Studies
on Joyce's *Ulysses*
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EN PREPARATION
Avant-propos

Jacqueline Genet


2 Ce petit livre apportera une aide précieuse aux étudiants et, par ses regards multiples sur l’Ulysses de Joyce, il séduira tout amoureux de littérature.
Calypso: myth, method, moment

Terence Brown

1 The narrative contents of this the first episode in Ulysses where we encounter its hero for the first time, are not complex. Leopold Bloom in the kitchen of his house prepares breakfast for his wife, feeds the cat, steps out to go round the corner to a shop where he can purchase something tasty for his own breakfast, as his lie-a-bed spouse sleeps on. *En route* he offers a cheerful “good day” to Mr. O’Rourke a publican, and remarks on the fine weather. He manages to buy the last kidney in Duglacz’s shop, while lusting after his next door neighbour’s servant girl, who is also making a purchase. He returns home, where he notices the post has arrived: two letters and a card. One letter is for him, from his daughter Milly, the other letter and the card are for his wife, to whom he passes them on. He returns to the kitchen where he makes tea, starts to cook the kidney, not forgetting to allow the cat to have the bloodsmeared paper in which it had been wrapped. He opens his letter, skims it, then carries breakfast (minus the kidney) upstairs to his wife, where they discuss her forthcoming concert performance and the funeral which it seems Bloom is scheduled to attend that day. Bloom agrees to get his wife a new book from the library returning the one she has done with, *Ruby: the Pride of the Ring* by Paul de Kock. His wife smells burning, the kidney is fast on its way to being a burnt offering, but Bloom saves his day and makes a breakfast of it along with tea and buttered bread. As he eats he reads his daughter’s letter. Meal and letter concluded he steps out to the back garden of the house where there is a privy. There he reflectively defecates and micturates all the while reading an old copy of a popular print *Titbits*, with which he eventually wipes himself. He steps out into the bright sunshine as the bells of George’s church sound a quarter to the hour. Mr. Leopold Bloom’s day has begun.

2 Joyce’s fictional method in this episode is the one to which at this stage we have become comparatively accustomed (Joyce himself in his schema for the novel designated it “Narrative Nature” as if his method had been undergoing a process of growth in the text to that point) through the first three episodes of the Telemachiad, Telemachus, Nestor and Proteus. It is a method which freely combines third person omniscient narration, with stream of consciousness and a narrative technique operating subtly between these two. Thus the opening is poised ambiguously between the various modes of narration as if instructing us on what is to come. The first magisterial sentence is exemplary. “Mr.
Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beast and fowls”. Is the verb here used to designate a completed action, as it would normally do in such a syntactic formulation, or is this the less customary usage which indicates habitual practice, predilection? The reader’s mind swiftly leaps from the former to the latter as we learn “he liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods’ roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine”. But we realise that this is not just a narrative description of Leopold Bloom’s culinary preferences but a step into his current state of mind where he indulges himself in an appetitive fantasy. Our minds however as readers can’t quite shake off the initial impression of that verbal ate (the verb gave accentuates the effect) as indicating a completed action and an image of gargantuan consumption (to which theme I shall be returning) lingers in our sense of the text. Let one further example suffice to exhibit the freely modulating nature of Joyce’s narrative method. As Bloom nears home after his brief journey (a minuscule preview of the greater voyages and adventures to come for this Dublin Odysseus) he imagines the physical pleasures which await him there. The passage runs as follows:

To smell the gentle smoke of tea, fume of the pan, sizzling butter. Be near her ample bcdwarnied flesh. Yes, Yes. [the novel of course famously ends with ninefold yeses]

Quick warm sunlight came running from Berkeley road, swiftly, in slim sandals, along the brightening footpath. Runs, she runs to meet me, a girl with gold hair on the wind.

Two letters and a card lay on the hallfloor.

3 Here we move from the internal world of Bloom’s consciousness, all desire and hunger for food and creature comforts, to the obviously objective report of a third person narrator in the final sentence, by way of a tantalisingly emotional passage which suggests Bloom’s tremulously paternal state of mind, without quite restricting itself to the contents of his consciousness. For the poeticism of those central two sentences, all romantic syntactical inversion and a decadent’s preciosity, is surely not Bloom’s formulation for all that the second sentence grammatically insists that it is. Again, external reality, consciousness, and the narrative trajectory of the text crossfade into one another through subtle shifts in linguistic register and syntactical deployment.

4 Such a method is marvellously adapted to Joyce’s purposes in this episode: to weave a simple narrative thread (of the kind I have outlined above) without thereby doing unacceptable damage to the impression of the moment by moment quality of consciousness he also wishes to supply. As one reads, attending to the frequent, swift movements from inner to outer life and to the spaces between them, one is almost mesmerised into sensing that this text is alive in a curious way, and modulations and variegated perspectives mimicking the vitality and instantaneousness of life itself. The method however is adopted by Joyce not only to achieve this brilliant literary illusionism, but because it can also, almost surreptitiously, carry a huge burden of information, allusion, reference and mythic analogue, which at one and the same time can provide detailed introductions to two of his main characters and develop thematic issues central to the work as a whole. And all this without sacrificing that utterly irresistible sense present here of life being lived moment by moment, with the surprise and freshness of the truly experiential that involves.

5 Consider at the most basic level how much we learn, almost subliminally, as if these facts are items held momentarily in the consciousness and even unconsciousness of Bloom,
about Bloom, about his spouse Marion and his daughter Milly. Marion (Mrs. Bloom is introduced to us as Marion but we learn in this episode that to Leopold she is Molly) has lived in Gibraltar, though she has forgotten what little Spanish she picked up there (Bloom it seems courted her in Dolphin’s Barn on the southwestern outskirts of Dublin). Her father was one Tweedy, a mustachioed gentleman, who rose from the ranks in the British army, who was involved in some way at the siege of Plevna. He also it seems collected stamps. We learn too how Bloom makes his living: he’s an advertising canvasser (“No use canvassing him for an ad”) who takes a professional interest throughout the episode in advertising signs and newspaper campaigns. We hear that Bloom knows Simon Dedalus, Stephen’s father, socially, for he has been in his company when that public house thespian had mimicked Mr. O’Rourke, the publican Bloom greets on his morning venture out for a breakfast treat. The Blooms now live in Eccles Street which apparently they rent rather than own, for Bloom is not a ratepayer, requiring a Mr. Kearney to act as a guarantor to allow him to borrow books from Capel Street public library. But the Blooms have not always lived in Eccles Street. They once lived, as Bloom's recollections inform us, at Saint Kevin’s parade, where they had the pleasure of a man named Citron as a neighbour and there are indications too in the episode that they lived close to Holies Street when their daughter Milly was born. Slowly we become aware of Bloom’s Jewishness, despite the unorthodoxy of his appetites. His sense of desolation as he briefly contemplates the miseries of the Diaspora confirms that: “The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere.” No wonder he hurries home, where he finds the letter from Milly whom we learn is working as assistant to a photographer in Mullingar (a town about 46 miles west north west of Dublin). Milly is fifteen and has already started to notice men, telling Bloom in her letter of a young student she has met named Bannon, a cousin it seems of Blazes Boylan. And perhaps most crucially we learn that the Blooms did have a son named Rudy who died in infancy. He would have been eleven, Bloom remembers.

At another level we learn as well various things about Bloom’s personality. We note that he is inclined to changes of mood, almost in tune with the momentary changes in the weather. As a cloud covers the sun his mood dips. It is as if at the start of a day his mood hasn’t quite stabilized. He fluctuates, as C.H. Peake has noted, “between feeling young and feeling old, between satisfaction and regret”. But certain responses seem more like characteristics of personality than just fluctuating effects of the environment. Throughout Calypso Bloom seems inclined to a kind of passivity, in response to his wife’s slothfully imperious orders, to his own disturbed recognition that he may well be about to be cuckolded by Blazes Boylan (who has rudely written to Mrs. Marion Bloom, committing a solecism to be sure, but displacing Leopold in script as he will replace him in bed) and in response to an intimation that his daughter may lose her virginity soon, to her young student perhaps. But this passivity is attended by an innate sympathy for people and animals. He saves the cat a tasty lick, he’s indulgent of old Professor Goodwin “Dreadful old case. Still he was a courteous old chap”. The last sentence of the episode is one of true sympathy: “Poor Dignam!” as the church bell tolling the hours reminds us of the bell which has tolled for that recently dead man, whose funeral Bloom will attend at 11 a.m. And despite the fluctuations in his mood in this episode Bloom remains chronically attached to information, scientific lore and opinionation of all sorts, which by the end of the book will have made him a walking compendium of mildly interesting but useless and often inaccurate data. As the sun nears the steeple of George’s church he ponders “Be a warm day I fancy. Specially in these black clothes feel it more. Black
conducts, reflects, (refracts is it?), the heat”. It absorbs actually, as Joyce would have us know. But no matter, for there’s something touching about this put-upon husband, who anticipates cuckoldry and who has the painful inheritance of Jewry to endure, with its vengeful God and experience of persecution, who keeps resolutely to secular explanations of a dangerous and troubling universe. It is he who can explain the etymology of that big word Metempsychosis which Molly has come upon in the course of her less than educative reading, as if a correct knowledge of linguistics can transcend the violent mysteries of life and death:

Cruelty behind it all. Doped animals. Trapeze at Hengler’s. Had to turn the other way. Mob gaping. Break your neck and we’ll break our sides. Families of them. Bone them, young so they metemspsychosis. That we live after death. Our souls. That a man’s soul after he dies, Dignam’s soul....

The fictional method which Joyce employs in this episode allows him therefore not only to create an impression of the moment by moment quality of consciousness but to supply us with a great deal of information about the Bloom’s family life, and about Leopold Bloom himself. It allows much else as well. Through the episode we become aware not only of this fine sunny morning in Dublin (the date is indicated as the 16th since Bloom reflects that Milly’s birthday has occurred the day before on the 15th) as a moment in time made up of moments, but as a point in history. The references to Molly’s father’s military past, in Gibraltar, at Plevna during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 when England sent the usual gunboats and considered intervention to prevent the expansion of Zsarist Russia, call into our minds that Ulysses is a work of the age of imperialism, composed during or after a terrible imperial war. We learn too of the imperial ambitions of the Japanese, then at war with Russia over disputed territorial claims in Manchuria and Korea. For Bloom recalls Simon Dedalus mimicking the publican O’Rourke: “Do you know what I’m going to tell you? What’s that, Mr. O’Rourke? Do you know what? The Russians, they’d only be an eight o’clock breakfast for the Japanese.” The episode also includes references to the new nationalisms that were fomented in this age of imperial hegemony and ethnic resurgence. Bloom calls to mind both Sir Moses Haim Montefiore, a Zionist father figure who supported the Jewish colonization of Palestine in face of widespread European anti-semitism and Arthur Griffith the robust (and as it happens somewhat anti-semitic) Irish Irelander and founder of Sinn Féin. We hear briefly too of militant Irish rebellion in the person of James Stephens the Fenian leader. And the butcher Dlugacz, is briefly identified as an enthusiast, presumably for Zionism.

Imperialism was of course essentially about wealth and control of the world’s resources. About economics in fact. In the scheme which Joyce employed as a compositional guide as he worked on Ulysses he identified each episode with a particular art: History, Rhetoric, Literature, Music etc. The relevant art in Calypso is Economics. Accordingly there is much about money, value, business, wages and wealth in the episode. We are told the valuation of a house on Bloom’s street; the salary earned by Milly in Mullingar; about old man Tweedy cornering a market in postage stamps; about a scheme to invest in a fruit plantation in Palestine and how young men from even such a dismal county as Leitrim come to Dublin as barmen and emerge eventually as grocers, the Findlaters of the age or even as Lords Mayor like Dan Tallon. Bloom ponders the economics of such transformations:

Where do they get the money? Coming up redhead curates from the county Leitrim, rinsing the empties and old man in the cellar (old man is the dregs of glasses, re-used by the unscrupulous bar staff). Then lo and behold they blossom
out as Adam Findlater's or Dan Tallon's. Then think of the competition. General thirst. Good puzzle would be cross Dublin without crossing a pub. Save it they can't. Off the drunks perhaps. Put down three and carry five. What is that, a bob here and there, dribs and drabs. On the wholesale orders perhaps. Doing a double shuffle with the top travellers. Square it you with the boss and we'll split the job, see?

The relation between the individual arts and the individual episodes of *Ulysses* is a complex one. It is very much easier, it seems to me, to discern the thematic significance of the Homeric parallels in the scheme (and that is difficult enough in some cases) than to relate each art to its episode in a convincing manner. Indeed Peake has argued "While the epic reference forms a commentary on the central themes, situations and action of the novel, and the *organs* compose a metaphor for the corporate life of the city, the *arts* column is essentially a checklist for the benefit of the author – its effect on the reader is achieved, not by recognition of the scheme, but by his total impression that the condition of all the fields of intellectual endeavor in Dublin have come under scrutiny". In *Calypso* the relationship may be more thematically integral than this allows. The episode is clearly about appetite, consumption and waste, about desire and failed fulfilment, about images and commodity fetishism. In fact this episode seems, it can be argued, to occupy itself with the stage in European economic history recently addressed by Franco Moretti, in his brilliant essay "The Long Goodbye: *Ulysses* and the end of liberal capitalism" (in his book *Signs Taken for Wonders*, 1983). There he identified (drawing on Marx and the Marxist historian of modern Britain, E.J. Hobsbaum), a stage in British history when imperialism sought to solve, by exporting surplus populations and by the exploitation of cheap natural resources, a crisis bred of disequilibrium in the Free Market of classic liberalism. Moretti sees the crisis as a breakdown in the liberal idea of the market which "in turn entails the decline of the liberal form of bourgeois society, to which the free market guaranteed rational functioning, automatically regulating its conflictual, irrational and private foundations.". The result is the economics of over-production and the exploitation through advertising of appetitive, irrational impulses that cannot be satisfied – a political economy of imperialist predators, of desire, consumption and evacuation so that the market may voraciously sustain its uncontrollable growth.

*Calypso*, this episode which reveals its historical moment as the era of imperialist adventurism and of other new irrational forces, nationalism, Zionism, re-invigorated anti-Semitism, which takes economics as an aspect of its material, opens with an image of the gargantuan consumption of offal, an appetitive infringement of taboo. Bloom, as we meet him, seems as predatory as his cat whose mental life is adapted solely to the hunt: "She understands all she wants to.

Vindictive too. Cruel. Her nature. Curious mice never equal." The cat is seen as possessing "avid shameclosing eyes" (no taboos here) with "Milkwhite teeth" "and eyelids narrowing with greed till her eyes were green stones." This last image combines in subtle fashion a hint of imperialist plunder with feral impulse; the same impulse evident for a moment when a trader accepts payment later in the episode: "A speck of eager foxeyes thanked him."

The predatory and the appetitive present in these images and in the descriptions of eating, drinking, the breeding of cattle, in the episode are, we must note, associated with the sexual impulse in Bloom's consciousness. Economics, predatory appetite and unsatisfied desire seem accordingly aspects of irrational impulse in *Calypso*, animalistic and even perverse. Mr. Bloom's hunger is almost erotic in its sensory indulgence. This is
suggested in a passage which reads like an extract from one of Molly’s mildly salacious library borrowings. These are merely sausages as Mr. Bloom sees them: “The shiny links, packed with forcemeat, fed his gaze and he breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pigs’ blood.” Bloom lusts after his neighbour’s skivvy (breaking one commandment and wishing to break a second) as if she were a succulent piece of meat, hurrying, unsuccessfully, with his non-kosher purchase so that he can follow her in the street “to catch up and walk behind her if she went slowly, behind her moving hams.” Molly to him is like a lactic beast: “He looked calmly down on her bulk and between her large soft bubs, sloping within her nightdress like a shegoat’s udder.” And as Bloom imagines the sexual dangers Milly risks in Mullingar he imagines her a piece of fruit ripening for the picking, like one of the oranges or citrons he has earlier day-dreamed about, or an olive, like those in the jar from Andrews, the merchant in Dame Street, which Molly hadn’t cared for. So instinctual sexual desires intermingle in the episode with economic fantasies or miracles, barmen to grocers, “Orange groves and immense melonfields north of Jaffa”, in a world of predatory impulses, consumption and the evacuation with which Calypso draws to a conclusion. Throughout there is no sense of economic life obeying rational, self-regulating principles as it was assumed to do under liberal capitalism and a free market. It is grounded in as primal and as irrational a level of human identity as hunger and libido. And even human culture which the modern economy delivers in proliferating, mass-produced printed form (in novels like those by Paul de Kock and prints like Titbits) is simply another example of consumption and evacuation. We see therefore Molly searching through her book with a hairpin because her fingertips are greasy with butter, that is when her husband has rescued it from under the bed beside the chamber pot; Bloom reads Titbits at stool; each of them enjoying the somatic pleasures of the text.

It is by now a critical commonplace to associate the emergence of fictional realism as the dominant mode of the English novel in the early nineteenth century with the era of liberal capitalism in Britain. A self-regulating free market (classically defined in Adam Smith’s The Wealth of Nations) seemed to the rational mind to be the product of a reality which, obeying principles of order, could be adequately represented in a mimetic art form. It was by contrast the determining assumption of the high Modernism of the early twentieth century (in which Joyce’s text is a notable entry) that such realism was no longer capable of such representation and indeed that representation itself was a misguided, because impossible, artistic ambition. It may be possible then, to read Modernism’s radical eschewal of mimesis as in part a response to the changed economic conditions of late nineteenth century Britain and Europe, a century of progress being brought to a premature end by the first Great Depression of the last quarter of the century which Britain had met by hectic imperial outreach and others by ethnic enthusiasms of one kind or another. In such an explanatory context it does not then surprise that Ulysses in the Calypso episode at the very least, should employ a radically Modernist method, in which no perspective is granted priority and mimesis is not implied as a normative artistic mode, to exhibit the irrational, instinctual and predatory quality of the economic factor in human life.

For Modernism, as it abandoned the epistemological certainties of realism and the empirical and even economic certitudes (many of the Modernist writers were obsessed with economic theory) which secured them, the matter of meaning was a central problematic. It was in artistic practices rooted in theories of myth as a mode of primitive
consciousness that embodied truths in narrative acts rather than in the discursive propositions of rational thought, that writers as different as T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and D.H. Lawrence sought to re-invest with meaning what was reckoned a meaningless world. Superficially considered, the Joycean project in Ulysses can seem to be similarly directed. The Homeric analogues of this text can seem just one more example of Modernism’s desire in T.S. Eliot’s famous words, to give “a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.” And the non-realistic methods which Joyce employs to such effect in so many sections of Ulysses, including the blend of objective narration, stream of consciousness and an intermediary mode, seen at work in Calypso, are of course as well-suited to the mythic method of high Modernism, as they are to the presentation of consciousness and historic zeitgeist. It is, however, only when we examine in detail how the Homeric analogues are worked into the text that we come to realize that something rather different than the endowment of “shape and significance”, of meaning indeed, is taking place. Calypso supplies a pertinent occasion.

The episode takes as its Homeric parallel Book Five of The Odyssey which tells of the seven year sojourn of Odysseus, in thrall to the nymph Calypso on her island of Ogyvia. In the Homeric telling of the tale Odysseus is less than happy with his lot on the nymph’s island but needs divine intervention to release him. How precisely this set of circumstances relates to the episode under discussion is, to say the least, not entirely clear. Is Molly Calypso? How then is she Penelope in the Ithaca of 7 Eccles Street from where Bloom must begin his odyssey? Or is that a simple-minded question? Does not the mythology of gods and goddesses, of enchantresses, speak only to us of the fact that all deities reside within the human breast and that a man can see a woman at different times as a Calypso (Nymph), a Circe (Whore), a Penelope (Wife)? But there is of course a nymph in Calypso, the print entitled Bath of the Nymph which Bloom had framed for three and six and which Molly thought would “look nice over the bed”. If we see this artistic representation as the Calypso of the chapter we can I think read the Homeric parallels more satisfyingly (in the company of Adaline Glasheen in her fascinating study of the episode). The nymph is an image of that purity and idealised sexuality, without the risks of marital congress with its pregnancies, pains and dead child, which has kept Bloom from full, procreative sexual intercourse with his wife for a span of years, just as Odysseus was kept from Penelope by the nymph on her island. And there is too an image of Circean sexuality in the episode, an image that calls to mind that other temptress who by contrast with Calypso tempts Odysseus and his companions to dally in a perverse, hoggish wallowing in the mire of dark bestiality. There are hints indeed in Calypso of Bloom’s own sexual dark side, his sado-masochism (he wonders does the mouse enjoy being hunted by the cat) which is to be graphically realized in the Circe episode in Nighttown later in the book. But here he is momentarily stimulated by an illustration in Paul de Kock’s somewhat questionable novel (Molly asserts, suggesting her taste has been coarsened to a degree by a steady diet of such fictional fare, “There’s nothing smutty in it.”).

He turned over the smudged pages. Ruby: the Pride of the Ring Hello. Illustration. Fierce Italian with carriage whip. Must be Ruby pride of the on the floor naked. Sheet kindly lent. The monster Maffei desisted and flung his victim from him with an oath.

So Glasheen can caustically observe: “I do not think it random, and I do not think it funny, the configuration of rival queans: Calypso over, Penelope on, Circe under the bed – virgin goddess, earthly wife, hellish whore.”. But what is striking about this configuration as the critic observes it is that two of the images here are commercial products, the one an engraving, presumably re-produced in illustration of the fictional
pot-boiler Molly has just finished reading, the other a photographic colour print “given away with the Easter number of Photo Bits”, a soft-porn publication that presented itself as a photographic magazine. The mythic world of epic does not therefore lie beneath or above the text in Calypso as a principle of meaning and order, or as an ideal by which the contemporary is mock-heroically reduced or comically ennobled. Rather it is revealed in this episode, so preoccupied with the economic basis of the world it embodies, to be merely textual, to occupy the zone of the semiotic if you like, as mere cultural artifact, sign rather than significance in a world of signs. For Bloom and Molly, Blazes Boylan, Milly and her student, do not come into existence in this episode as characters in a realist fiction who can be assumed to inhabit a stable reality, adequately mirrored by the procedures of the prose itself. Rather they exist as products of a textuality whose varying deployments are, as we have seen, attuned in method to moments of consciousness and of history, both driven by the irrational, predatory forces of desire, consumption, evacuation, by a political economy indeed of gross disorder, in which the mythic is merely one more constituent of that disorder. For the enchantress Calypso is here simultaneously sexual fetish, commodity and leader item in a marketing strategy. Stript of her ontological status in the prior order of myth, she enters the world of mere supply and demand and the distorting imbalances between them. She occupies Bloom’s world in fact. The world of advertising, Molly’s world too, the world of fashion and consumerism. She is indistinguishable from those things which constitute to a depressing degree what we are pleased to call the modern. Calypso, I am arguing, is a brilliant diagnosis of that condition as it presented in its early symptomatic pathology.

NOTES

3. Ibid., p. 152.
6. Ibid., p. 62.

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Inscription et circulation dans
*Calypso*

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1 On commencera par s’interroger sur la première phrase de *Calypso* – qui est en même temps la première phrase consacrée à Bloom dans *Ulysses*, son entrée dans le roman en quelque sorte : “Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls”. Le mot le plus important ici, c’est peut-être “Mr.” Si Bloom avait été un personnage d’un autre roman que *Ulysses*, on aurait pu s’attendre à ce qu’il soit présenté comme “Mr. Bloom” ou bien “Leopold Bloom”, mais avec les deux ensemble, “Mr. Leopold Bloom”, on quitte le registre de la fiction pour celui de la fiche d’identité ou du constat d’huissier. Dès les premiers mots, le personnage apparaît ainsi inclus dans un répertoire. La formulation abstraite et classificatrice de “the inner organs of beasts and fowls” confirme qu’il s’agit moins d’une présentation que d’une définition, de ce qu’on pourrait appeler l’énoncé d’une loi générique du personnage. Bloom entre dans le roman sous la forme d’une loi de fonctionnement, qui est sa loi alimentaire. Au lieu d’une mise en place spatio-temporelle propre aux romans traditionnels, il apparaît à travers un paradigme, un vecteur qui va l’orienter tout au long de l’épisode.

2 Mais cette orientation elle-même est gauchie par le décalage entre l’écriture et son contenu, entre d’une part la dimension générique et classificatrice véhiculée par la forme de la phrase, et d’autre part l’information transmise, ce que la phrase nous apprend de Bloom, qui renvoie plutôt à la bizarrerie, l’exception, pour ne pas dire l’anomalie : un goût immodéré pour les abats. Ainsi Bloom est dès sa première occurrence sous le signe d’une double appartenance qui va conditionner tout son statut dans *Ulysses* : la loi et l’anomalie, la règle et l’écart, la norme et la déviation.

corps de Bloom, avec toutes les implications de transsubstantiation parodique. Parcours symbolique enfin : c'est l'oscillation verticale entre pôles antagonistes, et en particulier le télescopage constant entre nourriture et excrément, entre manducation et défécation.

Le premier parcours, le parcours mental va du général au particulier, du potentiel au réel, de la non-existence à l'existence. On s'aperçoit en effet, en lisant attentivement les premières phrases de l'épisode, qu'on a un rétrécissement progressif du champ qui nous fait passer de la formulation de la loi bloomienne dans ses termes les plus généraux ("inner organs of beasts and fowls", 1-2), à un déversement d'exemples d'une précision maniaque : "thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes". On est passé de la loi à l'inventaire, et les exemples semblent sortis tout droit d'un catalogue pré-existant au texte et relever davantage de la grande mémoire du livre que d'une hypothétique mémoire bloomienne. La précision des détails ne change rien à l'affaire : on est toujours aussi loin de toute vraisemblance réaliste.

Y a-t-il place pour le rognon de Bloom, le rognon spatio-temporel, hic et nunc, de l'épisode, entre ces deux extrêmes ? Il arrive pourtant avec la troisième phrase : "grilled mutton kidneys" – ou plutôt d'ailleurs, il fait une fausse entrée, puisque ça n'est pas celui-là, le rognon de mouton, mais une autre variété, le rognon de porc, que nous verrons enfin apparaître 140 lignes plus loin. Comme tout ce qui apparaît dans Ulysses, il n'est pas donné mais construit. Son arrivée doit être préparée, annoncée puis remise, puis mise en danger, jusqu'au moment final de son entrée dans le texte et dans Bloom. Bien avant qu'il existe concrètement, il doit être peu à peu constitué, façonné, fabriqué potentiellement. "Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly" (6). Le rognon est pour l'instant une idée de rognon, un rognon idéal qui doit encore descendre dans le monde. Et il faudra plusieurs pages pour que cette incarnation s'accomplisse.

La figure potentielle du rognon continue ainsi à être consciencieusement façonnée par Bloom pendant qu'il regarde la chatte, avec une précision grandissante qui nous en rapproche peu à peu : "Fried with butter, a shake of pepper" (45-46). Et quand Bloom arrive chez Dlugacz, nous le verrons respirer l'odeur de la charcuterie et se pénétrer ainsi du rognon tant désiré avant même d'apercevoir l'objet de sa quête. De sorte que quand le rognon surgira enfin à l'existence sur l'étal du charcutier, il sera déjà pourvu de toute une charge de surdétermination et aura un coefficient de réalité tellement fort qu'il ne lui manquera plus que l'existence.

Or, cette dissociation entre élaboration potentielle et surgissement dans l'actuel est un des modes récurrents de l'écriture de Ulysses. On pourrait même dire que c'est le mode ontologique essentiel de tout ce qui surgit dans le roman. Car rien n'y apparaît jamais sans avoir déjà acquis, d'une façon ou d'une autre, parfois dans des zones fort éloignées du livre, une existence très élaborée dans tout un réseau potentiel sous-jacent, qui, même s'il n'affleure souvent que de façon fragmentaire et lacunaire, n'en surdetermine pas moins le moindre fragment, lequel devient ainsi porteur dans la moindre de ses parcelles de la charge du réseau dont il importe avec lui dans le texte toute la puissance. Toute lecture de Ulysses doit être orientée par cette tension permanente entre fragment et réseau.

Frank Budgen, a d'ailleurs fait une remarque sur la manière dont Joyce composait son texte, qui illustre assez bien cette idée de charge latente : "The words he wrote were far advanced in his mind before they found shape on paper" (2). Ainsi s'explique l'étrange capacité de vibration multi-directionnelle des noyaux d'énergie que sont les mots.
joyciens ainsi que la résonance aphoristique de certaines formulations à la simplicité trompeusement lisse. De même, on pourrait dire que le rognon “is far advanced in Bloom’s mind” avant d’apparaître hic et nunc sur l’étal du charcutier, puis dans l’assiette de Bloom.

Mais plus l’élaboration est complexe, plus la trajectoire est problématique pour parvenir du scénario potentiel imaginaire à l’actualisation dans le réel. La descente de l’idée dans le monde est semée d’embûches. Sans aller jusqu’à dire comme T.S. Eliot : “Between the idea / And the reality / Between the motion and the act / Falls the Shadow”(3), il y a toujours des avatars imprévus, des accidents de parcours qui rendent le trajet bien incertain entre “kidneys were in his mind”(6) et le constat de la cuisson parfaite : “Done to a turn” (391-392). On verra ainsi qu’il ne reste plus qu’un seul rognon sur l’étal du charcutier et Bloom se demandera avec angoisse si la jeune fille qui passe avant lui va l’en priver. Et le texte insiste avec une solennité délibérée sur cette solitude du rognon : “the last” (145) – dernière chance pour Bloom de manger ce dont il a envie, mais dernière chance aussi de rompre la période de stérilité avec Molly. Cette oscillation du rognon entre nécessité et contingence laisse largement le temps à Bloom – et le lecteur – de méditer sur les occasions perdues. Puis le rognon manquera de brûler et c’est in extremis que toute la préparation, aussi bien imaginaire que culinaire, sera sauvée. Plus tard Beckett, un autre spécialiste des distorsions entre matrice et actualisation, exploitera systématiquement et cruellement ce gouffre entre les proliférations potentielles extraordinairement élaborées de certains de ses personnages et leurs avortements dès que ces constructions mentales sont confrontées à l’épreuve du réel.

Le second parcours du rognon – qui se déroule en fait parallèlement au précédent – est le mouvement qui va peu à peu le faire pénétrer dans le corps de Bloom, l’y agréger. En effet, dès que Bloom touche le rognon, une sorte de proximité, et même d’intimité s’instaure entre son corps et la partie de corps qu’il saisit. On n’est pas loin du Hoc est corpus meum de l’Eucharistie que Bloom regardera s’accomplir dans l’église lors de l’épisode suivant Lotus-Eaters. On notera aussi que ce n’est pas Bloom mais sa main qui saisit le rognon : “His hand accepted the moist tender gland” (181), un peu comme si, par une espèce de tropisme magnétique, le corps de Bloom se détachait de lui pour venir constituer une entité autonome en s’agrégeant au rognon. Inversement, alors que le corps de Bloom semble se morceler, le rognon semble acquérir vie et s’animer : “moist tender gland”. Par la ruse très joycienne d’une espèce d’entre-deux narratif indécidable, le texte nous présente le rognon dans une narration à la 3ème personne, alors que les mots choisis sont orientés et contaminés par les sensations de Bloom. Moist : l’impression tactile d’une chair encore baignée par les liquides organiques. Tender : la douceur au toucher, mais aussi déjà le début d’une relation affective, d’une inclination de Bloom pour cette partie de corps qu’il va bientôt adjoindre à lui. Gland enfin : le rognon a déjà entamé sa transmutation, cessant d’être un abat mort pour devenir une partie de corps humain. On notera d’ailleurs que dès le départ le texte anglais favorise la double nature, animale et humaine, du rognon, puisque l’anglais, contrairement au français, ne dispose que du seul mot kidney.

Tout se passe donc comme si, dès qu’il est touché par Bloom, le rognon commençait à prendre vie, anticipant ainsi son introduction dans le corps de Bloom. Le geste même de Bloom : “slid it into a sidepocket” (181) accentue encore cette impression. Le lieu de rangement est inattendu : en fait, en entrant dans la poche, le rognon se trouve déjà placé dans une zone proche du corps, première étape vers l’entrée dans le corps lui-même, qui
aura lieu un peu plus tard. Et le slid, glissement sans à-coups, montre bien que la poche n’est là que l’antichambre du corps. Par la suite, tout au long de la préparation culinaire, plusieurs détails continueront à montrer le morceau de viande comme un corps vivant, que ce soit lorsque Bloom le retourne sur le plat : “he [...] turned it turtle on its back” (386), ou quand il mange “the toothsome pliant meat” (391).

Il suffira d’ailleurs de peu de temps pour que commence l’interaction entre la chair de Bloom et la chair qu’il vient d’absorber : “a gentle loosening of his bowels” (460). Le rognon a entamé sa circulation dans son corps et va en modifier imperceptiblement l’économie générale jusqu’à aboutir à l’évacuation finale. La transsubstantiation est en marche.

J’en arrive à présent au troisième parcours du rognon, la ritualisation qui va l’amener de la charcuterie à l’assiette de Bloom. On sait que le rognon renvoie ici à un ancien sacrifice de la religion juive mentionné dans un passage de l’Exode (29 :13,22) qui recommande que des rognons de bœuf et de bélier soient brûlés sur l’autel de Yahvé. Mais tout en s’inscrivant sans le savoir dans ce sacrifice, Bloom le détourne considérablement puisque, aprè avoir hésité, il choisit un rognon de porc plutôt que de mouton. On retrouve là toute la dimension de détournement du rite, fondamentale chez lui. En effet c’est là toute l’ambiguïté et en même temps toute la créativité de Bloom : tout en étant essentiellement une créature de codes et de liturgies, il ne cesse de mettre ces codes en perspective en les faisant jouer les uns contre les autres. Loin de les rejeter, il les réactive en les distendant jusqu’à leur limite extrême et les enrichit paradoxalement en y injectant ce qui leur est le plus étranger.

En tout cas, dès l’entrée chez le charcutier, la dimension religieuse est très présente. Bloom “breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pigs’ blood” (144), un peu comme un fidèle, en entrant dans un temple, hume l’odeur des animaux sacrifiés sur l’autel. Et le rognon saignant, qui “oozed bloodgouts on the willowpatterned dish” (145), apparaît comme une victime rituelle, image d’ailleurs amplifiée explicitement aussitôt après avec la rêverie de Bloom sur les animaux qu’on brutalise avant de les emmener à l’abattoir (158-162).

Quant à la préparation culinaire, elle est elle aussi ponctuée par toute une gestuelle très ritualisée. Ainsi Bloom “crushed the pan flat on the live coals” (274). C’est la seconde fois que ces “live coals” apparaissent. Ils étaient déjà présents tout à fait au début, pendant les préparatifs affairés de Bloom pour le petit-déjeuner de Molly, dans une phrase très énigmatique qui constituait un paragraphe à elle toute seule et semblait coupée de la continuité narrative : “The coals were reddening” (10). Mise ainsi en relief par son isolement, cette phrase semblait vibrer et déborder du texte, témoignant de ce qu’on pourrait appeler une insistance de sens qui semble attendre vainement d’être prise en charge par la narration. C’est seulement 260 lignes plus loin, lorsque Bloom entame ses préparatifs culinaires, qu’on commence à percevoir là l’image d’un feu sacré qui attend le sacrifice prêt à s’accomplir. Mais lors de la première occurrence, le lecteur ne dispose pas encore du réseau de ritualisation qui va peu à peu insister tout au long de l’épisode, et la phrase reste opaque car elle n’est encore qu’un signe avant-coureur qui ne s’éclairera que rétrospectivement.

On a là un exemple typique de ce va-et-vient constant de l’écriture joycienne entre la discontinuité fragmentaire et des moments de cristallisation qui viennent après coup intégrer le discontinu dans un réseau englobant qui lui donne sens. Toute la stratégie épiphanique au travail depuis Dubliners n’est rien d’autre que ce passage d’une
dissémination ininterprétable à un réseau qui n'apparaît qu'à la fin, à travers un mot-opérateur qui vient soudain ré-ordonner après coup le discontinu, ou plutôt faire passer de l'invisible au visible ce qui était en fait déjà là dans le texte, mais ne pouvait pas encore être vu – ou, pour reprendre ma distinction du début, faire surgir à l'actuel ce qui était déjà là, tout prêt, tout armé, mais seulement potentiellement. C'est pourquoi on a raison de dire que rien ne se crée jamais chez Joyce, car tout était déjà là quelque part, invisible, mais tout prêt à surgir, et il n'y a jamais de révélation, mais simplement changement de focus et passage de l'invisible au visible.

On notera aussi que Bloom saupoudre le poivre ringwise (279), dessinant comme un cercle magique, et qu'il le verse non pas d'un poivrier, mais "from the chipped eggcup" (279), le coquetier devenant pour la circonstance un calice sacré, même si c'est un calice ébréché – et il n'est pas indifférent qu'un des objets emblématiques de Bloom soit un calice ébréché, tout comme l'emblème de Stephen est un "cracked lookingglass". Il y aurait peut-être davantage à dire sur ce "chipped eggcup", mais ce serait s'aventurer en terrain moins sûr : le réceptacle de l'œuf évoquerait alors un corps de femme que Bloom détourne de sa fonction tout comme il néglige le corps fécond et maternel de Molly, réceptacle lui aussi chipped depuis la mort de Rudy.

On arrive à la quatrième et dernière trajectoire du rognon de Bloom, trajectoire non plus horizontale mais verticale : c'est la circulation, et même l'oscillation, entre les deux pôles symboliques de la nourriture et de l'excrément, de l'absorption et de la défécation.

Et là encore le texte nous donne très tôt des clues qui contiennent en germe tout le développement à venir. Ainsi on apprend dès les premières lignes que si Bloom aime par-dessus tout les rognons, c'est parce qu'ils "gave to his patate a fine tang of scented urine" (4-5), la phrase télescopant ainsi la bouche, lieu de l'absorption de nourriture, et le rognon, lié à l'excrétion. Avant même d'entrer dans le corps, la nourriture porte déjà la marque de la transmutation excrémentielle à venir.

De plus, Bloom, avant de déféquer, opère sur l'excrément le même travail d'élaboration potentielle que sur le rognon au début de l'épisode. Pendant sa rêverie alors qu'il se rend à son cabinet, il fabrique potentiellement et imaginai rement l'excrément avant de le produire. Et cette méditation sur le fumier et sa valeur fertilisatrice est pour Bloom l'occasion de télescoper sans cesse des pôles symboliques opposés. C'est ainsi qu'il relie les deux extrémités de la chaîne biologique par ses réflexions sur la nourriture et les excréments du bétail, et fait se rejoindre les deux pôles de la souillure et de la pureté lorsqu'il remarque que rien ne vaut les excréments d'animaux séchés pour blanchir les gants de femme en chevreau : "Best thing to clean ladies' kid gloves" (481), conjonction d'ailleurs magnifiquement condensée par un oxymore typiquement bloomien : "Dirty cleans" (481). Le jardin devient ainsi le point de rencontre de la corruption et de la fertilité : Bloom ne se souvient plus si c'est par une abeille ou une mouche à viande ("bee or bluebottle", 483-484) qu'il a été un jour piqué dans un jardin, son corps devenant ainsi, selon l'une ou l'autre hypothèse, fleur ou charogne.

Mais c'est surtout au moment de la défécation de Bloom que la circulation symbolique s'accélère. Tout comme la préparation et l'absorption du rognon, la défécation prend elle aussi l'allure d'un rituel. Bloom entre dévotement dans son cabinet comme dans une église "bowing his head under the low lintel" (495). Et on le voit ensuite "seated calm above his own rising smell" (513), comme enveloppé du parfum d'encens qui monte dans une église.
Mais alors que dans un premier temps, à travers l’écho d’une célèbre nursery rhyme (4) : “The king was in his countinghouse” (498-499), Bloom assis sur son siège de cabinet devient une figure de roi sur son trône, quelques lignes plus loin le sacré s’inverse en malédiction. Le roi devient paria et bouc émissaire, lorsque le siège du cabinet devient un “cuckstool” (“Asquat on the cuckstool he folded out his paper”, 500). Joyce joue ici sur le sens de “to cuck” (déféquer) et de “cucking-stool” (sellette de correction), siège sur lequel on attachait devant sa porte quelqu’un que l’on voulait punir et exhiber à la vindicte publique. Ce glissement de la figure du roi à celle du paria annonce le grand fantasme de Circe dans lequel Bloom sera d’abord l’empereur fondateur de Bloomusalem, le nouveau Messie, pour ensuite basculer dans la figure du pharmakos qui “shall carry the sins of the people to Azazel” (15.1898-1899).

Mais le fragment de nursery rhyme déjà cité n’introduit pas seulement l’image de la royauté. Avec le mot de countinghouse (499), c’est tout le réseau d’équivalence entre l’or et l’excrément, bien connu des psychanalystes, qui apparaît dans le texte. Pour saisir l’importance de ce réseau, il convient de revenir au moment de l’achat du rognon par Bloom, et là il me faut citer les quatre lignes du paragraphe, car chaque mot compte : “His hand accepted the moist tender gland and slid it in to a sidepocket. Then it fetched up three coins from his trousers’ pocket and laid them on the rubber prickles. They lay, were read quickly and quickly slid, disc by disc, into the till” (181-184).

La transaction commerciale, qui aboutit à l’échange du rognon contre trois pièces d’un penny, est présentée avec une étonnante précision. Comme par un phénomène de vases communicants, Bloom se remplit par un orifice et se vide par un autre, le rognon venant remplir dans une poche le vide laissé par les pièces de monnaie dans l’autre poche. Bloom absorbe ainsi le rognon par le haut, la poche de la veste proche de l’estomac, et excrète de l’argent par le bas, la poche du pantalon proche de l’anus. Rien d’étonnant donc à ce que, inversement, lorsqu’il est dans son cabinet, le rognon, à son tour excrété, le soit sous la forme de l’or du countinghouse. La différence est qu’à présent, comme on va le voir, cet or n’est pas simple monnaie d’échange, comme l’étaient les pièces d’un penny à la charcuterie, mais est le résultat de toute une alchimie complexe.

Mais il nous faut d’abord revenir à la transaction commerciale avec le charcutier. Une fois posées par Bloom sur le comptoir, les trois pièces de monnaie “were read quickly and quickly slid, disc by disc into the till” (183-184). Si les mots “quickly read”, qui semblent indiquer une activité de déchiffrement des pièces par le charcutier, peuvent paraître ici énigmatiques, il faut se souvenir que Bloom lui aussi avait lu et déchiffré à sa manière le rognon comme un “moist tender gland”, non pas des yeux mais de la main, conformément à cette perception du monde multi-directionnelle et synesthésique qui lui fait préférer tout au long de Ulysses et tout particulièrement dans cet épisode, les sensations tactiles, auditives et olfactives à la vision claire. On a vu précédemment quelle constellation subtile d’information était transmise par ces trois mots dans le rapide contact entre le rognon et la main de Bloom. On notera le accepted : c’est seulement une fois la lecture du rognon faite par la main, une fois enregistrée et reconnue toute la constellation de détails qui en font déjà une partie de corps humain vivant, que la main peut l’accepter et l’intégrer au corps.

On peut revenir, après ce détour, à la lecture des pièces de monnaie par le charcutier et voir qu’elle est symétrique de la lecture du rognon par Bloom. Chacun des deux acteurs de l’échange lit l’objet qu’il reçoit. Mais alors que la lecture bloomienne du rognon en fait un bloc de sensations indissociables (“moist tender gland”), au contraire la lecture
commerciale du charcutier aboutit à dissocier les trois pièces de monnaie en trois unités séparées vues de manière totalement géométrique : “disc by disc” (183-184). Le charcutier tranche et sépare alors que Bloom coagule et agrège. Ainsi les saucisses apparaissent d’abord sur l’étal comme des “hanks of sausages” (140) (rouleaux de saucisses) et des “shiny links” (chaînons luisants) (142), un continuum dans lequel le commerçant tranche et divise : “the sausages he had snipped off with blotchy fingers” (152-153), fabriquant des unités séparées propres aux échanges commerciaux.

On pourrait creuser davantage ici le mot disc qui évoque aussi en anglais le disque du soleil (c’est le terme utilisé dans Circe lorsque la figure du pharmacien Sweney apparaît parodiquement “in the disc of the soapsun”, 15.340-341). Or la transmutation d’un astre en pièce d’or est une mutation symbolique qu’on rencontre au moins à deux reprises chez Joyce, d’abord dans Dubliners, à la fin de “Two Gallants”, lorsque la lune irlandaise romantique se voile peu à peu pour se transmuter finalement en le “small gold coin” que brandit Corley, symbole du triomphe de la vénalité, d’autre part à la fin de Nestor, lorsque les taches de soleil qui dansent sur les épaules de Mr. Deasy deviennent des “dancing coins” (2.449), marquant là aussi le triomphe d’une sagesse financière sur l’artiste désargenté qu’est Stephen. Or, tout au long de sa longue rêverie de voyage oriental au début de l’épisode (77-98), Bloom était apparu comme un héros solaire, marchant légèrement en avant du soleil, comme s’il en annonçait symboliquement la venue : “Travel round in front of the sun, steal a day’s march on him” (84-85). Ici au contraire, dans une espèce de crépuscule parodique, le disc est englouti “into the till”, dans les profondeurs du tiroir-caisse.

Ainsi, en glissant les trois pennies “disc by disc” dans son tiroir-caisse, le charcutier opère sur l’argent que Bloom a sorti d’un repli de sa poche, proche des replis de son corps (les pièces doivent être “fetched up” par Bloom), il opère sur ces pièces, qui portent encore la marque du corps de Bloom, le cisaillement et la séparation qui lui permettra de les couper de la promiscuité bloomienne et de les faire entrer dans le monde des équivalences mathématiques et géométriques du tiroir-caisse. L’argent est ainsi passé de la poche, orifice semi-organique – car toute une contamination réciproque relie souvent chez Joyce corps et vêtement, organique et inorganique – à un orifice purement fonctionnel et financier, celui du tiroir-caisse. C’est là toute la différence avec l’Umwelt de Bloom, qui entretient toujours avec son corps toute une interaction complexe, comme si des fils invisibles reliaient son environnement immédiat à son corps qui en devient en quelque sorte le prolongement. Qu’on se souvienne comment Bloom porte la théière à Molly : “his thumb hooked in the teapot handle” (299), ou comment il ouvre la porte de la chambre : “Nudging the door open with his knee” (300). Au contraire de ce tâtonnement à l’intérieur d’une Umwelt mal différenciée, la transaction commerciale nivelle et normalise dans une équivalence propre aux échanges purement financiers.

Si on revient, après ce long détour, à Bloom dans son cabinet, son countinghouse, on comprend alors qu’il ne fait là qu’achever la transaction entamée à la charcuterie. Sa défécation est en fait le versant bloomien de la transaction financière. Mais pour explorer cette analogie, il nous faut faire un nouveau détour, cette fois par la page imprimée.

La jonction entre l’excrément et la page imprimée s’opère lorsque Bloom s’essuie avec la page du magazine Titbits contenant la nouvelle de Philip Beaufoy, “Matcham’s Masterstroke”. Mais autrement d’elle se tisse tout un entrelacs subtil qui mêle nourriture, excrément, page imprimée et argent. Le titre même du magazine Titbits a pour sens premier “friandises”, “bons morceaux” et a pris ensuite dans la presse le sens de
“entrefilet croustillant”. Or le texte maintient soigneusement la concomitance entre la lente défécation de Bloom et sa lecture des colonnes successives de la nouvelle dans le magazine. Bloom prend son temps : “Keep it a bit. Our prize titbit : Matcham’s Masterstroke (501-502). Cette répétition du mot bit, d’abord appliqué à la défécation, puis à la nouvelle, établit toute une équivalence entre le texte imprimé et l’excrément de Bloom qui devient ainsi la petite friandise, le “prize titbit” que Bloom, tout à son plaisir de l’excrétion, ne veut pas lâcher trop vite et retient avec toute une économie de la jouissance.

Mais le réseau s’enrichit encore lorsque Bloom se met à méditer sur le prix payé à Beaufoy pour sa nouvelle et dont il peut lire la mention dans le magazine : “payment at the rate of one guinea a column has been made to the writer” (503-504). Le mot-opérateur column va cristalliser toute une analogie entre excrément, argent et page imprimée. En ce point du texte, la column c’est du texte-équivalent-argent, dont Bloom, par un calcul mental rapide, opère sans se tromper la conversion, transformant les colonnes en leur équivalent financier : “Three and a half. Three pounds three. Three pounds, thirteen and six” (504-505).

Mais le mot column réapparaît quelques lignes plus loin, alors que Bloom commence à cédérer et à laisser sortir l’excrément de son corps : “Quietly he read, restraining himself, the first column and, yielding but resisting, began the second. Midway, his last resistance yielding, he allowed his bowels to ease themselves quietly as he read, reading still patiently, that slight constipation of yesterday quite gone” (506-509). La répétition de yielding et de read [...] reading” ainsi que la présence insistante de la column (“the first column [...] the second”) aboutissent à établir toute une équivalence entre trois registres : la lecture des colonnes successives de la nouvelle, la lente sortie de l’excrément du corps de Bloom et l’argent payé à Beaufoy pour ses colonnes de texte imprimé. Et c’est le mot column qui opère la jonction, s’appliquant aussi bien aux colonnes de texte, aux colonnes de chiffres de l’argent payé à Beaufoy et aux colonnes d’excrément qui sortent lentement de l’anus de Bloom.

Tout se passe ainsi comme si les colonnes de texte imprimé que lit Bloom ressortaient de son anus sous forme de colonnes d’excrément, sortant l’une après l’autre, de la même manière que les colonnes de texte ont été lues l’une après l’autre. Mais ces colonnes de texte sont aussi de l’équivalent-argent payé à Beaufoy, et Bloom transforme ainsi non seulement l’imprimé mais aussi l’argent en excrément. Et donc, de même que, lors de sa transaction commerciale avec le charcutier, Bloom absorbait le rognon par le haut et expulsait de l’argent par le bas, ici il complète le processus en l’inversant, apparaissant comme une machine à transsubstantier qui absorbe du texte-argent par le haut, les yeux, et le transforme en excrément par l’orifice du bas, l’anus, devenant le lieu d’une véritable alchimie.

Si nous passons maintenant de Bloom la machine à transsubstantier à Bloom l’herméneute, le déchiffreur d’inscriptions, nous voyons qu’il n’y a pas vraiment coupure. La venue du rognon dans le monde était déjà scandée par toute une activité d’interprétation des signes. Bloom en préparait la venue un peu comme un fidèle scrutant les signes du miracle imminent. Le monde de Bloom est en effet un monde de signes. Son espace n’est jamais une plage blanche et transparente, mais au contraire il est toujours balisé, quadrillé d’inscriptions, de textes, citations, signatures diverses qui circulent de manière plus ou moins erratique dans son champ de vision ou dans sa mémoire.

Plus qu’observateur, Bloom est sans cesse en position d’herméneute : tout en lui est signe et il ne cesse de lire, d’interpréter, de décrypter ces signes, avec plus ou moins de succès,
qu'il s'agisse des miaulements de la chatte ou des grognements inarticulés de Molly. Mais cette finesse de réceptivité se double d'une capacité à opérer de véritables micro-révolutions coperniciennes qui lui permettent de se percevoir par l'imagination comme les autres le perçoivent et de s'arracher à une perspective uni-dimensionnelle. C'est ainsi qu'avec la chatte, après avoir adopté un point de vue de suffisance anthropocentrique, s'imaginant qu'il a pour elle les dimensions d'une énorme tour, il est capable immédiatement après, par un saut imaginatif, de renverser la perspective et de passer de la place de l'observateur à celle de l'observé : "Wonder what I look like to her. Height of a tower? No, she can jump me" (28-29). L'herméneute se double d'un relativiste quasi-einsteinien.

On notera tout de même que Bloom herméneute échoue avec Molly malgré tous ses efforts pour lui expliquer le mot “metempsychosis”. Et l'ironie de la chose est qu'au moment même où il essaie désespérément de trouver les mots qui conviennent, Molly est en train d'accomplir naturellement, sans s'en rendre compte, un magnifique exemple de transsubstantiation en versant son thé dans sa crème, les deux liquides se mélangant harmonieusement dans la tasse : “The sluggish cream wound curdling spirals through her tea” (366). Au même moment, la version bloomienne de la transsubstantiation entamée avec la préparation du rognon manque échouer car le rognon brûle, et, ironiquement, c'est Molly qui s'en aperçoit et sauve ainsi le processus en cours. Le liquide de Molly réussit là où le feu de Bloom manque échouer.

Dans cet entrecroisement de messages, il faut faire un sort particulier aux inscriptions, à toutes les lettres et mots qui sont déjà là, dans le monde des choses, couches de texte plus ou moins effacées, signatures plus ou moins déchiffrables, support privilégié du travail de l'herméneute. Car le monde de Bloom est fait de multiples strates superposées dont chacune, comme dans un palimpseste, porte des traces d'écriture plus ou moins lisibles. À la fin de Nausicaa la plage lui apparaîtra comme “All these rocks with lines and scars and letters” (1261) et il ne résistera pas à la tentation d'ajouter sa couche d'écriture sur le parchemin du sable. Dans Calypso aussi, l'espace de Bloom est saturé d'inscriptions, que ce soit le parchemin que porte le prêtre dans sa rêverie orientale, le prospectus pour la ferme en Palestine, les écritaux des agences immobilières, l'enveloppe avec l'écriture de Boylan qui pointe sous l'oreiller de Molly, le livre de Molly adossé au pot de chambre, les phrases que Bloom avait un jour griffonnées sur ses manchettes ou la page de la nouvelle de Beaufoy avec laquelle il s'essuie.

Son vêtement même, c'est-à-dire ce qu'il y a de plus proche de son corps, en porte la marque. Ainsi son manteau est initialled (66), et on verra dans l'épisode suivant, Lotus-Eaters, toute la dimension religieuse codée des formulations en initiales, qu'il s'agisse de “S.J.” (5.323), “D.D.” (5.325) ou surtout “I.N.R.I.” (5.372) et “I.H.S.” (5.372). Le manteau de Bloom semble ainsi pointer parodiquement vers un texte sacré.

Le chapeau est lui aussi bardé d'inscriptions. C'est d'abord le nom du fabricant qui s'est partiellement effacé du fait de la transpiration : “The sweated legend in the crown of his hat told him mutely : Plasto's high grade ha” (569-70). Par ce mot legend, qui désigne à l'origine le texte d'accompagnement d'une médaille, pièce de monnaie ou gravure, le chapeau de Bloom apparaît comme un objet hautement emblématique, signe de gentility bourgeoise. De même dans Bouvard et Pécuchet, que Joyce connaissait fort bien, c'est la reconnaissance de cette même gentility liée au chapeau qui pousse les deux compères à
lier connaissance lorsque, assis sur le même banc, il s’aperçoivent qu’ils ont tous deux eu l’idée d’inscrire leur nom à l’intérieur de leur couvre-chef.

Mais ici la légende est *sweated* : la sueur exudée par le corps est venue faire interférence avec le texte imprimé et l’effacer en partie. On retrouve là la jonction problématique, déjà évoquée précédemment, entre corps et texte imprimé. Le chapeau est signe social par excellence et porte sur lui cette marque d’appartenance qu’est le nom du fabricant, mais le corps sécrète des fluides subversifs qui par une insidieuse alchimie viennent partiellement effacer cette signature. Seule une lettre est effacée, ce qui est peu, mais ce qui en même temps est beaucoup, car, après le registre noble des termes comme *legend*, *crommet high grade*, cette petite lettre absente suffit à faire du chapeau une plaisanterie, un *ha*. De même plus tard dans *Eumaeus*, dans le journal qui publie la liste des personnes présentes à l’enterrement de Dignam, une lettre enlevée au nom de Bloom par une erreur des typographes suffira à rendre ce nom ridicule en en faisant “L. Boom” (16.1260). Toute l’ambiguïté du statut social de Bloom, toujours un peu sur les marges de la bourgeoisie dublinoise, transparaît dans ces effacements stratégiques.

Mais on n’en a pas terminé avec le chapeau qui contient une autre inscription, celle-là non pas effacée, mais dissimulée dans la bande de cuir intérieure : “He peeped quickly inside the leatherband. White slip of paper. Quite safe” (70-71). Il s’agit bien sûr du ticket qui lui permettra d’aller à la poste restante chercher la lettre de Martha Clifford. Les replis du vêtement sont des recoins secrets qui dissimulent des messages. La surface interne du chapeau est en fait la superposition de quatre couches : le tissu qui porte la marque de fabrique effacée, la bande de cuir, et entre les deux le ticket. Ainsi, dès qu’on pénètre l’enveloppe extérieure, lisse, sociale, du chapeau, on rencontre des couches de texte comme un archéologue découvre des strates d’inscriptions sous la surface apparemment lisse du sol.

Et les choses se compliquent encore lorsqu’on s’aperçoit que le porte-manteau où Bloom prend son chapeau porte une accumulation de vêtements superposés dont la partie supérieure est le chapeau et les couches suivantes le manteau et l’imperméable : “His hand took his hat from the peg over his initialled heavy overcoat and his lost property office secondhand waterproof” (66-67). Or l’imperméable n’échappe pas non plus aux inscriptions. C’est un “lost property office secondhand waterproof”. *Secondhand*, seconde main : lui non plus n’est pas une surface vierge, mais il a d’abord porté une première couche, la première main, marque de son utilisation avant Bloom. En tout cas, entre un manteau sur-marqué par des initiales, un imperméable sous-marqué par l’anonymat de sa provenance du “lost property office” et un chapeau qui porte deux inscriptions dont l’une est en partie effacée et l’autre indique un nom d’emprunt, Henry Flower, le vêtement de Bloom est une bien piètre enveloppe pour son identité.

D’ailleurs, si l’on récapitule l’ensemble des couches superposées, les quatre couches du chapeau, les deux couches du manteau et les deux couches de l’imperméable, c’est-à-dire au moins six couches et trois inscriptions, cet ensemble chapeau-manteau-imperméable ne fait que reconstituer artificiellement Bloom sous la forme d’un espèce de mannequin : une fois qu’on a traversé toutes les couches on n’arrive à rien d’autre que le bois du porte-manteau. Comme toujours dans *Ulysses*, Bloom ne fait que traverser les inscriptions sociales, mais est ailleurs.

Mais l’inscription dans *Ulysses*, c’est aussi, étrangement, l’immense registre qui semble toujours pré-exister au réel, le document dans lequel tout est inscrit depuis toujours. A deux reprises dans *Aeolus*, Stephen évoque dans son monologue intérieur les “*Akasic
records” (7.882 et 928), allusion à l’Akasa, qui est dans la tradition théosophique et occultiste l’immense mémoire universelle dans laquelle non seulement les événements, mais aussi toutes les pensées et tous les mots sont inscrits de toute éternité. Dans Calypso ce lien quasi-obligé entre le réel et le registre est beaucoup plus prosaïque, mais sa présence est suffisamment insistant, à trois reprises dans le texte, pour devoir être mentionnée. Ainsi, Bloom imagine que la jeune fille qui est avant lui chez le charcutier va acheter son rognon en consultant sa liste : “Would she buy it too, calling the items from a slip in her hand ?” (146-147). La liste serait alors un ordre inscrit à l’avance qui briserait la contingence introduite constamment par Bloom dans le texte et inclurait le rognon dans une autre série temporelle concurrente. De même, lors de sa rêverie sur la ferme en Palestine, il imagine les hommes chargeant les caisses d’oranges et de citrons pendant qu’un employé est là “ticking them off in a book” (211-212). Enfin Bloom se souvient avoir noté à la minute près les phrases prononcées par Molly tout au long d’une journée (519-523), rédigeant ainsi des espèces d’annales de la parole de Molly, version domestique des Tables Akasiques.

Il était donc inévitable qu’à un moment ou à un autre Bloom lui-même se retrouve inscrit dans ces grandes tables éternelles, et c’est ce qui arrive lorsque passant devant l’école et par association d’idée avec les leçons de géographie, il se souvient de l’existence de “Slieve Bloom” (139), nom d’une chaîne de montagne au sud-ouest de Dublin (slieve voulant dire en irlandais montagne). Le nom de Bloom apparaît donc inscrit de toute éternité dans la carte de géographie bien avant l’existence de l’individu Bloom. Le texte précède le réel, le nom préexiste à son avatar dans le monde, Bloom existe sur une carte avant d’exister dans Ulysses.

Cette question de l’inscription met finalement en jeu tout le statut de Ulysses en tant que texte. Si tout est inscrit depuis toujours, il n’y a plus de texte premier, et effectivement on a souvent l’impression troublante en lisant Ulysses que tout y est toujours second, qu’il n’y a jamais de première occurrence mais seulement de la seconde main, un écho d’écho, un avatar d’une inscription déjà répertoriée ailleurs. Comment concilier ce constat frustrant avec l’extraordinaire impression de créativité, de mouvement, de vibration qui émane du livre ? C’est Bloom qui nous servira là encore de fil conducteur.

Alors qu’il avance dans la chaleur du soleil, déjà vêtu de son costume noir en vue de l’enterrement de Paddy Dignam, il s’interroge sur l’effet qu’a la couleur noire sur la chaleur. C’est tout à fait le genre de question de physique élémentaire qu’aime à se poser Bloom, qui s’interrogera dans l’épisode suivant sur le principe d’Archimède et la loi de chute des corps. Ici Bloom hésite, comme il le fait souvent, entre plusieurs hypothèses concurrentes et contradictoires : “Black conducts, reflects, (refracts is it ?), the heat” (79-80). On pourrait voir dans ces trois explications différentes trois types de rapport possibles de l’écriture avec le monde. Conducts, c’est la pure absorption. Reflects, c’est au contraire le miroir qui renvoie. Refracts, c’est la déviation du rayon lumineux qui pénètre, mais en modifiant sa trajectoire. Or, chacune de ces trois structures pourrait définir respectivement Molly, Stephen et Bloom. Molly conducts, elle est même le corps conducteur par excellence, absorbant tout indistinctement par son yes et produisant un langage qui charrie tout dans un immense flux indifférencié. Stephen voit au contraire le monde à travers le miroir auto-réflexif de son propre narcissisme, même si c’est “the cracked looking glass of a servant” (1.146), mais il est finalement assez imperméable au monde qu’il se contente de renvoyer. Enfin, Bloom est l’homme de la déviation par
excellence, qu'elle soit optique, linguistique ou sexuelle. Avec lui l'inscription est alors le terreau par lequel la réfraction deviendra in-fraction généralisée.

NOTES

1. Les chiffres renvoient aux numéros de ligne de l'édition Gabier de Ulysses (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1986). Lorsqu'il s'agit d'un autre épisode que Calypso, le chiffre est précédé du numéro de l'épisode.

Sing a song of sixpence
A pocket full of rye ;
Four and twenty blackbirds,
Backed in a pie.
When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing ;
Was not that a dainty dish.
To set before the king ?
The queen was in the parlour,
Eating bread and honey
The maid was in the garden,
Hanging out the clothes,
When down came a blackbird
And pecked off her nose.

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Joyce’s demystification of the ‘magical beguilements’ of The Sirens

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1 According to legend, the Sirens are bewitching females who, by means of their ravishing song, seduce men – or heroes – from their proper course and lure them to destruction. They bring together music (or singing) and sexual temptation: or, given the powerful emotional appeal of music, we might say that they bring together sentiment and sexual temptation. Central to the legend is their ambivalence: they combine compelling beauty with certain destruction. If they are envisaged as mermaids – and that, apparently, is how Joyce envisaged them for the purposes of the Sirens episode in Ulysses – they then emblematise that dualism in a form traditionally significant (and perplexing?) for the male consciousness.

2 In Chapter XII of the Odyssey, the music of the Sirens is treated briefly: the episode is one of a series of tests or ordeals that the hero must pass through unscathed. It is not in the nature of Homer’s narrative to linger over possible ulterior significance. In the Sirens episode in Ulysses, however, ulterior development insistently claims our attention (however much style or technique is “foregrounded”). I want to argue that in Joyce’s Sirens episode one major concern is to demystify music (thereby, perhaps, denying its sentimental appeal), and at the same time demystify women or female sexuality. These reductions may in turn be regarded as twin aspects of the demythologisation of the sirens themselves: for these are, after all, not the creatures of legend, but the barmaids Lydia Douce and Mina Kennedy, and possibly the “frowsy whore”1 whom Bloom encounters towards the end of the episode (legend allows for either two or three sirens). And all of these demystifications may be placed under the general rubric of “irony”.

3 Writing to Harriet Shaw Weaver in August 1919, Joyce, in a phrase that combines the sexual with the musical, speaks of “the seductions of music beyond which Ulysses travels” in the Sirens episode2. The phrase may be taken further to indicate liberation, release from the importunities that the Sirens represent. If we see those importunities primarily in musical terms, then it is Joyce as well as his Ulysses who is to “travel beyond” them. Georges Borach reports a famous comment by Joyce on June 18, 1919: he has just finished
the Sirens chapter. “I wrote this chapter,” he tells Borach, “with the technical resources of music”. But he then adds this:

Since exploring them in this chapter, I haven’t cared for music any more. I, the great friend of music, can no longer listen to it. I see through the tricks and can’t enjoy it any more.  

It is a complaint that Joyce repeats to Harriet Shaw Weaver one month later (“Since I wrote the Sirens I find it impossible to listen to music of any kind ...”: Letters, I, 129): like Thomas Mann’s Adrian Leverkühn in Doctor Faustus, Joyce has apparently seen beyond the technical trickery of music to an essential vacuity. It is clear that, for Mann, Adrian’s predicament is a representative modern one: at this late stage, art is self-consciously or self-reflexively aware of the burden of its own outworn conventions. “Why”, asks Leverkühn, “does almost everything seem to me like its own parody? Why must I think that almost all, no, all the methods and conventions of art today are good for parody only? ” (Doctor Faustus, p. 131-32). Parody parades technique as virtuosity, while affirming the nugatory or empty nature of such virtuosity. As Adrian’s devyll puts it in Chapter Twenty-five, the danger for the artist lies in the possibility that his compositions become “nothing but the solving of technical puzzles”: and that way lies the “aristocratic nihilism” of parody (Doctor Faustus, p. 233, 235). One could argue that such aesthetic virtuosity as is evident in parody is meant to purge art of its dead conventions: but the nihilistic tendency must be present as the interim danger, whether the modern artist in question be Leverkühn or Joyce.

Sirens – “a fugue with all musical notations”, as Joyce described it to Borach (Potts, p. 72) – is clearly parodic of the musical form; and like much of Ulysses, it thrives on that parody. Joyce, however, was capable of expressing misgivings as to the consequences of that artistic avidity that the Faustian scale of his ambition might promote: and not just in the Sirens episode. In a candid confession to Harriet Shaw Weaver, he writes as follows:

The word scorching has a peculiar significance for my superstitious mind not so much because of any quality or merit in the writing itself as for the fact that the progress of the book [Ulysses] is in fact like the progress of some sandblast... each successive episode, dealing with some province of artistic culture (rhetoric or music or dialectic), leaves behind it a burnt up field.

Yet for all the misgivings, there is no sense that Joyce might be ready to abandon his chosen schema. The negation that Joyce here recognises may be the price of power, but such is his devotion to the aesthetic imperative that it is a price he is more than willing to pay. The aesthetic will in such manifestations can hold in manageable form what otherwise might be an unstable nexus of feeling. It is Joyce as well as his Ulysses who successfully “defies and transcends the magical beguilements of music” (a suggestive judgement on Daniel Defoe in Joyce’s 1912 Trieste lecture).

One question that suggests itself at this point is whether in fact music can be demystified in this way: unless, that is, there is a wilful determination to accomplish that. In her Philosophy in a New Key, Suzanne Langer grapples with the problem of significance in music; and while she wishes to retain the notion that music entails logical expression, she also argues that music contains a significance for which there is no linguistic equivalent. Possessing its own “symbolic forms”, music “articulates subtle complexes of feeling that language cannot even name, let alone set forth...” Music, in fact, presents to our language-centred consciousness, in the most challenging form, the radical idea that something “can be known which cannot be named: "for "music articulates forms which
language cannot set forth” (ibid., p. 232-233). Thus the musicologist J.A. Hüller, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, holds that “it is quite impossible to name everything fascinating in music, and bring it under definite headings”; while for Richard Wagner, “orchestral language” serves to express “just what is unspeakable in verbal language...” (cited in Langer, p. 235). In our own century, Aaron Copland confesses that he feels “more at home with the unsystematic approach”, especially in the field of music: for it is in music in particular that we must “keep open what William James calls the ‘irrational doorways... through which... the wildness and the pang of life’ may be glimpsed. The systematic and the irrational are mutually exclusive...”

8 Most recently, George Steiner, in Real Presences, has pleaded with his usual eloquence the case for regarding music as transcendent of “logical structures or verbal expression”. Music “rebukes the arrogance of positivism, of the demand for a quantifiable, for a psychologically evidential or sociologically mapped explanation of things”; it “puts our being as men and women in touch with that which transcends the sayable, which outstrips the analyzable”.

9 If we accept any or all of these statements, then we must wonder whether Joyce’s systematic deployment of language in Sirens in an attempt to recreate musical form is not necessarily a vain undertaking: it is a futile essay in the translation of the untranslatable, foredoomed to failure, issuing inevitably as parody, as the mechanics of language approximate not to music – the meaning of which is ‘unspeakable’ – but to the mechanics of music. But an important purpose has been served: for one the reduction from music to mechanics has been effected and, in Joyce’s case, accepted, then the rejection of music (with its seductions thus analytically exposed) becomes comparatively easier. But this music is a parodic distortion (or ironic reduction) of what we feel music truly is. Suzanne Langer may be permitted the last word:

... this explanation of music as a high abstraction, and musical experience as a purely logical revelation, does not do justice to the unmistakably sensuous value of tone, the vital nature of its effect, the sense of personal import which we meet in a great composition every time it is repeated to us. Its message is not an immutable abstraction, a bare, unambiguous, fixed concept, as a lesson in the higher mathematics should be. It is always new, no matter how well or how long we have known it, or it loses its meaning; it is not transparent, but iridescent, its values crowd each other, its symbols are inexhaustible. (Langer, p. 239).

10 Joyce’s claim, however, is precisely that the musical, having become under his aesthetic insistence transparent, has indeed lost its meaning. We must enquire further into the possible motivation of that aesthetic will (or presumption). In the remark to Georges Borach (part of which I cited earlier), what strikes us most is the way in which the demystification of music is directly linked with the other major demystification – that of women. Joyce refers to the fugal form of the Sirens episode, the presence, too, of an operatic quintet, and then proceeds as follows:

The barmaids have the upper parts of women and the lower of fish. From in front you see bosom and head. But if you stand behind the bar, you see filth, the empty bottles on the floor, the ugly shoes of the women and so on – only disgusting things. (Potts, p. 72).

11 This is not quite King Lear’s

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above.
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend’s
(IV.VI 123-26);

but a blatant dualism is potentially or provisionally present in Joyce’s mermaids, as it is
actively and obsessively present in Lear’s centaurs. Joyce’s ironic reduction looks, we
assume, away from Lear’s tragic abyss to the sanity of the comic; yet, as a necessary
resolution of the dualism, such an ironic reduction must be made, and Joyce is not to
permit himself to be “a dupe of the angelic side of women”. So it seemed to Louis Gillet:
and what makes Gillet’s comment all the more interesting is that it occurs in a context in
which Gillet, considering Joyce’s passion for singing, notes his curious reservations about
the attractiveness of the female voice:

He set little value on feminine voices, neither the soprano, nor the mezzo, nor the
contralto found any favour in his hard-to-please ears; he always detected in them
something imperfect, as if an impure expression of nature gave itself away even in
this most immaterial form. He was not a dupe of the angelic side of women... here
again one can find a classical pessimist, a determined misogynist.
(Potts, p. 195).

Joyce’s resistance to the “maginal beguilements” of music is intimately connected with a
refusal to be the “dupe of the angelic side of women”; there is, in the Sirens episode, a
recurrent interplay between music and (female) sexuality, and both are to be
simultaneously demystified. Such are the full theoretical implications of Joyce’s extended
comment to Georges Borach; though what remains to be seen is the extent to which those
theoretical possibilities are actualised in the writing itself.

The Sirens episode, as its theme and title require, is obsessively concerned with music,
particularly singing; what makes the sexual reference unavoidable – what justifies it, if
such justification is necessary – is the brief appearance of Blazes Boylan in the Ormond
bar just prior to his illicit assignation with Molly. Boylan has a quick drink with Lenehan,
but is impatient to be gone:

- Wait a shake, begged Lenehan, drinking quickly. I wanted to tell you. Tom
  Rochford...
- Come on to blazes, said Blazes Boylan, going. Lenehan gulped to go.
- Got the horn or what? he said. Wait. I’m coming.
(U, p. 219).

At a concert in Zurich in 1919, shortly after he has completed Sirens, Joyce amused his
companion Ottocaro Weiss by “describing the obscene implications of each musical
instrument in turn”
9. In the case of Boylan’s horn, something of a reverse process is
indicated: initially obscene, the word horn can return us to the comparatively more
innocent world of music. But whichever direction this interplay takes, it is recurrent
throughout; and the counter-movement from the innocently musical to the sexual is (with
the assistance of further double entendre) established as early as the short prelude of
tuning up section:

Tiny, her tremulous fernfoils of maidenhair.
Amen! He gnashed in fury.
Fro. To, fro. A baton cool protruding.
(U, p. 211).

The constantly imminent double entendre – as with horn or baton-may make the reader
tread warily through his shifting text: but it also alerts him to the pleasurable perception
of unexpected connexions of the kind we associate with it. Thus Bloom on the
inadequacies of the female voice, as instance by M’Coy’s wife: “They can’t manage men’s
intervals. Gap in their voices too. Fill me. I’m warm, dark, open” (U, p. 232). Or the male
singers themselves become conscious of the possible parallels:

- Sure, you’d burst the tympanum of her ear, man, Mr. Dedalus said through smoke
  aroma, with an organ like yours.
  In bearded abundant laughter Dollard shook upon the keyboard. He would.
- Not to mention another membrane, Father Cowley added...
  (U, p. 222).

17 The main focus, however, is on female sexuality and its possible implication with the
musical – sometimes rather deliberately insisted upon, as in Bloom’s reflection as he
observes Lydia Douce listening to “The Croppy Boy”: “Body of white woman, a flute alive.
Blow gentle. Loud, three holes all women” (U, p. 234).

18 It is, in fact, through this pragmatic and reductive consciousness of Bloom that most of
the evaluations are rendered. Bloom prudently resists the blandishments of music, as the
exigencies of his own personal predicament require: much of the music is an invitation to
nostalgia or melancholy (“All is lost now”, U, p. 224) and Bloom cannot afford to yield to
the depression of spirits that Molly’s betrayed might provoke. His strategy must be (as he
observes himself in a totally different context, with reference to Richie Goulding’s
backache pills) to “Stave it off awhile” (and one assumes there is no need to point to the
musical pun in stave). The staving means allowing the singing to fill in a possible hour of
vacancy at that time of the day, without taking it as seriously as its own insistent appeal
would demand. “Music hath charms” (U, p. 230), charms of a seductive kind which would
lure us away from reality; a point made in the episode not by Bloom but by the narrative
voice commenting on Simon Dedalus’s high note in M’appari:

It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene,
speeding, sustained, to come, don’t spin it out too long long breath he breath long
life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence
symbolistic, high, of the etherial bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation
everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessness..........
  (U, p. 226-27).

19 It is an interestingly ambivalent passage. It may contain the implicit recognition that
language cannot after all capture or re-create the musical effect (cannot speak the
unspeakable); or, as the language progressively empties itself of meaning (“all soaring all
around about the all”), it may be meant (and be taken) as an ironic reflection of the
musical note’s essential meaninglessness. At the very least, the language remains warily
independent of the musical charm it is supposed to be describing; just as Bloom cannily
refuses to be taken in by any claim to transcendent meaning music might appear to make,
and instead reduces it to manageable proportions. It is all simply a matter of
mathematics:

Numbers it is. All music when you come to think. Two multiplied by two divided by
half is twice one. Vibrations: chords those are. One plus two plus six is seven. Do
anything you like with figures juggling. Always find out this equal to that ...
Musemathematics. And you think you’re listening to the ethereal. But suppose you
said it like: Martha, seven times nine minus x is thirty five thousand. Fall quite flat,
it’s on account of the sounds it is.
  (U, p. 228).

20 It is essential to Bloom’s situation that his own prudently analytical thought-processes be
allowed free play: and to Bloom, once he has left the Ormond, music appears as a “kind of
drunkenness”, a narcotic that holds its enthusiasts spellbound, cutting them off from
Bloom has his own exigent reasons for demystifying music and holding onto his own wary consciousness (“Music. Gets on your nerves” (U, p. 236): for him, “Love’s Old Sweet Song” is not an excuse for sentimental self-indulgence but (if he is alert enough to heed it) a reminder of the unsentimental coupling of Blazes and his wife. (In Sirens, “Love’s Old Sweet Song” appears only as “love’s old sweet song” (U, p. 225), but increasingly it becomes the ironic motif of Molly’s adulterous liaison).

In both Bloom’s meditation on Musemathematics, and the narrator’s attempted description of Simon Dedalus’ high note, there is one significantly shared preoccupation: that is, a suspicion of the ethereal, the disembodied (highlighted in the narrator’s “etherial bosom”, which we accept less as oxymoron than as plain contradiction). To counterpoise any such etherialisation, Bloom’s mind is brought to bear on the obvious pun in “Chamber music”:

It is a kind of music I often thought when she. Acoustics that is. Tinkling. Empty vessels make most noise. Because the acoustics, the resonance changes according as the weight of the water is equal to the law of falling water. (U, p. 232).

We shift, inevitably, from Bloom to his creator here, recalling the title of Joyce’s first book of poetry which, as Clive Hart reminds us, “whatever its origin, is plainly urinary in overtone...” The suspicion of the ethereal in music, and the flight from that to the reliably physical, culminates in Bloom’s own irresistible musical utterance at the climax of the episode, the blatant rectal song of the body, the most famous fart in literature: Prrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
See her from here though. Popped corks,
splashes of beerfroth, stacks of empties.
(U, p. 234-35).

27 But curiously the actual text has toned down the “disgusting things” mentioned to Borach: the presentation is less vigorous, more neutral. The introduction of the “frowsy whore with black straw sailor hat askew” towards the end of the episode (the sailor hat presumably a trophy from one of this siren’s victims) is more blatant, but perhaps too blatant; though when Bloom observes that she looks “a fright in the day. Face like dip” (U, p. 238), we are bound to recall a similar comment made by Joyce at the Ritz in Paris in 1922. When his attention was directed to a famous beauty passing by their table, and he was told that she was accessible only to the rich and famous, Joyce tartly informed his company: “She would look very different at five o’clock in the morning without the dress and makeup” (Ellmann, p. 381n.).

28 More interesting, however, in the Sirens episode than this possible deflation of feminine beauty is an ironic reduction of sentiment that glances both at women and music. Thus in Bloom’s mind, the tenderness potentially present in the singing of M’appari finds its proper expression in a vocabulary that is obviously sexual:

  Tenderness it welled: slow, swelling, full it throbbed... Throb, a throb, a pulsing
  proud erect...
  Bloom. Flood of warm jamjam lickitup
  secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire,
  dark to lick flow invading. Tipping her tepping her
  Tapping her topping her ... Tup. To pour o’er sluices
  pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthrob.
  Now! Language of love.
  (U, p. 225-26).

29 “Love’s Old Sweet Song” (sentimental version) is really, always and ever, “love’s old sweet song” (unsentimental – sexual – version): and when Joyce turns his full ironic gaze on the potential self-deception in this contrast, his glee in the unmasking process is unmistakable. This is, again, Lydia giving all of her compassionate attention to the fate of “The Croppy Boy” (in a passage which elaborates the prelude’s briefer reference to a “baton cool protruding”):

  On the smooth jutting beerpull laid Lydia hand, lightly, plumply, leave it to my
  hands. All lost in pity for croppy. Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows
  his eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in pity: passed, reposed
  and, gently touching, then slid smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel
  baton protruding through their sliding ring.
  (U, p. 235).

30 This is the passage that follows on immediately from Bloom’s realistic perception of “popped corks, splashes of beerfroth, stacks of empties”; and – pace Joyce in his comments to Borach – it is in this beerpull passage rather than in Bloom’s perception that the real ironic reduction occurs. No dupe of “the angelic side of women”, Joyce is likewise undeceived by the sentimental disguises the female sexual nature will assume. His most ironic treatment of such sentimental disguise is to occur subsequently in Nausikaa: in the meantime, in Sirens, the expose of that kind of sentimental disguise can be taken as merely one comparatively small aspect of the more sustained ironic resistance to the sentimental appeal of music.

31 Looking back over what I have just written, I am conscious of a certain tendentiousness or single-mindedness in my argument. One possible further question is this: given that there
is a highly problematic aspect to Joyce’s attitudes to both women and sentiment, is it necessarily the case that these must be imported – in a duplicative way – into his text? Or is there not, rather, something in the very nature of the text – something we might indicate by such terms as therapeutic, liberating – that turns potential personal inadequacy into textual capital, artistic gain?

If Joyce’s own attitudes are profoundly dualistic, it need not follow that the text is trapped in that dualism: it may, rather, be a flight from it. Given a culture – the Irish Catholic – that establishes an impossible polarity between Virgin and actual biological woman, the artist is bound to register the related tensions even as he strives to resolve them. Thus, if music / sentimentality is polarised by sexuality, then the artist may deploy his irony not to collapse the higher into the lower, but to bring them into playful – or humorous – conjunction. The “sonnez la cloche” episode in *Sirens* seems to constitute some such point of playful reconciliation. At Lenehan’s urging (though primarily for Boylan’s benefit), Lydia Douce strikes her own note:

Bending, she nipped a peak of skirt above her knee. Delayed. Taunted them still, bending, suspending with wilful eyes.
- *Sonnez!*
Smack. She set free sudden in rebound her nipped elastic garter smackwarm against her smackable a woman’s warmhosed thigh.

(U, p. 219).

This is a music that far from pointing to the ethereal (whatever that might be) derives its resonance from its intimate involvement with the warmly female physical. The movement is towards inclusiveness rather than opposition: and if we return to re-read the sequence about Lydia’s hand on the beerpull, we may now have to ask whether a similar inclusiveness is not potentially present. The phallic caress, that is, need not cancel the pity (U, p. 235); the irony need not be reductive/destructive, but promote a humorous (and tolerant) extension of awareness. In the letter he wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver in July, 1919, Joyce remarked: “The elements needed will only fuse after a prolonged existence together” (*Letters*, I, 128). Can we apply this in the most general terms to *Sirens*? As we make our retrospective response to the episode, are we not primarily aware of a rich panorama of character and episode, enlivened by dialogue, humour, and song?

If such is the case, then the irony in the piece may be deemed more Schlegelian than Flaubertian. In Friedrich Schlegel’s type of irony, the ambition is for a playful incorporation of the totality of our experience, the good-humoured acknowledgement of our inescapable paradoxes: such irony enjoys its deflationary privileges, but is not activated (as it sometimes seems Flaubertian irony may be) by a sour disillusionment (the hidden motive, perhaps, behind the inflation of the claims of Art and the assertion of the aesthetic will at the expense of, rather than in response to, the muddle of existence.)

Any such possible sourness of tone may be banished by humour: and insofar as Joyce’s ironic strategies are subservient to such humour, imminent negation is held in check. Whatever masks – in the Nietzschean sense – the young and not-so-young Joyce was moved to adopt, the most successful and humane mask of the practising writer is that of humour.

Yet we must ourselves avoid sentimental conclusions, if the humour is truly a mask, then it is still a mask called forth by severe personal exigencies; if negation and disillusionment are held in check, they are also held in reserve. The dilemmas posed by ironic consciousness are not – and were not always for Joyce – to be so readily resolved in
the facility of laughter. As the text, after its temporary dissolution in laughter, reconstitutes itself, the tensions may return to plague the interpreter.

NOTES

5. James Joyce, Daniel Defoe, ed. from Italian manuscripts and transl. by Joseph Prescott (Buffalo, 1964), p. 22: “The realism... of this writer defies and transcends the magical beguilements (le magiche frodi) of music.”
11. The vocabulary here may owe something to some of the sexually-charged utterances in Shakespeare’s Othello and The Winter’s Tale. For Tup, see Othello, I, i, 88-89 (“an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe”); while sluices recalls The Winter’s Tale, I, ii, 194 (“she has been sluic’d in’s absence”).
12. The precise implications of Friedrich Schlegel’s concept of irony have been much debated: some useful elucidation will be found in Hans Eichner, Friedrich Schlegel (New York, 1970), Anne K. Mellor, English Romantic Irony (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), and Raymond Immerwahr’s article in The Germanic Review, XXVI (1951). Such irony can be interpreted, in the first instance, as a means of expressing the paradoxical nature of the world and of human experience. Faced with the world’s bewildering plenitude and the recurrent paradoxes in experience, we require a flexibility of response to match and meet such multiplicity. That flexibility is provided by irony which, for Schlegel, co-exists with a fluid comic sense, allowing the author a playful freedom. Thus Schlegel envisages a humane and playful author-God behind the works of Cervantes, Shakespeare, or Goethe: the author of Wilhelm Meister, for example, is one who seems “to smile down from the heights of his spirit upon his masterwork” (cited by René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 5 vols., II (London, 1955), 15).

It is this awareness of art as play, and of the artist’s capricious freedom, which marks one essential distinction between Schlegel’s ironic author and Flaubert’s: Schlegel’s ironist is free to indulge his sense of humour in a manner quite alien to Flaubert’s pitiless and impassive creator (“Homer, Rabelais, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Goethe”, Flaubert informs Louise Colet, “seem to
me pitiless” (impitoyables: Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance: Nouvelle Edition Augmentée, 9 vols. (1926-33), III (Paris, 1927), 322: August 26, 1853). It is not surprising that Henry James, writing in 1893, felt obliged to ponder the lack of “ultimate good-humour” in Flaubert: how, he wondered, “can art be so genuine and yet so unconsolé, so unhumorous, so unsociable?” Flaubert, in his “extraordinary singleness of aim”, presents us with “the artist not only disinterested but absolutely dishumanized” (James, Selected Literary Criticism, ed. M. Shapira (1963; repr. London, 1964), p. 148, 141, 140). Flaubert’s absolutist sense of Art, and his ascetic dedication to that ideal, may appear all the more extravagant and misplaced if we think by contrast of Schlegel’s ironist who can commit himself irrevocably to nothing, least of all perhaps to the fictional creations of one’s own mind (for irony becomes, for the author, finally self-reflexive, turned against himself and his own imperfect medium).

The importance of Flaubert as an influence on Joyce has, one should add, been thoroughly documented: see, for example, Richard K. Cross, Flaubert and Joyce: the Rite of Fiction (Princeton, 1971), as well as relevant sections of Frank Budgen’s James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses.
La peinture dans *Nausicaa*

François Laroque

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1 Des définitions données par Stephen Dedalus, dans *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* et dans *Proteus*, le troisième chapitre de *Ulysses*, il ressort que la peinture est l’art du simultané (*nebeneinander*), associé à l’espace, par opposition à la musique, art du successif (*nacheinander*), lié au temps. Si la musique constitue une référence constante dans *Ulysses*, dont elle accompagne et amplifie le texte par le biais d’une myriade d’allusions qui dispersent autant qu’elles orchestrent les thèmes et les motifs récurrents du livre (en ce sens le *Don Juan* de Mozart et *Martha* de Flotow jouent un rôle comparable à celui de l’*Odyssee* et de *Hamlet*), il ne semble pas que la peinture puisse prétendre à ce lien privilégié dans l’œuvre de Joyce, à l’exception précisément du treizième épisode, celui qu’il est convenu d’appeler *Nausicaa*. Comme l’écrit Frank Budgen,

Nausikaa is the one pictorial episode in *Ulysses*, it is preeminently the episode of sensibility in both the emotional and physical sense [...]. If there is a parallel in the art of painting for Joyce’s swift, instantaneous shots of life it is in the art of Matisse.

2 La comparaison avec Matisse n’est peut-être pas celle qui vient spontanément à l’esprit de tous, à cause de la technique des à-plats très stylisés et des arabesques décoratives du peintre, à moins que Budgen n’ait songé aux odalisques sensuelles de la période des années 1920, et donc contemporaines de *Ulysses*, dont le sujet peut effectivement évoquer l’abandon impudique de la jeune Gerty aux regards de ce monsieur plus âgé qu’est Bloom. Si l’on raisonne par contre, en termes d’analogies de style et de méthode plus qu’en fonction d’une influence possible de la peinture sur le roman, j’aurais, quant à moi, plutôt pensé à un peintre comme Balthus ou André Delvaux ; car, sur leurs toiles se joue le spectacle mystérieux et quasi-rituel de l’exhibition du corps féminin et où, contrairement à Matisse, le spectateur-voyeur (savant à lunettes et redingote chez Delvaux, personnage étrange et pervers chez Balthus) est intégré dans un angle du tableau comme l’est Bloom dans *Nausicaa*. Si l’élément onirique et merveilleux apparaît plus franchement dans l’œuvre de Delvaux que chez Balthus, tous deux ont en commun un certain humour que l’on retrouve au cœur du chapitre de *Ulysses*.

3 Car *Nausicaa*, ainsi que je l’ai montré ailleurs, n’est pas qu’une scène de voyeurisme scabreux qui permet à Bloom de se soulager à bon compte de ses frustrations et tensions
sexuelles ce qu'il exprime avec un certain cynisme ("Thankful for small mercies. Cheap too [...] For this relief much thanks."). Ce chapitre est aussi et surtout traversé par un commentaire ironique sur les relations entre le peintre et son modèle, sur la complicité perverse qui les lie et sur le jeu d'érotisme scopique auquel ils se livrent et qui nourrit l'art. La toile est autant le lieu du fantasme que celui de la représentation d'une réalité rendue avec une perspective, des formes et des couleurs et, en ce sens, tout artiste est un Pygmalion en puissance. A cet égard, un tableau comme La tentative de l'impossible de René Magritte (1928), est exemplaire : on y voit l'artiste debout et de profil en train d'achever de peindre le bras d'une femme nue. Mais cette femme n'est pas dans le cadre d'une toile. Elle semble en trois dimensions, comme lui, et elle lui fait face, de sorte que l'artiste donne l'impression de créer la vie au bout de son pinceau. Une telle œuvre est complémentaire de celles de Balthus et de Delvaux qui faisaient rentrer le peintre ou son double à l'intérieur de l'œuvre. Avec Magritte, c'est le modèle peint qui sort du cadre et qui pénètre dans l'espace du peintre.

Dans Nausicaa, Joyce utilise le langage et la technique picturales, ainsi qu'une large palette de couleurs qui lui sert, comme pour Claude Monet, à peindre la même scène sous des éclairages successifs au gré de l'avance de l'heure. Le paradoxe qui accompagne l'utilisation de cette technique véritablement impressionniste est qu'elle intervient pour le dernier épisode diurne du livre, au moment où la lumière décline et où l'on va passer dans le monde de la nuit. Dans le même temps, si, grâce au monologue intérieur, la confrontation entre Bloom et Gerty occupe le devant de la scène, elle s'insère néanmoins dans un ensemble plus vaste dont elle n'est qu'un cas particulier et somme toute relativement marginal. Il y a d'abord le groupe des jeunes gens dont Gerty s'isole progressivement pour se consacrer tout entière au mystérieux monsieur habillé en noir qui la regarde ; puis la messe qui est servie à l'occasion de la retraite des hommes ayant fait vœu d'abstinence (à l'égard de la boisson) et qui se déroule à l'intérieur de l'église toute proche, cérémonie dont l'exhibition de Gerty constitue à la fois l'envers et le contrepoint profane (elle est la rose vierge mais charnelle livrant en offrande ses dessous bleus et transparents pour la consolation du pécheur solitaire) ; vient enfin le feu d'artifice de la Vente de Charité ("Mirus Bazaar") que la foule est venue admirer. Comme pour la messe, le feu d'artifice métaphorise la relation de Gerty et de Bloom, dont l'éjaculation constitue un avatar privé et miniaturisé ("There she is with them down there for the fireworks... My fireworks."). En ce sens, le chapitre présente ce foisonnement de vie et la diversité de perspectives que l'on observe dans les tableaux de Bruegel, dans lesquels une scène centrale se redouble ou se prolonge en des plans nombreux où les détails sont aussi soignés que multiples et où effets grotesques et obscénités font apparemment bon voisinage avec le spectacle du sacré.

Ces variations chromatiques autant que l'intégration de perspectives différentes permettent à Joyce de dépasser la conception statique de l'art pictural qu'il avait auparavant lié à une émotion extatique où l'artiste tombait en arrêt devant la révélation de la beauté (voir la scène de la jeune fille marchant sur la plage à la fin du chapitre 4 de Portrait of the Artist). Il s'arrache à la vision symboliste et paterienne de la peinture, faisant de l'art une épiphanie transcendante, en faveur d'une conception radicalement moderne qui s'efforce d'intégrer le mouvement, le multiple et le successif au sein du champ de vision traditionnel. Ainsi, Bloom joue-t-il le double rôle du spectateur privilégié (l'artiste jeune qui aperçoit la jeune fille retroussant ses jupes pour marcher dans l'eau à la lisière du sable) et du poète qui, dans le chapitre suivant, compose la villanelle dans
une vision érotique qui nous est indirectement présentée comme une pollution nocturne ("wet dream"). Joyce, on le voit, inverse ici l’ordre des phénomènes : l’émission solitaire sert de prélude à une méditation désenchantée et post-orgasmique. C’est qu’il est cette fois moins en quête d’un message ou d’une vision à transmettre que d’une formulation de rapports de type nouveau entre image et langage, entre parole et vision, entre jouissance et création.

6 En vertu de la correspondance avec l’art de la peinture, clairement indiquée dans le schéma reproduit par Stuart Gilbert dans l’introduction de son étude de Ulysses, Joyce a saturé le chapitre de notations de couleurs et d’adjectifs chromatiques. Ceux-ci peuvent tout aussi bien désigner le teint, la couleur des vêtements, la qualité de la lumière, qu’être empruntés à des expressions stéréotypées ou proverbiales ("till they went blue in the face", 289.220, ou “had won golden opinions”, 289.225), de sorte que la surface du texte présente bien à première lecture un incontestable effet de bigarrure et de chatoiement.

7 Les couleurs utilisées pour désigner Gerty et le groupe de ses camarades et des enfants qui jouent sous leur surveillance sont à dominante vive et même crue tandis que celles qui apparaissent dans le monologue de Bloom dans la deuxième partie sont plutôt éteintes et pâles. Il s’agit surtout de blanc, de bleu, de vert, de rose, de carmin, de marron, de mauve alors que les teintes grisâtres, lactescentes ou opalines domineront dans la deuxième moitié du chapitre. Ceci reflète les modifications de la lumière qui décline quand on passe d’une partie à l’autre du tableau autant qu’un jeu d’oppositions symboliques entre jeunesse et maturité, féminité et point de vue masculin, naïveté un peu mièvre et désenchantement mêlé de lassitude.

8 On retrouve, au début, les éléments et les tons symboliques traditionnellement attachés à la description du corps féminin : blancheur du teint, rougeur des lèvres, couleur châtain foncé de la chevelure. Ils forment une série de médallons ou de miniatures qui sont l’équivalent moderne (ou disons “Belle époque”) des mignardises ronsardiennes : “cherryripe red lip”, “rosebud mouth”, “nutbrown tresses” et une image plus plastique que colorée, “genuine Cupid’s bow” (286.87-8, 295.510). Leur transposition quasi-littérale dans le domaine quotidien et populaire des magazines de mode leur donne une allure immédiatement parodique qui procède de ce que Paul Zumthor appelle “la reproduction d’un texte en contexte situationnel contradictoire”6. Mais les codes de couleurs s’appliquent surtout aux vêtements et aux dessous de Gerty qui sont détaillés avec un soin obsessionnel et quasi-fétichiste pour mieux refléter les préoccupations de Bloom dont le nom renvoie aux culottes bouffantes des dames, les bloomers évoqués plus loin (311.1232-5). Ce que Bloom désigne ensuite par des mots français lingerie et deshabillé est soigneusement répertorié dans ses différentes nuances de couleur et d’étoffe (silk, nainsook). Ainsi se met progressivement en place une rhétorique du dehors et du dedans, du montré et du secret, du vu et du tu. La soie et le coton léger caressent la peau (300.724) tandis que la fourrure du renard bleu évoque la toison animale. Le vêtement joue le rôle d’une seconde peau qui permet le jeu subtil de la suggestion et du dévoilement (”a woman loses a charm with every pin she takes out. Pinned together”, 302.802-3).

9 Car ce qui est mis à nu ce n’est pas tant le corps que l’âme ou l’émotion de Gerty qui, conformément à sa qualité de vierge, est d’abord située dans le contexte de l’emblématique mariale et associée au bleu et au blanc, avant que son teint ne vire progressivement au rose, au carmin puis à l’écarlate : “a delicate pink [...] flaming into her cheeks”, “crimsoning up to the roots of her hair”, “burning scarlet” (292.360, 294.457 et 295.518). Or l’adjectif scarlet, par l’entremise du référent biblique, nous renvoie à la
grande prostituée, la "scarlet whore of Babylon". L’opposition du dehors et du dedans, ou plutôt du dehors et du dessous, permet donc une épiphanie graduée de Gerty, dont la double nature d’ange et de tentatrice est ainsi mise à jour par le truchement du regard de Bloom. Naïve et impudente à la fois, son attitude reflète l’influence de la nouvelle lune tout en s’autorisant du fait que l’année 1904 est bissextile (leap-year) ce qui, en vertu de traditions et les superstitions populaires très anciennes, permettait aux femmes de prendre l’initiative en amour. Elle est donc tour à tour Calypso et Circé et son image oscille entre les deux pôles de la nymphe et de la magicienne.

10 L’ensemble de la scène forme une vaste peinture animée qui montre la personne regardée sous différents jours et dans tous ses états. Bloom mentionne d’ailleurs l’appareil (le mutoscope, 301.794 ou stroboscope), grâce auquel des photos placées sur un rouleau actionné par une manivelle pouvaient donner l’illusion du mouvement. Il se trouve que l’utilisation principale de cette invention qui remonte aux années 1890, a été jusqu’à une date récente, de fournir de petits montages coquins pour messieurs dans les fêtes foraines et les salles dotées de divers appareils de jeu. C’est pourquoi Bloom l’associe à l’expression de “Peeping Tom”, le voyeur proverbial de Coventry dans la légende de Lady Godiva.

11 Pour ce qui est du modèle, c’est-à-dire Gerty elle-même, elle apparaît avant tout comme simple surface et comme trompe-l’œil. Sa peau est lisse et semble tout entière se résumer aux cosmétiques, aux crèmes, laits et onguents divers qu’elle utilise pour suivre les recettes et conseils de beauté fournis par un hebdomadaire féminin comme The Lady’s Pictorial (287.157). Ce titre évoque simultanément la technique picturale du chapitre et l’art de se farder, de sorte que le mouvement du chapitre de Nausicaa me paraît s’inscrire dans un passage du maquillage au maculage. Ces deux illustrations plutôt littérales et physiques de la peinture sont à la fois antithétiques et complémentaires et elles correspondent à une double dé-métaphorisation, féminine et masculine, d’un art qui englobe et décrit la provocation et la réalisation de la jouissance.

12 Pour ce qui est de Gerty MacDowell, ces instants semblent en tout cas constituer une forme d’éclosion, si l’on en croit tout au moins la symbolique des accessoires qu’elle a choisis pour aller avec le chapeau qu’elle porte :

She wore a coquettish little love of a hat [...] with an underbrim of eggblue chenille and at the side a butterfly bow of silk to tone (287.157-8).

13 Le modèle, ou l’objet du désir, c’est une nymphe qui sort de sa chrysalide. Bloom, lui, subit plutôt l’évolution inverse, dans la mesure où il se trouve associé à des images d’invertébrés (glowworm, limpet, mussels, 310.1171, 311.1211, 311.1233). Dans son cas, le bestiaire traduit un processus d’amollissement, de torpeur et de régression dans l’informe, qui va naturellement de pair avec la prédominance des tons gris et le déclin de la lumière qui accompagne ses réflexions solitaires “entre chien et loup”.

14 Les allusions insistantes et répétitives qui sont faites à la parure ainsi qu’aux soins que Gerty accorde à sa personne donnent à la première partie du chapitre l’allure générale d’une Vanité, genre pictural à la mode au XVIIe siècle, mais sous la forme sécularisée et frivole d’une dame à sa toilette se contemplant dans un miroir. Certes, il convient de transposer car nous sommes ici en extérieur et non dans l’intimité d’un boudoir, et il n’y a rien non plus de très opulent ni de vraiment élégant chez Gerty et le seul miroir qui lui renvoie son reflet à distance c’est l’œil dilaté de Bloom. Mais, à défaut de fleur d’oranger ou de bijoux, il faut noter la présence insidieuse et par trois fois répétée des algues sur les rochers qui l’entourent ("weedgrown rocks", 284.5, "seawedy rocks", 292.348 et "slippy seaweed", 301.769). Sous sa forme savante et latine, le fucus servait de base à la
confection du fard, comme l’indique l’O.E.D. qui cite sur ce point la traduction de Pline l’Ancien (Pliny) par Holland (1634) : “fucus : paintings to beautify the face in outward appearance”. Or, à la Renaissance, le fard ou art de se peindre le visage était communément lié à la prostitution, à cause, semble-t-il, du possible glissement phonétique de fucus à fucket de l’homophonie qui pouvait s’établir entre le verbe français “to peindre” et l’anglais “to pander”12. D’autre part, les belles poudrées et maquillées étaient alors assimilées par les polémistes puritains à “the scarlet whore of Babylon” et ces attaques répétées contre les artifices de la mode et les cosmétiques sont reprises indirectement dans le texte de Hamlet. Tout d’abord dans la scène I de l’acte III, où Hamlet s’emporte contre Ophélie :

Get thee to a nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them.... I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another.
(III, I, 138-46).

15 Un thème analogue, qui touche cette fois à la Vanité macabre, se retrouve dans la scène du cimetière où Hamlet contemple le crâne de Yorick :

Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady’s chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come.
(V, i, 182-8).

16 L’ironie est qu’Hamlet à ce point ignore encore la mort d’Ophélie et que la delectation morosa à laquelle il se livre ici, en accord avec la prédilection funèbre de la sensibilité baroque, va servir d’Épitaphe amère à celle qu’il voulait envoyer au couvent pour qu’elle se débarrasse de son maquillage. Pour ce qui est de Gerty, on décèle une forme d’ironie analogue, mais avec des répercussions moins sombres que dans le cas d’Ophélie, dans le fait qu’elle souffre de malformation et qu’elle boîte, défaut que Bloom ne découvrira qu’à la fin du tableau.

17 Mais l’allusion au varech des rochers n’est pas seulement liée à la substance servant de base au maquillage. Elle a également pour fonction de signaler l’invasion graduelle du gluant, du visqueux (clammy, dewy, wet) au sein du monologue détumescent de Bloom. Le varech renvoie à la fois à la semence répandue de Bloom et à la pâte diluée de la gouache sur la palette du peintre ; d’ailleurs, le terme turpentine, solvant utilisé pour la peinture murale, est évoqué par Bloom (306.1002)13. Il s’établit dans le texte une analogie sous-jacente entre la toile blanche qui se couvre peu à peu de taches pigmentées et le corps vierge de la jeune fille pollué à distance par l’émission séminale de Bloom. Mais, aux yeux de ce dernier, le maquillage appelle le maculage et la peinture faciale conduit au barbouillage pyrotechnique du voyeur. L’innocence n’est qu’une feinte, un leurre typiquement féminin et à la fonction essentiellement provocatrice : “Excites them also when the’re. I’am all clean come and dirty me. And they like dressing one another for the sacrifice” (302.797-8).

18 Dans A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, l’algue couleur émeraude qui s’était collée sur la cuisse de la jeune fille était déjà présentée comme la marque de l’impuir :

Her long slender bare legs were delicate [...] and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh14.
L’algue paraît en effet liée à la sexualité féminine, à la chevelure des sirènes ou, de façon plus intime et trouble, à de vagues fleurs spongíèuses et ovariennes. N’oublions pas non plus le double sens du mot weed en anglais qui signifie à la fois atours, vêtements et mauvaises herbes. Le mot revient d’ailleurs souvent dans Hamlet, dans l’image du fameux “unweeded garden” (I, ii, 135) qui sert d’emblème au prince pour dénoncer la gangrène qui gagne le royaume, puis dans la description par le fantôme du fleuve Léthé qui coule aux enfers “the fat weed / That roots itself in ease of Lethe wharf” (I, v, 32-3). Dans ce contexte, le mot prend une coloration vaguement maléfique, peut-être liée à l’association de forme et de mouvement entre le goémon et les ondulations de serpents. Ces jeux de correspondances imaginaires et linguistiques nous ramènent du côté de Bloom, qui, au terme de son éjaculation, apparaît indirectement comme changé en quelque reptile flasque et froid :

Mr. Bloom with careful hand recomposed his wet shirt. O Lord, that little limping devil. Begins to feel cold and clammy.

Je souligne ici le verbe recomposed car il indique bien qu’après la séance de peinture physique et sexuelle à laquelle il vient de s’adonner avec Gerty (la menstruation féminine étant présentée comme un équivalent de l’éjaculation masculine), et pour laquelle les fusées colorées du feu d’artifice ont constitué une brève et splendide épiphanie, il s’agit pour lui de recréer calmement la scène dans l’ordre de l’esprit et de l’imagination. Dans la mesure où le point d’orgue de cette composition picturale en mouvement coïncide avec l’instant même de sa décomposition, elle ne peut espérer trouver son être que dans le travail à la fois circulaire de l’anamnèse et dans la mobilisation des analogies sous la forme ludique de la digression ou de l’association d’idées, pour tenter d’en retrouver ou d’en recomposer le sens.

Dans la deuxième partie, le monologue de Bloom semble en effet obéir au déroulement d’un désir de savoir de caractère empirique plus que véritablement encyclopédique, ou plutôt à un questionnement perpétuel, à une curiosité inlassable sur la question du féminin et des femmes qu’il désigne sous la forme générale et quasi-générique du pronom pluriel they. L’œil et le nez guident sa pensée. Il flaire et traque l’odor di femina de façon animale et instinctive. En ce sens on pourrait dire que, tel Actéon changé en cerf pour avoir vu Diane au bain, il perd sa forme humaine et se voit puni de cette forme de régression dans la chaîne des êtres à titre d’expiation de son péché de voyeurisme, si une telle interprétation moralisatrice n’était pas contraire à la vision joycienne et bloomienne du monde. Ce monologue subtil, riche en associations et en suggestions imaginaires, où les détails foisonnent, ne saurait en effet se réduire à une suite de bégaiements ou de répétitions hétébées, même si, vers la fin, la torpeur amène Bloom à abuser de la parataxe.

Car “l’homme moyen sensuel” ne s’apitoie ni sur Gerty ni sur lui-même. Bloom se livre au contraire à des considérations assez étonnantes, qui semblent tout droit sorties des répertoires étranges des Pseudodoxia Epidemica (ce traité sur les superstitions populaires, qui porte le sous-titre de The Vulgar Errors, fut publié par Sir Thomas Browne en 1646), en particulier quand il établit ses jeux de correspondances entre les parfums et les couleurs :

Wait. Hm. Hm. Yes. That’s her perfume [...] Tell you what that is. It’s like a fine fine veil or web they have all over the skin, fine like what do you call it gossamer, and they’re always spinning it out of them, fine as anything, like rainbow colours without knowing it. Clings to everything she takes off. Vamp of her stockings. Warm shoe. Stays : Drawers : little kick, taking them off. Byby till next time.
La curiosité et le sens de l’observation de Bloom n’ont ici d’égal que son imagination. Quant à la sensualité olfactive et à l’érotisme quasi-fétichiste qu’il manifeste à la fin de ce passage, ils ne sont pas sans évoquer le Baudelaire de la Chevelure ou du Parfum. L’œil et le nez s’unissent dans la correspondance établie entre une gamme d’odeurs et les couleurs de l’arc-en-ciel. Lorsque l’on a affaire au degré zéro de la couleur, comme dans les “transparent stockings, stretched to breaking point” de Gerty (304-5. 929-30), la peau est encore enveloppée de cette gaze vaporeuse et invisible qu’est le parfum. Molly, par exemple est associée à l’opoponax et à un parfum à base de fleur d’oranger appelé “peau d’Espagne” (sans doute parce qu’il emblématise son enfance à Gibraltar). Un peu plus loin, on peut considérer que Bloom s’essaie à la nature morte symbolique et qu’il compose un blason gourmand du corps féminin quand il parle de “strawberries and cream” (307.1025), lequel nous ramène à la poésie baroque de libertins comme Saint-Amant ou Théophile de Viau. Le rouge et le blanc, couleurs quasi-héraldiques des blasons anatomiques de la Renaissance, sont ici des couleurs à consommer. Comme les citrons et les melons, fruits exotiques de la plantation utopique d’Agendath Netaïm dont il rêve dans Calypso (49.194), le corps féminin est une gourmandise qui se consomme dans des synécdoques successives qui sont autant de fétiches et de fantasmes.

Quant à Bloom lui-même, il se rattache à la sexualité féminine qui est régie par la lune, par le biais de la couleur lunaire et argentée qu’il décrit en liaison avec l’apparition sur scène de la belle actrice Maud Branscombe et qui renvoie sans doute aussi à la couleur du sperme qu’il vient de répandre et on remarque d’ailleurs que dans Circe il sera présenté par le Dr Punch Costello comme “a finished example of the new womanly man” (403.1798-9). L’expression “once in a blue moon. Tableau” (302.815), utilisée un peu plus haut, produit un effet à la fois naïf et irréalissant qui introduit un écho à partir de son nom (Blo-oom), effet qui peut rappeler le Bloowho et ses variations dans The Sirens (212.86). D’une façon générale, sa pensée intérieure navigue librement d’une idée à l’autre, elle ondoie sans logique évidente, va d’avant en arrière, et cet arbitraire apparent, qui n’est que l’expression de sa fantaisie, me semble évoquer à la fois la ligne serpentine et le subjectivisme de certains peintres maniéristes.

Mais les références que Bloom fait à la peinture dans ces pages ne sont pas toutes indirectes et il est significatif qu’elles restent constamment liées à la représentation du corps féminin. Il fait allusion à un certain Wilkins “… in the high school drawing a picture of Venus with all his belongings on show” (304.911) et il rêve de faire faire un tableau en pied de Molly (“wish I had a full length oilpainting of her”, 308.1091-2). Il s’intéresse également à l’art pictural sous l’angle pratique, comme un art lié à l’utilisation et à la répartition des couleurs. Il pense donc à cette forme de peinture cosmique qu’est l’arc-enciel, dont il a parfaitement mémorisé les sept teintes grâce au sigle enseigné par M. Vance : “Roygbiv Vance taught us : red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet”), à la suite de quoi il ajoute, de façon significative, “A star I see. Venus ?” (308.1075-6). Microcosme et macrocosme communiquent, comme dans la cosmologie de la Renaissance, et l’astronomie n’est chez lui que le prolongement de la peinture de l’anatomie de Vénus (le feu d’artifice n’avait-il pas d’ailleurs métaphoriquement projeté son désir jusque dans la voûte du ciel ?). Suivant toujours la courbe imprévisible de sa dérive associative, Bloom s’intéresse ensuite à la couleur des chats, se souvenant au passage du matou tricolore aperçu au City Arms ainsi qu’à la cinquantaine de couleurs censées constituer la pigmentation de la peau humaine (309.1136-7).
Mais, en passionné des questions scientifiques, il n’est pas indifférent non plus à la théorie de la couleur et il énonce le principe cher aux peintres impressionnistes et à Monet en particulier, selon lequel c’est la lumière qui détermine la valeur et la fonction des couleurs : “Colours depend on the lights you see” (309.1132). Cependant, conforme en cela à ses manières de dilettante, il n’essaie pas d’approfondir et il s’intéresse presque immédiatement après à la lumière couleur améthyste du phare de Howth, laquelle lui remet en mémoire l’anecdote apocryphe des miroirs qu’aurait utilisés Archimède pour mettre le feu à la flotte romaine et défendre ainsi à distance le port de Syracuse. A ce point de l’analyse, il est intéressant de mettre en parallèle ce passage avec le début de Proteus ou Stephen se livre à une forme d’expérimentation de la théorie aristotélo-berkeleyenne de la perception, dans un chapitre qui forme le pendant exact de Nausicaa dans l’agencement général du livre :

Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack [...] Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust : coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds : in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured.. (31.2-5)

Les couleurs sont des signes et les corps apparaissent à l’œil avant leurs qualités secondes. Stephen s’applique méthodiquement à vérifier les théories du philosophe grec. Il fera de même un peu plus loin, à partir de The Theory of Vision de l’évêque Berkeley :

Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta of Cassiopeia, worlds [...] Who watches me here? Who ever anywhere would read these written words? Signs on a white field (...) the good bishop of Cloyne took the veil of the temple out of his shovel hat; veil of space with coloured emblems hatched on its field. Hold hard. Coloured on a flat : yes, that’s right. Flat, I see, then think distance, near, far, flat I see, east, back. Ah, see now! Falls back suddenly, frozen in stereoscope (40.409-20).

Percevoir c’est penser et la couleur n’est qu’un emblème semé sur le voile infini de l’espace. On est ici aux antipodes du sensualisme bloomien pour qui tout procède de la perception, pour qui percevoir c’est jouir et, ensuite seulement, connaître, par le biais d’un long et sinueux processus rétrospectif. On observe donc, à propos de ce thème de la couleur qui est directement lié à celui de la peinture, quelques convergences de surface entre la pensée de Stephen et de Bloom au cours de la journée (la couleur, les astres, la lumière et l’ombre) mais c’est aussi pour mieux constater toute la différence de méthode et de visée qui les sépare. Stephen est raisonneur, intellectuel, analytique, Bloom jouisseur et blasonneur, curieux et intuitif.

Quant aux thèmes, conventions et théories relatifs à l’art pictural, ils sont aussi les véhicules indirects d’une réflexion sur l’écriture et sur la sexualité. C’est un aspect du problème qui apparaît surtout à la fin du chapitre, lorsque Bloom écrit son message fragmentaire sur le sable. Le point de départ est fourni par la métaphore traditionnelle qui relie l’instrument de l’écriture (en l’occurrence le bâton que Bloom utilise pour graver son message) à l’organe sexuel masculin et qui est renforcée en anglais par la proximité phonétique entre les mots pen et penis. Il faut donc faire le rapprochement entre la façon très imagée dont Bloom figure dans son monologue les deux phases de la tumescence et de la détumescence “Up like a rocket, down like a stick”, 304.895) et sa découverte d’un bout de bois sur le sable :

What’s this? Bit of stock.  
O ! Exhausted that female has me [...] Write a message for her [...]  
I.  
[...] Useless. Washed away [...] All these rocks with Unes and scars and letters [...]
AM.A [...]
No room. Let it go.

Mr. Bloom effaced the letters with his slow boot. Hopeless thing sand [...] He flung his wooden pen away. The stick fell in silted sand, stuck. (312.1252-1270).

30 Ce n’est pas un message que Bloom grave sur le sable mais plutôt une confession assez pathétique qui se trouve complétée à la fin du chapitre par l’épiphanie sonore de la pendule à coucou qui donne l’heure en répétant neuf fois le mot cuckoo, “...word of fear / Unpleasing to a married ear!”, comme il est dit dans la chanson qui conclut une des premières comédies de Shakespeare, Love’s Labour’s Lost, dont le titre pourrait d’ailleurs servir de légende ironique à ce chapitre de Ulysses. Ce texte minimal, “I AM.A”, qui semble se résumer à un rondeau lettrique ou à quelque sigle mystérieux, est aussi l’analogie bloomien du poème que Stephen compose au même endroit dans Proteus (40.39-400). D’autre part, l’enlisement de son instrument d’écriture dans la vase traduit la double impuissance de Bloom en tant que mari (voyeurisme et masturbation sont une “petite charité” dont il se sert pour conjurer et pour compenser la frustration et l’humiliation de son couiage) et de son impuissance en tant qu’écrivain : en effet, le “prize titbit” qu’il rêve d’écrire et qu’il intitule “The Mystery Man on the Beach” (307.1060) ne verra sans doute jamais le jour et il tente de combler ce manque en se promettant de mettre bientôt au point le motif publicitaire qu’il a imaginé pour Alexander Keyes, le marchand de vin. Contrairement aux graffitis gravés dans le rocher (les grappes de fucus ont disparu lors même que l’empreinte de l’écriture prend le relais de l’émission pigmentée), son inscription n’est qu’un éphémère et mystérieux exergue. Ce stylo-pinceau fiché dans le sable et qui voue l’inscription à l’effacement est l’image de son désenchantement, un emblème de la mélancolie qui l’envahit en cette fin de journée. Le stylet devient gnomon inutile, figure de Vanité, symbole énigmatique du contemptus artis sur lequel s’achève l’itinéraire diurne de Bloom. Cette image finale nous ramène sans doute en contrepoint à la fin de Calypso, au moment où, sur un mode de naturalisme burlesque, Bloom utilisait pour s’essuyer le papier du journal où il venait de lire la nouvelle de M. Philip Beaufoy, “Matcham’s Masterstroke”. C’est une variante à laquelle Gargantua lui-même (et pour cause !) n’avait pas songé dans sa recherche du torche-cul idéal !

31 C’est qu’à mon sens il faut lire la fin de Calypso comme un texte où l’écriture affirme symboliquement sa généalogie et sa destination anale tout comme, dans Nausicaa, elle apparaît placée sous la double instance de source de malentendu et de l’effet d’optique. Une telle idée est bien mise en lumière quand on s’avise que la couleur de l’encre utilisée par Gerty pour écrire ses pensées secrètes dans son journal, “that lovely confession album [...] and there were some beautiful thoughts written in it in violet ink” (298.635-42), est la même que celle des jarretelles que Bloom a offertes à Molly et auxquelles il fait allusion dans son monologue (302.800). Si, dans Calypso, l’écriture est liée à la souillure excrémentielle (ce qui annonce l’exclamation récurrente dans Finnegans Wake, “the letter, the litter”)21, elle passe dans Nausicaa par des phases ou des métamorphoses diverses : inscription aphrodisiaque sur le corps féminin ou, plus exactement, sur ses dessous, elle se dilue ensuite en sécrétion pigmentée avant de refaire brièvement surface à titre de trace vaine sur le sable, vouée à un rapide engloutissement par envasement quasi-cloacal ou par le coup d’éponge de la marée montante.

32 Ainsi, dans Nausicaa, Joyce expérimente-t-il ce que je serais tenté d’appeler un mode d’écriture-peinture, qui nous présente d’abord un chromo assez niais avant d’expoler dans une vaste configuration dynamique (le “feu d’artifice”) qui va du barbouillage ou de
la simple souillure d'une toile vierge à un rendu quasi-impressionniste de la lumière vespérale qui tombe sur Howth. Outre les nombreuses références à la pâte molle du matériau pictural servant de métaphore diffuse pour désigner l'émission solitaire de Bloom, Joyce intègre dans le monologue de ce dernier un ensemble de techniques, de codes, de signifiants et de systèmes picturaux, où le principe de digression généralisée du courant de conscience lui permet de courir librement de fragment de sens en brice intertextuelle et d'une série d'images à l'autre. Cela n'est pas pour autant synonyme d'incohérence ou d'arbitraire. Le texte, par référence à la peinture prise sous toutes ses acceptions possibles, du bric à brac de l'atelier du peintre aux problèmes de la lumière et de l'esthétique, sans oublier les différentes écoles ou genres picturaux, se construit selon sa propre logique qui tour à tour dissémène ou convoque divers savoirs pour mieux nous donner à voir, à sentir ou à penser. C'est ainsi que le chapitre tout entier peut se comprendre comme une tentative de la part de l'auteur de faire jouer dans son texte l'interface entre sexualité, mode pictural et écriture en tant que trace graphique.

33 Ces rapports complexes entre sexualité, peinture et écriture prennent la forme d'un aller et retour entre le corps et ses supports ou ses masques, entre la toile et la page (ou la plage dans le cas de Bloom). La projection matérielle, émission colorée ou trace sombre de l'encre, est le préalable inévitable à un travail ultérieur de reprise et de dérive où les signifiants se relient par des correspondances subtiles, dont les clés se trouvent à l'intérieur du système symbolique de l'œuvre autant que dans les jeux complexes de l'intertexte. La jouissance devient le prélude nécessaire au travail de la signification lors même que le voyeur est appelé à se transformer en voyant, au sens rimbaudien du terme, c'est-à-dire en visionnaire. Mais Bloom reste ici (comme Stephen, du reste, dans le roman) un artiste potentiel, pétrifié par l'inéffable et en proie à l'infinité du virtuel, ce qui, somme toute, est d'autant plus compréhensible qu'il n'est que l'un des rabatteurs d'images et de formules, l'un des agents de la circulation d'un sens, dont seul l'auteur, qui sait rester aussi invisible qu'imprévisible, est à même de fonder les éléments et de penser la totalité dans ce creuset en perpétuelle gestation qu'est Ulysses.

NOTES

2. "Mr. Bloom's Strange 'Gou(l)ache' – A reading in Perspective of the Nausicaa section of Ulysses", Cahiers Victoriens & Édouardiens N° 8, Avril 1979, p. 53-73.
3. Cette dernière phrase est une citation du début d'Hamlet (I, i, 8). Il s'agit de la relève de la garde au cours de laquelle Francisco est remplacé par Barnardo. Or, Bloom monte aussi la garde à sa façon et il en a outre des ennuis avec sa montre (action ou incident qui correspondent tous deux à des avatars du mot watch en anglais) puisqu'elle s'est arrêtée à l'heure fatidique de 16 h 30. Si Bloom est servi par les cycles naturels de la marée et de la lune, il semble trahi par le temps de l'horloge, comme le révèle l'épiphanie de la fin qui répète son infortune chaque fois que la pendule-coucou égrène le mot cuckoo. Toutefois, la façon étrange qu’il a de “remonter sa montre”, pour reprendre la remarque de Gerty (296.558-9), suggère ironiquement que
l’indicateur de sa paralysie sexuelle sert simultanément de métaphore à son soulagement auto-érotique.


7. Revelation 17 : 3-5.


10. En ce qui concerne les liens entre peinture et projection pigmentée du désir, on pense aussi à l’image terrible et fascinante que Troïlus utilise, au début de *Troilus and Cressida*, pour traduire l’empire qu’Hélène exerce sur les passions :

> Fools on both sides, Helen must needs be fair
> When with your blood you daily paint her thus.

(i, ii, 90-1).

C’est moi qui souligne. Mais Bloom, on le sait, est pacifiste dans l’âme, et à la couleur du sang il préfère les jets opaques.


13. Le terme désigne la résine liquide de l’arbrisseau lactescent appelé térêbinthe, auquel Milton fait vraisemblablement allusion au livre IV de *Paradise Lost* quand il décrit, au vers 248, “Groves whose trees wept odorous gum and balm”.


17. Voir, en particulier, le poème de Saint Amant intitulé “Le melon” :

> Quelle odeur sens-je en cette chambre ?
> Quel doux parfum de musc et d’ambre
> Me vient le cerveau réjouir
> Et tout le cœur épanour ? [...]
> De tous les mets que le désir
> Puisse imaginer et choisir,
> Ni les baisers d’une maîtresse [...] 
> Ni le cher abricot que j’aime,
> Ni la fraise avecque la crème [...]
Ne sont qu’amertume et que fange
Au prix de ce melon divin,
Honneur du climat angevin.


19. *Gnomon*, l’un des mots-clés utilisés au début de la première nouvelle de *Dubliners*, “The Sisters”, et qui, en dehors du sens technique qu’il a d’abord dans le contexte de la géométrie d’Euclide, désigne, selon l’*O.E.D.*, “a pillar, rod, or other object which serves to indicate the time of day by casting its shadow upon a marked surface” (sens n° 1). Ce cadran solaire primitif serait l’équivalent, en extérieur, des instruments de mesure du temps (horloge, sablier) qui figurent sur les compositions symboliques et les natures mortes des *Vanités* l’idée du caractère transitoire de la vie. Il est à rapprocher de la pendule placée sur la cheminée du presbytère, où le coucou qui égrène les heures complète de façon auditive le message visuel tracé sur le sable.


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In this paper I want to talk about the advent of Bloom: I mean the way in which James Joyce inserted his fictional hero into the fully tenanted city of Dublin that he himself had left behind in 1904, but also the way that he substituted his “competent keyless citizen” for the egoistical young artist, Stephen Dedalus, at the centre of his literary world.

Conceived in the tradition of Thomas Carlyle’s “Hero as a Man of Letters”, Stephen had been the self constituted moral hero and the only morally creditable person in Joyce’s earlier manuscript novel, *Stephen Hero*. Portrayed as “the intense centre of the life of his age, standing] to it in a relation than which none could be more intimate” [SH75], he was intended as a pattern of social and aesthetic awareness upon which the Irish could model themselves. The *Portrait* puts it a little more ironically (or perhaps more fatuously): “How could he hit their conscience or how cast his shadow over the imaginations of their daughters, before their squires begat upon them, that they might breed a generation less ignoble than their own?” But moral eugenics proved unworkable as an imaginative strategy in the long run, and the autobiographical project which absorbed Joyce over twelve years was finally wound up, in 1916, with the production of a text flawed (or redeemed) by ambiguities which render it difficult to attain a clear view of the value that the author attaches to his central character. *A Portrait* is a stylistic medallion, one side of which is the intelligence and courage, and the other side of which is the egoism and conceit of its central character. After that, Joyce cut his ties with Stephen, ceasing to use him as the privileged vehicle of his maturer values. In future, Leopold Bloom was to assume that role.

Perhaps the greatest mark of difference between Bloom and Stephen is in their respective relation to woman. “She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels” [PA288]: this is the hope expressed by Stephen’s mother – and, for all we know, by Joyce’s – on the last page of *A Portrait of the Artist*; but there is little indication in *Ulysses* that Stephen has adopted the humaner attitudes which voluntary exile with Nora Barnacle taught the author. Bloom,
on the other hand, is living in the condition of life that Joyce considered the necessary fulfilment of manhood. One of the reasons he gave for preferring Odysseus (or Ulysses) to Jesus as a hero was that Jesus “never lived with a woman... surely one of the most difficult things a man has to do.” Bloom has the easy sensuality of a husband, touching affectionately on Molly’s “large soft bubs” [77] and the “plump mellow yellow smellows melons of her rump” [867] as points of reference in his day (notwithstanding their discontinued sexual relations). Even the emotion caused by the knowledge of her infidelity – an emotion compounded on “envy, jealousy, abnegation, [and] equanimity” [864] – is tempered by the recognition that the adultery has been natural, non-felonious, inevitable and irreparable [865].

5 In fact, Stephen stands poised unhappily at the threshold of the transforming experience of freely given love which Nora Barnacle bestowed on James Joyce on precisely the date of Bloomsday – and Ulysses is therefore a monument to that event. Joyce stressed the point, in talking with Frank Budgen, who wrote The Making of Ulysses under his guidance, that Stephen “has never been loved by any woman.” In the Library scene, when Stephen described Shakespeare’s initiation to love, he asks querulously “And my turn? When?” [244], and when, at a book-barrow in “Wandering Rocks”, he finds a pamphlet called ‘How to win a woman’s love’, he greets it ironically with “for me this” [312]. Stephen is, precisely, the image of James Joyce up to the point when he ceased to be an adolescent and became an adult. By this distinction between his younger and older alter egos in Ulysses, Joyce neatly divided his personality in two: Stephen and Bloom: artist and citizen; “priest of the eternal imagination” and the ordinarily uxorious man: innocence and experience.

6 The advent of Bloom is decisively marked by the new tone of Calypso, where he makes his entrance. After long exposure to the baneful intelligence and melancholic temper of the younger man in Telemachus, Nestor and Proteus, we suddenly encounter a new spirit of cheerful pragmatism, appraising human frailty with a kindly gaze. By comparison Stephen’s mentality begins to seem more pathetic than heroic as he walks through Bloomsday battling hopelessly [285] against the elements of an increasingly desperate personal situation. Troubled by guilt about his treatment of his dying mother, and terrified of becoming like the father whose drinking habits he emulates so strenuously throughout the novel, he also feels usurped in his proper function as an artist and ostracized by the members of the Irish Literary Revival. His resentment is double-edged; like Antisthenes, it is hard to tell “if he were bitterer against others or against himself” [188]. His explosive cry, “Non serviam!” [1682] in the Circe episode, only serves to increase his isolation, while the Homecoming chapters give no indication that he is capable of recognising the real worth of Leopold Bloom upon which Ulysses itself is founded. Joyce was adamant about the limits of Stephen’s significance for the novel. “Stephen doesn’t interest me anymore,” Joyce told Budgen, “he has a character that can’t be changed.” And he added, “as the day goes on, Bloom’s justness and reasonableness should overshadow them all.”

One way of assessing the originality of Bloom is to consider him as a character in the final story projected for Dubliners – for that is how Ulysses originated. Here is an advertising canvasser, modelled on one Alfred F. Hunter, whom Joyce might have been expected to treat as harshly as any other of the characters in that collection: beset with difficulties – a wife’s adultery – which arouse him to no demonstrative gesture of self-assertion or dissent. Yet the angle of approach in Calypso is entirely new. Bloom has broken free from
the “scrupulous brute force” of Joyce’s lethal ironies in *Dubliners*. No longer the victim of a “vivisective art”, he has become the vehicle of a warmer concept of humanity.

Unlike the lost souls of the *Dubliners* stories, the quality in Bloom’s thoughts and feelings convinces us of his moral resilience from the outset. In *Calypso*, he begins to display a mind compounded of honesty and unaffected humour—distinct from literary wit—which invests his world with imaginative good-sense. His characteristic mental process is a right-minded method of enquiry, proceeding by comparison among familiar objects; and if it is occasionally skewed by errors of information or analysis, it is always equal to the demands of practical experience. His thinking is habitually informed by an altruistic phenomenology which admits of various points of view—not only in relation to other people (Molly, Milly, Simon Dedalus) but in relation to animals and things—as he demonstrates in his dealings with his cat early in *Calypso* “Wonder what I look like to her. Height of a tower? No, she can jump me.”

In stark contrast with Stephen, Bloom’s mental habits are intuitive and pragmatic rather than theoretical and deductive. Where Stephen Dedalus conceives himself scholastically as “a conscious rational animal proceeding syllogistically from the known to the unknown...” Bloom is content to feel that he has “proceeded energetically from the unknown to the known” when he has dropped through “the incertitude of the void” from street level to the basement of his home at 7 Eccles Street. Yet, if only an informal fabric of *aperçus*, his thinking nevertheless throws up a system of authoritative insights into the world around him. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his grasp of the way religions work, as for instance when he discovers the common denominator between Christians and cannibals in the church at Westland Row: “Corpus. Body. Corpse., rum idea: eating bits of a corpse why the cannibals cotton to it” [99]. True or false in point of scientificologies (in this case, his anthropology is dubious) Bloom’s convictions are always sane and forthright.

In creating Bloom, Joyce uncovered a practical conception of experience which stands at the opposite pole from Stephen’s unrealisable aesthetic theorising. (What conditions of life would actually satisfy Stephen Dedalus?) Yet, paradoxically, Bloom does fulfill those high ideals, in so far as his processes of heart and mind enact the kind of affirmation which interests Stephen: “the affirmation of the spirit of man in literature” [777]. The fact that Leopold tacitly dissents from Stephen’s opinion on this point need not detain us, since they agree about much else—most significantly in their shared skepticism about the way that prejudice blocks out the perception of the real. Indeed, in *Ithaca*, Joyce was at pains to stress the likeness of their intellectual temperaments: “Both [are] indurated by.. an inherited tenacity of heterodox religious, national, social and ethical doctrines” [777]. Together, they constitute an oasis of liberal thinking in a society blinded by narrow principles in politics, morals, and religion.

Just as Joyce was Stephen’s age on Bloomsday, 16 June 1904, he was Bloom’s age (38) when he created him. Hence they represent complementary aspects of their author’s personality, in adolescence and early middle age. How, precisely, are they related as characters in the novel? The Odyssean and Shakespearean parallels, canonically inscribed on the Gilbert and Linati schemas, tend to break down in point of detail. Ulysses-Bloom, remorselessly slaughtering his wife’s suitors, and Stephen-Hamlet, prince of Sandycove, avenger of his father’s murder, are provisional analogies only, though they powerfully illustrate the sense of betrayal felt by each of them. The son-in-search-of-a-father and the
father-in-search-of-a-son approach is viciated by the fact that, as Hugh Kenner has said, the last thing on earth Stephen needs at present is another father. A more fundamental ground of similitude and difference is their shared relationship to the privileged landscape of Ulysses for both are vitally connected with the same address in north central Dublin, the Holy of Holies of Joycean fiction: Eccles Street.

Eccles Street was not unknown to literary history before the advent of Bloom, though it can never now be thought of apart from it him again, unless by Dubliners themselves. Laid out in the late eighteenth century on the former estate of a seventeenth century landlord Sir John Eccles, Bloom’s neighbourhood was visited in 1842 by the English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray who noted caustically: “after Eccles Street, potatoes begin”. Is that the reason why Bloom carries a shrivelled potato in his pocket as a lucky charm? Perhaps. Before the advent of Bloom, in any case, Joyce had chosen Eccles Street as the place where Stephen Dedalus discovered or invented his “epiphanies”.

In Stephen Hero, Joyce carefully specified the meteorological and – more potently – the symbolic atmosphere of Eccles Street by means of images of mist and darkness derived from the Introit for the Feast of the Epiphany. The point of such imagery is that Stephen is anointed as a kind of literary prophet or messiah: not merely the privileged recipient of naturalistic revelations but the living embodiment of the power of disclosure itself. In time this power was to pass from the artist to the citizen – that is, from Stephen to Leopold. It is comical but not accidental, therefore, that when Bloom lights a candle in the kitchen after his arrival home with Stephen, he is described as “light to the gentiles” [790]. In the Cyclops episode, the Citizen sarcastically refers to Bloom as “a new apostle to the gentiles” [432]. “the new Messiah for Ireland!” [438]; and it is the same messianic Introit from the liturgy for the Epiphany, Surge Illuminare [“Arise and be enlightened”], which is chanted by a procession of real Dublin clerics of all denominations when Elijah Ben Bloom ascends, in a mock apotheosis, “at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donoghue’s in Little Green Street like a shot off of a shovel” [449].

There is a large difference in the climate of the Eccles Street settings in Stephen Hero and Ulysses, and the notation in Calypso takes full cognisance of this fact. For Stephen, trudging through “a misty Irish evening” in the “misty Irish spring” [SH188], it is an appropriate scene for a diagnostic glimpse of the moral blight of Ireland which he undertakes to document with unflinching accuracy. In particular, he plans to document the “purely suppositious [sic] conscience” [SH179] of Irish women whom, as a manuscript footnote to Stephen Hero tells us, he considers “the cause of all the moral suicide in the island” [SH179]. The first epiphany, with its mute drama of female modesty and male prurience, was precisely tailored to suit this purpose. Lacking charity or humour, it was written – as the footnote frankly adds – “in the spirit of revenge” [SH179]. Stephen has been jilted by Emma Clery, and what he sees as he walks the city streets are consequently “stray images” of her soul, each revealing a new taint of petty-bourgeois hypocrisy. In consequence, the Eccles Street of Stephen Hero is more like a crime of passion than a moment of redemptive grace.

Nothing could be more different than the sunny mood of Leopold at eight o’clock on June 16, 1904, or even his less certain optimism when he returns at 2.00 a.m., tired but not dispirited, to precisely one of those brown brick houses in Eccles Street – the phrase occurs in both passages. In Stephen Hero, they represent “the very incarnation of Irish paralysis” [SH188]. In Calypso, they are momentarily shrouded by a passing cloud as
Bloom turns into his own street of “blotchy brown brick houses”; but the darkness is dispelled as “quick warm sunlight [comes] running from Berkeley Road, swiftly, in slim sandals., a girl with gold hair on the wind” [74]. Depressed by the gloom, – “the grey sunken cunt of the world” [73] – Bloom as quickly regains good humour. Something has altered in the degree that only a revolution in the sensibility of the writer is sufficient to explain it. When Joyce chose Eccles Street as Bloom’s home, he must have had some reasons for doing so: either to confirm the meanings that he had already assigned to it, or else to overthrow them.

After three chapters of Stephen’s studied pessimism, the tone of controlled hilarity at the opening of Calypso marks a new departure – all the more impressive when we consider that Joyce suffered something like a nervous breakdown between the composition of the Telemachiad and the Wanderings of Ulysses. This is hardly surprising since what was involved was the tearing away of a literary mask which had been fixed to his face with all the adhesiveness of a paranoid obsession during the long years of A Portrait of the Artist. Take the comic overtones of the straight-faced opening sentence: “Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls..” This is wryly satirical, but Leopold Bloom, Esq., himself remains unscathed. Instead, it is the methods of conventional fiction, with its insistence on the formal introduction of a character, which is being satirised.

In the earliest draft of A Portrait, an autobiographical essay and literary manifesto of 1904, Joyce had already sketched a new method of characterization – or, at least, hinted at the function that it should perform. The passage in question has rightly been identified as the germinal expression of his innovative stylistic methods, foreshadowing the magnetized language which does the work of characterization in Dubliners, A Portrait, and Ulysses by excerpting from the characters’ own vocabularies.

Our world., recognizes its acquaintance chiefly by the characters of beard and inches and is, for the most part, estranged from those of its members who seek through some art, by some process of mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the personalised lumps of matter that which is their individualising rhythm, the first formal relation of their parts. But for such as these a portrait is not an identificative paper but rather the curve of an emotion.

In Ulysses, Joyce defers giving solid information about Bloom’s vital statistics until the cathetical chapter at the end, where the deficit is repaid with interest. That chapter is a reservoir of information which Joyce was precluded from presenting at the outset by the rules of the interior monologue. If the first reference to Bloom’s physique is merely a flurry of “stork’s legs” in Calypso [79], the questions-and-answers in Ithaca are there to tell us that his full height is five foot nine and a half inches, his complexion olive, his build full, and that his thigh and calf measurements are both 12 inches, after two months of exercise with Sandow’s athletic pulley.

Bloom’s entry, then, is less concerned with “beard and inches” than with the hermeneutic orientation of a new kind of fiction. To emphasis this, Joyce skewed the idiom: “Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting the breakfast things on the humpy tray.” Not “on his mind”, as we normally say; for here we are being introduced to the stream of consciousness along which we will be carried for some time to come. From that standpoint, things are apt to look a little different: “His hand took his hat from the peg..” [67]; “his hand accepted the moist tender gland and slid it into a sidepocket. Then it fetched up three coins from his trouser pocket..” [71]. The mind observes its body’s movements.
The wider rationale for presenting Bloom as an organ-eater is the fact that his existence is irreducibly organic. Thoughts pass through his mind in a digestive flux just as solids and liquids pass through the alimentary canal. Indeed, all of Bloom’s momentary alarms in *Ulysses* make noises like troubled indigestion: “His heart quop[s]” [149] when Boylan is spotted near the National Library. This blending of physical and psychic levels of reality is the feature of that Jean Paul Sartre identified in *Being and Nothingness* as “the initial project of the recovery of the body”, and therefore “an attempt at the solution to the problem of the absolute.” For Joyce, however, the transcendence of the physical inevitably had religious overtones. Catholicism was the native language of his imagination, and his intellectual development involved refashioning rather than abandoning it. By the time that Bloom has taken us to the lavatory (“holy of holies”, 859) and to the bath-house (“rite of St. John”, 859), where his mind entertains the blasphemous phrase, “this is my body” [107], we fully recognise that Joyce’s theme is the human physicality of the Word Incarnate.

The place where sensations and ideas combine is in the human mind. (Joyce, incidentally, does not swallow Berkeley’s theory of a world of ideas only; as Stephen demonstrates, the objective substrate of perception is “there all the time” without [us]: “and ever shall be, world without end”, 46.) The tempo of a sentence in *Calypso* is, accordingly, that of living perception rather than action recollected in tranquillity. Take, for instance, the business with the door: “He pulled the halldoor to after him very quietly, more, till the footleaf dropped gently over the threshold, a limp lid. Looked shut. All right till I come back anyhow.” [67]. Here *more* has the accent of a present tense, in spite of the preterite form of the sentence. The same criterion of psychological realism, translated into style, also dictates that Marion Bloom makes her first appearance in the novel as a bare pronoun, rather than a proper name. No apology is made for the missing anaphoric reference in the phrase, “She didn’t like her plate full”, because this is the way that wives feature in the consciousness of husbands, as distinct from novelists.

One of the most startling implications of the merging of the characters’ consciousness with the language of the text is that events are included or excluded from the narrative according to a psychological criterion. As Hugh Kenner has shown, *Calypso* omits the final interview between Bloom and Molly when she tells him that Blazes Boylan is going to arrive at four o’clock. By the ordinary standards of fiction, no piece of information could be more important, yet it is resolutely – or perhaps neurotically – suppressed, coming to our attention only in later episodes where Bloom’s anxieties surface fitfully: “At four she said” [335]. A whole chain of nudging reminders and second thoughts throughout Bloom’s day relate back to this missing episode: “Today today not think” [230]; “I could go home still: tram: something I forgot.. No.” [156]; “useless to go back” [214]; “About six o’clock I can” [143], and finally, “Go home.. No. Might still be up” [496]. All of these participate in the grammar of truncated thoughts. Here is another: “if he... O! Eh? No ..No. No, no, I don’t believe it. He wouldn’t surely. No, No .. Think no more about that” [194]. It has suddenly occurred to Bloom that Boylan might infect Molly with a venereal disease.

This new stylistic method invites at every turn the questions, who is thinking this, whose words are these? Elements of that technique had been developed in the *Portrait* and in *Dubliners* and can be traced back further still to Joyce’s first attempts at literary prose: the earliest epiphanies. According to Stephen, an epiphany was a *presentment* of some self-revealing gesture of vulgar*ity* or some “phase of the mind itself in the language native to it rather than the language of an author [SH188]. But Stephen was primarily concerned with
show-casing the hypocrisies of his Dubliners; the mature Joyce was more interested in the workings of consciousness *per se*. In *Ulysses*, the balance has decisively shifted away from the indictment of vulgarities towards the manifestation of typical – and untypical – states of mind. In effect, Bloom inherits a method of expression forged by Stephen Dedalus in Eccles Street.

23 But Stephen and Leopold have each a different lease on Eccles Street. Stephen was an autobiographical character, drawn from life, walking in places where Joyce had walked, while Bloom is a fictional creation whom Joyce inserted in the meticulously gazetted landscape of *Ulysses*. In 1902 the house at 7 Eccles Street had been occupied by Joyce’s college friend J.F. Byrne, the model for Cranly in *A Portrait of the Artist*.

24 In 1904, the house stood empty, awaiting its fictional inhabitant. Nothing expresses the realistic code of Joyce’s novel better than this slipping of Bloom into an empty home. For though Joyce played clever variations on the demography of Dublin when it suited him, he copied into his novel a great number of actual tenants and their Dublin addresses from *Thom’s Official Directory* for 1904, lending substance to his claim that the city could be reconstructed from *Ulysses*.

25 Memory supplied much of the literary and cultural personnel of the novel. George Russell and George Moore, W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, John Eglinton, Richard Best and Fred Ryan, John Howard Parnell, Maud Gonne, Arthur Griffith, and Buck Mulligan (Oliver St. John Gogarty) were all transposed from contemporary history via Joyce’s personal acquaintance or knowledge of them. Many of the less celebrated Dubliners in *Ulysses*, petty officials and their hangers-on, were friends of Joyce’s father. John Wyse Nolan, John Henry Menton, Bob Dollard, and Joe Hynes are of this class. Another one of these, Matthew F. Kane, a Castle official, has the distinction of occurring under several forms: as Martin Cunningham in *Hades* and *Cyclops*; but also as Paddy Dignam, whose funeral in *Ulysses* Joyce modelled on Kane’s which he attended with his father in July 1904. Kane also occurs under his own name when Bloom cites his death by drowning in Dublin Bay – the actual circumstances – in a list of departed friends and acquaintances in *Ithaca*.

26 Another death-date that Joyce adjusted was his own mother’s. In *Ulysses*, May Dedalus, nee Goulding, dies on April 24th 1903 – at least, she is buried on April 26th. May Joyce, nee Goulding, actually died on April 13th, 1903. Because Bloom is preparing for the anniversary of his own father’s death on April 27th, he has been unable to attend her funeral: otherwise the encounter of Bloomsday would have been pre-empted by a meeting in the previous year. In the Library, Mulligan tells Stephen that Bloom “knows your old fellow”[257], and the *Ithaca* chapter supplies further details of their acquaintance: Bloom is aware of having met Stephen then an infant, at a garden party in 1887, and more briefly in the coffee-room of Breslin’s hotel on a rainy Sunday in 1892.[795]. On the basis of such acquaintance, he is at least as likely to pay his respects to Stephen’s mother as to Paddy Dignam. The effect of the altered date is to enhance the verisimilitude of their relation to each other in the context of Stephen’s known biography. Other connections are these: both have been baptised by the same priest, the Reverend Charles Malone, C.C. [798], and both have known Mrs. Riordan [795-6], Stephen’s *Dante* in *A Portrait*, and James Joyce’s maternal aunt, Mrs. Conway, in real life.

26 Joyce could substantiate Bloom’s existence by linking it in with real lives. In other cases, however, he extended the fictional biographies of characters previously familiar from the *Dubliners* stories. Thus in *Ulysses*, Bob Doran enjoys – or suffers – a squalid after-life, appearing as a sentimental drunkard in the *Cyclops* episode.

32 Once the pattern was
established, new – and entirely fictitious characters – could be also made to function in the same reassuring way. Philip Gilligan, who died of phthisis in Jervis St. Hospital in 1888 [827], serves Bloom as an aide-memoire to the year in question [196]. He is mentioned twice in Ulysses and looks more credible for that, but there is no evidence that he ever existed in real life.

The Dublin newspapers also played a role in authenticating Bloom and Bloomsday, furnishing events such as the Minis Bazaar [233, 324], but Thom's Directory was the only place where he could check – what he naturally had to check – where the other Dublin Blooms, if any, were living in 1904. One such, Joseph Bloom, a dentist, was listed in Thom's as living at 38 Lombard Street. Joyce adroitly slipped Leopold and Molly into his house, their first home after marriage. If this seemed high-handed, he ensured that dentist Bloom is mentioned on his own account in Wandering Rocks, where the blind stripling passes his clinic at 2, Clare Street [34]. Joyce also profited by the possible confusion of Bloom and Bloom. In the Cyclops episode, Jack Power is heard to wonder if they are related [438]. When people start arguing about who his cousins are, his existence is put beyond dispute.

By searching the Directory, Joyce unearthed many Dublin Jews whom he had never known. In effect, he determined where Bloom had lived during previous stages of his life by identifying those streets listed in the Directory which held Jewish communities of his own class. The crowd of Jews who weep over miscreant Bloom in Circe [655] includes a Scholomowitz, a Goldwater, a Watchman, and an Abramovitz, all of whom lived on Lombard Street. A Moisel resided at Arbutus Terrace near Lombard Street West, so he occurs in Bloom's memories of early marriage days in Calypso [72]. Citrons and Mastianskys, Apjohns and Goldbergs, were families living on or near St. Kevin's Parade, where Moses Herzog the hire-purchase man also dwells, and this became the scene of Bloom's childhood [35]. Many other Dublin Jews, such as Marcus Tertius Moses, tea merchant, or Dr. Hy Franks, the venereologist, Louis Werner, the impresario, Louis Wine, the jeweller, George Mesias, Bloom's tailor, or the unnamed 'jewman tailor' who made Ben Dollard's unpaid for trousers [314] were similarity transposed from fact to fiction.

In other instances, the traffic was from fiction back to fact. One Jew who never lived in Dublin was Moses Dlugacz, a Zionist intellectual whom Joyce knew in Trieste. He was installed in 55a Dorset Street, the premises of Michael Brunton, pork-butcher, in order to set in motion Bloom's train of thought on the Semitic race. The one Dublin Jew who comes in for more than casual anti-semitism is Reuben J. Dodd, a solicitor acting for the Patriotic Insurance Company (5, Ormond Quay), and money lender on his own account. Simon Dedalus holds a particular grudge against him, and even for Bloom he is the archetypal pattern of “what they call a dirty jew” [149]. Names like “Barabas” [118, 318] and “Judas Escariot” [344] inevitably attack him as being of “the tribe of Reuben” [117]. Yet in spite of a Hebrew forename, he was not in fact a Jew [36]. Joyce's father had suffered at his hands, and his son was happy to avenge him. Besides, it obviated calling any real Dublin Jew a Jewman. The real existence of the Jews of Ulysses is in most cases corroborated in Louis Hyman's indefatigable study, The Jews of Ireland [37], though the shorter way to track them down today - we may as well admit - is to study the index of Gifford's invaluable annotations for Ulysses [38]. But here is a curious fact: Hyman's book was not prepared as a handbook to Ulysses instead, it is dedicated to a community of hard-working immigrants, that rarest of Irish social groups. Yet the reason why it stands in many university libraries, is precisely that it provides a social context for a Dublin Jew.
who never actually existed: Leopold, son of Rudolf Virag and Ellen Hegarty, herself a Jew
on her father's side [797-98].

30 With a parentage like that, Bloom is not of course a racial Jew according to the matrilineal
criterion. Nor does he qualify on the other grounds mentioned by Mulligan in his
blasphemous reference to the “collector of prepuces”. Bloom is uncircumcised, as we
learn from a detail in the masturbatory sequence of Nausicaa (“Stuck.. the foreskin is not
back”, 487). In fact, no religious denomination can claim him. A racial Jew, he has in fact
been christened in the Church of Ireland and rebaptised as a Roman Catholic before his
marriage to Molly[798]. Intellectually skeptical and religiously agnostic, he leans towards
atheism on the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: “once you are dead you are dead”
[133]. Though familiar with all religions, he is unmarked by any. It is this uniquely
heterodox outlook which qualifies him as Joyce’s new hero, substituting an
unimpassioned curiosity about the religion and politics for Stephen’s aggrieved anti-
clericism and vociferous anti-nationalism in A Portrait.39

31 For Joyce, Bloom’s Jewishness was primarily the measure of his immunity to pressure
from the established cultural, religious, and political traditions in Ireland. It allows him to
use the distancing third-person pronoun whenever he has something critical to say about
the Irish. When, in Hades, when conversation touches on suicide40, a sense of difference is
perceptible: “They have no mercy on that here.” In this way, the Irish world reveals itself
to Bloom objectively; and if his apparent lack of commitment to sectarian causes makes
his speculative turn of mind seem a dull irrelevance to other Dubliners – “his jawbreakers
about phenomenon and science and this phenomenon and the other phenomenon” [394]
– he still deserves to be called what the narrator of Cyclops sarcastically calls him, “our
distinguished phenomenologist” [B445].

32 The question, how far is Bloom Jewish, depends on point of view. Normally he himself is
diffident about drawing attention to his race. In Calypso, he leaves the Jewish butcher
Dlugacz’s mute enquiry unanswered: “No: Better not: another time” [72]. Yet Dubliners
know that he is a racial Jew, and even his civic virtues are seen through racial archetypes.
Hence when Bloom donates five shillings to Paddy Dignam’s family fund, John Wyse
Nolan reaches for his Shakespeare: “I’ll say there is much kindness in the jew” [317]. But
there is much uncertainty about his current religious affiliations: “Is he a jew or a gentile
or a holy Roman or a swaddler41 or what the hell is he?”, enquires one of the Citizen’s
sympaths [438]. Nosey Flynn thinks that he is a member of the Freemasonry – “he’s in
the craft” [227] – and Mr. Kernan considers him a Protestant, expecting him to prefer the
Anglican funeral service to the Catholic one [133]. When nationalism, with its racist
implications, enters in, however, the position clarifies immediately: Bloom is an alien.
“We want no more strangers in our house,” says the Citizen [420].

33 The anti-semitic climate of Irish nationalism is dramatised most fully in the Cyclops
chapter, where Bloom courageously defends not only his own race [431] but also the idea
of universal love. – “Christ was a jew like me” [445] – is a leading instance of Joyce’s belief
that Dubliners can be depended on to epiphanise their own vulgarity: “By Jesus, says he,
I’ll brain that bloody jewman for using the holy name. By Jesus I’ll crucify him so I will”
[445]. Yet the high drama of Bloom’s “altercation with a truculent troglodyte” in Barney
Kiernan’s pub [859] is certainly not the only incident of anti-semitism in the novel. In the
early chapters, Haines and Deasy exemplify English anti-semitism, as distinct from the
native variety. For Haines, a “Britisher” with Gaelic sympathies, “German jews” are now
the English “national problem” [25], while Mr. Deasy’s Ulster Unionism is armed against
Jews as well as Fenians [38]: “England is in the hands of the Jews. The Jews have already begun their work of destruction. Old England is dying” [41]. Stephen answers with a socialist epigram, “A merchant... is one who buys cheap and sells dear, Jew or Gentile” [41], and so far, at least, his position is impeccably non-sectarian. But the epiphany of the Jewish moneylenders at the Paris Bourse which follows in his silent stream of consciousness, full of the chill of anticipated pogroms, is more ambivalent: “... gold-skinned men quoting prices on their gemmed fingers. Gabbles of geese. They swarm loud, uncounted about the temple. ... Time would surely scatter all...” [41-42]. Joyce wrote this epiphany in 1902 before his own conversion to pro-Judaic feeling. That is not to say his anti-Semitism ever ran deep, but there are more traces of it than the plan of *Ulysses* might suggest.

34 Consider this from the first draft of his autobiographical *Portrait*, written on January 7, 1904:

He saw between camps his ground of vantage, opportunities for the mocking devil in an isle twice removed from the mainland, under joint government of Their Intensities and Their Bullockships. His Nego, therefore, written amid a chorus of *peddling Jews’ gibberish* and Gentile clamour, was drawn up valiantly.42 (Italics mine.)

35 The irony is that, in constructing a position for himself between the various camps in Irish politics – a position later to be occupied with maximum effect by Leopold Bloom, his Dublin Jew – Joyce slips unthinking into the contemporary jargon of abuse. In fact, his conversion to the cause of Judaism occurred during his sojourn in Trieste, where he knew closely members of the Jewish community including Otto Schmitz (Italo Svezo). Schmitz once asked Stanislaus to tell him some secrets about the Irish because Joyce had been asking him so many questions about Jews that he wanted to get his own back on him43. Joyce had come to recognise the analogy, not only between Israel and Ireland (which plays such a large part in the nationalist discourse of *Ulysses*)44, but more significantly, the analogy between the Judaic diaspora and his own artistic exile. It took twelve years for him to grasp the analogy firmly enough to make Bloom the spokesman for his own critique of Irish life.

36 One early critic who noticed this hiatus was John Eglinton, the editor of who refused to publish the 1904 *Portrait* essay as incomprehensible, according to his own account, and indecent, according to Joyce’s45. In his Irish *Literary Portraits*, he wrote:

Demonstrably, [Joyce] must have carried with him into exile a mass of written material but it was long before he learned how to deal with it, or to recognise, probably with some reluctance in the merry imp of mockery which stirred within him the spirit that was at length to take him by the hand and lead him out into the larger spaces of literary creation.46

37 The resemblance of these phrases is perhaps no more than a coincidence: Joyce’s ‘mocking devil’ and Eglinton’s ‘imp of mockery’. In *Ulysses*, the term mockery is reserved for the treacherous wit of Oliver St. John Gogarty (Buck Mulligan): “The mockery of it!, he said gaily. Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!” [2]. Stephen keeps his answer to himself: “the brood of mockers of whom Mulligan was one... Idle mockery. The void awaits surely all them that weave the wind” [25]. But Eglinton had a point: *Dubliners* had been cramped indeed; and it was Bloom not Stephen who eventually led Joyce out to those larger spaces of literary creation. And Stephen himself seems to acknowledge as much when he chants the 113rd Psalm from the scripture common to both their religions on leaving Bloom’s household: *In exitu Israel de Egypto: domus Jacob de populo barbaro* [818]47.
The prevalence of anti-semitism in Ireland was one of the themes that Joyce addressed most forcefully in the novel, and one of the topics which ensure the relevance of *Ulysses* in a wider than Irish context. In Europe, Joyce met anti-semitism, and knew of its existence elsewhere. In Zurich, at the time of writing *Ulysses*, he was following press accounts of the persecutions in North Africa which underlie Bloom's allusion in *Calypso*: “at this very moment sold off in Morocco like slaves or catties” [432]. But there was an instance of anti-semitism much nearer home, which Joyce avoided mentioning because it would inevitably have altered the balance of *Ulysses*. In April 1904, there occurred in Limerick a boycott of Jewish shopkeepers, instigated by one Father Creagh, which resulted in several deaths. Before that tragic outcome, a series of articles appeared in the *United Irishman*, the Sinn Fein organ, in which the editor Arthur Griffith publicly endorsed Fr. Creagh's position:

The Jew in Ireland is in every respect an economic evil... he produces no wealth himself – he draws it from others – he is the most successful seller of foreign goods, he is an unfair competitor with the ratepaying Irish shopkeeper, and he remains among us, ever and always an alien.

He later published two vitriolic attacks on Jews by Oliver St. John Gogarty, one of which includes the sentence: “I can smell a Jew... and in Ireland there is something rotten.” (*Sinn Féin*, 1 December 1906) Joyce, who continued to receive Irish papers in Trieste, dismissed Gogarty’s articles as ‘stupid drivel’ in a letter to Stanislaus from Rome (3 December 1906, SL134). A month earlier, he had condemned the “pap of racial hatred” which he detected in Griffith’s newspaper [SL111). If anti-semitism was a reality of contemporary Ireland, it was not an essential component of the nationalist tradition. Early in 1904, Michael Davitt, founder of the Land League, had condemned jew-baiting in the *Freeman's Journal*: Jews have never done any injury to Ireland. Like our own race they have endured a persecution, the records of which will forever remain a reproach on our “Christian” nations of Europe. Ireland has no share in this record.

Behind that lay Daniel O'Connell’s great speech of 11 September 1829 on Jewish Emancipation: “Ireland is the only country unsullied by any act of persecution of the Jews.” In casting Mr. Deasy's witticism in these terms – “Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which never persecuted the Jews.. because she never let them in” [44] – Joyce declared his position by contraries. There is no evidence, incidentally, that he had any better source for O'Connell’s phrases than his own memory.

However large it looms in *Ulysses*, anti-semitism was less of interest to Joyce than the question of national identity which it illustrates. Bloom’s heterogeneous brand of Irishness is the result of a modern conception of nationality to which Joyce gave expression in 1907, when he wrote his lecture on Ireland for the Universita Popolare in Trieste, *Irlanda, Isola dei Santi e dei Savi*. After a short history of Irish rebellions and betrayals, he turned to the racist attitudes of Irish-Ireland so evident at that date. He began with a generalisation about the complexity of European cultures: “Our civilisation is a mixture of many strands .. Nordic aggressiveness and Roman law, the new bourgeois conventions and the remnants of a Syriac religion.” Then he asserted that “no race has less right ['to boast of being pure today'] than the race now living in Ireland.” And, from these premises, he concluded that:

Nationality ... must find its reasons for being rooted in something that surpasses and transcends and informs changing things like blood and the human word. [

**CW166**]
Blooms famous definition of nationhood in Calypso expresses the pragmatic and non-racist view that Joyce himself took: “a nation is the same people living in the same place” [430]. This formula is calculated to include the emigrant of ancient or more recent stock (as distinct from the Protestant plantations of the sixteenth century, the Jewish immigration to Ireland occurred in the 1890s). A close analogy with Bloom’s position is offered by his thoughts on Councillor Joseph Patrick Nannetti, the foreman at Freeman printing works who subsequently became a Lord Mayor of Dublin in spite of his Italian extraction. “Strange”, reflects Bloom, “that he never saw his real country.” [150]. Then, in parenthesis, he adds: “Ireland my country” [150], the point which he will insist on in the Cyclops episode: “I was borne here. Ireland” [431]. Finally he calls to mind the phrase about the Norman families of the Conquest who became “more Irish than the Irish themselves” [98]. The xenophobia of the nationalist prevails, however, and in the list of Bloom’s adventures at the end of the day, this episode is called the holocaust [859].

If the attitude of Irish Ireland during the period which the nationalist journalist D.P. Moran called “the battle of two civilisations” was the greatest threat to Joyce’s heterogeneous conception of Irish nationality, he was determined to carry the game into the Sinn Fein court in Ulysses. He did so, daringly, by introducing the rumour that it is none other than Bloom who “gave the idea for Sinn Fein to Griffith to put in his paper” [436]. “He’s a perverted Jew,” says Martin Cunningham, “from a place in Hungary and it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system. We know that in the castle” [B438]. Now, this is a far more compelling claim to historical renown in Ireland than his having returned Charles Stewart Parnell’s lost hat in a public demonstration, as we learn in Eumaeus [761]. For by this sleight of hand, Bloom is represented as the political philosopher who originated the strategy that led inexorably to the creation of a separate Irish state in 1921.

Arthur Griffith (1871-1922), a member of the Gaelic League and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, founded the Celtic Literary Society and edited the newspaper United Irishman (1890) with Willie Rooney, whose posthumous poetry Joyce reviewed harshly in 1902) [61]. In articles published in January-July 1904, and then issued as The Resurrection of Hungary (1904), Griffith argued that the Irish Members of Parliament should follow the example set by Joseph Deak after 1848, when the Hungarian Parliament was abolished by Emperor Franz Josef in a measure seen by Griffith as analogous with the political Union with Great Britain (1800) that terminated the history of the Irish Parliament. Establishing a separate assembly in Budapest, Deak finally elicited recognition for the Hungarian Diet in 1867. At a convention in 1905, Griffith expounded these ideas under the name of Sinn Fein, a phrase coined by the Irish language movement (“Ourselves Alone”), inaugurating a political party of that name. While remaining the figure-head of Sinn Féin, he was effectively outmanoeuvred by militant republicans on the Executive council, and physical force movement advanced under cover of his organisation. As John Eglinton put it, “political agitation was holding back its energies for a favorable opportunity while the organisation of Sinn Fein was secretly ramifying throughout the country.” [97]. Without abandoning his policy of passive resistance, Griffith took part in the Howth gun-running episode of August 1914 which armed the Irish Volunteers. Though not connected with the Rising, he was arrested in 1916. In 1917, when his Hungarian policy was finally implemented, he stood down as leader of Sinn Fein in favour of Eamon de Valera but was elected Vice-President of the Republic declared by the first Dail Eireann in the Mansion House, Dublin, 1918. Imprisoned again in 1920 during the guerrilla war, he led the Irish
plenipotentiaries who negotiated the Treaty in 1921 and defended the Treaty in the Dail. He died in 1922 after a brief period as President of the Free State.

Students of Ulysses have always been incredulous about Bloom's connection with Griffith, doubting that Joyce intended to insert his common man in the pattern of such momentous national events. If the rumour were true it would surely have crossed Bloom's mind at some stage in the day. Yet it does conform with probability in some respects. There is no reason why Bloom should not be aware of the passage of events in Hungary during his father's lifetime; hard to imagine that he was not. Rudolf Virág (subsequently Rudolf Bloom) had arrived in Ireland by an itinerary which make those events an inevitable part of his awareness of the world: “Szombathely, Vienna, Budapest, London and Dublin” [797]. And Molly knows that Leopold has been “going about with some of them Sinner Fein lately or whatever they call themselves talking his usual trash of nonsense” [886]. Assuming – and it is a great deal to assume – that Griffith needed a Dublin Jew of Hungarian extraction to alerting him to the political parallel, Bloom is a reasonable candidate for the role of prompter. There is a final odd touch: Griffith himself was rumoured to have had a Jewish ghost-writer. As Hugh Kenner has suggested, Bloom probably believes as much. That is why he identifies Griffith's witticism about the Home Rule logo – “a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneay behind the bank of Ireland” – as an “ikey touch” [68]. Certainly Joyce did not expect us to believe that Bloom himself was that person. There is one good reason why we should doubt it: Bloom is a fiction and Griffith is a fact. In the last analysis, therefore, Bloom's credibility as a historical Dubliner – as Joyce puts it in Finnegans Wake – is simply “a matter of fict” [FW532.15].

Indeed, Bloom's record as a practical revolutionary hardly bears examination. Bloom remains vague about the organising principles of Sinn Fein, which he confuses with the more militant Fenian Brotherhood: “Back out and you get the knife. Stay in, the firing squad” [U207]; and his considered opinion of Griffith is less than adulatory – “a squareheaded fellow... has no go for the mo’” [134]. In politics, he leans towards parliamentary nationalism, having been a supporter of “the agrarian policy of Michael Davitt [and] the constitutional agitation of Charles Stewart Parnell”, and formerly a romantic “backtothelander” [843]. The extent of his actual involvement in political agitation has been limited to watching a Home Rule procession from the fork of a tree on Northumberland Road on 2 February 1888 [843]. Nor should it be overlooked that he has a furled Union Jack in his living-room [829]. But if there is any truth in the rumour of his intellectual donation to the Irish freedom movement, he surely deserves to be remembered as Political Father of Modern Irish State. Joyce has inserted his imaginary hero not merely into the peripheral spaces of the Irish world of 1904, but into the bloodstream of Irish nationalist history.

And the last of Leopold Bloom? We know his body lies in the Dublin cemetery near those of Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell, Paddy Dignam and other famous Irishmen. He has dockets in his drawer “relative to the purchase of a graveplot” in the “Catholic Cemeteries at Glasnevin” [852].

Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces. [824]

The ultimate convergence of Bloom and Stephen has been anticipated in other ways throughout Ulysses. As early as the Proteus episode, for instance, Joyce gave Stephen an Oriental dream foreshadowing his encounter with Bloom: “Street of harlots. Remember.
Haroun al Raschid. .. that man led me, spoke. I was not afraid. The melon he had he held against my face .. You will see who.” [59]. In Ithaca, under the astrological sign of Molly – astronomy is the science of the episode – their meeting is mapped onto the cosmos by the occurrence of a “celestial sign .. a star precipitated across the firmament.” [826]. This is a kind of epiphany, and it foretells an advent, just as – in Stephen’s theory – a star foretold Shakespeare’s: “a star, a daystar, a firedrake rose at his birth .. read the skies .. Where's your configuration? Stephen, Stephen ..” [269-70].

- What is that, Mr. Dedalus? the quaker librarian asked. Was it a celestial phenomenon?
- A star by night, Stephen said, a pillar of the cloud by day.

What more's to speak? [270].

Across the interstellar spaces of the novel’s cosmographic structure, star speaks to star, confirming the equivalence of the older and the younger artists, Shakespeare and Stephen, when the latter has entered the orbit of Leopold and Molly. Stephen does not depart into the night merely to lose himself in literary anonymity. Having encountered the reality of experience in Leopold Bloom, he goes forth to forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race – a racebroadened by experience to include, as its unlikely representative, the Irish Jewish Everyman of Ulysses.

NOTES

1. Page references to Ulysses are marked by numbers only. Those to other works by Joyce are prefixed with the appropriate initials. The editions I have used are:
   SH- Stephen Hero [SH], ed. Theodore Spencer (Grafton, 1986).
   AP – A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Jonathan Cape, 1943).
   U – Ulysses (Bodley Head, 1963).
   FW – Finnegans Wake (Faber and Faber, 1971).
2. The vocation ascribed to him in Stephen Hero [188] and the profession entered in James Joyce’s passport. Joyce’s indebtedness to Thomas Carlyle has never been adequately stated. The celebrated phrase “spiritual paralysis”, to name but one borrowing, is from Carlyle’s essay on Chartism.
3. Joyce’s remark to Frank Budgen that the most revealing element in the title is its modifying clause, “.. as a Young Man”, is widely taken as the proper measure of his limited intentions in A Portrait In “The Portrait in Perspective”, Hugh Kenner argued that Joyce set out to circumscribe his “futile alter ego” in a system of stylistic ironies which check the uncompromising heroism of the earlier draft version of the novel, Stephen Hero. See Frank Budgen, James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses (1959), p. 60, and Hugh Kenner, Dublin’s Joyce (1955), Chp. 8.
4. The impact of Nora Barnacle on James Joyce, both as a companion and a model for his female characters, for long a theme of Joycean biography, has been treated most fully – and most assertively – by Brenda Maddox in Nora (1987).
5. Frank Budgen, op. cit., p. 186.
6. See Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (1965), p. 162-62: “To set Ulysses on this date was Joyce's most eloquent if indirect tribute to Nora, a recognition of the determining effect upon his life of his
attachment to her. On June 16 he entered into a relation with the world around him and left behind him the loneliness he had felt since his mother’s death.” Then and later, when Joyce wrote to Nora, he associated her with the fulfilment of his literary ambitions, expressed in much the fashion that Stephen Dedalus expresses them: “O take me into your soul of souls and then I will become indeed the poet of my race” [15 November, 1909; SL169].


8. Later, in *Finnegans Wake*, which is built up of such distinctions, he summarised the process of autobiographical fission in these terms “his own personal life unlivable, transaccidentated through the slow fires of consciousness into a dividual chaos, perilous, potent, common to allflesh, human only, mortal.” [FW186].

9. He admits that his literary efforts are more imaginary than real. In *Proteus*, he dwells sardonically on his earlier epiphanies, “deeply deep” [50]. His sojourn in Paris, the land of exile to which he flies at the end of *A Portrait*, has not been successful: “Fabulous artificer, the hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? ... Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus” [270]. According to John Eglinton, W.B. Yeats said that he had never seen so much pretension with so little to show for it. *Irish Literary Portraits* (1935), p. 137.


11. “I have a new story for *Dubliners* in my head. It deals with Mr. Hunter”. (Selected Letters, p. 112; Rome, 30 Sept. 1906).


13. Later, he established four points of similar difference between his cat and his daughter: passivity, economy, instinct of tradition, and passivity [813].


15. The *Hades* of *Ulysses* chapter contains a more extended critique of religious formalism, framed by Bloom’s happenstance perceptions and reflections: “The priest took a stick with a knob at the end of it out of the boy’s bucket and shook it over the coffin. Holy water that was, I expect, shaking sleep out of it” [131]. This is the more effective for his being ignorant of the name and function of the asperser in Catholic rites. Elsewhere, his reflections on the theology of fertility [“the priest won’t give the poor woman the confession...”, [91], and sacerdotal celibacy [“the tree of forbidden priest”, 489] are particularly incisive.

16. “His present instinct is to get away from fathers, living or mythic, elected or adoptive”. Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (1980), p. 17.

17. 7 Eccles St. is now buried beneath an extension of the Mater Hospital which Joyce called “Mary Mercycordial of the Dripping Nipples” in *Finnegans Wake* [260.F2].


20. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce satirised the superior accent of the English visitor to Ireland: “Tiperaw row raw reeraw puteters out of Now Sealand in spig[h]t of the patchpurple of the massacre ... goddam and biggod, sticks and stanks, of most of the Jacobiters”. [FW110.36f]. This is hardly the most effective passage in *Finnegans Wake*, but it catches the amalgam of potato patches, prejudice, repression and futile rebelliousness that struck Thackeray as the chief ingredients of the Irish scene. See following note.

21. The Epiphany *Introit* reads: “Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee .. and the Gentile shall walk in thy light” [Isaias 60.1-6].
Joyce’s birthday, falling on Candlemas Day (February 2nd) when the Paschal Candles are lit, gave the light tropism of the Liturgy particular significance for him. The messianic gestures in the early Portrait drafts bask in this symbolic atmosphere.

22. The Citizen is modelled on Michael Cusack (1847-1905), who founded the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884. Cusack, who used the Republican honorific, reviled all this English.

23. The scene of Stephen’s epiphany in Eccles Street is revisited in Finnegans Wake, where the spirit of knight-errantry is captured neatly: “What child of a strandlooper but keepy little Kevin in the despondful surroundings of such sneezeful cold would ever have trouved up on a strate that was called strete a motive for future saintity ..” [FW110.32f]. The straight street is the road to Damascus where St. Paul saw the light, an even comparable to Stephen’s dramatic conversion to literary realism in Dublin, 1900. Stephen Dedalus is, of course, a celebrated “strandlooper” or “beachwalker” [FW110.36].


31. Frank Budgen, op. cit., p. 68.

32. Doran’s habit of going on “periodical bends” [89] is mentioned early in *Ulysses* and witnessed as shown in evidence at several later points. The malicious account of goings-on at Mrs. Mooney’s given by the narrator in *Cyclops* is essential secondary reading for students of “The Boarding House” [391].

33. Joyce had a copy of the *Irish Independent* for June 1, 1904 in which the opening of the Mirus Bazaar by Viceroy William Humble, Earl of Dudley, on the previous day was reported [324].

34. The dentist is called Marcus J. Bloom in *Ulysses*. Ellmann notes that Joseph Bloom converted to Catholicism in order to marry. *James Joyce* (1965), p. 386.

35. The details recalled by Bloom in *Ithaca* about the deaths of Percy Apjohn, “killed in action, Modder River”, and Philip Moisel, “pyemia, Heytesbury Street” [827], were, however, wholly imaginative additions to the bare facts in *Thom’s Directory*.


39. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen’s criticism of political and religious life in Ireland bulks very large indeed. In *A Portrait*, his conversation with Davin is a compact equivalent of several conversations in the earlier novel. In *Ulysses*, however, he keeps his thoughts about these issues to himself in the newspaper office and elsewhere. It is not so much a question of his changing his mind – he still thinks Ireland “the old sow that eats her farrow” [692] – as of retreating into silence, cunning, and exile, his adopted strategy. In Circe, he taps his drunken brow and says: “In here it is I must kill the priest and the king” [688].
40. – about which he has particular reason to be sensitive since his father died of an overdose of aconite [801].

41. A Presbyterian. Gifford glosses swaddler as a contemporary Catholic term for the morally rigid Protestant denominations (Ulysses Annotated, 1990, p. 367), but the usage is much older than that. An unacted play of that name was written by Amyas Griffith, according to W.J. Lawrence in a query answered in Irish Book Lover 1 (1919).

42. “A Portrait”, 1904, in Cixous, op. cit., p. 211.


44. Notably in J.J. Molloy’s recitation of John F. Taylor’s Liverpool speech of 1902 on “the language of the outlaw” in Aelous [179ff]. The best discussion of Joyce’s use of Taylor’s oratory, and more broadly the Irish rhetorical tradition, is still to be found in Malcolm Brown, The Politics of Irish Literature (1973).


47. Bloom’s accidental mistranslation of a related Torah text (Exodus 33:3) has ironic implications for his Irish hosts: “That brought us out of the land of Egypt into the house of bondage” [494].


50. Ibid., p. 131. Sinn Féin was the successor to United Irishman, the former having been closed by a libel action in 1906.


52. Ibid.


54. See F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (1971), in which a chapter bears this title (219ff).

55. See Manganiello, op. cit., p. 23. Joyce’s source was The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, by Barry O’Brien (1898), which he held in his Trieste library.

56. “An Irish Poet” Daily Express, 12 December, 1902; printed in Critical Writings, ed. Ellsworth Mason (1966), p. 84-85. The poems, edited posthumously by Griffith, were frankly patriotic. Joyce warned: “... a man who writes a book cannot be excused by his good intentions .. he enters a region where there is a question of the written word, and it is well that this should be borne in mind, now that the region of literature is assailed so fiercely by the enthusiast and the doctrinaire.”

57. John Eglinton, Irish Literary Portraits, p. 133.


61. Ibid.


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When I was invited earlier this summer to Greece to deliver a lecture on some aspect of Irish literature that would touch European culture, it was initially suggested that I should take as my subject the poet W.B. Yeats. However I am by profession a Joycean and it struck me immediately that the most appropriate subject would be the work of that great Dubliner and its relation to the literature of classical Greece. This conviction was reinforced when I discovered that the location of the conference on the beautiful island of Karpathos was the site of the mythical clash of the Titans. What more propitious omen for a paper dealing with a modern artist who with Promethean daring challenged the might of one of the literary gods of classical Greece by rewriting his most famous poem in modern guise. It is to Greece that we look for the origins of the city state, of much of the literature and of the philosophical and ethical systems that have guided Europeans these past several thousand years. In particular in the field of literature the creative mind has been consistently drawn to the artistry of that great myth maker and poet Homer and his genius in celebrating the spirit of man through epic.

Joyce was born in 1882 a citizen of what was then the second city of the British empire – almost indeed a city state itself with a sense of its own pride and personality. The tradition in which he was steeped was not alone that of Aquinas but also as he himself was to point out of Plato and Aristotle. Ireland is an island, its literature and legend enriched with tales of wandering and seafaring from even before the time of St. Brendan the Navigator, and so a parallel with the wandering of the legendary heroes of the isles of Greece also most inevitably suggested itself. Moreover the relationship between Greece, an empire of the mind, and the more pragmatic imperialism of the neighbouring Romans, suggestive of the conflict between the imaginative and the administrative, finds also its reflection in the relationship between the Irish and the English.

Growing to maturity during the first painful birth pangs of the new nation and setting his character Stephen Dedalus upon the mammoth mission of forging in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race, it is not surprising that Joyce should have been attracted to the idea of epic. Indeed although I intend to concentrate on the novel *Ulysses*...
and its relation to Homeric epic one should bear in mind that Joyce's creative attention was attracted towards this form even in his earliest writings. In *Dubliners* for example there are some surviving echoes of a heroic mode and it is worth while remembering that *Ulysses* itself was first contemplated as a story for the collection.

Remnants of an abandoned classical framework can occasionally be discerned in the book although I believe that the classical parallel has been extraordinarily over emphasised by the American critics Shattuck and Levin in their 1944 article “First Flight to Ithaca” in which they portray *Dubliners* as a preliminary sketch for *Ulysses* employing a consistent series of rather strained Homeric parallels. However, it is certainly true that the beautiful final paragraph of “The Dead”:

A few light taps upon the pane had made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamp light. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, further westward, softly falling onto the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorn. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

is, as Richard Ellmann points out, probably borrowed by Joyce from a famous simile in the Twelfth Book of the *Iliad*:

The snow flakes fall thick and fast on a winters day. The winds are lulled and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the planes where the lotus tree grows, and the cultivated fields, and they are falling by the inlets and shores of the foaming seas, but are silently dissolved by the waves.

Joyce improves upon this scene later when towards the end of his life he telescopes the whole mood with exquisite neologistic imagination in a beautiful phrase from *Finnegans Wake* “as flick as flowflakes”.

Moreover in the story “Grace” there is a clear anticipation of the way in which Joyce will subsequently employ the structure of the *Odyssey* as a framework for *Ulysses*, although in the short story the principal effect is the comparatively simple one of ironic reduction. In “Grace” we follow an incident in the life of Mr. Thomas Kernan, a Dublin tea taster, and its repercussions in his wider social circle. There is a clear tripartite division. The first section deals with a mishap in the lavatory of a public house when the inebriated tea taster falls down the steps of the lavatory, bites off part of his tongue and is removed semiconscious as a result of the good offices of a friendly passer-by. The second stage deals with his uncomfortable convalescence during which he is at the mercy of a scolding wife and well meaning friends who persuade him in the third and final development of the story to attend a retreat for businessmen in the Jesuit church in Gardiner Street in Dublin.

Mr. Kernan's unsteady feet prove the truth of the aphorism *facile est descensus Averni* and we become doubly aware of this ironic dimension when we discover that the entire story is modelled upon the movement and structure of Dante's *Divine Comedy* – the fall into the ooze and slime of a public house lavatory representing the descent to hell of the inferno, the period of miserable recuperation representing the purgatorio and the final acceptance in the nave of the Jesuit church into the glorious company of down at heel
businessmen, pawnbrokers and corrupt politicians in whose ears echo the smoothly pharisaical platitudes of a simoniacal priest an ironic paradiso.

9 We approach closer to a situation where the action of a fiction is controlled by the structural resonance of a set of classical parallels in Joyce’s next book *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This is made clear even before the action of the novel starts, in the epigraph which precedes the title page –

> *Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes* – he set his mind to the seeking out of hidden wisdom.

10 This line from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is often ignored by students particularly since nowadays they frequently lack any smattering of a classical education, but it is in fact an important clue in the unravelling of the novel’s web. It refers to the story of Daedalus and his son Icarus, a mythical narrative that is even yet part of the European cultural subconscious. From the very first page until the very last page the image of the inventor Daedalus is present; Daedalus the artist whose human ingenuity allows him to defy the fate imposed upon him by his supernatural overlords escaping from the cruel maze of his own invention on man-made wings accompanied by his son Icarus whose vaunting triumph in the new-found exercise of flight leads to catastrophe as, soaring too close to the heat of the sun, waxen wings melt and the youth plummets to destruction in the sea.

11 Joyce’s novel deals with the growth toward independent consciousness of the mind of a young boy in Ireland who aspires to be an artist. With an iron nerve the young James Joyce named his protagonist Stephen Dedalus. It is a tribute to the power of Joyce’s imaginative genius and his capacity to force the willing suspension of the readers disbelief that no one in the almost eighty years since the first publication of the novel has seen fit to cavil at his curious conjunction of names combining as it does the first martyr of the Christian church with the legendary death of the world’s first test pilot. Something of the complex trellis of symbolic resonances that sustains the frequently realist – or naturalist – appearing surface of the novel may be gathered from the fact that during the course of the first page or so of the book the figures not alone of Dedalus, Icarus and St. Stephen protomartyr are evoked but also those of Prometheus and Satan in his guise as Lucifer the fallen light-bearer.

12 Indeed the image of Icarian fall is one of the most frequently recurring motifs of the novel. The action proceeds in a kind of halting dialectic. Stephen appears to make some advance morally, spiritually, intellectually or artistically but this is speedily undercut by a subsequent ironic intervention in a manner which is reminiscent of the sickening fall of the son of Daedalus. Frequently this trope is accomplished by the employment of a species of sympathetic form where the language itself seems to rise in ecstasy from earth bound prose to the delirium of a prophetic chant only to be dashed back to earth by the harsh realities of the prosaic life. A representative example occurs towards the end of chapter four where Stephen’s imagination inflamed by the thought of his strange name and its association literally takes off into the aether only to be grounded by the rough voices of his bathing companions –

> Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy, so timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. A moment before the ghost of the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the haze wrapped city. Now, as the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a
hawk like man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being?

His heart trembled; his breath came faster and wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of fright made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his windswept limbs.

- one! two! ... look out!
- oh, cripes, I am drowned!

The novel of course ends on the splendid bombast

Welcome, oh life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

Twenty-seventh April: Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead.

Splendid rhetoric sufficient to set the hairs on the back of an adolescent neck a-tingle and to suggest that the ever present image of a maze in the text with its elusive and misleading twists turns and blind ends has at last been successfully circumvented. But those of us whose minds have wandered far in the realms of literature, sought and found strange wisdoms in this and other texts will have caught another note, the note of irony, will have noticed the ambiguity of the word forge, will have spotted Stephen’s mother packing his new second hand clothes in the background in order to allow him the luxury of the heroic demonic gesture of shaking the dust of Dublin from his artistically cloven hoof before springing towards that freedom that is always over the horizon, and will hold the book open for a few last minutes after the encounter with the final full stop in anticipation of the sound of a distant splash. Nor are we disappointed. But in order to achieve that slightly sadistic satisfaction we must a close A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and reach for the opening pages of Joyce’s great epic Ulysses.

In Ulysses James Joyce who had been described by the novelist George Moore as “a nothing, a nobody from the Dublin docks with no background, no breeding and no education” and dismissed by the great classical scholar and Provost of Trinity College Dublin Sir John Pentland Mahaffy as “an ill bird that fouls its own nest” and “a living argument in defence of my contention that it was a mistake to establish a separate university for the aborigines of the island” neatly bypassed the academic establishment whom he regarded as irrelevant to his purpose and took on the principal, Homer himself. Joyce had since a child been fascinated by the story of the Odyssey which he encountered as a boy in a children’s book first published in 1808 Tales of Ulysses by the essayist Charles Lamb known also as Elia. Indeed even after the completion of Ulysses, Joyce was still recommending this small book to friends and commentators as a helpful key to the understanding of his novel.

Writing to the Italian critic Carlo Linati on the 21st of September 1920 in a letter which also included a detailed scheme of the structure of Ulysses Joyce wrote as follows:

It is an epic of two races (Israelite / Irish) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life). The character of Ulysses always fascinated me – even when a boy. Imagine fifteen years ago I started writing it as a short story for Dubliners! For seven years I have been working at this book – blast it! I is also a sort of encyclopaedia. My intention is to transpose the myth sub specie temporis nostri. Each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being
interconnected and interrelated in the structural scheme of the whole) should not only condition but even create its own technique. Each adventure is so to say one person although it is composed of persons – as Aquinas relates of the angelic hosts.

No English printer wanted to print a word of it. In America the review was suppressed four times. Now, as I hear, a great movement is being prepared against the publication, initiated by puritans, English imperialists, Irish republicans, Catholics – what an alliance! Gosh, I ought to be given the Nobel Prize for peace.

It is interesting to note that Joyce here makes plain that what he is attempting is epic and also that his source goes back to childhood reading of Lamb rather than to any direct acquaintance with the original of Homer’s poem although he was, it is clear, interested in the theories of Victor Berard and others concerning the geographical location and possible Semitic origin of the Ulysses legend. It is a curious side light on Joyce’s attitude towards the Homeric substructure that he appears to have altered his attitude towards its significance after the initial reception of the book in the 1920’s, in much the same way that he said he thought he could no longer take any interest in music after writing the Sirens episode of the novel because he had exhausted the possibilities of music. This may of course to a certain extent have been conversational attitudinising during a period in which his interest had transferred to the creation of Finnegans Wake. But it is curious to note the episode retailed by Ellmann in his biography of Joyce which recalls a conversation between the novelist and Vladimir Nabokov in 1937:


Perhaps the reason for this late blossoming diffidence on Joyce’s part was because he felt uncomfortable about the increasingly sensational claims being made on his behalf by acolytes about his command of a myriad of languages. Frank Budgen in an appendix to the second edition of his book James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses entitled Further Recollections of James Joyce makes the following comment:

Joyce associated a good deal with such Greeks as were available in war time Zurich, for he thought they all had a streak of Ulysses in them. Although he knew some Greek he was not a Greek scholar by high academic standards. By chance one day I stumbled on the fact that this was a sore point with him. I told him that I left school and went to work in my thirteenth year, but that the only thing that I regretted about my lack of schooling was that I was never able to learn Greek. He thereupon regretted his insufficient knowledge of that language but, as if to underline the difference in our two cases (or so I interpreted it) he said with sudden vehemence: “but just think: isn’t that a world I am peculiarly fitted to enter?” As a work of reference for his Ulysses he used the Butcher-Lang translation of the Odyssey.

Similarly although Joyce indicates in the Linati Schema of 1920 the titles of the various episodes of Ulysses that give the most immediate clue to their Homeric correspondence he specifically omits these from the published work. In other words they nowhere appear as chapter titles in the printed version of the novel. It is I think clear that by omitting these titles Joyce was seeking to avoid the displacement of critical attention from his creation onto its epic original and a concentration on measuring the discrepancies between the two works instead of assessing Ulysses as a work of art in its own right.

Joyce undoubtedly also wished to have the freedom to vary the emphases of his tale as distinct from the original. In doing so Joyce was also following in the gentle footsteps of
Charles Lamb who, as the editor of the most recent 1977 Garland reprinting of the tales of Ulysses, Professor David Greene, says

infuses the character of Ulysses with a modern sensibility. By making explicit what is only implicit in the Odyssey, Lamb makes Ulysses feel his situation most strongly.

There is also another curious and amusing parallel with Joyce in that strangely the normally inoffensive and almost pusillanimous Lamb, anticipating Joyce’s difficulty by over 100 years, got himself into trouble with his publisher who objected to indecorous descriptions of the giant’s vomit and asked him also to tone down a number of particularly bloodthirsty passages. In a letter to William Godwin of March 11th 1808 Lamb wrote:

The giants vomit is perfectly nauseous, and I am glad that you pointed it out.

However, he refused to give in to Godwin’s other demand saying with a remarkable Joycean flourish:

If you want a book which is not occasionally to shock, you should not have thought of a tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders. I cannot alter these things without enervating the book, and I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you and all the London book sellers shall refuse it.

The similarity with Joyce’s correspondence about Dubliners with the publisher Grant Richards in which he uses virtually identical phraseology is remarkable.

Whatever about its mildly bizarre origins, Joyce’s clear desire was to re-enter Ireland in the stakes of the European epic, a thing not contemplated since the heroic cycle of the Fiannaíocht, and in so doing felt at least as much at liberty as Charles Lamb in dealing with his source material. Joyce’s Ulysses consist of eighteen episodes divided three, twelve, three. The first three the Telemachiad deal with the initial situation of dispossession and the anguish of Odysseus’ son Telemachus, the central twelve deal with the actual adventures of Odysseus, while the final triad complete the novel with the Nostos or return home.

Joyce has selected his eighteen episodes from the Homeric original with regard for his own artistic requirements. Indeed several of the episodes do not occur as episodes at all in the original but are expanded by Joyce out of glancing references in Homer. For example, in the Telemachiad, the Proteus section is expanded from a piece of indirect narration in which in Homer Telemachus is told by Menelaus of his encounter with the ever changing god of the sea Proteus, and how despite the ever shifting nature of this god of the sea he eventually managed to pin him down and extract news of the wandering Odysseus. Similarly the Wandering Rocks episode which Joyce places at the centre of his novel as an entr’acte does not occur in Homer at all. The heroes are warned against this particular marine hazard by the enchantress Circe and so they choose another way home encountering instead the equally ferocious Scylla and Charybdis. And thus the wandering rocks are present by absence, an appropriate Joycean phenomenon. (Joyce as an undergraduate argued that absence was the highest form of presence).

In addition to these kinds of changes certain episodes are displaced in order to fit in with the realities of Dublin life of the 1904 period. For example the visit to the underworld which takes place late in the Homeric cycle is introduced as a morning episode early on in Ulysses as a tribute to the actuality of funerary practice in the Dublin of the period. The tendency of all this is to demonstrate Joyce’s positive desire to create a new epic form, and I shall argue that this is related as closely to developments in the 18th Century English novel as it is to Homer’s Odyssey.
That Joyce was interested in the creation of epic is evidenced not only by the concealed structure of the work but also by a series of references that rise to the surface in the novel drawing the reader's attention to the author's ambition. The words of the librarian Best in the Scylla and Charybdis (library) episode refer – "our national epic was yet to be written, Dr. Sigerson says. Moore is the man for it. A knight of the Rueful countenance here in Dublin. With a saffron kilT? O'Neill Russell? Oh, yes, he must speak the grand old tongue. And his Dulcinea? James Stephens is doing some clever sketches. We are becoming important, it seems."

In choosing the wily Ulysses as his hero Joyce shows himself attracted to the qualities of intellectual agility, prudence and skill as a negotiator rather than the brute physical prowess associated in the popular mind with the heroes and demi-gods of antiquity. The presentation of the figure of Ulysses - Bloom also represents a maturing by Joyce both in technical accomplishment and psychological insight. One can view Joyce's complete oeuvre as a continuously expanding and developing entity. Dubliners for example is akin to a series of medallioned and Sepia-toned Vignettes, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man broadens the presentation by Chiaroscuro and the development of psychological depth in the representation of its central character. With Ulysses we are given for the first time three dimensions, and this relates to the way in which Joyce regarded Odysseus / Bloom. In conversation with Budgen in Zurich in 1918 while engaged on the composition of the novel, Joyce stated "I see him from all sides, and therefore he is all-round in the sense of your sculptors figure. But he is a complete man of the world – a good man. At any rate, that is what I intend he shall be." He glossed this somewhat further and characteristically by saying to the sculptor Paul Suter that he intended Bloom to be seen not really as gut but as gutm+ tig decent. The concept of Bloom as an all-round man was clearly important to Joyce, and Budgen records how the author teased him by asking to name a complete all-round character in world literature. Balzac, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, even Shakespeare all failed to provide the necessary answer. Budgen hazarded Faust and then no age Faust isn’t a man. But you mentioned Hamlet. Hamlet is a humanbeing, but he is a son only, Ulysses is son to Laertes but he is father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy and king of Ithaca. He was subjected to many trials, but with wisdom and courage came through them all. Don’t forget that he was a war dodger who tried to evade military service by simulating madness. He might never have taken up arms and gone to Troy, but the Greek recruiting sergeant was too clever for him and, while he was ploughing the sands, placed young Telemachus in front of his plough. But once at the war the conscientious objector became a jusqu’auboutist. When the others wanted to abandon the siege he insisted on staying till Troy should fall.

So we have James Joyce taking on an ancient epic theme, selecting for its hero a figure noted for intellectual rather than physical gifts and treating his subject almost as a sculptural model, a mode surely appropriate to the Grecian theme. The treatment of this theme by Joyce has come under the reproving scrutiny of certain classical scholars, notably my own distinguished colleague the late Professor W.B. Stanford. In his scholarly work The Ulysses Theme Professor Stanford while displaying both admiration for and understanding of Joyce chides for him for both sordidness and sacrilege. However, one must ask the question how po-faced was Homer himself? It is said that even Homer nodded and one hopes that he may also have smiled occasionally. Professor Hugh Kenner in Dublin's Joyce in a section entitled Odyssey as Comedy makes the point that our Western
European understanding of Homer depends very largely upon the quality and emphasis of
translation. He opens by quoting the following sentence:

I come from wonderland, where I have good estate, and I am the son of my lord
Neverstint GriefanPain; my name is Battleddwn.

and poses the question as to whether this comes from the Cyclops episode of Ulysses. Of
course it does not, it comes directly from Homer as translated by Dr. W.H.D. Rouse.
Kenner makes the point that the usual practice of translators is to leave proper names in
their original without making any attempt to render the vestiges of sense they contain.
As he says:

Alybas, Apheidas Polypemonides, Eperitos; they sound so much more majestic, and
the whimsical etymologies are (surely!) a mistake. But Dr. Rouse (in an essay
appended to his Odyssey) introduces much evidence that Homer’s diction is
colloquial and often ingeniously comic.

Kenner further goes on to compare a sentence from the Odyssey in two different
translations, the first from Butcher and Lang’s Odyssey runs as follows:

But the daughter of Cadmus marked him, Ino of the fair an kles and sat upon the
well-bound raft and spake “hapless one, wherefore was Poseidon shaker of the
earth, so wonderous wroth with thee?”

The same sentence translated by Rouse goes:

Poor Odysseus! You’re odd I see, true to your name! Why does Poseidon earth
shaker knock you about in this monstrous way?

Both are accurate translations in their own way, but one is reminded of the scene in E.M.
Forster where the pedantic The Rev. M. Eager glosses the line from Dante non fata guerra
al maggta as “war not with the May” whereas the spirit is far more aptly caught by Mr.
Emmerson “don’t go fighting against the Spring”. The Rouse translation brings Homer
within the ambit of Joyce and comedy. Kenner continues by invoking Alexander Pope’s
reference to the statement of Longinus that the Odyssey is indeed at least in part comic.

The mention of Pope brings in the question of the immediate ancestry of Joyce’s epic. It
seems to me that the Ulysses of James Joyce springs at least as much from the heart of the
18th Century English novel as from the epic of classical Greece. First of all 18th Century
English culture was Augustan, obsessed by the classic, nervously encountering and
measuring discrepancies between the ancient and the modern world, usually, though not
always to the disadvantage of the modern. One could instance Swift’s Battle of the Books,
Pope’s Rape of the Lock and Dunciad, the translations of the classics by most of the leading
poets into the inappropriate metre of the heroic couplet and finally the first great comic
novel in English Fielding’s Joseph Andrews. The writers of the 18th Century first of all
attempted to translate epic from Latin and Greek into English but found the ungainly
manners of the antique heroes fitted only awkwardly into the niceties of Augustine
culture. It was like a Sumo Wrestler dressed by Balmain. However, it is very important to
note that even in the case of Pope and The Rape of the Lock the tensions and diminutions of
the mock heroic operated as a two way system. Not only was the modern age found
lacking in primitive virtues but the tensions established led to a reassessment of the
nature of the heroic, and it is here that we are at the heart of the Joycean comic epic.

Perhaps the most important influence on Joyce, a man also heavily influenced by the
classics, was Henry Fielding. Fielding in the introduction of Joseph Andrews gives us a
description of the new form of writing upon which he is embarking. He describes it as “a
comic epic poem in prose”. What better description could there be for James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

I believe in fact that the influence of Fielding on Joyce is quite direct. *Joseph Andrews* is a picaresque novel. It concerns the adventures of a young footman, “Joseph Andrews”, virtuous and beautiful who fends off the amorous advances of a group of women protesting his principle, chastity — a reversal of the usual situation upon which no doubt Mr. Leopold Bloom the new womanly man might have some sympathetic comment. In his flight from the wicked city back to pastoral innocence Joseph is attacked, robbed, stripped, beaten and left for dead. A coach full of stock characters passes by and detecting something untoward stops to investigate the situation. The postilion is sent to poke around in the ditch and disclosing the naked and bruised figure of Joseph is met by a shriek of disdain from a lady of refined sensibility in the coach who squeaks “Oh Jesus a naked man, dear coachman drive on and leave him”. Here it is clear that Fielding is using the Christian value system as an unspoken negative analogue operating behind the text. The Christian heritage of his readership would immediately bring into play the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the *Cyclops* episode of *Ulysses* Joyce, in an episode very clearly and directly modelled upon the details of Homer’s account of the encounter between Odysseus and Polyphemus, uses the Christian myth in a very similar fashion.

But begob I was just lowering the heel of the pint when I saw the citizen getting up to waddle to the door, puffing and blowing with the dropsy and he cursing the curse of Cromwell on hi, bell, book and candle in Irish, pitting and spatting out of him and Joe and little Alf round him like a leprechaun trying to peacify him.

- Let me alone, says he.

And begob he got as far as the door and they holding him and he bawls out of him:

- Three cheers for Israel!

Arrah, sit down on the parliamentary side of your arse for Christ’ sake and don’t be making a public exhibition of yourself. Jesus, there’s always some bloody clown or other kicking up a bloody murder about bloody nothing. Gob, it’d turn the porter sour in your guts, so it would.

And all the ragamuffins and sluts of the nation round the door and Martin telling the jarvey to drive ahead and the citizen bawling and Alf and Joe at him to whist and he on his high horse about the jews and the loafers calling for a speech and Jack Power trying to get him to sit down on the car and hold his bloody jaw and a loafer with a patch over his eye starts singing “If the man in the moon was a jew, jew, jew” and a slut shouts out of her:

- Eh, mister! your fly is open, mister!

And says he:

- Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Saviour was a Jew and his father was a Jew. Your God.
- he had no father, says Martin. That’ll do now. Drive ahead.
- Whose God? says the citizen.
- Well, his uncle was a jew, says he. Your God was a jew.

Christ was a Jew like me.

Gob, the citizen made a plunge back into the shop.

- By Jesus, says he, I’ll brain that bloody jewman for using the holy name. By Jesus, I’ll crucify him so I will.

Give us that biscuitbox here.

[......]

Your never saw the like of it in all your born puff. Gob, if he got that lottery ticket on the side of his poll he’d remember the gold cup, he would so, but begob the citizen would have been lagged for assault and battery and Joe for aiding and abetting. The Jarvey saved his life by furious driving as sure as God made Moses. What? O, Jesus, he did. And he let a volley of oaths after him.
- Did I kill him, says he, or what?
And he shouting to the bloody dog:
- After him, Garry! After him, boy!

And the last we saw was the bloody car rounding the corner and old sheepface on it
gesticulating and the bloody mongrel after it with his lugs back for all he was
bloody well worth to tear him limb from limb. Hundred to five! Jesus, he took the
value of it out of him, I promise you.

When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot
wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed
upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon
and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out
of heaven, calling: Elijah! Elijah! And he answered with a main cry: Abba! Adonai!
And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to
the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe’s in Little
Green Street like a shot off a shovel.

37 I would like to conclude by adumbrating some of the qualities that I believe bind Joyce in
his modified epic to its classic original. There is the subject matter as already disclosed —
the following of incident from the great original. There is also Joyce’s use largely for
comic effect of epic simile, epithet and heroic listing (see for example the
Cyclops
episode
once more). As important as any of these elements is the closeness of both Joyce and
Homer to sound and to an aural culture. Homer unquestionably used traditional materials
and descriptions just as Joyce mines and rifles the folklore jokes and sayings of his native
Dublin. But most importantly, sound is the most significant clue to an understanding of
Joyce by his audience. Two examples will suffice: the Proteus episode already mentioned is
perhaps most intellectually complex of all the episodes of Ulysses. In it Joyce rifles the
whole history of academic scholastic philosophical thought in Europe reaching back to
Plato, Aristotle and Bishop Berkeley. He seeks their help in addressing one of the most
difficult problems to confront the artist, the question of how to give form and
permanence through art to human experience which is essentially a flux. In the middle of
all this disembodied cerebration the ordinary reader is allowed a handle on the mystery.
A curious sentence occurs:

Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseis, ooos.

38 What is happening here is not a cabbalistic conjuring or numerology gone mad; it is in
fact the accomplishment of the protean miracle by the young Stephen Dedalus who is
noting down on a fragment of paper the exact sound of a wave as it crashes upon the
shoreline of Sandymount Strand and retracts its foam once more through the shingle.

39 The second example addresses the question raised by Professor Stanford of Joyce’s sordid
sacrilege in the Naustca episode of Ulysses. Loosely based upon the Homeric episode Joyce
has Ulysses / Bloom half concealed behind a rock and admiring the deliberately exposed
undies of Gerty McDowell perform an act of ritual adulation personalised as
masturbation. We switch in an ironic antiphon between Gerty’s rock and the Star of the
Sea Church while Bloom’s erection and detumescence is portrayed as a firework display:

The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace. Far
away in the west the sun was setting and the last glow of all too fleeting day
lingered lovingly on sea and strand, on the proud promontary of dear old Howth
guarding as ever the waters of the bay, on the weedgrown rocks along Sandymount
shore and, last but not least, on the quiet church whence there streamed forth at
time upon the stillness the voice of prayer to her who is in her pure radiance a
beacon ever to be storm-tossed heart of man, Mary, star of the sea.

[........]
Queen of angels, queen of patriarchs, queen of prophets, of all saints, they prayed, queen of the most holy rosary and then Father Conroy handed the thurible to Canon O’Hanlon and he put in the incense and censed the Blessed Sacrament and Cissy Caffrey caught the two twins and she was itching to give them a ringing good clip on the ear but she didn’t because she thought he might be watching but she never made a bigger mistake in all her life because Gerty could see without looking that he never took his eyes off of her and then Canon O’Hanlon handed the thurible back to Father Conroy and knelt down looking up at the Blessed Sacrament and the choir began to sing Tantum ergo and she just swung her foot in and out in time as the music rose and fell to the Tantumer gosa cramen tum. Three and eleven she paid for those stockings in Sparrow’s of George’s street on the Tuesday, no the Monday before Easter and there wasn’t a brack on them and that was what he was looking at, transparent, and not at her insignificant ones that had neither shape nor form (the cheek of her!) because he had eyes in his head to see the difference for himself. Cissy came up along the strand with the two twins and their ball with her hat anyhow on her to one side after her run and she did look a street tugging the two kids along with the flimsy blouse she bought only a fortnight before like a rag on her back and bit of her petticoat hanging like a caricature. Gerry just took off her hat for a moment to settle her hair and a daintier head of nutbrown tresses was never seen on a girl’s shoulders, a radiant little vision, in sooth, almost maddening in its sweetness. You would have to travel many a long mile before you found a head of hair the like of that. She could almost see the swift answering flush of admiration in his eyes that set her tingling in every nerve. She put on her hat so that she could see from underneath the brim and swung her buckled shoe faster for her breath caught as she caught the expression in his eyes. He was eyeing her as a snake eyes its prey. Her woman’s instinct told her that she had raised the devil in him and at the thought a burning scarlet swept from throat to brow till the lovely colour of her face became a glorious rose.

And Jacky Caffrey shouted to look, there was another and she leaned back and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent and they all saw it and shouted to look, look there it was and she leaned back ever so far to see the fireworks and something queer was flying about through the air, a soft thing to and fro, dark. And she saw a long Roman candle going up over the trees up, up, and, in the tense hush, they were all breathless with excitement as it went higher and higher and she had to lean back more and more to look up after it, high, high, almost out of sight, and her face was suffused with a diving an entrancing blush from straining back .... She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow the cry of a young girl’s love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has rung through the ages. And then a rocket sprang and bang short blind and O! then the roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! in raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair threads and they shed and ah! they were all greeny dewy stars falling with golden, o so lively! o so soft, sweet, soft!

Anybody who can find sordidness, blasphemy or obscenity in these lines rather than compassion and humanity and supreme artistic skill seems to me themselves disordered. Or perhaps it is that my own poor old hormones are too jaded to be set a-twitter by such material nowadays. In any case it seems to me what Joyce is doing here is nobly in harmony with the spirit of the Odyssey as translated by Professor Rouse. In conclusion let me return to my title “Clash of the Titans” and let me proclaim as presumptuous referee this clash to have been a draw. Joyce accepts the subject matter of Homer’s great epic, renews its technique with extraordinary virtuosity as did also the great modern Greek writer Nicos Kazantzakis in his Odyssey and deepens in so doing our fundamental understanding of the human spirit. Homeric epic was a literature of
comrades and it is therefore appropriate to leave the last word to Joyce's comrade the French critic Louis Gillet:

Irish literature is the literature of an island of navigators: the world it made a present of a big theme, the theme of Quest, voyage discovery, Adventure. It was the Quest of the Holy Grail, the voyage of St. Patrick, of St. Brendan which was no other (from centuries before Columbus) than a route to the new world; later with Dean Swift, it was Gullivers Travels. I have told of Joyce's existence and wandering life. It was natural that life should appear to him as an odyssey. An extraordinary odyssey which never left the circle of Dublin's streets; the poet's whole story is but that of a single book, a single dream. While the exile wandered from town to town, on the shores of the Tiber on the Adriatic, on the Quays of the Seine, on the banks of a Swiss lake, he was — like Ulysses — a dreamer in search of Ithaca, and living only in his fatherland.

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Réflexions sur Joyce et l’occultisme

Jacques Aubert

1 La singularité de l’œuvre de James Joyce crée toujours un certain embarras lorsque l’on en vient à la considérer dans le contexte de son milieu historique. Les témoignages ne manquent pas, dans son œuvre ou dans sa vie, sur le soin, la vivacité, la vigueur même qu’il a mis à prendre ses distances vis-à-vis de ses contemporains et de leurs intérêts philosophiques aussi bien que religieux. Et pourtant il n’est pas rare de le sentir plus proche d’eux, à tel ou tel moment, qu’il ne veut bien le laisser paraître. Tel semble être le cas avec l’occultisme, d’une importance historique suffisante pour mériter examen. En effet, l’affaire ne concerne pas seulement l’attitude personnelle de Joyce à l’égard d’un milieu, celui du Dublin intellectuel des années 1880 et 1890, ou à l’égard de ses personnalités-phares, telles que W.B. Yeats : au-delà des tensions, ou même de l’agressivité, au demeurant réelles, on perçoit très vite chez lui une attitude sensiblement plus complexe, qui renvoie à des débats et des enjeux d’idées beaucoup plus sérieux.


3 Ce n’est pas par hasard non plus si W.B. Yeats présida cette première séance, au cours de laquelle Charles Johnston lut une communication sur “Esoteric Buddhism”, le titre même de l’ouvrage d’A.P. Sinnett, communication qui devait être publiée dans la Dublin University Review, celle-là même où Yeats publiera ses premiers poèmes. Jacqueline Genet a fait le point avec élégance sur la question des rapports du poète avec l’occultisme, soulignant l’importance pour Yeats de “la vie mystique – entendons la vie occulte” qui, dit-il, “est au cœur de tout ce que je pense et de tout ce que j’écris” ; l’héritage celtique, jusque dans ses croyances populaires, lui paraît relever de la même mouvance philosophique : dans ce domaine, dit-il, “l’occultiste doit avoir son mot à dire, aussi bien que le folkloriste... Certaines des croyances concernant les fantômes sont théosophiques” . Bien sûr, il n’est pas question de reprendre ici l’histoire souvent explorée de ce(s)
mouvement(s), le rôle qu’y joua en particulier madame Blavatsky et la façon dont s’y inscrivit Yeats, la Theosophical Society de George Russell avec laquelle il flirta, l’Ordre Rose-Croix de la Golden Dawn auquel il appartint.

Tout cela faisait bien partie du paysage dublinois dans lequel survint l’adolescent qu’était Joyce au tournant du siècle, c’est-à-dire avec un décalage d’une demi-génération. Telle est une première ambiguïté, telle était une source possible de difficultés. Il rencontrait là un phénomène culturel bien établi, qui avait donné lieu à des productions certes inégales, mais qu’il pouvait difficilement balayer d’un revers de main ; et du même coup cet héritage devait paraître singulièrement pesant à une personnalité poétique aussi précocement affirmée que la sienne. Il est remarquable qu’il ait à plusieurs reprises dit son admiration fidèle pour deux récits “occultistes” de Yeats : The Adoration of the Magi dans “The Day of the Rabblement” et The Tables of the Law dans Stephen Hero.

Les rapports de James Joyce avec l’occultisme sont d’emblée marqués au sceau de l’équivoque ; parler d’occultisme à son sujet semble totalement incongru, et contradictoire avec ce que nous savons de son écriture si concertée. Avant de les examiner plus avant, rappelons les quelques témoignages externes disponibles. Il est difficile de tirer des conclusions de la présence dans sa bibliothèque d’ouvrages tels que le Buddhist Catechism de H.S. Olcott, acheté en 1907. En revanche, s’agissant de sa rencontre avec George Russell (qui, après tout, fut le premier à publier sa prose) au cours de l’été 1904, se recoupent et font sens les deux récits de Constantine Curran et de George Russell lui-même (ce dernier rapporté dans la biographie de Richard Ellmann par le truchement d’Alan Denson, éditeur de Russell. Nous laissons de côté le récit de Yeats). La démarche de Joyce était concertée, sans doute même jusqu’à l’heure choisie (près de minuit...), mais il eut quelque peine à formuler sa demande. Russell tenta de l’aider en rappelant ses trois intérêts majeurs, l’économie, la littérature, le mysticisme (pour Curran, qui prétend rapporter les propos d’A.E., il s’agissait de l’économie, la poésie et la peinture, ce qui paraît curieux). Dans les deux récits, Joyce aurait dit qu’il avait eu l’espoir qu’un nouvel avatar (?) se manifestait en la personne d’A.E., mais qu’au premier coup d’œil il avait déchanté...

Dans l’épisode Charybde et Scylla d’Ulysses, Stephen Dedalus, face au même Russell, se laisse aller à des pensées sur les initiés de Dublin qui sont passablement sarcastiques, mais témoignent d’une réelle familiarité avec leurs thèses :

Yogibogeybox in Dawson chambers. Isis Unveiled. Their Pali book we tried to pawn. Crosslegged under an umbrel umbershoot he thrones an Aztec logos, functioning on astral levels, their oversoul, mahamahatma. The faithful hermetists awaited the light, ripe for chelaship, ringroundabout him. Louis H. Victory. T. Caulfield Irwin. Lotus ladies tend them i’the eyes, their pineal glands aglow. Filled with his god he thrones, Budd under plantain. Gulfer of souls, engulfer. Hesouls, shesouls, shoals of souls. Engulfed with wailing creecries, whirled, whirling, they bewail.

La petite histoire, dont on perçoit ici un écho, veut que Joyce ait pratiqué sur les membres de ce groupe, en compagnie de son ami Oliver St. John Gogarty, un canular consistant à pénétrer de nuit dans les locaux de la Hermetic Society, Dawson Chambers, pour installer un mannequin fabriqué à l’aide de dessous féminins.

Nous sommes sur un terrain beaucoup plus solide avec deux autres textes, qui permettent de saisir la position réelle de Joyce. Le premier est ce passage d’une lettre à son frère Stanislaus :

Words cannot measure my contempt for A.E at present (I believe he did not write to Lady Gregory) and his spiritual friends. I did well however to leave my MSS with
him for I had a motive. However I shall take them back as my latest additions to *Epiphany* might not be to his liking. And so help me devil I will write only the things that approve themselves to me and I will write them the best way I can. It is the same way with boots. O, I have revelled in ties, coats, boots, hats since I came here – all imaginary! So damn Russell, damn Yeats, damn Skeffington, damn Darlington, damn editors, damn freethinkers, damn vegetable verse and double damn vegetable philosophy!"

Joyce vient d’expliquer à son frère, comme il le dira bientôt à sa mère, qu’il est en pleine recherche théorique, lisant le *De anima* et autres œuvres d’Aristote, saint Thomas, Ben Jonson...). On le voit, le contexte de cette rupture avec A.E et son groupe n’est pas purement matériel et intéressé (la recommandation attendue auprès de Lady Gregory), et il est clair : c’est celui de l’écriture, et plus précisément l’écriture des *Épiphanies*, ces petits fragments en prose qu’il qualifie dans *Stephen Hero* de “spiritual manifestations”, le moment où “la chose”, “the thing”, voit “son âme”, “its soul”, s’échapper du “vêtement de son apparence”, “from the vestment of its appearance”, soulignant bien la connotation religieuse, spirituelle du propos. Mais souvenons-nous aussi que *spiritual* en anglais, c’est aussi bien *spirite* que *spirituel*. Et si Joyce a prêté à A.E son manuscrit, pour lui si précieux, c’est bien qu’il a cru, un moment au moins, qu’ils avaient tous deux quelque chose en commun, et peut-être même que la théosophie pouvait apporter quelque chose à sa recherche. Mais en quoi ? Il est évident que toute l’affaire tient au corps, à la position singulière de Joyce par rapport au corps. Le fait qu’il lie désir d’écriture et désir de vêtements est loin d’être indifférent. Le vêtement ici a une fonction majeure, qui est, paradoxalement, de donner consistence à ce corps qui ne cesse de s’évanouir dans la jouissance. On connaît le passage célèbre du *Portrait of the Artist* où Stephen Dedalus, expliquant sa théorie esthétique, affirme : “The lyrical form is in fact the simplest verbal vesture of an instant of emotion”\(^\text{11}\); ou cet autre : “His mind, in the vesture of a doubting monk” (p. 176). Son intérêt pour le vêtement, et point seulement les sous-vêtements féminins, qu’ils soient occasion de canular ou fixation féチチックiste (voir *Ulysses* et les lettres à Nora), est sensible jusque dans *Finnegans Wake*. Cette lettre à Stanislaus, fortuitement, signale et souligne la place que le spiritisme (“les manifestations et l’enseignement des esprits”) pouvait occuper dans sa recherche première. Il a pu penser qu’elle était une technique (plutôt sans doute qu’une science) parente de celle qu’il désirait articuler à partir de son expérience de l’*épiphanie*, ce nœud de l’esprit et de l’écriture dans la jouissance.

Stanislaus, le fidèle confident, nous aide à voir un peu plus clair dans le commerce de son frère avec l’occulte. Voici ce qu’il nous dit dans *My Brother’s Keeper* :

He did, indeed, toy with theosophy as a kind of interim religion. His interest in it had been aroused by reading Yeats and Russell, and though he never belonged either to the Hermetic Society or to the Theosophical Society that existed in Dublin then and, for all I know, perhaps still exists, he read with serious intent expository works on theosophy by Madame Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, Annie Besant, and Leadbeter, [...]. On the whole, however, I think his serious interest in theosophy lapsed very quickly [...]. Nevertheless it brought him in contact with certain mystical writers whose personalities were less questionable - the anti-Jesuit Miguel de Molinos, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Sienna, Thomas à Kempis [...].

- Why are you pottering about with the misty mystics ? I asked him.
- They interest me, he replied. In my opinion, they are writing about a very real spiritual experience you can't appreciate. [...]. And they write about it, he continued, with a subtlety that I don't find in many so-called psychological novels.
It is clear, however, that at this time he felt very forcibly both the attraction of mysticism and the call of reality, and for a while he was interested in the figure of Paracelsus, scientist and mystic, who had laboured somewhat too boldly in both spheres [...] “Life itself is a symbol”, he said, quoting a reply of Ibsen’s to one of his critics who had objected to the symbolism in his dramas. But mysticism, instead of enhancing the significance of life, required from the adept a total renunciation of it; instead of imaginative intuitions mysticism offered unsatisfying figments of the fancy [...]. Temperamentally he was not the kind of man to find his heart’s ease amid a murmuration of mystics. At Trieste, however, he lectured on two writers, a mystic and a realist, Blake and Defoe.

11 Si les premières affirmations de Stanislaus confirmant utilement la réalité et l’étendue des lectures de Joyce sur ces questions, et les influences qu’il a subies, ses conclusions doivent être examinées de plus près. Il ne fait pas de doute que Joyce s’interrogea sur l’expérience mystique ; le Portrait of the Artist de 1904 montre même qu’il y succomba presque. Il invoque d’ailleurs Molinos et saint Jean de la Croix dans son compte rendu du livre de McIntyre sur Giordano Bruno, pour mieux faire apparaître les mérites de l’hérétique de Nola : “His mysticism is little allied to that of Molinos or to that of Saint John of the Cross ; there is nothing in it of quietism or of the dark cloister : it is strange, suddenly rapturous, and militant”13. Là où l’argumentation de Stanislaus flotte, c’est lorsqu’après avoir développé la critique du mysticisme que son frère aurait abandonné, il relève que celui-ci consacra une conférence à Blake, bel et bien défini comme un mystique, à une date assez tardive, 1912.

12 Blake et Bruno : tels sont deux repères majeurs pour mieux saisir l’insistance chez Joyce des références occultistes. Car il y eut insistance, on le voit bien avec le premier. Et l’on voit bien aussi que, là encore, un intercesseur décisif est W.B. Yeats avec ses deux grandes études de 1897, “William Blake and the Imagination” et “William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy”, dont les échos sont nombreux dans les premiers écrits, comme la conférence “James Clarence Mangan”, et jusqu’à Ulysses. C’est qu’avec lui, comme avec Dante, mais à la différence des mystiques religieux, la “croyance en l’existence de réalités supra-sensibles” est étroitement liée à une production artistique. Blake ajoutait à cette première donnée une complexité intéressante. Il était l’exemple d’un créateur mettant enjeu un double registre, poétique et représentatif ; il le faisait en tant qu’illustrateur, c’est-à-dire d’abord lecteur d’une œuvre poétique autre que la sienne ; et ce faisant il posait, sans la résoudre autrement que dans sa pratique, la question des rapports conflictuels du symbole et de l’imagination, du symbolique et de l’imaginaire, de l’écriture et du corps.

13 Cette interrogation était au cœur du travail théorique de Joyce au début du siècle14. Yeats, observe Jacqueline Genet, appréciait que Blake fournît un système complet et ordonné. Telle était bien aussi l’ambition du jeune Joyce lorsqu’il s’obstinait, au même moment, à vouloir ordonner son expérience esthético-mystique en une théorie. Ce qui distingue et spécifie Joyce, c’est cette nécessité d’une écriture, par quoi nous entendons la mise en ordre de signes symboliques. Tout le contexte des références à Cornélius Agrippa et à Swedenborg dans le Portrait de l’artiste15 le montre bien : il s’agit de lecture, de déchiffrement, et d’écriture (et il est immédiatement question de Toth, sinon du Phèdre, en filigrane). Il en va de même au début de l’épisode de Protée dans Ulysses : “… Signatures of all things I am here to read”, où apparaît cette autre inspiration de Blake, Jakob Boehme.
Ici, à défaut d’une étude plus complète, nous pouvons rassembler quelques indices épars, vestiges et repères peut-être d’une construction abandonnée. Chez Boehme, la célèbre épiphanie du vase d’étain n’est pas sans rappeler celle de l’horloge du Ballast Office chez Joyce ; et cette Aurore dont il a laissé un traité, est-elle vraiment sans rapport avec cette aurore qui inaugure la “Villanelle of the Temptress” : “Towards dawn he awoke” ? ; et sa théorie de la naissance de la Trinité n’est-elle pas en résonance avec la réflexion trinitaire chez Joyce ? Chez Cornelius Agrippa, comme chez Bruno, Joyce a pu s’intéresser à l’idée d’une âme universelle qui serait l’intellect, cet intellect si cher à Stephen Dedalus.

Mais comme le souligne Stanislaus, celui qui devait retenir l’intérêt de Joyce, c’est plutôt Paracelse : c’est-à-dire un alchimiste qui, n’oubliant pas d’être médecin, s’intéresse aux maladies invisibles, celles du psychique, y compris les “religious ecstasies” (pour reprendre l’expression de Joyce à propos de Bruno) ; mais aussi un théologien-philosophe qui tente d’articuler corps matériel et corps astral. Sa théorie de l’imagination, qui, dans son système, “permet la naissance du corporel à partir du spirituel” (Hélène Védrine), donnait consistance métaphysique à ce qui, dans les suggestions avancées par les poètes, restait par trop vague (voir “James Clarence Mangan”). Enfin, grand théoricien des rapports du macrocosme et du microcosme, Paracelse proposait une grille symbolique dont on sait qu’elle eut la faveur de Joyce au moins jusqu’au début des années vingt : il en reste quelque chose dans les schémas de correspondances fournis à Carlo Linati et à Stuart Gilbert, et plus encore dans la manière dont il élabore et fait travailler le registre des astres, jusqu’au point final d’Ithaque, où réapparaissent les phénomènes astraux, le météorique, inauguré silencieusement avec la théorie de l’épiphanie, épiphanie qu’on ne relira jamais assez, sinon en tant que théorie, du moins sous l’angle du symptôme.

Joyce et l’occultisme : la convergence n’est pas avec une mode plus ou moins durable ; elle n’est pas non plus avec un savoir mystérieux et fascinant introduisant à des archétypes, comme chez certains adeptes (elle ne se présente pas d’ailleurs, comme chez W.B. Yeats, par le truchement d’un document oral ou manuscrit imaginaire). C’est la consonance avec son expérience la plus vive, celle d’une rencontre à la Blanchot, éblouissante surprise, tuché qui lui dicte un écrit, fait naître un écrit animé par une parole, où le macrocosme semble s’incarner en microcosme, sur un mode qui autorise l’analogie eucharistique.

Cela n’est pas contraditoire avec la visée scientifique qui était celle de Joyce au début du siècle (il parle souvent de “méthode scientifique”, de “science esthétique”, etc.) : on l’ajustement remarqué, le spiritisme est “moderne, cartésien” ; on observe, par exemple, que “le patronage de Swedenborg fut des plus recherchés par un xixème siècle en quête de la religion nouvelle qui serait à la fois science de la religion et religion de la science”, comme on le voit avec Alfred Russel Wallace. Et c’est l’année même de la naissance de Joyce, en 1882, que Sir William Crpokes, l’illustre physicien, fonde avec certains de ses collègues de Trinity College, Cambridge, la Society for Psychical Research. La découverte, dans la période qui nous intéresse, entre 1895 et 1803, des rayons X, de la radioactivité, du radium, ne pouvait que conforter ce mouvement, dont la propagation inquiéta l’Église au point que le Saint-Office condamna le spiritisme officiellement en 1898, et s’employa à opposer aux médiums, souvent des femmes, et par définition, par fonction dira-t-on, “femmes perdues”, l’image et la dévotion à Marie Médiatrice. Ce qui est en cause ici, ce n’est pas seulement la jouissance, encore qu’elle soit au cœur secret de l’affaire, c’est aussi le sujet de la science, de la science moderne, celle dont Joyce, par ailleurs, traque le surgissement à travers Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, ou un post-cartésien comme Baumgarten : à ce titre, Joyce est bien un contemporain de Freud. Et ce n’est pas par
Précisément, ce qui en dernier ressort rend le mieux compte de l’intérêt porté par Joyce à l’occultisme, c’est la persistance chez lui d’une interrogation singulière sur les rapports de l’âme et du corps. Le *Portrait de l’artiste* nous donne une idée de l’angoisse qu’elle suscite, par exemple dans ce passage où Stephen Dedalus regarde ses amis se baigner : “Perhaps they had taken refuge in number and noise from the secret dread in their souls. But he, apart from them and in silence, remembered in what dread he stood of the mystery of his own body” 

Le mystère du corps, de ce qu’il sait à son insu, mais affirme, et en quelque sorte parle, éprouvé de la sorte, classe Joyce hors du groupe des occultistes de bonne compagnie. Cette expérience le fait passer du côté du médium, et de sa jouissance au bord de l’horreur. C’est cette position qu’il dissimule, volontairement ou non, derrière le vocable de *médiateur* qui lui sert à décrire la position du poète. C’est pourquoi, d’ailleurs, lorsque dans le *Portrait of the Artist* de 1904 le narrateur se présente comme “the sensitive”, il faut entendre le terme au sens technique de *médium* qu’il possède en spiritisme. La métaphore, ici, traduit l’expérience la plus aiguë. Joyce s’implique dans le processus médiumnique, où, à travers le corps, parle un esprit qui est de l’Autre. Jacques Lacan a bien analysé, dans “Le Sinthome”, le rôle que jouent dans la structure de l’écriture joycienne les “paroles imposées”, repérables dès *Stephen Hero* et jusque dans la correspondance avec Lucia. Les paroles qui s’imposent à un Joyce en position de médium le mettraient en mesure de supporter l’horreur que constitue le mystère de ce corps qui le lâche, en lui donnant consistance par les nœuds d’une écriture singulière.

C’est pourquoi l’on peut dire que l’occultisme chez Joyce n’est pas seulement un objet de sarcasmes. Il ne disparaît pas de son horizon, mais simplement se transforme et se distribue en plusieurs niveaux, éclate en plusieurs facettes, parfois dérisoires, parfois lumineuses. L’inventaire sera donc hétéroclite : la lecture des paroles comme symptômes dans *Dublîners, Leopold Bloom* et son discours “de la science”, l’interrogation sur le Mystère de la Trinité, où insiste la question de la procession de l’Esprit... (il s’agit de l’amour, nous dit la théologie, et de l’Incarnation...). Il n’est pas surprenant qu’une autre facette, la plus éclatante, soit celle de la femme : l’écoute de paroles de femmes. Des femmes qui sont toujours, peu ou prou, médiums (média ?), médiatrices, intermédiaires, procureuses de sens ou de ce qui en tient lieu, proxénètes entre les hommes : Nora, Gretta Conroy, Bertha, Molly Bloom, The Nymph, Circe, The New Freewoman, Miss Harriet Weaver, Lucia, Anna Livia Plurabelle. Elles sont la figure inversée de l’*informer*, cet acteur occulte de la culture et de l’histoire irlandaises que Joyce était toujours prompt à repérer : elles informent, donnent forme à leur manière à cette histoire morale de son pays que très tôt il s’était donné pour tâche d’écrire. Mais, on le voit, cela est une autre, et pourtant la même, histoire, celle des *avatars* de son écriture.
NOTES

11. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (qui sera abrégé en A Portrait), The Viking Press, p. 214.
12. Stanislaus Joyce, My Brother’s Keeper, Faber & Faber, 1958, p. 139-40.
19. Jacqueline Genet me signale que W.B. Yeats fait très précisément référence à Crookes dans ses textes critiques.
25. SH, p. 77.
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Language in *Ulysses*

T.P. Dolan

1. In this paper I shall concentrate on the language of the *Sirens*, *Circe*, and *Penelope* episodes in *Ulysses*, in the light of an illuminating comment made by Seamus Deane in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*:

   The speaker of Irish-English in the world of increasingly Standard English finds it too difficult to conform to the imperial way. He takes as his script the advice: “When in Rome, do as the Greeks do.” There is a certain scandal in such behaviour. It is a linguistic way of subverting a political conquest.

2. In the famous encounter between Stephen and the Dean of Studies in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where the Irishman’s use of the word *tundish* and the Dean’s incomprehension at hearing the word bring out the national insecurity of the Irish, it seems that Stephen up till then had felt that he was doing as the Romans – he was wrong-footed and de-stabilized by the Dean’s response and the ensuing discussion. “How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine!” An Irishman’s pronunciation of these words classifies him as a speaker of non-Standard English, because his vowels and consonants, as well as his pronunciation of the endings of the words *Christ* and *master*, all demonstrate that he is using Irish sounds for English letters. This leads him to the painful recognition that for him English “will always be ... an acquired speech.”

3. The story of the history, use, and development of the English language in Ireland has often been told. For our purpose it is important to appreciate that, from the seventeenth century, the English language was not imposed on the Irish, as had been the earlier policy emanating from the so-called “Statutes of Kilkenny” first promulgated in 1366, but came to be seen as the more desirable language for getting on in daily life. In other words, the Irish themselves decided to learn English for the purely pragmatic purpose of communicating with their employers in their own language. Hence, it has become generally agreed among scholars that seventeenth-century English contains the origins of Hiberno-English as it has developed from then up to today. Put simplistically, Stephen’s use of the word *tundish* symbolizes the archaic English features of his speech, and his pronunciation of *home, Christ, ale, master* symbolizes the Irish (Gaelic) strain in his speech.

4. Joyce was himself perfectly well aware of the history of the English language in England, from Anglo-Saxon times up to his own era, as is evident from the use he makes of the
History of English in the Oxen of the Sun episode in Ulysses. This episode celebrates the gradual development of English syntax from Old English, with its thumping alliteration and variable word-order, to nineteenth-century English, by which time the Subject-Verb-Object word-order pattern had long been dominant – from the pattern of “Within womb won he worship” (p. 382), with Adverbial headword-Verb-Subject-Object order, to “He’s got a coughmixture...”, with its modern Subject-Verb-Object order. To recall Seamus Deane’s phrase, this is how “the Romans” (i.e., the English) developed their language, adapting to influences from Old French syntax and rationalizing its word-order as the inflexional system of Anglo-Saxon gradually collapsed. There was no influence from the Irish language, and so it was left to the Irish to accommodate their language, which was and is substantially different in its idiom, verbal structure, and syntax from English, to that language and, by so doing, form Hiberno-English.

As we have noted, Stephen was made to feel very insecure in his use of English. It is obvious that he was not intending to subvert English by imposing patterns drawn from his own linguistic experiences as an Irishman. On the contrary it seemingly had not occurred to him that his English was so different from Standard English, and we should now have a look at the implications of this fact.

On the basis of his researches into written survivals of seventeenth-century Hiberno-English, Alan Bliss claims that “the type of English which took root in Ireland was sub-standard and probably dialectal.”. If this is correct, as is likely, Hiberno-English is in its origins far removed from what was then regarded as “Standard English” (presumably the language used at court and in the universities). Since Irish speakers learnt this sub-standard form through the paradigms of their own language the resulting hybrid dialect of Hiberno-English would sound unusual in the ears of those who spoke it and those, especially native English speakers, who heard it. The relationship between the two languages, which may be classified as substratum (Irish) and superstratum (English), was and is a singularly productive and enriching one, because the original language has never ceased to interfere (in the linguistic sense) with the newcomer language. In terms of status and prestige, one way of describing the relationship would be to think of the position of Trinity College Dublin, a protestant institution founded and introduced from England in 1592 on the site of the suppressed Augustinian priory of All Hallows, which had been founded by Dermot Mac Murrough, King of Leinster (d. 1171):

> it was a product of the reformation, and not a catholic university which had been reformed. This coloured it in Irish eyes. Although there were catholics among its students, particularly in its earlier years, it was a protestant foundation, indeed a pillar of the state church, and catholic controversialists regarded it as a place “in which the Irish youth shall be taught heresy by English teachers.”

If we regard the English language as one of the organs of conquest, which became a presence in most accessible parts of Ireland as a result of the Plantations (those who gave orders spoke English; those who accepted orders spoke Irish, but were trying to learn English), it is reasonable to claim that the English language represented power in Church and State and that to give it, deliberately or involuntarily, the flavour of Irish idiom was an observable means of asserting Irishness at the expense of Englishness and thus subverting that power in a relatively harmless way.

The prestige of the English language continued to strengthen in the eighteenth century, although by now there was some interference from Irish noticeable in the speech of the Planters. This was not thought desirable by, among others, Swift, who poked fun at the
Irishisms creeping into the language of the settler-class in his *A Dialogue in Hybernian Stile Between A & B* and *Irish Eloquence*. For our purpose the important point to note is that these Irishisms were considered damaging, or at least, degrading, so far as the purity of Standard English was concerned.

During the eighteenth century the power of English culture was more extensively symbolized in architectural terms through the construction of great houses throughout much of the country, especially in Dublin with the building of the great squares (e.g., Merrion and Rutland (now Parnell) Squares, begun in the middle of the eighteenth century, and so forth). Then in 1795 St. Patrick’s College was founded in Maynooth, Co. Kildare, and this, too, as a Royal College, added further to the prestige of English culture, since it could be seen as a catholic version of Trinity College, educating the native clergy with a generous Parliamentary grant.

In the nineteenth century, the English language reached supremacy as a practical means of communication at the expense of Irish – Daniel O’Connell used English; English was the medium of instruction in the newly founded National Schools; emigrants had to learn English in order to survive in England and the United States of America; the Great Famine was much more serious in its effects on the poorer, monoglot Irish-speaking areas of the country. Everything seemed to combine to diminish the status and currency of the Irish language.

The events described above help to explain the perception of the Irish language as a medium of failure in the eyes of many its speakers and as an organ of subversion in the eyes of some members of the Anglo-Irish community, but when Irish people used English they were incapable of speaking it without interference from their native language. Hence, the dialect of Hiberno-English symbolizes a cultural, as well as a linguistic conflict.

Returning to Joyce, having briefly traced the development of English in Ireland up to his time, we can appreciate Stephen's distress at being made aware that he was not speaking Standard English. In later writings, however, Joyce uses the dialect, where appropriate, to localize his characters in Ireland, in such a way as to make them proud of their speech, because it utilizes and exploits some significant features of the Irish language through the medium of English.

In *Ulysses*, the most obvious use of densely clustered Irish-based features of speech occurs in the *Cyclops* episode, but he also employs similar devices in the three episodes which form the subject of this paper. Like Swift, but for very different reasons, he adjusts the idiom to enforce the non-Standard quality of the English used.

In the *Sirens* episode there are a number of striking examples of Hiberno-English idiom which colour the language of the participants so as to locate them in Dublin and also to deliberately destabilize the prose to register the fact that those who employ the idiom in such a way as to mock the authority of Standard English or, at least, English as spoken in England. Sometimes Joyce uses the idiom in so subtle a fashion that a word looks as if it might be ordinary English, but analysis shows that behind its use lies the idiom of the Irish language. A good example of this device is the word *till* in such sentences as

\[
\text{Wait till I see} \\
(256)
\]

and

\[
\text{But wait till I tell you. Miss Douce entreated} \\
(258)
\]
Here, in both sentences the word *till* has more than the simple temporal sense, because it represents the Irish conjunction *go*, and so the two sentences may be translated as ***Wait and let me see*** and ***Wait and let me tell you***.

Sometimes in HE (Hiberno-English) what appears to be a solecism according to the formal grammar of SE (Standard-English) may be explained as a piece of English which is surreptitiously following the rules of Irish grammar. Joyce is very sensitive to this form of linguistic subversion as in the sentence:

It’s them has the fine times, sadly then she said.

This sentence could hardly be further from the formality of SE, which would have something like ***They have good times***. In the Irish language every sentence must start with a verb (e.g. “Have they good times”). Alternatively, the main clause is often put into the form of a subordinate adjectival clause in a sentence which is then headed by a specially developed form of the verb *to be*, known as the copula. This copula (which, confusingly, looks in form like English *is*) is used to head sentences such as *Is fearmaith e* (lit. “Is man good is” i.e., “He is a good man”). This copula form of the verb is rendered in HE as *It is*, *It’s*, *Tis*, and so forth, and is often used to introduce sentences such as that quoted above from *Ulysses*. Following the *It’s* in that quotation we have *them* which looks ungrammatical, but in the Irish language the accusative case is frequently used where English would use the nominative. Hence, Joyce is imposing the grammar of Irish on English and so it strikes a grammatically subversive note – as also does the *has*, which should presumably have appeared as *have*, in agreement with the plural form of *them*. Here again, we can explain the *has* by reference to the idiom of the Irish language. In English, verbs tend to change their form from singular to plural (“am, is, are”; “have, has, have” and so forth), but in the Irish language, the same form is kept throughout the paradigm as, for example, in the following sentences which mean, respectively, “I have a book” and “They have a book”, in both of which the verbal form *ta* remains the same for singular and plural pronoun subjects:

1. Ta leabhar agam. 2. Ta meabhar acu.

Since the one form of the verb is retained for singular and plural in Irish, by analogy Irish speakers of English carry the same *rule* into English, thereby again demonstrating Joyce’s exquisite sense of Hiberno-English grammar.

Sometimes the *It’s* form, representing the copula in Irish, is omitted from a sentence in HE, and this, too, makes for syntactical distinction as, for instance, in:

Most aggravating that young brat is.

(257)

Not twenty I’m sure he was.

(262)

If the *It’s* is placed in front of these two examples we can see the original form in which the “Most aggravating” and “Not twenty” would have the function of complements to the verb *It’s*.

These and other verbal forms all exhibit influence from the Irish language, sometimes in very subtle ways. For instance, Irish idiom uses continuous forms of verbs much more frequently than SE, and so we find Joyce employing such forms as “Aha... I was forgetting... Excuse” (262), where the “was forgetting” exemplifies yet another variation between HE and SE, less spectacularly, it is true, than in the following:
Stout lady does be with you in the brown costume.

(289)

23 Here “does be” is a purely HE feature: this consuetudinal tense of the verb indicates the habitual sense more clearly than the purely temporal is.1

24 These examples from the Sirens episode demonstrate Joyce’s skill as using Irish-English in such a way as to destabilize the formal grammar of the English language, which his characters are supposed to be speaking. There are obviously many more interesting features in this episode, e.g., the fact that there is no aspirated th sound in the Irish language, and this gives rise to such pronunciations as “Tanks awfully muchly” (262); the use of words which look English but which in fact retain their meaning from Irish, e.g., “... he whispered, bald and bothered,...”, where bothered is from the Irish word bodhar, meaning deaf2; giving the meaning “bald and deaf”, not, as appears at first hearing, “bald and confused”; the frequent use of prepositional pronouns, which are commonly used in Irish1, and also in HE, as in “I’ll complain to Mrs. de Massey on you”, where the “on you” is based on the Irish idiom; the use of archaic or obsolete vocabulary, e.g. “bronze from anear” (257), “gold from anear” (263), where again Joyce shows his keen ear for sounds and meanings, because, unlike many obsolete survivals in HE, anear is especially significant because its form exactly parallels the structure in Irish: a-n-aice. Incidentally, it may be significant that P.W. Joyce singles out this word anear for special attention in his book on HE14 and we do know that James Joyce was familiar with his namesake’s book 15.

25 The Circe episode shares a number of HE features with Sirens (e.g., the till in “Come here till I tell you” (427), “Hold him down girls till I squat on him” (489); the copula-equivalent, with omission of relative pronoun: “Twas I sent you that Valentine of the dear gazelle” (434), “It was broke in the bucking broncho” (440); Irish words, e.g. alanna (= “my child”), Ochone (= “alas!”), Soggarth Aroon (= “beloved priest”) (all p. 524), and so forth16. Sometimes the HE is a straightforward translation from Irish (e.g., “where were you at all, at all?” (431), in which “at all, at all” is a translation of Irish ar chor ar bith. Incidentally the expression “where were you” also shows influence from the Irish language, which does not possess the verb have and so past tenses use the verb fee in place of the regular HE form, which in this instance would be * “where have you been”. Because of the absence of Aave in Irish, the past tense is often formed with the preposition after (Irish tar eis), as in the following:

And when Cairns came down from the scaffolding in Beaver Street what was he after doing it only in the bucket of porter that was there waiting...
(437-8)
You’re after hitting me.
(489)

26 Another direct translation from Irish occurs in the sentence:

There’s no-one in it only her father that’s dead drunk. (433)

27 Here the in it (meaning there) translates the Irish adverb ann.

28 One significant usage which again demonstrates Joyce’s sharp sense of the difference between HE and SE idiom is in the use of shall Irish people tend not to use shall in forming the future tense; they use will for all persons17. If shall is used, it suggests the speaker is being precious, like the supercilious Beaufoy:

We shall receive the usual witnesses’ fees, shan’t we?
(443)
Interestingly, Stephen is similarly punctilious when he says:

> How long shall I continue to close my eyes to disloyalty?

(471)

This studied use of SE contrasts with the speech of other characters who invariably signal their apartness from SE, even in small, seemingly insignificant ways, as, for instance, when Mary Driscoll says:

> I had more respect for the scouring-brush, so I had.

(444)

in which the so is what P.W. Joyce calls a “sort of emphatic expletive carrying accent or emphasis”.

Molly Bloom uses this clincher word so in the Penelope episode, to which we shall now turn; “common robbery so it was” (660). Her speech contains many examples of HE idiom. In the following she omits the relative pronoun that or who after bishop:

> because I told him about some Dean or Bishop was sitting beside me...

(661)

She also uses the conjunction and in a way which reflects the much wider use of agus (= and) in the Irish language:

> when I asked her to hand me and I pointing at them.

(680)

Here, SE would have something like “when I was pointing at them.” In verbal forms, she employs the pattern with after that we noted above:

> There was a woman after coming out of it

(699)

In SE this would be **“who had just come out of it.”**

One of the commonest markers of HE idiom in Molly’s soliloquy is in her use of Indirect Questions, which in the Irish language do not reverse the positions of Subject and Verb as in SE:

> I wonder did he know me in the box

(662)
> I wonder was he satisfied

(662)
> I wonder is he awake

(662)
> I was dying to find out was he circumcised

(667)
> He asked me would I yes to say yes...

(704)

On one occasion she uses this construction with a malapropism, which is another common feature of HE speech:

> asking me had I frequent omissions

(692)

which in SE would be **“asking me whether I had frequent emissions.”** Throughout her speech there are similar signals that her dialect is non-standard and that its linguistic origins are to be found in the inter-play of the two languages of Irish and English.

To conclude by returning to Seamus Deane’s “When in Rome, do as the Greeks do”, we can claim that the foregoing linguistic analysis of the syntactical and idiomatic patterns to be found in these three episodes in *Ulysses* provides ample evidence that Joyce uses the
Hiberno-English dialect to mark his characters as apart from speakers of Standard English. Their constant allegiance to their own dialect indicates that they wish to preserve their own peculiar linguistic identity and to express their sense of Irishness as a means of proving that the political conquest fell far short of being a cultural conquest as well: Stephen in the Portrait was unwillingly subversive in his speech; most of the characters in Ulysses are exuberantly subversive in theirs.

NOTES

16. On these and other Irish words see Richard Wall, op. cit., passim.
17. See P.W. Joyce, op. cit., p. 76-77.
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