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The Allincluding Language of Ulysses

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The *Allincluding* Language of *Ulysses*

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Hannah Degner

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Introduction

Thou art, I vow, the remarkablest progenitor barring none in this chaffering allincluding most farraginous chronicle. Astounding!

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My study of *Ulysses* began as I imagine most begin. I took a class, and liked the book more than anything I had ever liked. The novel eclipsed everything that I found exciting, in every context—not replacing my other interests, but taking them over. When I loved a passage from one of the novels in my 18th Century Sentimental Lit class, I would write to the class about its exceptional nature, referencing something I had just read in *Ulysses* that explained what was at work better than I could. It was my new favorite thing, and people began to notice. I believed, and explored with Professor Sabin inside and outside of class, that Joyce expresses an artistic frustration in his stylistic multipolarity: there is something inherently used-up in words and narrative styles that exist and have expressed many times, many ways, many of the same things. Because of this staleness, and the way our minds never fully engaged with expression because of how easily it often comes, Joyce’s episodes are each colored with new words, words that Joyce has arrived at personally and are expressed for the first time from his mind to another’s each time a reader comes upon one of these newfangled expressions. In these moments—with what is perhaps the impressionistic power of poetry—the reader glimpses something that she has never seen before, and the word pulls her away from the known, the accepted, the conventional forms of communication into a space that belongs entirely to Joyce’s story and his characters’ minds. This is not an isolating experience, rather, when comprehensible to the reader, Joyce’s stylistic experiments have the power to deepen the bond between reader and character, or reader and author, by allowing them to share in an expression that is entirely unique to the intangible

qualities of experience and emotion that have been limited to, but may never be expressed entirely in, words. Joyce's coinages include the descriptor of my thesis's title, along with hundreds of other formations, some that resemble known semantics (twirling japanesily, glovesilent hands, aquacities of thought) and others that resist on impact the clarity of meaning that a word is expected to provide (Hurhausdirektorumsanatoriumandsuspensorium-ordinaryprivatedocentgeneralhistoryspecialprofessordoctor). These new meaning lumps are at once exceedingly playful—their unconventionality harkening back to Lewis Carroll's similarly delightful novelties for children—and quite important to Joyce's unique offering to the reader.

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The first of Joyce's characters that I met was Stephen Dedalus, an autobiographical Joyce prototype whose life in Dublin is traced in and out of Joyce's fiction. In Joyce's *Portrait*, I found a style so personalized that it took stream of consciousness to a new level, a level on which words were not only built into new formations to reflect the workings of the mind at various stages of life, but the unit of the word itself became mutable in the process of expressing a mind's workings and frustrations. It was not until I took Professor Sabin's *Ulysses* course that I allowed myself the time and space to try to articulate what Joyce's made-up words—precise in their uncharted singularity—communicate to the reader.

Ulysses, more than *Portrait*, focuses on the flexibility, diversity and ubiquity of language. All of these qualities allow linguistic communication to be both celebrated for the expanse of its expressive potential and doubted for its ever-present limitations. Each episode of *Ulysses* is designed to portray a unique linguistic style. Joyce expresses through these various styles—newspaper headlines, stream of consciousness, stark realism, disembodied narration, scientific jargon, and others—the ways that all recognizable language is shared, and in some ways already

known, before it attempts expression. Often, the text takes what we know and twists it around new circumstances, calling into question the understood formulae of communication: why do we expect words to form this way? What happens when they don't? The stream of consciousness style of the first book of this novel dazzles the reader with the uncharted territory of Stephen Dedalus's mind. Stream of consciousness style is built around the authentic experience of the mind, and yet Joyce's version of a mind's speech pushes against the expectation of authenticity. Stephen's mind is convoluted, tense and self-conscious; building stories out of his prized store of knowledge, he often feels isolated from what is right in front of him. Stephen gets lost in his mind. His inner strokes of creativity are matched by displays of morose insipidity. The stream of consciousness authentically represents Stephen but does not allow Stephen to authentically represent himself. The Stephen episodes call into question the idea that authenticity is a value, that to see into someone's mind or heart or consciousness will yield depth, understanding, and overflowing sympathy for their condition. Seeing into Stephen we find him as he is, but not condensed to some knowable, pure form of identity. As with many of Joyce's storytelling techniques, the further we get inside a new and intense realm of the story, the farther we are from knowing it in any absolute way.

On the last pages of Stephen's opening section of the novel, the stream of consciousness becomes a stream of a different sort, the kind that flows "in long lassoes from Cock lake..."¹ The passage that follows will echo throughout the novel in the similar behavior of other narrators, who escape the overwhelming convolutions and confusions of their stories with a languid bodily release:

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Wilde's love that dare not speak the name. He now will leave me. And the blame? As I am. As I am. All or not at all.

In long lassoes from the Cock lake the water flowed full, covering greengoldenly lagoons of sand, rising, flowing. My ashplant will float away. I shall wait. No, they will pass on, passing chafing against the low rocks, swirling, passing. Better get this job over quick. Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseiss, ooos. Vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded in barrels. And, spent, it speech ceases. It flows, purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling.

Stephen's self-consciousness resumes in the episode's last sentences ("My teeth are very bad. Why, I wonder?"²), but not before the reader has gotten a sense of the scope of existence beyond his ruminations. The push of introspection against external stimulation runs through the various streams of Stephen's episodes. The language of his introspection (coded in his personal history and intellectual fixations) varies as much as the possibilities for applying himself elsewhere, for instance to the "fourworded wavespeech" of his pee; the infinity of his internal probing matches an equal scope of options to escape himself and enter into interactions with the present world around him. The interaction between internal and external is the central activity of Stephen's existence in the narrative, and this interplay activates the language. Like when Stephen pees, and we can hear it, "seesoo, hrss, rsseiss, ooos" and see it, "it flows, purling widely flowing, floating, foampool, flower unfurling" and see what's around it because of it, "In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap" and summon the imagery of its motion, "vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks." Because this novel always answers more questions than we can ask, and tells more stories than we can imagine, it has the effect of allinclusion—a mental phenomenon in the mind of the reader more than a technical possibility.

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Allinclusions means that our expectations as a reader are constantly foiled; each episode has a different style, a different length. The characters we meet might exist for a single line or be present for almost every line. The increasing flexibility of our expectations means that we hold fast to what we can know in each scenario. In order to delve into the uncharted territories of semantics and style, we keep track of the time, place, and Homeric allusion of each episode. The limiting factors of a novel that takes place over the course of one day (on walks around a single city) tether us to a conceivable reality that in every other way seems to expand in all directions. We make connections between episodes, constructing a web of significance that becomes a story, where before a story might have seemed a more linear procession. Stephen is the subject of the first three episodes, and instead of projecting himself on the world around him he draws the outside in. Noticing a dead dog on the beach, he begins a process of association:

A bloated carcass of a dog lay lolled on bladderwrack. Before him the gunwale of a boat, sunk in sand. *Un coche ensablé* Louis Veuillot called Gautier's prose. These heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here. And these, the stoneheaps of dead builders, a warren of weasel rats. Hide gold there. Try it. You have some. Sands and stones. Heavy of the past. Sir Lout's toys. Mind you don't get one bang on the ear. I'm the bloody well gigant rolls all them bloody well boulders, bones for my steppingstones. Feefawfum. I zmallz de bloodz odz an Iridzman.

The allinclusion of his mental process exists primarily in the depths of memory and knowledge that he mentally slogs through. For this reason, Stephen's fear at seeing a live dog is far richer, more refreshing to the reader than his poetic integration of a dead dog into his mental stores. Instead of immediately incorporating this experience into his self-image, he is paralyzed by real, physical fear that draws him into the present:

A point, live dog, grew into sight running across the sweep of sand. Lord, is he going to attack me? Respect his liberty. You will not be master of others or their slave. I have my stick. Sit tight. From farther away, walking shoreward across from the crested tide, figures, two. The two maries. They have tucked it safe mong the bulrushes. Peekaboo. I see you. No, the dog. He is running back to them. Who?

Seeing Stephen interact with the world and process it in real time, one cannot help but feel the life of his mind, the humor of his sudden panic (*Respect his liberty.*) and thoughts that occur spontaneously, inflected with his emotional state (*I have my stick. Sit tight.*). The purpose behind moments like this cannot be known, there is enough scholarship on this text that the “meaning” of every scene has likely been categorically discerned by someone. Instead of breaking down every inclusion and explaining why they exist in the text, I aim to consider *Ulysses* as an exercise in inclusion, and focus instead on the How? of its existence. How does each style include more than we expect to receive in a novel? How do new words and sentences defy existing words and structures to fit better into the meaning they attempt to convey? How do the boundaries of a story become even clearer as the scope expands to the brink of our comprehension? And how does one tell a story in a way that no one has heard before? Through close readings of episodes of the novel, I will expand upon the answers I found for these questions: By including everything that is remembered by a human but forgotten by a narrative, *Ulysses* tells the story of life.

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There are 18 episodes in *Ulysses*. I will look closely at three. The three that I have chosen are no more worthy of close reading than the fifteen that I have not. These episodes are chosen because their particular brand of inclusion has proven irresistible to me. The structures of these episodes are interesting in themselves, but even more compelling is the play that occurs at the limit of structure, when everything not included swells into the reader’s mind—a latent potential that lifts the words off the page. Each of these episodes (though “Circe” and “Ithaca” more than “Cyclops”), lays out a structure for the episode that is consistent from beginning to end.

The first episode that I will consider is the “Cyclops” episode. In Michael Groden’s book *Ulysses in Progress*, he considers the novel from the perspective of Joyce’s writing progress.

Groden groups the episodes into three stages based on the idea that the progression of *Ulysses*'s composition mirrored a stylistic progression of Joyce's artistic goals. "Cyclops" is the crux of Groden's "Middle Stage" of the novel. The tenth episode of the novel, "Cyclops" takes place at 5 p.m. in Barney Kiernan's pub, beginning in the language of an unknown narrator who we'll only come to know better through his narrative voice. Stylistically, the episode marks a turning point—the moment at which Joyce altogether dropped "the initial style (third-person, past-tense, narration; first-person, present-tense monologue)" and began a fast-paced personal exploration of style. Stylistically, the "Cyclops" episode represents "a midpoint between the compression of the early episodes and the encyclopedic expansion of the last ones." As the embodiment of this incipient expansion, the episode has the quality of an erratic series of explosions. Testing is underway. In a critical essay named after the episode, David Hayman, calls "Cyclops" the mixed media chapter: "In it Joyce purposefully mixes diurnal and nocturnal modes, juxtaposing a conventional direct narrative voice and a jumble of mocking asides, the spoken and the printed word."³ The churning of these stylistic forces parallels the powerful oppositions at work in the pub. Our ironic narrator casts an ironic glare on the social order of the pub. We perceive "the behavior of frustrated men, impelled by jealousy, pride, greed, and thirst, portrayed with muted rage and hilarity by a social reject, who, in another epoch would have been a professional story teller and satirist, a man respected and feared by Irish kings."⁴ The voices of this episode create the allinclusive quality that I will comment on in my analysis. Hierarchies of commentary build on each other, and are broken down. The reader feels more strongly than before the activating energy of piecing together a narrative made up of disparate perspectives, aware to varying degrees of their own existence within a larger scheme. Here, we begin to play.

³ Hayman, "Cyclops," 243

⁴ Hayman, "Cyclops," 243

My thesis topic emerged in the Circe episode, a dramatic spectacle of darkness and play with enough outlandish linguistic inclusions to fill an entire thesis in itself. In “Circe” this structure is that of a play: we know who is speaking because the names are listed, centered and bolded, above their speech. Stage directions block out the scene in the mood and style of performances, characters flit in and out of phantasmagoric existence, embodying entities we never thought we’d hear speak (The Sins of the Past, The Gramophone, The End of the World) but have words to say nonetheless; all the while, the style anchors us to something we *know*, so that our minds can roam on the ever-lengthening leash necessary to explore Joyce’s imagination.

We enter the stage of “Circe” nearing the end of the book, and our entrance into its dramatic structure comes right after a drudge through the episode of the novel that is generally agreed upon as the least comprehensible, “The Oxen of the Sun.” Hugh Kenner describes the instantaneous relief of coming into Circe in an essay titled after the episode, “When, just past the middle of the book, the reader of *Ulysses* turns from barely perceptible verbal chaos (‘Pflaaaap! Not half’.) to a page laid out with reassuring typographical controls...his gratitude for the *rappel a l’ordre* is apt to be mingled with astonishment at coming on what looks very like a play.”⁵ This relief is shortlived; soon begins the process that the novel has trained the reader to undergo: following the relief, come the questions. Kenner continues, “But Joyce’s art of slow revelation characteristically reveals itself more readily than it reveals anything else, and the ideal reader is meant at this point to reflect how thoroughly congenial is the theatre of roles and surfaces to this author’s vision of things.” Kenner delves from here into exactly what kind of reflections might follow, taking himself for granted as Joyce’s ideal type of reader. The surface-rich presentation of this episode, at least as it appears on the page, allows the mind to imagine dramatic

⁵ Kenner, “Circe,” 341

performances that would be virtually impossible to produce, and all the while, Kenner reminds us, “it follows that we can often not be sure what is ‘really’ going on, what a cine-camera would pick up in nighttown, or a tape recorder.”⁶ This contrast between what we witness on the page and what *is*—or perhaps, more appropriately what *can be*—is the tension that teases our sanity. We are included in the experience of Bloom in Nighttown, and escape without knowing for sure what is actually left in nighttown when we leave. Objectivity, more than anything, is the episode’s farcical representation.

The last episode of my consideration is, for me, also the richest. As much as possible, “Ithaca” is modeled in the style of objective experience. Critic A. Walton Litz finds in this episode the same taut contrast of perspective that Kenner pointed to at the center of “Circe.” Litz begins his “Ithaca” essay, “If *Ulysses* is a crucial testing ground for theories of the novel, as it seems to have become, then the ‘Ithaca’ episode must be a *locus classicus* for every critic interested in the traditions of English and European fiction. Here the extremes of Joyce’s art, and of fiction in general, are found in radical form: the tension between symbolism and realism...gives the episode its essential life.”⁷ The form of the Ithaca episode is a disembodied Q&A; a voice from beyond the story’s physical realm asks a question of the story, and another voice (or is it the same voice?) answers the question with inhuman detail and certainty. Each detail of the story comes through this structure; the Q&A, quite literally, all we have. The episode’s allincluding tendency, the quality of this exploration that likely caused Joyce to call it his “favourite,” builds from the narrator’s lack of context. Completely out of the realm of conventional storytelling, far from our expectations, our questioner asks about qualities of the characters and the setting that a reader does not expect to know; the story of Bloom and Stephen

⁶ Kenner, “Circe,” From *Essays*, 346

⁷ Litz, “Ithaca,” From *Essays*, 385

begins to feel like one arbitrary story among infinite others. A paradox ensues from this combination of detail-orientation and a roving lens. Litz explains, “Like Whitman, Joyce possessed a talent which was both centripetal and centrifugal, tending toward both the symbolic moment and the scrupulous accumulation of ‘fact’: and these complementary impulses give ‘Ithaca’ both its form and dynamism.”⁸ This inclusive paradox manifests as an episode that bursts with the questions and answers of the reader, never settling into a single reality, ever at play.

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A note on parallax: It is a metaphor for Joyce’s inclusive style or writing, and storytelling that is brought up by the novel itself, by Bloom, in fact.⁹

A parallactic view is one in which two entities look at the same object from different places and because of their perspectives, the object appears in a different context to each. Most often this phenomenon has been witnessed astronomically. The view from one side of the sun projects a star in a certain place relative to those further away; on the other side of the sun, the star appears to be in a slightly different place. Parallax is built into our bodies as much as our orbits: the typical two-eyed human sees two perspectives at once every time she looks at something. We perceive depth by combining the inputs of our eyes, yet if we reach out a finger in front of our eyes, the parallax view sees clearly from neither eye. We can only perceive so much depth before we are reminded by the blur of our overloaded minds that we have only two limited views among many.

⁸ Litz, “Ithaca,” From *Essays*, 390

⁹ There are other self-referential metaphors (meta-metaphors?) that I will take up in my analysis of the text, including the recurrence of pissing as purging the story and the story itself as a non-linear, ever-growing web.

Parallax is represented visually by two intersecting lines that form cones open at each end to suggest infinite spreading. The point exists at the center, but in the realm of human comprehension, a point represents one dimension. It is so singular, so impossible to spatially understand, it might as well not exist at all. It exists, and then it doesn't, and the spreading parts the paths forever, everything that was once coming together is not forever apart. Parallax is a rich metaphor for almost any concept of fleeting human thought, connection, or existence. It is an especially good metaphor for a story that deals with all of these concepts; A story that has definite characters, a definite timeframe and setting, and yet just as it approaches meanings more precise than ever expressed it opens up into the potential of all. We travel through all possibilities of meaning to Joyce's story, an unconceivable point so small it is infinite, then travel out the other end back into everything. Or the point might be the connection between Joyce's mind and ours, the text, at which point everything that he has fit inside moves between his infinite mind and the infinity of all thought, interpretation, and experience that this text yields.

The novel itself weaves the idea of parallax both literally and figuratively into the story. Most literally, Bloom considers and reconsiders parallax over the course of the day, in the believable manner of a man whose mind is caught up with an idea, unsettled and probing.

Around 1 p.m. Bloom first encounters the word in the episode entitled "Lestrygonians,"

Mr. Bloom moved forward raised his troubled eyes. Think no more of about that. After one. Timeball on the ballast office is down. Dunsink time. Fascinating little book that is, of sir Robert Ball's. Parallax. I never exactly understood. There's a priest. Could ask him. Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax. Met him pikehoses she called it till I told her about the transmigration. O rocks! Mr. Bloom smiled O rocks at two windows...¹⁰

¹⁰ 154

In what one might call a traditional stream of consciousness style, Bloom walks towards the pub where he will eat lunch, taking in the stimuli that he encounters as they flit in and out of his mind. The language is fragmented because the mind is fragmented: sentences are a fabrication that have no place in this uncommunicative realm. What does come across instead is the authenticity of a mind at work, even more apparent when it flits away (O rocks!) and returns moments later:

Wanted to try that often. Yes: completely. The tip of his little finger blotted out the sun's disk. Must be the focus where the rays cross. If I had black glasses. Interesting... Cap in hand goes through the land. Not go in and blurt out what you know you're not to: what's parallax? Show this gentleman the door.

As Bloom's mind (always musing, always plotting) roves around possibilities for scientific exploration, the question reemerges: "What is parallax?" Bloom deals with the question constructively, so that the question reemerges as he contemplates his physical circumstances and comes in contact with ideas from the outside, in. The word "parallax" might not mean anything in particular to Bloom, but he approaches its meaning nonetheless. Leaving the word behind, he continues to muse, "Never know anything about it. Waste of time. Gasballs spinning about, passing. Same old dingdong always. Gas, then solid, then world, then cold, then dead shell drifting around..."¹¹ In the plain language of his mind, Bloom describes the circumstances of parallax without being able to quite put his finger on the word. The "gasballs spinning about, passing" describe exactly the necessity of taking parallax into account—bodies always relative to each other can never hold absolute places in the universe.

The manner in which the word parallax is incorporated into the text mirrors its perspective-bringing scope. The representation goes even further when one considers the shifting that the

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novel undergoes in the progression of its episodes. Each episode takes on its own style, tracing the same story through new territory and finding other stories along the way. Infinite spreading. Along with the novelty of these perspectives come new dimensions to the story. Loosely following Leopold Bloom through the routine of one day, we inhabit characters, languages, levels of consciousness and aesthetic territories we would never have known we were missing in another context. In this manner, the novel trains the reader to build a story. The story exists in more than words or ideas, it is made up of shifts, of movement, of parallaxic vision focused, blurred and refocused. The story dwells in its own impossibility, and displays with pride the futility of holding it still, knowing it altogether, knowing it at all.

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Chapter One: The Cyclops's Limited View

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In the “Cyclops” episode of *Ulysses*, a group of Dubliners gathers in Kiernan’s pub around 5 p.m. for an afternoon drink. While they talk, the conversation drifts toward the common threads of Irish politics, which are easy for such men to discuss without having to think of anything new to say. In short, they confirm their identities. Often this is done most easily by denying the identities of others. The episode employs the language of these locals as its own social commentary, so that their rhythms and unique constructions dramatize spoken language’s role as a determining factor of social identity and power, beyond the intentions of a single consciousness. Words are taken for granted by all involved, to the extent that even the men themselves don’t know what their words are saying. The episode’s focus on the social dimension of language is in every word, beginning with the title, where the nationalistic attitudes have already influenced our depth perception. Stepping past the view of the novel’s protagonists, the episode expands its view of Dublin as a space coded by language and brings into the story the inescapable social dimension of speaking one’s identity.

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This seed of politicized language has been present in the novel from its first scene, at 8 a.m. in the Martello Tower at Sandycove, on the shore of the Dublin Bay. As Stephen and Mulligan share their breakfast with Mulligan’s well-off British friend Haines, Stephen’s grievances against Haines (and, more deeply, Mulligan) compound into his characteristic surly mood; by the fourteenth page of the novel when the milkmaid enters, the contrast provided by the characters in the room is enough to create a rich political commentary. As the medium of the

text, and perhaps of all social identity, language is central to how these characters conceive of each other, and themselves, as they interact. Buck Mulligan converses, somewhat ironically, with the diffident milkwoman while “Stephen listened in scornful silence,” watching his friends and writing a story of inescapable hypocrisy in his head. Feeling the need to cut through the grotesque act of social discourse, Stephen intrudes, asking the old woman “Do you understand what he says?” Haines the Englishman has been speaking. She responds:

- Is it French you are talking, sir? the old woman said to Haines.
- Haines spoke to her again a longer speech, confidently.
- Irish, Buck Mulligan said. Is there Gaelic on you?
- I thought it was Irish, she said, by the sound of it. Are you from the west, sir?
- I am an Englishman, Haines answered.
- He’s English, Buck Mulligan said, and he thinks we ought to speak Irish in Ireland.
- Sure we ought to, the old woman said, and I’m ashamed I don’t speak the language myself. I’m told it’s a grand language by them that knows.¹²

Among these descriptions of the language, we never actually hear what Haines is saying. It remains unclear to the reader whether Haines really was speaking Irish, or whether Mulligan is playing a game with the woman, enjoying her ignorance for the show he can put on at her expense. Perhaps it was French, after all. But the more provocative conclusion is that Haines knows the Celtic language better than this old Irish dairymaid. Spoken language so easily asserts one’s power over others. Haines goes to Oxford, where the privilege to learn Irish is far more accessible than the woman’s resources living poor in Dublin. Mulligan reports Haines’ belief that Irish people should speak Irish—if these people have their own language, why speak his? The ignorance of this conclusion, the ease with which it is come to by those who don’t acknowledge their own destructive power over others, is central to the portrait Joyce paints by bringing these attitudes together at one table. When the three young men undermine the milkmaid, they have very little work to do. They simply let her speak, and allowed the contrast between her

¹² Joyce, *Ulysses*, 14

uneducated speech and their own chosen, refined style to provide their entertainment. Moments of security like this—however fabricated by their personal senses of superiority—provide self-satisfaction.

When Stephen later explains that he feels “the servant of two masters, an English and an Italian,”¹³ Haines does not know quite what he means. Stephen spells it out: “The imperial British state, Stephen answered, his colour rising, and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church.” In response, “Haines detached from his underlip some fibres of tobacco before he spoke. –I can quite understand that, he said calmly. An Irishman must think like that, I daresay. We feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame.” Haines, whatever pathos his diplomatic words convey, is not getting worked up over this. Speaking for his imperial state at large, he tells Stephen what they have told him. For history to be to blame means that not only is the action in the past, but the attitudes of the past are necessarily different, more limited, than those of the present. Joyce seems capable of finding plenty of limits in the present, beginning with this speech. He portrays here a familiar imperialist attitude, with such refined dignity that the reader catches a whiff of his ironic disgust; he has likely encountered this attitude among Englishmen who feel (and would like to be rewarded for their feeling of) a sense of nostalgia for the culture they destroyed. Haines is a peripheral character in Joyce’s novel, not a central force of immorality by any means. The undertones of this conversation are spread throughout *Ulysses*, a novel in which each character is ignorant of the limits of his own perspective, in some way or another, and is causing the cultural and intellectual voids that exist in Joyce’s Dublin through the thoughtless exertions of their own self-

¹³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 20

centered worldview. Leopold Bloom is perhaps the only character exempt from this particular vein of the Arranger's commentary.

In fact, there are many languages being spoken in this tower just outside Dublin. Perhaps each character has his own dialect, a reflection of his self-conception and experience combined. Stephen is Irish—was raised around the Dublin citizens and pubs we will become familiar with over the course of the day—and while we can't hear his accent, it must inflect the educated English language he speaks aloud¹⁴. What we can discern of his speech on the page is the way he echoes the rhythms of poetry and philosophy; the sounds of high art that he reveres so completely have infiltrated his consciousness. As Stephen looks at the sea, his thoughts draw symbolic significances that always end as an expression of his inner turmoil: “Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile...”¹⁵ The interconnectedness he glimpses might be a precursor of Joyce's work (to the extent that Stephen is Joyce's predecessor), but his solemnity limits his vision. His friend Mulligan's voice is, indeed, “wellfed.” Mulligan is equally educated, but he inflects his English more colorfully and boisterously with the flavors of his town's idiomatic expressions and rhythms. His English is not Stephen's phlegmatic meditation, but an energetic assertion of self. Declaring his place in the conversation, Mulligan's language is not always as authentic as it may seem. Instead of speaking with the passion of earnestness, Mulligan often speaks in parody of many different voices: poetry, religious language, and city slang, always with his tongue in his cheek. Not sharing his friend's sense of decorum, his language flows from low to high, “—God, he said quietly. Isn't

¹⁴ and even the polylingual explorations we have already witnessed his mind undertake

¹⁵ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 5

the sea what Algy calls it: a grey sweet mother? The snotgreen sea. The scrotumtightening sea. *Epi oinopa pontoon*. Ah, Dedalus, the Greeks. I must teach you. You must read them in the original.” The Greek Mulligan quotes here is Homer’s, a famous epithet for the setting of Odysseus’s journey: “upon the wine-dark sea.” Mulligan adapted this famously recurring epithet to his own style when he connected the color of Stephen’s dirty handkerchief¹⁶ and the view they’re contemplating. By recognizing the differences between styles and using them to his advantage, he sets himself apart from—and above—people who speak their own dialect thoughtlessly; yet, the freedom with which he speaks, and teases, differs from Stephen’s serious and often silent criticisms; Mulligan might see the limits of those who surround him, but he doesn’t see the ignorance of others as a threat to human dignity so much as an opportunity to amuse himself. In this way, *Ulysses* straddles the opposing language of Stephen and Mulligan: everything may feel significant, nothing wholly is.

The third participant, Haines, speaks standard British English; the English he learned growing up likely fit perfectly into the hallowed halls of Oxford. The ease with which Haines speaks his own language, and believes others should do so as well, represents how little thought he has given to the privileges that go along with the way he speaks. Stephen and Mulligan have necessarily studied the differences between what they heard in their city—a Dublin-specific slang that arose adaptively and now is undeniably primary to all native inhabitants—and what they have learned of language in school. To educated Irish city-dwellers, language communicates position as much as thought. Stephen’s self-consciousness comes, at least in part, from the unsettled nature of his identity; the Dubliner’s identity is unsettled in this episode, and the act of devising one’s place in society is never done.

¹⁶ “The bard’s noserag. A new art colour for our Irish poets: snotgreen. You can almost taste it, can’t you.”

Some Dubliners, such as the likeminded citizens in Kiernan's pub in the episode "Cyclops," are more secure in their position than others. They have achieved their own version of Haines's stability by vocally asserting their ignorance without qualms. The Irishmen of this episode are Dublin-Irish. They have very little to do with the Celtic language of old—like the milkmaid, they don't know their mother tongue. Yet, unlike her, they don't admit to this. They are, likely, the ones she referred to when she said, "I'm told it's a grand language by them that knows." They know only a few phrases of Irish, enough to stake their claims of kinship but not to incorporate the language into their identities. By surrounding themselves with others who desire the same confidence, they secure a position in the majority that has the power to think little, and make claims that are easy and satisfying. In order to feel so secure, these pub-dwellers must set up their own contrasts: we are this—we are good—and these people are not us—and, remember, we are good.

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The "Cyclops" episode expertly reveals what criticisms are to be made without saving any words for a righteous voice. Instead it speaks through contrasting voices, creating an intellectual dialect above the text. The voices are entangled, hierarchically linked only by their awareness of each other and perhaps their rejection of what is limited about the dialects spoken by those who want to secure their identity more than they want to explore it. The citizen is only the first level of consciousness in this episode. Above the citizen in this hierarchy is the episode's narrator, a man who conveys the Irishmen's conversation in their own words, while critiquing the hypocrisy of their position in society. The narrator speaks their Dublin-Irish, and is thus empowered and included by it, but the content of his speech is what sets him apart from his countrymen. He does not see good in anyone, really, including Leopold Bloom—who provides the milkmaid-like butt of these drunken comrades' anti-Semitic jokes. He deals most harshly

with the citizen, cutting him down to size for us like no one else. When the narrator introduces us to the citizen, his disgust is immediately apparent. He channels his repugnance into the citizen's dog, "the bloody mangy mongrel, Garryowen."¹⁷ Garryowen is the only creature that the citizen seems to have abiding affection for. The love that the citizen feels for such an unworthy, disgusting creature is, in the eyes of the narrator, a further example of his human depravity. The narrator comes alive when given the opportunity to describe Garryowen: "The bloody mongrel let a grouse out of him would give you the creeps. Be a corporal work of mercy if someone would take the life of that bloody dog. I'm told for a fact he ate a good part of the breeches off a constabulary man in Santry..."¹⁸ From his narration, we get a sense of how he fits into his culture: his syntax and lexicon are specific to his community, as is the relish he takes in telling a somewhat violent story that has been passed along from person to person. "I'm told for a fact," he conveys to us, likely with the same conspiratorial verve of the man who shared the story with him. His perspective, funny in a vivid and disgusting Dublin-Irish way, is a breath of fresh air in the stale pub. No other Irishman in Kiernan's is quite so observant; only the narrator has escaped the overwrought rhetoric of bitter nationalism to illustrate the specific distaste closer at hand.

Lastly, we have the supreme consciousness of the episode—a disembodied voice known to many scholars as "The Arranger."¹⁹ He does not speak as "I" but speaks, nonetheless, in the form of chaotic and tumultuous interpolations. Perhaps the only style he does not include in these passages of frenzied parody is the Dublin dialect that the citizen and his cohorts empower themselves with. The interpolations, instead, come in many forms, each less settled, and

¹⁷ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 295

¹⁸ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 295

¹⁹ The arranger most closely resembles the forthcoming interlocutors who inhumanly reign over "Ithaca," though he is even further removed from a position of guidance, providing the chaos that disturbs the social order rather than the interlocutors' order that focuses us in a world of chaos.

expected, than the last. We might be reading the Arranger's interpretation of legalese, or some form of Middle English; often a list of names, each less relevant and more heretical than the last, seems to fit the bill. The Arranger reaches into the story to provide an introduction to the citizen in the form of a Homeric hero, replete with the epic-author's characteristic epithets. The citizen is among other things, "...freely freckled shaggybearded widemouthed largenosed longheaded...".²⁰ The passage builds in this form, evoking Homer's style only to bound beyond it into the Arranger's baser preferences: "The eyes in which a tear and a smile strove ever for the mastery were of the dimensions of a goodsized cauliflower." What can be certain in these passages that belong only to the Arranger is that everything is fair game, brought down from lofty significance to the level of a bland vegetable. These interpolations provide defense against the ease with which the citizens in the pub make sense to each other, and the way that Leopold Bloom, our hero, is easily minimized and humiliated by this bunch because his thoughtful, rambling earnestness is so different from their own blasé jocularity.

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The citizen holds court in Kiernan's pub; he enforces his domain so heavily that we forget at times that no official court is in session. This nameless representative is drunk in a pub in the early evening with his friends, on no particular occasion, just as they can be found (we are to assume) any day at this time. They converse, some half-heartedly, others fervently, about the problems that afflict their race, piecing together the sources of their troubles in whatever way they wish, simply to pass the time. The situation is stale in every sense. Their opinions have been spoken before, both by them and other grumpy nationalists filling themselves with righteous indignation at their comparative lot in life; the style of their speech is recycled as well, their puns

²⁰ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 296

and one-liners might seem fresh to a contemporary audience, but in Ireland in 1904 the citizen's comment that their civilization has become a "syphilisation"²¹ echoes many voices. While not necessarily thoughtful, the citizen's spoken language is colorfully presented, to the extent that the sound is entertaining. Speaking generally about the colonizing bastards who doomed his people to their wretched pub-dwelling squalor, the citizen follows up his recycled pun with these words, "To hell with them! The curse of a goodfornothing God light sideways on the bloody thicklugged sons of whores' gets"²²! No music and no art and no literature worthy of the name. Any civilisation they have they stole from us. Tonguetied sons of bastards ghosts."²⁴ It is unclear exactly what he means, though we all get the gist, and in response to this tirade his slightly less passionate friends do their best to follow along. One man throws in, "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen," while a man "that knows a bit of the lingo," calls out, "Conspuez les Anglais! Perfide Albion!"²⁵ in the style of another nation tired of being bullied by England.

With the words of others and an audience who doesn't seem to have any options (so might as well listen), the citizen's voice reigns over the episode's setting. Yet even without the levels of commentary that the narrator and the Arranger provide, the superficiality of the situation—the extent to which this political discourse is mostly a comfortable routine—suffuses the scene. The limits are most easily understood in contrast. He speaks to his fellow Irishmen as their leader, and one cannot always find his deficiencies when he expresses more than anyone

²¹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 325

²² This is not a typo, it is how the citizen chooses to end his sentence. The OED indicates that a "get" was once a term for what is begotten, i.e. an offspring, and often more specifically a bastard child.

²³ Alternatively, this could be a phonetic interpretation of the citizen's pronunciation of the word "guts."

²⁴ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 325

²⁵ From *Annotations*: "'Scorn the English! Perfidious England!' The latter phrase has been attributed to many irritated Frenchmen, including Napoleon on the occasion of his exile to St. Helena."

else in the room. But in between his words, we glimpse the oppression and boredom of those he aims to engage. First, there is the way he bullies Bloom, the lone Jew who unwittingly becomes the “Them” to the citizen’s “We.” At times, Bloom tries to reason with him, to engage intellectually and allow a glimpse of his own harmless worldview. When the citizen gets really fired up, Bloom’s pacifism calls forth a nervous survival instinct:

—Those are really nice things, says the citizen, coming over here to Ireland filling the country with bugs.

So Bloom lets on he heard nothing and he starts talking with Joe telling him he needn’t trouble about that little matter till the first but if he would just say a word to Mr Crawford. . .

—Swindling the peasants, says the citizen, and the poor of Ireland. We want no more strangers in our house.

—O I’m sure that will be all right, Hynes, says Bloom. It’s just that Keyes you see.

—Consider that done, says Joe.

—Very kind of you, says Bloom.

—The strangers, says the citizen. Our own fault. We let them come in. We brought them. The adulteress and her paramour brought the Saxon robbers here.

In this sequence Bloom attempts to conduct civilized business over the voice of the citizen, who makes general racist comments against intruders who bring bugs and swindle the poor²⁶. This is not the kind of behavior Bloom can reason with, and so he begins, in the narrator’s words, “letting on to be awfully deeply interested in nothing, a spider’s web in the corner behind the barrel, and the citizen scowling after him and the old dog at his feet looking up to know who to bite and when.”²⁷ The citizen’s voice is powerful only in the sense that his claim can be expressed in its recognizable rhythms rather than content. In order to function, the citizen’s empty slang must overpower others. After all, the man rarely makes much sense, and without his aggression—daring anyone to deny him—he holds no power whatsoever. This is the first level

²⁶ Perhaps this point is directed at Bloom’s current activity, as any Jew talking business with another might be called a swindler out for an easy shekel by a bigot who doesn’t feel like reaching too far for an insult

²⁷ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 324

on which words can have power in the episode, and the levels of commentary that eloquently and provocatively challenge it suggest that this repetitive verbal bigotry is the lowest form of expression available to—and utilized by—the Irishman. A conversation between Dublin nationals is entertaining, and even satisfying at times, to the outsider (the reader in this case), because the connection between those involved seems strong and easy. The forcefulness of the citizen's Dublin dialect, however, is not simply entertaining. Within the passage, the power of his language becomes a bullying capacity to knock down those to whom the language doesn't apply. Yet this brute-force tactic is mostly show: even those the citizen aims to engage with find more provocation snickering over their tabloid magazine and its article "Secrets to enlarging your private parts" than his too-loud slurs.

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The first level of remove from the citizen is our narrator, who, although Irish, does not apply his words to a national cause but instead conveys the scene as he sees it. To construct one of the least ironic moments in this episode, the Arranger creates a situation in which language is not so easily shaped as inside the tavern. Language is fabricated here in a new way; it mirrors the intensity of his concentration, and his feeling:

Goodbye Ireland I'm going to Gort. So I just went round to the back of the yard to pumpship and begob (hundred shillings to five) while I was letting off my (*Throwaway* twenty to) letting off my load gob says I to myself I knew he was uneasy in his (two pints off of Joe and one in Slattery's off) in his mind to get off the mark to (hundred shillings is five quid) and when they were in the (dark horse) Pisser Burke was telling me card party and letting on the child was sick (gob, must have done about a gallon) flabbyarse of a wife speaking down the tube *she's better or she's* (ow!) all a plan do he could vamoose with the pool if he won or (Jesus, full up I was) trading without a license (ow!) Ireland my nation says he (hoik! phthook!) never be up to those bloody (there's the last of it) Jerusalem (ah!) cuckoos.²⁸

²⁸ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 335

The words expressed by the narrator when he goes out to pee are unironic because of the difficulty of the situation—narrating and pissing at once. This difficulty²⁹ enables him to express the unfiltered matter of his mind, rather than continuing to relate the mindlessness of his peers. He is alone here, not constructing or communicating words but thinking in them—pushing past conventional form, which in this episode include stale nationalistic statements as well as his own predetermined critiques, to convey meaning in a complex present situation that words do not easily fit. This struggle, the messiness of it, is what we can trust in an episode where smooth, persuasive statements bully Bloom’s attempts not to take anything for granted.

The nonstandard English in this passage takes many forms: words that are not conventional are not necessarily unconventional in the same way. First, the narrator’s own style of speech asserts itself: a local lexicon that includes him in the Irish identity through his natural affinity for variations on the word “gob.” While the narrator might talk like the citizen, he’s separated from the citizen’s assertions by the simple fact that he, the narrator, does not share the citizen’s pride and loyalty to his country, or any singular cause whatsoever. The narrator builds our story by unbuilding the authority of the characters he describes. In this way, he is a destructive force. Bloom and the citizen are both seen as pathetic opposing forces, one more sympathetic than the other. And yet, even while he sees through both the citizen and Bloom, the narrator is not entirely outside because his words give him away: no matter what is said or intended, the fabricated Irish vernacular claims the speaker as its own.

The paragraph begins with an absurd statement that takes a recognizable form. “Goodbye Ireland I’m going to Gort,” the narrator says as he exits the pub to pee outside, either in an outhouse or the alley. The language and syntax of this introduction are quite clear, and grandly

²⁹ At odds with the ease of the citizen’s speech

stated in a way that is distinctly funny, without the reader even understanding what he means. Gort is an existing place, though it might sound made-up. Stranger than the word itself, the place is, in fact, in Ireland. Gort is a town in Galway, in the west of Ireland—a rural area of the country, full of castles that reach back to the Irish clans of the Middle Ages. If anything, Gort is more Irish than Dublin, or Kiernan’s pub—where the citizen and his lackeys claim national roots that they never successfully embody in their derivative prejudices. So, perhaps the narrator says this ironically. There is a more common phrase, the novel’s annotations tell us, “Goodbye, Dublin, I’m going to Gort,” which expresses an Irish countryman’s dissatisfaction with the city, and preference of a simple, country life. Perhaps the narrator meant this, and is simply too drunk to get it quite right. Or else, the revision of “Dublin” to “Ireland” is intentional, and he’s engaging in an elaborate, silly reverse-synecdoche in which Kiernan’s pub is the most centralized Irish place, and to go outside of it is to leave behind Ireland altogether and be in the backcountry of the pub’s external space—a vacant land that depends metaphorically on the idea that what’s inside is primary, and all else beside the point. If this is the case, the narrator expresses here a wish to divide himself from the Irish conception of itself, which his comrades devise drunkenly inside the pub he’s excreting on, and return to the forgotten majority of the country. Some level of ironic intention must be present, considering the simple fact that our narrator says goodbye to the folks inside the pub and promptly begins to physically purge his body of various toxins. We are made to believe that these toxins are both literal, and metaphorical. There’s a level of obscenity inherent to portraying an action such as this, just as illustrating Bloom’s urination in the end of our first episode with him seems to assert an unsettling proximity between the reader and the character that has nothing to do with his honesty. Some might be disgusted by the indecency of bearing witness to such actions; those people, the

careful arrangements assert, do not see that obscene individuals are sitting in the pub, getting along just fine, not once purging themselves of their own toxins. To have your bathroom door opened by the Arranger is, undeniably, a compliment. Only those individuals worthy of having their thoughts analyzed, entitled to humanization in these moments when no one is watching, are allowed this vulnerable position in this text.

While the ambiguities of this opening line are provocative, what comes next is both more linguistically complicated and expressively clear. The narrator continues to describe as he begins to urinate; yet his sentences quickly stray from the controlled quality they once had. Distracted by his own activity, the narrator loses track of his mind in the act of continuing his narration while “letting off his load.” He’s very frank about his activity, expressing it in many colorful ways. “Pumpship” was and remains a euphemism for urination, embraced by the narrator, no doubt, for being among a special breed of colloquialism that defeats its own obfuscation by being cruder than the literal. His disorientation is reflected in his language, “while I was letting off my (*Throwaway* twenty to) letting off my load gob says I to myself I knew he was uneasy in his (two pints off of Joe and one in Slattery’s off) in his mind to get off the mark to (hundred shillings is five quid) and when they were in the (dark horse) Pisser Burke was telling me card party and letting on the child was sick...” He goes on. The parenthetical statements verbally interrupt the flow of the sentence—the narrator attempts to pick up where he left off once the intrusions retreat, but cannot do so without ebbing back to where he lost his train of thought. Then, as the sentence progresses, the connection between each side of the parenthetical statement is even less clear, so that the “to” on one side is never followed up on the other, and we do not learn what “they were in.” We follow along as the narrator loses his ability to narrate, as well as his ability to control the story he tells. As the paragraph progresses, the parenthetical statements and the

main body of the sentence reverse themselves without our ever feeling the precise moment at which this occurs (like the verbal equivalent of the elephant leg optical illusion). As the paragraph begins, he is narrating his own progress, “So I just went round...” while the consideration of Bloom and the horse race that recently occurred intrudes on his own action. He’s thinking about something he just overheard inside: a strain of gossip that originated with a miscommunication we witnessed in an earlier episode. In “Lotus-Eaters,” Bloom runs into Bantam Lyons as he strolls out of the chemist’s shop. They make conversation, and Bloom gives him the paper he has so that Bantam can take a look at the horses running today. Bloom is entirely uninterested, “Better leave him the paper and get shut of him,” he thinks. He offers Bantam the paper to keep, reassuring him, “I was just going to throw it away.” In response, “Bantam Lyons raised his eyes and suddenly leered weakly—What’s that? his sharp voice said.” Bloom repeats what he said, to which “Bantam Lyons doubted an instant, leering: then thrust the outspread sheets back on Mr Bloom’s arms.—I’ll risk it, he said. Here, thanks.” He speeds off, the communication ends, and however odd it might have been, Bloom returns obliviously to his walk, and his wandering thoughts. It is clear, when this moment is later gossiped about in Kiernan’s pub, that these people give Bloom far too much credit. Between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. the story of their awkward exchange has become something else entirely. *Throwaway* is the name of the horse that was running in the races that day, and leering Bantam felt that Bloom was giving him a backhanded hint at where to place his money. The words he spoke, “I was just going to throw it away,” are instilled with all the wiliness and savvy of the Jew the Irish Dubliners think all Jews are. Bantam looks for something he wants from Bloom in his words, and instills in Bloom’s toneless earnestness his own leering hope for conspiracy. And later, when Bantam has apparently spread the word, the lechery belongs to Bloom entirely, the words he

spoke inconsequential to the story that now exists. When Bloom leaves the bar, Lenehan retells the story as it has come to be understood, “I know where he’s gone, says Lenehan, cracking his fingers.” The narrator asks whom he’s talking about. “Bloom, says he, the courthouse is a blind. He had a few bob on *Throwaway* and he’s gone to gather in the shekels.” This is not what is going on, but the reference to Jewish money is a nice touch that drives their version home as a better story than the truth.

Returning to the present situation in the back alley, the narrator’s thoughts build and simultaneously re-prioritize themselves. At the end of the paragraph, the intrusion is now his peeing, and the story of Bloom’s unlikely bet is what he strives to hold onto. This shift occurs as the duration of his relief has protracted beyond his expectation, and grown painful. We hear his pain in words that make sounds—these words are not chosen by a narrator, but spontaneously enacted. “(Ow!)” is first, then “(ow!)” again. The annotations point out that the pain the narrator experiences indicates gonorrhoea. Our connection to him as the conveyor of his world is further complicated by this disreputable development. He is literally a contaminated individual. Soon his noisemaking becomes even more personalized, and uncontrolled, “(hoik! phthook!)” he says, when he can’t take it any longer. These words are so new I don’t even know how to say them, nor are they fully expressive, I feel, without being able to hear them in the narrator’s mouth. They signify an experience that the narrator is having, one that cannot easily leave the setting without becoming less knowable, and comprehensible.

Finally, he recognizes, “(there’s the last of it),” and then relief: “(ah!).” The resolution of the parenthetical intrusions indicate the end of the scene more directly than whatever he was talking about all the while—after all, this paragraph is determined by his need to pee. Every comment during that period was simply to pass the time. Even so, it’s worth noting the words he

used mindlessly as he peed. He describes Pisser Burke's spouse as a "flabbyarse of a wife" and between painful spurts of parenthetical piss he makes the point that, "Ireland my nation, says he, never be up to those bloody Jerusalem cuckoos." These words are as harsh as they are entertaining. The word "flabbyarse" might be the narrator's own, though its construction follows a pattern of word creation that Joyce is fond of throughout his novel—squeezing out the pause between two words, relinquishing whatever force defines them as separate entities. This type of description is likely popular with Joyce precisely because it is used by the narrator: Joyce learned expression through Irish slang, and it was only later that his preparatory education allowed him to define what was a word and what was not in terms other than whether it seemed like it should be or meant anything. The "Jerusalem cuckoos" the narrator describes at the end of his rant sound silly, but has established meaning that is far more sinister than whimsical. The term is a disparaging nineteenth-century expression for Zionists, which grew from at least being that specific to later encompassing all Jews, with the assumption that they were collectively involved in a Zionist conspiracy. Of course, Bloom, as the token Jew among the Irishmen, is one of these cuckoos. These kinds of snide remarks are really the only ones that the Irish dialect has for Jews—calling someone a "Jerusalem cuckoo" is all the more insulting because it is spoken with simultaneous imbecility and authority. A bet placed by Bloom (which did not, in fact, occur!) has become his attempt to "gather in the shekels," rob the faithful Irishmen, and is now somehow associated with Zionist intent. These twists and turns of the truths display laughable ignorance on the part of the accusers. At the same time, the Irish conversationalists are the ones who have the words, and Bloom can't seem to get one in edgewise, so their story prevails. The narrator distances himself from an expression like this slightly by saying, likely ironically, that the accusation is coming from "Ireland my nation." He has already put himself outside of Ireland in

the beginning of this paragraph, so, in a sense, this rambling soliloquy is only murmuring over the voices he's already heard, rather than adding his own. Still, these words are in his head, and he knows just when to use them; even when he's distracted and pained, he knows how to talk like an Irishman.

A narrator is often omniscient, entirely focused and immersed in the story to an inhuman extent of concentration. In this episode, the true creator of the narrative, the Arranger, steps in to demonstrate how far this convention is from the full potential of human storytelling. We like to maintain control, and rehearse our tale until it seems effortless and smooth, but the telling of a story coincides with countless other thoughts that run in and out of our heads, unstoppable, at all moments. Just as words are convenient fabrications, so too is the idea that they can be arranged in a way that expresses an absolute reality. In fact, here with the narrator in his uncontrolled, rather appalling state, we see more of his personal truth than if he were more composed. We can be assured that the narrator's mind is not deceiving us, because he's working against the words rather than building them around himself.

This passage delves underneath the "richness of the surface" upon which the scholar David Hayman believes the Irishman's slang operates. Here we still have the abundance and energy of colloquial speech but presented in a way that doesn't quite fit into what has come before in this episode. The words are no longer in dialogue, so that the give and take of Irish humor that seems to unify these drinkers in a single perspective is replaced by the narrator's soliloquy. But even more remarkable is the way that parenthetical statements interrupt the language's flow, consistently intruding on the primary line of thought. The tension of two strains of thought vying with each other in the narrator's mind creates, through its interplay, one of the most unambiguous passages of the episode. We don't experience a thick yet translucent layer of

language covering over deeper injustices; instead, the narrator's loosened mind reveals the presence and honesty of a moment. This new and unclear style does the same work as Joyce's coinages: the reader is jolted out of the known, familiar terms of communication—contrived long ago and effortless to those inside the culture—and thrown into something that's in progress, unsettled, still moving around and ever finding itself. When language is activated in this way, it is as close to a full human experience as it can be.

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At times, it seems that all one can know for sure when reading this episode is to be on the Arranger's side. The greater challenge is to figure out where (and whether) he is aligned. The Arranger might be creating all that we see, but when he's most active it feels as if he's destroying everything else. The interpolations cut into this episode to bring us to a place, time, and structural formation of words that defies everything else we read; this defiance overpowers each of the voices that has asserted its authority in the episode. Seeing all, denying all, the Arranger includes all. As the conversation begins to peter out, signaling the end of the episode, the citizen's zest for discriminatory speech has not mellowed. Instead, his persistence has taken on an edge of desperation; and the more he rages, the less attention he receives:

—A wolf in sheep's clothing, says the citizen. That's what he is. Virag from Hungary!

Ahasuerus I call him. Cursed by God.

—Have you time for a brief libation, Martin? says Ned.

—Only one, says Martin. We must be quick. J.J. and S.

—You Jack? Crofton? Three half ones, Terry.

—Saint Patrick would want to land again at Ballykinlar and convert us, says the citizen, after allowing things like that to contaminate our shores.

—Well, says Martin, rapping for his glass. God bless all here is my prayer.

—Amen, says the citizen.

—And I'm sure he will, says Joe.

As the citizen picks as many fights as possible, attempting to ally himself with God and a biblical scale of judgment (referencing indiscriminately the tempters and Wandering Jews of the bible to

drive the threat home), the others refuse to listen to his hateful rants any longer, pointedly starting harmless conversations. The religious turn of the conversation provides an opportunity for the Arranger to imagine for us the kind of blessing that fits this pseudo-religious moment.

The Arranger's interpolation cuts in:

And at the sound of the sacring bell, headed by a crucifer with acolytes, thurifers, boatbearers, readers, ostiarii, deacons and subdeacons, the blessed company drew nigh of mitred abbots and priors and guardians and monks and friars: the monks of Benedict of Spoleto, Carthusians and Camaldolesi, Cistercians and Olivetans, Oratorians and Vallombrosans, and the friars of Augustine, Brigittines, Premonstratesians, Servi, Trinitarians, and the children of Peter Nolasco...

The procession continues for the length of the page, names compounding into oblivion so that one might not even notice when a shift occurs: "S. Cornelius and S. Leopold and S. Bernard and S. Terence and S. Edward and S. Owen Caniculus and S. Anonymous and S. Eponymous and S. Pseudonymous and S. Homonymous and S. Paronymous and S. Synonymous and S. Laurence O'Toole..."³⁰ Virtually every one of the saints has an annotation marking his historical relevance, barring the few that Joyce makes up himself. Seemingly more contrived than Joyce's made-up saints are the ones he scavenges from the annals of Catholicism: Saint Stanislaus, Saint Leopold and Saint Kiernan are all veritable figures, who also happen to be James Joyce's brother, protagonist, and pub-owner, respectively. The sheer volume of saintly names presented after the citizen's speech suggests a jocular retort: look, I can make biblical references as well. There's also the sense in which, without the annotations, few readers would know which of these names is legitimate and which made up by the Arranger. The citizen would surely be more comfortable accepting a Saint Synonymous than a Saint Leopold, even though the first is witty nonsense and the second a bona fide figure of his religious tradition. By overwhelming us with names that sound vaguely significant but hold no discernable meaning in this form, the Arranger

³⁰ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 339

mirrors the process by which the citizen approximates meaning by reiterating stories that vaguely relate to the prejudices he wishes to perpetuate. The citizen fits the facts to his purpose, and the interpolation responds by opening up words—in this case, names—to their overwhelming excess, not fitting them to the conventions of storytelling that secure the citizen in his position. The citizen means to say a lot, but using words disconnected from active thought he says nothing; the interpolation aims to say nothing very clearly, and in succeeding says a lot more. The Arranger communicates in moments like this how ridiculous it is to claim so many words without understanding even the limited meanings they are capable of conveying.

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Names should be significant in the episode entitled “Cyclops” that mirrors the Homeric myth of Ulysses and Polyphemus. In this story, Ulysses chooses a name that is not his own, that is not a name at all—“Noman,”³¹—and, blinding the Cyclops, he frees himself from the creature’s grasp. All names are arbitrary until they are instilled with the significance of mutual understanding. A name like Noman negates personhood and thus stifles the Cyclops’s communication. When the Cyclops could see Ulysses, he found him and easily overpowered him. When blind, he need only say aloud “Ulysses” to have a similar power: the ability within a community of his own people to single out his foe and divulge to others who Ulysses is and what he deserves. But when the Cyclops (whose name literally means many-voices) cannot speak of Ulysses, the last power he held over the man is released. Ulysses escapes, the Cyclops left disempowered, pathetically alone.

The citizen has the power of many voices in this episode, and the ability to pin Bloom to whatever names he desires; for this reason our protagonist is marginalized to such a great extent,

³¹ Similar to Joyce’s namelessly named saints “Synonymous, Eponymous, Homonymous”

his voice scarcely coming through the citizen's stifling condemnation. Leopold Bloom is the outsider in this Irish pub, and the doubly exclusive language overpowers Bloom: even if he finds a likeminded sentiment that proves he belongs, he will be saying it his own way because his language is different from theirs; in speaking of his Irishness, he disproves his own point. On the rare occasion that Bloom is given a chance to speak, his words are turned against him. The narrator describes:

—Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations.

—But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.

—Yes, says Bloom.

—What is it? says John Wyse.

—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

—By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for living in the same place for the past five years.

So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

—Or also living in different place.

—That covers my case, says Joe.

These men who tease do not have an answer to their own questions, nor do they need answers. In reality, there is no answer to the question "What is a nation?" This interaction is simply an opportunity to put Bloom on display; just as the milkwoman's voice provided the ironic entertainment for the educated students in the first episode, here Bloom's difference entertains the likeminded Irishmen. This is not a meritocracy, or any group in which Bloom's position can be earned from the value of his thoughts. The dynamics in this pub are fixed, not open to further consideration. Yet Bloom tries:

—What is your nation if I may ask, says the citizen.

—Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland.

The citizen says nothing only cleared the spit out of his gullet and, gob, he spat a Red bank oyster out of him right in the corner.

Here the citizen's language is nonverbal yet continues to stifle Bloom's assertions even without words. He spits in disgust (himself the more disgusting of the two, by far) at Bloom's answer,

not accepting the nationality asserted by this pathetic (yet somehow vastly threatening) Jew. Without saying anything, the citizen gets the last word.

As the conversation about nationality continues, Bloom's voice is allowed back in. The citizen lets him speak for the opportunity to twist his words around, yet Bloom relishes any opportunity to share his thoughts. He has a unique position on nationality to share with this group:

—But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.

—What? says Alf.

—Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now, says he to John Wyse. Just round to the court a moment to see if Martin is there...Just a moment.³²

Bloom abruptly exits the pub, his purpose stated clearly enough but still unconvincing. He seems to have grown more flustered than overcome with a purpose to "see if Martin is there." His language in the above passage is not powerful in any way that the Arranger admires; instead the construction resembles the citizen's convoluted confidence. He states "And everybody knows..." either in hopes of persuading them that this is the case or, even less perceptively, because he really believes that this is so. Yet no one here would readily agree with his conclusion, even if they could understand it. The second half of the sentence, "that it's the very opposite of that that is really life" evades true communication even better than the beginning. He's entangled in his own negative construction, probably sabotaging his own communication because he doesn't want to argue outright with these men. He relishes none of the verbal sparring that the citizen tries to provoke him into, and so he retreats at the moment he gets out (kind of) the point. Bringing it together, "Love...is really life." Once he's gone the citizen gets to work bullying until John Wyse cuts in, "Well isn't that what we're told? Love your neighbours." The citizen

³² Joyce, *Ulysses*, 333

retorts, “That chap? Beggar my neighbour is his motto. Love, Moya! He’s a nice pattern of a Romeo and Juliet.” While this tragedy is a famous example of the word “Love” in the face of adversity, the conclusion is characteristically too easy, and quite false. The citizen has chosen the most cliché example of tragic love in “Romeo and Juliet,” a play that relates to this scenario less than most others. Further, we’ve come to know Bloom as a man who would make a lovely neighbour. Sensing the injustice, the Arranger does not allow the conversation to end here:

Love loves to love love. Nurse loves the new chemist. Constable 14A loves Mary Kelly. Gerty McDowell loves the boy that has a bicycle. M.B. loves a fair gentleman. Li Chi Han lovey up kissy Cha Pu Chow. Jumbo, the elephant, loves Alice, the elephant. Old Mr Verschoyle with the ear trumpet loves old Mrs Verschoyle with the turnedin eye. The man in the brown macintosh loves a lady who is dead. His Majesty the King loves Her Majesty the Queen. Mrs Norman W. Tupper loves officer Taylor. You love a certain person. And this person loves that other person because everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody.

It is not clear whether this passage is intended sincerely. Some feel that the situations presented here are reductive. I feel enlivened when I read this passage with something other than an ironic tone of contempt for language’s limitations and the emptiness of such an important word to ever come close to the meaning it’s trying to approximate. There is something true of the love between creatures in these one-sentence relationships, even while the last words undeniably parody the religious claims of the deserving, God-fearing (but maybe not enough) citizen. Whether you find this moment tipping toward farce or warmth, the passage cannot be fully representative of anything because it illustrates rather than proclaiming. Here you men can see how it’s done, the Arranger replies to Bloom and the citizen. The passage both demonstrates love at work in the world, and points out the flaws of making claims about love at all. “Love loves to love love” can be a sentence because of the way language breaks things down into parts of speech and allows, through its codes, these words to build upon each other. The sentence is technically correct, and yet what does it say? Or, better still, what does it feel? It certainly

doesn't feel to the reader like the necessarily indescribable sensation of being connected to another person at your human core. "Love loves to love love" is about how words build on each other, seeming to go somewhere. But they're just words. Words can be barely intelligible, stiflingly banal, or a form of expression with the potential to convey infinite nuances of human experience. Still, they're not love.

The Arranger deconstructs definite existence in his interpolations and reconstructs in its place a reality that has no boundaries and affirms through inclusion everything but exclusion itself. He could go on for the length of the novel coming up with one-sentence examples of love, and there would still be infinite incarnations unacknowledged. Acknowledging this, the Arranger is free. The other voices of the novel have more definite limits. In an episode where storytelling reigns, spoken language and narration overpower whatever inner life these characters must have; as a result, the characters who speak the most have the fewest thoughts to share, because assured speech indicates a narrow understanding of reality's breadth. Bloom is lost in such a setting, where his identity is determined by the prejudices of others rather than whatever he feels himself to be. It will take a much less conventional structure, like the phantasmagoric walk through Nighttown later that evening, to bring the rich intensity of Bloom's identity to the surface. Until then, he wanders.

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Chapter Two: The *Wonderstruck* Language of Nighttown



The literary innovations of *Ulysses* are numerous. Each episode of the text immerses the reader in a different approach to language, exploring the stakes of the various ways we communicate. Immersed in Joyce's linguistic odyssey, the reader becomes aware of a critique that spans the course of our journey: none of these styles are quite right. Given the unique insight conveyed in each episode, every style must lack some aspect of the whole reality. Awed and unsettled, the reader who finishes *Ulysses* feels less secure in the bounties of language, even while reveling in the masterpiece of Joyce's vision. One of the novel's most formidable paradoxes lies in the essential tension between a work that figures its power in words, and the call to question the validity of the words *we* use outside of the text. What is this exceptional voice? Does it manage to escape the ambiguities it describes through its forceful awareness of them? The exceptional nature of *Ulysses* is, at least, twofold: Joyce's writing is both personal and all-inclusive.

The inclusiveness of *Ulysses* accounts for the exploratory quality embodied in the work's title and web-like complexity. The unsettling variety of types and allusions keeps the reader from feeling grounded in the words themselves. The personal aspect of this story is most obviously present in the narrative content: Stephen Dedalus remains, in this work, a rendering of *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Yet there is another aspect that combines Joyce's inclusive focus with his personal one; in striking instances that breach the tenuous boundaries that the novel builds, words themselves are rendered where they did not previously exist. In each of his episodes, Joyce manipulates language to convey meanings that English words did not previously approach. These linguistic creations strike the reader in many ways: they can be

extremely comical, very specific, and colored with the subjective experience or essence of the character or narrator that introduces them. The words themselves are action and necessitate a spontaneous reaction. In stark contrast to the trite and understood forms of speech that Joyce undermines, these words stand as monuments to the potentials of expressions we ignore in the lazy language of our lives.

Joyce's coined words, as the smallest building blocks of the novel (though he does play with individual characters at a few points, they never become consistent enough to interact with the themes to the same extent), convey both the thematic issue of any given episode as well as their own intrinsic theme of language's unrealized potential. Coinages actively instigate the very mindfulness that Joyce is asking the reader to participate in by introducing into our minds something we've never seen before and must process and consider anew. Instead of becoming part of what we know, these creations stay with us as uniquely part of Joyce's artistic rendering of the world, a communication that seems to travel directly from his mind to ours each time the novel is opened.

The novel's longest and most energetic episode, "Circe," is rife with more outlandish and exciting coinages than perhaps any other episode of the text; the episode brims with phantasmagoric performance. Because the episode is so auditory and visual, the coined words are utilized more than ever as a means of expression. Many of the most inventive coined words in this episode are blending sounds into descriptive words, so that even our suppositions that certain things sound one way linguistically (The cow goes "moo", the bird "tweets") are tested by the range of new voices present in this episode. This episode functions as an outlet for all of the creative chaos and silliness that doesn't quite fit into any other episodic form, and the language is bright and radical because of it. The whirlwind activity of "Circe" and exaggerated

reality of a nightmare setting are evoked through this experiential language. In this chapter, I will explore three instances in which the episode stretched language into new form, each of which plays on words in a different way to derive new meaning from existing forms.

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“Circe” begins with the descent into Nighttown. We enter at “*the Mabbot street entrance of nighttown, before which stretches an uncobbled transiding set with skeleton tracks, red and green will-o’-the-wisps and danger signals.*”³³ Joyce renders Dublin’s red-light district seedy and uncultivated; quickly, the coherence of the language begins to descend in response. Because the episode is set up as a dramatic performance, much of the narrative comes from the stage directions, which provide the little context Joyce will provide. While we enter the scene with Stephen, the stage direction introduces us to Bloom’s nearby presence: “On the farther side under the railway bridge Bloom appears flushed, panting, cramming bread and chocolate into a side pocket.” Suddenly, we have left Stephen’s side and enter Bloom’s view:

From Gillen’s hairdresser’s window a composite portrait shows him gallant Nelson’s image. A concave mirror at the side presents to him the lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom. Grave Gladstone sees him level, Bloom for Bloom. He passes, struck by the stare of truculent Wellington but in the convex mirror grin unstruck the Bonham eyes and fatchuck cheekchops of Jollypoldy the rixdix doldy.³⁴

The ending of this passage has morphed the common form of a nursery rhyme into a song about Bloom. A contemporary Irish reader would recognize this and feel the tension of its bizarre parody. Because the passage is part of the stage directions, another aspect of written structure is immediately destabilized. Stage directions conventionally exist in order to provide a structure for the performance that can be translated to any venue. Essentially, they order the play in some

³³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 429

³⁴ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 433-434

form of common language coded in familiarity, in the same way the journalistic form in *Aeolus* provided a framework that a reader depends upon.

In cases such as this, Joyce makes a point of building up the form, or style, as a foundation of the content he will convey, in order to newly raise our expectations of meaning. Including a nursery rhyme in a stage direction is one level on which this is at work, but the style is complicated further by its interaction with the scene itself. Joyce's ability to convey the thematic significance in the form of his language is one of the text's most idiosyncratic wonders. In this case, Bloom enters nighttown by way of Gillen's hairdresser's window, in which "a composite portrait shows him gallant Nelson's image." This idea of a composite portrait leads into the next sentence, where we find Bloom staring first into a mirror with a concave bend to see himself "lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom." The concave bend of a mirror—depending on the sides on which it is bent—will exaggerate one's features, making them larger and the face appear closer than it actually is in a ghoulish, unattractive way. The spreading of the words into a physical representation of the mournfulness of each of their parts—"lovelorn longlost lugubru"—unifies our experience of reading with an experience Bloom is having as he looks in the mirror. In a way, the fragmentation of common language is meant to make us feel Bloom's position more deeply—the broken words built back together strike at the essences of meaning the words were originally formed to convey. Between the concave mirror and the convex, a figure from the past reemerges and temporarily sobers the outlandish style: "*Grave Gladstone sees him level, Bloom for Bloom.*" Gladstone, previously mentioned in the *Lotus-Eaters* episode as a case for religious conversion, was a British Prime minister notorious for his anti-Catholic beliefs and support of Irish Home Rule—a combination that allowed him a status of reserved popularity in Ireland. The reason for his appearance here is indefinite, though the mention of a composite

portrait and other prominent figures of the British Empire seems to incorporate their pictures in the window into Bloom's experience of looking in the mirror: as if these eminent figures are observing him observing himself. Gladstone's "level" view indicates eye-contact between him and Bloom, and he seems to have transformed from a lifeless portrait to a larger-than-life omnipotence as his gaze cuts through Bloom and makes him feel known: "Bloom for Bloom." While Joyce's coinages don't carry into this moment, the way that the union between them is expressed by Bloom's name equated to itself works in the same way a new word might to push meanings—in this case a name that Joyce did indeed coin—through the words themselves, and expose another way that things can make sense through their originality. Bloom is certainly the focus of this passage, and the words reflect this; his name will appear in many variations, and sometimes come back to this practice of dwelling in itself. Later, two watchmen will approach Bloom and lay their hands on his shoulder, murmuring, "Bloom. Of Bloom. For Bloom. Bloom,"³⁵ giving him more attention than he ever received in the light of day. Nighttown, after all, exists only when the day has ceased to exist.

This thoroughly unconventional stage direction ends with a look into the convex mirror, which has a similarly distortive effect on Bloom: "He passes, struck by the stare of truculent Wellington but in the convex mirror grin unstruck the bonham eyes and fatchunk cheekchops of Jollypoldy the rixdix doldy."³⁶ "Bonham" is an Irish word meaning "sucking-pig" that existed before Joyce used it, but in a liminal way that he recognizes by including it in his Irish magnum opus. The word is not literary and would not be included in literature if Joyce didn't make a point of including it, as he makes a point of including so much of Irish culture, high and low. The word "struck" and its impacting personal resonance for Bloom are negated by a new word once

³⁵ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 453

³⁶ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 434

he looks into the mirror: “unstruck.” A simple construction with far more intricate implications, the experience of being “unstruck” by a distortive mirror foreshadows what we and Bloom will encounter in “Circe.” A standard mirror is designed to portray something as it is, and metaphorically to allow someone to see oneself undeniably and fully, no longer escaping the truth of one’s condition. As Bloom looks into the shop window and finds himself face-to-face with a playful, ghoulish likeness of himself, the view of his inner self as he walks on will be similarly exposed and distorted. What we will see of Bloom is not necessarily untrue: it reflects his deepest fears and desires. And yet, the outlandishness of it all represents the irrational psyche coming to the surface where it usually remains submerged, and becoming a new, temporary hyper-reality in which Bloom explores himself.

To Bloom this view is unexpected; walking past the shop window he did not intend to see himself in this way, in the same way that he has no control over the composite portrait that he witnesses. This mundane microcosm of a house of mirrors ushers us into the distortions and exaggerations of nighttown by infecting our consciousness of the environment with the possibility of manipulation and an entirely subjective experience. As Bloom leaves behind these bent mirrors—“*In a moment he reappears and hurries on*”—one must not forget the principle of parallax that Joyce often summons, by which a single object viewed from different positions will appear to have a different location. Through this idea, distorted views are a scientific reality of the human experience; in the novel, words are destabilized to reflect this subjectivity of experience, and life is perhaps most unstable when one is visiting nighttown.

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In “Circe,” the spaces between words are no longer fixed in a recognizable way. Instead, words like pigeonbreasted, lancecorporal, japanesily, Bloomusalem, nighthag and cometobed become the norm. When two or more words are pushed together—or often pushed farther to

blend with each other—the essences of each semantic unit are combined into an entirely new essence that becomes undeniably associated with Joyce, and with nighttown.

As Bloom's stay in nighttown lengthens, the trace of reality diminishes into a performance that resembles nonsense. Yet even while the words ramble and drag into apparent silliness, Joyce makes sure that more sense seeps through than the eccentric plot and structure lets on. At one point about halfway through the episode, Bloom's late grandfather appears to lecture him about sex as no one else could to quite the same mortifying effect. He enters and gets right to the point, "My name is Virag Lipoti, of Szombathely...Promiscuous nakedness is much in evidence hereabouts, eh?" (511). A rather long-winded fellow, Virag speaks to Bloom for quite some time, not often letting his grandson get a word in edgewise. He prattles, "I always understood that the act so performed by skittish humans was glimpses of lingerie appealed to you in virtue of its exhibitionisticity. In a word. Hippogriff. Am I right?" In this conversation, a hippogriff emerges from the chatter as an ideal representation of the work Joyce's similarly amalgamated words are doing. The word has fused accepted parts to a new, more elevated state of existence: that of a myth. Joyce's words might also take on the legendary quality afforded the hippogriff. And yet what's most interesting about the hippogriff is that it is already made up of a mythical creature and a non-mythical one: a mare fused with a griffon (the union of eagle and lion). There are layers of creation apart from the original or "natural" creature in the hippogriff, just as there are layers of meaning and construction in Joyce's language, and in the mythical, surrealist edifice that is nighttown. "Hippogriff" is someone else's made up word, and it has a physical form to go with it. If one considers Joyce's words pigeonbreasted or japanesily—which don't technically mean anything in the sense that the words have recorded significances—does one not imagine the person being described with these new words in a specific, detailed way because of them? It

is perhaps in the same way that we might imagine a hippogriff, without having ever seen one. Here we find how tenuous the bond between meaning and form is, and how easily our minds have adapted to putting together old meanings into new words without recognizing it.

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The episode's outlandish translations of vocalized sounds into words are perhaps the most entertaining coinages of Joyce's creation. From the cat's fresh meow in Bloom's introduction—*Mrkgnao!*—to his ruminations on *weggebobbles*, and beyond, there's something uniquely satisfying about reading the thought processes and vocalizations you never imagined as words, or had settled arbitrarily into another linguistic representation (Meow). "Circe" proves no exception to this abundance of phonetic verbiage; in fact, the unrestrained madness of nighttown marks the height of these creations. These types of words vary in significance, from pleasant to the ear to deeply meaningful. Coming down from the experience of nighttown, the sound of the carriage that conveys our heroes away soothes, echoes and infects:

Corny Kelleher on the sideseat sways his head to and from in sign of mirth at Bloom's plight. The jarvey joins in the mute pantomimic merriment nodding from the farther seat. Bloom shakes his head in mute mirthful reply. With thumb and palm Corney Kelleher reassures that the two bobbies will allow the sleep to continue for what else is to be done. With a slow nod Bloom conveys his gratitude as that is exactly what Stephen needs. The car jingles *tooraloom* round the corner of the *tooraloom* lane. Corny Kelleher again reassuralooms with his hand. Bloom with his hand assuralooms Corney Kelleher that he is reassuraloomtay. The tinkling hoofs and jingling harness grow fainter with their *tooralooloolooloo* lay. Bloom, holding in his hand Stephen's hat festooned with shavings and ashplant, stands irresolute. Then he bends to him and shakes him by the shoulder.³⁷

The descriptive language of this stage direction starts dry and straight, loosening along with the characters. The supportive energy of the syntax—looping around and back just as the characters do to take care of each other—expresses a quiet, intimate moment in tender contrast to what has just been experienced by all. Bloom and Kelleher are communicating without words,

³⁷ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 608

understanding each other through some connection of their sentiment, and then enacting whatever is necessary through their common understanding. The text shows what their bodies—such as Kelleher’s “thumb and palm”—are saying, but only for us. For these men, in their space and connection to each other, the words do not exist. Here is another way in which words aren’t fixed, and perhaps are overrated as a mode of communication when deeper connections are more communicative and personal. They use their bodies to speak, or rather to mean at each other, and the words of the description are impressed with their meaning indirectly. The sound of increasing sway—*assuralooms, tooralooloolooloo*—is phonetically reminiscent of the word Bloom. In this case, Bloom’s name becomes his action—an essence spreading from whatever inherently makes up Bloom to the things he does, a significance flowing from his being to the expression through his action. The rest of the description, apart from these words, is quite simple and repetitive; the assuring and reassuring becomes the structure as well as the content of what is occurring. Every fiber of the narrative is meaning together for the purpose of conveying this moment. Stage directions themselves become increasingly important in these last moments of the episode, as the performance ends and that which is unsaid becomes most significant in the ensuing silence. The last lines of the episode are in the form of direction, under the agency of the voiceless “RUDY.” As a wishful figment of Bloom’s imagination, Rudy says nothing; yet, as an undeniable aspect of Bloom’s reality, Rudy has a part in this play, nonetheless.

One of the most complicated relationships in the text exists thematically between creativity and meaninglessness, and this tension lies at the center of a discussion of new words. How can Joyce be invested in creating so many new expressions when the idea of language itself is brought into question at numerous points for its reductive qualities and inability to participate in the tangible, emotional or truly communicative experiences of existence? It must be the case

that the indictment of language never stops being applicable: words never become universal, true or entirely legitimate. And yet, as with almost all aspects of Joyce's text, there is another side to this struggle to mean. Joyce pushes words to a further brink of meaning in each episode in order to express the productive and limiting potential of any mode of expression that one might use to tell the story of a day in the life of two men. And in the same way that he tests, exaggerates, and subtly undermines each mode of language, he also celebrates the potential to come so far in communicating that one can *feel* truth in the telling. Thus, Joyce uncovers both the creative and deconstructive aspects of language in the unit of the "allincluding" word.

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Chapter Three: Voices in the Dark



Hugh Kenner's commentary on *Ulysses*, entitled *Joyce's Voices*, puts forth a two-voice approach to understanding *Ulysses*. This approach is especially well suited to the "Ithaca" episode, as Kenner's idea began with this episode and moved on to other episodes from there. One most easily conceives of this episode by accepting the existence of two voices: the two interlocutors. The first line of Ithaca is a question, the second line begins the answer. Each paragraph, or subject-unit of the episode begins with a question, and is followed by an answer. To say that these questions and answers are made up of two voices one must simply decide it is so. What might feel like deduction is in fact the first of many steps one takes to transform this episode into a knowable entity. The reality of this episode is intentionally arbitrary. Intentional because it was created—a decision, or a series of them, was made to create something that ended here—and arbitrary because even while there are as many answers as questions, the information provided leads one further and further from following any direction in particular. The voices are beyond the human realm of processing. Indeed, the only way I can imagine them as humans is if they are reading Joyce's novel themselves, as their script. The idea that these characters are being themselves denies the concept of "self" its proper boundaries; to say that they are acting naturally has the same paradoxical effect. Kenner agrees, and conceives of the voices as extra-human entities, embodying in their voracious wisdom the ultimate source of creativity:

The Muse answers tirelessly; she has geometry to impart, and metrical poetry, information about the characters' pasts and about their innermost thoughts; and she can deluge us with information we never thought to want, the acreage of the reservoirs of the Dublin waterworks or the output in the candlepower of the gasflame on Bloom's kitchen range; she can rise also to a poetry of which we had not suspected the possibility, notably

in the grave cadences which celebrate the domain of Odysseus, Water, for some 500 accurate ceremonious words, and conclude with ‘the noxiousness of its effluvia in lacustrine marshes, pestilential fens, faded flowerwater, stagnant pools in the waning moon’ (672/593).³⁸

Kenner describes well the tireless impossibility of this episode’s narrative style. Gleaning “a poetry of which we had not suspected the possibility” in the answering voice, he recognizes the Muse as an awe-inspiring entity. The poetry of the passage he chose comes from its lyrical evocation. Kenner’s Muse is capable of poetic expressions, yet its intentions are indiscernible. We don’t know if it’s a poet in the same way that I cannot know if nice words on a sheet of paper shot under my door were written with me in mind or by a computer randomly configuring words and slipping them under all the doors. We are given no context for this conversation—nothing to say that this even is “a conversation.” All we can do is provide our own context, or assume that the episode defies the concept of context altogether, aiming for what Kenner labels “Objectivity of Objectivities.” Kenner describes what he believes the episode’s intention to be, along with its limits:

...So there are gaps, there are evasions, many. The very budget—Objectivity of Objectivities—is tampered with, to delete the sum left behind in the warehouse. For though “objective” is what we generally hear “Ithaca” called, objective is exactly what it is not. It is incomplete and only intermittently straightforward, it is confined to no one’s experience, it does not adhere except whimsically to a chronology of impressions—Gulliver in Lilliput by contrast told the plain truth—and it refuses restriction to the experiences of the senses. It encompasses even Bloom’s Beatific Vision, life amid the eeltraps, lobsterpots, lawnmowers and lilactrees of Bloom Cottage, St. Leopold’s, Flowerville.

Kenner’s point of view asserts that the episode can be defined by the qualities he identifies but is also necessarily “Beyond Objectivity” because it is “incomplete and only intermittently straightforward.” The duality at work fits well into the structure of Kenner’s argument, itself full of Hegelian dualities that tease each other into meaning. I am not as sure as Kenner that the

³⁸ Kenner, *Voices*, 96

episode relies on, or asserts the existence of, something called objectivity. The episode is not beyond objectivity, rather it prods objectivity as a state of mind, or a state beyond the mind, in order to display just how impossibly objectivity applies to our minds' conceptions. Every entity of this episode takes on a life of its own, a story of its own, through its sheer existence in what was understood as someone else's story. There can be nothing objective about a story. There is no full story. And in the realm of Ithaca, the more the story brims over, the more apparent it becomes that what we have will never convey it all. Exercises in objectivity are a mind's fabrications, necessarily limited and therefore defined by infinite potential for exploration.

Scholars have proven more arguments about the Ithaca chapter than can ever be recorded here. Even saying that doesn't quite explain the thing fully. Any argument recorded here has been contradicted, improved upon or proven irrelevant by another scholar. And even when I choose to quote a scholar's argument, the quote itself will reduce their larger point. When discussing any chapter in this novel, a scholar will circle in on a quality, stating and restating their point through analysis of passages and biographical research. The ever-expanding quality of *Ulysses* commentary fits the text by escaping any other kind of fit. Everything has been said, and so nothing has been said. Everything has been focused on and so there is no focus. The Ithaca episode is the most overflowing subject of this phenomenon. The scholarship that most interests me attempts to define the episode's expansive, almost nihilistic quality; and each attempt necessarily floats out to sea, indefinitely away from home.

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The episode begins as if its theme might finally be the ever-evaded sense of order. Bloom and Stephen are going home. If parallax defined their movement up until this point, the lines have finally intersected, and for an instant the pair travels together. We can imagine that lines in

parallax touch only at one point and continue moving apart. Yet lives cannot touch in a single point. A point does not allow for any duration of time, it is instantaneous, even less than that. If a line had a human mind it might find itself to be traveling parallel to another at the moment they intersect, out of disorientation at the sudden existence of another sharing one's place. This suspended state of union opens the episode. We are asked the question, "What parallel courses did Bloom and Stephen follow returning?" and the answer comes in the form of directions, a physical map of their progress along Dublin's streets. An unidentified voice responds to the first, "Starting united both at a normal walking pace from Beresford place they followed in the order named Lower and Middle Gardiner streets and Mountjoy square, west: then..." and continues to dictate the pace, street and cardinal direction of the pair, relative to the city and to each other. First they are together walking at a normal pace, then their pace is reduced but still matched. Finally their pace is relaxed and each is at his leisure, disparate but not so much so that they cannot discuss various topics of mutual interest. The episode's form provides extensive detail about their journey, yet one must first grapple with the peculiar narrative style.

Confronted with this episode's form, we work first to comprehend it on the most basic level of meaning—what does it say? Once the form is understood, the circumstances of this episode come into question. Who is asking? And who is answering? Within context, a question followed by an answer might be one of the most straightforward methods of conveying information. Out of any worldly context, it makes almost no sense at all. We might know more about Stephen and Bloom than we otherwise could because of this narrative style, but we never know with whom we're communicating.

The second question reframes the details provided by the first. Where we first found Bloom and Stephen through the physical space they inhabit, here we peer into their mental space.

“Of what did the duumvirate deliberate during their itinerary?” The answer comes unfiltered, unprioritized; possibly chronological, likely not even that. It begins and ends in one gust:

Music, literature, Ireland, Dublin, Paris, friendship, woman, prostitute, diet, the influence of gaslight or the light of arc and glow-lamps on the growth of adjoining paraheliotropic trees, exposed corporation emergency dustbuckets, the Roman catholic church, ecclesiastical celibacy, the Irish nation...

This is a technique that serves well Joyce’s affinity for telling the story and disguising it at the same time. The lack of order creates a reading experience that feels true and authoritative because of its unruliness. The list of topics is so unconventional that it seems to flow freely through the associations of these characters’ minds. The topic of conversation shifts from artform to artform to nation to city to city to relationship to gender to sexual appetite to physical appetite. Then the topic shifts from a fabricated topic to one that their environment stimulates. “The influence of gaslight or the light of arc and glow-lamps on the growth of adjoining paraheliotropic trees” are our impersonal voices’ way of conveying how the two men noticed that the trees have more leaves closer to the lamplight. Their deliberations on the topic of “exposed corporation emergency dustbuckets” are the trashcans that Bloom wishes were on the street. The annotations point out that “This is one of Bloom’s ‘civic self-help’ ideas; the baskets did not exist in 1904.”³⁹ A number of levels now separates the episode’s voice from the characters’ voices. Whereas a direct line to a character’s consciousness might have defined the first episodes of the novel, this episode works like the others in this part of the novel to shift our lens. We are not overwhelmed with Stephen and Bloom, instead, siphoning through these questions, we have to find them. The personal language of a character has been a powerful guide at certain points in this novel. While Stephen’s thoughts shift through multiple languages and

³⁹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 566

jokes with himself and references to events of his life that we could not possibly know, the guiding principle is always the essence of his character—his voice. The mode of this episode shifts that stability and provides what feels like the reverse. We have been separated from our protagonists and we do not even know what stands between us. There are voices, or maybe just one, who are now telling the story by asking questions of these men, and also providing the answers. The questions could come from anywhere. Often they seem to anticipate the answers, as if they are building the story together, with intention. At other times the questions tell more of a story than the answers, and the form itself seems to be the only limit that holds the chaos of the full experience back. Whereas Stephen's mind might have once been the story's single constraint, now it is the technical formation of a question followed by an answer that holds chaos at bay—stabilizing our experience just enough to connect us to the meanings spilling out of the episode.

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The narrative builds around the overarching question of what Stephen and Bloom are like together. The Ithaca episode embodies their union. Where Odysseus and Telemachus are reunited as father and son, Bloom and Stephen are acquainting themselves with each other. After we learn about their topics of conversation, we are introduced to their opinions, always relative to the other. “Did Bloom discover common factors of similarity between their respective like and unlike reactions to experience?” The question is asked of Bloom, though he never answers it himself. The episode's voices convey his conclusions: “Both were sensitive to artistic impressions musical in preference to plastic or pictural. Both preferred a continental to an insular manner of life...both indurated by early domestic training...Both admitted the alternately stimulating and obtunding influence of heterosexual magnetism” (666) By this third question, the

divide between the content and the form of this episode has declared itself. In the repetitive syntax and mechanically stiff lexicon, we experience the form. Peering through this structure, we can decode—or perhaps recode—the characters, setting, and plot. Context must be instilled from within the reader, who calls upon her own awareness of these characters to sketch out the scene. Imagination and engagement are key to understanding that Bloom *would* be focusing on the similarities of their experience because of the way his own mind concentrates on pulling together the forces at work. Even while we might not hear Bloom’s voice, we recognize his mind at work. The conversation itself is also familiar once our minds provide the context. They cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time and share opinions on many topics, including the ones they have been dwelling on all day. The “alternately stimulating and obtunding influence of heterosexual magnetism” might be the spring of angst out of which the majority of their conflicted position flows, and yet in these unintended circumstances the reader is left to draw her own conclusions.

When the story isn’t told straight, the levels of a mind’s consciousness have space to tell their own story. The list of similar qualities between Bloom and Stephen is not trying to tell the truth, nor does it hope to tell its own story or fear our impression. Bloom would tell one story, or his freely flowing thoughts would tell us another. Here we have the story of both, along with many others. The falseness of a voice is removed. We are not presented with the fact that they agreed on all counts but find instead that the points on which the men agreed have been pulled from their interaction and synthesized. The code of communication has shifted in this episode away from authenticity toward efficiency.

Perhaps we readers thought we knew what Bloom and Stephen were like together from the way they walked. United, apart, meeting at the end—their story was unfolding. Now, the

story is fuller, but also less conceivable. The information is not ordered for us by a human hand, instead this episode presents more like a computer's attempt at telling a story. But they are just as infinitely knowable in their indefinitely complex thoughts as in their gestures. The revelation of this episode's style comes over and over again: as many ways as you come to know a character, and a relationship, there are infinitely more views to have.

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No two people have ever had a conversation quite like this. The nebulous lack of context destabilized the form; these voices don't seem to know the rules of conversation. One finds that the content of the questions begins to take on the revealing quality of the answer. What does the questioner know, and what does the answerer? How are they one entity and how separate? Without the ability to embody them, we are left without context. The result is that they each in turn go beyond a mind's capacity to retain information and to connect with another mind. They could all be the same voice, or each could be a different voice. In an attempt to stabilize this narrative, an audio recording of this episode creates a dialogue between two consistent interlocutors: voicing the questions in a specific voice, and the answers in another. This stability cannot be assumed of the reading experience, although one might find herself imagining the situation with features that define and control the page. Yet even as we absorb new features into our understanding of the novel, something else pushes past our expectation. We are forever active, grasping at the story in an attempt to stabilize it, never to succeed.

The questions asked delve into specifics hardly intelligible to the reader. The interlocutors ask questions that we cannot as humans conceive of the answers to, unless we've been training for an academic decathlon. They ask questions that cut right to the chase. The questions relate to circumstance and define the mental conditions under which events occurred

more than anything moving the story forward. The questions revolve around each moment of the story, so that if the reader shifts her focus the story also begins to leak through the inquiry. Even without the answers, the reader can feel the narrative pull of the questions—allknowing, allincluding:

What reflection concerning the irregular sequence of dates 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1892, 1893, 1904 did Bloom make before their arrival at their destination?

As in what ways?

What action did Bloom make on their arrival at their destination?

Was it there?

Why was he doubly irritated?

What were then the alternatives before the premeditatedly (respectively) and inadvertently, keyless couple?

Bloom's decision?

Did he fall? ⁴⁰

These questions anticipate the answer. While it might seem like two interlocutors, they are not two people talking, at least not in any naturally occurring dialogue. The questioner, it is clear from questions such as “Why was he doubly irritated?”, that provide yet unknown information about the scene, knows as much as the answerer. What, then, is this dialogue? What is its occasion? The two sides of this discussion seem to be working together to tell a story that they both know. The interrogative voice might then be considered simply a convention of their storytelling, and yet there are other storytelling conventions that the exchange lacks. There is not, in any way, a personal touch. There is an element of whimsy, but only in the way that a voice is made to be ironically impersonal. Some entity speaks (or many entities speak) as if it has a consciousness, and yet as a “self” these voices are like no consciousness that exist. They are

⁴⁰ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 667-668

funny through their information, not their intention. They are funny, at times, through their lack of artifice. When the voice asks, *Was it there?* Knowing full well that it was not—to the extent that these voices can *know*—but not knowing how to tell it with a light touch, the reader might laugh at the abruptness of the question.

This works with the same startling energy that the interlocutors will bring forth when they ask, outright, *What two temperaments did they individually represent?* And answer, *The scientific. The artistic.* This question, and, even more so, its answer, cuts through all the circumlocution to present like a revelation. No word means more than any other in this episode because nothing is weighted with a person's intent. Instead, the reader finds words important because she feels they are so, based on the story as she knows it; discovering the story, one feels drawn to it more deeply.

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After we start to understand the possibilities for storytelling that this episode allows, we begin deciphering the story's content. The characters come alive in this form in ways that characters might never have existed. A reader might have experienced a character through a series of questions and answers, or read a story in which the physiology of the character was more apparent than their state of mind. Here, there is no aspect of Bloom and Stephen more apparent than any other. The combination of a person's internal state and external appearance with every possibility for interacting with the scientific, philosophical, political and linguistic realities of human existence has perhaps never flowed so freely. When Bloom and Stephen arrive home, Bloom goes to make tea.

The process of making tea is made complex by the questions. An action that could be simply stated as “Bloom made tea” takes on virtually unfathomable depth in a series of questions. The first question is habitual: “What did Bloom do at the range? He removed the saucepan to the left hob, rose and carried the iron kettle to the sink in order to tap the current by turning the faucet to let it flow.”⁴¹ Bloom makes tea the same way every time, and we are held fast in his routine for a moment, until the word “flow” ushers in a wave of detail that gushes freely into Bloom’s story through his sink tap. The second question is municipal:

Did it flow? Yes. From Roundwood reservoir in county Wicklow of a cubic capacity of 2,400 million gallons, percolating through a subterranean aqueduct of filter mains of single and double pipeage constructed at an initial plant cost of 5 pounds per linear yard by way of Dargle, Rathdown, Glen of the Downs and Callowhill to the 26 acre reservoir at Stillorgan, a distance of 22 statute miles, and thence, through a system of relieving tanks, by a gradient of 250 feet to the city boundary at Eustace bridge...⁴²

The informing voice echoes the authority of earlier in the episode, when Stephen and Bloom were returning home and their path was described in terms of the space they inhabited. Just as their walk took place in their minds, in their bodies, in the streets and so on, the water in the tap is a story on as many levels. Water is the source of human life, with physical and chemical properties that have a biological effect on mankind. The metaphorical potential of water is itself limitless, and as it flows through the tap into the story as the momentary subject, the truth of water’s existence comes into our minds with the import of a character whose acquaintance we have just made. One cannot hold all stories in one’s mind at once, and the water’s flow is a reminder of how arbitrary our concentration is. Kenner’s concept of false objectivity lands home in moments like this; nothing seems more objective than the physical structure of the water pipes and reservoirs. They hold so many gallons, travel so many miles, fall and gain gradients of

⁴¹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 670

⁴² Joyce, *Ulysses*, 671

elevation fueled by forces physical and manmade to pour from the taps of tea drinkers, as simple as anything. Yet the physical presence of the water does not simplify its existence. It is thought of and forgotten, guided and freely flowing, made into tea and made into poetry. The simultaneity of events, the arbitrariness of a single story among infinitely interconnected paths, and the ability for this novel to express that, despite that, are all a part of this aquatic realization. And not only does the water travel, it connects. As the answer surges on, we learn:

The water had fallen below the sill of the overflow weir for which reason the borough surveyor and waterworks engineer, Mr. Spencer Harty, C. E., on the instructions of the waterworks committee, had prohibited the use of municipal water for purposes other than those of consumption (envisaging the possibility of recourse being had to the impotable water of the Grand and Royal canals as in 1893) particularly as the South Dublin Guardians, notwithstanding their ration of 15 gallons per day per pauper supplied through a 6 in meter, had been convicted of a wastage of 20,000 gallons per night by a reading of their meter on the affirmation of the law agent of the corporation, Mr Ignatius Rice, solicitor, thereby acting to the detriment of another section of the public, selfsupporting taxpayers, solvent, sound.

This solicitor and engineer are connected to Bloom by his tap. The stories of these characters are only hinted at, promising a fullness that equals Bloom's if only our attention was pointed in their direction. And even while the conflict that connects them to the water (the water that will become Bloom and Stephen's tea) starts to take shape for us, the very fact of it promises more stories like it that we can necessarily not imagine but can, for a second, imagine imagining. This is the story for a reason, but the reason is only that Joyce wrote it this way, ended it when he did, and sent it around. Seeing a fuller scope of possibilities, we find that our narrative of Bloom and Stephen, and narrative is necessarily limited, the details that are included prioritized over the details that we'll never know. Yet as this episode continues, that hierarchy is called into question as Ithaca's homecoming refuses to realize a journey's end. The novel's pages run out, yet the conceptual scope of the story broadens. There's nothing final about this homecoming. The hint of the episode in general: a narrative homecoming that unsettles the reader.

The third question is philosophical:

What in water did Bloom, waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier returning to the range, admire? Its universality: its democratic equality and constancy to its nature in seeking its own level: its vastness in the ocean of Mercator's projection: its unplumbed profundity in the Sundam trench of the Pacific exceeding 8,000 fathoms: the restlessness of its waves and surface particles visiting in turn all points of its seaboard: the independence of its units: the variability of states of sea...⁴³

On and on, without order beyond its inexplicable order, the list flows. The colons build on themselves as a grammatical construction, all equal and yet each ushering on the next, the sentence begins with a Capital letter and ends in a period. But when we begin with "It's universality:" it seems that something might be explained further, as if we are about to have water's universality explained. And the next fragment must be part of that universality, "its democratic equality and constancy to its nature in seeking its own level;" in the way that anything can be considered part of an entity's universality. Without pause, the qualities of water are listed and the equality of their existence together, side by side, explains itself. Taking a phrase alone, one might dwell on the sibilance of "its secrecy in springs," the indiscernible whimsy of "its lutefluveous beds" and eventually become awed by one's own admiration of "its metamorphoses...its strength...its solidity...its docility...its utility...its submarine fauna and flora." Within this Q&A form, a veritable ode to water is expressed and, without import, flows into the next question. Formatted differently, reframed for a different context, the content of this answer might be a freestanding poem with space before and after to let the words settle and resonate. Instead it is here a small matter of Bloom's mind expressed by an inhuman narrator voice within James Joyce's work called *Ulysses*, and the paradox of its lack of context is the matter at hand. If we are to attempt to contextualize this passage, its expression is reduced.

⁴³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 671

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In order to expand the story in this way, it must also begin to contract. Like the parallax view that comes together in a point and branches back out again forever, the episode could not sustain its message if it were consistent. Pointing out the infinity of stories possible to tell, it comes back to its own. As the episode of homecoming, Ithaca mirrors the return of Odysseus to his palace and the manner in which he reclaims his space and reunites with his family. In the minute details of the plot, Joyce's episode finds correspondences to the original story, the annotations point out that Odysseus has also "entered his house 'by a stratagem,' as Bloom does...[and] the state of his house 'corrugates' his brow—as Bloom's brow is corrugated,"⁴⁴ and the correspondences proceed in this manner. These types of witty inclusions mean less in this episode than they have before; we are too far down the rabbit hole, Joyce's vision diverged from the methodical beauty of an archetypal epic, to feel a force to his intention in these moments. Instead they provide the necessary contrast to his stylistic probing: just as we are grounded by the returning presence of Bloom and Stephen, their correspondences comfort our jerking minds. Odysseus and Telemachus are reunited at the end of a long journey in Odysseus's occupied palace; Bloom and Stephen are united at the end of a long day in Bloom's disrupted home. We can follow the progress of their evening in the context of the Q&A tangents. After tea, Bloom proposes that Stephen stay indefinitely in asylum, and "promptly, inexplicably, with amicability, gratefully it was declined."⁴⁵ Counterproposals are made, complications arise, and without any future commitments, Bloom and Stephen begin to part ways. Outside our attention turns to the cosmos with the same breadth that we recently encountered water. The facts and associations of a natural entity are blended again by Bloom's mind, filtered through the narrator: "What specific

⁴⁴ *Annotated*, 566

⁴⁵ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 695

affinities appeared to him to exist between moon and woman? Her antiquity in preceding and surviving successive tellurian generations: her nocturnal predominance: her satellitic dependence: her luminary reflection: her constancy under all her phases, rising, and setting by her appointed times, waxing and waning: the forced invariability of her aspect: her indeterminate response to inaffirmative interrogation..." (702). Even while we are removed from Bloom by the style, the fixations of his mind come through these affinities as if he cannot help but tell his story. In the last moments of Bloom and Stephen's time together, the reader faces again an inescapable reality of life: urination. As they pee, they are related to each other and relate to each other, they are defined as separate entities that share undeniable qualities and are thus linked. This is the last event of their unified stance: they have crossed paths, hung in the balance of their own eclipse for an extemporal moment of unity, during which they discussed the option of abandoning their course, but alas the journey is reassumed. Stepping outside and emptying their bladders, Stephen and Bloom momentarily stand together before beginning picking up their course, ever divergent on this side of their union.

What visible luminous sign attracted Bloom's, who attracted Stephen's gaze?
In the second storey (rere) of his (Bloom's) house the light of a paraffin oil lamp with oblique shade projected on a screen of roller blind supplied by Frank O'Hara, window blind, curtain pole and revolving shutter manufacturer, 16 Aungier street.⁴⁶

The language of this scene is oriented toward the characters more than in other parts of the episode. Instead of following Bloom's water tap to the municipal works center, and the stories on the other end, we follow Bloom's gaze and Stephen does the same. Instead of pointing to the surplus of stories, the distance between meanings, and the arbitrariness of their proximity, we

⁴⁶ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 702

find a connection in their unified gaze. Not only does Bloom's attraction become Stephen's, he shares his thoughts on what he sees:

How did he elucidate the mystery of an invisible person, his wife Marion (Molly) Bloom, denoted by a visible splendid sign, a lamp?

With indirect and direct verbal allusions or affirmations: with subdued affection and admiration: with description: with impediment: with suggestion.

Throughout the day, Stephen and Bloom have dealt with their own internal states as separate entities: separate from each other and those around them. The book has brought us to other characters, allowed them to temporarily take over the narrative, reminded us that Stephen and Bloom aren't the only internal creatures, that each character on the streets, beaches and barstools of Dublin on June 16, 1904 is telling in his or her own way the epic tale of his own life. In this episode, when we are with the characters, the alienation of their voices is not present. Any voice, whether or not it is intentional, holds itself apart by speaking alone. Stephen's stream of consciousness in the first section of the book highlights its own isolation; Bloom's later voice does the same, without Stephen's angst, simply by muting out the other voices at work. Here, in the realm of Ithaca, the voices that control the language that have an unattainable perspective. When such disconnected beings point the story back at our protagonists, the personality of their union feels authentic. They are not telling their own stories, not feeling their own righteousness or singularity, and as a result their connection feels singular to the reader, all the more so for the difficulty it takes to discern the emotional resonance of the moment in the technical jargon. Since they began their walk home, these men have been sharing thoughts, listening to each other, and comparing their realities. This does not seem out of the ordinary in Ithaca because there are so many more startling realities in this episode, i.e. the structure, the elusive concentration, the clinical eye. Yet, when the state of Bloom and Stephen is comparatively examined, their transformation into connected entities is an anomaly. This union makes real the single united

moment on a parallactic course. Under all the exploration of meaning and limitation that this episode embodies, the protagonists have made things quite simple by meeting each other, relating to each other, and speaking to each other. Their voices are heard, not by us, but by each other. We are able to wander as the reader because they are, for a moment, standing on firm ground. Peeing side by side.

To Stephen, Bloom “elucidates the mystery of the invisible person” of his memory, or his muse: Molly Bloom. The annotations point out that this is an allusion to Dante’s *Purgatorio*. As Dante and Virgil proceed into the underworld, Cato challenges them, “Who hath guided you? and who was a lamp unto you issuing forth from the deep night that ever maketh black the infernal vale?” Virgil responds, “Of myself I came not. A lady came down from heaven through whose prayers I succoured this man with my company.”⁴⁷ The strength of the connection between this scene and Joyce’s cannot be gleaned. Perhaps Joyce had it in mind, thought actively about its place here; perhaps not. In connection with Bloom’s realization to Stephen, the passage strengthens the position of Molly in this passage, and her approach in the next and last episode. A lady has brought these men together to the extent that Bloom’s wanderings would not be quite the same without his preoccupation, and further to the extent that his connection to Stephen here is necessitated by a nervous agitation that both men share on this day. With a twist, Molly is the muse of the unity between these two men. “With indirect and direct verbal allusions or affirmations: with subdued affection and admiration: with description: with impediment: with suggestion,” Bloom teases out of his mind “the mystery of an invisible person” and the image of this scene is left for us to gather from the scattered stimuli. The darkness but for a light. The

⁴⁷ *Annotated 585*, from *Purgatorio* 1:43-45

men, standing and looking together at the light as, eyes focused above, Bloom's mind conjures her image, her meaning, for Stephen to know what he knows.

Both then were silent?
Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of
theirhisnothis fellowfaces.⁴⁸

What is the role of the questioner in moments like this? The voice can be empty entirely, leading us on, or caught up in the story to the extent that it intuitively feels what comes after Bloom's words. "Both then were silent?" might be a question simply because every new paragraph, or subject, must begin with a question. Or it might be a question because the first interlocutor wants desperately for the story to go on, like a child who has heard the same story every night and is bursting to have it all come out, even more excited to know what's coming than if it were all new. The response is affirmative, without recognizing the voice that it affirms. The words are as inflected with the minds of the characters as they ever are in this episode: "Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh..." The syntax of this moment eludes immediate understanding. Taken in pieces, running over the words back and forth, one begins to sense the how and why of the construction. The sentence enacts reciprocity; simultaneous contemplation of the other becomes contemplation of self. "Each...the other...in both...of the reciprocal," these words break down the language of such an exchange. Then the sentence beings rebuilding language to meet the necessity that has been expressed in the cracks: "...of theirhisnothis fellowface." This is the verbal, syntactic, ontological embodiment of a moment in which two entities contemplate each other, both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh. The minds of the characters are again at work on the page, this time as one they consider the other, as if their gazes are bouncing back and forth (he-I-his-mine-our-their-mine-mine-not-mine-his) off

⁴⁸ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 702

of the other entity and back to self, crossing the thoughts of the other and becoming entangled. Mirrors of fellowfaces. Singular and plural.

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Without pacing of any sort, the moment begins and ends. We are cued once again by the interlocutors into a causal, or at least temporal, realm of the story:

Were they indefinitely inactive?

At Stephen's suggestion, at Bloom's instigation both, first Stephen, then Bloom, in penumbra urinated, their sides contiguous, their organs of micturition reciprocally rendered invisible by manual circumposition, their gazes, first Bloom's, then Stephen's, elevated to the projected luminous semiluminous shadow.⁴⁹

As if dispelling the tension, or the overabundance of meaning, the men end their unified pondering, stand side by side, and piss. This activity is familiar from earlier episodes, and not (to the extent that anything in this book can be) by accident. The annotations call on the micturition to point out Joyce's enjoyment of such scenes: "In *Finnegan's Wake* (pp. 185-186), Joyce explicitly associates micturition with poetic creativity and with the writing of *Ulysses*."⁵⁰ Pissing acts as an embodiment of Joyce's gleeful brand of subversion. Drawing my own conclusions, it makes perfect sense that Joyce would connect the writing of what became known as the greatest modern novel in existence with expelling the urine that has built up, pressuring his bladder until he can savor the release of the waste from his being. Writing externalizes, and more than that it wastes time (to the extent that everything is a waste of time) and, as in this case, evades the complex reality of the present. However focused Joyce might have been on his work, however it might have challenged his personal life, psychological and physical health, he was no longer trapped in himself as Stephen is as the pre-Artistic artist, the artist who has never created, and

⁴⁹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 702

⁵⁰ *Annotated*, 585

grows sick in his confinement. Joyce's pen and Joyce's penis provide a parallel release that means nothing more than anything else but perhaps, at least sometimes, feels good.

Bloom and Stephen agree in this moment—the same way they've existed symbiotically for the duration of the episode—that it is time to pee. Built in to this agreement is the understanding that their silent, expansive moment of contemplation is over. Turning away from overt contact, they relieve themselves. They are still united. The give and take of their process of doing illustrates their connection. Stephen suggests, Bloom instigates. First Bloom's, then Stephen's gaze lifts to the stars. In fact, the entire episode portrays a process of symbiotic relief from self. Not only do they agree, but they work together, lifting the burden of the day by each performing half the duties of life. If one has the idea, the other begins to enact it. When the gaze of one is lifted, the other knows what he will now do. Relief from oneself, solace in another, permeates this episode in which their paths have momentarily crossed. Briefly they are home.

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Retreating from conventional intimacy, the interlocutors begin again their comparative endeavor:

Similarly?

The trajectories of their, first sequent, then simultaneous, urinations were dissimilar: Bloom's longer, less irruent, in the incomplete form of the bifurcated penultimate alphabetical letter who in his ultimate years at High School (1880) had been capable of attaining the point of greatest altitude against the whole concurrent strength of the institution, 210 scholars: Stephen's higher, more sibilant, who in the ultimate hours of the previous day had augmented by diuretic consumption an insistent vesical pressure.

We have returned to the narrative territory of the interlocutors, who build character by making physiological distinctions. The question asks simply, "Similarly?" and the answer once again portrays a connection between the two entities that defies the traditional logic of asking a question. The interlocutors seem to be one entity working out a single process of letting on an

inevitable truth. In a similar way to how Stephen and Bloom relax into the symbiosis of their relationship, these voices share one task, leading each other into the details of the story without the necessity of needing to know the answer. Perhaps the interlocutors are permanently lost in their his and her's, the lines of identity blended to the extent that separation is simply a technicality. We know only the impossibility of their voices—the distance between their domain and human interaction. In the case of this comparison, they channel their extensive knowledge toward the detail of the scene, approximating character development in the details of Bloom's peeing style as compared to Stephen's. Differentiation is their specialty. Earlier in the episode these narrators simply stated, "What two temperaments did they individually represent? The scientific. The artistic." and because we don't know who they are, what they're capable of, and what their motives might be, authority resounds in each and every uninflected word. The styles of urination seem to tell as much or as little as everything else these narrators tell us. Bloom's was "longer, less irruent" and Stephen's "higher, more sibilant." Irruent is barely an existing word, archaically it means rushing and flowing quickly. Stephen's stronger flow points to his youthfulness, while the sibilance is distasteful in some way, predictably less robust even at the apex of his youth. Making these comparisons one can learn quite a bit, but also become trapped in the exercise of finding the absolute meaning that the novel consistently undermines. This episode in particular includes so many qualities and perspectives that one would get lost trying to find The Meaning, to deign absolute significance in some aspects of the reality. The surplus of urinary detail, inserted when we see them side-by-side for the first time and want to know them in these concrete and comparative ways, is a trick of Joyce's trade. The situation could not be more pragmatic, and yet we are driven to make every adjective tell the story. This process is a give and take. "Ithaca" has mastered our expectations to the extent that we find as much story in

their urination as in their contemplation; still more difficult to trust as a reader is the sense that while the story might be everywhere, it's as likely nowhere in particular.

Next, we travel with the interlocutors from the bodies to the minds:

What different problems presented themselves to each concerning the invisible audible collateral organ of the other?

To Bloom: the problem of irritability, tumescence, rigidity, reactivity, dimension, sanitariness, pelosity. To Stephen: the problem of the sacerdotal integrity of Jesus circumcised (1st January, holiday of obligation to hear mass and abstain from unnecessary servile work) and the problem as to whether the divine prepuce, the carnal bridal ring of the holy Roman catholic apostolic church, conserved in Calcata, were deserving of simply hyperduldy or of the fourth degree of latria accorded to the abscission of such divine excrescences as hair and toenails.

We are reminded again here of the simultaneity of events. If the last question made their pee endlessly complex, here we recognize that their minds are on another plane entirely. And in the way of these questions, the story is not in the connection of words to each other but the specificity of words chosen. There is the story of what they are doing, the story of how it is told, and now we add the story that they are telling themselves. At times the internal story runs separate from the telling; in this case both Bloom and Stephen are in the process of analyzing for themselves the story as it unfolds. The nature of their pee is described to us, and we come to our conclusions. Bloom and Stephen witness it firsthand (in the way that fiction can be witnessed firsthand) and have conclusions of their own. Of Stephen's "invisible, audible collateral organ" Bloom concludes methodically, in the style of our even-tempered narrators, "irritability, tumescence, rigidity, reactivity, dimension, sanitariness, pelosity." Bloom's analysis of Stephen is at once straightforward and vague. The episode continues to probe our assumptions about seeing into a mind by tearing down the styles that we've come to believe are associated with it. Here instead is a highly articulate list of qualities that Bloom is able to consider while the scene progresses. One's mind does not work by fashioning a list, it does not articulate with perfect

word choice; yet by listing the concerns of Bloom over this period, the interlocutors display again the breadth of the moment. Conventionally, writing engages the imagination when its details are so powerful that one can see the scene before her, feels through the craft that the barrier between oneself holding a book and the scene within dissolves. Here, the episode engages our imaginations in almost the opposite way. We know the type of thought—the subject line, in fact—and are left to our imaginations to create the scene. If this episode were first in the novel, or even in the first half, we might not know so well what to make of these fragments. The words are funny in their abstract acquaintance, but more funny as details of these ever-growing characters: once one draws up the idea that Bloom listens closely and peeks down and considers the “sanitariness,” “dimension,” and “pelosity” (an archaic form of the word pilosity, i.e. hairiness), his bumbling curiosity and enthusiasm are forever associated with this attempt at clinical analysis. The effort of assembling the story, and the contrast between what it is and what it seemed, those are the depths of the story.

Stephen’s analysis is not a list of subject lines; his mind is never removed so far from its own words. Stephen dives in deep and rarely emerges. As a result, to know Stephen’s mind is to drudge in the depths of his fixated mind. “To Stephen: the problem of the sacerdotal integrity of Jesus circumcised (1st January, holiday of obligation to hear mass and abstain from unnecessary servile work) and the problem...” the problems go further and deeper. I will not analyze this passage; one can find the specific references in the annotations, which require even greater length to bring us to the surface. Stephen is not the craftsman that we are led to believe he becomes. What we see here is, effectively, the opposite of what Bloom’s mind presents: there was a puzzle to engage your faculties, here is an archaic text to put you to sleep. One asks you to pay attention to the story, the characters; the other begs you to disassociate yourself from the

world around you and find a quiet corner in which to read difficult texts so that you can refer back to them later. No longer are we being presented with arbitrary excess of stories of stories, now the story we know is told in everything. Just as there are so many stories around the chosen narrative, all of a story can be in any part of it. Through this last scene of Stephen's appearance, his character remains intact; his story resides in every part of him.

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As the space between Bloom and Stephen grows in literal and figurative dimension, the interlocutors resume their clinical gaze in the manner of doctors, professionally keeping a distance to do their job. The one asks, "How did they take leave, one of the other, in separation?" There is no gravity weighing the question or the answer; a reader might forget that we are witnessing the final separation of our two protagonists, one indefinitely descending into obscurity. As a conventional plot point, this event marks a final shift in the story's dramatic construction; a narrator of any good standing will convey the gravity of their departure, perhaps drawing it out in elegiac import. As always, the interlocutors couldn't care less: "Standing perpendicular at the same door and on different sides of its base, the lines of their valedictory arms, meeting at any point and forming an angle less than the sum of two right angles."⁵¹ To anyone familiar with this gesture, the men shake hands. Always better at providing contrast than unity, the interlocutors give us one last earful of this (do they know?) comically matched pair:

What sound accompanied the union of their tangent, the disunion of their (respectively) centrifugal and centripetal hands?

The sound of the peal of the hour of the night by the chime of the bells in the church of Saint George.

What echoes of the sound were by both and each heard?

By Stephen:

Lilibata rutilantium. Turma circumdet.

⁵¹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 704

*Iubilantium te virginium. Chorus expiciat*⁵².

By Bloom:

*Heigho, heigho,
Heigho, heigho.*

Together and apart for the last time, these characters inhabit the same moment and live it within themselves, and without. The interlocutors acknowledge this paradoxical union as they always have: through the language of expression. The narrators might have alienated their handshake by not knowing it by its social name, but assuming their external gaze we witness its unique intimacy as if for the first time. The words “one of the other” to describe their leave-taking is intimate in the same way that “theirhisnothis fellowfaces” connected us to both connecting to each other. It is an action they are relationship they both experience at once, each the one, each the other to each other. Language begins to break down approaching a meaning of such unified incongruity; unperturbed by the limits of conventional formations, the interlocutors form words around it. As the men listen to the bell toll, spreading apart physically, “both and each” perceive its echoes. Both and each listen; Stephen perceives the prayer for the dead—his thoughts echoing yet again the guilt of his mother’s death. Bloom hums something that sounds like the buoyant work-tune within him, but also echoes death, in his case the church bells that tolled at Dignam’s death earlier that day.⁵³ Both men unconsciously acknowledge their position in Joyce’s novel as they walk away, humming songs of perpetual departure.

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The overwhelming surplus of information, hinting at indefinite possibilities, crowds into this episode’s fixed structure. The resulting paradox calls and recalls the nature of the episode into question: Is this narrative guided or flowing freely? Are we controlled or allowed to

⁵² From *Annotated*, 586, this translates as “Bright [glowing] as lilies. A throng gathers about. Jubiant you of virgins. Chorus rescues [releases, exempts or receives].”

⁵³ See *Ulysses*, pg 70

wander? The episode does not answer these questions—in attempting to answer one might arrive back at the question. We do not see everything possible, so perhaps we have been guided here. Yet what we do have evades a conclusive stance and seems to infinitely grow on itself in implications even while the words on the page are held fast—necessarily consistent. The paradox is allowed, the possibility of control bestowed, by the necessarily fixed nature of the words on the page. Nor is the form consistent in itself, anchoring our minds to something that can be known, there are only so many words to comprehend. We are held by the words where we know them, and yet as in every episode the words are not entirely stable either. The words we’ve never heard that already exist are included alongside the words that don’t exist—that the episode brings into being—but seem more real than many others. The coinages of Ithaca participate in its halting flow and the resulting state of mind.

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Perhaps the only comments on the “Ithaca” episode that can stand apart, plainly irrefutable, are Joyce’s own. They sustain the creation, and even while outside of the text his speculations are more internal than those of scholars once further removed from the episode itself. Only Joyce wrote this episode, only Joyce’s opinions come from the same mind that created this experience for all. Thumped over the head with the complexity of a web spinning out eternal convolutions and replications, I turn back to the everliving spider at its center. Perhaps Joyce’s opinion is simply more important; at the very least his existence is concrete in a way that almost anything else about *Ulysses* can wriggle free of. We might listen a little harder, glean a little more in, or simply give in to, what he has to say. The Ellmann biography records “Ithaca” as a step in the process of finishing *Ulysses*. Always pushing his end date further into the future, Joyce was pressed for time: “He sent the last of *Eumaeus* to the typist in the middle of February,

then hurried on to *Ithaca*, which he described to Miss Weaver as my ‘last (and stormiest) cape’.” In the same letter, Joyce called this tumultuous endeavor, “the ugly duckling of the book and therefore, I suppose, my favourite.” Reading Joyce’s letters, Ellmann found, “He intended *Ithaca* and *Penelope* to be counterparts, the first to exhibit what he called to Robert McAlmon ‘a tranquilising spectrality.’”⁵⁴ As an author, Joyce’s relationship with “Ithaca” mirrored the duality of the writing process. Partially living in and for his work, and as truly living in his own context, he loved the episode for the same reasons that it thwarted his expectations for completion:

In May he reported to Claude Sykes that he was ‘struggling with the acidities of Ithaca—a mathematico-astronomico-physico-mechanico-geometrico-chemico sublimation of Bloom and Stephen (devil take ’em both) to prepare for the final amplitudinosly curvilinear episode *Penelope*.’ He set forth this purpose more fully in a letter to Budgen:

I am writing *Ithaca* in the form of a mathematical catechism. All events are resolved into their cosmic physical, psychical &c equivalents, e.g. Bloom jumping down the area, drawing water from the tap, the micturition in the garden, the cone of incense, lighted candle and statue so that not only will the reader know everything and know everything and know it in the baldest coldest way, but Bloom and Stephen thereby become heavenly bodies, wanderers like the stars at which they gaze. The last word (human, all too human) is left to Penelope. This is the indispensable countersign to Bloom’s passport to eternity.

These notes affirm my attempts at drawing conclusions from this episode. After all is said, Joyce has, in fact, communicated a knowable experience of “Ithaca.” He has shared his perspective, his excitement, with the reader. The sublimation of Bloom and Stephen is complete in the inconsequence of their recession. Stephen pees and stumbles off into his own story, no longer a part of ours. Bloom remains home and we watch his mind stumble off, ebbing into unconsciousness. Joyce’s parenthetical “(devil take ’em both)” has its place in the episode. He has a personal relationship with these characters. They’ve stuck to him for so long that the opportunity to finally shake them free is a liberating occasion. The episode shatters, then pieces back together, the concept of homecoming. An almost unbelievable degree of order harnesses the

⁵⁴ Ellmann, *James Joyce* 500-501

episode to a rhythm: Question? Answer. Question? Answer. Question? Answer.” Yet in every constriction there is a release, an opportunity for the structure to be defeated by a view of some Other. Stephen and Bloom are left (devil take ’em both) as tiny dots on cosmic lens, as if Joyce finds it easiest to let them go by reminding himself of their obvious insignificance. Story is everywhere. These people are nothing. I’m tired of them anyway. All events are resolved, the unfathomably small blends into the cosmic infinity of everything together, and our protagonist retreats into himself. We cannot follow.

Where?



Conclusion: Left In the Wake

To write a novel is to betray it, and in this regard Finnegans Wake is only a book like any other.

-- Michael Chabon

Ulysses is poised on a precipice of meaning. This is quite fitting for a novel that “began as a sequel to *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* [and] ended as a prelude to *Finnegan’s Wake*.”⁵⁵ On one side is conventional⁵⁶ storytelling; on the other side is nonsense. Perhaps the vital energy of the novel emanates from this polarity. Groden explains:

If “in the space of three or four years [Joyce] travelled most of the distance from *Dubliners* to *Finnegan’s Wake*” (Litz, p.35), then there are opposing tendencies in *Ulysses*—compression and expansion, verisimilitude and literary parody, “centripetal” and “centrifugal” writing—that achieve a state of resolution, remain locked in unresolved conflict, or are simply thrown together in a witch’s brew that is proudly termed “allincluding.”⁵⁷

I fear that my focus on the allincluding quality of the novel has not allowed space to consider an equally important aspect of the *Ulysses*’s existence: control. *Ulysses* is remarkable, not simply for including, but for including *just enough*. Generalizing Joyce’s career in the extreme: his early work began to establish the milieu and character of *Ulysses*, but lacked the stylistic fervor of this text. The *Wake* took its style and tumult beyond the tenuous (and therefore tantalizing) communication of *Ulysses* and into a reading experience that only die-hards claim satisfying comprehension of. Michael Chabon in his immensely more communicative essay “What to make of Finnegans Wake?” describes the storyline in this way:

⁵⁵ Groden, *Ulysses in Progress*, 13

⁵⁶ relatively

⁵⁷ Groden, *Ulysses in Progress*, 18

There is not a whole lot in the way of external action; by comparison to *Finnegans Wake*, *Ulysses* is *Scaramouche*. The sleeper rolls over. He grumbles. He farts. Late in the book, without quite waking, he fucks his wife, who lies asleep beside him. At numerous points, her dream narrative—along with those of their three children, and of all sleepers, everywhere, busy dreaming in Swahili and Gaelic and Norwegian and even (so lonely!) Volapuk—seems to intermingle with the protagonist's, all the narratives running together, like rivers, into a single great confluent babel of dreams.

To my mind, Joyce's last novel escapes even the bounds of a web. I have read only a portion of this text, and a bit more from others who have. From what I have witnessed, it seems that the *Wake* takes *Ulysses* to uncharted territories of inclusion and then turns off the lights. "A single great confluent babel of dreams" seems to be where the *Wake* strays into territory no longer comprehensible to a person attempting to read a novel. The "apparent hostility to being read" is a quality of the *Wake* that is harder to come by in *Ulysses*. Sometimes, deep in Stephen's stream, one might grow weary of the endless intellectual associations and lose the discipline to keep one's mind engaged. Yet Stephen's stream will always be punctured, deflated by the rush of fresh air from an entire world around him. Joyce's *Wake* doesn't make a point of providing such life-affirming respites.

The close friends and colleagues with whom Joyce shared early drafts of the *Wake* commented on its prickly shift into obscurity. Many of these staunch defenders of *Ulysses*, who risked their reputations to bring Joyce's opus to prominence, felt that Joyce had strayed from the realm of his genius. Ellmann's biography reports that Joyce's patroness, Harriet Weaver, was especially concerned. In letters responding to pieces of the novel Joyce sent her, she began to nudge him towards taking a break, focusing on nurturing his failing health and perhaps spending time supporting the work of his friends. The negative criticism did not have the desired effect of inducing relaxation, rather Joyce grew mentally tenser and bodily weaker as he grappled with the disconnect, "Your letter gave me a nice little attack of brainache. I conclude you do not like the

piece I did? I have been thinking over it. It is all right, I think—the best I could do...Do you not like anything I am writing.”⁵⁸ To Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* was an intensification of the originality and creativity of *Ulysses*. Indiscernible, or perhaps unacceptable, to him was the fact that his previous novel reached the epitome of connection between his mind and the reader’s. There must be more. There were infinite stories that could be created, but a person is only capable of so much creation, and the terms of this sort of relationship with a reader are entirely out of one’s personal control. A man who writes stories that draw to mind infinite alternative courses is particularly susceptible to feel tortured by his personal, human limitations. He can imagine beyond the limitations of a story, and yet to try to write beyond it does not always result in the expansive eeriness of Ithaca’s voices or the excessive energy of Circe’s realm. This time, the general consensus was that he had gone too far, the tether to reality disconnected so that, try as we might, the reader could not work her way into the text, feel that it was building itself up and out. Rather, the *Wake* provides small moments of connection, fleeting correspondences between ideas, yet the activity of *Ulysses*, the mind-melding engagement that one experiences and immediately understands the importance of, these qualities are in *Ulysses*’s territory.

What is to be gained from going beyond comprehension? When Chabon attempts to answer the question he put to himself, “*What to make of Finnegans Wake?*” he answers my question as well:

To write a novel is to betray it, and in this regard *Finnegans Wake* is only a book like any other; but it’s also, at the same time, a celebration of that betrayal, as wakes are always celebrations, and an act of defiance against the impossibility of realizing the dream, as the fallen builder Tim Finnegan, in the ballad that lends its title to Joyce’s book, defies death itself for the sake of a drop of Jameson’s. “I’m at the end of English,” Joyce is said to have declared, as he began work on *Finnegans Wake*; and so he ventured beyond that fatal bourne.

⁵⁸ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 589

This, to me, was the wisdom—the potable water, the fungible currency, the capering troop of Sea-Monkeys—left me by the *Wake*. If the language we have inherited, have had imposed upon us, proves unfit to our purpose in catching hold of the darting apparition of our dream book (as it always will, for the job is impossible), then we must reinvent it. The writing of every novel, and not just some polyglot punster’s babbling Book of Kells, requires this act of invention, the creation of a personal Volapük... The limits of language are not the stopping point, says the *Wake*; they are the point at which we must begin to tell the tale.

There’s no saying for sure how disciplined Joyce felt while writing *The Wake*, how hard he pushed himself to “write a novel.” Surely those around him hoped this is what he was doing. But I’m personally inclined to believe that at this point he didn’t push very hard at all. Eyes closed, mind working, he was lost. He was free.

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