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The Play of Fictions and Succession of Styles in *Ulysses*

Perhaps the single most significant aspect of *Ulysses* is the way it systematically disrupts and transforms its own ground rules. The novel begins with a consistent mimesis of time, place, and the mental life of the protagonists. By the novel's last episode language does not so much elucidate a referent as elaborate itself. This new autonomy of language also unsettles our sense of character as the experiential center of the novel. If there is a "logic" to the metamorphosis of *Ulysses* it lies in the gradual expansion of what I choose to call the fiction-engendering process. This process is rigid and reflexive in the characters of *Dubliners*; it becomes more complex and tortured in the Stephen of *A Portrait*; it is playful and liberating in Bloom of the early episodes of *Ulysses*; and finally it expands beyond character to direct the late styles of *Ulysses*.

What is a fiction? A fiction is a piece of invention, an act of mind which begins with a sense of "what is" and uses the resources of language to mix in new possibilities—a fiction says "what if . . ." to the world. A fiction can be as stern and important as the hypothesis that directs an experiment or as fugitive as a daydream. It can be as simple an elaboration of reality as a play on words, or it can organize the whole universe of what a man takes himself to be. Some fictions mark their remoteness from the given world with the words, "Once upon a time." These fictions invite surrender to the rich and strange. But Joyce's art is alive to the disturbing ways that fictions seem to circle back on those who engage them. We may begin speaking fictions, but they often end speaking us. Many of the *Dubliners* stories are above the way this happens. Little Chandler's sense of the possible has come to him through a fictional language—the stories of Ignatius Gallaher, reviews of "the Celtic School," and the cadences of Byron's poetry. From this language he weaves a fiction of himself as poet. Little Chandler gains a measure of satisfaction from manipulating the language which, in turn, manipulates him. For, once one's experience is mediated by a fiction, life becomes a struggle to win authority for this fiction, in spite of molesting adversaries: for Little Chandler, a condescending friend, a crying baby, an angry wife.[1]

The fictions which shape the lives of Joyce's Dubliners are like Janus—they face in two directions. On the one hand fictions can be assembled in anthologies and distilled in dictionaries. They take on a static public character as songs, operas, novels; they settle into rigid terms of a cliché morality. In all these ways, fictions assert their

"otherness." But fictions also have a "thisness" and immediacy. They live in the mind, shape emotions, and "deliver" a vast portion of man's experience. In this way fictions are both mediators and mediums. As mediators they come between the self and the world; they filter and limit experience. As mediums, fictions activate experience by conveying something vital and possessing to the self. Like the spiritual medium at the Delphic oracle they bring into mundane form and presence an intuition of the beyond. Stephen's rebellious thoughts in the National Library point to the dual status of fictions. He thinks of the "coffined thoughts . . . embalmed in spice of words": "They are still. Once quick in the brains of men. Still: but an itch of death is in them, to tell me in my ear a maudlin tale, urge me to wreak their will" (*U* 193-94).

The narrative of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait* makes fictions operative for the protagonist at the same time that they are visible to the reader. The reader's superiority comes from his insight into the fictions which animate each Dubliner, whether it is Little Chandler's fiction of literary greatness, Eveline's fiction of romantic adventure, or Lenehan's projection of the heroic in "Two Gallants." *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* traces the creation of an elaborate identity fiction. Here Joyce draws the reader into sympathy with a controlling fiction by implicating him in Stephen's fictions. First, he does this by dramatizing the fiction as the terminus of a process of discovery which opens on the future. Secondly, the narrator enters into collusion with Stephen's aestheticism through the sheer resplendence of his own prose.[2] But Joyce also keeps us at a critical distance from Stephen and his fiction. In Stephen's encounters with others, we see his strangeness, hostility, and self-centeredness. The language of the narrative helps to distance us from Stephen':

> He shook the sound out of his ears by an angry toss of his head and hurried on, stumbling through the mouldering offal, his heart already bitten by an ache of loathing and bitterness. His father's whistle, his mother's mutterings, the screech of an unseen maniac were to him now so many voices offending and threatening to humble the pride of his youth (*P* 175-76).

Here is Stephen, the isolated and sensitive artist, refusing the tyranny of other "voices" in order to shape his own. Or is it? The narrative refuses to validate this fiction by lending Stephen its powers. Instead, the language of the narrative renders Stephen's fiction visible *as* a fiction. Stephen is invested with a remoteness and "otherness" by the constant repetition of third person pronouns: "He . . . his . . . his . . . his." The carefully turned phrases and sentences expose a precious, stylized emotional gesture. Finally, this passage links Stephen to the clichés of his fiction ("an ache of loathing . . . the pride of his youth").

The opposition of personal fictions and molesting realities results in something akin to satire in *Dubliners*; in *A Portrait*, a sustained ambiguity of meaning. The discovery of the character of Bloom gave Joyce a wider scope for the elaboration of fictions. This is one reason why Bloom is Joyce's modern-day Ulysses. Bloom can come through all his trials, he can be the complete man and the "allround man" because he is released from the confining fictions which freeze other Dubliners into static gestures.[3] Instead, Bloom entertains the fictions he is drawn toward. He adopts the fiction of a lover when he corresponds with Martha. He entertains the fiction of entrepeneur when he comes up with a new scheme for money-making. Both of these fictions are important, but less so than Bloom's fictions of himself as husband and father. He engages these fictions by planning presents and tours for Molly, a surprise visit to Milly, and a future for Stephen. All of these fictions bear the impress of Bloom's desire, and yet none define him. At every point he feels the molesting factors which balk these fictions—lack of courage or money, the presence of Boylan or the "young student" who admires Milly (i.e., Bannon). But instead of feeling a rigid despondency, Bloom responds with all the versatility of a modern-day Odysseus. He projects a host of transient and exploratory fictions that move him out toward his world. He uses a "light touch" with his fictions, and he accepts their hypothetical status. Bloom's life becomes a kind of play with fictions.

Bloom's play with fictions and use of language in the first half of *Ulysses* prepare for the more exotic gyrations of language in the last nine episodes. In the early style of *Ulysses*, an alternation between a spare third-person narrative and the protagonist's flow of thoughts achieves a coherent narrative of time, place, and character. Here, language is directed toward and transparent to the world depicted.[4] In the styles of the later episodes an illusionistic representation is suspended, and language becomes "opaque." Earlier, narrative has its origin in the protagonist's experience of Dublin. Later, language has its origin in the *a priori* order of language. David Hayman attributes the late styles to the "arranger," a manipulator of language and fictions who becomes so active that I would rather consider him an "arranger-performer."[5] The arranger-performer's displacement of the narrative of *Ulysses* can be seen as an extension of Bloom's fictional displacement of experience. The reader first learns how language shifts, plays with, and transmutes reality by following the silent linguistic activity of Leopold Bloom.[6]

A paucity of action or dramatic encounter in *Ulysses* makes the movements of language the central "events" of the novel. Bloom's isolation and inactivity on 16 June 1904, establish the preconditions for his play with fictions. Bloom begins as a keen observer, who sees,

smells, and hears, and then incorporates all of this into a mental commentary. It is as though he takes the advice Stephen offers himself: "Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (*U* 186). Bloom's acute hold on the given world results in the short catalogues in graveyard, printroom, and Davy Byrne's which foreshadow the epic catalogues of "Cyclops," "Circe," and "Ithaca" (*U* 113, 119, 174-75). If Bloom's first act is to hold "to the now, the here," his almost immediate and complementary act is a fictional projection into a different place, time, person, or activity. When Bloom walks to get his pork kidney in "Calypso," he begins with steadfastly empirical observation: "Be a warm day I fancy." Then he speculates as to the warmth of black clothes, sees a breadvan, and finally projects himself through space: "Somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at dawn, travel round in front of the sun . . ." This launches Bloom on a long evocation of the East. But it terminates abruptly with a consciousness of the unreality of the projection: "Probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read" (*U* 57).

Bloom's projections away from himself seem to evade actuality, but end in sharpening his experience of the empirical world. Thus Bloom projects himself into his cat at breakfast, into a priest at the funeral, and into the gulls on the Liffey at lunch hour (*U* 55, 105, 153). He postulates an event: "if we were all suddenly somebody else," or if the foreman in the printroom "got paralysed here and no one knew how to stop," or if he were suddenly blind (*U* 110, 119, 181). All these transient fictional projections give Bloom a more vivid experience of some aspect of the world under scrutiny. Sometimes a sentimental projection in time, through an act of remembrance, leads Bloom to some broader apprehension: "Happy. Happier then. Snug little room that was . . . . Milly's tubbing night . . . . Funny she looked all over. Shapely too. Now photography. Poor papa's daguerreotype . . . . Hereditary taste. / He walked along the curbstone. / Stream of life" (*U* 155). Bloom demonstrates a mental mobility and versatility which allow him, at one moment, to foreshadow Molly's prolonged acts of remembrance in "Penelope," and in the next carry out a witty newspaper parody which prefigures the parodies in "Cyclops," "Nausicaa," and "Circe": "Wanted live man for spirit counter. Resp girl (R.C.) wishes to hear of post in fruit or pork shop" (*U* 160).

Sometimes Bloom's fictional expansion of experience comes from play with language. In thinking of his penis as it will appear in the bath, Bloom imagines it a flower and then plays on "f" and "l" sounds: "Floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (*U* 86). Bloom's word play renews the figural level of common expressions. When he sees an "old fellow asleep" near a confession box, Bloom thinks, "Blind faith," and we get a comic

interpretation of the phrase (*U* 81). The undertaker crossing his graveyard is "sure of his ground," and when a woman eyes Mrs. Breen, Bloom thinks, "Cruel. The unfair sex" (*U* 111, 158). At these moments, Bloom brings his experience into collision with dead language and renews both. This is an analogue to the actual animation of language in "Circe," where fans and kisses will speak. Bloom is also capable of lyric flights of language. The expressive repetition of the words "gold," "bronze," "sweet," and "sad" in "Sirens" is foreshadowed when Bloom weaves the word "moon" through his memory of walking with Molly and Boylan (*U* 167).

Bloom's whole mode of experience keeps introducing the kinds of comic and ironic vistas which will be so much a part of the late styles. When Bloom smells the flower Martha has sent him, he thinks "Language of flowers." Then he re-reads Martha's letter: "Angry tulips with you darling manflower punish your cactus if you don't please poor forgetmenot" (*U* 78). Here Bloom's language wins comic discontinuities that prefigure the virtuoso performances to come. Bloom's intent observation of a woman in a cab is carried on against the questions and jabber of M'Coy. Bloom's activity deflates M'Coy's conventional expressions of regret at Dignam's death. When a tram car has interrupted sight of the stylish woman at the crucial moment, Bloom enters M'Coy's monologue to say, "Another gone." M'Coy replies (of Dignam), "One of the best." Here is the kind of ironic opposition, presented naturalistically, which will shape the parodies of "Cyclops," "Nausicaa," and "Circe." The irony and comedy in Bloom's style—both mental and linguistic—is consonant with his good-natured acceptance of things. He ignores M'Coy's sham sentiments, follows his own rich meditations, and exposes the barren formality of M'Coy's words (*U* 74). Bloom projects transient fictions so as to draw closer to his world, and engages in a play with language which renovates experience of that world. Now we can see that the language of the first nine episodes is not simply transparent to the world of Dublin. Bloom's language begins to shift the terms of that world, and becomes "opaque" and self-referential as it constitutes the vibrant spectrum of fictions that Bloom's encounter with his world engenders.

We are now in a position to offer a tentative description of the "logic" which directs the succession of styles in *Ulysses*.[7] Modifications of this "logic" will be necessary later. In traveling from the normative styles of "Telemachus" and "Nestor" to the virtuoso performances of "Circe" and "Ithaca" the novel goes through four discrete but related movements:

a) There is a gradual expansion of the fiction-engendering process, which first unfolds in the thoughts of Stephen and

Bloom and later expands to shape the narrative.

b) There is a full articulation and gradual withdrawal of a novelistic mimesis. The faithful reportage of an external world at first provides the materials for the fictional displacement won by the protagonist's meditations. Later these fictional projections become autonomous.

c) There is a full assertion and gradual dispersal of an experiencing center, the character, whose existence defines the boundary between inside and outside, the subjective and objective domains. Early in the novel, fictional projections take place within the boundaries of the protagonist's consciousness; later, these boundaries are almost completely effaced.

d) With the expansion of the fictional process and the withdrawal of a mimesis that assumes the stability of character, language takes on a new autonomy. It no longer seems to elucidate a referent (the world, Stephen, Bloom, man) so much as to elaborate itself.

These four movements most clearly shape the arc of the styles of the final nine episodes of *Ulysses*. Below, we will see the ways that the narrative of "Wandering Rocks" represents an important break with all the earlier styles of *Ulysses*. A. Walton Litz, in a recent study of "Ithaca," gives reasons for dividing *Ulysses* between "Scylla and Charybdis" and "Wandering Rocks." Joyce once considered putting an "Entr'acte" between the two episodes, and on a chart of the episodes sent to John Quinn the first nine episodes are clearly separated from the last nine.[8] Joyce's late revisions of earlier episodes point in two directions. They indicate, as Litz insists, that Joyce understood his novel to be evolving in fundamentally new directions. But it also shows that Joyce wanted these changes to build gradually, not abruptly, and appear natural rather than arbitrary. Even as early as "Proteus" the lyric energy of Stephen's language blurs the reader's link with the external world.[9] All through the early episodes the hidden pressures of the schema work on the novel's diction. Thus in "Lestrygonians" smoke will have to shape itself into something eatable like a "puffball" (*U* 152). But the headlines in "Aeolus" mark the first obtrusive presence of the arranger. This is as it should be; for language begins its withdrawal from its referent in an episode where typesetters manipulate print, words appear backwards, and Irishmen display their rhetoric. In "Scylla and Charybdis" there is no longer a deft alternation between objective presentation and Stephen's thoughts. In a recent article, Robert Kellogg demonstrates the way the whole narrative begins to bend toward Stephen's mind and concerns: "Through the narrator the scene is transmuted into the literary forms

and modes that are at any particular moment the appropriate extension of Stephen's powerfully patterned imagination."[10] Displacement of the episode's narrative is also evidenced in the use of the names "Æ" and "John Eglinton" for Russell and Magee, a brief break into dramatic form, and the way the narrative undermines the dialogue in a fashion compatible with Stephen's ironic stance throughout the episode:

> —The most brilliant of all is that story of Wilde's, Mr Best said, lifting his brilliant notebook . . . (*U* 198)
> —Antiquity mentions famous beds, Second Eglinton puckered, bedsmiling . . . (*U* 204)
> —Gentle Will is being roughly handled, gentle Mr Best said gently (*U* 206).

"Wandering Rocks" points backward by being written in a chaste style compatible with the early episodes, at the same time that it unsettles the mimetic assumptions of the early style—a successive representation of the protagonist's experience of time and place. Thus the reader can be sure that the experience, time, and place represented on page 178 comes after that represented on page 177. This is the illusion which all narratives in prose and poetry tend to engender. But in "Wandering Rocks" the arranger-performer uses three eccentric structural devices to disrupt these ground rules. First, he scatters eighteen stars through his episode, dividing the whole into nineteen independent narratives of Dublin life. This disrupts the temporal illusion of the narrative, and leaves the reader without any sense of an integral connection between one time, place, or event and another. Secondly, he displaces events, phrases, and sentences from one section backward and forward into another. Thus in the section that deals with Tom Rochford's machine, there is a line about Patrick Dignam emerging from Mangan's with pork steaks. This prefigures the narrative of this event in section eighteen. For the reader this has two effects. It disrupts the narrative by interjecting alien material into the narration of each section, and it achieves the illusion of simultaneity—different things are happening at different places at the same moment. Finally, after the arranger-performer has disrupted the reader's sense of temporal progression, he links all the narrative sections together with three sweeping movements: Conmee's walk across Dublin, the progress of Bloom's throwaway down the Liffey, and the final ride of the Viceroy. What has happened in "Wandering Rocks"? Each section is like one strand of a web. Occasionally one strand crosses another, but it moves in an independent direction. After the reader has gone over the strands, he is carried on a rapid transverse movement which touches most of the strands. This gives him an intuition of the whole pattern and a passing sense of the simultaneous activity of a great city.

"Wandering Rocks" has broken up the coherent illusion of time and

place. But it has done more than this. For in the spaces which this has left, the whole variegated life of the city has entered in. But what "enters in" is neither Dublin's bricks and mortar nor her human actions. For these are but the inert accumulations of history. What enters *Ulysses* is the epic range of Dublin's fictions. Her yearnings and stratagems are felt through the new voices and new language which swell the second nine episodes of *Ulysses* to three times the length of the first nine episodes. Bloom ceases to be a representation of one man. He becomes the nodal point of the arranger-performer's permutation of fictions—fictions which are Dublin's as well as Bloom's. In the first half of *Ulysses* naturalistic assumptions subordinated personal fictions to a city-full of realities. In the novel's second half fictions break out of their naturalistic frame.

"Sirens" moves the reader beyond Bloom's private panoply of fictions to enact a public fiction: the sexual-romantic infatuation that leads to a clandestine affair. All play a part in this fiction: Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy, as modern-day Sirens, are the focus of attentive eyes, dalliance, and innuendo; Bloom is both cuckold and lover as he permits Molly's adultery and writes secretly to Martha; Blazes Boylan, the "hero" of this fiction, makes a brief appearance and then goes off to his love tryst; Simon Dedalus and Ben Dollard support the "action" by singing sentimental old songs. Stage directions in the narrative ("With sadness") and a succession of musical performances help to create a context where every gesture becomes part of the melodrama. Of Blazes Boylan:

> Lenehan heard and knew and hailed him:
> —See the conquering hero comes (*U* 264.38).
> He touched . . . a rim of his slanted straw (*U* 265).
> [He] drankoff his tiny chalice . . . (*U* 267.1).
> —I'm off, said Boylan with impatience (*U* 267.9).

The Dubliners at the Ormond share stylized public emotions: memories of the past, a languorous surrender to love, and expressions of the most maudlin sentiments. The barmaids tell Simon Dedalus of the beautiful playing of the blind boy: "So sad to look at his face" (*U* 263). Bloom hears the song "All is Lost Now" and thinks, "Too late . . . . Woman. As easy stop the sea. Yes: all is lost"; and of death: "Cruel it seems. Let people get fond of each other: lure them on. Then tear asunder" (*U* 273, 277). But when Bloom writes to Martha he strikes a different pose—he thinks of detective stories and relishes the secrecy which necessitates his precautions: "Blot over the other so he can't read" (*U* 280). Finally, all the activity in the Ormond is given a significant counterpoint through the interpolation of language which conveys Boylan's progress towards Molly. This is more than action "off-stage"; for this love-tryst also exists in a mental space. It has been

contemplated all day by a host of Dubliners and completes (though it can never be completed) the fiction of love and romance this episode acts out.

The arranger-performer directs and supports the fiction which unfolds at the Ormond with linguistic invention. He interpolates the passages which move central characters toward and away from the Ormond. More decisively, he elaborates a narrative which imitates the rhymes and repetitions of song lyrics. Thus the words "sad," "sweet," "gold," and "bronze" are made to weave through this language just as music weaves through the mind, and yearnings weave through thought. This language accentuates the fictional projections latent in events. An appropriate effusion of language renders Boylan's knock on Molly's door:

> One rapped on a door, one tapped with a knock, did he knock Paul de Kock, with a loud proud knocker, with a cock carracarracarra cock. Cockcock (*U* 282).

The lively cadences of this sentence neatly imitate Boylan's brash assurance. "Cock" and "Paul de Kock" should follow "Knock," for they are part of the fictions of romance and male potency latent in Boylan's arrival at Molly's door. This narrative leads the reader in two directions. Through its virtuosity of language the fiction of love becomes visible as a construction to the reader; and, to the extent that we respond to its rich language, we feel this fiction as it operates in Bloom, among the Dubliners, and in ourselves.

"Cyclops" moves Bloom into an alien, male-dominated world where the Citizen and his fictional projection of Irish greatness hold sway. Now, fictions are both remote from Bloom's concerns and inflexible in their articulation. Several factors push Bloom to the margin of this episode. For the first time in *Ulysses* we are not in the active present, and events are narrated by a reliable but hostile narrator. Instead of the carefully elaborated language of "Sirens," we get "gigantic" interpolations which disclose the inflated pretensions of Irish nationalism and the comic postures of Irish journalism. These parodies gain no validation from events, and because they are presented in counterpoint with the blunt language of the narrator, our dominant experience is of the deceptive potential (sometimes playful, sometimes vicious) of language and fictions. Thus, "a god-like messenger [coming] swiftly in, radiant as the eye of heaven, a comely youth," shrinks to "little Alf Bergan popped in round the door and hid behind Barney's snug" (*U* 298). Though Bloom becomes a scapegoat and outcast in this episode, it is incorrect to see him as entirely outside the Citizen's continuum of fictions. Bloom has his own notion of citizenship and his own set of prescriptions. They include tennis, world peace, meeting Martin Cunningham to arrange Dignam's in-

surance, and not "Force, hatred, history" but "love" (*U* 333). Then too, Bloom ends an episode full of nationalism and inflated rhetoric with his own brand of both: "Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Saviour" (*U* 342).

In "Nausicaa" Bloom's play of fictions and language is once again brought into conjunction with Dublin's—now present in the person of Gerty MacDowell. Our first experience is one of contrast and difference. Gerty sees Bloom admiring her, thinks he has "the saddest eyes she's ever seen," fancies he is in "deep mourning," and revises her fictional lover from the boy with bicycle to "a manly man with a strong quiet face" (*U* 351). By contrast, Bloom's first thoughts after Gerty rises can be taken as an acute commentary on her predicament. He suspects she's "near her monthlies," analyzes women's competitiveness, and thinks, "All kinds of crazy longings" (*U* 368). But, more importantly, Bloom diagnoses the measure of controlled illusion necessary to sustain the romantic fiction: "See her as she is spoil all. Must have the stage setting, the rouge, costume, position, music" (*U* 370). But this is as true for Bloom in reaching climax as it is for the Gerty who performs. When Bloom sees Gerty limp away, he acknowledges the contingent nature of his own response to Gerty: "Glad I didn't know it when she was on show" (*U* 368).

What separates Bloom and Gerty is the control and quality of the language which directs their fictions. Both think of passing youth: for Gerty "oft-times the beauty of poetry . . . had misted her eyes with silent tears that the years were slipping by for her, one by one"; for Bloom, "All quiet on Howth now. The distant hills seem. Where we. The rhododendrons. . . . All that old hill has seen. Names change: that's all . . . . My youth. Never again. Only once it comes" (*U* 364, 377). Where Bloom's language is flexible, firm, and immediate, Gerty's language is stylized and repetitious in its moods and gestures. While these differences seem decisive, the arranger-performer begins to move Gerty and Bloom across the ground which separates them. Gerty senses a strangeness in Bloom, a "passionate nature," perhaps he'd "lost his wife or some tragedy like the nobleman with the foreign name from the land of song" (*U* 371). In addition, Gerty's evocation of the exotic echoes Bloom's mental wanderings toward the East, and Molly's memories of Gibraltar in the closing pages. At sunset come moods and evocations that can't be easily attributed:

> It was like the paintings that man used to do on the pavement with all the coloured chalks and such a pity too leaving them there to be all blotted out, the evening and the clouds coming out and the Bailey light on Howth and to hear the music like that and the perfume of those incense they burned in the church like a kind of waft . . . .

Is this a section of Molly's soliloquy? Or Bloom's thoughts reaching in

remembrance toward Molly? No, these are Gerty's thoughts, in a moment when her language takes on a firmness which approximates the reach of the protagonists (*U* 357). When Bloom falls asleep near the end of "Nausicaa," exactly the reverse takes place. The language of the episode lapses back into the clichés of a sentimental parody. In a sense, "Nausicaa" marks the end of Bloom's presence in *Ulysses* as a discrete character. After this point Joyce's novel moves into a more severely anonymous interplay of language and fictions. The collapse of language at the end of "Nausicaa" prefigures "Eumaeus," where Bloom's thought and language parody themselves.

In "Oxen of the Sun" Dublin's familiar fictions are invoked by the extravagant banter around the table at Holles Street Hospital. But here fictions emerge less from men than from the order of language. The empirical event is given an expressive counterpoint in "Sirens," is interrupted by the extended parodies in "Cyclops," and is submerged through a large part of "Nausicaa" by sentimental parody. But in "Oxen of the Sun" the "event," the sense of time, place, and character which words denote, begins to fade under the pressures of the fictional process. Here the fictional process does not come from one character (Gerty, the Citizen, or Bloom). It comes from the style being parodied in Joyce's re-enactment of the development of English prose style. We should think of the arranger-performer bringing two elements into "Oxen of the Sun" which refuse to "mix": the "events"—that is, all that happens to Stephen, Bloom, and others at Holles Street Hospital between 10 and 11 p.m.—and a series of fictional processes which are alien to those events. Most novels, including the first nine episodes of *Ulysses*, create a consistent illusion of reality such that the events seem embedded in the fictional language which describes them. But when, near the beginning of "Oxen of the Sun," a traveller named Leopold talks to a knight named Dixon about a wound from a dragon, we "know" it is just Bloom talking to a doctor about a bee sting. How do we know? We know from the assumptions and expectations the novel has given us up to this moment. Our sense of an empirical "event" behind the words we read modifies the illusion-engendering power of the fictional process. We cannot settle into a story about knight, traveller, dragon, and castle because we've extrapolated another alien "event" into the narrative (the convergence of man, doctor, bee, and hospital). The rapidity with which the style and fictional process shift modes prevents any one fictional process from taking hold of our reading experience. But if the event modifies the fiction, the fictional process also modifies the event. For we don't know the real tenor of the short exchange between Bloom and Dixon; we don't feel we've experienced this event in the same sense we experience Stephen's short dialogue with Haines on religion.

We can see more clearly how the fictional process modifies the event in the parody of Bunyan which deals with Stephen's fear of thunder and death. It says of Stephen that "he had in his bosom a spike named Bitterness which could not by words be done away." A little further on it speaks of what we know through "the tube of Understanding":

> For through that tube he saw that he was in the land of Phenomenon where he must for a certain one day die as he was like the rest too a passing show. And would he not accept to die like the rest and pass away? By no means would he and make more shows according as men do with wives which Phenomenon has commanded them to do by the book Law (*U* 395).

This passage is followed by an allegory of "Bird-in-the-Hand" beguiling Stephen from the "true path." Stephen has been described as living in a world bounded by phenomenon, time, and death. Behind all this narrative it is not difficult for the reader to find the bitter, fearful, skeptical protagonist of the first chapters of *Ulysses*, the Stephen who would withdraw from experience. But it is my contention that this language has changed Stephen as much as Stephen has shifted this language. In the first chapters Stephen's problems seem *merely* personal. In this passage they gain new intensity and significance by being placed in the context of Christian's struggle against despondency and death. It is as if Joyce asked, what would Stephen have been in Bunyan's time? or, how would Bunyan have made Stephen one of his characters? This leads to a parody which is firm and forceful, not an object of mockery, like the parodies in "Cyclops" and "Nausicaa."

The four episodes which begin with "Sirens" and end with "Oxen of the Sun" carry out a withdrawal from the empirical world of the early styles. Gradually fictions are cut off from any experiencing subject and become visible as the products of an apparently autonomous linguistic process. This movement toward autonomy reaches completion in "Circe." Perhaps "Circe" is most striking for what it does *not* do. It does not give us a consistent sense of events. The opening description of Nighttown is outlandish and only very occasionally do we get something resembling a normal exchange: Bloom's first encounter with Zoe, Bloom and Bella settling accounts, and Stephen with the soldiers. The faint evocations of place and people we get prepare for activities of a different order. "Circe" also has remarkably little dialogue. Instead we get something akin to a mechanical emission of words. Finally, "Circe" does not give us Bloom's thoughts, or even emanations of his thought. Efforts to demark some areas of the text as belonging to Bloom's mind and other areas as a recording of naturalistic events are the work of critics and stand diametrically opposed to the directions of Joyce's artifice. The use of a dramatic

form in "Circe" brings all onto one plane of reality. This text gives us no experience of regress, no ability to move "down" and "in" to some point of origin which will elucidate meaning—like Dublin, 1904, or Bloom's unconscious. Instead, words and fictions recognizable from the previous fourteen episodes, but now cut off from the character who gave them life, enter into apparently random interaction so as to elaborate new permutations.

In "Circe" characters cease to exist as anything but nodes around which fictions interact. Bloom's encounter with Virag is not a dialogue which takes him to the origin of his personality to get counseling about sex. Virag simply extends fictional projections of the kind of avid sexual interest epitomized by Mulligan, Lenehan, and Boylan. Instead of speech coming from a coherent self, speech in "Circe" seems to emanate from a rhetorical moment. When Stephen quotes the "Dusk of the Gods" in a melodramatic tone, Zoe says "(Tragically) Hamlet, I am thy father's gimlet! (She takes his hand)" (*U* 561). Zoe's response makes no sense as the speech of a prostitute. But it is appropriate as a reflexive response to Stephen's histrionics, and of course, it recapitulates (with comic distortions) Stephen's earlier connections with Hamlet. Even Bloom's alternation between guilt-ridden passivity and heroic dominance emerges more from the openings of language and the momentary availability of fictions than from any social or psychological contexts. Bloom's ascent to reign as Lord Mayor and King begins with a pejorative comment to Zoe on smoking ("mouth can be better engaged"), gains impetus from his speech ("Mankind is incorrigible"), is momentarily threatened by the counter-rhetoric of Alexander J. Dowie, and only ends with Bloom's "death" when all possible fictional apparitions seem to have been exhausted (*U* 478-99).

In a domain that is sealed off from empirical reality an easy concourse can be established between words and "things." J.J. O'Molloy defends Bloom with a piece of rhetoric that includes an appeal to Bloom's "Mongolian extraction." Bloom obliges by metamorphizing into a dimwitted oriental (*U* 463). This concourse between words and "things" is controlled by the intrinsic properties of language. Thus the movement of "Circe" reflects the tendency of language to develop in a linear direction. Stephen talks of going "to the ends of the world," Florry talks of "the last day," and then the Apocalypse occurs (*U* 505). In this progression, actions pivot on the tendency of words to undergo transformations of meaning. Thus "ends" of the world (spatial) shifts to "last day" (temporal) and then to Apocalypse (theological). "Circe" concatenates transformations which bring new entities into existence to speak new words to bring new transformations. Thus, the closest structural analogue of "Circe" is the sentence. The earlier episodes of

Ulysses act as a kind of lexicon for this very long sentence. The entities which parade through "Circe"—whether they be persons, things, or words—take their previous position in *Ulysses* less as a limiting context than as a point of departure. These new movements of language don't point back to Bloom's and Stephen's stories with any deep truths. Instead, there is a promiscuous mixing of fictions which is public, autonomous, and comic in its conjunctions. We can see this by looking at the two scenes in "Circe" that should be most serious, and most intensely private. When Bloom watches Boylan and Molly through the keyhole it might have become the climax of his anxieties on that subject. Instead we get:

BOYLAN

(*To Bloom, over his shoulder.*) You can apply your eye to the keyhole and play with yourself while I just go through her a few times.

BLOOM

Thank you sir, I will, sir. May I bring two men chums to witness the deed and take a snapshot? (*U* 566).

This is a playful permutation of the events of the day and the fulfillment of the Dublin fiction which makes Boylan an outrageously successful seducer. This is a completely public fiction because there simply is no person present to have a profound or disturbing experience. Bloom is just one of the characters in a new fiction—a farce based on Dublin's fictional projection of illicit love. In an analogous fashion, Stephen's encounter with his mother moves a personal fantasy into the conventional domain of gothic fiction:

THE MOTHER

(*With the subtle smile of death's madness.*) I was once the beautiful May Goulding . . . .

STEPHEN

(*Horrorstruck.*) Lemur, who are you? What bogeyman's trick is this? (*U* 580).

The mother's malignant assertion of her status as ghost, and Stephen's expression of horror, wonder, and skepticism are entirely appropriate to a gothic fiction. Soon the fiction modulates into an excess of horror consistent with parody but entirely inconsistent with any normative human emotions:

STEPHEN

(*Panting.*) The Corpseschewer! Raw head and bloody bones!

THE MOTHER

(*Her face drawing near and nearer, sending out an ashen breath.*) Beware! (*She raises her blackened, withered right arm slowly towards Stephen's breast with outstretched fingers.*) Beware! God's hand! (*A green crab with malignant red*

eyes sticks deep its grinning claws in Stephen's heart.) (*U* 581-82)

"Circe" is heady with the energies of language—words become material, they speak, and everything is brought into a lively and promiscuous interchange. This involves a deft movement of mind, a collective mind which belongs equally to Joyce, Bloom, Dublin, and the reader. But in "Eumaeus" all is submerged in a wordy, turgid, circular language which moves with a clumsy momentum and thoughts and dialogue trail off into ellipsis.[11] This language does nothing quickly, makes no connections and leaves us with a sense of receding consciousness, an ebbing away of experience. As such, "Eumaeus" is an apt lapse away from the activated linguistic transpositions of "Circe" and a preparation for the disappearance of consciousness in "Ithaca." But where does this exhausted prose leave Leopold Bloom? We have seen that Bloom's claim to heroic stature, what separates him from other Dubliners like Gerty MacDowell, is the energy and versatility of the language which shapes his fictional response to the world. But now all that is gone. Bloom is rebuked by Stephen, so he tries to account for and excuse Stephen's behavior:

> Probably the home life, to which Mr Bloom attached the utmost importance, had not been all that was needful or he hadn't been familiarized with the right sort of people (*U* 645).

The lameness of this cliché language reduces Bloom's thoughts to the most insipid bourgeois sensitivities ("the utmost importance," "all that was needful," "the right sort of people"). Bloom's compassion, which seemed worth something before, is here subjected to merciless formalization. The Bloom we have known has contracted into an empty shell. Fictional projections become literal, lurid, and unimaginative. There is a picture of naked savages, a sexy and inviting snapshot of Molly, and the sailor's antic mimings of a Buffalo Bill shooting stunt and a brutal knife killing. In the episode of *Ulysses* where the correspondences with Homer are most exact, we get a maudlin reduction of the Odysseus myth (*U* 624). Characters have become caricatures, and fictions have become naive responses to desire. Stephen's fiction of the isolated artist lapses into an arid hostility and self-centeredness. Bloom's closing fiction, a projected tour for Molly and Stephen, is a ludicrously presented answer to all Bloom's wants—wife, wealth, and son.

"Ithaca" wins a movement beyond the interaction of man, language, and fiction that has exhausted itself in "Eumaeus." Now man disappears as an experiencing subject, and we see him set against the material universe. In the resulting alternation between material and human domains, human life is diminished, but in a way which yields a delicious coolness and clarity. Bloom enters Molly's bed, "the

bed of conception and of birth, of consummation of marriage and of breach of marriage, of sleep and of death" (*U* 731). He feels "the imprint of a human form, male, not his," and

> If he had smiled why would he have smiled?
> To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity (*U* 731).

This language moves us a startling distance away from any event. We are beyond any certitude about action ("*If* he had smiled"). We are beyond the immediate narrative of unfolding events. The episode's question-and-answer form defines events that are both remote and complete—for how can a question be framed and answers formulated for what is ongoing? We have also moved beyond the direct apprehension of Bloom's thought or speech. In comparing Bloom's entrance into Molly's bed to one term in an endless series, the arranger-performer defines a reality which, by its mathematical form, demands a mute acceptance. This language seems to spin out of the very nature of things, and thereby it wins a release from the book-long concatenation of efforts to say and mean. Now Bloom is "alone" with "the cold of interstellar space" (*U* 704). The star imagery of the episode shows that the matter with which Bloom is brought into conjunction is not inert and confining. It is luminous and eternal, and reminds us of the larger patterns of time and space against which man's life is lived.

But the strange peace of "Ithaca" may come less from Bloom's movement beyond time or his calm conjunction with the physical domain, than from the arranger-performer's exploration of the otherness of language. For the language of "Ithaca" comes from nowhere—who asks these questions? who answers them?—and needs no auditors. In its long gracious periods this language seems to balance itself by completing a logic of its own unfolding. Within the still cold beauty of this matrix, a new tranquility enters Bloom's intercourse with fictions. He still harbors hopes for Stephen, but he can accept Stephen's negative reply to his invitation, and postulate other possibilities for the future. The form of the episode has moved us to such a distance from human life that, somehow, the discrepancy between fictions and reality that once loomed so large has ceased to be significant. Bloom's dream house is given in catalogues as real and elaborate as the living room he sits in, and if his schemes for getting the money for the house are problematical, they still help him get to sleep.

From this vantage point in Joyce's novel we can see the limits of our earlier description of four concurrent movements that shape the styles

of *Ulysses.* A movement completely beyond a mimesis of the lived experience of a human subject would mean that *Ulysses* ends as a display of autonomous language. There are special reasons why this development is neither complete nor secure. The earlier presence of fully rendered characters leads the reader to interpolate their presence into the language and movement of later episodes. In fact, the severe objectivity of the language in "Ithaca," and the outrageousness of parody in "Circe," seem to mirror their opposites—a remembered sense of Bloom as our sturdy and sympathetic protagonist. Finally, "Penelope" seems almost a conscious return to the moods, language, and idiom of earlier episodes. For these reasons Kenner and Litz can give convincing and effective readings of "Circe" and "Ithaca" by reintroducing the Bloom and Stephen of the early episodes, and Joyce's novel seems to invite this kind of reading.[12] Since the early style establishes the fullness and vitality of Stephen and Bloom, and the late styles allow them to unravel into an array of component fictions, the interpreter of *Ulysses* is almost compelled to deploy his argument along an axis defined by the tension between these two points.

After many pages controlled by the "otherness," the strangeness, and the public autonomy of fictions, Molly's soliloquy is an explicit return to fictions as a vivid and animating projection of human consciousness. In this way, Molly proves a counterpart to the Bloom of the early episodes. Like Bloom, she sees the world as it is, at the same time that she mixes in her own sense of possibilities. She has his broad acceptance, his curiosity, and his comprehensiveness of spirit. She too eludes any confining fictions. But other factors give us the sense of return to the earlier presence of fictions. The episode echoes with the firm cadence of human speech. Partly because Molly is blunt and partly because she is thinking out loud, we accept what she says as if it came to us unmediated. Here is the language of desire before it is vitiated by social disguises, language as it begins to shape itself into fictional projections—hopes of seeing Boylan Monday, of learning Italian from Stephen, and trying once again with Bloom. This is language informed by its human origin and in its exultant tone it gives Bloom and all of life's fictional improvisations a resounding affirmation. In a different way from "Ithaca" it makes man's life heroic, truly epic. Instead of receding from the place where fictions are formed to set man's life against the stars, there is a return in "Penelope" to the animate core of a self where desire initiates the movement into fictions.

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NOTES

1. For the way "people live in stories that structure their world," see Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 39. I have adopted from Edward Said the terms "molestation" and "authority" to describe the tensions faced by character, narrator, and artist in their efforts to assert the authority, continuity, and truth of their existence against the molesting sense of the duplicity and sham which undergirds their enterprise. See Edward Said, "Molestation and Authority in Narrative Fiction," *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 47-68.

2. This is most apparent in passages of sustained lyricism like the "vision" of the girl as bird at the end of chapter IV.

3. Joyce told Frank Budgen of his admiration for Ulysses as a "complete man" who came through all his trials. See Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses"* (1934; rpt. Bloomington: U. of Indiana Press, 1960), pp. 16-17. Of course Lenehan calls Bloom an "allround man" in "Wandering Rocks" (*U* 235). More arcane evidence of Joyce's design comes at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis" when Stephen, watching Bloom, thinks "step of a pard." The name for this animal is regarded as deriving from the Greek **πάν** ("all"), like Joseph's tunic "of every tinge in colours." See Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, *Notes for Joyce: An Annotation of James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), p. 207.

4. Later we shall see why this formulation is much too simple. Within the mimetic assumptions of the early style both Bloom's thoughts and the third-person narrative which "supports" him use language in complex ways that go beyond recording of reality, or even a recording of Bloom's perceptions of reality. Even here, language is acting on the reality it re-presents.

5. See David Hayman, *"Ulysses": The Mechanics of Meaning* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 70.

6. Of course Stephen's thoughts in the early episodes of *Ulysses* and in *"Scylla and Charybdis"* also engage in a fictional manipulation of experience. But Stephen never loses the kind of seriousness and asperity that characterized him in *A Portrait*. I suspect Bloom replaces Stephen as protagonist of the novel precisely because Bloom provides a more capacious and genial site for the kind of play with language that becomes so important in *Ulysses*.

7. For discussions of the shifting styles of *Ulysses*, but not too much help in understanding why they shift, see: Arnold Goldman, *The Joyce Paradox* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 74-118 also Franz K. Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1971), pp. 121-45.

8. See the "Ithaca" chapter in *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays*, ed. Clive Hart and David Hayman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 385-86.

9. Hugh Kenner suggests that Stephen's eccentric experience on the strand in "Proteus" has a rather prosaic cause—the fact that he's broken his glasses. See the "Circe" chapter in Hart and Hayman, pp. 353-54.

10. See the "Scylla and Charybdis" chapter in Hart and Hayman, p. 159.

11. A few of the many examples may be found on pages 606, 615, 617, and 627.

12. See the "Circe" and "Ithaca" chapters of Hart and Hayman. A reading of Professor Kenner's interpretation of "Circe," during the revision of this paper, revealed to me an unexpected indebtedness that is too comprehensive to be detailed.