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Towards the memory theater: The re-presentation of the city in literature and architecture

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Rice University, 1991
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Towards the Memory Theater:
The Re-presentation of the City in Literature and Architecture

by

John P. Herrera

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The re-presentation of the City in Literature and Architecture

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines ways in which the re-presentation of the city in literature can serve as a model for the re-presentation of the city in architecture. The vehicle for this investigation is the memory theater, a theater in which the "play" is enacted by the spectator. The "play" is the play of the memory/imagination as it confronts a series of seemingly meaningless abstractions. The experience of reading the city as a text simulates the dynamic of the memory theater. In Ulysses, Joyce employs the memory theater's strategy of role reversal to reconstruct Dublin in the text by forcing the reader into a position of co-authorship. In order to re-present the city, architecture must effect a similar suspension of meaning in formal and spatial terms. I have attempted to create the memory theater as a means of demonstrating through architecture that the city is written by whomever reads it.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text of Thesis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Description</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Photographs</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Photographs</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Images</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Analysis</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Model Photographs</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Models and Drawings</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Drawings</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Model Photographs</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When they set out from Ithaca for the Ionian islands, he placed a glass of wine on the railing of the ship and held the stem down with his finger so that it would not overturn. The red wine in solidarity with the briny sea, faithfully transmitted every move of the water. In the glass he now had a copy of the waves. "That's how it is with me," he thought. "I, too, am part of some kind of current that I'm transmitting without even knowing it..."

-Milorad Pavic, Landscape Painted with Tea

World without end.

- James Joyce
The structure of language is amorphous and chaotic. As a term it has no ground other than itself; it is beyond the figure ground. Writing is a process of opening language and giving form to chaos. Language falls back as a ground for the figure of the written word. Writing makes language habitable by setting up a scaffold for the reader's memory and imagination. Reading is therefore a process of inhabiting language. Reading is also a creative process because ultimately the written word is frail and subject to a multitude of meanings. Within the process of reading, then, are both the figure, the written word, and the ground, the context of the reader's memory and imagination. But like all figure ground relationships this one can be reversed to extraordinary literary effect.

Cities share with language the quality of being artificial constructs implemented to make sense of the world. However the sense making is often obscured by the mechanism. And so to live in the city, or to use language, we must construct fictions to frame and make intelligible our context. The very act of thinking is a process of fictionalizing. Our fictions prove Descartes' dictum, "I think therefore I am," but they also beg the question of whether the obverse, I dream therefore I am, is not just as true. This metaphysical dilemma revolves around the blurred distinction between fact and fiction.

In writing Ulysses, James Joyce makes generous use of the blurred distinction between fact and fiction inherent in language. He is hyperaware of the frailty of the written word, its inability to connect one to one, signifier to signified. However, he turns that frailty on itself and transforms it into power. The word games which Joyce implements clearly
demonstrate the parallax of language; that the same word viewed from two
different contexts undergoes a shift in meaning. Joyce is also entirely
aware of the creative process the reader goes through in navigating
through the novel. He knows that the reader will pick up the shifted
meanings of words but will also carry with her the trace of its former
meanings derived from the text as well as carried into the text. Thus the
context of the word grows around and deforms the word. Joyce gives
Ulysses a certain rhythm through his ironic use of language and its
equivalent in narrative the peripety. He allows the reader to build up her
own narrative on the framework of the text as well as the momentum of
expectation which that narrative engenders. He then pulls the rug out
from under the reader by exposing the reader's word chain to its own
instability. This is a form of peripety which forces the reader to consider
the mercurial quality of language before creating another fictional chain of
events/words. Peripety also references the act of reading and its inherent
figure ground relationship. According to Hugh Kenner Ulysses "grand
design is a design of multiple misreadings" (84).

Although the concern for language which permeates Ulysses would
seem to place it in the category of the Modern novel, the way the discourse
on language is structured has an ancient precedent. A useful device for
examining the structure of this discourse is the memory theater. A
memory theater, like a text or a city, provides merely an open context for
memory to unfold its cosmic tale. Through memory the theater generates
fictions by making the equation that memory is imagination; the inventor
of the memory theater, Giulio Camillo believed that imagination and
language were organically related to the memory of the universe.
Similarly, in a conversation with Frank Budgen, Joyce said that "imagination is memory." Joyce also said that "some of my methods are trivial others are quadrivial" (Kenner 83). What I take this statement to mean with regard to Ulysses is that Joyce was able to achieve both density and flux in the novel by holding several ("quadrivial") figure ground relationships in suspension, and by balancing each as a figure against the ground of the others. As readers we become aware of these figure ground relations through the action of parallax and peripety as they operate within both the context of the narrative in the novel and the play of language in the novel. I intend to show how the memory theater works on the principles of parallax and peripety, and how Joyce then creates a memory theater in the ""Wandering Rocks"" chapter of Ulysses. I will begin with a discussion of the memory theater.

In 1532 Giulio Camillo built the Memory Theater in Venice. The Memory Theater was a sort of amphitheater constructed like a classical stage with seven semicircular tiers and seven ramps radiating from the center of the stage (see figure 1). However, "In Camillo's Theater the normal function of the theater was reversed. There is no audience sitting in the seats watching a play on the stage. The solitary 'spectator' of the theater stands where the stage would be and looks toward the auditorium gazing at the seven times seven rising grades" (Yates 137). Camillo gave both the tiers and the ramps of his theater meaning according to Neoplatonic and Hermetic symbolism. An iconic image marks the intersection of each tier and ramp, thus embodying a symbolism compounded of the planets and a universal view of man's development. Below each icon were coffers containing written arguments, exegeses
explaining the symbolic content of the icon. The icon thus represents all the arguments embedded in a simple form of compounded symbols. When the spectator projects her imaginative memory onto an icon, the potential of the embedded arguments is revealed. The icon stimulates her imagination, simultaneously taking it back to first causes through the "deep structure" of the Theater and connecting it with the universal knowledge outside of the Theater.

The function of Camillo's Memory Theater stems from the rhetorical tradition of mentally constructing mnemonic devices in order to categorize and remember topoi (topics or places) in an orderly fashion. The rhetor's topoi constituted lists called the sensus communis which were essentially the common ground of argument understood by an entire community. With the sensus communis as a basis the rhetors unfolded their arguments by applying the tools of rhetoric to the arena of common knowledge. The dynamic of rhetoric took place at the intersection of the sensus communis, the ground of language, and the tropes, the figures of language. This intersection represents a locus of memory, the equivalent of a single argument in the exegeses relating to an icon in the Memory Theater. Arguments depended on drawing these loci together in a coherent pattern. Camillo's Theater pretends to have grasped all the possible patterns and embedded them in the icons. The Theater is thus a physical manifestation of the imaginary architecture which the rhetors used to create the mnemonic scaffolding for the topoi. For the rhetors as well as for Camillo the architecture is not in the building itself but in the sum of memories contained within. The building was continually reoccupied with different arguments. However, in Camillo's theater the infinity of all possible
arguments have already been played out and distilled into the forty-nine icons of the Theater. The expansion and contraction of knowledge in the Theater relates to the flux between the particular and the universal inherent in objects/words. The icons develop the "tropic space" of discourse by holding signifier and signified in patterns of suspension. The Theater demonstrates the principle of parallax in that the spectator's memory provides the context which animates the theater and no two spectator's would interpret the icons in the same way. One dumbfounded and somewhat skeptical visitor to the Theater, Viglio Zwitchem, summed up its metaphysical operation in a letter to Erasmus of Rotterdam:

He [Camillo] calls this Theater of his by many names, saying now that it is a built or constructed mind and soul, and now that it is a windowed one. He pretends that all things that the human mind can conceive and which we cannot see with the corporeal eye, after being collected together by diligent meditation may be expressed by certain corporeal signs in such a way that the beholder may at once perceive with his eyes everything that is otherwise hidden in the depths of the human mind. And it is because of this corporeal looking that he calls it a theater. (Yates 132)

Although Erasmus, and therefore Zwitchem, predate Descartes by almost one hundred years, their rational minds and protoskepticism do not allow the performance of the Memory Theater to take place. As Yates says, "Under his [Zwitchem's] eye the Idea of the Memory Theater dissolves into stammering incoherence" (132). The Theater relies on the
fluidity of associational logic or hypertext for the unfolding of memory rather than the orderly progression of a rational mathematical logic.

In more contemporary terms, Camillo's Memory Theater is an attempt to concretize the metanarrative, to create the scaffolding from which all narratives can be derived. The reversal of the auditorium and stage relationship makes it clear who is performing. The performance is an act of realizing the potential in the empty signs, the icons, by infusing them with meaning through the fictions that we create. The Memory Theater thus occupies the center of Humanistic thought because it assumes that the volatile poetic logic of our language is the fountain of all knowledge. Paradoxically, Camillo's Theater receives the spark of its dynamic from the rationalist philosopher Spinoza's dictum that "Nature Abhors a vacuum," that the empty sign, unvalued by language, is a chaotic image. The chaotic image (icon) has all the potential of the universe of language within its possible discourses, and, like a black hole, has an intense gravitational pull for meaning.

Over four hundred years later, our positivistic minds will not allow us to lend much credence to something as metaphysical as the the potential alignment of the Memory Theater with a universal sensus communis. However, the relationship of spectator and theater in Camillo's invention finds a parallel in the relationship of an observer and the city as well as the relationship of a reader to a text. "readers need a sensus communis to read, even if it is the sense that the sensus communis is absent. Destabilized irony draws upon a sensus communis that the reader knows has vanished. The meaning of an ironical text is always elusive, always evaporating" (Schaeffer 99). Though particular to its location, the city can be seen as a
representation of the lost sensus communis. Within that rhetorical environment architecture functions as a kind of trope making connections between different topoi in the city. However, the modern city is not a coherent list arranged along the orderly lines of the Memory Theater. Making the city a place is tantamount to creating a memory theater, or apprehending a kind of order within its flux. Whereas Camillo's Theater was an orderly construction, a trace of the structure of relationships which the spectator brought to bear on the icons within the theater would seem a random web of connections. Both the idea of the city and the sensus communis are mythical constructions in which the material structure of relationships have been etherealized, leaving only a field of operations. They are the ground which carry within them all potential figures. As Frank Kermode points out, it is the structure of relationships, or fictions, within the field of operations which is useful to us:

Myth operates within the diagrams of ritual, which presupposes total and adequate explanations of things as they are and were; it is a sequence of radically unchangable gestures. Fictions are for finding things out, and they change as the need for sense-making changes. Myths are the agents of stability, fictions the agents of change. Myths call for absolute, fictions for conditional assent. Myths make sense in terms of a lost order of time, illud tempus as Eliade calls it; fictions, if successful, make sense of the here and now hoc tempus. (39)

Myth functions as a datum; it is a kind of public space for play of fictional constructions. And yet, to the extent that the myth encompasses these fictions, it is also a kind of palimpsest and thus both figure and
ground. The eccentric quality of the modern city makes it a palimpsest of multiple centers as well. The trace of the parallactic shifts from fiction to fiction is recorded in the memory theater that we create in the city. Each one of these shifted centers is the equivalent of a locus of memory in Camillo's Theater. The juxtaposition of these shifted centers does not add up and we experience the alienation of the city in the peripety; the palimpsest is layered again. However, through our imaginative memory we begin again, making the connections between new loci of memory and recreating the city, a "fictional" city within a city. In the words of Umberto Eco, "Remembering is like constructing and then traveling again through space. We are already talking about architecture. Memories are built as the city is built" (89).

The play of memory in Camillo's Theater is also analogous to the act of reading. Giulio Camillo is essentially the author of a novel into which the reader steps, and by supplying the context of her memory to a metaphor-waiting-to-become-a-text, initiates a passage through the text. Like the best literature Camillo's Theater bears rereading because it demonstrates that the chosen passage is not the only one possible. We choose different reading strategies which elicit different outcomes each time. As our knowledge of the text becomes fuller; we see more patterns of connection. In Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities Marco Polo shows the density of connection by drawing fifty-five cities from his memory of Venice, the ultimate text which is never seen. Each "imaginary" city is a trope, a figure emerging from the ground of Venice. Tropes open the public space of language, the domain of the imagination. A metaphor, for example, is an attempt to create an identity between two dissimilar things.
But the connection is never complete. The residual space is filled by the reader's imagination. The metaphor thus operates as much through the connection as through the absence of connection. The architectural manipulation of literary space in Joyce's *Ulysses* relies on the residual space of the metaphor. Not only does this space locate us specifically in a linguistic context but also dislocates us and suggests where we could be.

I would suggest that Joyce learned the value of the poetic logic from the late Renaissance philosopher Giambattista Vico who wrote in *The New Science*.

All the first tropes are corollaries of this poetic logic. The most luminous and therefore the most necessary and frequent is metaphor. It is most praised when it gives sense and passion to insensate things, in accordance with the metaphysics above discussed, by which the first poets attributed to bodies the being of animate substances, with capacities measured by their own, namely sense and passion, and in this way make fables of them. Thus every metaphor is a fable in brief. (Schaeffer 94)

Metaphor thus functions in the same fashion as the icons in the Memory Theater; the compounded symbolism providing a springboard for the imagination.

In *Ulysses* Joyce makes the very bold move of using the city of Dublin as a kind of mnemonic device for the text. Whereas many writers would choose a static image (a Grecian urn for example) to still the movement of language by focusing it around a discrete object, Joyce fights fire with fire. Joyce's intention is to achieve the maximum density and flux by layering
the figure ground relationships inherent in both cities and language. Joyce superimposes these layers and creates a dynamic palimpsest onto which we project our imagination. Hence we make the city by reading in the same way as we animate the memory theater by supplying the context of meaning to the icons by infusing them with our memory. Our experience of reading becomes the experience of the city in the way that the reality that we create through our webs of connection is simultaneous to the creation of the city by the characters we read. We spin the webs of connection as a means of controlling the parallactic shifts of perspective within the text and the city of Dublin. Joyce anticipates our passage through the text and allows our webs of connection to amass a certain critical density before they collapse under their own weight, a form of peripety. About peripety Frank Kermode says:

    The more daring the peripeteia, the more we may feel that the work respects our sense of reality; and the more certainly we shall feel that the fiction under consideration is one of those which by upsetting the ordinary balance of our naive expectations, is finding something out for us, something real. (18)

Joyce's intention was to create a Dublin in Ulysses that we would perceive with the same degree of verisimilitude as the actual city held on June 16, 1904. Clive Hart says:

Joyce wanted Ulysses to be a documentary source from which Dublin, if destroyed, might be recreated. In saying so, he was shoring up physical fragments against the potential of total imaginative disembodiment...it was one of the central issues around which he constructed his novel. (182-83)
With Ulysses Joyce was attempting to make a memory theater for Dublin by embedding in the text all the possible Dublins imaginable. Nineteen possible Dublins are re-presented in "Wandering Rocks", it is the memory theater for the novel. The multiple Dublins transform and distort each other; parallax disembodies and distorts Dublin; peripety pulls it back together by reconnecting the fictional Dublins with the physical city. Against the rising and falling of these "fictional" cities, Dublin is presented as a ground. In "Wandering Rocks" the city Joyce uses as physical fragment to guard against imaginative disembodiment, the peripety, meets the parallactic disembodiment of the memory theater. In "Lestrygonians," and "Scylla and Charybdis" parallax and peripety rise to the surface of the novel as figures against the ground of the text. With the crossing of Bloom and Stephen at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis," parallax and peripety intersect and create "Wandering Rocks".

The word parallax is derived from the Greek word parallassein, "to wander." In "Lestrygonians" we find Bloom wandering through Dublin. Parallax is the apparent change in position of an object resulting from the change in direction from which it is viewed. Bloom describes the dominant movement of the chapter with the apparently non-sequitorial statement in his interior monologue, "Wheels within wheels." This image reflects the semi-circular plan of the memory theater, and the movement inherent in the wheels reflects the action of memory within the theater. Wheels within wheels prefigures the frame within frame construction of "Wandering Rocks". This spinning also refers to the parallax of language as we encounter the cyclical rise and fall of fictional cities within the text. Joyce borders on the fetishistic in his elaboration of this principle, working
it into the texture of the novel at every scale of its symbolism. Bloom
operates on this texture; he is Joyce's first reader. This is particularly
evident in "Lestrygonians".

Dublin is Bloom's memory theater. His interaction with the city, the
way he inhabits it with his mind by superimposing webs of connection on
it, is the process by which he stills the city's flux. An example of this takes
place soon after Bloom introduces the theme of parallax in his interior
monologue: "Parallax. I never exactly understood." Bloom's mind then
latches on to a character named Ben Dollard: "They used to call him Big
Ben. Not half as witty as calling him Base Barreltone. Appetite like an
albatross. Get outside a baron of beef. Powerful man he was stowing
away number one Bass. Barrel of Bass. See? It all works out" (126). Ben
Dollard is imaginatively disembodied and operates as a vehicle for Bloom's
memory. Thinking through Dollard, Bloom is transported back to the
Liffey which he has recently visited and where his thoughts were connected
with birds and fish. Later in the chapter, Bloom's thinking returns to
parallax: "What's parallax?...Never knew anything about it. Waste of
time. Gasballs spinning about, crossing each other, passing....Gas: then
solid: then world: then cold: then dead shell drifting around, frozen rock,
like that pineapple rock" (137). Bloom translates parallax into a fiction
useful for his understanding, a framing that helps him comprehend the city.
But these fictions, in the words of Eliot, are "visions and revisions that will
a minute will reverse." And so spinning gas can pass through six phase
changes to become "that pineapple rock." Parallax allows Bloom to
apprehend the apparent shifts in matter of a single entity in the process of
becoming. The final phase change is a uniquely Bloomian displacement.
indicative of the parallax latent in his interior monologue. Bloom's reading of the city demonstrates the associational logic with which we should read the text. The city is a rebus which requires thinking through material artifacts. This is the logic that we have seen operating on the icons in the Memory Theater.

In "Lestrygonians" we follow Bloom's lead, using associational logic to create fictions in order to apprehend the text. We try to find the substance in the field of Bloom's parallactic vision. For example, to place "that pineapple rock" the reader's memory must trace back to the first words of Lestrygonians, "Pineapple rock." To follow the motif of "wheels within wheels" we retrace the chapter, spinning out this particular thread forward and back, following its deformations. We begin at the Liffey River on O'Connell bridge. The river is a caesura in the fabric of the city, and the bridge is an image of the middle ground between water and sky. If we regard the Liffey as a ground, the image of birds and fish become figures. The birds and fish enter a figure ground relationship of their own, juxtaposing the world of birds (a sensible world) against the world of fish (a psychic world). The visible surface of the river is the meeting of these two worlds onto which Bloom projects his imagination, "The flow of language it is" (125). The birds which Bloom watches from the bridge are gulls, sea birds, a conflation of bird and fish and also a pun, see-birds. "Looking down he saw flapping strongly, wheeling between guant quaywalls, gulls" (125). The bird imagery, wheeling, begins below Bloom and is contained within the city walls. Bloom is like the birds wheeling within the flux of the city. His is the desire of parallax is to see an object whole at once. Similarly, the reader is wheeling within the flux of the text
try to make the jump from fragment to whole. Bloom decides to feed the birds, throwing Banbury cake "fragments" down to the Liffey. "The gulls swooped silently, two, then all from their heights pouncing on prey. Gone. Every morsel" (125). The reader devours every morsel of the city-transfigured-into-cake that Bloom offers. Only through these morsels can we come to know the city. Later Bloom comes across birds within the fabric of the city. "Before the huge high door of the Irish House of Parliament a flock of pigeons flew." Bloom suspects that they will defecate on him and turning this around says, "Must be thrilling from the air." This reminds him of an experience he had as a child and of his nickname, "Mackerel they called me" (133). Bloom's short sequence of thoughts contains within it all the oppositions we have seen before at the bridge: the door is the equivalent of the bridge, a space between; the Parliamentary hall relates to the Liffey as a kind of meeting place; The birds are flying, and Bloom remembers that he was called by the name of a fish. "See? It all works out."

The theme of wheels within wheels follows many forking paths through "Lestrygonians." For example, one could carry it downward through the fishes to the "fields of undersea, the lines faint brown in grass, buried cities" (144). And then perhaps pick up the thread again in the inner vision of the blind stripling: "See things in his forehead perhaps.... something blacker than the dark"(149). However, the high flying movement of the birds is more directly related to the parallactic theme and the desire to get the whole picture of the city, the bird's eye view. Through synecdoche the flying pigeons are transformed into the bird's eye view of the trams passing one another, "ingoing, outgoing." The trams'
cyclical movement mimics that of the birds wheeling. Later, from an even more distanced view, Bloom says, "Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: others coming on, passing on....Piled up cities, worn away age after age. Pyramids in the sand" (135). This perspective distanced not only by space but also time foreshadows the omniscient eye of the city-become-narrator in "Wandering Rocks." Because "Lestrygonians" is presented from the perspective of Bloom's interior monologue, the reader finds very little to hang her memory on. The city becomes nothing but a series of broken images. These images resurface in "Wandering Rocks" in particulars that contain within them webs of connection that span the text.

If Bloom is the agent of parallax in "Lestrygonians," then Stephen is the agent of peripety in "Scylla and Charybdis." Literally translated from greek peripety (peripeteia) means falling around. Icarus, the son of Dedalus is characterized by falling. Bloom prefigures the connection between Stephen and Icarus when he says "but there are people like things high" (143). Stephen picks up the Icarus theme and develops it through himself when he says, "Fabulous artificer. The hawklike man. You flew.... Seabedabbled, fallen" (173). Thus Stephen also connects the realm of birds and fishes.

Stephen's relation to the physical city is only tangential; his mind does not interact directly with the city. He exists in the webs of connection that both Bloom and the reader create. It is no wonder then that in "Scylla and Charybdis" we do not find Stephen out in the city but deep within the city library, another kind of memory theater. Within the layered structure of the memory theater the enigmatic fragments of Bloom's mind are the
equivalent of the icons. Stephen functions as of the literary exegeses which simultaneously connects its icon to the foundation of the human mind and to the stars, while ultimately leading it to its thoroughly self-referential state. Stephen explains this process by rethinking the poet Maeterlink, "Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourself" (137). Peripety is the figure seeking its ground and finding itself. Along the way it is subject to a multitude of interpretations though. Within the cycle of peripety (the singular) the dominant force is parallax (the multiple). Anticipating the action of poetic logic in the memory theater Stephen interprets Shelly:

In the intense instant of the imagination, when the mind, Shelly says is a fading coal. That which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now But by reflection from that which then shall be. (160)

Within the memory theater of Ulysses Bloom supplies the context with his memory, his are the eyes of the text. Stephen provides structure of the memory theater, the self-reflexive literary construction. Stephen is the literary and philosophical exegete to Ulysses. He grounds the text within the traditions that created it.

In the last passages of "Scylla and Charybdis" Stephen and Bloom cross paths. Appropriately the intersection takes place in the space of the library threshold; "About to pass through the doorway, feeling one behind, he stood aside" (178). The library threshold is the symbolic space which separates and joins language and the city. This space is common ground
for Stephen and Bloom. Here language and the city meet. The city of Dublin is the memory theater for Bloom's imagination. Language, especially as it is developed in literature and philosophy, is Stephen's memory theater. The threshold is the space of Joyce's novel. The memory theater of Ulysses occupies the gap between language and the city.

Nowhere is Joyce's intention to make Ulysses a documentary source for the reconstruction of Dublin more evident than in the "Wandering Rocks" chapter. Dublin is the ultimate memory of the text. The literary mapping of the city in "Wandering Rocks" is the memory theater for the novel. In the preceding chapters the characters are foregrounded and the city recedes into the background. However, in the nineteen frames of "Wandering Rocks" the city surfaces from within the experience of the characters to assert itself now as the foreground. By reversing the figure ground relationship of city and inhabitant, Joyce exposes the city as the sensus communis that has grounded the text thus far; it is the rhetorical environment of the novel.

"Wandering Rocks" is a turning point in the novel. Most obviously this chapter marks a stylistic transition between "realistic" and experimental narration. The reader must adjust to Joyce's new form of narration. Joyce does not develop the nineteen frames into complete narratives but instead constructs them as fragmentary events around which the life of the city revolves. The reader makes sense of this fragmentation by projecting the accumulated memory of the preceding chapters onto the fragments. Through these webs of connection, fictions the reader constructs, the city of Dublin comes into being. As Kermode says, "fictions make sense of the here and now hoc tempus"(39). Thus the
reader achieves the effect that Joyce wants by literally reconstructing Dublin from within the text.

In "Wandering Rocks" the experience of creating a city and the experience of reading a text are balanced against each other. Their relationship can be examined through the operation of parallax and peripety in the structure of the chapter. In "Lestrygonians" parallax operates on the city; Bloom imaginatively disembodies Dublin by reducing it to the fictional city within which he moves. Similarly, the nineteen frames of "Wandering Rocks" depict the city from nineteen separate perspectives. Each of the frames can be seen as a fragment of the literary map which constitutes the ground of the text. Through the parallactic shift from frame to frame the map is collaged together. Parallax operates in the chapter by lending the city a two-dimensional quality. Joyce presents nineteen disparate scenes, none privileged over the other. As readers, we enter this collage, this memory theater of city fragments and read them from our own perspective. What Joyce stresses in these fragments is not the units themselves, but the blank spaces between them and their relationships to one another. Between the fragments the city emerges.

If parallax presents a two dimensional map of the city in "Wandering Rocks", peripety provides the depth of field. Peripety connects the act of reading and the apprehension of the city. Parallax gives us the sense of flux in the city and peripety cuts through the flux and creates places. In "Scylla and Charybdis" Stephen's literary allusions not only discuss peripety but are also a form of peripety; "Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (153). Ulysses is the here and now, it is the fiction which connects these allusions. Peripety reveals
the web of connections and reconnects text and context. Two forms of peripety connect the nineteen frames of "Wandering Rocks". First, the elements which traverse the disjointed narrative like the sound of a bell which resounds in several frames stopping temporarily the flux of the city. Second, the peripety takes the form of the blank space between the fragments. These blank spaces are like the residual space of a metaphoric construction. Thus peripety is both common thread and a blank space. Either way it connects dissimilar images and adds dimension by bringing the relationship into focus.

About "Wandering Rocks" Clive Hart writes,

The mind of the city is both mechanical and malisciously ironic. It chooses to define itself openly by means of physical relationships which are usually visible and observable in the present time. What holds the city together is not a common conceptual basis, but the web of connexions which may be formed within the texture of its surfaces.... the city's mentality is mercurial and unpredictable. "Wandering Rocks" is in fact full of verbal echoes and thematic connexions which are, so to speak, potential interpolations to be made by the reader himself. (193)

The re-presentation of the city in "wandering Rocks" and indeed throughout all of Ulysses demands the participation of the reader. The city is elusive, forever in flux between materialization and etherealization. My reading of the novel through parallax and peripety lead me to the discovery of the city as the memory theater for the text. Joyce uses Dublin to check the flow of linguistic anarchy in the text by providing fragments of city which are specically located in time and space. But tracing the "web of
connexion" from fragment to fragment is the responsibility of the reader who ultimately authors the city in the text.
SITE DESCRIPTION

My site for the thesis design project is located at the southern end of Roosevelt Island in New York City. The Island is situated mid stream in the East River between Manhattan and Queens and stretches two miles from Manhattan's Forty-sixth Street to Eighty-sixth Street. Access to the island is available by subway from both Manhattan and Queens. In addition there is an aerial tramway from Manhattan and a bridge from Queens which allows for vehicular access. The enormous figure of the Queensboro bridge bisects the island as it soars hundreds of feet overhead.

Martha Sickles, an urban planner in New York, provides this brief account of the island's early history:

First known by its Indian name as Minnahannock Island, the long and narrow slice of land in the East River was taken by the Dutch in 1637. New Amsterdam, as New York was called then, knew its neighbor as Varckens Eylandt or Hog Island. After three decades of Dutch rule, the island was confiscated by the English and given to Captain John Manning, who distinguished himself in battle against the Dutch. Five years later, in public disgrace for surrendering Fort James to the Dutch without a shot, Manning retired to his island and named it after himself. On his death in 1686 his stepdaughter, Mary Manningham, inherited the property. When she later married Robert Blackwell, the island was named after him and continued to be called Blackwell's Island until 1921. (105)

The City of New York purchased the land from the Blackwells in 1828 and proceeded to immediately develop a community of charitable institutions
beginning with the Penitentiary. During the nineteenth century twenty-six hospitals were constructed including the New York Lunatic Asylum, the Smallpox Hospital, City Hospital, and the Hospital for the Incurables. All of the institutions on the island were built from stone that was quarried on the island by prisoners from the Penitentiary. The buildings include the work of such notable architects as Andrew Jackson Davis and James Renwick Jr.. Although technologically and socially innovative at the time of construction by the early twentieth century the hospitals were barely able to meet the demands of modern medicine. In 1921 the Island was optimistically renamed Welfare Island, but by 1955 all of the original institutions had closed their doors.

During the 1960's plans for the development of Welfare Island foundered in confusion as the city chose the course its future. Such luminary architects as Philip Johnson provided guidance in the master planning of the island producing a document entitled "The Island Nobody Knows." One useful recommendation was for the renaming of the island to its present form. The seventies and eighties brought the island a tremendous amount of residential construction, all of it focused to the north of the Queensboro bridge.

While the new development was under way, action was taken to preserve the seven remaining historic buildings. In 1976, six of the seven buildings were designated New York City Landmarks. The City Hospital designed by Renwick was denied entry. Martha Sickles recalls the architectural historian Henry Russell Hitchcock's suggestion to keep the hospital as a ruin and stabilize it in order to "play a positive part in the general layout as a screen or backdrop" (111) Preservationists have continued to campaign for the buildings importance though the fate of the hospital remains unknown.
The ruinous City Hospital forms the northern edge of my site; its bulk stretching over 400 feet almost touches the east and west banks of the island. On the 11 acre site to the south are both the Strecker Laboratory and the Smallpox Hospital. The southern extension of the island has changed dramatically in form due to the landfilling of debris from construction sites in Manhattan and the island's own demolished structures. On the western bank of the landfill the delacorte fountain sits in disrepair. Because of it exposure the site affords magnificent views of Manhattan and the sweep of the river to the south.

Approximately one hundred feet below the site the E and F subway lines shuttle back and forth from Queens to Manhattan and beyond. The extreme depth of this tunnel is due to the necessity to pass below the river's east and west channels. The only evidence of the subterranean system at ground level is an emergency exit which pops up amongst the ruins. This curious juxtaposition recalls the living city of New York from which the island seems so disconnected. It is this quality of natural decay within the framework of a vital city that captured my attention and attracted me to the site.
Map showing subway tunnel passing below Roosevelt Island.
Roosevelt Island in the 1940's with Manhattan in the distance.
Site Photograph--The Queensboro Bridge.
Site Photograph--View of Roosevelt Island from Manhattan.

Site Photograph--View of Roosevelt Island from the East River.
The Smallpox Hospital from the west.
Peter Brueghel. *The Ship of Fools.*
Since the demise of the hospitals on the Southpoint site (as the southern tip of Roosevelt Island is referred to) abundant speculation has been invested concerning the future development of the site. Proposals have been made for gardens, nuclear power plants, university extensions, and even for the placement of the Metropolitan Museum's Temple of Dendur on the site. In 1970 the architect Benjamin Thompson was hired to come up with "A development strategy ... that would preserve the historic structures there provide transport to the island and create a 'joie de vivre, a restoration of the joy of urban life that is lively and participatory" (Sickles 113). The vast project which Thompson submitted realized the exceptional potential of the site for commercial real estate development. Two years later, however, the Thompson plan was scrapped and the Roosevelt Island Development Corporation commissioned Louis Kahn to design a memorial to Franklin Roosevelt to be located at the end of the island instead. Although the project remains unbuilt the extraordinarily dour form which it would have taken and the minimal impact which it made on the surrounding context is surprising considering its predecessor. Clearly the fate of the site hangs in the balance between the twin pressures of preservationist and developmental interest.

The program which I developed attempts to resolve the conflict between the priorities for development and preservation. I suggest creating a memorial park which is a destination not unlike the park at the Cloisters in northern Manhattan. Visitors to the park would augment the economic life of the island and the park would be an amenity to any further development on the island. The derelict hospital structures would house indoor and outdoor museums,
observatories, and educational facilities. The Strecker Laboratory, for example, should be restored in order to house The Roosevelt Island Historical Museum and its archives. As access to the site is of critical importance the program includes a subway station for the E and F lines which traverse the site. The intersection of park and subway station is a major concern. The station could house information booths, park services, and exhibition space; it should be considered an extension of the park. The subway station would serve as the main gateway to the park and as such could effectively control the use of the park.

To provide further access to the park as well as to make a connection to the northern reaches of the island a vast promenade would be added to the west bank extending the island to its pierhead between the Queensboro Bridge and the southern tip. At the northern end of the promenade a passenger elevator would be connected to the pedestrian platform of the bridge, making the island accessible by foot. At the southern end of the promenade the Delacorte Fountain would be reconstructed as a water clock sending off a jet of water every hour on the hour. Along the eastern bank the promenade would become more intimately scaled letting on to discrete city block gardens. The construction of an outdoor theater on this path would provide space for a variety of performance needs from dance to drama. Off the southern tip of the island bell buoys would be located to chime in the river's current.
Site Analysis
Study Model
Study Model

Study Model
New York City Lunatic Asylum, central stair in the Octagon Tower.
Octagon Tower analytical model
Octagon Tower analytical model and drawings
SITE PLAN
CONCLUSION

I find the lofty goals of the Roosevelt Island Development Corporation's 1970 plan-- to restore "the joy of urban life that is lively and participatory"-- in keeping with the aims of the memory theater. The memory theater, in its essential function, re-presented the public space of the imagination. The project which I have undertaken stemmed from a desire to create a genuinely public urban space in which imaginative participation was encouraged in order to fulfill the dynamic of the space. Like the overlapping of figure/ground relationships which Joyce develops in *Ulysses*, relationships must develop at a multitude of scales in the architecture of the memory theater. For example, the relationship of the observer to the architecture should be reflected in the relationship between the architecture and the city. Thus any fictions created by the observer to make sense of the architecture could be extended to a larger context with more profound resonance.

In order to achieve my aims I began the design process with an analysis of the site which documented such basic information as the island nature of the site as well as historical conditions now obscured from view. My research into the history of the site yielded some fascinating maps of the island including a nineteenth century engraving which showed both Blackwell's Island and Central Park. Clearly illustrated in the engraving are all the charitable institutions on the island as well as all the follies in central park. The unselfconscious juxtaposition of the two images created a powerful rebus which demanded the explanation of its internal logic. My own hypothesis about the provocative nature of the image is that both Central Park and Blackwell's island came under the rubric of urban public
spaces, and although one was an Arcadia and the other a Purgatory they were both part of the way in which the city defined itself. This raised the issue critical to this thesis of how cities define themselves and how that definition is reiterated at various scales in the memory theater.

The idea of "Cantor Dust" which James Gleick illustrates in his book Chaos helped to ground my thoughts about scaler iterations and the condition of the modern city. Cantor Dust is produced by Cantor Sets which are a series of numbers that at first appear randomly ordered but in fact obey the rules of simple mathematical functions. The notion that the repetition of some simple steps would produce objects that are suspended within their own logic immediately appealed to me as a simulation of the icons in Camillo's Memory Theater. The discovery of "Cantor Dust" clarified my intention in design and suggested a system of overlaying information in a simple fashion in order to reveal complex spatial relationships.

In order to create the memory theater for the city I needed to develop the Sensus Communis for the site. With that in mind I began to look for instances of repetitive systems in the city and producing repetitions of my own. The meter of the Manhattan grid was an obvious example, but the application of that meter to another system could produce very interesting figure ground relationships. The point of the exercise was to provide only enough information to make the observer aware that very specific and perhaps very obscure rules are operating on the design. Beyond the investment the observer has in making the place through memory, the park should help orient oneself in time, space and the literary texture of the city.

In the design itself the Manhattan grid is projected onto the island where it intersects a variety of local historical conditions which deform the
lines of the grid and in turn are deformed themselves. The deviant order of the subway line which is typically hidden below the surface of the city is articulated on the island in the form of a gigantic trench. The enormous scale of the subway station serves to reference the operation of the memory theater as it is viewed from the heights of the manhattan skyscrapers. The trench also recalls the history of quarrying on the island and the promenade is constructed of the indigenous materials. In an attempt to further define the orders of the site the Central Park folly style of the outdoor theater is divided according to the cardinal points.

Nowhere is the intensity of the overlay technique more extensively reiterated than in the design of the subway station; it is the memory theater for the rest of the project. The main figure in the composition is the Octagon Tower of the former New York Lunatic asylum. The stair tower has been cut according to the orders which criss-cross the subway line leaving the fragments suspended in the space. The specific position of each fragment registers the orders which fixed it there. In drawing the sections of these fragments I was pleased by their apparent lack of relationship to the original object. The drawings had the quality of a kind of architecture degree zero open to interpretation and free to be manipulated in plan, section and elevation. The fragment drawings became the building blocks for the design of the subway station providing clues to the meter, measure and proportion of the project. In keeping with the memory theater the observer might never discover the rules at work in the subway station, but I feel that part of the pleasure of the text if having something to return to and wonder about.
WORKS CITED


