INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in “sectioning” the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.

University Microfilms International
300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106
18 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON WC1R 4EJ, ENGLAND
NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE LAST HALF OF "ULYSSES": THE CASE FOR JOYCE'S "DOOMED" EXPERIMENTS

Rice University

University Microfilms International

Copyright 1980

by

Chapman, Daniel Knowlton

All Rights Reserved
RICE UNIVERSITY

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE LAST HALF OF ULYSSES

The Case for Joyce's "Doomed" Experiments

by

DANIEL K. CHAPMAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

John Meixner, Chairman
Professor, English

Walter Isle
Professor, English

Konstantin Kolenda
Professor, Philosophy

HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL, 1980
ABSTRACT

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE LAST HALF OF ULYSSES
The Case for Joyce's "Doomed" Experiments

Daniel K. Chapman

In his seminal essay on Ulysses, Edmund Wilson called such episodes as The Oxen of the Sun and Eumaeus "artistically absolutely indefensible," and he wondered if Joyce had forgotten, in his flights of technical virtuosity, the "drama which he had originally intended to stage." Friendlier judgments have occurred since then, but rarely have critics taken the late narrative strategies as seriously as did Joyce.

The difficulty lies in what seems a widespread assumption that Joyce's youthful aesthetic bears little relation to his advanced narrative art in Ulysses. Yet the aesthetic holds clues to the later performance — the clamor of debased viewpoints, the ridicule, the ferocity, the swift disruptions of mood and manner, the disorienting strains of unrhymed poetry that appear when least expected. We learn that Joyce will work through indirection: that he will portray people and events as they are not, the better to define what they are. He will purge from his art unsuitable moods of "desire" and "loathing"; will fashion a poetry which "transcends the mode of its expression," thus helping to liberate the reader from avenues of pedestrian response.

While the aesthetic should be construed as a roadmap, rather than a destination, it can reveal thematic profundities in such late episodes as Eumaeus, Oxen, and Sirens — principal targets for hasty critical response.
over the years — and whose sequence in this dissertation I have reversed
to suit my exposition of fraudulence, purgation, and poetic intensity
foreshadowed by the aesthetic.

The Eumaeus chapter has been condemned as a relinquishment to "express-

ive form," a projection through rambling style of the fatigue felt by
Stephen and Bloom. Yet wider implications lie beneath the verbal drizzle:
Through a hopelessly vagrant narrative voice, Joyce has dramatized the
pathology of exhausted minds and spirits; has amassed an encyclopedic
digression upon a civilization in decay. Joyce has challenged his reader
to navigate through shoals of false, tasteless and inhumane sentiments,
on a negative journey towards ethical truth.

While layers of archaic style obscure our vision of the Holles St.
hospital's "action," The Oxen of the Sun can profitably be viewed as a
study in mixed tonalities. The past authors cast shadows of mortality
upon the young revelers. In turn, the rowdies disturb the repose of the
sober dead. Consequently, the term "parody" fails to characterize the
double-edged thrust of Joyce's burlesque. Further, a reading of Oxen
which is confined to the immediate text can prove short-sighted: Unspoken
thematic dialogues exist between this chapter and 1) Joyce's prose models
found in George Saintsbury's *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, and 2)
earlier moments in *Ulysses* which Joyce has recollected "subly" in Oxen.

With Sirens, scholarship of a literal sort has dwelt upon Joyce's
success in imitating an art other than writing. But only upon an analo-
gous plane of poetic intensity does the author achieve the inarticulate
elocution of music. Such poetry has little to do with a tradition of
versification as Joyce knows it, and ridicules it, in Sirens. Rather the
author employs such poetic tools as synaesthesia, oxymoron and archetype
to force our irrational identification with a fallible Bloom.

Even so brutal an early chapter as Lestrygonians contains subtle hints of the fraudulent, purgative, and poetically intense techniques to follow. And noting that Bloom's bodily organs are personified -- only to be figuratively "cannibalized" -- we sense, too, the creative dissolution of meaning, prevalent in the late chapters, whereby Joyce will use a variety of narrative ambiguities to create new dimensions of doubt -- a doubt which Joyce believed held mankind together.
To

John Meixner

and my wife Kathleen
I am heaping all kinds of lies
in to the mouth of that sailorman in Eumaeus
which will make you laugh.

Letter to Frank Budgen

He told me to be a good son to ma.
I couldn't hear the other things he said
but I saw his tongue and teeth trying
to say it better.

Master Dignam

... I want the reader to understand always
through suggestion rather than direct statement.

Joyce to Budgen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>JOYCE'S AESTHETIC: MEANINGS STILL UNUTTERED</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>EURUMEUS: A METICULOUS SHAMBLES</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>THE OXEN OF THE SUN: STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF STYLE</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>THE SIRENS: DISORIENTING STRAINS</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>THE LESTRYGONIANS: BLOOM CANNIBALIZED</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>JOYCE'S CREATIVE DISSOLUTION OF MEANING</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much of the early critical response to James Joyce's Ulysses 1 seems now as unsophisticated as it was hostile, producing pages of memorable invective and little insight. Some writers found their sensibilities offended by the work's inelegant subject matter. To E. M. Forster, the Circe episode was "a monstrous coupling of reminiscences," and the book itself "a dogged attempt to cover the universe with mud."2 Others were vexed by Joyce's digressive and deliberately experimental presentation. In his preface to a German language edition, Carl Jung complained that Ulysses was an endless "tapeworm," winding like the symbol for infinity: "What richness and what boredom!" -- a verdict which seems, however, to have pleased Joyce, as must have Jung's concession that the book was not in fact a book, but a fair model of "the world" itself. 3 Stanislaus Joyce declared that the manuscript "lacked serenity and warmth" and called portions of it "technical monstrosities." 4 Such a range of adverse reactions -- given the radically experimental nature of Joyce's novel -- should not, of course, surprise us. Since then, however, an altered social perspective and a tireless (if not exhaustive) round of scholarship have invalidated most of these complaints. But even among the most perceptive of Joyce scholars has lingered an unreadiness to approach and deal systematically with the "technical monstrosities" -- Joyce's remarkable narrative experiments -- which dominate the last half of his book.

In the late stages of Ulysses, formal techniques seem to sever them-
selves from content. Viewpoints pretentious, or vulgar, proceed from a succession of storytellers who seem to hinder, rather than aid, our understanding of the story proper, the trials of Stephen and Bloom. Joyce's "little story of a day" begins to slip behind clouds of technique and style, in a way that Edmund Wilson described as "artistically absolutely indefensible." Referring to Eumaeus and The Oxen of the Sun, Wilson wondered whether Joyce "had forgotten, in the amusement of writing parodies, the drama which he had originally intended to stage," half burying his story "under the virtuosity of his technical devices." 

Many readers would agree with Wilson's charges. Eumaeus appears to be narrated in a perversely dull and clichéd prose. And Oxen willfully obscures an amusing scene with parodies of past authors. Nausicaa unfolds in sentimental banalities, redolent of Mariolotry and cheap romantic fiction; Cyclops alternates scabrous abuse with mythic inflation; Ithaca applies scientific (and pseudoscientific) objectivity to human emotions; Sirens plays melodious games with language, in cheerful indifference to Bloom's sad predicament. The chart is familiar, but disconcerting still.

These intrusive maneuvers make our passage through the last half of Ulysses difficult — unless we abandon all preconceptions about what constitutes a story, and how it should be told. Such advice, in effect, Joyce offered his patroness, Harriet Shaw Weaver, who had expressed polite dismay over the manuscript of the Sirens chapter. To Miss Weaver's criticism ("... the episode seems to me not quite to reach your usual pitch of intensity"), the author responded firmly:

They [the sections of Sirens] are all the eight regular parts of a fuga per canonem; and I did not know in what other way to describe the seductions of music beyond which Ulysses travels. I understand that you may begin to regard the various styles of the episodes with dismay and prefer the initial style, much as the wanderer did
who longed for the rock of Ithaca. But in the compass of one day to compress all these wanderings and clothe them in the form of this day is for me only possible by such variation which, I beg you to believe, is not capricious.

For dismayed wanderers like Miss Weaver, even for vigilant explorers like Ezra Pound, Joyce left few familiar landmarks by which a reader could negotiate his way with confidence through the distorted narrative scenery. Left behind lies the candid, the necessarily honest, realm of interior monologue of the first half, mainly that of Stephen and Bloom. With the advent of the Sirens episode, as Richard Ellmann notes in passing, the interior monologue becomes stylized "to the point of absurdity," and at this point in Ulysses:

Fictional devices begin to break up as if they had grown skeptical of themselves. The presiding imagination of the book appears more and more distinct from his characters, with purposes to which they are only tributary.10 (My emphasis)

Ellman's observation is both accurate and promising. But when it has come to defining the "presiding imagination of the book" in relation to Joyce's narrative experiments, or to interpreting those "purposes" to which Stephen and Bloom become tributary — the commenters have faced difficulty.

When Stuart Gilbert (with the author's approval) reported that the wanderings of thought and syntax in the Ëumaeus episode reflected "the intercourse and mental state of two fagged-out men," he unfortunately encouraged a tradition of easy and imprecise response to that episode. Thus, in a relatively recent commentary, John Gross dismisses Joyce's technique in Ëumaeus as "tired cliche-mongering," while earlier, William York Tindall had remarked: "The method illustrates fatigue... all is trite, stale and dead." And Edmund Wilson, in his
influential essay, had spoken of "the interminable letdown of the cab-
man's shelter."

But missing from such commentary is recognition of the chapter's positive merits, unsettling though these may be. They include the spirited imposture of the false Odysseus, Sailor Murphy, who speaks an "idiolect" which Anthony Burgess has found "appallingly fascinating":

I seen a crocodile bite the fluke of an anchor . . . .
Khann! Like that . . . . I seen maneaters in Peru . . . .
stark ballocknaked eating a dead horse's liver raw.
(625-26/609-10)

There is nothing trite or stale or dead about such passages. Furthermore, from the chapter's narrative technique — a landmark in stylistic vagrancy — emerges a symbolic portrait of human dereliction, foil to the regenerative bonds that are forming between Bloom and Stephen. Many other lurid felicities lie camouflaged in Eumaeus, and Hugh Kenner has accurately noted:

Like 'The Oxen of the Sun,' the episode has incurred the displeasure of those who don't read closely, and imagine that Joyce is conveying the sense of exhaustion by exhausting the reader for fifty pages."16

In his remark, Kenner has anticipated what might well be called the critical cul de sac of berating an author's use of "expressive form" — a term used by important critics like A. Walton Litz to censure a method whereby Joyce allowed himself to "imitate in the novel's form the irrational, the chaotic or trivial quality of its subject matter." (Rather similar terms — imitative form" and "significant form" — have reinforced this facile tradition.) Hence, for Litz, the meandering thought and syntax of Eumaeus accounts for the "failure" of the chapter. No less reductive an appraisal of Eumaeus lies in a theory that the weary stabs at elevated language express "Bloom's ideal of fine writing," which in
striving for complexity, "succumbs to cliché." Certainly, a passage like the following, with its queasy misalignment of narrative impulses, displays such fatigue and such pretension that it could be used to validate both critical viewpoints:

A few moments later saw our two noctambules safely seated in a discreet corner, only to be greeted by stares from the decidedly miscellaneous collection of waifs and strays and other nondescript specimens of the genus homo, already there and engaged in eating and drinking, diversified by conversation, for whom they seemingly formed an object of marked curiosity. (621-22/606)

But while the above can accurately be called a "relinquishment to fatigue," and possibly also a glimpse of Bloom's incipient writing style, the author of Clockwork Orange has cited this passage for quite a different purpose:

There is a horrid and riveting fascination about this: it holds us with its lackluster eye. The muscularity of imagination is spent, and only the nerves function now . . . . 21

Clearly the "expressive form" of the Eumaeus chapter is no "failure" for Burgess, whose observation, brief as it is, exemplifies the close reading Kenner advised. What is more, no conflict with the theory about Bloomsian style has been suggested — merely a helpful qualification that can release one's interpretive viewpoint from prevailing theories about Joyce's intent in Eumaeus.

In fact, there is reason to believe that Joyce discouraged the notion of artistic "intent" in his late chapters: that despite the compositional rigors he projected in the Gilbert and Linati schemata, Joyce actually courted a less precise form of artistic creation. We have a good basis upon which to conclude that the author viewed his cerebral outlines almost magically. To Linati, Joyce asserted that
each inlaid art, science, hour and organ "should not only condition but 22
even create its own technique.". This statement demands consideration,
and Shakespeare's reliance upon legendary sources comes to mind. Both
writers, as have so many others, depended upon known literary or public
commonplace to release creative energies that might otherwise have lain
stillborn in their brains. Such a "magical" release of talent — the 23
word has long been used in clinical psychology — surely conditioned
the epics of Dante and Milton, whose works were built upon platforms of
known legend.

Nevertheless many have treated Joyce's creative tools as ends in the
themselves, either inspired or misguided, so that something of a scholar-
ly cottage industry has been built around the "fuga per canonem" plan
of Sirens, or the "embryonic" growth of literary styles in Oxen. One
group of commentators has affirmed the musical accuracy of the "fugal"
method employed in Sirens. 24 Others, like S. L. Goldberg, have attacked
the technique as a "purely spurious patterning of the material" based
upon "a kind of nihilism of unreasonable order." 26 With Oxen we hear of
the "sheer fantastic pedantry" of its embryonic-literary evolution of
prose styles, and of the "bathetic pit of false analogy" into which
the author fell. 27 Others have naturally praised the verve and accuracy
of the parodies, but this has ended the issue, and discouraged an atten-
tive reading which would reveal the rich, complex thematic and tonal im-
pact of Sirens, Oxen and Eumaeus — Joyce's "doomed" experiments.
Too often their techniques are viewed as esoteric gymnastics so that the
"presiding imagination" becomes a pedant's, with "purposes" no higher
than the creation of scholarly conundrums.

At other times, the fluidity of Joyce's technique — for example the
"Catechism (impersonal)" of Ithaca — has been ignored and rigid formulas set down. Stuart Gilbert has stressed the inquisitorial ruthlessness of the chapter — "precise as the Summa Theologica."

Richard Ellmann fixes on its absurdly pedantic aspects — "Reason itself here goes mad . . . ." Harry Blamires sees the episode as a "triumph of intellectual clarity" and the "high peak of our secular civilization."

The first two views are diametrically opposed, while the last carries implications congenial to neither. And the text offers maddening exceptions to all. If Ithaca embodies Thomist precision and intellectual clarity, as Gilbert implies, how account for the rebellious jumble of rhymed iambics — "a shock, a shoot, with thought of aught he sought though fraught with nought" (674/658) — with which the catechized member mocks a question about Bloom's preference for evening shaves? But if a pedantic abuse of the scientific method, as Ellmann suggests, is the target of Joyce's satire, how reconcile the majestic digressions on the global characteristics of water (671–72/655–56) and on the vastness of the universe, "in comparison with which the years, threescore and ten, of allotted human life form a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity"? (698/683)

And if, on the other hand, the Ithaca episode, as Blamires states, represents the peak of a secular civilization, what should one make of Bloom's "final meditation" on the perfect advertisement (720/705), his charming but hopelessly bourgeois vision of an ideally aristocratic country estate (712–15/607–700), or his livingroom desk drawer that is cluttered with artifacts suggesting the cobwebbed vanities of a secular civilization? (720–21/705–06)

To dismiss such varied materials and techniques as "displays for their sake," "sheer linguistic exuberance," and "sheer blarney" —
attitudes adopted by a surprising number of critics — is to disregard the pains Joyce took first to lay a clear narrative foundation, then to undermine it with ridicule and qualify it with poetry, in a systematic assault upon his reader's expectations. Such tonal ruptures, ranging from the Celtic "rann" growled by Giltrap's dog (312/307) to the techniques of whole episodes like Ithaca, have thus been dismissed as persiflage, extrinsic to the author's artistic accomplishment in Ulysses. Northrup Frye's assertion that large portions of the book have been misread because critics have failed to include it within the genre of "anatomy," may suggest a partial antidote: The Eumaeus episode takes on thematic force when viewed as an encyclopedic digression on the decay, dereliction, decline and imminent fall of a mediocre civilization, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter III. The centrifugal artistic impulse we associate with "anatomy" can do much to justify Ulysses along other than novelistic lines. But so can Homer's interminable Catalogue of Ships be justified by a student of the epic, or an anthropologist, or maybe a marine contractor in some modern seaport. Frye's extenuation of Joyce's departure from the generic "novel" offers small consolation to those seriously concerned with refining and preserving that genre. And it suggests the "presiding imagination" of an omnivore, without addressing the more selective, disciplined, viewpoints which molded the late narrative strategies.

This dissertation is based on a conviction that much Joyce criticism has not dealt seriously enough with the author's experimental techniques in the last half of Ulysses, and that there is a need for a defense of these techniques. My plan shall be to illustrate some general characteristics of Joyce's narrative mentality, and to define how that mentality
both reflects and denies certain traditional techniques of story-telling. Thereafter, I shall focus closely on the strategies employed in the three episodes that have been most frequently attacked or misinterpreted — The Sirens, The Oxen of the Sun, and Eumaeus. My selection of these chapters for sustained scrutiny is not arbitrary: They are among the most difficult for the unprepared reader to penetrate, and once exposed to the intricacies of the Gilbert and Linati schemata, to tolerate. Lastly, I shall link the "presiding imagination" of these late chapters to the first half of Ulysses, whose less controversial episodes swarm with hints and warnings of the "technical monstrosities" that follow.
I. Introduction


3 The bemused response appears in C. J. Jung, "Ulysses: A Monologue," trans. W. Stanley Dell for the Analytical Psychology Club of New York, Inc. (Spring 1949), pp. 12-16. A revised opinion ("I'm profoundly grateful to yourself, as well as to your gigantic opus, because I learned a great deal from it ... I suppose the devil's own grandmother knows so much about the real psychology of a woman. I didn't.") is expressed in a letter to Joyce from Jung, in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 642. Ellmann notes that Joyce was proud, Nora contemptuous, of this tribute to his psychological acumen.


7 Ellmann, *James Joyce*, pp. 474-75.

8 Ibid., p. 474.


Our roving visitation into the minds of sixteen characters in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, seeing nothing but what those minds contain, may seem in one sense not to depend on an omniscient narrator. But this method is omniscience with teeth in it: the implied author demands our absolute faith in his powers of divination. We must never for a moment doubt that he knows everything about each of these sixteen minds, or that he has chosen correctly how much to show of each.


20 This reduction of the Eumaeus narrator to a mere facet of Bloom's consciousness, an entrenched habit in Joyce criticism, occurs in Brook Thomas, "The Counterfeit Style of 'Eumaeus,'" *James Joyce Quarterly*, 14 (Fall 1976), 15-16.


22 *Letters*, I, p. 147.


27 Wilson, p. 215.


29 L.A.G. Strong pins the epithet to the fragmented "prelude" of the Sirens episode, in The Sacred River (London, 1949), p. 37. I have borrowed his notion of a "doomed experiment" to convey the attitude towards Sirens, Oxen and Eumaeus which has prompted some of the least incisive judgments by Joyce's most perceptive critics. As for the Sirens "prelude" itself, Kenner has, in Dublin's Joyce, p. 254, defended "the marvellously varied thematic index with which the episode opens," and which grinds "a comic edge on verbal sonorities that are after all the banalities of a hundred tenth-rate operas." I believe the "prelude" can also be enjoyed as an introductory signal of contempt on the part of the "presiding imagination" — a contempt for both subject and reader that infuses the late episodes with a mordant energy not lacking, but differently expressed, in the book's first half.

30 Gilbert, p. 30.

31 Gilbert, pp. 369-70.


34 Gross, p. 60.

35 Levin, p. 105.

36 Goldberg, p. 286.


38 Robert Murray Davis, editor of *The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism*, p. 264, takes note that, for Frye, and certain others, "there is no need to justify Moby Dick as a novel, since it is rather a combination of romance and anatomy, and there is less a question of unassimilated genre or divided authorial mind than of the effects that can be achieved by an artful mixture of forms."
CHAPTER II

JOYCE'S AESTHETIC: MEANINGS STILL UNUTTERED

In the late stages of Ulysses Joyce was clearly working against, as well as within, the literary traditions he inherited. If we note cheerful collapses into Shandyesque digression, we also encounter sudden poetic turns of language that bear more resemblance to the intensity of a Keats than the rambling of a Sterne. Gargantuan distortions of perspective are righted by a return to a scrupulous regard for realistic detail, more Flaubert than Rabelais. Warm sentiment appears in Bloom's vision of his dead son Rudy at the close of Circe, yet immediately afterward, in Eumaeus, the "presiding imagination" looses a flood of reactionary disdain on Leopold, laying bare in pedestrian prose the psychological infirmities by which Bloom covertly pimps for his wife to secure the esteem of his surrogate son, Stephen Dedalus. In effect, the simplicities of Richardson's Pamela are discarded for the duplicities of Fielding's Shamela. Traditions proceeding from the heroic and the symbolic epics of Homer and Dante undergo similar, if subtler, travesty.

In a related vein, but on a greatly reduced scale, Bloom's messianic proclamation of brotherly love ("the opposite of hatred") (333/327) to the Fennian barflies is ridiculed by a narrative voice that shambles suddenly into a nihilistic vein:

Love loves to love love. Nurse loves the new chemist . . . . Li Chi Han lovey up kissy Cha Pu Chow. Jumbo, the elephant, loves Alice, the elephant . . . . His Majesty the King loves Her Majesty the Queen . . . . You love a certain person. And this person loves that other person because everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody. (333/327)
These are lines far closer in spirit to subway graffiti than to the Biblical tone of Bloom's small spiritual triumph so forcefully rendered but deliberately shattered. Thus, the "presiding imagination" causes moments of strong moral affirmation to dissolve in a dark laughter.

We begin to sense that Joyce has mastered a variety of literary traditions so he can expose their limitations. And more unsettling: that Joyce has cultivated his reader's expectations in order to demonstrate the meager soil -- the impoverished legacy -- from which such expectations grow. From such attacks upon ethical, thematic and emotional meanings that have been associated with older, more stable styles and narrative frameworks, there issues forth a new meaning, an altered perspective, a changed relationship between the author and his reader. But of what sort: Have we stumbled into some Special Theory of literary relativity, where fixed points of reference no longer exist, and nothing seems but what is not? Characteristically, Joyce will never say: Implication, rather than declaration, lies at the heart of his narrative method.

That method finds much of its conscious justification in the classic passages from Joyce's aesthetic formulas, expounded in The Critical Writings, I, Stephen Hero, and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Many have puzzled over these theories, wondered at their seeming ingenuousness, and suggested their abstract irrelevance to art. But with some care, Joyce's early aesthetic rationale can be applied to the late narrative strategies of Ulysses, not as a feat of ingenuity, but as a key to the "presiding imagination" that has bewildered many. The broad outlines of the author's narrative mentality seem clear enough.

Joyce sought to foster, through the agency of a liberated narrative technique, an unusually intense relationship with his reader. In fact, the reader
whose patience carries him through to the close of *Ulysses* has been forced to complete much of the tale himself. Such a task has been rendered obligatory because Joyce's technique precludes any direct or didactic statement of the author's point of view. We need not agree entirely with the assertion by Burgess — "No face shines through the novels of James Joyce, and this is disturbing" — nor necessarily subscribe to the refutation by Wayne Booth: "[The] claim that the author does not address us directly in *Ulysses* is one of the most astonishingly persistent myths in modern criticism." But we must acknowledge a rather ghostly abstention on Joyce's part from reliable, straightforward commentary. That is to say, the reader will not be able to associate the artist/God who created *Ulysses* with any of the whimsical, demented, or vicious spirits that Joyce has invoked to relate the last half of his book.

The reader's search for some kind of portable "meaning" is therefore thwarted, in the episodes Sirens through Penelope, by a gang of narrative voices whose claim to reliability can be construed as the sort we might accord rock musicians, bill collectors, propaganda ministers, sentimentalists, antiquarian prose stylists, unhinged playwrights, quack scientists and drowsy, semi-literate housewives. Encountering such a clamor of debased viewpoints, the reader of Joyce's late chapters will find himself recoiling in ethical distaste from a sequence of statements he feels to be false. Thus prompted, the reader by negative steps journeys toward truth. He will experience curiously mixed emotions along the way, as if some timeless bond between author and reader had been broken, or some trusted parent caught in a lie. There seems something perverse in Joyce's rigid fidelity to fraudulent spokesmen, something contemptuous in his treatment of both tale and reader.
Such lessons are complex. To the intellectual irritant of falsehood, Joyce has added the emotional sting of conflicting narrative tonalities. The author sought to purge from his art (and from the reader's response) certain emotions he deemed unworthy, particularly those of unqualified loathing or desire. That is not to say *Ulysses* lacks vulgarity and ferocity, or that it fails to depict refined sentiments and traits worthy of emulation. Rather, it is to observe that Joyce will qualify his pungent materials by swift, willful disruptions of any mood or manner which threatens to take over his tale. Should a Leopold Bloom briefly achieve messianic stature, as in the example given earlier, he will soon be chopped down to size by the narrative intrusion of a latrine mentality which perverts brotherly love into sexual lust, equates human sexuality with that of the animal kingdom, and ends by placing Divine love somewhere down in the plumbing.

To such a horizontal — or sequential — dialectic of emotional purgation must be added a vertical — or simultaneous — narrational emetic in which the formal frame of an entire episode will seem to vibrate in hostility against the subject matter it was chosen to divulge. Does Bloom feel anguish at Boylan's impending conquest of Molly? In the Sirens episode, Joyce will mock that anguish by conveying it through a stylistic medium that mingles the jovial banalities of popular song with the excessive sentimentality of operas and folk ballads. Are the medical students at the Holles Street maternity hospital drunk and lewd? Joyce cloaks their bawdiness in distinguished if antique prose. No strong emotional statement in the late episodes escapes this kind of withering inspection from the "presiding imagination."

What are the implications of such fraudulent, disruptive and abrasive narrative techniques? Joyce has placed a difficult strain upon his reader's
intellectual powers and emotional maturity. If the reader feels flattered, he also finds shaken his ability to evaluate the book. And this experience verges upon insult. In addition, the succession of ethically-maimed narrative voices creates a disturbing impression that reality lies only in the eyes of the beholder — glazed or wandering as that gaze may be. From such a pageant, we sense a complexity verging upon that of life itself, certainly the shifting of perspectives that Joyce called "parallax," and which the new critics of the 1930's labeled "irony." Hints of a more traditional sort of "irony" seem present as well: Through his technical virtuosity, Joyce has stated both more and less — these words are carefully chosen — than he means his reader comfortably to understand. Like irony, Joyce's narrative presentation is both exaggerative and elliptical; it carries an emotional sting not found in more straightforward presentations of plot or discourse.

Finally, to the tensions stirred by Joyce's false and abrasive narrative viewpoints can be added still a third source of intensity. I refer to the author's frequent condensation of thought and language into a type of poetry that attacks his reader's resistance to intuitive, or emotional truth. Can we doubt Bloom's repugnance toward an aging bookstall vender whom Joyce describes as follows: "Onions of his breath came across the counter out of his ruined mouth"? (235/232) If Joyce often reminds us that poetry need not reflect Parnassian splendor, he also conveys the mystical fusions of imagery we associate with a John Keats, a comparison not so farfetched as it might seem. In both writers we sense a kindred impatience with inherited linguistic convention, a desire to wrest transcendental meaning from the world's stale speech and thought.
In all such trespass upon the reader's comfortable certitude — de-based and fraudulent viewpoints, disruptive and hostile narrative tonalities, and a derationalizing strain of unrhymed poetry — we note the author's desire to work through implication, rather than by direct or didactic methods. We witness also a marked displacement of intellectual and emotional impact in late Ulysses, a bleeding of the portraiture into the frame of the tale's telling. And we detect in Joyce a somewhat morbid disdain for his subject matter, as well as a healthy celebration of it. All such formal rebellion, refutation and trespass point to a rather unique "presiding imagination" — Joyce's youthful aesthetic — which govern this seeming narrative anarchy.

At first glance, this version of the "presiding imagination" would seem to argue poverty of invention. Seemingly vague, a bit pretentious, and tacitly discredited by near-exclusion from recent commentary, Joyce's early thoughts on art and the beautiful are generally believed to have reached apotheosis within Portrait, but to have refined themselves out of existence in Ulysses. The relatively recent essays by David Hayman, William B. Warner, and Hugh Kenner, while heralding an overdue Golden Age of commentary based on the formal strategies of Ulysses, attempt no application of Joyce's aesthetic doctrine whatsoever. But Joyce's formulations are too assiduously — even obsessively — pursued in Writings, Stephen Hero, and Portrait to be written-off as the fashionable aestheticicism of a persona, Stephen, from whose earnest inquiry into art Joyce later dissociated himself. There is also the amply documented fact, as Robert Adams reminds us, that Joyce was proud of his aesthetic theories. Assertions of their "almost incredibly simple" argument, while frequent, invariably fail to explain what that argument is, or how it relates to Joyce's art. Furthermore, to attribute to Joyce an ironic detachment from the doctrines expressed by
the two Stephens of *Hero* and *Portrait* is not satisfactorily to account for Joyce's separate expression of these doctrines, at least their embryos, in the "Paris" and "Pola" notebooks, and in the essays "Drama and Life" and "James Clarence Mangan." Often, the legacy is verbatim.

Joyce's devotion to his aesthetic amounted to a compulsion, even to the point where he encumbered the climactic Chapter V of *Portrait* with a disquisition so lengthy, and so little redeemed by natural dialogue, that at least two critics have agreed with Stephen's sardonic friend Lynch that the borrowings from Aquinas have "the true scholastic stink." Yet Joyce's obsession suffers no easy dismissal. Repeatedly, in the three earlier works, we encounter the distinctions between lyric, epic and drama; the inveiglements against didactic art; the semi-Aristotelian boundaries drawn between tragedy and comedy; the neo-Kantian mistrust of strong emotions; and the tireless exposition — irritating to some scholars — of a limited number of terms borrowed from Aquinas, which have been stripped of their religious context, and employed to justify a secular theory of art. Clearly, the "aesthetic" has debatable parentage and questionable value in itself. However, its ability to reveal a methodical artistry behind Joyce's seemingly chaotic narrative experiments should vindicate its other shortcomings, as I shall now endeavor to demonstrate.

Joyce's bewildering succession of narrative voices and writing styles in the late stages of *Ulysses* serve as vehicles of indirect statement, whereby the author can articulate viewpoints, and create moods, of far greater complexity than would be possible with a more straightforward handling of his materials. For example, Joyce circumvents direct narrative statement in *Nausicaa* by means of what he called a "namby-pamby marmalady drawery (alto la!) style" — one that is sat-
urated with cliches of Mariolatry and cheap romantic fiction. From the start, the reader of this episode is immersed in a soothing, syrupy world where the virgin Mary shines as a radiant beacon to the "stormtossed heart of man," and the last sunlight "lingers lovingly" on sea and shore. (346/340) More precisely than some, Burgess has labeled the narrative style as that of a woman's magazine of the Edwardian period, specifically an Irish woman's magazine, since it is religious and almost lachrymosely Marian . . . ."16 Of course, even on the episode's first page, Joyce's stylistic virtuosity allows him to sneak beyond the editorial resources of such a publication with a deft representation of baby talk:

— Now, baby, Cissy Caffrey said. Say out big, big. I want a drink of water.
And baby prattled after her:
— A jink a jink a jawbo. (346/340)

And Joyce can even incorporate in Gerty's thinking the glazed ideals of a London fashion-page, without letting the machinery of his burlesque intrude on the reader's awareness:

Time was when (Gerty's) brows were not so silkily seductive. It was Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess novelette who had first advised her to try eyebrowline which gave that haunting expression to the eyes, so becoming in leaders of fashion, and she had never regretted it. (349/342-43)

A thrill of revulsion begins to complicate our amused response. But in simplest terms, we have landed in a world of "marmalady" sentiment, intelligible if not intelligent, and somewhat of a relief after the collisions of juggernaut styles in the Cyclops episode.

However, no stylistic turn by Joyce is ever simple, and Blamires' observation about the mixed tonality in Nausicaa seems unusually perceptive:

The farcical, satirical strain does not wholly determine the temper of the passage; for the vulgar idiom of the novelette, when exploited to articulate a young, uneducated
girl's thoughts and dreams, becomes peculiarly touching by virtue of its sheer aptness to her adolescent self-dramatization.\textsuperscript{18}

And through the indirection of a borrowed writing style, Joyce has securely made his point about Gerty's pathetically unrealistic longings. Far more has been accomplished than demolition of a stale genre, or of a minor character: Joyce has, by means of a fraudulent narrative voice, portrayed Gerty's — and by extension Dublin's — crippling sentimentality without provoking in the reader the distaste, or the disbelief, he might feel if such malicious scrutiny took the form of a direct description of either Gerty or Dublin. The effect of the stylistic inlay is amusing, but also nauseating, and the reader shrinks from a set of false values.

An early forecast of such indirect narrative techniques can be found first in \textit{The Critical Writings}, then almost verbatim in \textit{Stephen Hero}, where the author in the guise of his persona, Stephen, sides with what he terms the "classical temper," vowing to dwell upon earthly matters, and so to work on them that the quick intelligence may go beyond them to their \textit{meaning which is still unuttered}.\textsuperscript{19} (My emphasis)

In the late stages of \textit{Ulysses}, the eccentric styles and narrative postures bear much of the burden of that meaning which is "still unuttered." Fraudulence dominates these narrative voices, and the "quick intelligence" feels impelled to fill the moral or intellectual vacuum. When the narrative voice conveys Gerty's response to the silent, intently staring and (as we learn later) the sexually aroused Bloom —

She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale intellectual face that he was a foreigner . . . . He was in deep mourning, she could see that, and the story of a haunting sorrow was written on his face. (357/351)

-- such wishful sentimentality strikes a resoundingly false note in both fact and emotional tonality. We know through earlier interior monologues that Bloom is sensitive, but not "intellectual" in the manner of a Stephen
Dedalus. Though alien to Dublin's wisecracking pub society, Bloom is not literally a "foreigner." And although he could be said, after a fashion, to be in "deep mourning" for his adulterated household, or perhaps more accurately for his son Rudy who died when eleven days old, by no stretch of the imagination does Bloom's black mourning attire betoken deep spiritual regard for the negligible Patty Dignam — one of Dublin's many bibulous ciphers — whose funeral Bloom dressed for and attended that morning. Those are the false facts of the statement.

More obvious still is the false tonality — a sort of vibrating emotional discord — which Joyce creates by forcing his reader to contemplate Bloom in the guise of Byronic hero, world weary, and possibly the more oppressed for lack of a stringed accompaniment. Hastily, we reject the fraudulent romantic appraisal, just as we declined the sneering evaluations of Bloom by the cynical "I" narrator of Cyclóps, who depicts Bloom falsely as a winner of the Gold Cup horserace, a selfish hoarder who would not stand a drink for his neighbors ("Cute as a shithouse rat." (341/335), and as a seditious alien, the embodiment of an international Jewish conspiracy as the son of old Methusalehem Bloom, the robbing bagman, that poisoned himself with the prussic acid after he swamping the country with his baubles and his penny diamonds. (336/330)

These estimates — the sentimental and the sordid — provide what might be called dialectical extremes of false Bloom. The reader must perform his own intellectual and emotional synthesis in order to isolate "real" Bloom, a task that grows exceedingly complex. Repeatedly, in the last half, Joyce will delineate Bloom's character in terms of what it is not.

Such a technique of narrative indirection falls clearly in line with the first of three stages in the aesthetic experience, as outlined in both Stephen Hero and Portrait. Borrowing terms from Aquinas, the persona of Stephen Hero argues his interpretation of integritas, or the
"wholeness" by which the object of aesthetic consideration must shape itself in the artist's vision:

Your mind to apprehend that object divides the universe into two parts, the object, and the void which is not the object.²⁰ (My emphasis)

The author is insistent upon this distinction, and in Portrait he redefines the irrelevant void as being

the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it.²¹ (My emphasis)

According to my reading of Ulysses that irrelevant void undergoes constant, and highly relevant, refinement in the hands of narrators who express flawed, inept or uncongenial viewpoints. The alternate portrayals of Bloom as Byronic Hero and Stage Jew reduce this proposition to its simplest terms. Far more intricate are the distortions of "real" Bloom which occur in Sirens, where a stylized "musical" prose, a cheerfully indifferent narrative voice, and an aura of banal song lyric --

Jingle a tinkle jaunted . . . He's off. Light sob of breath Bloom sighed on the silent bluehued flowers . . .
— Love and war, Ben, Mr Dedalus said. God be with old times.(268/263)

— all serve to sharpen our awareness of the opposed characteristics in Bloom: his highly idiosyncratic mentality, his immediate anguish at Boylan's departure for the rendezvous with Molly, his subtly masochistic toleration of the affair (rendered explicit in Circe: 565/551) — a toleration which argues a psychological response that is lightyears distant from the simplified ethos recalled by "old times" and sentimental ballads. Such fraudulent narrative frames heighten our appreciation of what the present moment is, and they do so in terms of what that moment is not. Similarly, the Ithaca chapter misapplies scientific (and pseudo-scientific) objectivity to an event — Bloom's "homecoming with Stephen — that is laden with potential for unscientific human emotions. What truly poignant aspects
may be said to lie in Bloom's return to an adulterated household, together with his attempt to ingratiate the alien artistic temperament of a James Joyce/Stephen Dedalus, are accentuated in our minds by the false — the seemingly "unfair" — dislocation between cold style and potentially warm revelation, between the fraught nature of the question being asked, and the data-processed substance of the answer given. Late in the episode, for example, we encounter the following query, laden with invitation for sententious response:

How did (Bloom and Stephen) take leave, one of the other, in separation?

And we receive this literal and almost totally uninformative answer:

Standing perpendicular at the same door and on different sides of its base, the lines of their valedictory arms, meeting at any point and any angle less than the sum of two right angles. (704-05/688)

This resolution of a climactic moment might well have pleased a student of Euclid, but it offers little satisfaction to Romantic or Naturalistic tastes. For admirers of symbolic statement, there is a hint of mutual harmony, of emotional equilibrium, but little more. Most apparent is the author's contempt for a reader's hypothetically unsound, or wishful, expectation of what a proper farewell should be between near-strangers so intellectually and artistically incompatible.

Elsewhere in Ithaca, the fussy literalism of the two narrators, when applied to Bloom's sizeable aspirations and negligible household effects, exerts, as Gilbert states, "a more devastating effect on its subject than any calculated gesture of scorn." However, Gilbert's observation is somewhat imprecise, since Joyce's gesture of scorn is obviously calculated and, on balance, the undermining of Bloom's stature becomes not only devastating, but also endearing. In other words, we again confront one of those peculiarly mixed tonalities wrought by Joyce's abrasive narrative
techniques. We find that our amusement has been severely qualified by the poignance that hovers near any object of malicious and unprovoked mirth. Through fraudulent indirect statement, Joyce has made a forcible appeal to the reader's humane sentiments.

Such negative appeals are frequent. Found in Joyce's bizarre narrative stances are strong ethical drives, directed at the reader's sense of fairness and unfairness, justice and outrage — what is right and what is wrong — no matter how the young Joyce/Stephen Dedalus might have scorned "missionary intention" in writing, or have viewed with suspicion the "antique principle that the end of art is to instruct, to elevate, and to amuse." In response to such assertions by Joyce/Dedalus, one can again invoke Booth, who stresses the unlikelihood of perfect "nihilism" and who argues that the act of writing a book becomes, in itself, a moral gesture, a meaningful symbolic act. By such a slim standard of ethical commitment, Ulysses would seem almost to emerge as a hymnal, albeit one written in a dark mirror language which the "quick intelligence" must reverse to attain the truth "which is still unuttered."

Altogether, Joyce has created a sort of Symposium of oblique and discordant viewpoints. And by means of this negative investigation of "real" Bloom (or "real" music, science or literature), the author fulfills for the reader the second step in aesthetic discovery, consonantia, or "symmetry," in which the object has been apprehended as being complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. In turn, this stage of apprehension leads finally to claritas, "the whatness of a thing," or the spiritual manifestation of an object — in this case "real" Bloom — which Joyce calls "epiphany" in Stephen Hero but elaborates upon as "the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure" in Portrait. This final apprehension of the object has been reached by
stages of mounting intensity, and for the author is best described as:

The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal.

In these lines, a poetic intensity is suggested, as well as the ephemeral nature of the aesthetic experience. However, to relate such statements to the remaining principles behind the narrative strategies, one has to depart from Joyce's "highly qualified Thomism," and consult other elements of the early aesthetic.

The first of these elements has to do with Joyce's artful purgation of strong emotions. I refer to the author's repeated attacks, through ridicule and abrasive tonal contrast, upon all material in the last half of *Ulysses* which might cause "desire" or "loathing." He considered these to be *kinetic* emotions induced by "improper" arts. Such emotions urge us to "possess" or "abandon," and Joyce rejected their disturbing influence in favor of the *static* emotions of tragedy or comedy -- "terror or pity or joy." His restful sounding aesthetic goal then became "satisfaction" (later intensified into the "luminous silent stasis of aesthetic pleasure"), and his dominant mood the "sane and joyful spirit" of the classical temper.

In order to execute his artful purgation of strong feeling, Joyce fashioned a pervasive network of narrational counter-strokes by which to undermine, soften, or sublimate the materials he thought inordinately stimulating or repugnant.

To Joyce's use of *fraudulent statement*, then, must be added a second technique of formal indirection -- *countervailing statement* -- by which the author not only satisfies his code of muted emotions, but also, somewhat paradoxically, creates tonal dislocations of great intensity. Examples range from the sharpest of contrasts between narrative methods in the late episodes, right down to a sentence-by-sentence refutation of impressions immediately preceding.
Thus, the Nausicaa episode brings a reassuring (if saccharine) sentimentality after the stylistic collisions and asperities of the Cyclops episode. The Eumaeus episode: a sane pedestrian weariness, after the neurotic energies and flights of Circe. Ithaca: a formal rigidity after the Munchausen narrative performance of Eumaeus. Each late episode counter-vails the vivid impression left by the material and technique in the chapter previous. Furthermore, Joyce even makes a point of discrediting each chapter's dominant stance at the close: Bloom breaks wind to dispell the "musical" style of Sirens. A cab horse methodically drops "three smoking globes of turds" (665/649) on the narrative anarchy of Eumaeus. Circe's tragi-comic horrors dissolve in a touching fairytale vision of Bloom's long-dead son. Oxen's adumbration of proud moments in English prose collapses into what Joyce called a "frightful jumble of Pidgeon English, nigger English, Cockney Irish, Bowery slang and broken doggerel."34 There are no exceptions to this principle of thematic sabotage in the larger outlines of the narrative strategies. Even Molly's final surge of breathless "yes's" contradicts her nearly book-long "no" to Bloom.

However, the persistent thrust of Joyce's countervailing technique often proceeds passage-by-passage, and line-by-line. In Cyclops, the ferocious newspaper accounts of a "sambo strung up on a tree with his tongue out and a bonfire under him" (328/322), and of floggings aboard a British training vessel with "a young lad brought out, howling for his ma" (329/323), are soon ridiculed by a nautical parody of the Apostles' Creed, in which members of the Admiralty

believe in rod, the scourger almighty, creator of hell upon earth and in Jacky Tar, the son of a gun, who was conceived of unholy boast . . . yelled like bloody hell, the third day he rose again from the bed, steered into haven . . . " (329/323)
Narrative style effects purgation here, intellectual as well as emotional. The sudden congeries of puns ("believe in rod . . . unholy boast . . . rose again from the bed"), which serves to evoke the familiar liturgical anthem, also helps ameliorate the reader's strong reaction to the cruelties mentioned just before. No different is the "presiding imagination" of the Circe chapter, where the format of a play complete with animistic stage directions — "The kisses, winging from their bowers fly about him, twittering, warbling, cooing" (474/466) — permits the sustained deflation of windy emotions. The response of the GASJET to Stephen's apocalyptic attack upon the whorehouse lamp offers a compact illustration:

STEPHEN

Nothung!

(He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's livid flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry.)

THE GASJET

Pwfungg! (583/567-68)

Stephen's pretensions (but not the lamp, as we learn later) have been shattered, the portentous shades of Wagner and Blake silenced. Again, the format of drama permits Joyce such sparks of purgative nonsense. The genre carries an air of authorial detachment. Playwrights may conceal their personal attitudes behind the masks of players. Furthermore, stage directions can invest the most fanciful imaginative flights with concreteness and plausibility. Improbable commands seem to carry the weight of objective reportage. In the above passage, drama's impersonal frame allows Joyce to repudiate Stephen's histrionics with the personified indifference ("Pwfungg!")
of the natural world. We cannot but laugh at so inane a confrontation. A laughter that is purgative.

Purgative disruptions swarm through the last half of Ulysses. A less obvious example in Nausicaa, disguised by the narrator's sugary voice, allows Joyce to juxtapose the real occupation of Bloom's honorable fingertips (he is masturbating) with a stale romantic tribute:

... she knew he could be trusted to the death, steadfast, a sterling man, a man of inflexible honour to his fingertips. His hands and face were working and a tremor went over her. (365/359)

The conflict lies between a romantic stereotype, and the destruction of that stereotype through 1) Bloom's alert gesture of sexual appreciation and 2) the young female's evident complicity ("a tremor went over her"), which in turn conducts a further attack on the flowery nonsense by under-scoring its false decorum. There is an emotional sting to these smoothly joined but irreconcilable elements. Joyce's technique ranges from bathos to refined shades of irony. However, the same impulse to neutralize material that is pungent or painful — or simply one-sided and wrong-headed — can also tighten into outrageous paradox.

By Jesus, I'll crucify him so I will; (342/336)

whereby the Citizen in Cyclops inadvertently condemns his own hatred; or can surface in bits of "oddly cathedrallized poetry":

The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit (698/683)

or the near-nonsense:

He kissed the plump mellow yellow smellow melons of her rump . . . with . . . melon-smellonous osculation (734–35/719)

by which Joyce, in the Ithaca episode, countervails the cruel detachment
of his narrative strategy: that of subjecting Bloom's spirit to labora-
tory analysis "in the form of a mathematical catechism." When exter-
nalized by such an uncongenial narrative viewpoint, Bloom's sensibility —
or any man's must seem ludicrous, somewhat pathetic, and certainly
unmathematical. Nevertheless, Ithaca's sporadic departures into absurd-
ity and poetry assert a self-critical and humane skepticism.

Such ruptures in tonality are sequential: the hostile narrative
stroke falls later than, and separate from, the immoderate emotional
statement it is meant to purge. However, Joyce's formal sabotage of
strong feeling also manifests itself in a simultaneous narrative counter-
vailence, whereby an episode's entire technique and style will vibrate
in conflict with the subject. Such a sustained friction takes place in
The Oxen of the Sun, where the solemnity of a literary tradition collides
with youthful ribaldry; in Circe, where wicked humor battles horror, and
overtones of childhood myth offset the dismal realities of grown-up vice.
Specifically, the comic apparition of Bloom, "antlered," and in "flunkey's
plum plush coat" playing a grateful accomplice to the adulterer —

BOYLAN

(Tosses him sixpence) Here, to buy yourself a gin and
splash . . . . You can apply your eye to the keyhole
and play with yourself while I just go through [your
wife] a few times.

BLOOM

Thank you, sir, I will, sir . . . . (565-66/551-52)

— exemplifies Joyce's aesthetic counterattack, through ridicule, upon
material that would otherwise seem gratuitously savage to the cuckold in
his distress, and therefore a stimulus to the "loathing" forbidden by the
author. Likewise, the interpolated voices of real whores laughing (567/553),
while spicing the imagined scene of adultery with a sort of spectator
malice, soften Joyce's rough handling. The laughter provides a realistic link back to the comic shenanigans of the bordello, thereby distancing Bloom's hallucination.

It is all a joke, Joyce seems to be saying, carefully inserting Halloween pranks in his stage directions from the beginning. Trolley signals metamorphose into Walpurgis Night will-o'-the-wisps by "skeleton tracks"; the "famished snaggletooths" of an elderly bawd frame themselves suddenly in a doorway; children have become "stunted men and women" who are eating ice cream sandwiches of "coal and copper snow." (429,431/422,424) Even Halloween's orange and black decor has been suggested, establishing a context of harmless and ritualized lunacy, which is later sustained by a capering hobgoblin (506/495), by the excessively gothic apparition of Stephen's mother ("her face worn and noseless, green with gravemould" 579/564), and by a light-hearted Black Mass. (599-600/583-84) Thus Joyce transposes the real horrors of Nighttown's concupiscence and dismay into a remote realm of folk myth that closes in a Cinderella reincarnation of Bloom's dead son Rudy — a "changeling" in an Eton suit "with glass shoes . . . ." (609/593) All such tonal manipulation in Circe might seem delicate compared with the archetypal patterns of fall and redemption embodied in the episode. Yet, this simultaneous narrative countervailance imposed on subject matter becomes Joyce's way of asserting his "sane and joyful spirit" amid the joyless insanities of swinish metamorphosis, neurosis, infidelity, decay and the grave. The emotional temper, or tonality, produced by such surrounding narrative qualification becomes a disturbing hybrid that makes analysis difficult. Generally speaking, Joyce's technique of narrative impeachment creates a curious friction between style and
substance, form and content: between things that are stated, and facts as the reader feels them to be. Circe's conciliatory distancing of adult horror in childlike myth does not deceive us, but we are nonetheless gratified, as well as amused, by the good taste of the "presiding imagination" which performed the act. Somewhat menacing, rather than conciliatory, is the glare of scientific indifference to which Bloom is exposed in Ithaca, but the purgation of unsuitable emotions — those produced by a too overt sympathy for outraged Bloom and homeless Stephen — remains Joyce's aesthetic goal.

Just what emotions emerge from Ithaca's dislocation of style and subject becomes matter for debate. The menace, the misalignment of narrative viewpoint, vibrates without resolution in the reader's mind. In his essay on genre theory, Northrup Frye detects an appeal to the reader's sympathy in Ithaca, where

the sense of lurking antagonism between the personal and intellectual aspects of the scene accounts for much of its pathos.39

The phrase "lurking antagonism" is as good as any for describing the tensions established by the narrative vehicle of Ithaca, and also several other of the late chapters. (Oxen's dead literary styles cast shadows of mortality on the lively hedonism of the present, creating a similar tonal rift.) But "pathos" is just one result of the Ithaca technique: As well as feeling compassion for a Bloom placed under a scientist's lens, we also experience mixed amusement and contempt at his plight. As well as resenting the indifference of the cross-examiners to Bloom, we feel an existential uneasiness at such indifference. Bloom is both diminished by the unfair treatment and elevated. He towers above the scientific method
while cowering under it. All this we feel about Bloom's incourteous
treatment at the hands of the two omniscient spirits.

Joyce's narrative frames carry thematic implications which mock their
subject matter, a derision which can abrade Joyce's vivid material to "stasis"
(even the paralysis that haunted his recollections of Dublin). But it can
also set in motion intellectual frictions which invest his tale with a
"luminous" intensity verging upon incandescence. In this fashion, both
types of narrative contradiction --- the stylistic disruptions I have
called sequential and the derisive frames I have called simultaneous ---
seem to achieve the dynamic equilibrium suggested by the author's "luminous
silent stasis of esthetic pleasure." However, bearing in mind that Joyce's
aesthetic should be employed as a roadmap, rather than construed as a
destination, it is important to note some effects of Joyce's narrative
disruptions and abrasive stances. These are: 1) through contrast to
intensify either the pathos or the humor, the significance or the absurd-
ity, of whatever elements are made to clash; 2) to undermine with implied
contempt, or ridicule, whatever intellectual viewpoints and ethical conclu-
sions the reader may have established; 3) to imitate the real and complex
cross-currents of sublunary nature where, as Samuel Johnson put it,

the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the
frolic of another; and many mischiefs and many
benefits are done and hindered without design. 41

For Johnson's "chaos of mingled purposes," Joyce in Ulysses substituted
the astronomical concept of "parallax" --- a word whose meaning eludes Bloom
for the entire day, and which for the purposes of this study can be defined
as the fuller, more nearly three-dimensional perspective supplied by widely
separate viewpoints. Such an enhanced perspective results from the interior
monologues of Stephen, Bloom and Molly, people distinguished one from the
other by differing education, taste and temperament. The views of these
characters on art, the Church, sex -- and on each other -- range from the poetically-inspired and sensitive to the hopelessly prosaic and philistine. A three-dimensional depth of truth emerges from their several views.

Less evident is the enriched sense of "parallax," or perspective that Joyce creates through the unfolding shocks and distortions of his countervailing narrative viewpoints. The intensification of emotional effects, the undermining of strongly-stated positions, and the imitation of life's complexity through such narrative "parallax" can all be seen working in the Nausicaa episode to establish the dynamic equilibrium Joyce called "stasis." Frequently in that chapter a less-than-pristine reality will bubble near the surface of the narrator's "marmalady" viewpoint, as will a sense of Gerty's youthful and sexual vitality, which this hypocritical and trite voice cannot wholly disguise. Such contradictory tensions appear most strikingly during Gerty's menstruation and Bloom's masturbation, her exhibitionism and his voyeurism, when the narrator's capacity for euphemism strains to the breaking point and melts into an appropriately effusive flood of poetry, all keyed metaphorically to the sight of bursting fireworks:

... she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back he had a full view high up above her knee no-one ever not even on the swing or wading and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist the sight of the wondrous revealment ... She would fain have cried to him chokingly ... And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind and O! ... and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair threads ... all greeny dewy stars falling with golden, O so lovely! O so soft, sweet, soft!

Then follows a more obvious collision between sentimentality and a soiled reality, a countervailing narrative impulse which reflects the stylistic "tumescence: detumescence" of the Gilbert schema. After the gushy poetry
of the fireworks display, Bloom's interior monologue begins to surface.
And the real temper of his "inflexible honour" and "sterling" character
emerges, a comic mixture of pity, mild disdain and wayward sexual curios-
ity:

Mr. Bloom watched her as she limped away. Poor girl!
    ... A defect is ten times worse in a woman. But
makes them polite ... Hot little devil all the same.
Wouldn't mind. Curiosity like a nun or a negress or
a girl with glasses. (367-68/361)

Bloom's reactions are the more jarring for the romantic pretensions estab-
lished by the earlier narrative method. And his subsequent tribute — "Oh
Lord, that little limping devil" (370/363) — further shatters the preceding
mood of sentimental idealism.

Against Gerty's soaring spirit, Joyce opposes Bloom's increasingly
weary and dispirited thought-stream. In a mood of gathering hopelessness,
this interior monologue winds toward the near obliteration of Bloom's
identity when, with a "slow boot," he effaces the message he had begun
to scrawl — "I. ... AM. A." (381/375) — but then had decided was
futile to complete in the tide-washed sand. Thus, an aging Bloom's despon-
dent drift towards anonymity heightens our impression of Gerty's youthful
self-assertion. Her youth underscores his fatigue. These impressions are
the more deeply etched by narrative contrast. At the same time, they under-
go a somewhat paradoxical erosion from the friction of antagonistic view-
points. And in that friction lies Joyce's parallactic vision of life's
complexity.

The upshot of these countervailing narrative strokes and nuances —
the sentimentality and the cynicism, the vitality and the weariness — takes
the form of a touching synthesis in Bloom's thought-stream:

    Goodbye, dear. Thanks. Made me feel so young. (382/375)
This poignant reconciliation may well have fulfilled the "luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure" which the Stephen of Portrait likens to Shelley's image of a fading coal, and with appropriate self-consciousness compares to "that cardiac condition" described by an Italian physiologist, as "the enchantment of the heart." Not a cold luminosity, but a warm ephemeral glow resides in Bloom's kind thought above, his small "epiphany" of Gerty. But we must remember that it was the clash of antagonistic styles — styles conveying opposed views of reality — which intensified our reaction.

Necessarily, "parallax" is only a metaphor, rather an insufficient one, for the kaleidoscopic vision of reality Joyce is able to sustain in the last half of Ulysses. In his analysis of differences between "uniform" and "mixed style" novels, Leonard Lutwack points to the altered literary vision which, with the appearance of Ulysses, rendered obsolete the Nineteenth Century's "bond between author and reader." The uniform prose style of a novel like David Copperfield helped to "create under a single aspect of language a single vision of the multiplicity of reality . . . ." Thus, a bond was established between the writer and his audience from the outset, an implicit guarantee that no significant readjustment to language or viewpoint would be required.

By contrast, Ulysses assails the reader with a cluster of disruptive styles and unamiable viewpoints. Of such "mixed style" novels, Lutwack notes the reader's obligation to "pass through a succession of ambiguous and contradictory attitudes," and to "change his position of witness as the style changes." No fixed stylistic norm betrays the author's final point of view. Instead, such narrative flux mimics "the diverse attitudes with which reality may be viewed." Approached as various windows through which reality can be perceived, the styles and techniques of the late
episodes take on intellectual and thematic weight. In the Wandering Rocks we receive an airplane view of a city's labyrinth, and a superior vision of the hostile environment through which the citizens make their generally ineffectual way. In Eumaeus, we peer through the eyes of a derelict and poseur, as befits the Homeric correspondence; in Oxen, through a diffusion lens of past literary associations; in Penelope, through a veil of semi-conscious mental ramblings on the part of a woman who is sane, selfish, non-moral, and to the point of picturesqueness, vulgar. All fixed views of reality are subjected through narrative technique to refinement, qualification, revision, even cancellation.

In other words, Joyce's method in the late episodes seems akin to the systematic deflection of a reader's potentially hostile, or incredulous, response that was recommended by the "new" critics of the Thirties, and called "irony" by them. For these critics, the ironical temper became essential to an avoidance of the callow, glib and sentimental. Does the writer's statement seem to be that which the reader can accept as "coherent, mature, and founded on the facts of experience?" Has the writer achieved a poetry which does not leave out what is apparently hostile to its dominant tone, and which, because it is able to fuse the irrelevant and discordant, has come to terms with itself itself and is invulnerable to irony?

In short, it may be that the poet should have made his peace early with Mercutio . . . otherwise [Mercutio] is apt to show a streak of merry vindictiveness about the finished product.

It should be apparent that Joyce, by his fraudulent and countervailing narrative voices and styles, satisfies all such requirements of the "new" critics for anticipating, deflating, undermining potential skepticism. Thus Joyce utilizes "irony" in its modern, hybrid sense. As for the more

Yet in emotional flavor, if not in literal execution, many of Joyce's techniques in the late episodes recall such indirect modes. The reader's awareness runs counter to what is stated; his vision is often loftier than that of the characters, whose hallucinations (Circe), sentimental ideals (Nausicaa), banalities of aspiration (Eumaeus, Ithaca) he can better assess from the remote viewpoint forced by Joyce's antagonistic narrative frames. And from this superior perspective results a tension, an emotional sting, that is both unsettling and highly gratifying — and which resembles the unspoken menace and crackling tonal effects of traditional irony, whether that of an Oedipus heaping curses upon his own head before an audience to whom the legend's outcome is already known, or that of a sincere, bumbling economist praising the efficiency of cannibalism as a solution to hunger and poverty caused by English exploitation of the Irish.

The irony of Swift's *Modest Proposal*, of course, resides in the disparity between the explicitly proposed cruelties and the implicitly rendered humanitarian message. However, Swift's irony also resides in the disparity between the dispassionate nature of the speaker's utterance and Swift's underlying wrath; the meticulous financial consideration of cannibalism and the hasty rejection which such considerations demand; the callous logic which is supplied and the heartfelt gesture which our reason tells us is needed.

In line with Swiftian "verbal" irony, Joyce employs his swarm of narrative voices to suggest a "discrepancy, great or small, between what is actually said and what might be said." Like Swift's indirection, Joyce's
perverse styles and narrative stances serve to force immediate value judgments upon the reader. Such ethical stands emerge from Joyce's exuberant inversions of accepted decorum, whereby he will, in effect, praise what is contemptible or vilify what is praiseworthy. Thus, high literary styles aggrandize low bawdy in Oxen; euphemism inflates what Joyce considered "the broken lights of Irish myth" in Cyclops. Conversely, the low argot of a latrine mentality is used to blister a dignified Bloom in Cyclops; scientific detachment implies contempt for sentiment in Ithaca. And again like Swiftian irony, Joyce's implementation of fraudulent and countervailing statement pays a compliment to the intelligence of the reader, who must forever forage for "the meaning which is still unuttered," spared as he is from any obvious "missionary intention."

However, unlike most eighteenth century ironists, Joyce employs narrative masks and voices which display an exaggerated wrong-headedness, rather than the careful simulations of piety, rectitude, sincerity we associate with Swift, Pope, or Defoe. The instability of voice in the first half of Nausicaa affords a good example. This spirit is not simply that of a sentimental woman's magazine or Church bulletin; rather it is a narrative instrument that reflects a Gerty in fragmentation, a viewpoint which expresses an idealized segment of the girl's adolescent imaginings and vanities, but upon which a vulgar reality markedly intrudes. (Similarly, the voice of Eumaeus, though it reflects Bloom's fatigue, seems false to the Bloom we know.) We are amused and mildly shocked when this narrator, who was earlier full of beaming tolerance for the Caffrey twins — "darling little fellows with bright merry faces" (346/340) — then veers abruptly into Gerty's latent repugnance for them as those "exasperating little brats of twins" and "little monkeys common as ditchwater." (359/352-53)
However, this narrator also wings omnisciently above the young girl, even requisitioning briefly a spark of Bloom's guilty conscience. Gerty, never before having seen Bloom, could not thus upbraid him for past voyeurism:

What a brute he had been! At it again? A fair unsullied soul had called to him and wretch that he was, how had he answered? An utter cad he had been. He of all men!

(My emphasis: 367/360)

This is what Gerty might have thought, had she been able to read Bloom's mind. The statement shatters subtly the verisimilitude so far preserved in the Gerty-spirit which has been addressing us. And this chameleonic quality of the narrative voice in Nausicaa — not unlike the rowdy blend of voices at the end of Cyclops ("amid clouds of angels . . . like a shot off a shovel") (345/339) — imparts a structural restlessness to the episode which both betrays the fraudulent point of view and, through narrative countervailence, thwarts our expectations and destroys humorously the logic of Joyce's outlandish invention.

For the most part, no such grinning intrusions wrinkle the serene face of eighteenth century irony. Instead, the experimental techniques of Ulysses recall a Rabelaisian excess, a surreal gigantism reminiscent of Pantagruel's capacious mouth (which contained pigeons, cabbage-planters, thieves, villages and mountains), that imparts to Joyce's narrative voices an air of malign caricature. Something of G. W. Stonier's general remark about Ulysses also holds true for these veriginous distortions of propriety: The mediocrity of the man on the street "has become monstrous," and, in some inane misappropriation of our attention, rises aloft "like the giant masks of carnival." From Joyce, then, proceeds something resembling ridicule of the ironic tradition itself: a rupture of verisimilitude in the pose, and consequently a repudiation of the earnest pamphle-
teering spirit that lay behind much eighteenth century writing.

However, so much of Joyce's technique can be construed as an assault upon inherited meaning (see my Ulysses chapter), with a view toward raising from ashes a revivified meaning, that certain spiritual departures from the ironic method do not refute the family resemblance. All ironic statements are devices of indirection, whereby the writer depends upon "the reader's capacity to develop implications imaginatively." Joyce's techniques do this. In both irony of statement ("verbal") and irony of event ("dramatic," "cosmic"), lie strong elements of contrast: between what is said and what is meant; between expectancy and fulfillment, desert and reward; between what is happening and what men think is happening; between a character's limited knowledge and the greater knowledge of the informed reader, whether that knowledge be supplied by the author or retained by an audience familiar with Oedipal myths and Homeric correspondences. Techniques in Ulysses show somewhat similar contrasting patterns.

All irony appeals covertly to the reader's sense of justice and the fitness of things. It creates a friction, a clash between surface meaning and underlying message — between opposites — which heightens the significance of both, while affirming only the author's intended, his underlying message. It suggests dry inner laughter, and rejects pious affirmation. But here again, the departures by Joyce from the ironic tradition emerge, for the scholarly community has shown very little agreement upon the "underlying message" of Ulysses, including the nature of the "laughter" resulting from the author's "sane and joyful spirit." Richard M. Kain, whose far-reaching synopsis of Joyce criticism should qualify him to make the assertion, writes of the dialectical impulse and of the laughter discernible in Ulysses that:
The nihilistic and relativistic aspects seem to be contradicted by the implicit moral criteria, just as the seemingly irresponsible laughter is countered by the pain of conscience. However much faith the critic may have in his own interpretation, an opposite reading has equally valid support.

Robert Adams reaffirms such observations about critical divergence, and both critics offer convincing summaries of the self-balancing thematic equations (of which I consider countervailing narrative statement to be an important variable) in *Ulysses*; both in their summaries suggest the protean quality of the author's laughter.

That the thematic message is ambiguous, and the laughter more than a disinterested smirk, further distances Joyce from a literary heritage that includes the sledgehammer ironies of a Thomas Hardy, whose heroine "having lost her virtue because of her innocence, then loses her happiness because of her honesty, finds it again only through murder, and having been briefly happy, is hanged. Hardy concludes: 'The President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess.'" Joyce would never have rendered his repugnance to a Godless void so explicit; but neither would he have offered so methodically ironical a retort to Hardy's hasty philosophy as did Samuel Johnson, more than a century before, to one Soame Jenyns. This unfortunate had postulated the malicious pleasure of the gods in tormenting man. Under the pretext of carrying the notion a little further, "very much to the advantage of the argument," Johnson wrote:

Many a merry bout have these frolick beings at the vicissitudes of an ague, and good sport it is to see a man tumble with an epilepsy, and revive and tumble again, and all this he knows not why . . . . The paroxysms of the gout and stone must undoubtedly make high mirth, especially if the play be a little diversified with the blunders and puzzles of the blind and deaf.
Johnson's reply is saved from being an elaborate sarcasm (the common man's irony) through its appeal to a universal sense of value, proportion, and truth, the appeal which characterizes all higher forms of irony of statement. Falling far short of Swiftian intricacy, Johnson's irony nevertheless suggests a set of standards: It is finely patterned, consistent in its absurdity, unambiguous in its message, and couched in moral certitude — whether about God in Johnson's case, or about politics and the stupidity of mankind in Swift's. By contrast, Joyce's fraudulent and countervailing narrative statements can be smoothly finished, or jagged. They show impatience with consistency. And while they often provoke an immediate, unambiguous ethical response, their crowded passing leaves behind a whirl of relativistic doubt. A disconcerting analogy to the ambiguities of the Creation resides in Joyce's Ulysses, which teems with implications that permit no self-assured response.

I have tried to suggest how Joyce has wrinkled the unsmiling mask of traditional irony, while yet retaining its emotional sting; and how he has anticipated the austere precept of the "new" critics for issuing a statement that is "invulnerable" to irony. Yet another clue to Joyce's narrative temperament lies in the concept of paradox. His welding of seemingly ill-suited elements supplies much of the energy which ripples through the experimental chapters. Fierce mirth, affectionate loathing, and ugly beauty are among his characteristic moods and preoccupations.

That the author's vision of beauty was innately paradoxical, the Stephen Stephen of Portrait makes obvious with his description of art as being a deliberate effort
to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth ... an image of the beauty we have come to understand ... .
The image is that of a forced childbirth from a swollen belly. From the "gross earth" the artist will "press" — not cultivate — his version of ideal beauty. The paradox has to do with the extraction of beauty from ugliness, a preoccupation with Joyce, who had earlier claimed that "even the most hideous object can be said . . . to be beautiful in so far as it has been apprehended." This latter assertion may sound suspiciously like a rationalization by Joyce to excuse his choice of earthy subjects, and the ferocity with which he sometimes handled them. Even so, the violence, and the intellectual perversity of such an antithesis — beauty as the spawn of ugliness — finds realization in Joyce's countervailing and purgative narrative techniques.

What "beauty" may be said to emanate from the following passage can only be attributed to 1) the humor by which Joyce purges horror, and 2) the brilliance by which he expresses a reader's accumulative disdain for the poor "Croppy Boy," mawkish emblem of innocence, whose cruel fate Dubliners sing sentimentally in bars. We have learned in the Sirens episode that the Croppy Boy has committed certain grievous sins, such as cursing "three times" since Easter, and going to play "at masstime." And once "by the churchyard he had passed and for his mother's rest he had not prayed." Tender innocence! — "A boy. A croppy boy." (289/284) So sings Ben Dollard the sentimental ballad, an allegory for Ireland's unjust "hanging" by England. Joyce was obviously not impressed by the sentiment of his compatriots. Here is how he serves the Croppy Boy in the Circe episode:

THE CROPPY BOY

(The rope noose round his neck, gripes in his issuing bowels with both hands.)
I bear no hate to a living thing,
But love my country beyond the king.

RUMBOLD, DEMON BARBER

. . . . (He jerks the rope, the assistants leap at the
victim's legs and drag him downward, grunting: the croppy
boy's tongue protrudes violently.)

THE CROPPY BOY

Horhot ho hray ho hmother's heste. [Forgot to pray
for mother's rest.]

(He gives up the ghost. A violent erection of the hanged
sends gouts of sperm spouting through his death clothes
to the cobblesstones. Mrs Bellingham, Mrs Yelverton Barry
and the Honourable Mrs Mervyn Talboys rush forward with
their handkerchiefs to sop it up.) (593-94/578)

More than any other passage in Ulysses, perhaps, the above could have substantiated Supreme Court Justice John M. Woolsey's considered opinion that "whilst in many places the effect of 'Ulysses' on the reader undoubtedly is somewhat emetic, nowhere does it tend to be an aphrodesiac." (xiv/xii) Joyce has created a horror we must laugh at; he has purged from the reader's final assessment of Ulysses the impression of rank sentimentality that adheres to even so tongue-in-cheek a narration of Ben Dollard's singing performance as we encounter in Sirens. But the same ferocity in Joyce's temperament can also execute tidier, swifter refutations of material that has nagged both author and reader. During Dublin's holocaust at the close of Circe, we learn the fate of the Quaker librarian, Thomas Lyster, whose platitudes about Shakespearean drama we have endured in Scylla and Charybdis, and whose dancing, mincing walk Joyce stressed on those pages. Now, appropriately enough:

Quakerlyster plasters blisters. (599/583)

With no less scorn does a vindictive "presiding imagination" consign the fecund Mina Purefoy, an energetically-praised symbol of procreation in The Oxen of the Sun, to a central position among the forces of primal night:
On the altarstone, Mrs Mina Purefoy, goddess of unreason, lies naked, fettered, a chalice resting on her swollen belly. (599/583)

Such dialectical shifts in mood and viewpoint — the figurative and literal damnation of characters or motifs that were more-or-less tolerantly conceived during earlier portions of Ulysses — may have accounted for Stuart Gilbert's attribution to Joyce of a Swiftian "loathing," and to his book an "undertone of despair" that runs counter to its prevalent humor, to its insistent deflation of sentiment, and to its equally strenuous negation of traditional values. Gilbert seems to construe, as do I, the attacks on sentiment and tradition as being fundamentally optimistic gestures. However he then suggests that the religious and material disillusionment of a Stephen Dedalus, from whom the author cannot entirely dissociate himself, somehow nullifies the optimistic traits just described. I think not, because the energy inherent in paradox remains, although in shades ever more refined. Gilbert himself then admits: "Yet it may be that to this very disharmony is due the seething vitality of the Dublin epic; the stream of its life is fed by the waters of bitterness." 77

Whether we use "paradox," Gilbert's "disharmony," or Frye's "lurking antagonism" should make little difference, so long as such terms suggest the unresolved tension in Ulysses, and the narrative techniques which convey it. But perhaps this vocabulary of tension can be improved upon. Altogether, both types of narrative countervailence in Ulysses (the stylistic disruptions I have called sequential and the derisive frames I have called simultaneous) can be more profitably compared to the silent clash of an elaborate oxymoron, intellectual and emotional, sustained by Joyce through the pages of Ulysses in a manner recalling the poems of John Keats. Some gently radiant "cold pastoral" is not meant by this. The
poet may have known better than the author how to preserve, within an extended statement, the vaguely conflicting elements of luminosity and silence, pleasure and repose, that form Joyce's culminating equation for the aesthetic experience.

Nonetheless, Joyce's own extended "oxymoron" lay in a subtle perversity of temperament which led him to fashion lovingly the realistic dimensions of characters and motifs — Leopold Bloom, the "Croppy Boy," a reverence for childbirth whose locus is Mina Purefoy — that he would eventually subject to varying degrees of fierce contempt. Joyce has built — to destroy. And from this unstated clash between love and loathing, building and destroying, stems the "oxymoronic" intensity of Ulysses. The narrative techniques in the late stages of Ulysses express this stern dialectic, and further variants as well: Fraudulent narrative statement forces upon us a vision of truth from a tissue of lies, while countervailing narrative statement compels tolerance in the reader for events and situations that might be construed brutal, sentimental, or simply dull, were it not for the intercession of a "presiding imagination" that expresses the reader's potential hostilities for him.

While the acerbity of Joyce's "oxymoronic" temperament may seem entirely alien to that expressed, say, in Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn, both seem to have resulted from somewhat similar attitudes toward life and art. The Keatsian "mystic oxymoron" arose from a yearning for immortal bliss on earth an aspiration perpetually frustrated by the embarrassing constraints of mortality. In the famous Ode, as Earle Wasserman has pointed out, the oxymoronic impulse becomes a way of articulating the "knife edge" of territory where mortal ideal and immortal essence can live together, or nearly so, in delicate tension. With Joyce, as we have seen, such a confrontation
of the ideal with the real, the immortal with the mortal, creates a tension far from delicate: An ideal of beauty will be pressed from the earth's "gross" belly, however violent or unclean such a delivery might seem. But for Joyce, as well as for the nineteenth century poet, such a "mystic interfusion of contraries" served to convey the full weight of inchoate thought, the meaning "which is still unuttered," no matter how the thoughts and meanings of Ulysses may have smelled of dung and brimstone. We have begun to enter, however obliquely, the region of poetic thought as it occurs in Ulysses, and to discuss this major component of Joyce's narrative technique, it will be necessary again to revive Joyce's early aesthetic, and make some rudimentary observations about it.

To narrative fraudulence — which among other things forces ethical evaluations of Joyce's subject matter in Ulysses — and to countervailance — which purges unsuitable emotions from his material — must be added a third technique of formal indirection: poetically intense narrative statement. The author's elaboration upon "luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure," via the Stephen of Portrait, suggests this third major trait of the "presiding imagination." For the author, that final apprehension of the beautiful is best described in the phrase mentioned earlier:

The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal;

and in the expression borrowed from an Italian physiologist:

... a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition ... called the enchantment of the heart. 80

Poetry's transient moments of peak intensity are evoked by the "fading coal"; its disorienting impact on the rational faculties by "enchantment of the heart." And translated into a narrative impulse, these peculiarities of the "presiding imagination" declare themselves in passing
moments of stylistic intensity, during which the author compresses thought, imagery and diction into a species of unrhymed poetry. How does a librarian walk? "He came a step a sinkspace forward on neatsleather creaking and a step backward a sinkspace on the solemn floor . . . Twicreakingly analysis he corantoed off." (184/182) And where do precious stones come from? "Born all in the dark wormy earth, cold specks of fire . . . Where fallen archangels flung the stars of their brows." (241/238) What does a Viconian lightning bolt sound like?

A black crack of noise in the street here, alack, bawled, back. Loud on left Thor thundered: in anger awful the hammerhurler. (394/388)

Or a herd of creatures to the slaughter?


Or an evening fireworks display? "A monkey puzzle rocket burst, spluttering in darting crackles. Zrads and zrads, zrads, zrads." (372/366)

And how does a husband enter the adulterated marriage bed?

With circumspection, as invariably when entering an abode (his own or not his own): with solicitude, the snakespiral springs of the mattress being old, the brass quoits and pendent viper radii loose and tremulous under stress and strain: prudently, as entering a lair or ambush of lust or adder . . . . (731/715)

While I have saved more impressive examples of Joyce's poetic technique for a later discussion, these suggest the verbal intensity of which he is capable, from the fantastical coinages surrounding the lightfooted librarian, to the Edenic archetypes coiling in Bloom's restless bed. Through such evocative manipulations of style, the author accomplishes great density of association and emotion, while attacking our habits of rational perception in a manner consistent with the more mystical goals
of his aesthetic: the spiritual manifestation he called "epiphany"; the dynamic equilibrium he called "stasis"; the glowing moment he deemed a "fading coal"; the emotional state he considered "enchantment of the heart."

Elsewhere the aesthetic reveals Joyce's preference for "poetry" over inferior techniques, most obviously when the ingenuous persona of Stephen Hero expresses his growing contempt for "literature" as occupying the vast middle region which lies between apex and base, between poetry and the chaos of unremembered writing. 81

The same assertion, somewhat less arrogantly expressed, is to be found in the author's essay on James Clarence Mangan:

Literature is the wide domain which lies between ephemeral writing and poetry;

Together with statements which combine to suggest a broad, even a transcendental conception of "poetry":

Verse, indeed, is not the only expression of rhythm, but poetry in any art transcends the mode of its expression; 82 [My emphasis]

Which is as much as to say that 1) if "rhythm" can be found in writing other than "verse," 2) so "poetry" can be expressed in forms other than writing, and 3) this eclectic "poetry" takes on an existence apart from the medium which gave it birth. For Stephen (and for Joyce in the Mangan essay), a song by Shakespeare represents this disembodied and "artless" ideal. Such a song,

which seems so free and living, as remote from any conscious purpose as rain that falls in a garden or as the lights of evening, discovers itself as the rhythmic speech of an emotion otherwise incommunicable, or at least not so fitly. (My emphasis) 33

From all this (particularly the lines I have emphasized) emerges not so much a helpful rationale of verse — Joyce's experiments are disappointing to
some, but worthy of defense to others — but rather an insight into the
author's early determination to fashion a "poetic" prose which could commun-
icate in rhythmic tongue "an emotion otherwise incommunicable" by any less
skillful choice and patterning of words. "The value of the book is its
new style," Joyce explained to a young friend who had professed inability to
grasp the meanings of Ulysses.

Elsewhere, we detect Joyce's nearly superstitious veneration for words
and the act of writing, as his narrative voice remarks upon a certain uneasi-
ness in the central figure of Stephen Hero: "People seemed to him strangely
ignorant of the words they used so glibly," and upon the shock Stephen
receives in Portrait, while standing in the gloom of a deserted Queen's
College anatomy theater:

On the desk before him he read the word Poetus cut sev-
eral times in the dark stained wood. The sudden legend
startled his blood: he seemed to feel the absent stu-
dents of the college about him and to shrink from their
company. A vision of their life, which his father's words
had been powerless to evoke, sprang up before him out of
the word cut in the desk.

To Miss Weaver, the author later admitted an uneasy fascination with what he
imagined were certain occult effects of his writing in Ulysses:

The word scorching has a peculiar significance for my
superstitious mind . . . . As soon as I mention or in-
clude any person (in my writing) I hear of his or her
death or departure or misfortune: and each successive
episode, dealing with some province of artistic culture
(rhetoric or music or dialectic), leaves behind it a
burnt up field. Since I wrote the Sirens I find it im-
possible to listen to music of any kind . . . .

In his next letter to Miss Weaver, Joyce included a cutting from a Dublin
newspaper, "just received," announcing the death of Mr. J.G. Lidwell, who
had made an appearance in the Sirens episode. We sense from such remarks
the intensity with which Joyce responded to words themselves, as well as to
their poetic possibilities for expressing "an emotion otherwise incommuni-
cable, or at least not so fitly." Glibness in people disturbs him, and
the carved word, "Foetus," has both a visceral and evocative impact that
the father cannot achieve — "or at least not so fitly." Words assume
the malevolent stature of voodoo dolls and pins in the letters to Miss
Weaver; in turn, protracted manipulation of the concept, "music," has
laid waste a corner of the author's intellect. Or so he says.

All told, some rather unusual opinions about artistic creation, poe-
try, and words themselves begin to emerge from the exquisite agonies of the
two "Stephens," and from the less refined urgency expressed by the author
in his letter to a patron. Clearly, words for Joyce had begun to adopt a
life of their own, magically independent of the person who used them,
whether artist or philistine. Poetry "transcends" the manner of its ex-
pression. People seem "ignorant" of the semantic power of words used
"glibly." A word cut on a desk becomes a "sudden legend" that stirs the
bloodstream, and makes young Stephen "shrink" from the scuffle of bygone
students evoked by that legend. Artistic creation itself leaves behind
it a scorched and "burnt up field" and, after composing the Sirens episode,
Joyce finds it "impossible to listen to music of any kind." From such
statements we can detect an emphatic awareness on Joyce's part of how
words may lay siege to man's rational pretensions and how the act of artis-
tic creation — at least for the author — was intimately involved with a
type of emotional and intellectual destruction.

I have said earlier that Joyce builds his edifices in order to destroy
them, and compared this "oxymoronic" temperament with the less ferocious,
but no less persistent instinct for contradiction to be found in a Keats.
However, a further aspect of the Joycean "oxymoron" can here be sketched,
and again a comparison to the thinking of the nineteenth century poet
should be illuminating, if not conventional by the standards of scholars devoted exclusively to either field. Joyce builds a traditional, a conventional meaning, so that he can destroy it. But from the ashes of his "burnt out field," there will inevitably arise a new meaning, a form of affirmation that is both transcendental and oblique. Joyce builds, to destroy — to rebuild. Admittedly, Keats's forays against inherited meaning, while exploiting fantasy to its limits, took forms far less disconcertingly clownish and ragged than many we shall see from Joyce. However the poet's urge to test the rudimentary powers of figurative speech — oxymoron, metaphor, synaesthesia, and so forth — offers some instructive parallels for those who would properly interpret the "new style" of which Joyce was understandably proud. I shall explore such treatment of a stale linguistic inheritance in my defense of the Eumaeus episode, and of a dated literary heritage in the discussion of Oxen. Additional examples of Joyce's creative dissolution of meaning will be reserved for the vindication of poetic techniques employed in the Sirens chapter, where some further pursuit of parallels to Keatsian technique will be appropriate.

In my justification of Joyce's three "doomed" experiments — The Sirens, The Oxen of the Sun, and Eumaeus — I shall refer somewhat informally to the extremes of narrative technique, both traditional and those distinctly Joycean, that have been suggested by the foregoing discussion. How does the author's preference for indirect statement allow him to articulate viewpoints and moods of far greater complexity than would otherwise be possible? In what fashion does narrative fraudulence nudge the reader toward ethical judgements? What false visions of "reality" emerge from this "mixed-style" novel; what bonds are broken between the author and his reader? How does narrative countervailence both ameliorate and heighten the ferocity of Joyce's statement, and what types
of "lurking antagonism" can be traced in the relationship of the "presiding imagination" to the tale it tells? At what points does Joyce create the emotional sting which can be felt, but not easily explained, in the works of traditional ironists from Sophocles through Swift? Where and how does a poetically intense style assert itself in Sirens, Oxen, and Eumaeus, and towards what end does Joyce labor, in the manner of a Keats, to break down his reader's analytical barriers to instant emotional perception? In what way does Joyce employ narrative method to destroy meaning so that, phoenix-like, new meanings can be born?

Two further questions emerge from the previous discussion, and they are perhaps more nearly fundamental to a justification of Joyce's "doomed experiments" than any of the others. To what extent have traditional story elements — theme, symbol, and plot — begun to migrate into the narrative structure itself, frustrating our curiosity about the story of Bloom and Stephen (therefore heightening that curiosity), but also infusing the narrative vehicle with unusual energy and fascination in its own right? And finally: What valid creative role has been played by the cerebral motifs which pack the Gilbert and Linati schemata, and which taunt those familiar with Joyce's letters, or his offhand remarks to friends? In particular, I refer to the notion of exhaustion which controls the "presiding imagination" of the Eumaeus episode, the concept of irreverence which inspires Oxen, and the aspiration to music which so obviously — yet so elusively — governs the style of Sirens.

In my defense of Joyce's three "doomed" experiments, I shall reverse the order of these chapters to provide a sequential explication of fraudulent (Eumaeus), countervailing (Oxen), and poetically intense (Sirens) narrative impulses, whose origins have been traced to Joyce's early thoughts on art and
beauty. The initial position of Eumaeus in this discussion will permit a close look at the crude vigor of Joyce's dominant narrative mentality in late Ulysses — the malign "presiding imagination" which insults and wounds its subjects — before moving on to that mentality's finer reaches: the thematic ambivalence and mixed tonality of Oxen; the poetic intensity and "musical" mimesis of Sirens. Following the defense, I shall comment upon the early Lestrygonians chapter, whose "cannibalistic" techniques foreshadow the more subtle narrative trials to come.
II. JOYCE'S AESTHETIC: MEANINGS STILL UNUTTERED


2. Burgess, ReJoyce, p. 25.


4. For example, Hayman, in Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning, p. 24, asserts such an atrophy of the aesthetic is displayed during Stephen's Shakespeare argument in the Scylla & Charybdis chapter, as follows:

   The difference between the famous esthetics conversation with Lynch in chapter 5 of the Portrait and this tense and tendentious argument is another symptom of Stephen's fall. In the Portrait a relaxed and self-confident Stephen deliberately chose in the reptilian mocker Lynch the peer least likely to approve or understand his theory. Here, unsure of himself in the presence of experts, Stephen is less systematic, more brilliant, and more vulnerable. . . . Tension is generated not only by his sense of failure but also by the emotional conflicts that have sterilized him and permitted others to usurp his laurels.

   I maintain that the early aesthetic has been absorbed into Ulysses, not abandoned.


12 For example, Joyce substitutes stasis for catharsis, deems tragedy the "imperfect manner" and comedy the "perfect manner of art," and suggests that tragedy's "terror" or "pity" can achieve such perfect status only to the extent that these emotions excite in us the feeling of restful "joy" he associates with comedy. Joyce, "Paris Notebook," The Critical Writings, p. 144.

13 Goldberg, p. 65, refers to Kant's "purposiveness without purpose," by which the philosopher dissociated the "static" appetites satisfied by art and beauty from the "kinetic" appetites of ordinary life.


15 Letters, I, p. 135.

16 Burgess, Joysprick, p. 102.


18 Blamires, p. 139.

19 Joyce, Stephen Hero, p. 78. The same thought — and nearly identical wording — can be found in Joyce's essay, "James Clarence Mangan," in The Critical Writings, p. 74.

20 Stephen Hero, p. 212.

21 Joyce, Portrait, p. 479. Stephen has just pointed out to Lynch a basket slung upside down on a butcher's boy's head, explaining: "In order to see that basket . . . your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended."

22 Gilbert, p. 369.

23 Stephen Hero, p. 92, records Stephen's touchy debate with his school's president:

—I mean that Ibsen's account of modern society is as genuinely ironical as Newman's account
of English Protestant morality and belief.
— That may be, said the President appeased by the conjunction.
— And as free from any missionary intention.
The president was silent.

24 Ibid., p. 79.


... Since nothingness cannot be described in itself, let alone shown dramatically, something or someone must always be shown doing something, and if the action is to be grasped at all by the reader, it must somehow be fitted into a scheme of values that is intelligible to him ... If, for example, we show a character caught in a predicament that has no meaningful solution, the very terms of our literary success require the assumption that to be caught in a meaningless predicament is a bad thing, in which case there is meaning, however rudimentary. To write is to affirm at the very least the superiority of this order over that order. But superiority according to what code of values? Any answer will necessarily contradict complete nihilism. For the complete nihilist, suicide, not the creation of significant forms, is the only consistent gesture.

26 Portrait, p. 480.

27 Stephen Hero, p. 213:

Its soul, its wholeness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.

Earlier, p. 211:

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself.

28 Portrait, p. 481.

29 Critical writings, p. 143. Ellmann refers to the terms from Aquinas — integritas (wholeness), consonantia (harmony), claritas (radiance) — which
in their affective progression, imitate the mounting intensity of the aesthetic experience as conned by Stephen.

30 Portrait, p. 481.

It is worth noting that whatever criticism has been forthcoming from Aquinas scholars like Noon, Joyce himself has anticipated and, in a characteristically defensive maneuver, somewhat invalidated. The Stephen of Portrait knows that his search for the "essence of beauty" is based on a "garner of slender sentences" from both Aristotle and Aquinas, and that the search for art amid their "spectral words" can be wearisome, if not hopeless. Portrait, p. 438. Earlier, Joyce had expressed still other reservations about the borrowings from Aquinas, via Stephen Hero's essay:

"The qualifications [Aquinas] expects for beauty are in fact of so abstract and common a character that it is quite impossible for even the most violent partizan to use the Aquination theory with the object of attacking any work of art that we possess from the hand of any artist whatsoever."

Stephen Hero, p. 79. The narrative voice then invites further repudiation of the young aesthete and his jottings by employing such satirical epithets as "fiery-hearted revolutionary" and "this heaven-ascending essayist." Stephen Hero, p. 80. In short, the reader, critics, Aquinas scholars, et al are many times invited to condemn, or dismiss, the aesthetic tenets so insistently, and repetitively, put forth in Joyce's early works. In view of the author's preference for defining matters in terms of what they are not — the aesthetic is not a responsible extrapolation of anything Aquinas or Aristotle thought or wrote — it stands to reason that scholars might more profitably contemplate what the aesthetic is: it is Joyce explaining Joyce, with the help of mentors whose initial stimulus he values, but whose ultimate positions he covertly rejects.

32 The "Paris" and "Pola" notebooks, Critical Writings, pp. 143-45, 148. "Satisfaction" has become a variant of the "joy" discussed in my note 55.

33 Stephen Hero, p. 78. Joyce adopts this attitude in preference to what he deems the "romantic temper," which in the words of Stephen Hero,

is an insecure, unsatisfied temper which sees no fit abode here for its ideals and chooses therefore to behold them under insensible figures. As a result of this choice it comes to disregard certain limitations. Its figures are blown to wild adventures, lacking the gravity of solid bodies, and the mind that has conceived them ends by disowning them. (Ibid.)

34 Letters, I, p. 140.

posed by the dramatic form on the reader of Circe, as follows:

To render Bloom's nightmare Joyce chose the form of a play, complete with speech tags and stage directions — of a dream play like Strindberg's. Since dreams give objective solidity to desires, the form is suitable, far more effective than analysis and far more vivid than the stream of consciousness. Abandoning discourse, psycho-analysis becomes drama. Rising from his couch, the patient walks a stage, attended by a company as solid as he.

Whether nightmare or purgative fantasy — Bloom's, Stephen's, Dublin's, or Joyce's — the crisp stage directions permit a picturesque delirium to assault the reader's imagination in the guise of concrete plausibility.

36 *Letters*, I, p. 159.

37 Hugh Kenner, in his excellent chapter, "Circe," for James Joyce's *Ulysses,* *Critical Essays,* eds. Clive Hart and David Hayman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 346, detects "Halloween grotesquerie" from the offset, but does so without exploring the ameliorative effects of such a narrative strategy on the adult horrors that are depicted in the episode.

38 Warner, *James Joyce Quarterly,* p. 31, suggests this therapeutic distancing of specific and paralysing dread, as "Stephen's encounter with his mother moves a personal fantasy into the conventional domain of gothic fiction."


40 Expressed, for example, when the narrative voice introduces the illustrative "epiphany" in *Stephen Hero,* p. 211: "A young lady was standing on the steps of one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis."

41 We can feel the early winds of modern "nihilism" and of "black humor" in Johnson's celebrated defense of imaginative truth in the *Preface to Shakespeare.* The above fragment occurs within a single-sentence paragraph that captures the reader's imagination as follows:

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveler is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another; and many
mischief and many benefits are done and hindered without design. (My emphasis)

Johnson's subsequent statement — "Surely he that imagines this may imagine more" — can as well be applied to the single-sentence paragraph above, as it is justly asserted later in the Preface with regard to an Eighteenth Century playgoer who affects a concern for rules which, if taken seriously, would cause him to "believe that his walk to the theater has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Anthony and Cleopatra."

The somewhat sinister, absurd, misalignments of private hopes and moods suggested by Johnson have been echoed by Joyce in such a way as to suggest, delicately, the brutal incursions of "parallax" upon a sensitive mind. Weary of his search for the "essence of beauty," the Stephen of Portrait, p. 438, will turn his mind for pleasure to the dainty songs of the Elizabethans. His mind, in the vesture of a doubting monk, stood often in shadow under the windows of that age, to hear the grave and mocking music of the lutenists or the frank laughter of waistcoateers until a laugh too low, a phrase tarnished by time, of chambering and false honour, stung his monkish pride and drove him on from his lurkingplace. (My emphasis)

The emphasized portions of both passages are alike in their evocation of the "chaos of mingled purposes," whose recognition is essential to a description of life, a defense of Shakespeare, or an illustration of "parallax" through clashing narrative viewpoints.

42 Ellmann, in Ulysses, pp. 131-32, points out that Gerty is "not so self-deluded" as Joyce implies in his remark about the "marmalady, drawery style," and that she has a quality of "underlying wariness and sharpness, a disconsolate sense of the impingement of her real upon her ideal..." However, Ellmann does not specify the tension which exists between the narrator's wishful sentimentality, and Gerty's down-to-earth vitality and sexual drive.

43 Gifford's Annotation, p. 331, notes that Bloom's "I./AM. A." carries a host of transcendent Biblical and pagan overtones when construed as "I am alpha," but I think these need not outshine the obvious: Bloom, through despondency, lacks the will to assert his identity in the form of a completed sentence that would have stated what he is. He is not in his present mood disposed to think of himself as "Alpha," the sign of the fish and traditional symbol for Christ, or as the "beginning and the ending" by which the Lord defines himself in Revelation, 1:8. If anything, these symbolic overtones amount to a fraudulent, a derisive, maneuver by Joyce to sharpen our sense of what Bloom is, by suggesting what Bloom is not. A mixed and poignant tonality results from this subtle narrative contradiction.

44 Portrait, p. 481.

46 Of the Penelope episode, Joyce wrote: "Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent Weib. Letters, I, p. 170.


48 Ibid. (Brooks summarizes views by I.A. Richards.)


51 Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1951), p. 724, offers the following useful definition of traditional irony's emotional impact:

Not only a person, or an utterance, mood, or expression, but also a situation or an event may be described as ironical or ironic when he or it manifests the power to evoke amused, but often startled or unpleasant, reflection on the difference between what is said and what is intended, or between what happens and what was aimed at or what was expected.

Abrams in his Glossary, p. 47, explains the emotional sting of "dramatic" (or "tragic") irony by the following:

A concentrated instance of dramatic irony is to be found in the Oriental story of the frightened servant who obtains permission from his master to flee to Samarrah in order to escape Death, who had looked at him strangely in the market place. The master himself encounters Death in the market place and asks him why he had looked so strangely at his servant. "Because," said Death, "I was surprised to see him here. I have an appointment with him this afternoon, in Samarrah."


53 William Bragg Ewald, Jr., The Masks of Jonathan Swift (New York: Russell & Russel, 1954), is the standard work on the subject, for which Ewald employs the term "faculty of impersonation" to designate Swift's inexhaustible capacity for "acting a part" — a technique of narrative indirection akin to Joyce's use of fraudulent narrative voices to express views that are neither his own nor the reader's.
And so with Swift: Ewald, *Masks*, p. 53, calls attention to Swift's propensity for expressing, through his personae, "an extreme, self-debasing affection for England... the exact opposite of what Swift felt..."

Ewald speculates, p. 187: "The demand made upon the reader to do part of the work in getting Swift's meanings doubtless accounts for much of the intellectual and emotional force his writings have." More persuasively, Booth (*Rhetoric*, pp. 304-05) argues the matter as follows:

Whenever an author conveys to his reader an unspoken point, he creates a sense of collusion against all those, whether in the story or out of it, who do not get that point. Irony is always thus in part a device for excluding as well as for including... In the irony with which we are concerned, the speaker is himself the butt of the ironic point. The author and reader are secretly in collusion, behind the speaker's back, agreeing upon the standard by which he is found wanting... Our pleasure is compounded of pride in our own knowledge, ridicule of the ignorant narrator, and a sense of collusion with the silent author who, also knowing the facts, has created the trap for his narrator and for those readers who will not catch the allusion [or unstated truth].

That is not to say these simulations should be pursued too carefully. Ewald, p. 10, notes that: "Most irony, it can be said, involves a surface statement which at the same time contains a clue to a real meaning underneath." Failing to provide such clues, the ironist faces embarrassment:

This is the problem in Defoe's *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*, in which — behind the undeveloped disguise of an Anglican extremist — he urges that all dissenters be eliminated. The tract is ironical only if one feels that the extremity of the proposal is enough to make the Anglican argument ridiculous, and thus show the real meaning. Unfortunately many of his contemporaries took Defoe seriously.


Gulliver, for example, is portrayed throughout as credulous, stolid and humorless. To momentarily depict him otherwise would have been to attack the foundation of ironic rationale that supports *Gulliver's Travels*. Similarly, Swift's sedulous economist can be accorded no more capacity for deviant ideology than, say, an Adolf Eichmann during hours of peak traffic. By contrast to these, as well as to the somewhat less consistent posture of Addison's "Spectator" (that of "taciturn objectivity": Ewald, p. 6), Joyce's narrative impulses present a sort of sour-honeycomb of deviant ideologies.


Brooks and Warren, p. 636.

Ibid.

F.M.C. Turner, *The Element of Irony in English Literature* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. 6. Turner notes that irony appeals to our judgement suddenly, not allowing us to take refuge in thought. A sudden assessment of behavior or thought will be primarily moral, and intuitive evaluation is concerned with fundamentals: truth, goodness and beauty.


Abrams offers this summary, in *Glossary*, p. 47, to illustrate "cosmic" irony (irony of "fate"), a technique attributed to literary works in which God or Destiny is represented to be manipulating events as though deliberately to frustrate and mock the protagonist."

Quoted as an example of irony in Turner, *The Element of Irony*, pp. 61-62.


Turner, p. 6. (See my note 114.)

*Portrait*, p. 473.


In *Portrait*, p. 471, Stephen had discounted the artistic value of "pornography" in the following rather oblique manner:

> The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. (My emphasis)

Gilbert, pp. 22-23.

Ibid., 23.
Ibid. Gilbert discounts any serious application of the Joyce/Stephen aesthetic to Ulysses. In Portrait, p. 471, Stephen concluded the aesthetic emotion is "static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing." To the contrary, Gilbert asserts, p. 23, that:

The conflict of deliberate indifference (stasis) with the loathing of disgust (kinesis) is apparent throughout Ulysses.


Ibid., p. 15. Elaborating upon the "mystic interfusion of contraries," Wasserman observes:

To this point of the mystic oxymoron and no farther, Keats held, can the human imagination occasionally and momentarily arise as it seeks to overcome the weariness, the fever and the fret.

Portrait, p. 481.

Stephen Hero, p. 78.

Critical Writings, p. 75.

Stephen Hero, p. 79, retained almost verbatim from Critical Works, p. 75.

Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 568.


Letters, I, p. 129.

Ibid.
CHAPTER III

EUMAEUS: A METICULOUS SHAMBLE

From a conventional standpoint, the Eumaeus chapter bores, and it insults. It bores in the manner of several other late episodes — the Oxen, Ithaca and Penelope chapters come to mind — by throwing up a smokescreen of expressionistic style between the reader and the event being portrayed. For much the same reason, it insults: After all, the first sober and direct encounter between Stephen and Bloom should not be a matter for banal and insensitive presentation. Nor is Ulysses a Munchausen work — although Joyce does his best to imply it is. In Eumaeus he has employed a narrative voice of stupifying incompetence, and has travestied the act of writing with a nearly unbroken chain of clichés, euphemisms, solecisms, and syntactical blunders. Kenner’s defense of the episode in terms of the "exquisite absurdity of "cliché after cliché" may do little to fortify tolerance. Still less is the common reader satisfied by Gilbert that the wandering point of view and listless cadence represent the "intercourse and mental state of two faggred-out men." Conventional readers are instead likely to agree with Toynbee that "even long-windedness need not be long-winded"; that the drowsy visit to the cabshelter could have been told more compellingly in less than half the space, and that Joyce paid a high price by "retreating into unity of time" in order to convey "exhausted minds and spirits."

What then is a sound "unconventional" reading? Necessarily, it is one that pays closer attention to Joyce’s narrative manipulation than has most previous commentary. Even when construed as more than a tiresome
demonstration of fatigue, the protean voice of Eumaeus has been interpreted narrowly. No less than three accomplished critics have called it Bloom's "ideal of fine writing." More attentively, Gerald K. Bruns has described this voice as an omniscient spirit hovering between Stephen and Bloom, but occasionally adopting the personality of a local drifter who addresses, with meager sensibility, "an imagined audience of his peers."

The text supports these interpretations, but also invites many more.

Even the opening lines of Eumaeus convey a fuller thematic range than can be attributed to the motif of fatigue, to the excesses of a Bloomsian style, or to the gratuitous presence of a local personality:

... Mr Bloom in view of the hour it was and their being no pumps of Vartry water available for their ablutions, let alone drinking purposes, hit upon an expedient by suggesting, off the reel, the propriety of the cabman's shelter, as it was called ... . (613/597)

Reflected in such language is the strained cleverness, and the artificial camaraderie which logically would hamper a cautious Bloom in his approach to so difficult a young man as Stephen. Further, this awkward voice serves to symbolize the gulf both in years and in artistic sensibility which separates the two men; helps also through circumlocution to suggest the redundancy of Blooms' entrepreneurial temperament. As Kenner notes of Joyce's narrative technique generally, the voice of Eumaeus has incorporated traits from the "gravitational field" it has entered, in part the social ineptitude of a Bloom.

However, this garrulous voice of mediocrity should not be mistaken for an unswerving chronicler of "real" Bloom, any more than the Nausicaa narrator should be judged a complete, or consistent, representation of "real" Gerty. As if to warn us from such an error, Joyce fleetingly shows "real" Bloom's more vigorous thought-stream when he ponders Sailor Murphy's
ill-advised return to a wife seven years abandoned. In its swift associations, we detect the humorous leapfrog of thoughts that has characterized Bloom through much of the book:

Believes me dead. Rocked in the cradle of the deep.
And there sits Uncle Chubb or Tomkin . . . in shirt-sleeves, eating rumpsteak and onions. No chair for father. Boo! The wind! Her brandnew arrival is on her knee, post mortem child. (625/609)

By contrast, the narrative voice in its alternate guise as evening drifter will display terminal senilities of a sort unlinkable to "real" Bloom — will even interrupt his report of Stephen's meeting with the ruined John Corley by lapsing into enthusiastic speculation about Corley's family tree:

No, it was the daughter of the mother in the washkitchen that was fostersister to the heir of the house . . . .
(617/601)

These thoughts bear the stamp not of Bloom, but of the nighttown derelict, whose faulty switchboard lights-up whenever any random call on his ability is made. It is then he will offer a crumbly morsel of his artistic taste, interrupting a seemingly pertinent disclosure of Odysseus/Bloom's thoughts on Rip Van Winkle, with the observations I have emphasized:

... and does anybody hereabouts remember Caoc O'Leary, a favorite and most trying declamation piece, by the way, of poor John Casey and a bit of perfect poetry in its own small way. (624/608)

The reference to "Coach the Piper," a ballad of John Keegan, has appropriate Van Winklesque overtones, but the aesthetic asides are grossly inopportune — when one recalls Joyce's views on "poetry," and on "the broken lights of Irish myth."

As this intellectual twilight deepens, the reader realizes that Joyce is fabricating — in all senses of the word — a statement of far-reaching contempt: for artistic theory and the act of writing; for the
book *Ulysses* and its themes; and for the reader himself. To test our patience, the author has compiled a catalogue of stylistic blunders, which vary from sophomoric artifice:

he had succumbed to the *blandiloquence* of the other parasite; (619/603)

to inspired nonchalance in the crafting of sentences:

Alluding to the encounter, he said, laughingly, Stephen, that is: He's down on his luck; (619/603)

to listless verbal repetition:

Shipahoy, of course, had his say to say; (637/622)

to syntax so ruptured, and epithets so banal, as to render simple thoughts nearly unintelligible, and so vivid an encounter as that of Bloom with the Citizen, nearly colorless:

He took umbrage at something or other, that muchinjured but on the whole eventempered person declared, I let slip. (My emphases: 642-43/627)

It should be clear that Joyce has thrown down the gauntlet to his reader, challenging this reader through negative indirection to appreciate *Ulysses* for what it is, by portraying that book in terms of what it is not. Joyce invites the reader's scorn in order to test and refine his allegiance. In short the performance of the Eumaeus "narrator" — if this seeming misalignment of artistic impulses deserves the designation — is the most ambitious display of fraudulent *narrative statement* in the late episodes.

As will be seen, the Eumaeus chapter in the original Odyssey allows Homer to ridicule Homer. The ancient poet must have known intuitively that this technique was the best way to force, through negative indirection, a more mature and favorable verdict upon his tale. To our discomfort, we witness the mighty Odysseus telling threadbare lies to a noble servant. We
begin to thirst for the slaughter of the suitors, and for a return to the more fierce spirit which characterized earlier portions of the *Odyssey*. In his interpretation of the Homeric myth, Joyce imposes much the same discomfort and frustration on his audience. With inspired perversity, he assembles a sort of Bloomsian aesthetic as foil to his own. Bloom even contemplates a version of the episode — "*My experiences*, let us say, in a Cabman's Shelter." (647/631) From Bloom's instinct for a lucrative composition that will be "something out of the common groove," may have come the restrictive insights of critics who hold that the voice of the Eumaeus chapter approximates Bloom's style of writing. However, such a point becomes small when one views the sustained attack which, with Bloom's help, Joyce executes on his own youthful aesthetic.

Painting, sculpture, music and literature are all soiled in a stream of entrepreneurial asides by Bloom — or by the narrator. (We are rarely able to tell who is who in Eumaeus.) Whatever strain of poetry might "transcend its mode of expression" finds a sluggish burial in this chapter. The arts of painting and poetry are confused with sexual lust, that of music with Wildean preciousity and worse. At best, Shakespeare's lines fortify advertising slogans. Even Stephen's scrupulous Aristotelian distinctions begin to desert him in the shifting sands of Eumaeus.

In accordance with the Homeric myth, Joyce has written an oblique treatise on "exhausted minds and spirits" (Toynbee's phrase is an apt one). The implications of this treatise have spread far beyond the closed spheres of the two tired men. Almost all mankind seems reduced to categories of dereliction and failure. The viewpoint is almost methodically inhumane, and eased by a comforting fatality. Life has become a vague lottery. Free will and moral responsibility seem to have been obliterated. Further, all talk
of virtue that proceeds from the Bloomish mentality bores us. But vice, too, assumes a dull grey aspect when exposed to the blight of Bloom's stale thinking in this episode.

Yet, the extent to which the amorphous voice of Eumaeus portrays "real" Bloom is seldom clear. In its own right, the narrative vehicle shows a rubbery flexibility that rewards close inspection. At times, we feel in the hands of a local Dublin derelict. Elsewhere, we encounter a spirit which seems to glow with a malign vitality. Such verbal energy and crisp reportage invariably show themselves when the narrative voice sidles near representatives of true evil: the Corleys, Whores of the Lane, Sailor Murphys and broken-down night watchmen, whose personalities show symptoms of irreparable and contagious decay. Symbolically, many of these derelicts can be taken for bleak extensions of a fate that lies waiting for Stephen Dedalus, should he persist in his private mystique of self-enchanted doom.

In brief, Joyce has dramatized through narrative technique the pathology of failing minds and spirits. And when least expected, the reader himself may find that his intellect has been lulled into a sluggish participation. He experiences in varying degrees the decay of consciousness that Joyce, in moments of stylistic intensity, can sneak past with the facility of a noiseless drifter in the night. All such moments invest true evil with a vitality nowhere evident in Bloom's weary, homily-ridden thoughts about virtue and vice. However, in Eumaeus stylistic muscularity is not reserved alone for emblems of decay and dereliction. Life begins to battle death as we near the episode's close. Against the prospect of a dishonest society which courts its own extinction, Joyce has placed in stark terms the proposition of honest brutehood — the patient cabhorse — struggling to survive. That horse's triumphal defecation at the chapter's close can be construed in a
limited sense as the author's commentary on the intellectual and verbal mire of the materials preceding. The act can also be taken for a bolder gesture on the part of the "presiding imagination" which governs Eumaeus — a gesture of visceral contempt for a civilization in decay.

Fraudulence and deception are, of course, the dominant motifs of the Homeric original, and Joyce relished such an explicit call to mendacity. To Frank Budgen, he wrote: "I am heaping all kinds of lies in to the mouth of that sailorman in Eumaeus which will make you laugh." Consequently, the author's false Odysseus, Sailor Murphy, professes to have seen Stephen's father on tour with Hengler's Royal Circus: "I seen him shoot two eggs off two bottles at fifty yards over his shoulder. The left hand dead shot." (623/607) Murphy is also familiar with Chinese customs: "Cooks rats in your soup . . . the Chinese does." (628/612) And his career has been legendary, as well as hazardous: "... I uses goggles reading. Sand in the Red Sea done that." (659/643) Whenever the narrative voice focuses on the sailor, a lurid vitality shines from the calculated verbal wreckage.

That Joyce's attack on the art of writing was premeditated seems certain. We are informed by A.G. Atherton that the author had a source book for the elaborate anti-style of Eumaeus: W.B. Hodgson's Errors in the Use of English, a text which Joyce doubtless improved upon. And we are reminded elsewhere that the author tended often "toward oblique interpretation, converting Homeric motif into tone and imagery." Again, the artistic weight of Joyce's scaffolding makes itself felt. Odysseus's ruse in the hut of Eumaeus is awkward, strangely disquieting — a shabby test of a servant who needs no testing. Such braggadocio is unseemly in the hero, his lies transparent, as these excerpts from the Samuel Butler translation make clear:
I never gave death so much as a thought, but was the first to leap forward and spear all whom I could overtake . . . . Then Jove spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy . . . . I took off my helmet and shield and dropped my spear from my hand; then I went straight up to the king's chariot, clasped his knees and kissed them, whereon he spared my life, bade me get into his chariot, and took me weeping to his own home . . . . Jove let fly with his thunderbolts and the ship went round and round and was filled with fire and brimstone . . . . These men hatched a plot against me . . . . they bound me with a strong rope fast in the ship, while they went on shore to get supper by the sea side. But the gods soon undid my bonds for me, and having drawn my rags over my head I slid down the rudder into the sea . . . .

Nervousness at trials impending, fatigue after long travels — these qualities are conveyed by Odysseus's recitation. We notice too that Homer has consummated a parody of his own tale: For the lethally deceptive Odysseus of the Cyclops' cavern, we are now given a sycophant who embraces the knees of a king and rides weeping to his home; for the imagined terrors of Scylla and Charybdis, we are offered a Disneyland ship that spins "round and round and was filled with fire and brimstone." The formidable archetypes of self-destruction embodied in the Sirens and Circe episodes of the Odyssey have here been replaced by men who "hatched a plot against me," an amusingly trite evasion of the psychic liability — the personal responsibility for mishap — that Homer has ambiguously sustained in the earlier books. All now becomes unconvincingly simplified: Without their usual perverse delay or partisanship, the "gods soon undid my bonds for me," and without his perennial flair for difficult solutions, this pseudo-Odysseus "slid down the rudder into the sea." Homer thus ridicules Homer, imparting to his audience a better grasp of what the real Odyssey is, by allowing his protagonist to portray it in terms of what it is not.

So with Joyce. I shall again quote at length, for the following turbid
passage offers an unusually compact example of the fraudulent narrative statement through which Joyce, like Homer, insults his art to refine our perception of its excellence. Furthermore, the lines can serve as paradigm for most of the melancholy virtues that vindicate the Eumaeus episode. At this point, we have no reason to doubt that the narrative voice provides a certain insight into Bloom's real state of mind. As potential author, Bloom amounts to an artistic King Midas of lead. And of Joyce's malicious wink, we can be sure.

From thoughts of homosexual aberration in high places, Bloom has slipped into a more opportunistic vein: Stephen Dedalus, he supposes, might actually climb to the top, as have other insolvent but talented spirits in the past. Recognizing Stephen's potential, Mr. Bloom felt it was his interest and duty even to wait on and profit by the unlookedfor occasion, though why, he could not exactly tell, being, as it was, already several shillings to the bad, having in fact, let himself in for it. Still, to cultivate the acquaintance of someone of no uncommon calibre who could provide food for reflection would amply repay any small ... [The ellipsis is Joyce's] intellectual stimulation as such was, he felt, from time to time a firstrate tonic for the mind. (My emphases)

From the italicized phrases, we sense a tawdry commercialism masquerading in the Victorian guise of self-improvement and "duty." Propriety has usurped valor; a sort of sedentary opportunism has displaced the Ulysscean thirst for adventure. An impoverished elegance of expression founders in tautology. Even the tactful ellipsis calls attention to a tactless ingredient — a word such as "outlay" — which has been omitted. All prepares for the wicked inversion of artistic values which follows, a sham tribute
to the mediocre sensibility of modern commercial man:

Added to which was the coincidence of meeting, discussion, dance, row, old salt, of the here today and gone tomorrow type, night loafers, the whole galaxy of events, all went to make up a miniature cameo of the world we live in, especially as the lives of the submerged tenth, viz., coalminers, divers, scavengers etc., were very much under the microscope lately. To improve the shining hour he wondered whether he might meet with anything approaching the same luck as Mr. Philip Beaufoy if taken down in writing. Suppose he were to pen something out of the common groove (as he fully intended doing) at the rate of one guinea per column, My Experiences, let us say, in a Cabman's Shelter. (My emphases: 646-47/630-31)

First, we note Joyce's mock recapitulation of the episodes in which Bloom has accompanied Stephen: the "meeting, discussion" (Oxen), the "dance, row" (Circe), the "old salt" and "night loafers" (Eumaeus). Evaluation of these as a "galaxy of events" lands us in a realm of music-hall promotion, while the suggestive "miniature cameo of the world we live in" becomes an almost explicit demand that we equate Bloom's projected short story with Ulysses. While certain critics have questioned Joyce's ability to capture the complexity of life, we recall that no less grudging an admirer than Carl Jung attributed to Ulysses the "richness" and the "boredom" that are to be found in "the world" itself. By contrast, Bloom will emulate Philip Beaufoy's Macham's Masterstroke, half of whose "prize story" he tore away to complete a ceremonious evacuation in the outdoor jakes that morning. (70/69)

Still further clues to Joyce's perverse viewpoint lie in the above passage. That the "lives of the submerged tenth" (a euphemistic equivalent of our "disadvantaged classes") should be "very much under the microscope lately" (i.e., enjoying journalistic, as well as sociological vogue) suggests in fashionable phrase a routine disregard for human suffering, especially within the context of Bloom's pragmatic aesthetic. Reference to Isaac Watts' "Busy
Bee" adds a further speck of utilitarian grime, while words like "coincidence" and "the same luck" suggest that artistic accomplishment reduces to mere hazard. The title, "My Experiences . . . in a Cabman's Shelter," completes Joyce's mock evaluation both of Eumaeus and the writer's art. In this "miniature cameo" of artistic penury, we perceive not so much a microcosm of "the world we live in" as a paradigm for the debased narrative viewpoint and technique of the Eumaeus chapter. Joyce has posed a fraudulent aesthetic based on such stylistic traits and emotional attitudes as cliché, tautology, false elegance; detachment from human suffering; cupidity with regard to literary performance — that performance a sort of defecation, derivative and mildly pornographic, with chance governing the whole. As with the lines quoted from Homer, such calculated ethical and intellectual outrage recommends to the "quick intelligence" its opposite: originality, concision, substance; concern for suffering, a reasonable aesthetic idealism, a realistic complexity of statement, and plain hard work. These are the positive implications of Joyce's energetically fraudulent aesthetic, as hatched in the mind of Bloom.

Just what views of "art" will seep through Eumaeus should be clear from the chapter's opening phraseology:

Preparatory to anything else . . . which he very badly needed . . . . on his expressed desire . . . let alone drinking purposes, hit upon an expedient . . . . the propriety of the cabman's shelter . . . . as the duty plainly devolved upon him . . . . bringing commonsense to bear on it . . . . (613/597)

Preparation, need, desire, purpose and experience set the pragmatic tone of this chapter. The "propriety" of the cabman's shelter serves as ideological destination for the two wanderers. "Commonsense" will govern so humble an act as
walking from a bordello to an all-night diner. Such verbal anodynes may be welcome to the reader who, with Stephen and Bloom, has emerged shaken from Circe's palace. But in their implications, such words as "propriety" and "commonsense" spell death to art. The taint of conformity, of collective mediocrity, will spread chapter-wide in a rather astounding refutation of all Joyce holds artistically dear. The "aesthetic" which emerges from these pages becomes correlative to the "exhausted minds and spirits" which control the narrative viewpoint. Drama, literature, painting, sculpture, vocal instrumental music — no art escapes.

The attack on art begins with a humorously perfunctory nod to Joyce's beloved iconoclast playwright, as we are told that Stephen "thought to think of Ibsen, associated with Baird's, the stonemason's in his mind somehow in Talbot Place . . . ." (614/598) A pedestrian observation about bread — "the staff of life" — trails off into an advertising slogan: "O tell me where is fancy bread? At Rourke's the baker's, it is 16 said." (614/598) If Shakespeare in Merchant has here been borrowed to sell the products of a bread factory, he later will become an accessory to Bloom's dreary "commonsense." During the altercation between Fitzharris and Sailor Murphy, Bloom reacts skeptically to arguments for and against an Irish Free State and then — "pending that consummation devoutly to be or not to be wished for" (641/625) — ruminates upon the advisability of making the best of the status quo.

Nor is Milton spared. The poignant overtones lent to the Nestor chapter by such lines from Lycidas as "The dear might of Him that walked the waves," (26/27) — a moving reminder of Stephen's lost faith — have now been cloaked in motley. The stirring pastoral becomes here the daydream of a "superannuated old salt" returning the stare of a blank sea,
musing over "fresh woods and pastures new as someone somewhere sings."

(630/614) The amusement afforded by such a slur of unassailable poetry ought, perhaps, to be qualified by our awareness of the appallingly jaded sensibility Joyce has dramatized in so few lines.

No aspect of the beautiful is left unstained in Eumaeus. Sounds have become "impostures" (622/607); Italian icecream vendors, despite the pleasing ring of their language, turn out to be "haggling over money."

(622/606) Stephen's whole fussy attempt to isolate the modes of the visible and the audible on Sandymount Strand that morning, together with his aesthetic relegation of these modes to space and time (in Portrait, as well as in the Proteus episode), washes away in tides of indolence here. Listening to Bloom praise the value of "work" and his "synopsis of things in general," Stephen

stared at nothing in particular. He could hear, of course, all kinds of words changing color like those crabs around Ringsend in the morning, burrowing quickly into all colours of different sorts of the same sand where they had a home somewhere beneath or seemed to.

(644/628)

For once, dagger definitions elude this punctilious aesthete. Aristotelean classification, the significance of words and of art -- even the reality of reality -- all seem to blur and blend meaninglessly like those translucent crabs around Ringshead. Even Joyce's renowned comparison of the artist to the God of the creation -- "refined out of existence, indifferents, paring his fingernails" -- becomes downgraded in the Eumaeus episode to a homely, and literal, observation by Bloom about the trials of an awkward cabhorse, "the while the lord of his creation sat on the perch, busy with his thoughts." (662/646)

As with literature and the youthful aesthetic, so with music, painting and sculpture. Our lugubrious Sailor Murphy growls "in wouldbe music,
but with great vim, some kind of chanty or other in seconds or thirds" (639/634) — an amusing impossibility, since the human voice cannot duplicate the simultaneously-sounded intervals (seconds, thirds, sixths, and the like) that are possible on such instruments as piano or violin. In this fashion, Joyce sneers at the musical art he so carefully imitated in the Sirens episode, just as he consigns Milton to oblivion and Shakespeare to the marketplace. Furthermore, musical taste in Eumaeus seems to swing precariously between preciosity and layman's ignorance — between Stephen's preference for lute music and Elizabethan songs (661,662/645,646), and Bloom's admiration for Mendelssohn as a prototype of the "severe classical school . . . ." (661/645)

The visual arts fare no better. Within the chapter's debased aesthetic framework, they have been reduced to the status of conversation piece and aphrodisiac. By such standards, Skin—the goat's inscrutable face becomes "really a work of art . . . begging description" (629/613), while Sailor Murphy's tattoo that laughs and scowls as he fingers the skin — a fleshy commemoration of one homosexual ("a Greek he was") by another — excites "unreserved admiration" from the derelicts gathered in the cabman's shelter. Alternatively, Bloom considers himself "a bit of an artist in his spare time," and he expounds platitudinously on the Greek sculptures of women —

perfectly developed as works of art . . . . Marble could give the original, shoulders, back, all the symmetry (653/637)

— whose posterior orifices he tried, but failed to inspect that afternoon in the National Museum. While no photograph could be expected adequately to capture Molly's opulent curves "because it simply wasn't art, in a word" (653/637), Bloom nevertheless displays proudly to Stephen a creased portrait of Molly spilling from her gown years earlier — "Lafayette of
Westmoreland street, Dublin's premier photographic artist, being responsible for the aesthetic execution." (My emphasis: 652/636)

When we recall how Joyce labeled "pornographical" those artistic endeavors which tended to provoke desire, and when we realize that Bloom verges upon pimping for his wife to win allegiance from Stephen, we can appreciate the dark laughter with which Joyce brings his views of art into collision with the Bloomsian aesthetic. It is for the "quick intelligence" to negotiate this slag pile of inverted values so as to arrive at "the meaning which is still unuttered." Should the reader have lost his way, however, Joyce gives his fraudulent aesthetic still another grotesque twist. Impressed by Stephen's fine tenor voice, Bloom envisions his young friend, "educated, distingue, and impulsive into the bargain" (653/638), on tour with Molly

in English watering resorts packed with theatres
turning money away, duets in Italian with the accent perfectly true to nature . . . . (658/643)

To Bloom, the prospect of a Molly adulterous, conjoined with a Stephen distingue," understandably seems preferable to her further performance with "jingle jaunty Blazes boy." (263/259) Such a career for Stephen would include musical and artistic "conversaziones" during the festivities of the Christmas season (663-64/648), and of course Stephen would have "heaps of time to practice literature" in his spare moments. (664/648) Needless to say, such a capitulation to Bloomsian enterprise would signify artistic endgame for Stephen. The older man's alternate suggestion that Stephen "command" his price as literary hack (644-45/629) reminds us of Joyce's steadfast refusal to submit articles for pay. All that Joyce held dear to art he recommends through negative indirection in the Bumaeus episode.

Even Sailor Murphy is described as "a bit of a literary cove in his own
small way . . . " (659/643) Among his literary conquests are The Arabian Nights Entertainment and Red as a Rose is She, both built on themes of deception and, despite their popularity, somewhat less than artistic masterpieces. Not without justification does Joyce have his patient cabhorse rear high a "proud feathering tail" to obliterate with "three smoking globes of turds" (665/649) the counterfeit aesthetic he has put before us — a wasteland of collective mediocrity, opportunism, and obliquely-tendered lust.

How justify so seemingly perverse an excercise? The answer lies in Joyce's "oblique" manipulation of the Homeric myth, together with the creative role he assigned the motifs of his schemata. Few writers, with the possible exceptions of Dante and Milton, can have relied so heavily upon preconceived intellectual frameworks as Joyce. The author seems to have used his motifs and topics — including those from the Odyssey — to release creative resources that might otherwise have lain incipient, but unfertilized, and therefore buried in his brain. In the Bumaeus chapter of Ulysses, Joyce allows the concept of Odyssean fatigue to swell beyond the localized weariness of a "fagged-out" stephen and Bloom into an exhaustion of minds and spirits that seems to engulf all civilization. Joyce explores fatigue to its symbolic length and breadth. And a slumbrous, nerve-deadened aesthetic is but a small part of the degenerate whole.

Closely related to his celebration of inferior art is Joyce's fraudulent endorsement of inhumane and desensitized social attitudes. A callousness toward human misery marks this episode, unequivocally reinforced by a choice of words that argues contempt for the individual and scorn for the species. This particular aspect of exhausted minds and spirits seems far less amusing than the sham aesthetic discussed above, far more sober-
ing than a mere glorification of the tasteless in art. For the Eumaeus episode can also be viewed as a powerful tract against the collective anesthesia that softens the birth of apocalypse. Programs in "basic" medical research by the Third Reich come immediately to mind, but so also do aerial campaigns in which the person releasing the bomb is divorced by altitude, and by abstraction, from the building or family bombed. Essential to such occupations is a generalized, rather than an individualized, perception of mankind. Solipsism and a comfortable sense of fatality help complete the formula. All such variants of fatigue make the Eumaeus episode an assault upon a reader's assumed sensibilities: his concern for his fellow creatures, his reverence for the good and his abhorrence of the bad. No chapter in Ulysses (including Hades) more faithfully reflects the moral inertia condemned in Dante's hell. Like the Inferno, Eumaeus poses an ethical nadir against which the less tangible benefits of virtue can be measured and felt. But unlike Dante, Joyce leaves hortatory and explicit condemnations to the reader.

Joyce's extrapolation of the concept, fatigue, here becomes quite unsettling. Throughout the chapter, individuals are reduced to vague types of unredeemable dereliction. Bloom reflects that Stephen, inebriated and careless, invites attack by "famished loiterers of the Thames embankment category" (My emphasis: 616/600), and when the two reach the cabman's shelter, they are greeted by stares from "a decidedly miscellaneous collection of waifs and strays and other nondescript specimens of the genus homo . . . ." Soon after, Stephen and Bloom are ignored by "the hoi polloi of jarvies or stevedors or whatever they were . . . ." (621-22/606) Here, humanity begins to recede into a faceless status of degeneracy and failure. Joyce may well have been reacting against the elitest facets of Victorian mentality which, in even so perceptive a
novelist as Joseph Conrad, could surface in Marlow's pointed reminder that Lord Jim's breach of faith has the more relevance, the more immediacy, because he "was one of us." From this exclusionist viewpoint, those who are not "one of us" belong to the generic class of "waifs," "strays," and "hoi polloi," whose day-to-day ethic presumably incorporates treachery, sloth, cowardice, opportunism, and so forth. In the Eumaeus episode, we are informed that John Corley, his breath afloat in rotten corn juice as he approaches Stephen to borrow money and get a job, has "the customary doleful ditty to tell." (616/600) I do not wish to imply that Corley should be construed as much more than a derelict cadging the price of a drink, merely that the callous ring of all such language -- "nondescript specimens of the genus homo," "customary doleful ditty" -- contains alarming implications for a civilization verging on holocaust, and unwilling to break forth from self-enchanted solipsism long enough to contemplate another's suffering as one's own.

Again, a comforting sense of fatality becomes part of this formula. With much insight, Bruns has detected on Bloom's part a psychological defense by which he uses the Parnell story

to construct a kind of determinist theory of adultery, thus to place specific episodes within the governance of a fixed law of nature . . . . Bloom raises everything to the level of types and kinds, and he does so in order to enforce a dissociation of character from role -- a dissociation, for example, of Bloom from cuckold. 22

Bruns documents his assertion convincingly, but I believe that so sweeping are the winds of fatality in the Eumaeus episode — whether they go by the name of "determinism," "naturalism," or plain "luck" — that this collective absence of free will transcends a merely Bloomsian rationalization about his cuckoldry.

Instead, we sense in Bloom's defensive thinking the larger pattern by
which an entire civilization -- exhausted in mind and spirit -- might fabricate its apology for a decayed and dying enterprise. Twice, the phrase, "What's bred in the bone" is used to explain Parnell's civility in thanking Bloom for the return of a dislodged hat: "... what's bred in the bone, instilled into him in infancy at his mother's knee in the shape of knowing what good form was ..." (650/634 and, slightly modified, on 655/639) To such environmental determinism is added predestination: The patriot's downfall came because he and Kitty O'Shea were "fated to meet." (654/638) Biology can also be blamed: Parnell and the married woman maintained a platonic relation "til nature intervened ..." (650/635) Twice, a proverbial fatality is invoked to excuse this fallen idol with "feet of clay." (649/634;654/638) In fact, references to hazard and casualty appear with such frequency in Bumaeus as to suggest that life is no more than a vast lottery. "He's down on his luck," says Stephen generously of the wastrel Corley (619/603), and a copy of the Telegraph with its botched account of Dignam's funeral rests "as luck would have it" by Bloom's elbow in the shelter. (647/631) Later, Bloom reflects that to exploit the singing talents of Stephen and Molly, no further combination of circumstances will be required than "a slice of luck. An opening was all that was wanted." (659/643) With such an outlook, Bloom has momentarily descended to the level of a Corley, whose dependence upon chance and influence suggests an almost lordly irresponsibility, in a chapter devoted to that subject:

You might put in a good word for us to get me taken on [as bill-poster for Boylan]. I'd carry a sandwichboard only the girl in the office told me they're full up for the next three weeks, man. God, you've to book ahead, man, you'd think it was for the Carl Rosa. (618/602)

In Corley's almost terminal erosion of free will (as regards job placement, at least), we can detect an amusing correspondence to the
near-futility of exerting private initiative under Homer's pantheon of spiteful and capricious deities. Corley, furthermore, can be taken to represent one of the psychological obstacles (e.g., the seeking of refuge in a deterministic view of life) past which Stephen and Bloom, according to the "art" of the episode, must endeavor safely to "navigate." However, the larger import of Corley's atrophied self-determination is the obliteration of moral responsibility. Though the Eumaeus episode fairly bulges with homily, no dependable model for right or wrong conduct emerges. Even Bloom's "orthodox Samaritan" compassion for Stephen (613/597) edges over into a grey world of self-serving prudence, as the older man (Samaritan indeed!) finds it his "duty" to "wait on and profit" from the friendship. (647/630) Wars, revolutions, battles — Bloom dismisses these as a "bump of combativeness or gland of some kind," erroneously supposed by society to be a matter of flag and honor, but instead "very largely a question of the money question ...." (643/628) While Bloom eschews the "money question" in conversation with Stephen, he privately allows it to control his plans for the young man. Altruism lies in sordid ruin.

If historical combativeness can be traced to a sort of money-gland, a good wife's sudden infidelity can be explained by the fact that she "chose to be tired of wedded life, and was on for a little flutter in polite debauchery ...." (655/640) The small suggestion of free will — "chose to be tired" — turns out to be little more than a glandular response to boredom. No morality exists, the author seems to be saying. But to ensure our ethical reaction he has hedged his relativism with the imaginatively vulgar phrase, "a little flutter in polite debauchery." Encountering such a desensitized use of language, the reader cannot help reacting with amused disgust. His response is moral. An equally trenchant abuse of language
governs a fleeting description of Patty Dignam's funeral. Bloom recalls
the snub from Henry Menton and considers it hardly appropriate conduct,

after the burial of a mutual friend when they had
left him alone in his glory after the grim task of
having committed his remains to the grave. (655/639)

Reflecting the narrator's impoverished thought-stream more than Bloom's,
this version of the Dignam funeral might well have been useful to the
composer of "The Star-Spangled Banner." But when we review the circum-
stances of Dignam's burial in the Hades chapter, the affront intended to
our sensibilities becomes clear. We recall that Dignam, who in his life-
time was a bibulous nonentity, still managed in death to achieve a sort
of negative significance through 1) the inconvenience caused for those
forced to attend his funeral, 2) the unwelcome sense of mortality imposed
on most who witnessed (or learned of) the event and, 3) the unwholesome
meditation by Bloom on matters ranging from necrophilia to the dissolution
of corpses underground ("Flies come before he's well dead. Got wind of
Thus, the passing of this "mutual friend" whose remains have been abandoned
to the "glory" of the grave.

Such misapplication of language to reality -- a reality established
within the covers of Ulysses -- need not always provoke so automatically in-
dignant an ethical response. Sometimes a malignant casuistry seems to slip
past us in the dark. We are told that Bloom both condemns and secretly ad-
mires the Phoenix Park murderers:

. . . [He] disliked those careers of wrongdoing and crime
on principle. Yet, though such criminal propensities had
never been an inmate of his bosom in any shape or form, he
certainly did feel, and no denying it (while inwardly re-
maining what he was), a certain kind of admiration for a
man who had actually brandished a knife, cold steel, with
the courage of his political convictions though, personally,
he would never be a party to any such thing . . . . (642/625)
What can this mean? That Bloom dislikes "on principle" what he has "admir-ation for" in secret? That he admires "criminal propensities" which he would "never be a party to?" How does Bloom's respectable "principle" relate to the "political convictions" he both admires and condemns? Does he admire a "brandished" knife, as opposed to the knife that kills? No explicit mention of murder taints this reflection on political "courage." In short, here is modern video man, the spectator, enthralled by carnage so long as he can re- main remote from it -- perhaps queuing-up to help subsidize another Christmas movie about the Mafia "while inwardly remaining what he was."

In the above passage, the notion of "wrong-doing" has been thoroughly scrambled with "courage." As if to call attention to such absurdity, Joyce has inserted two mischievously ill-timed figures of speech: Bloom could never be a "party" to such a display of "political" conviction, and such "criminal" propensities had never been an "inmate" of his bosom. Such punning metaphorical linkages -- subtle examples of the author's counter-vailing narrative technique -- refute humorously the very distinctions Bloom wishes to preserve. We have drawn close to the destruction of moral meaning itself.

And from such relativism as dramatized by Joyce, emerges a stupifying equation: If vice is a crashing bore, virtue wearsies us to tears. Here is Bloom's version of virtuous moderation in human affairs, his distillation of lessons learned from the fracas at Barney Kiernan's in the Cyclops episode:

... you must look at both sides of the question. It is hard to lay down any hard and fast rules as to right and wrong but room for improvement all round there certainly is through every country ... .

(643/627)

No flabbier recommendation of brotherly love seems imaginable. The state-ment is hopelessly dull, abstract, and inapplicable to life as it is lived.
Picturesquely appalling, however, is Bloom's view of proper courtship, an institution he deems unsuitable for Stephen because of such proprieties as "the preliminary canter of compliment-paying" that eventually leads to "fond lovers' ways and flowers and chocs." (656/640) Yet if "proper" courtship suggests a dull and ritualized horror, "improper" sexual conduct can hardly be called stimulating. By accentuating differences of attire, including undergarments, heterosexual lovers can add "a genuine fillip to acts of impropriety . . . ." (646/630) How jaded and dull can illicit sex be made to sound? Soiled by artifice and euphemism, such effete delineations of vice would seem sufficient to repel a wavering spirit toward virtue — even in 1904. However, within the ethical nihilism of Ulysses — qualified by the moral energy of Joyce's scorn — virtue can only be upheld by some of history's oldest and stupidist arguments.

For example, Bloom condemns sexual perversion in high places — the throne, the House of Lords, the "upper ten" — because it runs "counter to morality . . . in a way scarcely intended by nature . . . ." (646/630) The Hobbesian retort that man's existence in nature is nasty, brutish and short can serve as a background by which the reader may assess Bloom's nursery version of "mother nature." So, too, can Keats's waking nightmare of the robin "ravening" the worm, and Tennyson's later, more stylized dismay at a nature "red in tooth and claw." And failing these, the reader can look around him. No less debatable is Bloom's earnest aside to Stephen that individuals like the Whore of the lane ought to be medically inspected and licensed — a policy which Bloom "as a paterfamilias" believes that, if "properly ventilated," would confer "a lasting boon on everybody concerned." (633/617) Again, a mischievous metaphor ("venti-lated") sabotages the assertion and, while such an argument probably orig-
inated shortly after The Fall, it is not represented convincingly here: Bloom's stalwart advocacy comes not "despite being," but rather "as a paterfamilias," and we well might question upon whom, besides whores and Blooms, this "lasting boon" would be conferred.

Joyce's fraudulent narrative technique in Eumaeus irrevocably blurs the boundaries between right and wrong. The reduction of suffering mankind to irredeemable types of dereliction; the aura of fatalism, of glandular and environmental determinism which discredit free will; the vicious misalignment of descriptive language and the deed described; the self-contradictory moral assertions; the dull and debased arguments which are used both in praise of virtue and in condemnation of vice — these variations upon a theme of "exhausted minds and spirits" impose a challenging, perhaps an impossible task upon the reader of Eumaeus. The possessor of a "quick intelligence" is not consistently exposed to entirely fallacious viewpoints, against which he can turn his back in a positive quest of the "meaning which is still unuttered." As often as not, Joyce has composed studied mixtures of the half-right and the half-wrong. Are we to reject Bloom's wise-seeming (and prophetic) dictum that a "revolution must come on the due instalments plan"? (643/627) Certainly not, until we learn of the spiritual and intellectual vacancy from which Bloom's political "convictions" stem. We eventually learn that Bloom, some twenty years earlier, had borne a "sneaking regard" for certain "ultra ideas" having to do with agrarian reform; that, while "not contributing a copper or pinning his faith absolutely to its dictums, some of which wouldn't exactly hold water, he at the outset in principle, at all events, was in thorough sympathy with peasant possession, as voicing the trend of modern opinion . . . . " (656–57/641) So qualified are the assertions, and so inane their justification
("the trend of modern opinion") that they cast mortal, if retrospective, suspicion on the prudent temperament which plumbs for peaceful revolution earlier in the chapter. (Joyce's own short-lived foray into activist politics apparently had not left him impressed with the motivation of such avocations.)

The fuse safeguarding moral light has blown in Eumaeus, the circuitry overloaded with sententious abstraction, homily, and half-hearted prescriptions for collective harmony. With great difficulty — perhaps nearly as much as Joyce must have experienced in sustaining this tour de force of ethical vacuity — the reader is forced to reassess his own assumptions: his inherited, generalized, and often meaningless conceptions of good and evil, right conduct and wrong. Bloom's observation about the effects of religious dogma on Turkish behavior plumbs fatuity to its depths: "If they didn't believe they'd go straight to heaven when they die they'd try to live better — at least, so I think." (644/628) We presume that Bloom's sober-seeming blither has been accurately reported by the wayward narrative voice of Eumaeus, but as regards this prankish vagabond, we may presume very little else.

Because so much of this episode's justification depends upon close scrutiny of the narrative mentality, some detailed investigation of this voice is appropriate. Careful distinctions between "unreliable" and "unreliable" narrators promise more than they yield: Booth uses "unreliable" of narrative voices which display consistently fallacious or immoral viewpoints discernibly at variance with those of the author. He then points to Ellmann's choice of "unreliable" to describe narrative method in Eumaeus, where no reliable pattern of falsehood emerges. But when discussing the Joyce technique, terms like "fluid" or "unstable" seem more
appropriate, if only to avoid the confusion of employing near-synonyms — "unreliable," "undependable" — to describe narrative methods so dissimilar. Through the calculated instability of his narrative voices, Joyce repudiates all clearly-defined thematic statements, an artistic trait which both betrays the fraudulence of the implied viewpoints, and purges through countervailance the "loathing" or the "desire" which he outlawed from his art.

However, by itself the alignment of the Eumaeus technique with the Joyce aesthetic cannot satisfactorily refute the many charges of dullness leveled at this episode. Unless we view the narrative method as a symbolic substitute for the more traditional execution of theme, character, and plot, then most of Eumaeus, by the most circuitous routes, seems to move nowhere. Nevertheless this voice — flickering somewhere between omniscience and personality — is capable of a wicked vitality, as well as a serene incompetence. It can transmit terror, as well as amusement; can convey poetic intensity, as well as prosaic sprawl. This voice is above all changeful. There is no way of pinning it down to either responsibility or predictable irresponsibility. In its corporeal guise of Nighttown drifter, this speaker is often incapable of accurate reportage. His epithet — "irrepressible" — for Bloom is hopelessly off-target for describing the man whose prevailing impulse in Eumaeus is caution. And while this narrator pointedly mentions Sailor Murphy's stammer, he refuses to imitate it:

(Murphy) with some slow stammers, proceeded:
-- We come up this morning eleven O'clock. The threemaster Rosevean from Bridgewater with bricks. (625/609)

Though capable of undoubted omniscience (as with the fleeting return to Bloom's spry thought-stream mentioned earlier), this voice relapses into
an ineptitude that is governed by imperfect sense data during Murphy's unveiling of his tattoo:

That worthy, however, was busily engaged in collecting round the someway in. Squeezing or . . .
(Joyce's ellipsis: 631/615)

— after which the sailor pulls and twists the portrait of dead Antonio into expressions of cursing and laughter for the admiration of those gathered. Here the viewpoint could be that of any drowsy bystander. But elsewhere, this voice can achieve perceptive and corrosive extremes of double entendre. Bloom's version of the Parnell adultery, while aspiring to a sort of mature and generalizing dignity, thus suffers a scurrilous erosion. We are told that everything about the affair was Platonic until nature intervened and "an attachment sprang up between them"; matters gradually "came to a climax," with the result that "their names were coupled." (650–51/635) The implications to be drawn from this sudden intensification of the narrative vehicle are thematically profound, far beyond those conveyed by the voice in its guise of inept reporter.

If, in accordance with Bruns convincing theory, Bloom must sublimate his specific anguish over Molly's infidelity by retreating "to a corner of stoic generality, there to explain away his lot as merely a steadfast theme in the way of the world," then such ribald counterpoint invites multiple interpretation. For example, the seemingly perverse wordplay might represent: 1) a subconscious surfacing of realities unfriendly to Bloom's conscious desire for "stoic" propriety; or 2) a wish by Joyce to puncture Bloom's pseudo-dignity — to reveal his acceptance for the evasion it is; or 3) an impulse to have some fun at Bloom's expense, to enliven the dull cast of Bloom's reflections — although much the same could be said for amusing disruptions in other episodes, and as little
learned; or 4) a momentary crystallization of the narrative voice into malicious wit, an embodiment of society's latent (and in some cases overt) contempt for cuckold Bloom.

All seem plausible, given Joyce's habit of creating richly-layered significance through indirect narrative statement. Certain is the inadequacy of single-faceted evaluations of this voice — e.g., that it conveys merely fatigue, or cliché, or Bloom's ideal of fine writing.

The adroitly villainous "presiding imagination" suggested by the above analysis can also dwindle to moronic self-parody. The Evening Telegraph's typo — "L. Boom" — is capriciously adopted by the narrator — "Boom (to give him for the nonce his new misnomer)" — and is appropriately dropped for "Bloom" a few lines later. But then, as if to spare us from falling prey to his drollery, this narrator takes pains to clarify: "All the same Bloom (properly so dubbed) was rather surprised at their memories . . . ." (648–49/632–33). One wonders at this point to what depths of insanity a narrative voice can descend, or to what extent a serious reader's patience may be tried. To reconcile such extremes — a vision that is omniscient, and a viewpoint that is severely restricted by the senses; a capacity for malicious double entendre, and a weakness for moronic word play — one needs to explore further the symbolic implications of Joyce's fluid narrative vehicle. Most compact in its suggestion of such a unifying principle is the passage cited by Burgess and quoted earlier. To Burgess the lines exerted a "horrid and riveting fascination" that revealed Joyce's dramatization of the concept of nerves. Stephen and Bloom have arrived groggily at the cabman's shelter:

A few moments later saw our two noctambules safely seated in a discreet corner, only to be greeted by stares from the decidedly miscellaneous collection of waifs and strays and other nondescript specimens of the genus homo, already
there engaged in eating and drinking, diversified by conversation, for whom they seemingly formed an object of marked curiosity. (621-22/606)

The "fascination" derived from this passage stems, I believe, from the privileged glimpse it affords of a disordered mentality. And this glimpse is undeniably "horrid." That disordered mentality, and the third-person impressions it is transmitting, could be Stephen's. The mentality could be Bloom's. Or it could reflect the "gravitational field" of both — the one disoriented by a fight and a bad hangover, the other by business frustration and an adulterated household. Further, this mentality could also be that of the protean narrative voice, forever on the point of asserting a shabby personality of its own. Naturally, it is also Joyce's mentality, reconciling all these possibilities within a generic concept of nervous fatigue. The paranoia associated with such a state issues in the "marked curiosity" and unsettling "stares" with which Bloom and Stephen are greeted. The world turns into a collective enemy of the observer, a generalized field of "nondescript specimens" whose attention becomes vaguely menacing.

Most disquieting, however, are the greater symbolic implications — the abstract message — conveyed by Joyce's technique. Traditional elements of theme, character, and plot have been displaced into this narrative method. Motion normally supplied by twists of plot has been transmuted into the fitful wandering of an inept narrative voice. Elements of theme reside in the disturbingly impoverished traits that voice reveals. We detect mental drift and spiritual vacancy; a sham gentility of diction in the midst of decaying sentence structure. Character takes shape from an ambience of such calculated stylistic deficiencies. In short, the narrative voice becomes in Eumaeus a formal embodiment of dereliction — and the episode in its larger aspects, a universalized digression on the psychic
shipwreck of those lost souls who inhabit the world's nighttowns and all-night cabshelters. It may be that the art of navigation is "quietly celebrated" by the safe passage of Bloom and Stephen homeward, as Burgess notes. However, salvation shines a slender beacon in this tale of "waifs and strays": the false Odysseus, Murphy, who disdains the art of navigation as "salt junk all the time"; (630/614) the corporation watchman, Gumley, asleep at his post and "practically on the parish rates"; (639/623) the whore of the lane, with her "demented glassy grin"; (632/617) and others whose namelessness — "One man was reading by fits and starts a stained by coffee evening journal; another, the card with the natives choza de; another, the seaman's discharge" (629/613) — suggests their submerged social status.

Furthermore, the theme of dereliction, as reflected by the narrative voice, need not be expressed in a merely vagrant syntax, nor a decayed pseudo-elegance of diction. Nor even a wandering frame of mind. When reporting the speech and actions of a Sailor Murphy, this voice abandons its symbolic drift, aligns its syntax, and achieves an hallucinatory vitality. To demonstrate how an alligator bit the fluke of an anchor, Murphy "took out of his mouth the pulpy quid and, lodging it between his teeth, bit ferociously." (625/609) After requesting the return of his seaman's papers, "he clawed them up with a scrape." (629/613) His account of a murder in Trieste leads to a mock demonstration with a similar weapon, and a terse summary: "Knife in his back. Knife like that." (628/612) This last is metrically powerful, vivid, just as nervous exhaustion, psychic shipwreck — dereliction — can momentarily organize itself into a semblance of vitality. If, as we have seen, the "sane" speculations of a Bloom can degenerate to a point where they evoke a moribund civilization — a supreme instance of "shipwreck" — no such torpor can be detected in the vigorous
lies and mannerisms of a Murphy.

So it is with many of the vignettes of terminal dereliction that slide past us in Eumaeus: They are alarming and they are immediate. That is to say: True evil inspires in the narrative voice a morbid energy, while Bloom's stale effigies of virtue and vice elicit no more than a desultory and insensitive presentation. With glazed eyes, the Whore of the lane assesses the men clustered in appreciation of Murphy's homosexual tattoo, and beams a "demented glassy grin" before she vanishes. (632/616) As her own life has decayed, she seems to nourish on the symptoms of decay in others. We feel that no prudent Bloomsian program for the inspection of prostitutes (633/617) could effectively assimilate into society this creature of winking, smirking lust.

Subtler, but no less virulent, is the attitude conveyed by jobless Corley. Again, Joyce takes steps to render vivid a fugitive mentality. As we learned at the close of "Two Gallants," Corley prides himself on extracting handouts from unlikely sources. That he now cautions Stephen against an inadvertantly large donation -- "Those are halfcrows, man . . . ." (618/602) -- becomes one of those brilliant anomalies by which Joyce refashions the commonplace into the memorable: The inveterate cadger has principles. He retains a sense of honor. Or so it seems. The gesture is instinctively shrewd, practically and psychologically. Acceptance of the mistaken gift would doubtless have reprecussions, immediate or future. His cautioning of Stephen permits Corley to display his "generosity" -- an intriguing reversal of roles, given the circumstances. That his breath is "redolent of rotten cornjuice" (616/600) lends smell and taste to this portrait of willful dereliction. Corley is no more likely to seek honest employment than the Whore of the lane, inspected and certified, would be
likely to supplement her income by selling Girl Scout cookies. Neither
can renounce the ingrained psychology of deception and lust through
which they manipulate society. A passing vitality in Joyce's narrative
technique awards these paradigms of true evil the immediacy, and the
spark of virulence they deserve.

The thematic relevance of such lurid vignettes of dereliction should
be obvious: It requires no great leap of the imagination to see that
Joyce has dramatized (particularly with Corley) the sort of fate Stephen
can expect, should he continue to confuse light verse with true artistic
accomplishment; to shun food (he has not really eaten for two days, only
drunk 656/640); to scorn "work" (he pretends ignorance of the word 644/628);
to slight and offend companionable connections, and so forth. Stephen's
psychological state is serious, his immediate future doubtful. While
Stephen may retain his artistic integrity by refusing the hospitality
offered by the bourgeoise Blooms, he still has no place to rest his head.
He has money, but will he eat with it, or drink?

A further thematic extension of Stephen's possible fate occurs with
a particularly vivid description of penury — that of Stephen's own family —
which is later linked meaningfully by Joyce to the Wildean dissipations of
a Parisian homosexual. Stephen recalls his last visit home, repicturing
the burning hearth,

with his sister Dilly, sitting by the ingle, her hair
hanging down, waiting for some Trinidad shell cocoa that
was in the sootcoated kettle . . . the cat meanwhile
under the mangle devouring a mess of eggshells and charred
fish heads and bones on a square of brown paper in accor-
dance with the third precept of the church to fast and
abstain on the days commanded . . . ." (My emphasis: 620/604)

The passage verges on Dickensian exaggeration of material hardship, and
seems too calculatedly heartrending and sarcastic to reflect a true state
of affairs. However, the narrative voice achieves one of its moments of picturesque vitality, and the cross reference that will be established in a later passage seems, through amusingly artificial means, to join unmistakably the two spheres of dereliction — penury and aberrant preciousness — which Stephen both scorns and fears. Recently returned from Paris, imbued with mannerisms, Stephen excites some uneasy speculation on the part of a concerned Bloom:

[He] brought to mind instances of cultured fellows that promised so brilliantly, nipped in the bud of premature decay .... For instance, there was the case of O'Callaghan, for one, the half crazy faddist, respectably connected, though of inadequate means, with his mad vagaries, among whose other gay doings when rotto and making himself a nuisance to everybody all round he was in the habit of ostentatiously sporting in public a suit of brown paper (a fact). And then the usual denouement after the fun had gone on fast and furious he got landed into hot water .... (First emphasis, mine: 645/629–30)

Less stylistically precise — but no less picturesque — than Stephen's Dickensian recollection, this further projection of dereliction for the young, posturing artist seems joined to the former by these intrusive squares and suits of "brown paper." The visual and symbolic link seems an important one: Both grinding poverty and Wildean excess hold Stephen's artistic future within a gloomy parenthesis.

Despite its symbolically-significant meandering, then, this narrative voice seems to breathe with wicked life when called upon to portray the speech and manner of liars, beggars, whores, Wildean homosexuals — people whose prospects have slipped beyond salvageable mediocrity into self-en-chanted doom. And such are the prospects which await Stephen, should he continue to confuse aesthetic daydreams with artistic accomplishments; should he persist in his belief that "Ireland must be important because it belongs to me" (645/629), when his claims to recognition rest upon such
slender beanpoles of authorhood as a "capful of light odes" (415/408) and, in the Scylla and Charybdis episode, an inventive application of Shakespeare's obscure biography to his poorly understood plays and poems. Self-enchantment is the nightmare from which Stephen must awaken, not history.

However, such passing fits of muscularity in the narrative voice should not, I think, be taken merely for a dramatization of the dangers Stephen faces. As suggested earlier, a writing style which purposely affronts the reader must cast a larger shadow than could be supposed to result from the localized mental state of "two fagged-out men." Similarly, the vividness with which Joyce depicts destructive temperaments in Eumaeus — those of Murphy, O'Callaghan, Corley, the Whore of the Lane — assumes a thematic prominence that outweighs its contribution to our understanding of Stephen's precarious future. More hangs in the balance than the preservation of an endangered aesthete. Instead we are invited to contemplate a pathology of dereliction which has afflicted all society.

One further passage will illustrate the manner in which the author can display not only a muscular, but also a morbidly intense writing style in the service of his meditation on wrecked lives. Our shambling narrative voice informs us that Murphy has drifted outside the shelter to relieve himself; that the noise of his "bilgewater" apparently disturbs a sleeping horse:

A hoof scooped anyway for new foothold after sleep and harness jingled. Slightly disturbed in his sentrybox by the brazier of live coke, the watcher of the corporation, who, though now broken down and fast breaking up, was none other in stern reality than the Gumley aforesaid, now practically on the parish rates . . . (639/623)

Almost slipping past us in the verbal mire which surrounds it, this passage
alerts our nodding heads with its powerfully evocative appeal. Part of this appeal is to our senses of hearing, sight, and possibly smell, through a scooping hoof, a jingling harness, a live coke burning brightly (and perhaps odoriferously) in darkness. Additionally, an archetypal image -- that of awakening from sleep -- further calls the reader's subliminal cooperation into play. That image, however, is soon dashed to pieces by the figurative language of shipwreck and death ("broken down and fast breaking up"). We are reminded of Stephen's self-admonition in the National Library, when laying the scene for his discourse on Shakespeare: "Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices." (188/186) Though a highly deflationary intrusion at the time, Stephen's passing thought should have alerted us to the calculated artistry Joyce is forever sneaking by us in Ulysses, perhaps nowhere more effectively than in these densely-textured lines from Eumaeus.

Not easily evaded at first reading are the syntactic land mines which Joyce has laid -- ambiguities reminiscent of those found in The Wandering Rocks. In that episode, style imposed upon the reader hazards corresponding to those inflicted by "The Hostile Environment" upon Dublin's citizens. Misleading syntax became for the reader what deceptive sensory experience became for the characters: an intellectual strain, an emotional frustration. In the above passage from Eumaeus, however, ambiguity of syntax has been used for a different and more unsettling purpose. Our intellect suffers no strain, rather it is lulled toward a tolerance of the decay of consciousness. No frustrated urgency makes itself felt here, only the lure of a fatigue which leads to extinction. Joyce's sentences warrant close inspection. The first of these --

A hoof scooped anyway for new foothold after sleep and harness jingled.
will likely effect a rather magical association: sleep cannot jingle like a harness, although Joyce's omission of a crucial comma (after "sleep") encourages us to make the misreading. Yet a sort of shimmering reality is created by the misread phrase, "after sleep and harness jingled" — maybe a reality appropriate to the honest horse scooping for "new foothold," or to the self-enchanted night watchman who through prodigality and drink has forever lost the will to scoop for "new foothold." Between such dialectical extremes of a bestial instinct for survival, and a civilized relinquishment to exhaustion, no viable synthesis seems to exist. Through his misleading syntax, Joyce has momentarily charmed the reader into sympathy for either, or both, subrational states — that of a beast, or that of a failed and moribund human being.

Again through misleading syntax, the adjectival clause which opens the second sentence will also be misread by most:

Slightly disturbed in his sentrybox by the brazier of live coke, the watcher of the corporation . . . .

Placement of a comma after "disturbed," or even of the word "located" after "sentrybox" would have prevented the reader's impression that the brazier of live coke — and not Murphy's noisy micturation — has disturbed watchman Cumley. The ambiguity pivots on the word "by," which can either mean "in proximity to" or "through the agency of." While these distinctions may seem pedantic (to those who find Ulysses "boring"), they should further establish the considerable extent to which thematic elements in the late episodes have migrated away from the tale proper, and into the narrative voice — here assuming the guise of a corrupt style. These are not the liberating ambiguities of Molly's expansive and somnolent syntax. Rather, they are a dramatization of the decay of civilized consciousness, whether
such decay assumes the form of a will to survive brutishly, or to suffer
extinction mindlessly. Next comes the ingenious description of the dozing
"watchman"

who, though now broken down and fast breaking up,
was none other in stern reality than the Gumley
aforesaid, now practically on the parish rates . . . .

Several figurative devices prompt the reader's unconscious cooperation here.
In the epithets, "broken down and fast breaking up," we may notice with
admiration the clever joining of mechanical and nautical terms, clichés
individually, that Joyce has mated into humorous serviceability. But we
probably fail at first to remark the significance of the "up" and "down"
'motion in the linked expressions. Failing to notice, we are the more
effectively engaged subliminally. Beneath our conscious attitude towards
the clever mating of tired phrases sits a primal image. What goes up must
come down, like a boat rising and falling to a mindless groundwell. Hopes
are raised and hopes are dashed is the hidden message. Gravity levels all.
Dispirited old age succeeds youth, especially when youth has been raised
artificially aloft by the stout arm of Guinness — not an infrequent
phenomenon in Joyce's "archipelago of corks." (249/246)

The trite phrase, "in stern reality," extends the nautical figure by
way of a pun which, appropriately enough, suggests the receding perspec-
tives one gets from the back of a ship underway. Rearward vision is
Gumley's lot. He has painted the town "tolerably pink," and he has made
"ducks and drakes" of a modest, but potentially useful annual inheritance.
(639/623). Now his vision is futureless. All he sees is a wake dissolv-
ing. His ship is captained by death, and propelled by time. Had Joyce
meant us to put a different construction on "stern reality," he could
easily have employed the worn coinage: "bow to reality." That phrase
might have suggested with seagoing overtones a forward vision thwarted. Or perhaps a courteous abstention ("bow to reality") from facing-up to facts. Either suggestion might have suited a Wildean poseur like O'Callaghan, or a Stephen Dedalus run to seed, but neither nuance would have been appropriate to the inert and featureless wastral Gumley. A further bit of sardonic wordplay by the narrator describes this derelict as being "practically" on the parish rates, a pointed malapropism since prodigality, not husbandry, has characterized the decline of the snoozing watchman.

The accumulative effect of all such rhetorical tools — the appeals to the senses, the magical mismating of sentence elements, the primal images, the mordant wordplay — invest this fleeting passage with a sort of malevolent life, the more remarkable since these lines describe a living death. The symbolic statement issuing from such a skillful abuse of stylistic intensity should begin to grow clear. Life itself seems robbed of meaning. All is mindless, hopeless, along the path to terminal dereliction. Conjunctions are made which should not be: Sleep jingles like a harness. A noiseless brazier disturbs repose. So the inane ambiguities bend our thoughts. Images burn brightly, but meaninglessly, in the black night. Sounds intrude without point. All seems weighted with significance, yet nothing coheres. The nerves deceive the mind, when they are deprived of rest and health. Joyce has made his dismal point. And yet this vignette of human self-destruction, generalized by a phrase like "the watcher of the corporation" and universalized by a cliché like "in stern reality," then becomes a subject for archetypal maneuvering and clever jest by Joyce. A further symbolic message now emerges: What seemed pathetic — terminal dereliction — deserves no sympathy from us; it is universal and
incorrigible; it is worthy of our contempt; it is laughable.

To the degree which archetypal patterns have seduced the reader — that is, to the extent which primal images of waking from sleep, fires burning in darkness, waters rising and falling, have insured an emotional, before an intellectual response — to this extent the reader has participated in, has been governed by, Joyce's dramatization through narrative technique of the pathology of failing minds and spirits. The reader has been lulled towards understanding (if not acceptance) of the decay of consciousness. And he has felt the lure of a fatigue — a death wish — that seems within the context of the Eumaeus chapter to have swallowed civilization whole — or almost whole.

For in addition to these sweeping winds of thanatose, so vividly embodied in the portrayals of derelict mentalities, there also stirs a breath of eros which commences to make itself felt with the enigmatic scooping of a hoof and the jingling of a harness, then assumes a near-revelatory aspect for Bloom, and finally buries this civilization of death under a symbolic evacuation at the chapter's close. I refer, of course, to the commendable cabhorse, whose honest, if brutish, will to survive contrasts so effectively with the slack and moribund society in which he toils. At first no more than a disembodied scooping and jingling, the honest idea of a plodding brute intrudes in the intense writing style which Joyce has otherwise reserved to convey the virulence of true evil — the lures to self-destruction, the seductive decay of consciousness. Later, Stephen's disclosure that he plans to purchase a lute costing sixty-five guineas is suddenly rendered inaudible to Bloom, as "a horse, dragging a sweeper, paced on the paven ground, brushing a long swath of mire up .... " (662/646) Through style, concrete and vivid, Joyce has contrasted the honest vitality of the animal kingdom to
Stephen's precious nonsense. A vision of this beast then breaks upon Bloom with the impact of a small epiphany:

They thereupon stopped. Bloom looked at the head of a horse not worth anything like sixty-five guineas, suddenly in evidence in the dark quite near, so that it seemed new, a different grouping of bones and even flesh . . . . (662/646)

The epiphany then fades into an explanation of why the creature is not worth sixty-five guineas, followed by some Bloomsian rationalization and a concluding bit of idiocy. The horse should not cost as much as a lute because palpably it was a fourwalker, a hipshaker, a blackbuttocder, a tailsembler, a headhanger, putting his hind foot foremost the while the lord of his creation sat on the perch, busy with his thoughts. But such a good poor brute, he was sorry he hadn't a lump of sugar but, as he wisely reflected, you could scarcely be prepared for every emergency that might crop up. He was just a big foolish nervous noodly kind of a horse, without a second care in the world. (662/646)

As I have said earlier, between the dialectical extremes of an honest brutehood struggling to survive, and a dishonest mankind courting extinction, there lies no satisfying synthesis in Eumaeus. Bloom's sudden vision of the horse strikes us as portentous, perhaps as even being the embodiment of an inchoate social force which will sweep the old society into oblivion. But this force, honest and brutish, is subrational. The Prime Mover has wound himself in solipsism, sitting on his "perch" like a gluttoned bird of prey, or maybe a domesticated parrot. His "thoughts," we can therefore assume are also subrational. Even if supra-rational, these "thoughts," have no bearing on the struggles faced by those of his "creation," In turn, Bloom here transforms revelation into humane sentiment ("such a good poor brute"), but then perverts a sensible objection ("you could hardly
be prepared for every emergency") into a rationalizing evasion of responsibility ("just a big foolish ... horse, without a second care in the world"). Then, follows a wonderfully fatuous rumination by Bloom "anent the brutes of the field," by which Joyce nails down his point, allowing his tired hero to celebrate man's rational superiority over animals in such a way as to call that superiority into question. Alligators can be tickled into submission, tigers stared down, roosters hypnotized. "Nine tenths of them all could be caged or trained," thinks Bloom, "nothing beyond the art of man barring the bees . . . ." (662/646) So silly is this last reflection that it should require no commentary, possibly excepting the observation that, just as a Gumley has fallen "practically" on the parish rates, and as the issue of a whore's medical inspection should be "ventilated," so man's art enables him to cage most of the animal kingdom "barring" the bees. Throughout Eumaeus, Joyce's wickedly malapropos diction undermines Bloom's tired aspirations to wisdom, and his resorts to sententious commonplace. Generally, these puns and double entendres serve to refute whatever fraudulent narrative postures have been adopted, offering corrosive little negations of the sort I have called sequential narrative countervailence.

Not so easily resolved, however, are the roles played by the "brutes of the field" in this disturbing chapter. They roam, stalk, perch, snore, and dribble throughout — not literally, but in vigorous passing metaphors that could be described as lurking, but scarcely buried. In particular, these lurking metaphors adhere to liar Murphy. After having rudely requested his neighbor's newspaper, "he [pawed] the journal open and poured upon Lord only knows what" (my emphases: 659/643) — a choice of figurai\-tive words that suggests nothing so much as an impatient dog urinating,
since the idiom for perusal of printed material is to "pour over." After demanding back his seaman's papers, Murphy "clawed them up with a scrape" (my emphasis: 629/613), suggesting the depredation of a fierce bird or cat. And his tale of the knife-stabbing completed, Murphy's "heavy glance, drowsily roaming about" (628/613) seems that of a glutted predator, maybe a boa constrictor after choking-down a live dinner. As for the sailor's tall tales, many liken human beings through association to animals: His buddy Antonio was "Ate by sharks" (631/616), and the naked "meneaters" of Peru depicted on the postcard can be witnessed, Murphy tells us, "stark baglocknaked eating a dead horse's liver raw." (626/610) In one of his most vivid demonstrations for the weary gathering in the cabshelter, Murphy chews his plug of tobacco as a crocodile might bite the fluke of an anchor: "He took out of his mouth the pulpy quid and, lodging it between his teeth, bit fer ociously. — Khann! Like that." (625/609)

Clearly, Joyce has linked Murphy through both figurative and literal language to non-productive carnivores, just as he has associated Bloom through epiphany with the "good poor brute" of a horse, a productive vegetarian. But while such a formularization might suggest a pat solution to how Joyce employs animals in Ulysses — e.g., Bloom is the honest plodder whose virtue we can measure against the predacious, energetic, but dishonest Murphy — we must still account for Bloom's fatuous rationalization about the "foolish nervous noodly" creature that has "no second care in the world" (as if a Dublin sweeper-horse had no first cares worth ponder ing!); and for Bloom's silly tribute to man's rational superiority over the beasts of the field. That cannot be done. Implied significance does not cohere in this fraudulent chapter. Deep "meanings" fall in ruins. A weary Bloom invites our contempt, just as an exhausted Odysseus discern-
its his name, abandons his integrity by the tale he tells in that domain of honest animals, the hut of his faithful shepherd, Eumaeus.

Yet by the close of Joyce's chapter, both Bloom and Stephen have survived the psychological shoals of Nighttown. A tentative communion has taken place. The two men now walk arm-in-arm (660/644), and Stephen's spirits have risen from an opaque surliness (644, 645/628, 629) to a mood that expresses itself in song. (663/647) Buried deep in this chapter's texture of dismay, the growing rapport between a muddled father and his difficult "adopted" son -- the chapter's single hopeful element -- shines the more brightly from behind the narrative shrouds.

For the most part, however, Joyce has invited his reader to share in civilization's decay of consciousness with the help of broken-down Gumley, tired Bloom, self-enchanted stephen, a witch-like whore, a proudly manipulative beggar, an incarnation of picturesque mendacity -- Sailor Murphy -- and above all, a villainously incompetent narrative voice. Such company has not been pleasing to many readers of this chapter. Only when one acknowledges the artistry with which Joyce probes psychic horrors does the episode achieve its baleful magnificence. What fascination the episode exerts is morbid. Humor passes in nervous winks and leers. Plot limps wearily. Themes self-destruct and sanity lies down. How Joyce must have enjoyed creating this meticulous shambles.
III. Eumaeus: A Meticulous Shambles

1 Ellmann, in *Ulysses*, p. 155, evokes the fabulous Baron in a more limited sense, detecting in Sailor Murphy an unspoken aesthetic theory, rival to Stephen's that the novel is a Munchausen performance. With falsisimilitude Murphy would ambush the verisimilitude that is claimed in *Ulysses*, and turn Aristotle's imitation of nature into mere fakery.

Besides Murphy, the narrative voice in Eumaeus contributes to the fraudulent aesthetic.


4 Toynbee, pp. 280-81.


6 Bruns, p. 367.

7 Kenner, *Joyce's Voices*, p. 16.

8 The ballad commemorates the Piper's twenty-year absence and eventual return on the verge of death. Gifford, p. 442.

9 *Portrait*, 443.


11 J.S. Atherton, p. 332.


14 Levin, p. 112.
"Submerged tenth" was not coined in a spirit of euphemism, but such it stands when compared with realistic epithets — i.e., "poverty-stricken," "diseased," "starving," and so forth.

Gifford, p. 439.

Portait, pp. 479-80.

Ibid., p. 483.

Ibid., p. 471.

Bruns, p. 383.

Gifford, p. 456.

Bruns, p. 377.

Gilbert, p. 30.

Booth, Rhetoric, pp. 158-59, 300; Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 367-68.

Bruns, p. 380.

Burgess, ReJoyce, p. 168.

Lest such a cross reference seem coincidental, it should be remembered that 1) Joyce was not given to coincidental effects in his writing, and 2) brown is not the stated "colour" for this episode. (None is: Brown shades the language of both Nestor and The Lotus Eaters.)
CHAPTER IV

THE OXEN OF THE SUN: STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF STYLE

Of the late episodes, The Oxen of the Sun offers the most sustained and subtle display of Joyce's countervailing narrative impulse. Against the loose impieties of the present moment -- a bawdy exchange among clever, inebriated young men in a maternity hospital's waiting room -- the author opposes the solemn associations of an entire literary heritage. Not once are we permitted a direct glimpse of the living: Their thoughts and their speech unfold in the styles of authors who are dead. The progression of styles is roughly chronological, leading from Mandeville to Carlyle, and the whole is circumscribed by nearly unreadable stretches of early Latin prose (set down as if literally translated) and by modern street slang. Joyce's prevailing technique is that of parody. But humor is not the unalloyed result: Even when parodied, the borrowed literary styles intrude their overtones of sober accomplishment in the midst of carousal. The reader knows that although the authors are dead, their work survives. He also knows that while Stephen, Bloom and the rest are noisily alive, their works -- their artistic and commercial aspirations -- are passing to oblivion before one's eyes.

From this antagonistic interplay of form and content emerges the thematic and tonal richness of Oxen. The contempt (or "loathing") which might have marred a reader's response to the cynical, if witty, exchanges has been tempered by the sobering literary frames in which they are presented. Unknown to the roisterers, their banter has been recast in tonalities that
range from the inadvertently pathetic to the unintentionally ludicrous. However, the dated writing styles encounter a reciprocal reduction: Divorced from their original subject matter, forced into applications which are either trifling or scurrilous, they now display affectations and vanities that lay hidden in their original settings. Joyce thus purges any admiration (or "desire") which might have tempted us to place the old authors and styles on too lofty a pedestal. This muted strife between Oxen's narrative frame and the actual story suggests a satisfying analogue to the restful incandescence Joyce sought in his "luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure."

But while this formulation might help explain Oxen's curious mood in general, it fails to address a major problem of the chapter: All too frequently, critics have viewed the succession of archaic styles as frustrating gratuitously the reader's wish to experience the action. However, as with the Eumaeus episode, to appreciate fully Joyce's elaborate performance in Oxen, one needs to cultivate a fresh attitude toward plot and theme.

In establishing this new approach to Oxen, I shall pursue two rather different lines of analysis. The first method will explore marked, or seemingly obvious, instances of narrative friction whereby a distinct writing style seems to mock the event it describes. For example, no elaborate literary background is required to sense that John Bunyan's somber, moral spirit is incongruous to Stephen Dedalus's thoughts on whoring, or that Thomas Carlyle's gusty hyperbole verges upon a humorous overstatement concerning the birth of yet another Purefoy urchin. From an analysis of such countervailence — or antagonism between style and subject — will be established a basis for discussing the far subtler extremes to which Joyce has carried this technique in Oxen.
The second method of analysis will examine several sources and what Joyce made of them in his parodies — thematic equations which should control our response to the immediate scene, the thoughts and words ricocheting in the maternity hospital's waiting room. How, for example does an original passage by John Henry Cardinal Newman interact with Joyce's transformation of it — interact in such a way as to countervail a seemingly straightforward commentary in Oxen about sin and guilt? How should the style and thought of a Thomas De Quincey qualify our interpretation of Bloom's imaginative flight as he stares at a bottle of Bass Ale? Because these original texts lie outside Oxen's pages, their thematic relationship to the scene in the Holles St. hospital cannot be called obvious, or even accessible to most readers. Yet the critical value of such a comparison has been well set forth by Robert Adams, who analyses the changes Joyce wrought on Bloomsday newspaper sources, and on data obtained from Thom's Dublin Post Office Directory, 1886:

When we know what basic materials Joyce started with, we may be able to estimate his artistic intent from the changes he imposed on them, the selections he made among them, his omissions.³

Close inspection of certain models is thus a critical tool, rather than an esoteric journey.

Beyond that, even the bookish will need the more precise background of Joyce's own preparation in writing Oxen. Fortunately, exact sources for Joyce's parodies are available through the persistence of A.G. Atherton, who has pointed out the importance of George Saintsbury's History of English Prose rhythm.⁴ My own analysis will dwell more intently upon
the Saintsbury History than Atherton had occasion to, and will take for its focus three different passages and authors — those by Thomas Babington Macaulay, Cardinal Newman, and Thomas De Quincey. While the choice of two Victorians and one Romantic may seem to slight Joyce's other sources, it should be noted that his other specific models are a matter for speculation and dispute. 6 No reasonable doubt can be harbored about Joyce's use of the Saintsbury passages.

By employing two such lines of inquiry — the one based upon clear-cut examples of countervailence within Oxen; the other upon a less obvious thematic qualification supplied by texts external to Oxen — I shall endeavor to make several major points about the episode. Overall: that the dead authors, and their works, should be ranked as strong thematic rivals of the young blades whose clowning more readily assumes our interest. Of the styles themselves, we shall see that even the most broadly satirical application by Joyce — the Bunyanesque commentary of Stephen's dalliance — yields a hybrid tonality and intricacy of theme that can greatly enrich our experience of the chapter. Far from amounting merely to a superficial overlay, these literary mannerisms control, and often distort, the reality they depict. Joyce has contrived a series of linguistic solipsisms. From these claustrophobic worlds of manipulative and idiomatic style, there flows no road to a clear perception of the events in the maternity hospital. But paradoxically, Joyce's countervailing technique — his use of styles which insult his subject and thwart his reader — actually refines our understanding of the camouflaged reality. As our gaze is frustrated, we struggle the more urgently to pierce the veil. From Joyce's ambivalent approach, we gain yet
another access to interpretive freedom, find doors opening to a richer, though superficially obscure reality.

Further, by consulting Joyce's original models, we shall gain our first real presentiment that much of the Oxen chapter lies elsewhere, off the pages. Among these remains will be discovered an alternate subject matter -- a countervailing story line, if you will, that can both qualify and enhance our reading of the corresponding Oxen passage. "Joyce's memory for the words of his own compositions and for those of all writers he admired was prodigious," writes Frank Budgen. "He knew by heart whole pages of Flaubert and of Newman and De Quincey and of many others. Most human memories begin to fail at midnight, and lapse into the vague and a peu pres, but not that of Joyce."7 It is of interest that while writing Oxen Joyce had at hand a volume of De Quincey's selected works. To Budgen, Joyce himself explained, in laying out his intellectual format for Oxen, that the progression of styles is "linked back at each part subtly with some foregoing episode of the day . . . ."8 For reasons to be explained in their appropriate place, our analysis will take us from De Quincey to the Calypso chapter of Ulysses.

But first to the problems of Joyce's use of his dead authors, to their violated thoughts and parodied styles. Even the most clearly satirical and humorous of these stylistic distortions, the Bunyanesque passage, places a significant demand on the reader's ability to arrive at Joyce's "still unuttered" meaning. In this parody Stephen recalls how, even though "Pious" and "Chaste" had pointed the righteous course, the alert whore "Bird-in-the-hand" had then

beguiled him wrongways from the true path by her flatteries that she said to him, as Ho, you pretty
man, turn aside hither and I will show you a brave place, and she lay at him so flatteringly that she had him in her grot which is named Two-in-the-Bush or, by some learned, Carnal Concupiscence. (395-96/389)

The inadequacy of Bunyan's allegorical style and intense religiosity to cope with Stephen's thoughts on whoring is unquestionable. The known facts of Bunyan's imprisonment for nonconformist preaching after the Restoration, his evangelical zeal, his noble humility -- all clash uncompromisingly with the reader's awareness of Stephen's (and Joyce's) sophisticated contempt for ethical and ecclesiastical certitude. Bunyan would not have understood Stephen's vision of God as "corpsechewer." (581/566)

Yet even in this least debatable instance of Joyce's countervailing narrative technique, the author has produced a satire that seems double-edged. This mismating of sensibilities has rendered Stephen's peccadillo the more absurd, ridiculing his own habit of ridicule. But what remains a subject for speculation is the precise target of Joyce's amusement -- Stephen's worldliness, or an idiosyncratic prose style from the past, or an outmoded piety. Additionally, the manner of Pilgrim's Progress, used to convey Stephen's primordial terror at a sudden lightning bolt in the street, seems far less amusing, and even strangely apt:

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. (395/389)

There is still humor in the mating of an archaic style to the temperament of a young man who would so bitterly resent this liberty. But mortality is not a matter for honest laughter, and Stephen -- like Joyce, who also feared lightning -- has been scared momentarily into Bunyanesque sobriety. In this instance the allegorical method evokes a universal dilemma
with unanswerable simplicity and force. While diminished by the association with Bunyan's "Christian," Stephen has been paradoxically aggrandized by a nobler link to "Everyman." The mood of an age when duty, kindness, reverence for the mysterious forces of life and death all seemed simple imperatives — an age preserved in the noble cadence of the Authorized Version of the Bible and emulated by Bunyan — has been starkly evoked by the stylistic indignity (or is it ennoblement?) which Joyce imposes on his cultivated hero. Finally, it is the very suitability of Bunyan's primitive ethic to Stephen's growing guilt and despair (however much concealed by a theatrical atheism) which adds pathos to the mixed tonality of the passage.

Thus, a relatively obvious manipulation by Joyce of a dated mode of expression turns out to be quite complex, as is seen everywhere in the critical divergence concerning Oxen's techniques. Edmund Wilson thinks Joyce in his parodies is saying of past literary styles, "how naive or pretentious they seem!" Burgess believes the styles betray a humorous inability to cope in a modern setting. Blamires, however, notes the occasional suitability of a style to the event described. A clear example is the section in Walter Pater's intense manner, where the "brief alert shock" of bowls colliding on a "shaven space of lawn" sounds for Bloom a choice victory — and for Henry Menton a permanent affront (as we have learned at the close of the Hades chapter). The style's crisp focus suits the razor-fine emotions of the two men — one jubilant, the other enraged, and both forced to preserve a civilized silence before an audience of potentially critical women.

Nevertheless the styles and their relevance vary greatly, as do their thematic and tonal relations to the subject matter. What Oxen does do is
force us to view the present through a stained-glass window of the past that
distorts and blurs, but which paradoxically lends an enriched perspective,
or "parallax," to both the past and the present. Strange dignity may be
conferred on the immediate action by the borrowed literary styles. In turn,
the vanished authors and their coffined thoughts can also be rejuvenated by
the here and now.

So variable is the thematic interplay between style and subject in the
Oxen chapter that language itself assumes the stature of a powerful and
mercurial persona. Sometimes appropriate to its subject, often hostile, this
linguistic manifestation of the "presiding imagination" controls our vision
of reality with rude and seemingly inescapable vitality. A comparison of the
chapter's two differing descriptions of lightning bolts should make clear
the dilemma Joyce poses. First comes the Viconian flash, cited much earlier
to suggest the poetic intensity of which Joyce is capable:

A black crack of noise in the street here, alack, bawled,
back. Loud on left Thor thundered: in anger awful the
hammerhurler. Came now the storm that hist his heart.

(394/388)

It is difficult to imagine more appropriate language for capturing the ter-
rors of sudden lightning and the nearly instantaneous thunder which accom-
panies it. Joyce's lines mix heavily-stressed monosyllables, onomatopoeia
and inchoate energy -- all sped by rhyme and alliteration to the rhythmically
satisfying "hammerhurler." The style here amounts to a virulent manipulation
of what Joyce termed in his letter to Budgen the "double-thudding Anglo-Saxon
motif." While a certain comic exaggeration of the poetic devices can be
sensed, these lines nevertheless strike a chord of archetypal fear, and
seem far more than a remote atavism of language that chronicles the history
of the tribe.
Soon, however, comes a description of the same storm (and presumably the same lightning bolt) in the matronly style of a Pepys:

... one great stroke with a long thunder and in a brace of shakes all scamper pellmell within door for the smoking shower, the men making shelter for their straws with a clout or kerschief, womenfolk skipping off with kirtles caught up soon as the pour came. (397/390)

Fear is here controlled by fastidiousness, by a civilizing concern for trifling and nearly photographic detail, a solipsism imposed by style: The reader cannot pierce these lines to reach the storm's majesty. Terror masks itself behind clouts and kerchiefs; sublimity vanishes in a "brace of shakes" amid a scampering and a skipping. The style of the seventeenth century diarist has removed mankind from the cave and placed it in the precincts of the Royal Society.

There is no escape and no compromise, Joyce seems to be saying. Our vision of reality is governed entirely by the dead author's style and his choice of words; by the personality that style projects, and the overtones those words and phrases carry. The final phrase of the Pepys -- "soon as the pour came" -- contrasts radically with the description of the rain's onset at the close of the Viconian lines: "Came now the storm that hist his heart." (394/388) In the Pepys passage, the subordinating syntax, as well as the homely idiom, deflects any appeal to our emotions. By contrast, in the Vico, such linguistic tools as rhetorical inversion ("Came now"), synaesthesia ("a black crack of noise"), and consonance ("hist," "heart") all play strongly upon our emotions. (The word "hist" in particular: It is a dialectical variant of "hoist"; it is also an interjection used to attract someone's attention, and, within its present
context, the word also provides a fine onomatopoeic suggestion of a sudden gush of rain.) Beyond their identical subjects, the two brief descriptions are further linked by repetition of the word, "came," suggesting the precision with which the author composed his little tract on epistemological futility. We can never know reality, Joyce warns us, so long as our perceptions are governed by highly individualized styles of writing.

Still, the extent to which style masks reality in Oxen can be over-emphasized. At least once Joyce proves how the most repellent of literary manners can heighten, through narrative countervailence, our perception of a significant present moment. The style is that of Thomas Henry Huxley, the English naturalist who energetically espoused the findings of Darwin. Huxley's lucid expository prose and characteristic defense of Nature as "bountiful mother of humanity" are now carried to wicked extremes, as Joyce applies the Huxlian formula in caricature to any youngster, seemingly healthy, who "succumbs unaccountably in early childhood." (419/412) The death at eleven days of Bloom's son Rudy springs inevitably to mind, and the Joyce/Huxley justification of such a mishap makes our hearts ache and our flesh crawl: "Nature, we may rest assured, has her own good and cogent reasons for whatever she does . . . ." In all probability, such early deaths are due to "some law of anticipation" whereby germ-infected children tend to disappear at an increasingly early stage of development,

an arrangement, which, though productive of pain to some of our feelings (notably the maternal) is nevertheless, some of us think, in the long run beneficial to the race in general in securing thereby the survival of the fittest. (419/412)

From there, the vindication of "natural law" degenerates into a critique of Stephen Dedalus as "morbidminded esthete and embryo philosopher," and concludes in the patronizing fashion of a grade school mistress lecturing her class on the marvels and beauties of sex. Here, Joyce's savage
parody brings home the significance, even the poignance, of the book's first meaningful exchange between Stephen and Bloom. The Joyce/Huxley/schoolmarm voice informs us that Stephen

is reported by eyewitnesses as having stated that once a woman has let the cat into the bag (an esthetic allusion, presumably, to one of the most complicated and marvellous of all nature's processes, the act of sexual congress) she must let it out again or give it life, as he phrased it, to save her own. At the risk of her own was the telling rejoinder of his interlocutor none the less effective for the moderate and measured tone in which it was delivered. (My emphases: 420/413)

One may search vainly for a more succinct, even a similar acknowledgment by Joyce in the Oxen chapter of the mortal dangers in childbirth. All else in Oxen has been, and will be, either a desecration of motherhood ("0, lust, our refuge and our strength ") (426/419) or some fulsome tribute to orthodox parentage and the newborn ("that mite of God's clay, the fruit of their lawful embraces.") (421/413) But with the Huxley, the muted declaration of a dilemma inherent in childbirth springs upon us with the force of a terrifying revelation. Joyce makes us realize that Huxley's all-wise Nature -- the "bountiful mother of humanity" in his famed essay -- actually afflicts rational beings, as it did Leopold, with imbecile alternatives, in the struggle between dread, hope and pain that attends childbirth.

Predictably, Joyce's acknowledgement of this universal terror lies almost hidden under layers of narrative indirection: the fraudulent extensions of Huxlian logic, the countervailing winds of a narrative viewpoint so hostile to its subject matter that the reader, surprised by a sudden emotional truth, cannot reject either the emotion or the truth as a mere sentimental indulgence on the part of Joyce. The hostility of the narrative viewpoint lies in the scorn feigned by the Huxley-monster for Stephen, who "can scarcely distinguish an acid from an alkali" (421/413), but whose rebellion against the "omnivorous [not "omniscient"] being" that is Nature (420/412), we must sympathize with. Further complicating our response to this burlesque, the most trenchant in
The Oxen of the Sun, is the fact that Stephen's and Bloom's exchange is of singular importance: One of the few sincere pieces of conversation to be heard amid "the general vacant hilarity of the assembly" (416/399) it broaches the motif of paternity, which the author will increasingly manipulate in his portraiture of the evolving relationship between the two men, and is an unusual meeting of minds between Odysseus and Telemacus on one of their few planes of mutual awareness.

That such a signal moment in Ulysses should be nearly buried beneath an effluvium of parodied Huxley provides among the most concentrated instances of Joyce's fraudulent narrative technique in Ulysses. So repellent is the narrative viewpoint embodied in the Huxley-monster that the reader's entire ethical spirit thirsts for truth. Truth lies in the veiled remarks which pass between two men, not in nature's ambient mire. In line with remarks made earlier about Joyce's countervailing narrative technique, we can say that the clash between natural science and human sentiment undermines somewhat the pretentions of both, but also that the juxtaposition of two so alien viewpoints heightens, paradoxically, our awareness of each. It is important also to note that not only has Joyce ransacked the styles of the dead, but also their specific ideas and subject matter. Again important: Stephen's commentary on the "omnivorous being" who eats corpulent politicians and cancerous females is as intellectually futile as the Huxley vein is repulsive in its dismissal of human emotions. Always Joyce seems to be toying with a destruction of meaning in these late chapters, the better to dislodge his reader from received attitudes, and to clear the way for creative thought. The borrowed idiom of Huxley has been a tool in this process. The nonsense about bountiful Nature has not in this case
disguised or distorted reality, but rather conferred a keener appreciation
of that reality which lies beneath the verbal oil-slick of "modern science."

(419/412)

Still more vigorously, an overlay of inflated praise can enforce our
awareness of a pathetic reality. When the Purefoy baby is finally born,
the result of nine days' labor, Joyce heralds the event in the disparate
styles of Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, and John Donne. First, Joyce
adopts the sentimental vein of a Dickens:

... she wishes only one blessing more, to have her
dear Doady there with her to share her joy ... . (420/413)

Then he lauds her husband in the hyperbolic manner of a Carlyle:

By heaven, Theodore Purefoy, thou hast done a doughty
deed and no botch! ... . Art drooping under thy load,
bemoiled with butcher's bills at home and ingots (not
thine!) in the counting house. Head up! ... . Copula-
tion without population! No, say I! Herod's slaughter
of the innocents were the truer name. (423/416)

And finally seasons this stew with John Donne at his saltiest:

Thou sawest thy America, thy lifetask, and didst charge
to cover like the transpontine bison. (424/416)\(^{17}\)

For all their exaggerative praise, the above lines amount to a defla-
tion. But of exactly what? The maudlin excesses of a Dickens, or the
deadening fecundity of the Purefoys? The work-for-work's-sake ethic of a
Carlyle, or the benighted plodding of a husband whose wife will ween yet
another Purefoy child to Dublin's streets? The lusty bachelorhood of young
Jack Donne, or the mechanically procreative drives of Purefoy wedlock?
Further, can we even assert with confidence that Joyce's disparagement
lights upon authors and Purefoy alone, or that his treatment of them is
unmitigated by certain glints of admiration? Might not Leopold Bloom, the
truant husband, also be particularly numbered among the satirical marks?
For some ten years he has abstained from normal sexual relations with his wife, because of the psychic trauma at the death of his newly-born son. He has once again committed the sin of Onan, a transgression not to be lightly dismissed when viewed within Oxen's controlling theme of reverence for childbirth.

Primarily, however, I think the stylistic inflation heightens our awareness of the Purefoys' pinched lifestyle, a benighted struggle for existence which is reflected in their plan to name their latest child after an "influential third cousin" in the Treasury Remembrancer's office. (421/414) Again, we note Joyce's impulse, through fraudulent narrative statement, to distill the essences of characters, situations and events indirectly -- in terms of what they are not. Yet the formula works both ways: Dickens and Carlyle would never have applied their sentimental extravagance to so bleak a subject as the Purefoy population explosion. The lover's address to his mistress ("O my America! my new-found land") in John Donne's "Elegie XIX" is diametrically opposed in spirit to the themes and counter-themes which now surround it: those of sentimental parenthood and the heroic morality of work, and their reverse -- indiscriminate childbirth and sordid drudgery. Is not our perception of an authentic Dickens, Carlyle or Donne refined by Joyce's countervailing application of their high styles to so dingy a subject as the Purefoy treadmill? And do we not appreciate more fully Bloom's true paternal quandary -- his male line faces extinction -- when faced by such a glorious and glib disparagement of it?

The narrative presentation of such countervailing themes, made possible by associations clinging to the borrowed styles of two major authors and a poet, cannot be called a truly subtle example of Joyce's dialectical
technique. The planned collision between subject and malappropriate style is exaggerative and invites commentary based on obvious premises. However, in the midst of such abrasive countervailence, Joyce has posed a subtle qualification: While Bloom might deserve censure within the intellectual framework of Oxen, Joyce cannot have meant his reader to take this ridicule for an expression of absolute disapproval. Bloom tried hard to bring life into the world. He was wounded by the death of Rudy, and evidently feels compunction at further attempts. Conversely, the Purefoys have spawned numerous children, but they evidently feel no civilized inhibitions about spawning more. As Robert Adams puts it: "Molly, like the perceptive reader, is properly horrified at the vision of Mrs. Purefoy blindly breeding brats into squalor." The Purefoys cannot logically be praised for their mindless productivity that resembles the mitosis of simple cells, or perhaps the disconcerting proliferation of Banquo's ghost. Joyce has created a narrative environment which censures and praises indiscriminately. What we know to be true, the "presiding imagination" of Oxen tells us is not, and a recognition of the subtleties imposed by this artfully-perverse narrative strategy should inform any adequate reading of this chapter.

What is the target of Joyce's satire -- the action at the Holles St. hospital, or the past styles and associations emanating from the dead authors and their themes? One problem we face is the misleading term, "parody," which restrictively suggests that Joyce in The Oxen of the Sun has merely attacked particular literary works and styles, imitating their features and applying them to "trivial or grossly discordant materials."
Thus, Walter Pater's magnetic style and subject -- the Italian Renaissance -- are said to be parodied when borrowed to describe Bloom's silly feud with Henry Menton. However, Joyce's satirical approach is double-edged. And parody is but one of two contrasting forms of "high burlesque." In the form which is opposed to parody, ridicule focuses upon the subject matter, rather than on the high style used to convey it. As M.H. Abrams explains: "An incongruity arises from treating a trivial subject in an elevated and serious manner . . . ." In a manner the reverse of parody, Pater's elevated style can be said to burlesque Bloom's trivial feud on the bowling green with Menton. Thus Joyce has achieved a satire that is symmetrical. The antithetical forms of "high burlesque" prevail in equal measure. Bloom is dunned, Pater is cashiered. Such satirical ambiguity is to be found in the passages discussed earlier: Is Joyce the more determined to raise the laugh at Carlyle's bluff positive thinking, or at Theodore Purefoy's benighted fecundity; at Huxley's deification of Mother Nature, or at Stephen's callow address to this "omnivorous being"? We cannot say.

Our inability to fix the locus of Joyce's targets -- his true subject matter -- imparts to Oxen's burlesques a transcendental dimension not to be found in traditional satire. While most great satires tend to be somewhat double-edged, one cannot say that Dryden meant equally to burlesque the biblical story of David (2 Samuel xv-xviii) along with England's contemporary political scene in Absalom and Achitophel, or that Pope was as concerned with demolishing the conventions of heroic epics as he was with scoring the vanity and frivolity of high society in The Rape of the Lock. For that matter, were we to view Ulysses as a type of satire, it would be impossible to maintain
that Joyce meant as earnestly to deflate Homer as he did to employ associations from the *Odyssey* in a critique, or backhanded evaluation, of modern times. What distinguishes Oxen's burlesques from others, is that Joyce balances his equation: The young ribalds and the accomplished authors are both primary targets. Neither can be viewed as subordinate.

This satirical ambiguity -- or symmetry -- provides a further release from the solipsism imposed by style, forcing us to acknowledge a richer, more complex reality than has been recognized. In his remark about Joyce's application of Macaulay's Warren Hastings to the Holles St. shenanigans, A. G. Atherton aptly suggests this transcendental dimension of Oxen:

> The weighty dignified sentences contrast significantly with the trivialities they describe, and yet the criticism may be taken in the opposite direction, to suggest that Macaulay's description gave undeserved glamour to a piece of political jobbery. 21

Such symmetry in Joyce's satirical thrust becomes still more apparent when we inspect the original Macaulay passage in Saintsbury. Macaulay had written about a gathering of the British Empire's rulers and officialdom in the "great hall of William Rufus," the seat of a "spectacle which no other country in the world could present." Joyce in turn adopts Macaulay's manner to chronicle a rowdy group gathered under the "high hall of Horne's House." (417/410) In language saturated with euphemism, he describes "the primrose elegance and townbred manners of Malachi Roland St. John Mulligan," and includes an encomium of Stephen Dedalus:

> Lastly at the head of the board was the young poet who found a refuge from his labors of pedagogy and metaphysical inquisition in the convivial atmosphere of Socratic discussion . . . . (417/410)
Without recourse to the Macaulay, we might readily assume that the thrust of Joyce's "high burlesque" is aimed at the tale proper; that the ridicule centers chiefly upon the two young men, whose clownishness and intellectual nihilism is underscored by Joyce's fraudulent, and countervailing, application of a grandiloquent writing style. Parody seems minimal, with the Victorian's elevated manner and subject (the glories of the British Empire) serving as a convenient tool for trimming the irreverent gang down to size. But a closer look at Macaulay's piece of "political jobbery" reveals the precision and energy with which Joyce attacked his alternate subject.

In fact, we are doubly surprised to discover how many ingredients of the original passage themselves verge upon the ludicrous. Macaulay cloaks all signs of human blemish in abstraction:

There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art.

And when Macaulay supplies concrete detail, the effect becomes as absurd as Joyce's inflated paeans to Gaelic heritage in the Cyclops episode:

There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague.

Can Macaulay have seriously meant such puffery? Out of these two quotations, Joyce has composed the following tribute to his young rowdies:

The debaters were the keenest in the land, the theme they were engaged on the loftiest and most vital. The high hall of Horne's House had never beheld an assembly so representative and so varied nor had the old rafters of that establishment ever listened to a language so encyclopedic. (417/410)

He has seized upon Macaulay's penchant for abstract superlatives, and has pinpointed the over-blown tones in Macaulay's "representatives of every
science and every art" with his own wonderfully vague "assembly so representa-
tive and so varied" -- even preserving with a "so . . . so" the pompous
parallelism of Macaulay's prepositional phrases: "of every . . . . of
every." And just as those egregious "rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague"
hover in a ludicrous personification over Macaulay's scintillating society,
so the "old rafters" of Horne's House respond with alert timbered ears to
the keen and "encyclopedic" debate among Joyce's young reprobates.

Viewing such artfully distorted borrowings of Macaulay's language and
subject, we are less inclined to relegate Joyce's parody to a subordinate
status. Even the slightest alteration strikes sparks: "Neither military
nor civil pomp was wanting," Macaulay had written elsewhere in the passage,
thus supplying the sort of archly imposing understatement that requires
little parodic amplification, as witness Joyce: "Neither place nor council
was lacking in dignity." (417/410) However, the pointed assertion of
"dignity" attacks the general assumption that councils are routinely digni-
ified. Simultaneously, this abortive claim reaches back into the source,
encouraging us to question the "dignity" of Macaulay's splashy "military"
and "civil pomp," and the integrity of that author's less-than-critical
stance. Joyce's parody of Macaulay is everywhere vigorous, precise. Learn-
ing of such craftsmanship with the aid of the Saintsbury History, we suspect
that Joyce might have considered inadequate a reading of Oxen which neglect-
ed a close inspection of his textual models.

A further instance of Joyce's devotion -- or misdevotion -- to the past
authors occurs during the curiously evocative lines which imitate the style
of John Henry Cardinal Newman. Again, the source is Saintsbury. Without the
original one might assume that Joyce has this time abandoned his simultaneous
ridicule of both present and past. For the moment, his concern for the com-
versational acrobatics in the waitingroom is dropped, and a plaintive
tone and seemingly humorless decorum replace it. But comparison of the
two passages merely reinforces the conviction of Joyce's ubiquitous
mockery. It also affords a dramatic example of the way in which Joyce
can distort the dominant theme of his source to create a theme of his own,
born from the ferment of antagonistic ideas and motives. This is Joyce's
treatment of the Newman passage:

There are sins or (let us call them as the world calls them) evil memories which are hidden away by man in the
darkest places of the heart but they abide there and wait. He may suffer their memory to grow dim, let them be as
though they had not been and all but persuade himself that they were not or at least were otherwise. Yet a
chance word will call them forth suddenly and they will rise up to confront him in the most various circumstances,
a vision or a dream, or while timbrel and harp sooth his senses or amid the cool silver tranquility of the evening
or at the feast at midnight when he is now filled with wine. Not to insult over him will the vision come as over
one that lies under her wrath, not for vengeance to cut him off from the living but shrouded in the piteous vesture
of the past, silent, remote, reproachful. (421/414)

These lines provide a somber and memorable interlude to Oxen's thematic
strife between past and present, a point of repose amid the buzzing of bor-
rowed writing techniques, and seemingly a reasonable tribute to the Anglican
convert to Roman Catholicism whose prose style Joyce admired. Further compli-
ment seems paid Newman through Joyce's brief abandonment of events in the
waiting room, demonstrating as Atherton notes the "stylist in vacuo" and
clearly laying the groundwork for the narrative method of the Circe episode,
where a "chance word" will call forth legion "sins," "evil memories" and
past embarrassments in the minds of Stephen and Bloom. Vaguely, one might
suppose Joyce has distilled from a prelate's logical preoccupation with
mankind's woe, a sympathetic, if imitative, measure of humility.
Here however are the lines from which Joyce captures so plangent a mood and so penetrating a psychology about the revisitation of sins and the persistence of sad memories. What a difference in subject!

Let us consider, too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages, which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others, which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness.

Newman then draws a conclusion that surely touched a competitive nerve in Joyce:

Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years with a power over the mind, and a charm which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival. 24

Newman's version speaks neither of "sins" nor of "evil memories," but rather of classic authors and the phenomenon by which their writings return to haunt the casual scholar late in life. Because of the considerable lengths of these passages, Joyce's close adherence to the mood, structure and substance (barring literature!) of Newman's eloquent defense of the classics may not be quickly apparent. Yet the matching elements are precise.

Joyce's "sins" and "evil memories" are hidden away by man in the "darkest places of his heart." There they bide their time. Likewise, Newman's mechanical schoolboy "gets by heart" his classical passages by Homer or Horace. These too lie dormant. The "evil memories" in Joyce may be suffered to "grow dim," allowing the sinner to persuade himself "they
had not been or at least were otherwise." Similarly, in Newman the classic lines wait patiently in the brain of his facile scholar "as if he had never before known them." For Joyce's sinner, the misdeed will return "shrouded in the piteous vesture of the past, silent, remote, reproachful." And for Newman's schoolboy, the long-dormant passages will "pierce him" with their "sad earnestness and vivid exactness." Thus in both instances, that of sinner and scholar, the delayed recognition of a past misdeed or archaic passage is abrupt and somewhat painful. To generalize further: Both Joyce's "sins" and Newman's "classic authors" lie waiting to confront the older man with their profound and sorrowful disclosures. Yet more than a private joke is being played on Newman. Thematically, what does Joyce seem to be saying? By inspecting Joyce's willful alterations of an original passage, we see intimate patterns of the artist's thinking begin to stand out. These patterns form a sort of thematic equation, each of whose halves means little without the other.

But what "sins" have the dead authors committed? How do their immortal lines embody "evil memories"? Earlier I suggested that the dead styles of the Oxen chapter enforced a controlled and insufficient vision of reality from which it is nearly impossible to escape — a dilemma exemplified by the trivializing description of the storm in the manner of Pepys. For Joyce, the fabricator of multiple and complex realities through the narrative techniques of his "mixed style" novel, and for the author of Ulysses, whose manipulation of Homeric myth helped make "the modern world possible for art," the immemorial persistence of frozen styles and dead art forms would make them analogous to recurring "sins" and "evil memories" — spectors which distract us from facing a complex reality, and which can stunt the artist-infant in his crib.
On this Joyce/Newman equation many refinements are possible. Perhaps the most intriguing is the relationship between artistic creation and sinning. An uncharacteristic break in the parallels between the two passages provides a clue: the alteration of "chance" in Newman from an agent in the birth of deathless literature, to Joyce's catalytic "chance word" which revives "evil memories." (An accurate parallel in the Joyce would have employed "chance" as a cause of sins, not their later revisitation.) Newman calls the lines written by a Homer or a Horace

the birth of some chance morning or evening at an
Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills . . .

Joyce writes of "sins" and "evil memories" that

a chance word will call them forth suddenly and
they will rise up to confront him in the most
various circumstances, a vision or a dream . . .

And he would therefore seem to be drawing a connection between the "chance" mystery of Newman's artistic inspiration, and the sudden recognition — equally mysterious and a matter of "chance" — of sins that have matured into remorseful memories. Further: to be implying that creative awareness is contingent upon some mysterious access to "evil memories"; that a mature grasp of "sin" — whether in the individual or the race — might be instrumental in the "chance" birth of great literature. Of course, the formula works both ways, as stated before: Great literature, past authors, frozen styles return to haunt civilization like "sins" or "evil memories." In this sense, we can view Joyce's use of dead authors and outmoded styles in the Oxen chapter as a gesture of exorcism. Figuratively speaking he roasts the hides of his spokesmen, as did Odysseus's crew the cattle of Helios.

Even the seeming tribute to Newman, then, turns out to be a mixed compliment at best. While retaining the plaintive tone of the original,
Joyce has substituted a portentous and shrewd babble about "sins" and "evil memories" — matters which Newman's sense of intellectual dignity forbade him to dwell upon. Joyce has indirectly attacked the sobriety of Newman's stance on literature, and implied that "sins," only drearily acknowledged in the Cardinal's most remembered literature, have been catalysts in providing the best of the world's writing. The recognition of such themes follows from the realization that Joyce has maintained a critical dialogue with his dead authors, and that much of Oxen's intellectual ferment exists off its pages, in potential, awaiting the comparative analysis which the Saintsbury History makes possible.

Let us try to penetrate this elusive territory by looking at another specific case — Joyce's handling of Thomas De Quincey. Perhaps the best way to start is by offering Joyce's version of the English prose stylist. In Oxen, the passage is climactic. (414/407)

After admonishing Bloom for his refusal to conceive another son, the narrative voice adopts the manner of De Quincey, intermingled with fragments of Bloom's drifting imagination. The chatter of irreverent youth fades, and Bloom's soul is "wafted" back through generations to a region where grey twilight ever descends, never falls on wide sagegreen pasturefields, shedding her dusk, scattering a perennial dew of stars.

On these surrealistic pastures, Bloom's daughter and wife appear as horses, trapped in the past yet conveying prophetic tidings:

She follows her mother with ungainly steps, a mare leading her fillyfoal. Twilight phantoms are they yet moulded in prophetic grace of structure, slim shapely haunches, a supple tendonous neck, the meek apprehensive skull. They fade, sad phantoms: all is gone.

After his horselike family fades, Bloom's Eastern paradise — Agendath
Netaim — turns into a "wasteland" beset by threatening animals:

Netaim, the golden, is no more. And on the highway of the clouds they come, muttering thunder of rebellion, the ghosts of beasts.

Stalked and goaded by "Parallax," the astronomical term whose meaning has eluded Bloom throughout the day, the vengeful bestiary troops toward the Dead Sea ("Lacus Mortis"), while voicing their complaint:

Ominous, revengeful zodiacal host! They moan, passing upon the clouds, horned and capricorned ... snouter and crawler ... all their moving moaning multitude, murderers of the sun.

The beasts drink the waters of the salt sea, remain "unslaked," but are then displaced by the return of the "equine portant," which looms over the house of Virgo. Amid flattering associations derived from the Virgin Mary and Flotow's "Martha," Bloom's daughter rises to the status of heavenly constellation:

And, lo, wonder of metempsychosis, it is she ... the bride, ever virgin. It is she, Martha, thou lost one, Millicent, the young, the dear, the radiant ... a queen among the Pleiades ... shod in sandals of bright gold, coiffed with a veil of what do you call it gossamer!

Milly's veil winds itself into a portentous "writing" that undergoes symbolic "metamorphoses," resting finally within the constellation of Taurus the Bull:

It floats, it flows about her starborn flesh and loose it streams emerald, sapphire, mauve and heliotrope ... winding, coiling, simply swirling, writhing in the skies a mysterious writing till after a myriad metamorphoses of symbol, it blazes, Alpha, a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus.

For future analysis I have divided the De Quincey parody into six sections, as follows: I: ("The voices blend and fuse"); II: ("She follows her mother with ungainly steps"); III: ("Agendath is a wasteland"); IV: ("Huuh! Hark! Huuh! Parallax stalks behind"); V: ("Onward to the Dead sea they tramp"); VI: ("It floats, it flows about her starborn flesh").
Reality has been viewed through the eyes of an opium eater. People become horses, horses fade to vengeful beasts. Personalities merge, dissipate, but are then reinstated as heavenly constellations. As in De Quincey, the absurdities of dream logic are everywhere felt in the Joyce parody, fluent, baroquely creative, and yet able to harness isolated motifs into a unified statement. The final blaze of symbolism as a "ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus" is magnificent, and combines, as Atherton notes, "lingam and yoni in one symbol," itself presenting "the underlying symbol of the chapter, and placing it in the depths of space." Still more however is to be seen, a resonance of thematic detail still imperfectly understood.

A look first at the De Quincey model in Saintsbury offers a start. The passage which is clearly Joyce's immediate inspiration for the parody is from De Quincey's "The English Mail Coach," and treats the author's recollection of a kiss stolen on the moving vehicle from a toothsome young lady named Fanny. To De Quincey, the coachman, who is Fanny's grandfather, resembles a crocodile because both man and beast — the one too fat and the other too long — cannot face about with enough speed to embarrass their quarry. Regretting the flight of years, De Quincey writes:

Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, uprises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June; or if I think for a moment of the rose in June, uprises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June; then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus, roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile in a royal livery of scarlet and gold with sixteen capes; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath mail. And suddenly we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial sculptured with the hours that
mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host. Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough Forest, amongst the lovely households of the roe-deer; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the thickets are rich with roses; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful legendary host of semi-legendary animals — griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes — till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demonic natures, whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest, one fair female hand with the forefinger pointing, in sweet sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.29

As we can see, visions that fluctuate between glory and horror, the surrealistic encroachment of the animal kingdom upon the human, heavenly hieroglyphs, the emotional perspective supplied by the passage of years — all are De Quincey's ingrained mode. Joyce has exuberantly employed such motifs in his parody. Both versions offer sentimental retrospectives of days past and spirits departed: Bloom's wife Molly and his maturing daughter Milly have moved beyond the capacity to evoke pastoral cameos of "a mare leading her fillyfoal." De Quincey's Fanny has put "forty years" between her present self and the nubile flirt of the mail coach. Both authors interrupt the fond recollections with a "dreadful legendary host" (De Quincey's) of beasts that are soon tamed by a return, in heavenly form, of the departed spirits. For De Quincey's "vision of fighting images," Joyce offers a profusion of seeming symbols. For the earlier writer's poignant "vast emblazonry of human charities that have perished," Joyce supplies a father's belated appreciation of his daughter's Golden Age of innocence — "Millicent, the young, the dear, the radiant" — and his recognition of the loss inflicted by passing years: "They fade, sad phantoms: all is gone."
But although these parallels are of interest, much more may be delved into — a far more intricate, disciplined and variegated statement by Joyce about De Quincey's art, Bloom's frame of mind, even Joyce's approach to narrative technique.

To begin with, Joyce has invested Bloom's hallucination — and by implication De Quincey's art — with various climactic aspects. Like a well-structured paragraph, Joyce's parody has a beginning, middle and end. It combines rapture and nightmare. No other moment in Oxen is so clearly defined, nor so imaginatively intense. And it is Joyce's closest approach to interior monologue in an episode which has abandoned that technique.

Furthermore, a major theme of Oxen is here resolved: All who have committed a "crime" against fecundity by "sterilizing the act of coition" are condemned forthrightly in these lines as "murderers of the sun" (so Odysseus's men faced retribution for slaughtering the Sun-god's cattle, emblems of fertility). Joyce has also signalized his parody by dropping several uncharacteristic hints about his narrative art, hints embodied in the prominently displayed terms: "parallax," "metempsychosis," "metamorphoses of symbol." Finally, Joyce seems to have permitted Bloom an unstained vision of female glory — his daughter Milly's ascension into the heavens amid a host of flattering symbolic associations, both secular and religious. While it is not like Joyce to permit Bloom — or anyone else — unqualified glimpses of splendor in Ulysses, the rude winds of narrative countervailence seem here to have died down. Only the muttering beasts trouble Bloom's idealized reverie, yet they soon pass.

But there are also questions. First of all, why has Joyce so pointedly called attention to narrative techniques — "parallax," "metempsychosis," "metamorphoses of symbol" — all of which he seems here to ridicule, rather
than display? In the opening chapter, I have suggested that "parallax," the astronomical term whose meaning eludes Bloom all during the day, can be taken as an analogy for the various types of narrative perspective Joyce achieves through both fraudulent and countervailing narrative techniques. In the De Quincey parody, "parallax" is personified as an implacable fate which drives a vengeful bestiary, just why we are not sure. Obviously, the "wonder of metempsychosis" to which Joyce refers would include the apparition of Molly and Milly as "mare" and "fillyfoal," their merging with Flotow's idealized "Martha," and Milly's reemergence as Queen of Heaven among the Pleiades (i.e., the Virgin Mary), and these events suggest a lofty "metempsychosis" by which Bloom's daughter is frozen in eternal youth and virginity. But beyond a father's wishful daydream, what thematic logic do these altered states convey? As to the "myriad metamorphoses of symbol," Joyce suggests, but does not illustrate, this protean technique. He clusters a variety of motifs and entities — the color of dead Rudy's face ("mauve"), Boylan's seaside song ("simply swirling"), the Virgin Mary ("harbinger of the daystar"), the prime mover ("Alpha") and more — in such a way that their relationship seems tenuous, and their final location on the forehead of Taurus mystifying. Instead of "myriad" changes wrought upon a single "symbol," there appears to be a littering of the text with many symbols.

Even more fundamental questions are the following, which neither the Joyce text nor the Saintsbury model can satisfactorily answer. Why have Molly and Milly appeared as horses? Why does their idyllic tableau fade, or Bloom's Agendath Netaim turn into a wasteland? What accounts for the repugnant diversity of Joyce's bestiary? Only cattle mutter revenge in the
Homer: "The skins were creeping, and the flesh bellowing upon the spits, both the roast and the raw, and there was a sound as the voice of kine." Moreover, Joyce's zodiacal menagerie marches with an air of impending Doomsday not to be found in the Homer, which has more the flavor of an eerie conspiracy ("... the gods showed forth signs and wonders to my company"). Furthermore, what is the significance of the "mysterious writing" composed from Milly's "veil" which ends the passage in a symbolic landslide "upon the forehead of Taurus" — the zodiacal sign of artistic, financial, and amatory prowess? Finally, can so triumphant a daydream by Bloom about his daughter's destiny have escaped Joyce's instinct to countervail — or purge — extreme statements from his art?

In the main, De Quincey's "Roses and Fanny" passage provides no specific answers. To argue that the horse-phantoms merely parody De Quincey's more delicate "lovely households of the roe-deer" would be to accuse Joyce of one-dimensional, even simple-minded jest. Because Fanny's countenance fades into a vision of griffins and dragons does not seem a satisfying reason for the oblation of Bloom's pastoral household, and the desecration of his idealized Agendath Netaim by beasts. Not within the context of Ulysses.

Yet the De Quincey model does offer some clues, together with a tentative confirmation of what we already suspect: that the author forever mistrusts — so countervails — all aspects of the idealized and ludicrous sublime.

I specifically refer to the linkage created by the similar culminations in De Quincey "eternal writing" and in Joyce of "mysterious writing." Joyce offers no explicit commentary, but De Quincey does make clear the
meaning of this "eternal writing." The departed Fanny is restored as

one fair female hand with the forefinger pointing,
in sweet sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven,
where is sculptured the eternal writing which pro-
claims the frailty of earth and her children. (My emphasis)

As with the equations established by the Newman parody, we can here surmise
that Joyce had in mind a specific, if unstated message: that his own "myste-
rious writing" proclaims man's terrestrial infirmity; that the "myriad meta-
morphoses of symbol" by which Milly and her veil are carried into the region
of Taurus may be malign; and that, for reasons I shall later explain, the
"wonder of metempsychosis" which Joyce associates with Bloom's daughter could
lead downward, as well as to the skies.

Perhaps such speculation is tenuous, but nonetheless we are confronted
with Joyce's own reduction of the resplendid Taurus image, and therefore of
Milly's glowing future. In language which foreshadows the verbal drizzle of
the Eumaeus episode, we learn two pages later that Bloom's imagination had
been triggered by the triangular label on a bottle of Bass Ale, "certainly
calculated to attract anyone's remark on account of its scarlet appearance."
(417/410) Joyce has circumscribed the portentious, elegant constellation with-
in a bottle of beer. And along with it, Bloom's dream. As with Newman, the
equation works two ways: Just as Taurus holds an ultimate position in the
heavens, so drink and the bottle lie at the heart of the universe that is
Dublin. They poison her society with futile dreams, lace her art with senti-
mentality, and produce Dubliners who caricature the artistic, amorous and
social virtues inherent in Taurus the Bull. Joyce has worked his own answer-
ing variation upon "the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth
and her children." In short, all such thematic pessimism must countervail a
favorable interpretation of Milly's proud ascension in the Oxen parody.
While instructive parallels gained from De Quincey's "Roses and Fanny" fragment may still seem incomplete, we can begin to sense the intellectual drift of Joyce cryptic disclosure of artistic method. From the larger context supplied both by the reductive bottle of Bass and the Saintsbury excerpt, we can begin to infer a parallax (or perspective) forced by the passage of years; a metempsychosis of human beings downward into varying states of bestiality; a thousand metamorphoses of symbol that can destroy the ideals of childhood, turn a paradise such as Bloom's Agendath Netaim into a wilderness, trap a heavenly constellation within a beer bottle, and generally overlay a comfortable optimism with despair. The archetypal pattern beneath such sobering progressions is that of the Fall -- whether from the Garden to the world of death, or from childhood innocence to disillusioned maturity.

While such inferences about Joyce's meaning are perhaps justified by De Quincey's "Roses and Fanny" fragment, they find a still solider footing in the larger body of the opium dreamer's work. De Quincey's preoccupation with the Fall from Innocence can be tersely conveyed -- "the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children" -- or explicitly stated, as in another section of "The English Mail Coach. This is entitled "The Vision of Sudden Death." In that work, De Quincey addresses the frailties of human nature that manifest themselves in a recurrent dream, shared by mankind, which

repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will . . . . [In such dreams] each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.36

Subsequently, De Quincey illustrates his Edenic archetype in a manner which
closely parallels the poignant eclipse of Molly and Milly in the Joyce parody — "They fade, sad phantoms: all is gone." The dreamer, now aboard ship, views on the deck of another vessel "a bevy of human flowers," dancing with "sweet girlish laughter" amid blossoms from forests. As in the Joyce, all fades suddenly to a wasteland: Stricken by the shadow of the onlooker's ship ("Was our shadow the shadow of death?")

the revel and the revelers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas.37

In the waning of De Quincey's little Golden Age can be noticed the same decline from "splendor in the grass" which haunted romantic poets like Wordsworth — the Fall from childhood innocence to adulthood — and which accounts in the Joyce burlesque for the tonal transition from bliss to horror: "wide sagegreen pasturefields ... She follows her mother with ungainly steps ... They fade ... Agendath is a wasteland ... And on the highway of the clouds they come ... the ghosts of beasts."

Implicit in this dissolution of Bloom's pastoral cameo, as in the De Quincey passage, is the grim parallax wrought by the passage of years, and by time's irreversible erosion of ideal states. As we shall see, such parallax incorporated in Joyce's narrative technique can transform a Milly into a Molly, and a Molly into an apprehensive crone — a frail ideal into an abhorrent reality — according to the author's austere train of associations.

De Quincey's use of Joyce's second cryptic narrative technique — a downward metempsychosis of human beings to bestial states — is to be found in still another work: "The Pains of Opium." Again, De Quincey echoes the archetype of the Fall, dramatizing the spiritual degeneration of man to lower states along the Great Chain of Being. After years of
indulgence, the opium dreamer's addiction has carried him beyond exhilaration to horror. Night after night:

[The] sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens — faces imploring, wrathful, despairing surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: my agitation was infinite, my mind tossed and surged with the ocean.38

As well as the disintegration of human personality, we note a hint of the procreational futility reflected in Joyce's "cycles of cycles of generations that have lived" in Section I. Subsequently, De Quincey's nightmares assume a horrid fixation upon Southern Asia: "Man is a weed in those regions," feels the author, and his dreams begin in a vein of "utter abhorrence" to incorporate equatorial beasts, together with the superstitions built upon those beasts by the archaic civilizations of China and Egypt:

I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at by monkeys, by parakeets, by cockatoos . . . . I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes . . . . I was kissed with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.39

Much of Joyce's ambiguous menace, certainly the diversity of his bestiary ("snouter and crawler, rodent, ruminant and pachyderm"), can be seen lurking in De Quincey's monstrous Asian antiquity. The opium dreamer's metempsychosis downward to animality has been patterned on the initial elevation and subsequent distress faced by habitual users of drugs, and Joyce's reduction of Taurus to a beer bottle is appropriate.

Missing from De Quincey's animal-ridden Asian antiquity is the ominous movement and impending apocalypse conveyed by Joyce's tramping, muttering beasts. But that element actually appears some pages later when we learn De Quincey has reached an ultimate stage in the addict's withdrawal.
In his dream, De Quincey forms the impression "of a vast march, of infinite
cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies." He perceives
that "a battle, a strife, an agony was conducting." The passion deepens:
"Some greater interest was at stake; some mightier cause than ever yet the
sword had pleaded or trumpet had proclaimed." The dreamer then hears sudden
alarms, together with the
trepidations of innumerable fugitives. I knew not
whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness
and lights; tempest and human faces, female forms,
and the features that were worth all the world to
me, and but a moment allowed -- and clasped hands,
and heartbreaking partings, and then everlasting
farewells! . . . .
And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, "I will
sleep no more!" 40

This apocalypse, De Quincey-style. In the tread of his "innumerable
armies can be heard the tramping of Joyce's unslaked beasts; in the "trep-
idations" of his fugitives, the urgency of Joyce's "moving moaning multi-
tude." Just as De Quincey's armies advance ambiguously -- "I knew not
whether from the good cause or the bad" -- so Joyce's revengeful herds
convey no clear allegiance to good or evil. (If Joyce's beasts march right-
fully, why does he bury them in the waste of the salt sea; if wrongfully,
why the biblical and zodiacal aggrandizement of their mission?) Furthermore,
in De Quincey's idealized lament over departing "female forms," and the
features that were "worth all the world to me," we sense the same flavor
of pathetic transience that lingers in the grey twilight, where Bloom has
tried sentimentally, but unsuccessfully, to imprison his "mare" and her
"fillyfoal."

Joyce in his parody has incorporated De Quincey's two nightmares --
the bestial and the apocalyptic -- in the form of an impressionistic ana-
gram: He has retained such De Quincean elements as the ephemeral females
and persistent beasts, as well as the antagonistic emotions of desire and loathing they promore respectively. And Joyce has also preserved in his march of animals the sense of religious dread, and the malign urgency, which seem to power De Quincey's obscure armies. While Joyce has somewhat scrambled the legacy from De Quincey, saturating his parody with a benign as well as a forbidding animal symbology, we can nevertheless say that the disintegration of human personality — the metempsychosis of human beings downward along the Chain of Being to varying states of animalhood — haunts the revery of a Bloom, as well as that of the opium addict.

Finally, we must look briefly at the final attribute Joyce associates with De Quincey's writing — metamorphoses of symbol. For an extremely compact illustration, a passage from "Dream Fugue" again will serve. As usual, the author's context is elaborate and must be reviewed before we can appreciate De Quincey's symbolic manipulation of the color red. The hurtling mail coach, which carries news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, finds in its path "a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers." The setting becomes a "city of sepulchers, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth." Vast sarcophagi crowd the aisles. On them, are sculptured immemorial battles, as well as those battlefields "yet angry and crimson with carnage." The child vanishes. All in the carriage assume she has been killed, and wonder: "Is the young child caught up to God?" — a question upon which rides the fate of the child and the moral integrity of the mail coach. At heights "insuperable to man" rises an altar and
"three mighty windows to the clouds." The altar is of white alabaster, and on its eastern face is

  trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed through the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted on the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth?  

The italics are De Quincey's, and may somewhat conceal his powerful symbolic treatment of the color red. The compact chain of associations — the "metamorphoses" of a single "symbol" — takes a downward direction from the celestial glory of a "reddening dawn," to the murk which emanates from the "bloody bas-reliefs of earth." Midway in the series of deteriorating associations (again suggestive of the archetypal Fall), De Quincey has inserted the "crimson robes of martyrs" — ambiguous in its combined allusion to the heavenward ascent of the owners after death and to whatever bloodbath sent the martyrs on their way (the robes are "crimson"). Further aspects of symbolic intensity stem from De Quincey's increasingly inert, cold and claustrophobic imagery: The passage carries us from airy dawn, to amorphous robes, to dead sculptures; from the sky outdoors, to windows midway, to indoor crypts below.

The color red has been De Quincey's symbolic tool for lending coherence to this intricate chain of associations. But deprived of such a context, this color has no symbolic significance. It is a blank slate. However, by imbedding this abstraction within worldly and visual settings — a "reddening" dawn, the "crimson" robes of martyrs, the "bloody" bas-reliefs of earth — De Quincey imparts to his faceless symbol a remarkable density of meaning. If we take the author's manipulation of "red" for a microcosm of Joyce's symbolic method — a particularly succinct treatment which carries "red" in four lines through protean and antagonistic associations, from the
glories of the dawn to the gore of the battlefield — then we can better understand metamorphoses of symbol on the large scale Joyce intends us to. Within the Oxen parody, such a symbolic entity is suggested by Joyce's "mysterious writing," meaningless in itself but invested with a varied significance by both the context of the parody, and also of the Calypso chapter — a chapter whose subtly-recalled elements provide, in addition to De Quincey's work, a major interpretive key to Bloom's reverie in the hospital.

We can now turn selectively to the Calypso chapter, which can further help shape our understanding of how Joyce applied the three techniques noted in De Quincey: the parallax of passing years, the metempsychosis downward from human to animal states of being, and the metamorphoses of symbol which can impart significance to blank slates — all patterned upon the archetypal Fall from innocence to disillusionment, nightmare and death. Calypso helps also to explain the more basic questions of why Bloom's wife and daughter appear suddenly as gentle equine creatures; why Joyce's De Quincey tableau fades so abruptly to a wilderness of beasts, and why Bloom's Agendaeth Netaim — his Eden — becomes a wasteland.

In the parody, Joyce's nod to Bloom's experience in Calypso is indeed "subtle," but a glance at the thematic structure of the Oxen parody greatly simplifies matters. Bloom's hallucination progresses from a sentimental pastoral eternity, through nightmare, to a resurrection in the skies of the lost idyllic splendor. In the parody, serenity brackets turbulence, and beauty surrounds ugliness. Bloom's daydream could be described as doughnut-shaped — emotional nutrients ringing spiritual emptiness. Almost identical in tone and structure is Bloom's comforting reverie in Calypso, a reverie that holds within its parentheses a small, intense moment of horror.
Bloom's comfortable train of thought begins with a newspaper advertisement which feeds his vague hopes for Zionist fulfillment in Palestine, the land of his forefathers. In the melon fields north of Jaffa, a Hebrew company of planters -- Agendath Netaim -- will harvest land for an investor who mails eight marks. Each year will bring a sending of the crop -- "olives, oranges, almonds or citrons." (60/60) Contented images of ripeness and plenty control Bloom's mind; the citron fruit of the advertisement leads to reminiscences about an old Jewish acquaintance -- "poor Citron" -- and an idyllic early stage of his marriage to Molly:

Pleasant evenings we had then. Molly in Citron's basketchair. Nice to hold, cool waxen fruit, hold in the hand, lift it to the nostrils and smell the perfume . . . . Always the same, year after year. (60/60)

Notable at this point is Bloom's tendency to roam back toward some "pleasant" springtime in his relationship with Molly, and his disposition to seal-off these memories from the realities of change -- "Always the same, year after year." The sensuous association of Molly with the cool fruit -- "Nice to hold . . . and smell the perfume" -- helps supplement the imagery of lazy amplitude and fertility, which then runs to completion when Bloom's gaze rests on a watering cart: "To provoke the rain. On earth as it is in heaven." (61/60) The soothing temper of these recollections, as well as some of their substance, helps compose the idyllic opening to Bloom's reverie in the De Quincey parody.

Heaven's bounty -- moisture, fertility, domestic felicity, cloistered foreverness -- all will later be incorporated in such phrases as the parody's "perennial dew of stars," "wide sagegreen pasturefields," "a mare leading her fillyfoal," and a twilight that "ever descends, never falls." Joyce has recast this moment from Calypso in the language and imagery of
De Quincey, even preserving Bloom’s wistful sense of loss in Calypso — "pleasant evenings we had then" — with a type of paraphrase in the opening of the parody: "They fade, sad Phantoms: all is gone." In both chapters, the stage is set for harsh Joycean countervailence.

In Calypso, Joyce suddenly colors Bloom’s sanguine reflections with a poetry of horror. The Oxen parody’s nightmare interlude, its abrupt intru-

of themes centering on thirst, sterility, bestiality and death, has all been "linked back subtly" to the obliteration of Bloom’s comfortable mood in Calypso:

A cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly. Grey. Far.
No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste. Volcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. No wind would lift those waves, grey metal, poisonous foggy waters. Brimstone they called it raining down: the cities of the plain: Sodom, Gomorrah, Edom. All dead names. A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. Old now. It bore the oldest, the first race. A bent hag crossed from Cassidy’s clutching a noggin bottle by the neck. The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead: an old woman’s: the grey sunken cunt of the world.
Desolation.
Grey horror seared his flesh . . . . Cold oils slid along his veins, chilling his blood: age crusting him with a salt cloak.

(61/61)

Many of the parody’s nightmare elements are explained by this moment of spiritual dread. Just as the sun slips behind a cloud here, plunging Bloom into a desolate reevaluation of his spiritual homeland, so the safe pas-
tures of Sections I & II dissolve to a threatening desert of futility and death. In the parody, Joyce has preserved the essence of Bloom’s dark moment in Calypso, but the literal motifs have been translated into the symbolic shorthand of a person who dreams — whether he sleeps, is drugged by opium, or like Bloom in the hospital, enjoys a respite from the babble
of youthful tongues.

Just as the landscape of Calypso darkens, so the idealized phantoms of Molly and Milly "fade," and a thirsty menagerie comes muttering "thunder of rebellion" on the "highway of the clouds." As Bloom's oriental paradise becomes a sterile antiquity in the Calypso, so his Agendath in the parody turns "wasteland," and his "golden" Netaim is no more. Clear references to Calypso's cloudscape and vanishing sun are in the parody, though disguised by their hallucinatory context. And except for De Quincey's themes of bestiality and apocalypse, these motifs have their origin in Bloom's traumatic response to a cloud's covering the sun, chilling the air, cloaking the landscape in lifeless grey.

When Calypso's dark cloud passes, Bloom's comfortable optimism is restored:

Quick warm sunlight came running down Berkeley Road, swiftly, in slim sandals, along the brightening footpath. Runs, she runs to meet me, a girl with gold hair on the wind. (61/61)

Likewise, when the menagerie of the De Quincey parody has passed harmlessly in the skies, Bloom's "radiant" daughter Millicent reemerges "shod in sandals of bright gold" and borne on the wind. Both passages displace an imagery of sterility with an idealized vision of female youth, and both suggest for Bloom salvation from a spiritual wasteland. These are the larger outlines of Bloom's parallel reveries, doughnut-shaped, ringing spiritual emptiness with emotional fulfillment in both Calypso and Oxen.

Further correspondences abound, but their full development would run this chapter to disproportionate length. (For example, in both passages, the Dead Sea provides a locus of spiritual futility; the many "greys" of Bloom's passing trauma in Calypso explain the "grey twilight" in the
pastoral Section I of the De Quincey parody.) A few additional remarks about Calypso's relation to the parody are needed, however, for an understanding of parallax, metempsychosis and metamorphoses of symbol — both in their relation to De Quincey's pessimistic train of thought, and to Joyce's countervailing narrative technique in Oxen.

While Joyce's parody of De Quincey portrays Bloom's wishful daydream, the father's vision also harbors countervailing tides of pessimism. The color "mauve," for example, is one of several used to describe Milly's windborne "veil" in the parody, and this grotesque reminder of dead Rudy's flesh tone injects a note of mortality into Bloom's vision of eternal radiance. Even the glowing apex of his daydream — "... it blazes, Alpha, a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus" — holds within it the name of Molly's lover. Similarly, Milly's "veil," and therefore the "mysterious writing" which apparently holds her destiny, contains in its windings and coilings a reference — "simply swirling" — to Boylan's disruptive song. The more closely we detect the terrestrial frailty which underlies Bloom's vision, the more we shall appreciate the care Joyce has taken to portray, amid emotional sunlight, the shadows of a disturbed father's mind.

Lurking prominently in those shadows is the crone who supplied a symbolic core for Bloom's moment of spiritual horror in Calypso:

A bent hag crossed from Cassidy's clutching a noggin bottle by the neck ... The oldest people ... Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world.

Incorporating these personified horrors — thirst, sterility, poisonous antiquity, death — the marauding beasts of the De Quincey parody drink with "unslaked" thirst the poisonous salt of the "sunken" sea. Both hag
and beasts epitomize the lethal qualities which Bloom, in Calypso's dimmed sunlight, has associated with his idealized homeland — now civilization's tomb for him, instead of its cradle.

Yet Bloom's bent hag has imposed a more general cancer on the Oxen daydream: It is this crone who supplies the subtle language of death which disturbs Bloom's pastoral eternity In Section II of the De Quincey parody:

She follows her mother with ungainly steps, a mare leading her fillyfoal. Twilight phantoms are they yet moulded in prophetic grace of structure, slim shapely haunches, a supple tendonous neck, the meek apprehensive skull. They fade sad phantoms: all is gone. (My emphasis)

A close reading of the above reveals that both Molly and Milly have merged briefly as a single beast with "tendonous" neck and apprehensive "skull." Such is not the imagery of pastoral eternity, but rather of temporal mortality. Nor can Molly or Milly accurately be called "meek" or "apprehensive." Yet Bloom's symbolic bent hag may well deserve such epithets: She leaves Cassidy's "clutching" her whiskey bottle by the "neck," and Joyce's diction leaves an impression that the crone is, to say the least, "apprehensive." Further, bent hags are more likely to have "tendonous" necks than young Millys and middle-aged Mollys; they are more apt to be "meek" than daughters who summer at resorts as photographers' assistants or wives who conduct blatant affairs without remorse at home. The "skull" is a more fitting emblem of bent hags than it is of creatures with "slim shapely haunches." And that this crone clutches her bottle by the "neck" creates a verbal linkage — non-rational but inescapable — to the tendonous "neck" of the De Quincey parody. It is through such abbreviated imagery:

slim shapely haunches, a supple tendonous neck, the meek apprehensive skull;
that Joyce implies his own desolate parallax of passing years. He has suggested that in time a Milly becomes a Molly, and Molly a bent hag — or so runs the pessimistic undercurrent of Bloom's thought-stream in Section II of the De Quincey parody.

Nor has Joyce neglected to supply overtones of the Fall from Eden in the mosaic of associations from Calypso which color Section II of the parody. The "prophetic" grace of structure and the "slim" shapely haunches are those of a younger Milly, as recalled by Bloom in Calypso after reading the worrisome letter from the Mullingar resort:

Oh well: she knows how to mind herself. But if not?
No, nothing has happened. Of course it might. Wait in any case till it does. A wild piece of goods. Her slim legs [e.g., "slim ... haunches"] running up the staircase. Destiny. [e.g., "prophetic"] Ripening now. Vain: very.

Milly's destiny, as it shapes itself in the father's head, is not a promising one: A recollected snatch of Boylan's wanton song —

Your head it simply swirls ... Those lovely seaside girls. (66/66-67)

— leads Bloom to identify Milly explicitly with adulterous Molly:


In Bloom's vision of deteriorating female lips can be sensed De Quincey's Edenic parallax of passing years — or Joyce's version of this bleak motif — with its overtones of waste and loss. In Calypso, mother and daughter merge in Bloom's mind. Innocence fades to maturity. The puzzling fusion of identities in Section II of the parody is explained, and the descriptive statement — "She follows her mother with ungainly steps" — is
invested with a figurative significance. And because the bent hag intrudes her death's-head imagery at this point in the parody, she too may have a place in Bloom's pageant of deteriorating female lips. She is an emblem of sterility and thirst. Her lips kiss only the noggin bottle, the "neck" of which she is "clutching" in a distorted lover's embrace. All three women -- daughter, mother, and hag -- may thus be situated along the borders of Bloom's consciousness in the De Quincey parody, rehearsing Eden's legacy of fallen women, undermining the surface optimism of Bloom's fond idealization of Milly.

To these desolate perspectives which disturb Bloom's hospital daydream can be added the pessimistic implications of a degenerative metempsychosis that carries mankind downward toward the animal kingdom. De Quincey's deviant version of metempsychosis reveals the human personality in disintegration -- describes an ocean paved with innumerable faces, "imploring, wrathful, despairing" -- and finally leaves the dreamer surrounded by menacing beasts. No less beast-ridden is Bloom's reverie in the De Quincey parody, despite Milly's spiritual ascent at the close. Initially, Bloom's wife and daughter appear as docile "mare" and "filly-foal." That particular vein of downward metempsychosis may well express Bloom's wish for a more tractable household, in effect a safe domestic stall inhabited by man's servants. But vengeful beasts obliterate this vision, originating in some badlands of Bloom's mental landscape. Returning to the Calypso chapter, we discover that the beasts and the badlands are Molly.

With economical strokes, Joyce has created in Molly a human personality in disintegration -- bestial, indolent, appetitev. He has closely
identified Molly with Bloom's self-assured feline:

The cat went up in soft bounds. Ah, wanted to go upstairs, curl up in a ball on [Molly's] bed. Listening, he heard her voice:
— Come, come, pussy. Come (68/67)

Molly had earlier glimpsed Boylan's letter of assignation and, like this cat, "curled herself back slowly with a snug sign." (62/62) These comfortable curlings, the mutual indolence, the congenial sexual innuendo of later lines ("Come, come, pussy. Come") — all such carefully selected detail by Joyce contributes to our impression that Molly exists on a spiritual plane no higher than that of the cat. And like this animal, whose insistent "Mkgnao!" spurs Bloom to provide a saucer of milk at the episode's beginning — like the bibulous hag and the unslaked beasts of Oxen's nightmare interlude — Molly herself is an emblem of appetite, impatience and thirst:

Hurry up with that tea, she said. I'm parched. (62/62)

And like the rebellious herds of the De Quincey parody, Molly's mood carries overtones of vengeance:

— Poldy!
— What?
— Scald the teapot. (62/62)

This is language of menace, thinly disguised. In these early pages, Joyce has sketched a psychically-fragmented Molly, a person whose station along the Chain of Being is predominantly subhuman. As an embodiment of qualities which link man to the animal kingdom, the Molly of Calypso undergoes in Bloom's imagination a degenerative metempsychosis that breeds the beasts which trouble his reverie in the hospital. And in those passing herds, rebellious, appetitive and vindictive, we can detect a Molly whose character has been torn down to rudiments, pondered subliminally by Bloom, and then
recast according to a De Quincean dream-logic.

No less subtle is Joyce's manipulation of De Quincey's concept, metamorphoses of symbol. Recalling the opium dreamer's skillful and compact handling of the color red, a reasonably exact interpretation of Joyce's term seems possible. For example, women's lips do not really carry much more inevitable significance than De Quincey's protean "red." They may kiss, drink, pout, flatter, chide -- like men's lips. Yet through Bloom's mental comparison of a girl's "sweet light lips" to "Full gluey woman's lips" -- and possibly the bent hag's dry, wasted lips -- Joyce has written an entire chronicle of decay and mortality into this ambiguous symbol of "woman's lips." Similar is Joyce's treatment of the "mysterious writing" which occupies a climactic position within the De Quincey parody. Like woman's lips, and like the color red, the phrase "mysterious writing" signifies little until we learn the mosaic of associations by which its meaning is controlled. Some, I have already suggested: De Quincey's "eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children"; the tawdry label upon a bottle of Bass; the element of mortality injected by dead Rudy's "mauve" skin; the reference to Boylan's diabolic song of hedonism. All color Joyce's "mysterious writing" with a less-than favorable significance for "Millicent, the young, the dear, the radiant . . . ." However, at least two more contexts -- the one hopeful, the other less so -- help to round our understanding of the complex "mysterious writing." Again, the Calypso chapter provides the needed background.

Bloom's reminiscence about his daughter's headlong spirit supplies the source of Milly's "veil," which in turn coils into the "mysterious writing" of the De Quincey parody:

On the Erin's King that day round the Kish. Damned old tub pitching about. Not a bit funky. Her pale blue scarf loose in the wind with her hair. (67/66)
Milly's "scarf" becomes a "veil" in the Oxen passage, and the stiff breeze aboard the tour boat becomes an "intersteller wind." To the bleaker components of the "mysterious writing," then, has been added a promising note of existential defiance, embodied in fearless Milly's wind-tossed scarf.

However, a less encouraging symbolism lies in the letter Milly has sent her father. Bloom reads the dispatch from the resort with "troubled affection" (67/66), as well he might: Milly's poorly written letter reveals an emerging sexuality, a servile admiration for a visiting medical student ("Tell him silly Milly sends my best respects"), and an equally unpromising fancy for Boylan's giddy song ("about those seaside girls"). For the concerned father, the hastily-written letter becomes — both literally and figuratively — a "mysterious writing" that holds his daughter's destiny.

Of course, the symbolic accretions gathered from Milly's letter do not necessarily weight Joyce's "mysterious writing" with a malign significance, only an ambiguity as to the future of a girl who may face an early loss of virginity, disappointment in love, neglect of her social and educational potential through unwise acts and friendships. On the other hand, such a sobering ambiguity serves further to countervail a vision which associates an idealized "Millicent" with either the Virgin Mary, or lusty Taurus — emblem of prowess in society, the arts and love. Less compact than De Quincey's treatment of the color red, Joyce's handling of a "mysterious writing" conveys, if anything, a greater density of meaning, and certainly no less profound an ambiguity.

Through his countervailing narrative techniques, Joyce has portrayed in his De Quincey parody the shadows and monsters which inhabit Bloom's basically sunlit mind. As well as the most vital, some of the most decadent
attributes of the female species that can be plausibly imagined influence our interpretation of Bloom's wishful daydream: the primordial infidelities of an Eve, the feline degeneracy of a Molly, the thirsty gleam of a barren hag — and perhaps most powerfully, the pathetic haste of Bloom's Milly to immerse herself in a life that may drown her.

By now it should be evident that a reading of The Oxen of the Sun can be greatly enhanced by a close attention to Joyce's working literary contexts — the subtly-recollected earlier moments in *Ulysses*, and the texts upon which he based his parodies. We are faced in Oxen with the recognition that much of the tale lies elsewhere, incipient, waiting to be reconstructed from a rubble of Macaulay, Newman, De Quincey and many others — and also from moments like Bloom's intense vision of horror under the fading sun, his glimpse of ancestral decay, and his grateful acknowledgement of the returning Light: "[She] runs to meet me, a girl with gold hair on the wind."

All such contexts supply Oxen with a wealth of potential meaning that eludes those who search only within the limited dimensions of the Holles St. hospital. Between the roistering youths and their accomplished spokesmen, the English prose stylists, exists a mute dialogue which only the author and his reader can enjoy. Therein lies an escape to a more convincing reality. Liberating equations have been set down by Joyce: between the present and past, the here and elsewhere — the living and the dead.

The more we study these equations, the more we appreciate the massive-ness of Joyce's conception. Whole tides of negative countervailence wash down upon a Stephen and Leopold determined to surface positively, somewhere and somehow, from the flood. They persevere in a Dublin that is anesthetized by Stout, Porter, and Bass. A credulous Bloom pins his hopes, at least his
daydreams, to women whose progress from youth to maturity rehearses the
Fall from innocence to death. An artistic Stephen battles a Gaelic heri-
tage no less inert in its implications of decay. The dead authors who tell
the story of Oxen become a symbolic extension of this frozen inheritance.
By means of these countervailing backdrops, and the oblique narrative tech-
niques through which they are conveyed, Joyce intensifies our concern for
his two heroes and sharpens our appetite for a more straightforward presen-
tation of the tale itself.

In the Oxen chapter, there cannot be any such narrative integrity.
The archaic styles of the dead authors can be viewed as a type of maimed
interior monologue: Their habit of thinking is often preserved, as is
the phraseology they might have used to express such thoughts. But such
intellectual habits and styles of expression have been applied by Joyce
to subjects which are "trivial or grossly discordant," and which the authors
would have ignored or shunned. A portion of the Bunyan parody and the
Pater, the language of the sudden lightning bolt, the garbage-can slang
that closes the episode — these manage to convey a mood, or a nuance, or
a truth which might have eluded any consistent technique. The viewpoint
of the Huxley/monster, consummately repellent, nevertheless heightens our
appreciation of the touching exchange between Stephen and Bloom, all but
buried in the verbal mire. Surely the section in the manner of De Quincey
is as much a tribute to that author's formative influence as it is a parody
of his linguistic flights.

But on balance, Joyce has in The Oxen of the Sun fashioned his own
Tower of Babel; has erected a monument to literature's incapacity for con-
veying through distinctive writing styles any but false or inappropriate
versions of "reality." The Tower of Babel became mankind's further mythic
acknowledgement of the Fall from Paradise. To the original penalty of death, was added the lapse from an ideal understanding, preserved through use of a single tongue, into a solipsistic nightmare of misunderstood, untranslatable thoughts broached by many tongues. Much the same flavor of frustration from inward and stillborn thought permeates Oxen, a chapter ostensibly devoted to the virtues of procreation. We gain a further insight into Joyce's creative dissolution of meaning that was pieced-through in the discussion of Eumaeus, and will be sorted in the commentary on Sirens, Lestrygonians, and the other late chapters. From the avenues of interpretation I have tried to open — those based on Joyce's double-edged satirical approach to his material, and on the countervailing themes latent in his source material — I believe we can free ourselves from this chapter's curtains of style and climb beyond the Tower that is Oxen.
IV. The Oxen of the Sun: Stained Glass Windows of Style

1. Among others, Gifford chronicles Oxen's succession of prose styles, pp. 336-68.

2. Even so sympathetic a commenter as Burgess, in ReJoyce, p. 156, concludes: "But it is a pity that Stephen and Bloom have to get lost in the process of glorifying an art [e.g., writing] that is supposed to be their servant."


6. It is one thing to trace Joyce's clearly-defined borrowings from the Saintsbury *History*, another to search for verifiable sources, for example, in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.


17. Gifford, pp. 359 (Dickens), 361 (Donne).


20. Ibid.
Atherton, p. 332.

Saintsbury, pp. 371-72.

Atherton, p. 333.

Saintsbury, pp. 388-89.

T.S. Eliot, as quoted in Kain and Magalaner, Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation, p. 172.

That is to say Newman seldom belabored the topic as does Joyce in the Oxen passage. For example, in Newman's Apologia Pro Vita Sua, the condition of sin is not a subject for prolonged contemplation, but rather merely a subordinate link in the chain of dismal circumstances which mark contemporary British life, a Godless wasteland in which Newman sees:

the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion . . .


Gifford explains the symbolic associations, respectively, on pp. 356, 103.

Atherton, p. 331.

Saintsbury, pp. 313-14.

Letters, I, p. 139.

Gifford, p. 356.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Gifford, p. 356.

Thomas De Quincey, "The English Mail Coach — The Vision of Sudden Death,"


38 De Quincey, "The Pains of Opium," Confessions, p. 94.

39 Ibid., pp. 95-96.

40 Ibid., p. 99.

41 De Quincey, "Dream Fugue," Confessions, p. 272-73.
CHAPTER V

THE SIRENS: DISORIENTING STRAINS

Of the three "doomed" experiments, The Sirens adopts a narrative voice the most jarringly independent of its subject, and the most poetically intense in its style. However, recognition of these qualities has been obscured by frequent failure to isolate the episode's literary strengths from its "musical" pretensions. The spell cast by Sirens does not lie in its partial counterfeit of fugal structure, nor in its clever mimicry of such musical ornamentation as arpeggios, trills, pedal points and the like. Scholarly analysis of a literal-minded sort has both praised and challenged the accuracy of Joyce's musical mimesis -- and questioned the artistic validity of such an experiment as well. And even those interpretations confined to a study of Sirens as literature have quite understandably borrowed terms from music to explain Joyce's treatment of subject and style. Thus Boylan's jaunty, jingling progress to Molly's bed is fully "orchestrated." Lust in the episode becomes "a refrain." Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy, the two siren-barmaids, scarcely exist "except as musical motifs." Bloom measures the absurd sentimentality engendered by song "with the precision of a tuning fork." Actions, emotions and people all undergo various "harmonic transformations."¹ But while such transplanted terms can stimulate our imaginative response, and while they flatter Joyce's known objectives,² they also serve to remind us of the many important ways in which music is not like language.³ When this obvious fact is acknowledged, one can move beyond "contrapuntal" technique and reiterated "motif" to Joyce's more profound approximation
of music in Sirens.

In questioning so pervasive and durable an intellectual habit as that of equating one art to another absolutely dissimilar in its technique, one must of course be cautious. Reviewing some of the impressionistic commentary surrounding piano music, we discover that Chopin not only created "a little poem!" with his Prelude No. 4 in E Minor, but also that this piece resembles "some canvas of Rembrandt . . . all gold and gloom." While many are aware of the massive "drama" in Beethoven's Symphonies, some may have failed to note the effect of two triads in Chopin's Funeral March movement, chords which in their combination possess a "highly tragical element." Writers and their critics have been no more sparing of their analogies. In fact comparisons between literature and music became a fashion in the early twentieth century. The intricate structure of Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point was said to be modeled on Bach's Suite No. 2 in B Minor. A novel by Joseph Conrad is to be respected for its "contrapuntal presentation of character," according to James Huneker, and for a pattern of narration that is evasive, even carried at times "to the pitch of polyphonic intricacy." Frank Budgen felt there were "innumerable changes of key and scale" in the bewildering completeness with which Joyce depicted Leopold Bloom. And Ezra Pound declared that the form of Ulysses was a sonata, without making clear whether he meant the classic opening movement, or the several movements which make up such a work. Such comparisons seem everywhere applicable, nowhere precise, and limitedly helpful.

Discussion of the "musical" technique in Sirens should proceed, I believe, along lines which answer the following question: To what degree can writing on a page resemble -- be analogous to -- music's actual sound,
or capture music's inarticulate intensity? The answer would appear to be Joyce's plentiful use in Sirens of those poetic devices which simultaneously attack rational perception and achieve a rich density of association and emotion -- synaesthesia, oxymoron, archetypal imagery, calculated rhythm, manipulative refrain. Such poetic tools can create a stylistic intensity which has the power, like music, to fuse a clutter of symbols -- whether words or notes -- into emotional truth. In short, The Sirens succeeds by those very means which critics like Litz have condemned:

In trying to atone musical and literary forms, Joyce weakened the rational structure of his prose, exalting secondary qualities ('suggestion' and 'sound-imitation') at the expense of full communication. The Sirens episode demonstrates the weakness of a compromise between the two arts. 10

My purpose shall be to demonstrate that it is just such a weakening of the rational structure in Sirens, and such an exaltation of suggestion and sound "at the expense of full communication," which justifies the episode's technique: a **poetically intense** mode of expression through which Joyce forces us -- emotionally, irrationally -- to live within the heart and mind of Bloom. Joyce's "musical" technique stirs our emotions in the manner of music, while suspending our intellectual judgment in the best tradition of Homer's Sirens.

Before discussing the poetry of Sirens, however, it will be necessary to explore the valid role which music played in supplying Joyce with a variety of themes, motifs and insights that might otherwise have lain dormant. Even the more superficial aspects of music -- the ornaments such as trills and arpeggiated chords -- helped reinforce the author's creative framework. And to limit Joyce's "musical" exercise to **fuga per canonem** (as he himself suggests we do) 11 is to ignore the scope of his
experiment: the evolution of music, early classical to the present day. With this broadened perspective, new light and interpretations are possible. And while some musical conventions have been mimicked more successfully than others — the trills, rolled chords, and so forth — even their transformation into words supplies overtones of ambiguity that enrich a reading of Sirens.

It is through the devices of poetry, however, that Joyce most successfully emulates music's disorienting strains, and loosens our grasp of reality. Synaesthesia is one such tool: Like analogies drawn among the different arts, synaesthesia attacks the boundaries between the senses, and is unverifiable in life or logic. Yet its implementation, notably in Simon Dedalus's spirited rendition of "Martha," tames our rational resistance to so fanciful a linguistic showpiece. Elsewhere, employing metonymy, synecdoche and lurking archetype, Joyce startles us with a flash of joyful imagery depicting Blazes Boylan's arrival at Molly's home. We are scandalized — irrationally — by what seems a gratuitously venomous attack on the husband. Upon reflection, we are impressed by the sudden poetic density, but we remain disinclined to analyze: Like powerful music, it seems to baffle commentary.

Surrounding these isolated moments of transcendent poetry in Sirens are swarms of less remarkable devices and techniques — among them alliteration, onomatopoeia, slant rhyme, and the like. As with both Eumaeus and Oxen, Joyce has confronted us with a burlesque of an entire tradition, and not only of versification, but also of music itself. Budgen tells us:

Joyce's brilliant burlesque of the more banal tiddley-pom aspects of music pleased him, and all of us who heard him read them, immensely. . . . This is one of them:

"Miss Douce withdrew her satiny arm, reproachful, pleased. 'Don't make half so free,' said she, 'till
we are better acquainted.' George Lidwell told her really and truly: but she did not believe . . . . To these simple rhythms on our homeways I invented appropriate dances. The steps wouldn't have satisfied Professor Magninni, but they were better than I could ever do on a dance floor to the music of drums and saxophones.¹²

Against such a backdrop of anti-poetry -- and anti-lyric -- shines the true poetry, the "music," of the Sirens episode. One such moment occurs when Bloom glimpses the Siren-barmaids listening mysteriously to their seashell. The passage makes unusual demands upon the reader's empathy, and recalls in its evocative power the "mystic oxymoron" by which Keats structured whole poems. However, the intellectual motif -- that of sound which cannot be heard, and emotions which cannot be felt -- has its genesis in Joyce's "The Dead." Comparison of a certain passage in the story to its counterpart in Sirens should demonstrate Joyce's progress toward poetic intensity over the years, and refine our sense of the later passage's understated excellence. Only when we separate the superficially poetic from the extra-dimensional poetry that drifts through Sirens can we appreciate the high plane of analogy upon which Joyce was able to achieve "music" in that disputed episode.

Before analyzing Joyce's transcendental technique in Sirens, it will be helpful to comment upon the relation of real music to Joyce's analogous version of it. His stated technique -- fuga per canonem -- is highly misleading: The term suggests both an historical and an imaginative restriction of Joyce's musical sources of inspiration.¹³ But from the start, we are confronted with an "overture" -- a cluster of some sixty Wagnerian "leitmotifs"¹⁴ which transport us from the crisp atmosphere of the Baroque drawingroom into the romantic mist of the nineteenth century. Snatches from songs, ballads, and arias further discredit the fugal designation.¹⁵
And the reiteration of a jarringly dissonant motif, centering on deaf
Pat the waiter, suggests the intrusion of brutalized twentieth century
musical techniques within the fugal disciplines of Sirens:

Pat is a waiter hard of his hearing. Pat is
a waiter who waits while you wait. Hee hee
hee hee . . . . A waiter is he. (280/276)

And later:

But perhaps he has wife and family waiting,
waiting Patty come home. Hee hee hee hee.
Deaf wait while they wait. (283/278)

And finally, in application to the blind stripling:

An unseeing stripling stood at the door. He
saw not bronze. He saw not gold. Nor Ben
nor Bob nor Tom nor Si nor George nor Tanks
nor Richie nor Pat. Hee hee hee hee. He did
not see. (291/286)

Bartok? Prokofiev? Both composers, in their reaction against Romanticism,
as early as 1911 had composed pieces stressing "a new, percussive" use of
the piano. 16 The ugly abdication of humane sensitivity in the above
passages from Sirens, while reflecting an anxiety in Bloom that borders on
hysteria (he craves chatter to keep his mind from straying to Molly's im-
minent affair: "Talk. Talk. Pat! Doesn't") (280/276) also reflects the
bleak dissonances of pieces like Bartok's "Allegro Barbaro" (1911), and
Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 1 (1911) -- compositions whose departure
from the tradition of Liszt and Chopin once seemed scandalous. 17

 Surely such a mixing of centuries in Sirens raises the possibility
that Joyce was toying with the evolution of music, just as he depicted
more systematically the evolution of English prose styles in Oxen, and
offered a comic-page history of journalistic titles, captions and head-
lines in Aeolus. Such an expansion of the formal severity implied by
fuga per canoem would be appropriate not only to the author's encyclo-
pedic intent, but also to Sirens' richly ambiguous interplay of romantic and anti-romantic, sentimental and cynical, tender and brutalized emotions.

Even Joyce's rather gadgety imitation of musical ornaments carries an ambiguity that supports such thematic antitheses. When Bloom imagines leaving Molly bereft -- her "wavyavyavyheavyyeavyyevyevy" hair uncombed (277/273) -- there is no way of telling whether Joyce had in mind a trill, a vibrato, or tremolo (stringed or vocal). All have a certain resemblance: In common they suggest minute fluctuations in pulse or intensity of the same pitch (vibrato or tremolo), or of different pitches alternatively (vibrato, trill). Their use can either enhance dramatic moments, or can display mere mannerism.¹⁸ The skill with which Joyce has "wavy" metamorphose into the longer, more emphatic word "heavy" forms an expert, but merely analogous, match to the dynamic swell and ebb which usually accompanies these musical embellishments. But whether Joyce intends an instrumental or vocal, and particularly, a dramatic or a mannered performance, adds a speculative dimension to what might seem a doggedly prosaic translation of music into writing. It seems likely that Joyce meant us to construe a maudlin, therefore mannered, performance from Bloom at this point in Sirens.

More heavy-handed would seem the rolled chord, "First Lid, De, Cow, Ker, Doll, a fifth," but these truncations of the full names immediately following -- "Lidwell, Si Dedalus, Bob Cowley, Kernan and Big Ben Dollard" (290/285) -- could just as plausibly represent fugal diminution, in which themes are recast in notes one-half, one-third, or one-fourth of their original time-value.¹⁹ One could speculate that the word, "fifth" represents the tonal separation between the fugal subject -- the five sentimental cronies, and by extension the Sirens -- and its answer: Bloom, with his
windy refutation of music's lures. However, more effective than most such imitative sleight of hand seems the sinister pedal point -- "Tap. Tap. Tap." (287/282) -- which announces the return of the blind stripling to retrieve his tuning fork. Above this reiterated tone in the bass, reserved in fugues for the concluding stretto section, but used more liberally by nineteenth century composers for its evocation of impending "storm,"20 rise the sunnier melodies of the bar-girls and of the sentimental confraternity of men: That their happiness (or anyone's) is short-lived, the mortuary "Tap. Tap. Tap." reminds us, whether it comes from a blind man's cane, a soft "thunder" in the lower register, or Poe's insistent raven.

More precisely relevant to *Ulysses* was Joyce's solution to representing "absolute pitch" -- the intuitive faculty whereby some can assign heard sounds to their correct place on the musical scale. The answer, Budgen tells us,21 comes by way of Bloom's recollection that Molly, without understanding the hurdy-gurdy boy's language, "knew he meant the monkey was sick." (285/281) Learning this, we are not only grateful for the creative impact of music on Joyce's imagination, but also renewed in our awareness of how music differs from literature. For example, the "Tap. Tap. Tap." does not occur simultaneously with the sunnier melodies -- as would a pedal point -- but rather alternately, along a horizontal plane of succession. The same infidelity to real music can be noted in the "stretto" which closes Sirens, and where an overlapping of themes would be traditional in a fugue.22 While restating motifs in rapid succession, Joyce's last pages recapitulate earlier themes as discrete, rather than as simultaneously-sounding elements:

they chinked their clinking glasses all, bright-eyed
and gallant, before bronze Lydia's last rose of summer,
rose of Castille... True men like you men...
They lifted. Tschink. Tschunk. Tip. An unseeing strip-
ing stood in the door... Seabloom, greaseabloom
viewed last words. Softly. When my country takes her
place among. Prrprr. Must be the bur... ...
(289-91/285-86)

To overlap these themes simultaneously would have either entailed writing
gibberish (i.e., mating words by mixing their letters) or employing the
technique of Finnegans Wake, where a "vertical" or "Chordal" -- presenta-
tion of themes is achieved by heavily-weighted portmanteau words and puns.
Of the former, Burgess gives as example the Wake's "crossmess parzle,"
which he notes "is descriptive of life, as of the book itself: a fusion
of crossword puzzle and Christmas parcel" (to which can be added, perhaps,
the suggestion of the holiday season as a cross mess, after the disastrous
banquet at Stephen's house in Portrait). And of the punning, a sobering
example occurs with the benediction that closes "Tales Told of Shem and
Shaun":

In the name of the former, and of the latter and of
their holocaust. Allmen."

Such "chordal" resonances as these invite no supercilious groan nor sneer.
But their appearance in Sirens ("vast manless, moonless, womoonless marsh")
(my emphasis: 283/278) is quite rare, and does not significantly contrib-
ute to the "musical" texture of Sirens.

Instead, to achieve an analogous approximation of music's mentally
disorienting strains, its vertical simultaneity, and its full orchestra-
tion, Joyce employs such writers' tools as synaesthesia, synecdoche, oxy-
moron (conceptual, as well as literal), and archetype. We are shown, for
example, a synaesthetic response by Bloom to the so-called "dark" key of
F Sharp Major -- "dark" because the six sharps force performance mainly on

Bloom's humorous association of colors, sounds, thoughts and feelings -- of "dark" piano keys with "dark" thoughts and places, and "low" notes in the bass with sunken depths and "low" spirits -- is an extremely common, but almost totally nonrational synaesthetic response to music. We might assert with some justification that bass notes sound very much like thunder; that thunder is accompanied by darkening of the skies; that darkness causes gloom in our species; that caves deep in the earth are dark, gloomy and, in their amplicity of sound, thunderous. However, not even such debatable correspondences as these apply to the "upper" reaches of the keyboard, which are often said to sparkle like sunlight or shimmer like reflected light on water. Notes a quarter-tone high are said by piano tuners to be "a little bright," and the shrill tone of a trumpet, when compared to the "hollow" or "mellow" timbres characteristic of other instruments, is typically called "metallic" or "brilliant." There being no clear-cut rationale behind such metaphors, Joyce asked Budgen what epithets he thought most appropriate to apply to the human voice. Budgen answered: "My own random suggestions were just such that would occur to anybody -- the brighter-toned metals and colours, I think." Joyce's acknowledgement appears in his comparison of Simon Dedalus's cheery, "high" tenor voice with shiny metal, speed, flight and flame:

It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene . . . aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolic . . . of the etherial bosom . . . of the high vast irradiation everywhere . . . .

(My emphases: 275-76/271)
No less effective for its hints of burlesque, Joyce's adaptation of Budgen's remark moves beyond "brighter-toned metals and colours" to a soaring metaphorical progression that evolves from a bird in flight, to a suggestion of a pagan sun diety ("silver orb it leaped serene"), to a burst of divine radiance ("the high vast irradiation everywhere") that could have pleased a Dante.

Again, it is important to remember that such synaesthetic correspondence of a tenor's voice to events that are picturable, while forcing our intuitive acceptance, has no verifiable basis on this earth.29 Sound bears the same relation to sight, as music does to the printed word: Only on a plane of analogy can they be united. Elsewhere, when Ben Dollard reaches the climactic moment in his rendition of "the Croppy Boy, Joyce demonstrates more subtly the non-rational intensity which can be supplied by synaesthetic metaphor: "Low sank the music, air and words." (285/280) For this statement, we understand a sudden drop in dynamics, together with a sense of hushed anticipation in the barroom -- not, certainly, a physical descent of the song itself. Here, the word "air" is ambiguous, meaning either "emotional atmosphere" or "song," and of course such ambiguity adds to the poetic density with which Joyce works to undermine our rational habits of perception. Zeugma, -- i.e., the triple-harness service performed by the verbal phrase, "Low sank" -- tightens the statement further. A sustained attack through synaesthesia on the boundaries between sense perception is but one of the poetic tools by which Joyce approximates in writing the disorienting emotions caused by the sound of music.

To Joyce's transferral of sense data in Sirens can be added his calculated use of such figurative devices as metonymy ("crown" for king)
and synecdoche ("hands" for workmen). As employed in Sirens, however, such poetic devices move beyond glossary definition into the realm of animism, and become capable of instilling some of the primitive awe that term recalls. An impressive example occurs when the "fugal counterstatement" -- Boylan's jaunty jingling ride toward Molly's bed -- suddenly collapses into a startling shorthand of imagery and association. To appreciate the poetic intensity Joyce creates through such a telescoping of metaphor, it will help first to recall Sirens' earlier, and systematically prosaic, description of Boylan en route: "A hackney car . . . on which sat a fare, a young gentleman, stylishly dressed in an indigoblue serge suit . . . and wearing a straw hat very dressy . . . ." Only a reference to the "Gallantbuttocked mare" (279/275) which pulls the young man to his destination intrudes a lickerish tone. But together with a still earlier description of Boylan at the Hotel Ormand's bar, tossing "to fat lips his chalice . . . sucking the last fat violet syruppy drops," (267/262) this reference to a Mollyish mare is enough to govern strongly our response to the following lines, inserted as they are between Bloom's husbandly yearnings and reminiscences:

Jog jig jogged stopped. Dandy tan shoe of dandy 
Boylan socks skyblue clocks came light to earth. (282/278)

This flash of joyful imagery -- especially "socks skyblue clocks came light to earth" -- has considerable impact upon a reader sympathetic with Bloom's predicament. Blazes Boylan leaps to life, as does our pang for helpless Bloom. Joyce has fused stray symbols into strong feeling, much as performed music melts notation into passionate sound.

Much of the passage's peculiar shock can be laid to the metonymic and synecdochical aspects mentioned before: Boylan appears nowhere. Instead, the adulterer is embodied in the gay noise of the jaunting car
(metonymy) and through his cheerfully vulgar shoes and socks (synecdoche), which he will presumably soon shed. In short, Boylan here becomes an amalgam of the external world, and that world seems animistically to celebrate the success of his venture. Against such powers, Bloom sits hopeless, immobilized by psychic inertia. Yet we respond to the two lines -- and Bloom's plight -- with irrational sympathy. And no wonder: The density of painful association (from Bloom's point of view) that Joyce has packed into the brief passage is extraordinary.

Underlying the sudden emotional appeal of these lines are the sing-song elements of an appropriately naughty nursery rhyme:

```
Handy-spandy, Jack-a-dandy,
loves plumcake and sugar candy. 30
```

While our response will probably not be conditioned by an awareness of that particular jingle, it is important to remember that Joyce's thinking was -- that much of Ulysses exists in potential for a reader similarly informed (as the discussion of Oxen's prose models suggested). Regardless, the irrational style of a nursery rhyme confronts us:

```
Dandy tan shoe of dandy Boylan socks
skyblue clocks came light to earth;
```

and the effects are at least two-fold -- not only to confer upon Boylan's tentative affair the legendary qualities and inevitability we associate with such doggerel (e.g., "Humpty-Dumpty"), but also to countervail somewhat the painful truth by lodging it within a frame of childhood nonsense (as the Halloween flavor of the Circe episode distances the sordid horrors of Nighttown). However, such a countervailing narrative ingredient can also intensify the vicarious pain we feel for Bloom; Within the context of Ulysses, his plight is real, not the figment of some childish imagination. And with a ferocity of which few writers seem capable, Joyce drives
this fact home only seven lines later in a forthright response to Bloom's plaintive speculation — "Now. Maybe now. Before." The retort of the narrative voice is sarcastically affirmative, brutally explicit:

One rapped on a door, one tapped with a knock, did he knock Paul de Kock [understandably Molly's favorite author], with a loud proud knocker, with a cock carrera carrera cock. Cockcock." (282/278)

No such finality resides in the transcendental nursery jingle —

Jog jig jogged stopped. Dandy tan shoe of dandy Boylan socks skyblue clocks came light to earth

— but rather a suggestive core of disturbing impressions acquired previously in Sirens, and in Ulysses; together with hints of an archetypal resonance that further controls our response to these lines. All prompt sudden sympathy for outraged Bloom:

Jog jig jogged stopped: an echo via the earlier Boylan motif — "Jiggedy jingle jauntly jaunt" (271/267) — of the jingling "loose" brass quoits on Molly's hospitable bed (56/56); a mating of Molly and Boylan as "gallant-buttocked mare" and sportive "jaunting car." Persuasive onomatopoeia sounds the halt.

Dandy tan shoe of dandy Boylan: Boylan's gaudy attire makes him somewhat of a dandy in the eyes of lower middleclass barmaids (266/262); his vulgar audacity seems to strike them as fine-and-dandy. Embodied in a "dandy tan shoe," Boylan figuratively stomps on Bloom's domestic rights.

Socks skyblue clocks came light to earth: a fusion of such elements as the skyblue clocks embroidered on Boylan's tasteless socks (254/251); the congenial image of a bright skyblue day; the barroom clock that "clacked" the time of Boylan's belated rendezvous with Molly (266/261); the sound of an admiring Lydia Douce's smacking garter ("Sonnez la cloche": Though "cloche" means "bell" in French, the word "clock" comes unavoidably
to English minds); Boylan's late and impatient departure as a result of enjoying this performance (267/263). Together with fundamental emotions stirred by images of clocks (mortality) and blue skies (salvation), Joyce employs the word "light" like an archetypal lever to condition our response. "Let there be light" is the biblical formulation of the archetype, and Joyce's echo here — "came light to earth" (i.e., "There came light to earth") — quite possibly helps undermine our rational defense against the persuasive imagery, does so in the manner of all misapprehended archetypes. 31 To the primordial energy conveyed by "came light to earth," can be added several modern connotations: Boylan's light frame of mind, his light jaunty step down from the cab, under light bright skies, to invade lightly the Bloom household. Bubbling under all these images of light is our intuitive perception of Boylan as Anti-Christ, usurper, and casually vacuous opportunist.

That is a lot to say in a little. Any reader's version of what Joyce has compressed into these two lines must vary. But the impression of sudden and remarkable poetic density should not. The impact of the brief passage is considerably more than the sum of its parts: With a jolt our sympathies are aligned with hapless Bloom. A further intensification of our response is forced by the cavalier, almost vindictive good cheer with which the ugly tidings are announced.

Such narrative countervailence becomes so harsh, in fact, as to reach the level of insult. And all such weighted appeals -- the animistic vitality achieved through use of synecdoche and metonymy, the predetermination imparted by the undercurrent of nursery rhyme, the condensation of adulterous themes presented earlier, the verve with which these elements are conveyed -- all such poetic density, like a slap in the face, forces
immediate reaction. Our sympathy for Bloom is instinctive, involuntary — no more deliberative than our first hearing of Beethoven's apocalyptic coda to the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. Our experience of both the Joyce and the Beethoven can, of course, be deliberative and analytical, but the emotions which such passages provoke disincline us to perform the exercise, at least on a first reading or hearing. Such a disinclination forms an obvious corollary to Joyce's precept that "poetry in any art transcends the mode of its expression," and that poetry "discovers itself as the rhythmic speech of an emotion otherwise incommunicable, or at least not so fitly." How define the inexpressible, or express the incommunicable?

Such pronouncements by Joyce stress the transcedent nature of poetry, no matter the art. For that reason, I have slighted somewhat the more traditional aspects of poetic usage which occur so copiously in Sirens. Few sympathetic readers of this episode would dispute Richard Kain's appraisal of the episode as "one of the most ambitious tone poems in modern literature," or of Joyce as sharing with the Elizabethans "a love of language almost reaching the point of exhilaration... ." Kain, Hayman and others have charted expertly the impact of such devices as alliteration, onomatopoeia, meter, assonance, half-rhyme, and others. To be sure, Joyce manipulates the relationships of words to subject, and each other, with a gusto unmatched by the other episodes (although approached by Scylla and Charybdis, and Circe). Ben Dollard, for example, does not play the piano; rather his "gouty paws plumped chords (267/283). And after a successful rendition of the Croppy Boy, those same gouty fingers are "nakkering castagnettes in the air." (287/282) The onomatopoeic words of the first description suggest an ursine degeneracy, and those of
the second a dance macabre, but Joyce, like a virtuoso, can vary his

technique to express boredom: "Bloom tamborined gently with I am just
reflecting fingers," (279/274) or uncertainty, as Simon Dedalus tries un-
successfully to play the air from Martha in its original version of one
flat: "The keys, obedient, rose higher, told, faltered, confessed, con-
fused." (272/267) Such hands and fingers convey mental frustration,
rather than physical decline. The Renaissance transvaluation of the word
"tamborine" from noun to verb may scarcely be noticed when followed by the
unusual "I am just reflecting fingers," in which a complete clause modi-
ifies a noun. The elaborate compound predicate used to portray Simon's
non-performance at the keyboard -- "told, faltered, confessed, confused" --
when reinforced by staccato bi-syllables and slant rhymes, comically sug-
gests an awkward confessional: After all, it is under Father Cowley's
surveillance that contrite Simon blunders.

In fact, so prodigious is the accumulation of poetic devices in
Sirens that we are again confronted with the burlesque of an entire tradi-
tion -- in this case, versification. As Bloom responds sentimentally to
Simon's rendition of "Martha," Joyce turns poetry's favorite theme of
rhapsodic love into a tongue-twister of liquid "m's" and "l's," open-mouthed
"o's" and nearly palindromic internal rhythms: "her first merciful lovesoft
oftloved word." (274/269) Bloom tamborines gently on "flat pad Pat brought;"
(279/274) and Miss Douce to reach a bottle stretches her arm and "her bust,
that all but burst, so high." (265/261) Whatever expressive uses modern
poets have discovered for the associative linkages created by assonance,
consonance, and dissonance (or slant rhyme) probably can be found hiding
somewhere in Sirens,\(^{35}\) as can metrical experiments that might have silenced
a Saintsbury. However, these poetic usages are not the means by which Sirens
emulates the condition of music, but rather a mockery of them.

Joyce caricatures tradition concepts of poetry in Sirens, just as his selection of song lyrics -- "When first I saw that form endearing" -- caricatures the reality from which those lyrics offer an escape. Joyce's ridicule of the sentimental contagion of song is almost specific: "Bloom listened feeling that flow endearing flow over skin limbs human heart soul spine." (272/269) There is nothing "endearing" about Molly's impending adultery, although the song prompts in Bloom a recollection of the vanished past. Similarly, nothing terribly "endearing" promises to emerge from the epistolary dalliance with Martha: Like the "whore of the lane" she exhibits a preternatural interest in Molly. Perfume is Martha's concern; cloths, the whore's. "Put you off your stroke" (290/285) is Bloom's succinct verdict of the whore's pitch, and by implication Martha's.

Accordingly, the massage of sweet poesy and sentimental song has nothing to do with the poetic rigidities of Sirens. In fact, through the tools of prosody which I have mentioned, Joyce fosters a sense of the maudlin anti-poetry against which his aesthetic struggles toward fulfillment. Poetic convention to Joyce is a sorry joke; its sing-song banalities supply in Sirens the fraudulent narrative statement that forces judgment, and the countervailing narrative statement that purges emotions the author deemed invalid — in this case, romantic sentimentality.

The true poetry in Sirens takes the forms I have begun to suggest: a density of emotional association that can provoke from the reader an unstudied response: a manipulation of poetic concepts such as synesthesia, synecdoche, metonymy and, as I shall soon illustrate, oxymoron. In common, such devices attack the roots of our faith in the ability of language to represent a sane ordered universe. At the same time, they can suggest
a transcendent reality sensed by primitive intelligence, imitated by poets, and generally discredited by empirical schools of thought such as those of Bacon, Newton and Locke.

Just such a manipulation of the concept, oxymoron, takes place when Bloom gazes into the Ormond Hotel bar, and spies the barmaid Sirens listening to their "spiked and winding seahorn":

Bloom through the bardoor saw a shell held at their ears. He heard more faintly that that they heard, each for herself alone, then each for other, hearing the plash of waves, loudly, a silent roar. (281/276)

The effect is dimly mysterious and oddly seductive, as a song by Sirens should be. None of the stylistic juggling which I have called anti-poetry occurs here. Yet the relations between words and rhythms invite close analysis. Randomly spaced dactile feet -- "Bloom through the . . . held at their . . . . that that they" weave insinuatingly among less pointed rhythms -- "He heard more faintly . . . then each for other" -- until an imitative flood of strongly stressed syllables closes the passage:

". . . waves, loudly, a silent roar," The strongly accented close recalls the steady and magical pounding of waves at the seashore, which strongly effects the memories of those who have been there. Joyce's use of the delicately onomatopoeic "plash" (compare the more obvious "splash") contributes to the seductive aura of these few lines, and the sudden oxymoron -- "loudly, a silent roar" -- intensifies the spell.

But in a larger sense of the term, "oxymoron," we suddenly find ourselves involved in the paradoxical absurdity of straining to hear a sound which cannot be heard -- a sound Bloom can only imagine. And we must do the same. But for us, the shell's remote whisper is twice filtered through the minds of others: It washes from the girls to Bloom, and comes to us shaded by their mild awe. Joyce's intricate distancing of the seashell's
faint roar makes the sound seem fainter, more alluring still. Yet for us, the sound of waves seems to become more real, perhaps because of the elaborate challenge to our empathy: We must imagine what Bloom imagines the two girls imagine they hear from the echoing shell. And reinforcing this vague wealth of suggestion will inevitably be our own recollections of the seashore, prompted no doubt by the imaginative need to close gaps in the evocative, yet artfully incomplete, moment Joyce has set before us.

This oxymoronic tension — created by the notion of a sound that exists but cannot be heard — is heightened by a further contradiction: We know the shell's ocean whisper is false, nothing more than an echo of the Ormond Hotel's barroom roar. Such a theme of deception is of course central to Sirens, and Joyce drives this home. A transitional line reminds us that these Sirens are tired bargirls.

Bronze by a weary gold, anear, afar, they listened.

(281/276)

With surrealist precision, Bloom's mind slides to the strange resemblance a human ear bears to a seashell:

Her ear too is a shell, the peeping lobe there. Been to the seaside. Lovely seaside girls. Skin tanned raw.

(281/277)

Although Joyce has dispelled the mysterious mood, a striking metaphorical density in Bloom's thought-stream still exerts a poetic — and non-rational — influence on the reader's perceptions. A type of dream-logic suddenly prevails: The Siren/barmaid's ear reminds Bloom of a seashell, one which still houses life — "the peeping lobe there." A shy animal of lascivious promise seems to dwell inside. But as the other shell was dead, and its ocean song a lie, so it would be a mistake to attribute honest sexuality to this mechanically flirtatious Siren/barmaid. Ears, furthermore, bear other than a literal resemblance to seashells: Both can deceive the lis-
tener. Ears can permit an idealized song lyric ("Lovely seaside girls") to embellish a sore reality ("Skin tanned raw), just as a dead seashell can distill magic sounds from dull surrounding noise. Joyce chose the "Ear" as the organ which would partially guide his thinking for this episode; the tradition of "The Sweet Cheat" was his interpretation of Sirens, and the concept of "Embellishments" his symbol for deceit in both music and life. 36 All themes are compassed within Bloom's swift, humorous disenchantment. But even here, a lurking chaos of imagery -- the human ear as tenanted mollusk -- briefly attacks our saner faculties in the manner of both poetry and music.

Taken as a unit, these consecutive passages provide a climactic point in Sirens. Odysseus/Bloom has been momentarily bewitched by the barmaids: by their "spiked and winding seahorn" and its seductive song of lost youth and love. As quickly, Bloom's redeeming cynicism returns him to the safe reality of a touristy "seaside" and sunburnt skin. Occurring here in microcosm, this pattern of narrative countervailence forecasts the larger rejection by Bloom of music, its lures and its sentimentality, in the coda of gaseous wind that closes the episode. 37 Yet while variously undermined, the passing moment of enchantment lingers in our imagination like some charming passage -- or even some weighted silence -- in music.

A nearly identical oxymoronic effect -- that of funneling the reader's imagination through the mind of a character who, in turn, strains to imagination the sounds heard and emotions felt by still another character -- provided Joyce his climactic fulcrum for the short story, "The Dead" in Dubliners. How far Joyce traveled toward economy of suggestiveness and poetic intensity in Sirens is astonishing. The climactic moment in "The Dead" occurs when the banal pleasantries have been exchanged at the close
of the Christmas party, and Gabriel Conroy is left puzzling over a mys-
terious mood that has absorbed his wife Gretta. She is listening to
music inaudible to her husband, who is distanced by the length of a
staircase (just as Bloom sits in a separate room gazing "through the
bar door" at his barmaid-Sirens). This is Joyce's earlier, more labored
attempt to draw his reader down human corridors to hear inaudible sound:

Gabriel had not gone to the door with the others. He
was in a dark part of the hall gazing up the staircase.
A woman was standing near the top of the first flight,
in the shadow also. He could not see her face but he
could see the terracotta and salmonpink panels of her
skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It
was his wife. She was leaning on the banisters, lis-
tening to something. Gabriel was surprised at her
stillness and strained his ear to listen also. But he
could hear little save the noise of laughter and dispute
on the front steps, a few chords struck on the piano and
a few notes of a man's voice singing.

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to
catch the air that the voice was singing and gazing up
at his wife. There was grace and mystery in her atti-
dute as if she were a symbol of something. He asked
himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the
shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he
were a painter he would paint her in that attitude.
Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze of her hair
against the darkness and the dark panels of her skirt
would show off the light ones. Distant music he would
call the picture if he were a painter. 38 (My emphases)

Again, here is the moment of enchantment in Sirens:

Bloom through the bar door saw a shell held at their ears.
He heard more faintly that that they heard, each for her-
self alone, then each for other, hearing the plash of
waves, loudly, a silent roar.

The similarities, as well as the differences, between the passages should
be readily discernible. In both passages the reader's empathy is required
in order to complete the intellectual and emotional transaction Joyce has
set in motion: that of isolated males projecting their thoughts into the
minds of preoccupied females — with the sounds to which the females are
responding unheard, and the thoughts thus kindled unknown. Various shades
of awe seem to touch all parties in both passages. And both describe
a spiritual moment within a context of vacant social gesture and senti-
mentality. Yet the lines from "The Dead" are far less persuasive than
those from Sirens. Doubtless they were meant to be. It is hard to
imagine that Joyce, even early in his career, could have relied upon
such phrases as "grace and mystery" and "as if she were a symbol of some-
thing" to do more than break the spell of grace, mystery, and elusive
symbolism which events, without such verbal stage directions, had cast
in the lines just previous. The sudden apparition of one's wife grown
unrecognizable, with even her richly-colored clothes drained by shadow to
cubistic panels of black and white, provides all of the grace, mystery
and symbolism that the "quick intelligence" needs for his journey toward
meanings which are "still unuttered." More likely Joyce's narrative voice
in this passage from "The Dead" reflects the somewhat muddy mental stream
of a Gabriel Conroy -- a partially sensitive, somewhat literary reviewer
of books and poems, who can pride himself on so imprecise an epithet for
Browning's poetry as "thought-tormented music." Grant, Joyce was in-
tent upon portraying a less-than-Dedalean sensibility in Gabriel, but in
so doing he eas forced to vulgarize the mystery he had created.

Booth has chosen this very passage from "The Dead" as an example of
the "rather turbid, sense-bound 'camera eyes' of much fiction since James,"
but he also concedes that such third-person "reflectors," while filling
precisely the function of avowed narrators, "can add intensities of their
own." Naturalness" and a "vivid illusion" are among the intensities which
Booth ascribes to this technique, and for which qualities Gabriel's cloudy
little epiphany serves as prototype. Yet how much more intense seems
the equivalent passage about the shell from Sirens. None of the vivid or
natural qualities have been sacrificed, but none of the deadening literalness remains. Grace, mystery, and elusive symbolism have been artfully assimilated.

Joyce's persistent grip upon so elusive a theme is astonishing, his progress to the seashell passage in Sirens no less remarkable. The oxymoronic tensions in the passage from "The Dead" — those implicit in sounds which cannot be heard, and emotions which cannot be felt — seem there to sprawl listlessly under Joyce's naturalistic "camera eye." However, by the time that the "doomed" experiment of Sirens is reached, the author has tightened his paradoxical theme to lines as terse, and as suggestive, as those by Keats in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The comparison is by no means farfetched: Similar themes motivate both novelist and poet. Consequently, some speculation by Kenneth Burke about the oxymoronic temperament Keats displays in the "Ode" can be applied to Joyce's seashell passage as well. The critic fixes upon the "unheard" melodies Keats ponders in his "Ode." These are melodies of "no tone;" they are piped by a stone shepherd to the poet's "spirit," rather than to his "sensual ear." Burke observes that:

> the notion of inaudible sound brings us into the region of the mystic oxymoron .... Here the poet whose sounds are the richest in our language is meditating upon absolute sound, the essence of sound, which would be soundless as the prime mover is motionless ....

Whether one toys with the artist's relationship to a "prime mover," or to an artist—God that is "refined out of existence," he will be led to much the same conclusion about both writers: Each destroyed conventional meaning as an act of creation: each worked to fuse worn verbal associations into non-rational, yet ultimately sane, emotional truth. In Keats' "Ode," one encounters such intellectual contradictions as melodious silence,
passionate marble; ephemeral love that has been rendered eternal, and finally, the explicit oxymoron — "Cold Pastoral!" which, in a manner that anticipates Joyce's narrative countervailence, refutes the previous intellectual frame that was supplied by the oxymoronic concept of warm, ingratiating stone. In Joyce's seashell passage, there also occurs an explicit oxymoron — "loudly, a silent roar" — but purgative countervailence is briefly delayed until we reach Bloom's mental rebuttal, in which the archaic lure of Homer's ocean fades to a seaside resort and sunburnt flesh.

No matter the validity of a comparison to Keats, Joyce's narrative technique in Sirens, rocked gently forward by shrewd verbal rhythms, must certainly approximate the "poetry" which in his youthful arrogance he had distinguished from "the chaos of unremembered writing." And whether or not the briefly glowing moments of superior poetry in Sirens satisfied Joyce's recollection of Shelly's mysteriously fading coal, there can be little argument about the author's ability to charm a city's noise and folly into a captivating vision, and thus fulfill his vow to "press out again from the gross earth or what it brings forth . . . an image of the beauty we have come to understand . . . ."

To refine our vision of that beauty, Joyce has created in Sirens a mocking undercurrent of anti-poetry. The nearly palindromic "her first merciful lovesoft oftloved word" attacks with ridicule the very roots of both romantic "love" and sentimental "word." From this creative dissolution of meaning arises our sense of Sirens's episodic moments of peak intensity, an intensity that is heightened by a sometimes venomous narrative voice. In a flash — a kind of mental short circuit — Joyce makes us feel Bloom's keen pain as boastful Boylan's socks skyblue clocks come
light to earth, beguiles us into sharing Bloom's nostalgic longing for the seashell's lost shores of youth and love. Not in the clever imitations of musical form, but rather in the fusing of worn rational habits into emotional truth, does Sirens approach the inarticulate eloquence of music.
V. The Sirens: Disorienting Strains

1 Ellmann, Ulysses, pp. 102-03.

2 For example: Joyce was irritated when a friend, to whom he had read Sirens, would not agree that its "musical" effects rendered those of Wagner tawdry. Ellmann, Ulysses, p. 104.

3 Gross, p. 62.


7 James Huneker, Ivory Apes and Peacocks (New York, 1915), pp. 6, 16.

8 Budgen, p. 65.

9 Ezra Pound, in Kain and Magalaner, Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation, p. 171.

10 Litz, p. 70.


12 Budgen, p. 138.

13 As the term implies, a "fugue according to rule" has strict compositional requirements, which are outlined by Gifford, p. 238. Among these requirements are certain programmatic elements, such as a coda which concludes the fugue with a "desire for home." Taken seriously, such a motif might have precluded Bloom's unsentimental departure from the Ormond Hotel, might have forced a journey home — at least prevented his action before Gerty on the Strand. Joyce would brook no such imaginative restrictions.

Historically, the "fuga per canone" is associated with the classic school of composers:

Classic is . . . a distinctive epithet for the works of the earlier masters, including Beethoven, and their imitators, in contrast to those of the romantic school . . . .

Dr. Thomas Baker, A Dictionary of Musical Terms (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1895), p. 46. How seriously either Joyce or Johannes Brahms took "classical" strictures is suggested by the title of an early piano work by the
composer — Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24. Like Brahms' piece, Joyce's musical opus is a compositional hybrid, unchecked by an archaic set of rules.

Burgess observes in Joysprick, p. 83: "[The device of placing fragments from the episode at the beginning] suggests Wagnerian leitmotif (especially as it ends with a reminiscence of one of Walther's trial songs) more than the baroque atmosphere of the fugal form. But it will do for symbolizing the broken bones of men rent and devoured by the sirens."

Ellmann, Ulysses, p. 104, notes that opera "is subsumed in the fugal form." But so, too, are the cadences of street ballads like "The Cropsey Boy," operatically rendered by Ben Dollard.


Harold C. Schonberg, The Lives of the Great Composers (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 512. Like Bartok, Prokofiev helped usher in a musical machine-age, stressing that the piano "was a percussion instrument and had to be played percussively."

Baker, A Dictionary of Musical Terms, pp. 207-10 (trill), 219 (vibrato), 207 (tremolo).

Ibid., p. 58.

Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, Op. 57, builds much of its tension upon pedal points in the first movement; Robert Schumann carries the principle to elaborate extremes in his Etudes Symphoniques, Op. 13, employing full repeated chords in the bass ("Variation 2"), against which the treble melody -- in single notes! -- struggles to survive.

Budgen, p. 136.

Baker, p. 79.

Burgess, Joysprick, p. 92.


Similarly, Chopin's "Black Key" Etude, No. 5, Op. 10, in the key of G Flat Major, has six flats and is played almost entirely on the black keys.

Baker, p. 8.

Budgen, p. 136


Gifford, p. 250.


When a situation occurs which corresponds to a given archetype, that archetype becomes activated and a compulsiveness appears, which, like an instinctual drive, gains its way against all reason and will, or else produces a conflict of pathological dimensions, that is to say, a neurosis.

Of this coda, Schonberg, p. 104, writes:

[The] coda of the first movement, with its slippery, chromatic bass and the awesome moans above it, remains a paralyzing experience. That is the way the world ends. It is absolute music, but it clearly represents struggle, and it is hard to hear so monumentally anguished a cry without reading something into it. The trouble is that, faced with such music, all of us tend to become sentimentalis, reading into it the wrong message.


Ibid., p. 152.


Ellmann, Ulysses, Appendix, after p. 187.

Ibid., p. 106.


Ibid., p. 208.


Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone . . .

CHAPTER VI

THE LESTRYGONIANS: BLOOM CANNIBALIZED

Bold narrational techniques loom formidably in the last half of *Ulysses*. But in the book's early stages, the thrust of these techniques is also operative, assuming guises that are both subtle and obvious. In Scylla and Charybdis, the musical directives and playlet (209/206) clearly warn the reader of formal energies which will disturb the surface of later chapters. So, too, do the capricious "headlines" of Aeolus, inserted as an afterthought by Joyce,¹ and serving to burlesque the breezy materials they introduce. But far less readily apparent aspects of indirect narrative statement -- of fraudulence, countervailence, and poetic intensity -- are to be found elsewhere. The Lestrygonians chapter, for all of its brutality, displays a wide and subtle spectrum of such techniques.

To be sure, narrative fraudulence is sharply reduced in Lestrygonians, because information comes to us either through reported conversations (" -- I will, Mr. Bloom said") (159/157), or interior monologue, where accuracy can again be presumed. However, good faith can never be quite presumed when it comes to third-person descriptions of exactly how thoughts strike Bloom, what he sees, hears or feels, and in exactly what ways surrounding events stimulate him. That is not to say precisely that the reportage of the "presiding imagination" turns false at this point; it is to observe that Joyce has preserved a manipulative fringe area where he can employ semantic distortions, rubbery syntax, and highly selective detail without totally dispelling his air of diplomatic objectivity. We
are the more deceived for Joyce's seeming candor, the more prey to his refined synthesis of the crude terrors of Homer's tale.

To trace Joyce's manipulative instinct, I shall first view closely one of the key moments in Lestrygonians: Bloom's languorous approach to the Burton restaurant, and his violent revulsion upon crossing the threshold. Joyce's rude surprise pivots upon the following lines:

Must eat . . . Feel better then . . . Perfumed bodies, warm, full . . . His heart astir, he pushed in the door of the Burton restaurant. Stink gripped his trembling breath . . . See the animals feed. Men, men, men. (168-69/166)

As will be shown, fraudulent narrative techniques have first contributed to the reader's sense of Bloom's well-being. Bloom's subsequent disenchantment is violent, one of the most powerful strokes of narrative countervailence in Ulysses. All the artificialities of Bloom's viewpoint have been purged through the agency of a poetically intense style which employs such techniques as personification, transvaluation, and breathless sentence fragments to convey Bloom's agitated frame of mind.

At such moments of poetic intensity, Joyce acknowledges the Homeric chapter by figuratively dismembering Bloom: As the would-be voluptuary encounters disappointment, Joyce personifies Bloom's bodily organs and functions -- "Stink gripped his trembling breath" -- as well as the external forces which thwart his expectations. Correspondingly, Bloom's mental faculties languish. The "presiding imagination" has in effect cannibalized Bloom, and the reader's reaction becomes a type of intellectual nausea -- the only fit response to cannibalism in a civilized world. The Joycean narrative countervailence which encloses its subject within hostile intellectual frames reveals itself in each of the peristaltic shocks that ripple the surface of Lestrygonians. And with each shock,
PLEASE NOTE:

This page not included with original material. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
our sympathy for Bloom increases.

However, in the swells and ebbs of Lestrygonians can be detected a series of modest dramas, not all of which flatter Bloom. Pride feeds his momentary downfall in the exchange with Nosey Flynn. The reader then becomes accomplice to a Sophoclean (or "dramatic") irony that mingle portions of Bloom's living anatomy, his ribald thoughts, and his patronizing demeanor, with an intrusive hint of Blazes Boylan — "Getting it up?" — and a well-deserved emotional setback for Bloom at the close.

But the final playlet of the chapter imposes upon the reader another, less distanced viewpoint. When Bloom generously helps the blind stripling across a Dublin Street, even projects his mind into that of the unfortunate boy, no hubis mars Bloom's impulse. No self-centered thought would seem to justify the emotional mayhem that follows: Boylan appears; Bloom affects blindness and plunges into the sanctuary of the National Library, there to view the comforting, cold posteriors of female statues. The reader this time shares the ironic fate of the protagonist, unspared by foreknowledge and a candid "presiding imagination."

Eating, of course, is the subject of Lestrygonians, and themes of alimentation control the universe of this disturbing chapter. Sex and defecation become extensions of eating, and cannibalism the metaphorical extension of these ultimately mechanical and self-centered drives. So brutal is Joyce's interpretation of the Homeric myth that two flies, stuck on the window panes of a pub, serve as an intrusive multiple symbol: On the most obvious level, the buzzing flies seem an image of copulation, an odious forecast of Molly's tumble with Boylan. But because they are "stuck," the flies might also symbolize the paralysis which afflict's Bloom's marital relations — or even Dublin's moribund society. Other
interpretations are possible. Despite the symbolic prominence of the "buzzing" flies, their real meaning is elusive, and their presence in the narrative a calculated affront to searching minds. A creative dissolution of meaning resides in these unpleasant flies, buzzing their song of sex, food and filth.

Fortunately, Joyce left at least one explicit warning of such manipulative narrative tendencies. Of two carefully written lines in Lestry--he wrote to his friend Budgen:

> My hero is going to lunch. But there is a seduction motive in the Odyssey, the cannibal king's daughter. Seduction appears in my book as women's silk petticoats hanging in a shop window. The words through which I express the effect of it on my hungry hero are: "Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore." You can see for yourself in how many different ways they might be arranged. (My emphasis)

The artistic tamperer is everywhere apparent in these two sentences, and Joyce conceded this fact to Budgen, who had inquired about the progress of Ulysses. Joyce answered that he had been working hard all day -- on the fifteen words stressed above. The author had not been seeking Flaubert's mot juste: "What I am seeking is the perfect order of words in the sentence. There is an order in every way appropriate. I think I have it." 4

According to Joyce, then, the diction had already been ascertained; syntax was what took him all day to write:

> Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore. (168/166)

There can be no doubt that the position of the words is carefully chosen. "All assailed him" would be a more conventional phrasing, but the present order of words reinforces the sense of intellectual drift conveyed by "obscurely" and "mutely." In a manner appropriate to its sense, "obscurely"
seems to wobble back and forth between the prepositional phrase ("With
hungered flesh ... ") and the main clause ("... he mutely craved to
adore"), suggesting that Bloom may either have "obscurely" hungered
flesh, or that he may "obscurely," as well as "mutely," crave a suitable
target for his adoration. Such syntactical ambiguity contributes to the
rapt vagueness of the sentences, complementing that state of mind in
Bloom. For all their exquisite patterning, the two sentences have an
air of artificiality -- but that quality serves Joyce's purpose, as I
shall soon demonstrate.

The two sentences are important for several reasons. They display
Joyce's pride in the "perfect order of words" while writing *Ulysses*.
Further, they suggest Joyce's exploitation of that manipulative combat zone
in his narrative -- a zone where words, their emotional content and their
arrangement, can work their rhetorical mission to the fullest. Even the
artificiality of Joyce's two proud sentences serves a narrative purpose:
It heightens through contrast our impression of candor and verisimilitude
in the lines which precede:

A warm human plumpness settled down on his brain.
His brain yielded.

and in the lines which follow:

Duke street. Here we are. Must eat. The Burton.
Feel better then. (168/166)

By comparison with the artful "mutely craved to adore," these sentences
almost seem examples of unstudied naturalism. We are apt not to notice
the encroaching personifications of "plumpness" and "brain" in the former,
and the latter convinces us that if Bloom drops into the Burton restaurant
and eats, he really will "feel better then." This thought leads to a
Walter Mitty-ish daydream in which there is no such thing as amatory
disappointment:

All kissed, yielded: in deep summer fields, tangled
pressed grass, in trickling hallways of tenements,
along sofas, creaking beds. (168-69/166)

We have slipped back from Bloom's actual thoughts to the narrative voice's
version of them -- a version which progresses rhetorically from the idyllic
and general "deep summer fields" to the sordid and particularized "creaking
beds." But returning to Bloom's mind, we rise to magnificent abstraction:

-- Jack, love!
-- Darling!
-- Kiss me, Reggy!
-- My boy!
-- Love! (169/166)

Notions of "Perfumed bodies, warm full" have saturated Bloom's brain.
The rhetorical progressions, the good-natured humor, the images of
perfumed gratification -- all narrative ingredients have conspired to
eavour the reader into a frame of mind as optimistic as Bloom's.
Nowhere else in the book, perhaps, has Joyce manipulated techniques and
content to raise Bloom (and the reader) to such false heights. Subtly,
Joyce's narrative fraudulence has depicted the world as the world is
not. To purge this element of "desire," this "pornographical" fancy,
the author consummates a stroke of sequential (or linear) narrative
countervailence so harsh and brutish as to evoke the emotional horrors
experienced by Odysseus's cannibalized crew. After Bloom's warm day-
dream, comes reality:

His heart astir he pushed in the door of the Burton
restaurant. Stink gripped his trembling breath: pun-
gent meatjuice, slop of greens. See the animals feed.
Men, men, men.
... A man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated
gristle: no teeth to chewchewchew it. Chump chop from
the grill. ...
Smells of men. His gorge rose. Spatton sawdust, sweet-
ish warmish cigarette smoke, reek of plug, spilt beer,
men's beery piss, the stale of ferment. ...
Out. I hate dirty eaters. (169-70/166-67)
Or is this reality? — a reality which persons in a less expectant frame of mind than Bloom's could all agree upon as such? Are restaurants, men, and the act of eating as revolting as Joyce here portrays them? The questions answer themselves. No. Instead, Joyce has depicted one man's violent response to a shattered daydream, has rendered in extreme caricature the rupture of careless hopes.

Aspects of a poetically intense style which help engineer Joyce's rude surprise center upon the personification of Bloom's bodily organs and functions, and the abstract entities which assail them, both in the languorous approach to the Burton restaurant, and in the cannibal's den itself. At first, comfortable abstractions exert a kindly tyranny on Bloom. "A warm human plumpness takes charge of his brain." He is "assailed" by an imagined "perfume of embraces," a gentle thralldom to be sure. Parts of his body begin to respond: The "flesh," not the man, is hungered "obscurely." When Bloom enters the Burton restaurant — "His heart astir" — some small and helpless creature, rather than a mindless portion of the anatomy, seems wakened into hope. This stirring hope is promptly strangled: "Stink gripped his trembling breath . . . ." We notice that "heart" and "breath" have been called to life by our artful narrator: one stirs, the other trembles. Luncheon "stink" asphyxiates them both.

Brutally symmetrical are the countervailing annoyances that shatter Bloom's daydream: A press of "Men, men, men" offsets female "embraces"; a real "stink" stifles an imaginative "perfume"; the rudely vigorous "gripped his trembling breath" purges the languid artificiality of "all him assailed." The opposed terms of the figurative equation are almost exact, and the stasis Joyce achieves is paralyzing, incandescent. No
mild purgative, but rather a concentrated emetic has been poured. An emotional nausea passes through Bloom and the reader -- appropriately enough, because cannibalism is the subject of this chapter, and to cannibalism, nausea is the only civilized response.

However, such ferocity in the "presiding imagination" also amounts to a simultaneous countervailence -- or lurking antagonism between frame and subject matter -- which depicts a type of intellectual nausea. As we have seen in the symmetrical passage, the mindless organs in Bloom's body begin to breathe with spiritual life. Simultaneously, his intellect weakens and for the moment dies. As integrated Bloom recedes from our vision, anatomized Bloom springs into unserviceable action, only to be in effect cannibalized by a hostile "presiding imagination" which will employ personified abstractions like lunchroom stench to perform figuative assaults on itemized, dissected, corporeal Bloom.

With the phrase, "Stink gripped his trembling breath," we seem a long way from the pleasurable emotions that were conveyed by another personification, almost identically structured, in The Lotus Eaters. There, the artful narrator voiced Bloom's satisfaction upon completing the letter from Martha, his vicarious mistress: "Weak joy opened his lips." (78/77)

While Bloom's emotions differ in the extreme, the thematic significance becomes in a larger sense the same: Both convey a weak and passive Bloom, prey to emotions or circumstances he is not at the moment equipped to fight. And both implement highly effective personifications -- "Weak joy opened," "Stink gripped" -- to create a poetic fantasy-world of puissant creatures, before whom Bloom seems to stand hardly a chance.

Such narrative fraudulence can dispose the reader to a more sane conclusion:
that Joyce through camouflaged poetic license portrays a Bloom whose body corrupts his mind and soul. 6

Such a thematic statement, made through poetic turns of style, is one of many in Lestrygonians, and it is about the simplest to describe. More difficult to fix are the ways that Joyce has, so to speak, chewed and digested the motif of cannibalism. While Joyce generally avoids literal applications of the motif, he nonetheless exploits fully the overtones of selfishness, cruelty and fear that reside in the concept of "cannibalism." Thus, Boylan can be said to be "cannibalizing" Bloom, as the violent gustatory imagery surrounding any mention of the adulterer's name in Lestrygonians would imply. Appropriately enough, Bloom reacts viscerally whenever the hated name is mentioned, as later examples will show. In the act of eating, as in sex, man becomes animal becomes object, as the upward aspiration inherent in the Chain of Being reverses course, and bends violently downward.

Such themes in Lestrygonians unfold through clustered poetic devices, metaphorical and rhetorical, by which the artful narrator devours his subject matter. After evoking Bloom's figurative strangulation by stench, the narrative voice employs verbal metaphors to equate the lunchroom's greedy crowd with the animal kingdom:

Perched [like birds of prey] on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling [like pigs], wolfing [a direct metaphor] gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging [Goya's painting of Saturn eating his child comes to mind], wiping wetted mustaches. (169/166)

We have arrived with Bloom in a den of vultures, predators, pigs, wolves, and cannibals. Contrasting wildly with the lazy syntax of Joyce's two artfully-contrived sentences, a breathless series of participial clauses:
"Perched . . . shoved back . . . calling . . . swilling . . . wolfin
g . . . bulging . . . wiping" -- imitates the rapid bombardment of Bloom's
senses, just as the unpunctuated phrase, "calling for more bread no
charge," expresses the rapacious urgency of the gobblers. No true verb,
active or passive, resolves this hurtling sentence fragment.

Further metaphors conspire to transform the latterday cannibals.
The narrative voice describes a young man as "pallid suetfaced" -- a
disembodied piece of fat -- and then employs the artifacts of babyhood
and senility to round-out his portrait of mindless degeneracy: While
one patron gurgles soup behind "an infant's saucestained napkin," another
spits back half-masticated gristle because he has "No teeth to chewchew-
chew it." (169/166-67) Still more pronounced is the decline from adult-
hood suggested by Bloom's glimpse of an "old chap picking his tootles"
(169/167), where the infantile term for "teeth" suggests an advanced
case of second childhood. We notice that the narrator's artful presenta-
tion has momentarily given way to Bloom's vigorous thoughtstream ("chew-
chewchew it"), but that the figurative devices of the narrative voice
soon return in force to suggest a final degradation. Bloom decides to
leave this den of "cannibals":

He gazed round the stooled and tabled eaters,
tightening the wings of his nose. (169/167)

Dehumanization of the lunchtime crowd is complete: through a transval-
uation of nouns ("stool," "table") into participial adjectives, the
voracious eaters seem to have been metamorphosed into dead restaurant
furniture -- the last stage in a progression from predator, to disembodied
fat, to infantile senility, to lifeless object. However, Bloom's partial
dehumanization has also been reasserted, as it will be to the end of the
chapter: Joyce could have made him tighten his "nostrils," rather than the "wings of his nose," had he not wished to play upon our awareness of an anatomized Bloom, whose personified organs will continue to be "cannibalized" by the hostile environment.

These figurative devices help render the Burton's patrons in lurid caricature, thus contributing to a fraudulent narrative statement by which a reader can learn for himself the truth, the "reality," which lies somewhere between Bloom's dream of sensuous gratification, and the artful narrator's nightmarish, hyperbolic response to that dream. We can call this nightmare an expressionistic portrayal of Bloom's disappointment; we cannot call it a dispassionate portrayal of "reality" as most of us know it.

In fact, so strong are the tides of revulsion which have been loosed by the "presiding imagination," that they spill over into Bloom's thought-stream, imparting an intense and hallucinatory poetry of horror. In his mind, a spreading nausea acquires the form of tramping, alliterative monosyllables: "Gulp, Grub. Gulp. Gobstuff." (170/168) Marching away from the restaurant to this cannibal chant, Bloom imagines a communal kitchen with "a soup pot as big as the Phoenix park. Harpooning flitches and hindquarters out of it." (170/168) Such detached flights of phantasmagoria then turn distressingly immediate, as Bloom imagines the cruelty of commercial slaughter:

Wretched brutes there at the cattlemarket waiting for the poleaxe to split their skulls open. Moo. Poor trembling calves. Meh. Staggering bob. Bubble and squeak. Butchers' buckets wobble lights. Give us that brisket off the hook. Pulp. Rawhead and bloody bones . . . . Don't maul them pieces, young one. (171/168)

Here is a poetry of the common man, wrenching tired colloquiality into
an intense demonstration of concern for fellow sufferers, helpless brutes. Such Dublin argot as "staggering bob" (a calf newly dropped from its mother, and butchered illicitly) and "bubble and squeak" (beef and cabbage fried together)\(^3\) conveys a visual horror — e.g., staggering, bobbing, bubbling, squeaking — in addition to the more pedestrian applications.

The effects of such a passage are complex, given the frightening Homeric context of Lestrygonians. While again proving the relevant metamorphoses through which Joyce could put so exotic a motif as "cannibalism," these lines also help cement our sympathies for kind Bloom — Bloom, whose mindless organs will continue to be personified by the "presiding imagination" so they can be cannibalized, whose mind will degenerate from time-to-time into states less alert than his mindless organs, and whose urges toward self-gratification will spasmodically surge, only to suffer what amounts to sudden evisceration! To the extent we sympathise with kind Bloom, we, the readers, shall suffer torments analogous to those imposed by Homer's Cannibal King, for whom the narrative voice at work in Lestrygonians serves as a fair counterpart.

Not always, however, does Bloom draw our sympathy in Lestrygonians. Occasional hubris can be detected in his thinking, and hints of Sophoclean irony flicker in Joyce's treatment of his hero. The author may have shown limited aptitude as a playwright, yet he was able to create a life-like and piercing drama of the printed page in *Ulysses*. To his cast of players we can add the artful narrator, a lusty embodiment of "cannibalism" in Lestrygonians, the malign "presiding imagination," which has coerced so many warring elements into kinetic equilibrium; the reader himself, whose "quick intelligence" must respond to the urgent attacks upon his sensibilities, and who must close gaps left by the author's
refusal of direct comment.

Consider the following passage. Nosey Flynn has greeted Bloom at Davey Byrne's bar, then inquired innocently of Molly's singing career. Bloom has been momentarily lulled from his unpleasant preoccupations by the congenial setting. At any rate, his mind has wandered far enough from Molly's assignation so that he can calmly remember a limerick about a "right royal old nigger" who, for aphrodisiacal motives and to impress his many wives, consumes the genitals of "the reverend Mr. MacTrigger."

Bloom's reaction to Flynn's question about Molly's singing contains a Joycean touch of archaic hubris, as Bloom thinks superciliously:


Like the Homeric deities, the "presiding imagination" offers this fleeting stain of unjustified self-confidence in Bloom, and the seeds for ironic reversal are sown. What "harm" a conversation about Molly will do to Bloom grows rapidly apparent and, like traditional Sophoclean irony, the reader's awareness remains superior to that of the doomed hero, who answers Flynn:

-- She's engaged for a big tour end of this month. You may have heard perhaps.
-- No. 0, that's the style. Who's getting it up?

While the reader may be aware of encroaching double entendre at this point, neither of the characters is. Food arrives for Bloom:

The curate served.
-- How much is that?
-- Seven d., sir . . . Thank you, sir.
Ever so slightly, the hand of the artful narrator begins to be felt, in the subtle suggestion of Davy Byrnes as parish priest tending a restaurant flock. However, the dialogue seems void of implications, and briefly the narrator behaves himself: A businesslike description of the sandwich preparation, however, gives way to Bloom's thoughts about the troublesome limerick:

Mr. Bloom cut his sandwich into slender strips. Mr. Mac-
Trigger. Easier than the dreamy creamy stuff. His five
hundred wives. Had the time of their lives.
-- Mustard, sir?
-- Thank you.

Yet even here can be detected in the narrator's smooth meter and alliteration ("cut his sandwich into slender strips") a mocking acknowledgment of the exaggerated dignity Bloom preserves before an inferior like Flynn. Strong thematic contradictions have also begun to intrude: Friction can now be felt between civilized propriety and cannibalistic gusto, remote love lyric (the "creamy dreamy stuff") and immediate sexual gratification (the "time of their lives") -- between Bloom's fastidious demeanor, and his inward flight to sexual anarchy, a self-indulgence he deems as harmless as the satisfying of Flynn's curiosity. The narrative pattern -- e.g., description of sandwich preparation, preoccupation with lewd limerick, realistic dialogue) then repeats itself, and we sense a growing restlessness in the "presiding imagination" which controls these elements:

He studded under each lifted strip yellow blobs. Their
lives. I have it. It grew bigger and bigger and bigger.
-- Getting it up? he said. Well, it's like a company
idea, you see. Part shares and part profits.
-- Ay, now I remember, Nosey Flynn said, putting his hand
in his pocket to scratch his groin. Who is this was tell-
me? Isn't Blazes Boylan mixed up in it?
The artful narrator's businesslike description of sandwich preparation has turned both precious and grotesque: the ugly "yellow blobs" of mustard countervail the elegance of the use of "studded" (which in view of subsequent wordplay, may not be so elegant after all). With Bloom's triumphant recollection of the limerick's missing snatch -- "It grew bigger and bigger and bigger" -- and his absentminded repetition of Flynn's question -- "getting it up?" -- the wicked double entendre has begun to condense into a bawdy jest at Bloom's expense. In the manner of traditional irony, this jest is unperceived by the players; but it is appreciated by the "presiding imagination," by its manipulative agent, the artful narrator, and by their privileged accomplice -- the reader. For all but Bloom and Flynn, the vision of Boylan's impending erection has become the backdrop for this otherwise-innocent conversational exchange, an impression which is not weakened by Bloom's comparison of Molly's tour to a "company idea" with profit sharing (e.g., Boylan profits, Bloom shares), and which is greatly strengthened by the disclosure of Flynn's impulse to "scratch his groin" as he associates Boylan with the enterprise.

In its pointed relevance, this last detail warns that narrational technique will again turn brutal, just as it did during Bloom's nightmare visit to the Burton restaurant. Flynn has asked his question, mentioning Boylan's hated name. Bloom's hubristic world collapses:

A warm shock of air heat of mustard haunched on Mr Bloom's heart. He raised his eyes and met the stare of a bilious clock. Two. Pub clock five minutes fast. Time going on. Hands moving. Two. Not yet.

The cannibalizing abstractions have returned to devour an anatomized Bloom.

More accurately, the prevailing image is one of a bestial copulation, as
befits the context, since the word "haunch" refers only to an animal's hindquarters. The beast which "haunched on" Bloom's heart has been embodied from several abstract entities, all projections of Bloom's stricken mind and body: the shock he feels and the mustard he smells; the social stigma of cuckoldry he dreads almost more than the deed itself, and the onslaught of physical sensations ("warm," "air," "heat") which suggest sudden dizziness, and perhaps a burning blush. Of course, Boylan has also been evoked by the artful narrator's metaphorical beast which "haunched on Mr. Bloom's heart." Again Bloom has been jolted from an idealized (if obscene) reverie by unpleasant reality; the parts of his body have been animated so they may be "cannibalized" by the artful narrator, and again Joyce has achieved a metaphorical density which, in its disorienting impact, draws the reader close to Bloom's stunned state.

The analogy of Joyce's technique to actual drama seems valid. But to the "players" and "setting" (Bloom and Flynn conversing at Byrnes' pub) must be added several personae and locales which are less conventional: a "second" Bloom, whose thought-stream counters the outward bearing of "first" Bloom; a "third" Bloom, whose personified bodily organs undergo traumatization, "cannibalization," "vivisection" -- what you will; a Blazes Boylan, whose presence is strongly felt in the bawdy synecdoche which eventually dominates the passage; a Molly Bloom, whose bountiful sexuality is evoked by the next lines, themselves a further reduction of Bloom to a mindless clamor from his innards:

His midriff yearned then upward, sank within him,
yeared more longly, longingly. (173/170)

To these "players" can be added those manipulative agencies mentioned before: the artful narrator, whose descriptions employ a poetic density
that encourages an emotional, rather than a rational response; the "preceding imagination" which governs the narrator, and draws his skilful antics into conformity with Bloom's thoughtstream and dialogue according to a malign masterplan; the attentive reader who, through Joyce's insistence, must complete this drama which is "still unuttered." Stage settings not specified in the narration all revolve around Molly's hypothetical beds: the one that will jingle to an intruder at Bloom's home later this day, those she will occupy on tour with Boylan, and the proper matrimonial bed Bloom's "midriff" now seems to long for. Joyce's playlet ends much as it began:

He smelt sipped the cordial juice, and bidding his throat strongly to speed it, set his wineglass delicately down.
-- Yes, he said. He's the organizer in point of fact.
No fear. No brains.
Nosey Flynn sniffed and scratched. Flea having a good square meal. (173/170)

Our passing sympathy has been countervailed by a skilful restatement of the Bloomsian hubris which originally invited, even justified, the whole cruel-humorous attack on his emotions and bowels. Bloom has weathered his emotional storm, returning smugly to safe harbor with yet more contempt for Flynn's mentality ("No fear. No brains") and personal bearing ("Flea having a good square meal"). Equally incriminating is Bloom's apparent disposition to "fear" the possibility of social ridicule more than adultery itself.

So mercilessly has Joyce explored through narrative technique the strengths and frailties of Bloom, that our opinion wavers precariously. Such narrative countervailence in Lestrygonians forecasts the more subtle mixtures of tonality in Oxen and other late chapters. Complicating our emotional response, however, is Joyce's offer of privileged complicity
in Bloom's unwitting progress toward a mini-tragedy. We share the malicious enjoyment of the "presiding imagination," as well as sensing Bloom's shock and dismay. We also feel the weight of Sophoclean irony, in which the protagonist's proud frame of mind -- normally a strength -- turns out to be his weakness, and his every assertion of awareness a confirmation of his limited viewpoint, and his blindness.

Yet not all of the playlets in this chapter supply the reader with privileged awareness. A few pages later, the "presiding imagination" apparently tires of offering direction signals, and permits Bloom a moment of touching generosity from which no spiteful reversal ought to occur. Even so, a brutal attack on Bloom's equanimity transpires: His anatomy is again cannibalized, poetic compressions carry language to the brink of self-destruction; and the reader himself joins Bloom in a type of emotional defeat. The rude joke falls this time on us.

The deceptive moment takes place when Bloom kindly stops to help the blind stripling across a Dublin Street. Bloom's action supports Flynn's earlier assertion: "He has been known to put his hand down to help a fellow" (178/175):

He touched the thin elbow gently: then took the limp seeing hand to guide it forward. (181/178)

It is true that the personification of bodily members -- "the limp seeing hand" -- continues here, but the figurative license seems merely a benign overflow from the poeticized brutalities recorded earlier. After sending the blind stripling safely on his way, Bloom next engages in a commendably selfless gesture -- in fact an imaginative act the reverse of his mental depreciation of Nosey Flynn. Bloom imagines what it is to be blind, pondering the other senses which would necessarily be called into service,
and then exploring on his own body the tactile sensations which might translate darkness into vision:

With a gentle finger he felt ever so slowly the hair combed back over his ears. Again. Fibres of fine straw. Then gently his finger felt the skin of his right cheek . . . . pulling aside his shirt gently, felt a slack fold of his belly . . . . Want to try in the dark to see . . . . Poor fellow! Quite a boy. Terrible. Really terrible. What dreams would he have not seeing? Life a dream for him. Where is the justice being born that way?

(182/179-80)

Bloom's kindly empathy surely exempts him from any taint of hubris at this point, and, except for the unusual emphasis upon a single adverb -- "gently" -- the narrative voice seems to have turned comparatively docile, almost sympathetic. Yet the use of three "gently's" within eight lines is a pronounced rhetorical maneuver, even for Joyce, and we notice, too, that Bloom's introspection has lodged him somewhat precariously in a world of nightmares not his own. However, we are altogether left with an impression of Bloom's good fortune at being a sighted person, his generosity, and his firm footing among men. Thoughts on fate's injustice then give way to comfortably practical matters: the advertisement he hopes to place for Keyes, the visit he will make to the library to trace that ad. Then comes Joyce's sledgehammer blow, as Bloom's thought-stream records the unwelcome appearance of Boylan:

Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers. It is. It is.

A nameless Boylan has again appeared in synecdoche, signaling the renewed ferocity of the "presiding imagination." Again Bloom is anatomized, stripped of civilized pretensions:

His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right.
The onomatopoeic "quopped" -- perhaps a blend of "quit," "plopped," "flopped," "popped," and so forth -- describes the unpleasant effect on Bloom's heart and viscera of sudden fright. And after pitying the blind stripling, Bloom now ironically emulates him:


To this willful obliteration of vision, the "presiding imagination" adds a further indignity -- rhymed verse:

[Thought-stream]: Didn't see me perhaps. Light in his eyes.
[Narrative voice]: The flutter of his breath came forth in short sighs.

The amorous doggerel (a combined product of both Bloom's thought and the narrative voice) has mocked, and thereby intensified, the poignance of the situation. Does Boylan see? Bloom wills not to. In the "flutter" of Bloom's breath, we again note the personification of bodily functions that occurred within the Burton restaurant ("Stink gripped his trembling breath") and during the exchange with Nosey Flynn ("A warm shock of air heat of mustard haunched on Mr. Bloom's heart"). This "cannibalism" of a Bloom in spiritual dissolution finally, and with appropriately brutal irony, encompasses his eyes:

His eyes beating looked steadfastly at cream curves of stone.

The malign intensity of the "presiding imagination" has reached its apex here: The eyes now are "beating" like the heart that "quopped softly"; the adverb "steadfastly" jars against our knowledge of Molly's impending adultery, just as it ridicules Bloom's effort to find solace in the museum's lifeless, idealized statues. Even the phrase "cream curves" becomes an echo of Molly's lazy breakfast: "The sluggish cream wound curdling
spirals through her tea." (65/64)

Reference to Bloom's "heart" and "hand" punctuate the closing lines of Lestrygonians, and in a convincing portrait of emotional disintegration, the passage ends with a gasp:

My heart!
His eyes beating . . . .
Look for something I.
His hasty hand went quick into a pocket . . . .
Hurry. Walk quietly. Moment more. My heart.
His hand looking for the where did I put found in his hip pocket soap lotion have to call tepid paper stuck. Ah, soap there! Yes. Gate.
Safe! (183/180-81)

As befits the motif of cannibalism, Bloom's talismanic bar of soap finally prevails: The intellect lies in ruins, the senses command all activity, and Bloom's body has been carved into metaphorical pieces. Joyce's cruel playlet has transpired amid ironic reversals which more nearly spite the reader, than they flatter his traditional awareness of pride's inevitable downfall. Even a rereading of the above lines -- from Bloom's kindly attention to the blind stripling, through his unkind treatment by the "presiding imagination" -- does not provide one with the comforting foreknowledge shared by Greek audiences when viewing Oedipal legend. Instead, one discovers such unsettling variations upon traditional dramatic foreshadowing as the "gentle" detail that colors Bloom's adventure in blindness:

With a gentle finger he felt ever so slowly the hair combed back above his ears. Again. Fibres of fine straw. (182/179) (My emphasis)

-- and which eventually returns as the nemesis, Boylan, capped in straw:

Straw hat in sunlight . . . . It is. It is. (183/180)

The "fine straw" of Bloom's hair can perhaps be said to foreshadow the presumably coarse straw of Boylan's hat, but if anything, the reader
becomes unsettled, rather than reassured, by so coincidently malicious a liaison between thought and fact. Nor can Bloom's floundering horror be counted a traditional "recognition" scene: He has committed no deed but generosity, has indulged in no act of pride but that of pitying others less fortunate than himself. Nonetheless, Joyce has left us with a feeling of drama, and a taste of irony's electric-sour sting, although the malign joke seems as much to engulf the reader, as it does the fumbling protagonist.

More clearly, we again see the narrative patterns I have tried to trace in the late episodes. A fraudulent emphasis on "gentleness" creates in the reader a feeling of confidence that is supported by Bloom's dignified, altruistic thought-stream. Equally fraudulent is the response by the "presiding imagination" — an attack on Bloom which blankets reality in emotional shock and which prompts our ethical distaste for so "unfair" a treatment of kind Bloom. Characteristically for Joyce, a countervailing narrative stroke has provided a sequential, or linear, destruction of previous sentiments and expectations, a check to our unjustified admiration for a mistreated Bloom, while a sudden poetic density derails our habit of rationality, encouraging a perhaps-unwarranted empathy for the hero in his absurd predicament.

We can also see in Lestrygonians a display of Joyce's oxymoronic temperament, polished to a gem in a later episode such as Sirens. How does Bloom eat cheese? With "relish of disgust" (173/171), and this terse dialectic expresses the tense equilibrium which Joyce maintains between nausea and gratification in Lestrygonians. In this chapter, both eating and sex render man bestial. Joyce links both activities closely: Both cause in Bloom alternating moods of pleasure and revulsion — an emotional
embodiment of the "peristalsis" Joyce declared ruled his technique in this episode. We see this alimentary tug-of-war performed during another "gentle" moment for Bloom when, his thought-stream bracketed by the unpleasant buzzing of flies, he remembers a moment with Molly high on Howth Hill:

Softly she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed. Mawkish pulp her mouth had mumbled sweet and sour with spittle. Joy: I ate it: joy. Young life, her lips that gave me pouting. Soft, warm, sticky gum jelly lips. (176/173)

For the moment the idea of "eating," which within the context of Lestrygonians we have been taught to abhor, becomes merged with the idea of "sex," which as the source of Bloom's present domestic misery we find distressing. However, both ideas are now celebrated convincingly by Joyce. What person does not harbor some cherished sexual recollection, framed perhaps in imagery suggesting a Danish confection? Not Bloom at least.

Joyce has silenced the merrily vindictive Mercutio within us: Too sustained a horror story about food and sex would have made us squirm with impatience, just as would have a blanket encomium. Still, Joyce has maintained our "relish of disgust" skillfully -- as he does Bloom's -- even to the point of the suggestive "sweet and sour" of Molly's spittle.

The word, "mawkish" specifically intrudes a note of nausea in the revery. (The same intrusive epithet was used when Bloom ate "mawkish cheese.") (174/172) Like eating, sex occupies an ambiguous frontier, somewhere between pleasure and horror. The clash between contrary modes of perception continues: High on Howth Hill a nannygoat passes by the two lovers, not defecating, but "dropping currants." (176/173) By figurative association, food, sex, and excrement have now become one. All can be reconciled under such headings as appetite, gratification, and revulsion, and such
headings suggest the archetypal disharmonies with which Joyce is playing. To food, sex, and excrement, Joyce next adds religion: Bloom recalls how Molly's breasts lay "full in her blouse of nun's veiling, fat nipples upright." (176/173) Even the word "upright" works double-harness here, having settled somewhere between connotations of a monastic asceticism and Molly's fat nipples. By this powerful chain of opposed associations, Joyce arrives at one of Bloom's most triumphant inner moments in *Ulysses*: "All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me." (176/173)

Bloom has slipped into another pleasurable and idealistic trance. We brace for Joyce's characteristic attack on emotionally unsound thoughts and statements. It arrives. After Bloom's climactic self-assertion: "Kissed, she kissed me," comes a piercing anti-climax that bridges the gap between recollected ideality and present reality: "Me. And me now." The pathos of this countervailing reflection is of course heightened by the intensity of the soaring vision which preceded it. But the "presiding imagination" is not content to let things go at that. Now, the ferocity of Joyce's artistic temperament reasserts itself. Again the unpleasant flies return, and do so in a meter and syntax that is identical to the two preceding thoughts by Bloom. This is the progression, and it occurs without a break in the text:

Kissed, she kissed me.
Me, and me now.
Stuck, the flies buzzed. (176/173-74)

Where does this parallelism of structure leave Bloom's happy reverie? Clearly Joyce meant to enforce a comparison of altered states of being. But exactly how? The two buzzing flies bracket Bloom's daydream with ugliness, as if a birthday cake had been offered under a coating of slime. The narrator's pointed juxtaposition of opposed elements is, appropriately enough for Lestrygonians, barbarous. Certainly, these flies are intrusive.
Isolated as follows, their message seems precise, a telegram for Bloom that warns of Molly's journey to the animal kingdom:

    Stuck on the pane two flies buzzed, stuck. (175/173)
    ... ...
    Stuck, the flies buzzed. (176/174)

But while the symbolic message of these stuck flies might seem obvious, even to the point of heavy-handedness on Joyce's part, the exact referents are illusive. Of Bloom's relationship to the flies, Blamires writes:

    And into this dream of rich food and sex intrudes
    the symbolic reminder of Molly and (I take it)
    himself (or Boylan?) in the two buzzing flies
    stuck on the window-pane.

If so hardy an interpreter of symbolic implications in Ulysses as Blamires confesses doubt, one need not be ashamed of some bafflement himself. Much meaning seems to reside in these pestering flies. Because they surround Bloom's reminiscence, their image of sexual gratification need not apply alone to Boylan and Molly. They could also signify Bloom's household, glued together amorously on Howth, but now "stuck" in a domestic mire of fallen hopes and random infidelities. We must also ask: Are the flies temporarily stuck -- or permanently? Grease, or a casual hand might have smeared them to the window pane of Davy Byrne's "Moral pub." (171/169) And we have all seen flies "stuck" behind closed windows, beating against glass to reach the outdoors. Misfortune somehow beams from these stuck flies.

    However, should the flies be only temporarily "stuck," they could suggest, as well as fornication, Bloom's eventual release from uxorious thralldom, his confrontation with Molly, and her grudging promise to serve him breakfast. Whatever the intent of this ugly symbol, it renders the more poignant Bloom's happy recollection of Molly's "sticky gumjelly
lips" — a phrase contained within the narrator's pointed mention of the "stuck" flies. This countervailing image serves to label Bloom's escapist daydream a lie, qualifying to an inordinate degree his wine-induced sense of well-being. But if in fact the flies are somehow enslimed by grease to the window pane of Davy Byrne's pub, trapped, miserable, buzzing their complaint, we may have also been offered Joyce's most vicious analogy for the "paralysis" he loathed, and repeatedly dramatized, in Dublin's "buzzing" fraternity of trapped barflies.

Beyond all of these possible interpretations of Joyce's symbol, there may emerge a further significance: So blunt is the narrator's intrusion of the flies that Joyce's gesture almost becomes symbolic in itself, as if to say: "Find the precise meaning -- I defy you." No red flag of obscure significance by a T.S. Eliot could do more to alert, or annoy, a curious reader. But instead of "What the Thunder Said," we have from Joyce the distinctly less elegant "Stuck on the pane two flies buzzed, stuck." Obviously the author's meaning is not obvious, although the concreteness of detail and the pointed repetition of "stuck" suggest that a forthright, unequivocal statement has been made.

However, there is no ambiguity about the ugliness or the hopelessness of Joyce's symbol -- simply an uncertainty about which of several interpretations it applies to. It must, of course, apply to all. And because this symbol suggests such opposed meanings as, say, an adulterous romp or a domestic imprisonment, it strikes another Joycean blow for "meaninglessness," from which, however, new significance may arise. Further, the rhetorical brutality with which the image breaks upon us suggests a scorn for subtlety, a contempt for stylistic artistry, which, like the oozy pall of the Eumaeus chapter forces the possessor of a
"quick intelligence" to reassess his suppositions, as he winds indirectly with Joyce toward truth.

As with other chapters, we are confronted in Lestrygonians with what I have called Joyce's **creative dissolution of meaning**: his tendency to inspect and destroy inherited concepts, whether civilization itself (Bumaeus), past prose styles (Oxen), conventional poetry (Sirens) or, in his case, the time-honored distinction between body and soul. Personified as various animals, fluttering, stirring and trembling, Bloom's "cannibalized" body controls his mind and stifles his soul. With such imagery as "trembling breath" or veins that are "kindled" by wine (174/172), we encounter a metaphorical brutality, and calculated illogic, that attacks the traditional use of figurative language at its core. Another example of this destructive impulse is seen in Lestrygonians' buzzing of stuck flies, so obviously a focal point of symbolic meaning, yet so ultimately obscure in its ambiguous thrust. Again, the reader has been jolted from conventional and self-confident response by narrative techniques which, in both halves of Ulysses, early and late, carry their own implications of theme and plot.
VI. Lestrygonians: Bloom Cannibalized

1 Litz, p. 49.
2 Gilbert, p. 30.
3 Budgen, p. 20.
4 Ibid.
5 Portrait, p. 471. See note 74, Chapt. II

6 Our objections to this dehumanization of Bloom might well resemble those of Budgen, p. 21, when Joyce informed him that in Lestrygonians "the stomach dominates and the rhythm of the episode is that of the peristaltic movement." Budgen recorded the exchange:

"But the minds, the thoughts of the characters," I began. "If they had no body they would have no mind," said Joyce. "It's all one. Walking towards his lunch my hero, Leopold Bloom, thinks of his wife, and says to himself, 'Molly's legs are out of plumb.' At another time of day he might have expressed the same thought without any underthought of food. But I want the reader to understand always through suggestion rather than direct statement."

7 Gifford, p. 142.
8 Ibid., pp. 143–44.
9 Blamires, p. 72.
CHAPTER VII

JOYCE'S CREATIVE DISSOLUTION OF MEANING

In this commentary on Joyce's narrative strategies, we have explored the author's transcendent application of such poetic tools as oxymoron, synaesthesia, metonymy, synecdoche, rhythm and symbol — have noted his willful abuse of such linguistic phenomena as cliché, versification, and stylistic mannerism. And we have charted some of the narrative instabilities which prove to the reader that his expectations were lodged in quicksand, reminding him that all fixed views of "reality" are subject to qualification. In the book's last half, such qualification is achieved through Joyce's clustering of unamiable styles and viewpoints — these presented by a variety of fraudulent and antagonistic narrative voices that are nevertheless capable, during poetically intense moments, of building new meanings on the ruins of those which have been shattered. During such moments of intensity, Joyce creates a type of poetry that "transcends the mode of its expression" — as forecast by his early aesthetic — and explores new dimensions of "reality" unperceived by less inventive novelists, before or since.

To suggest further the scope of Joyce's technical experiments, I shall now dwell briefly on certain passages in late Ulysses which either defy conventions of narration, of linguistic or poetic usage — or which distort these techniques and usages into tools for the expression of renewed and extra-dimensional meaning. Such will hopefully convey the nearly limitless reach, not the boundaries, of Joyce's narrative invention.
Much of Joyce's creative dissolution of meaning attacks man's habit of imposing subjective states of mind upon nature. Examples of the "pathetic fallacy" proliferate in the Wandering Rocks chapter, where Joyce was concerned with illustrating "errors in judgement" typically committed within "the hostile universe." Thus, an ambling Father Conmee will enter a field to be confronted by "breadths of cabbages curtseying to him with ample underleaves," a projection of his thoughts about privileged times of yore (223-34/220), and he will note a self-conscious Lynch appearing through a gap in a hedge with his girlfriend, who is carrying "wild nodding daisies" — another superimposition of human traits on nature, which stems from Conmee's reading of a psalm ("Blessed are the indefiled") just moments before. (224/221) Most extraordinary, however, is the pathetic fallacy that occurs toward the chapter's close when, after the people of Dublin have exhausted themselves in obsequious salutes to the Vice Regal cavalcade, vain greetings and credulous smiles, Joyce projects his own (and the reader's) scorn upon indifferent nature:

From its sluice in Wood quay wall under Tom Devan's office Poddle River hung out in fealty a tongue of liquid sewage. (252/249)

The impact of this image cannot entirely be explained by its forceful paradox: fealty/tongue of sewage. Rather, we must acknowledge that our own judgment has momentarily been swayed, in the manner of a Conmee, so that we respond to the seductive illogic of projecting our own thoughts upon inanimate nature.

Joyce has illustrated a type of solipsism that impedes our recognition of a true reality. A different variety of subjectivity lies in the narcissism displayed by young Patrick Dignam who, shortly after his father's death, is "stopped" in Wandering Rocks by a poster advertising a boxing
match. The poster hangs in a milliner's window, between two mirrors. Joyce then illustrates with the aid of the two mirrors the boy's psychic fragmentation:

From the sidemirrors two mourning Masters Dignam gaped silently. . . . Master Dignam on his left turned. That's me in mourning. When is [the boxing match]? May the twenty-second. Sure, the blooming thing is all over. He turned to the right and on his right Master Dignam turned, his cap awry, his collar sticking up. Buttoning it down, his chin lifted, he saw the image of Marie Kendall, charming soubrette, beside the two [boxers]. (250-51/247)

Joyce forces us to contemplate three Masters Dignam: the real, and the two reflected ones. A splintering is suggested: The real Dignam is a simple receiver of impressions unrelated to his recent bereavement; the Dignam "on his left" attains a fleeting awareness of reality — "That's me in mourning" — but after the realization dawns that he has missed the boxing match, the Dignam "on his right" becomes an unconscious reflection of the hostile environment — "his cap awry, his collar sticking up" — and we are returned to real Dignam, the passive receiver of images unrelated to his father's death and burial. Paradoxically, the false reflections and images of both boxers and soubrette seem more real than the actual boy, whose developing consciousness the mirrors dramatize. As in the shell passage from Sirens, the reader is made to strain his mental vision through an intervening medium, in this case mirrors, and Joyce has invested unreality with an eerie extra-dimensional presence that undermines our own grasp of what is, and is not, within the realm of sane possibility. By his narrative presentation through reflected images, Joyce has disoriented his reader into a greater awareness of the instability of subjective states, particularly as they unfold in the puerile mind.
As well as psychic fragmentation Joyce has, in the Aeolus chapter, suggested the breakdown of descriptive imagery into a form of visual anagram. Such disintegration takes place when both Lenehan and the professor to their amusement witness the harassment of Bloom by a wild swarm of newsboys:

Both smiled over the crossblind at the file of capering newsboys in Mr. Bloom's wake, the last zigzagging white on the breeze a mocking kite, a tail of white bowknots. (129/128)

In a chapter which reduces news story to cryptography (136–37/135), and history to palindrome (137/135), we also note here the reduction of visual experience to anagrammatic components — "a tail of white bowknots" — that are somehow puzzling, suggestive, but scrambled into near-meaningless elements. The newsboys as "mocking kite" are appended illogically to Bloom's "wake," and a small metaphorical chaos further disrupts our reasoned response. Again, as in the shell and mirror passages, Joyce intensifies the reader's experience by placing him within a receding corridor of witnesses and sensibilities: Lenehan and the professor, through whose gaze from the window we are forced to imagine the emotions of Bloom and the terrible newsboys — "'Look at the young guttersnipes behind him hue and cry,' Lenehan said, 'and you'll kick. Oh, my rib risible!'" (129/128)

As visual anagram, the scavenging newsboys, scampering in all directions, yelling, their white papers fluttering, (146/144) have their older counterparts in that less-spirited file of people, the sandwich-board men whose tall white hats spell H.E.L.Y.'S in scarlet letters, and whose commercial message ever threatens to disintegrate:

At Ponsonby's corner a jaded white flagon H. halted and four tallhatted white flagons halted behind him, E.L.Y.'S, while outriders pranced past and carriages. (253/250)
The faded men who are charged with touting Helys — itself a printing house! — have been portrayed as wine bottles, empty and exhausted, as Joyce forces us to contemplate the spiritual destruction of the printed word.

Carrying us one step further into verbal destruction, Joyce depicts the final moments of Dignam senior, as seen in the mind of his son:

Pa was inside it and ma crying in the parlour and Uncle Barney telling the men how to get it around the bend. A big coffin it was .... Never see him again. Death, that is. Pa is dead. My father is dead. He told me to be a good son to ma. I couldn't hear the other things he said but I saw his tongue and teeth trying to say it better. Poor pa. That was Mr. Dignam, my father. (251/248)

The father's words retreat to chaos behind "tongue" and "teeth," but simultaneously the son's grasp of an elusive reality has begun appreciably, even impressively to take root. At this inchoate turning point, as words collapse and thoughts take shape, Joyce has expressed succinctly the creative dissolution of meaning by which he tears his materials into vivid shreds, then reweaves those materials anew, and with new significance.

Clive Hart sees the passage not as I do — an endearing growth of awareness in the perplexed boy, in fact one of the most striking of Joyce's many "epiphanies" — but rather as a "failure" to "feel" on the part of a youth who must content himself with a merely "peripheral relationship to the phenomenal world." But while readers must resolve such disagreement for themselves, they should realize that many types of ambiguity — among them interpretive, syntactical, tonal, aesthetic, and that which is implicit in the narrative stance itself — contribute to the extra-dimensional, or transcendental, narrative effects in Ulysses.

Interpretive ambiguities of the sort mentioned above are plentiful,
supplying almost as many scholarly disputes as readers. An extended exercise in syntactical ambiguity is to be found in the Penelope chapter, where Molly's eight run-on sentences leave us doubting where thoughts begin and end:

... [Mrs. Rubio] never could get over the Atlantic fleet coming in half the ships of the world ... ... (759/754)

After doing a double-take, we realize the Atlantic fleet has not fallen in half, and that a comma — "fleet coming in," — could have saved the appositional "half the ships of the world" from a drowsy destruction by Molly. Such ambiguity is small, humorous, but when sifted through eight country miles of unpunctuated thought, it begins to unhinge our faculties. At least four possible readings can be made from the following slight thought:

... he was shy all the same I liked him like that morning I made him blush a little ... ... (760/745)

Variously punctuated, Molly's somnolent appreciation of Lieutenant Mulvey carries (or miscarry) many nuances, none more final than any other, but all a part of the faceted character Joyce, in the last stretch of the book, must belatedly portray. Such syntactical ambiguity permits Molly a greater breadth of utterance than punctuated thought could provide, and, conversely, the reader is forced to acknowledge the emotional — at least arbitrary — limitation of any judgment he presumes to be final.

Of far greater intensity, but no less rich in implications, is the tonal ambiguity emanating from Bloom's vision of dead Rudy at the close of Circe. I shall let the critics describe this emotional puzzle for me: Burgess finds this climactic transformation of "the trappings of death . . . to the fanciful dress of resurrection" to be touching — "Only the hardest-hearted of readers will withhold his tears." John Gross,
however, finds Bloom's vision "grotesquely namby-pamby," though conceding that "despite such lapses [by Joyce]," Bloom's humanity holds firm against such "lurid mutations." According to Hayman:

It is at this point that the symbolic link between [Stephen and Bloom] is confirmed by Bloom's version of Rudy as an eleven-year-old Pre-Raphaelite dream child with a "mauve" face, a ghastly-sweet emanation hovering over the prostrate poet. The moment is worthy of the Dublin Christmas Pantomime, but the reader may be moved as well as amused and shocked. Such tonal ambiguity, visible in the disparity among scholarly reactions, reinforces the intensity of Joyce's statement, its emotional complexity, while suggesting also the inadequacy of analytical methods to deal with the Circean technique, which Joyce designated as "Vision animated to bursting-point."

Also to be found in Circe is an aesthetic ambiguity that applies poetic techniques in the service of ugliness:

*Her sleeve, falling from gracing arms, reveals a white fleshflower of vaccination.* (575/560)

And elsewhere:

*The elderly bawd seizes his sleeve, the bristles of her chinnole glittering.* (441/434)

The effect of applying graceful metaphor and energetic epithet to scars and chin-moles intensifies their ugliness, while calling into question the validity of conventional poetic raptures on beauty. Somewhat disguised, but if anything more powerfully disorienting, is the narrative description in Wandering Rocks of a bookstore keeper's untidy approach to Bloom:

*Onions of his breath came across the counter out of his ruined mouth.* (235/232)

Such phraseology, metaphorical and rugged, has normally been associated with epic heroes, not living cadavers, and Joyce has again forced us to
think closely about poetry's worn aesthetic inheritance.

Equally disturbing to a reader's grasp of reality -- at least the reality offered within *Ulysses* -- are several striking instances of narrational ambiguity. One such breach of a reader's faith is committed by the Cyclops episode's "I" narrator -- the collector of "bad and doubtful debts" whose most temperate opinions fall like acid, but whose invective scours nature herself for comparisons:

... the most notorious bloody robber you'd meet in a day's walk and the face on him all pockmarks would hold a shower of rain. (292/287)

As a thematic element in itself, this narrative voice embodies a multifaceted social horror: As a local dun, the man may be roundly despised, but he cannot be ignored. Many in Joyce's Dublin have fallen into irreversible debt; none, we assume, could tolerate being appraised out of earshot by this inventive man -- a fact which the cynical debt collector seems at pains to demonstrate whenever he speaks. Many in *Ulysses* would rather drink than pay debts. If Headmaster Deasy, Bloom and Molly are exceptions, the vitriolic "I" narrator of Cyclops is not. He will drink as much as he can, collect as many debts, and ensure both activities by comradely shows of invective. The narrational ambiguity occurs when the reader -- if he is alert -- realizes that the speaker does so in the evening, not in the afternoon as we had supposed, and that he may have had at least eight pints -- a gallon -- of free porter since leaving Barney Kiernan's that afternoon, sometime after 6 p.m. He urinates painfully now, as he well may have earlier in the day. His thought-stream is contained within parentheses, where he catalogues his treats and treaters, the pains either of gonorrhea or of a distended bladder, and imposes upon
the reader a series of interjections which telegraph disjointed emotions of satisfaction and pain, the result of such unpromising activities as winning free drinks, urinating, spitting:

Goodbye Ireland I'm going to Gort. So I just went round to the back of the yard to pumpship and begob (hundred shillings to five) while I was letting off my (Throwaway twenty to) letting off my load gob says I to myself I knew he was uneasy in his (two pints off Joe and one in Slattery's off) in his mind to get off the mark to (hundred shillings is five quid) and when they were in the (dark horse) Pisser Burke was telling me card party and letting on the child was sick (gob, must have done about a gallon) flabbyarse of a wife speaking down the tube she's better or she's (owl) all a plan so he could vamoose with the pool if he won or (Jesus, full up I was) trading without a licence (owl) Ireland my nation says he (hoik phthook!) never be up to those bloody (there's the last of it) Jerusalem (ahl) cuckoos. (335/329)

David Hayman's analysis of the "famous gonorrheal micturation" carefully demonstrates the chronological ambiguity Joyce has placed in his narrator's wandering mind and mouth:

[The exact status of the collector's urination] is puzzling unless we realize that we are witnessing two parallel activities artfully mingled: the urination that intervenes between Lenehan's attack [on Bloom] and Nolan's defence, and a second urination that takes place drinks later in an unnamed pub. The key to this is in the parenthetical asides. The exclamations of pain and satisfaction are disturbingly immediate, but their indeterminate temporality needs the matter of fact 'there's the last of it' to confirm the dual time. The reader has been drawn gradually into the context of the moment, sharing not only the experience of micturation but the immediate unpleasantness of the spit, before he can fully appreciate the ambiguity of his and the narrator's situation. 11

Hayman's argument for Joyce's dual narrative format is intricate — but convincing — and I shall not repeat more of it here. With further argument Hayman has, to my mind, established the narrative ambiguity that must dis-
orient any close reader of Cyclops: Joyce has created a significant theme of social horror by means of a small — shall we say infectious — narrative gesture. In few words, he has opened the inner office of a diseased mind, while insinuating the strong hold that mind has upon a diseased society.

Who is host, and who parasite, begins to trouble a vision of ours we thought was clear — that of a cynical narrative personality whose invective breeds upon those listeners he violates. Instead, we learn through Joyce's narrational aside that Dubliners will listen to tales well told, spot drinks for the teller, and accompany him to a worn urinal for this privilege. That the "collector of bad and doubtful debts" simultaneously tells a story of urination — while performing it hours later — ought to remind us how insistently Joyce wove thematic ambiguities into his narrative technique. Receding mirrors of horror reside in the gonorrheal "ows" and "ahs" which pour from this collector of bad and doubtful debts.

No less unsettling to the reader are some of the narrational ambiguities of Wandering Rocks, where not only syntactic pitfalls, but also a confusion between interior monologue and third-person description, can play grotesque tricks upon a reader's imagination. In the mirror passage, a series of formal statements about Master Dignam —

[F] Master Dignam got his collar down and dawdled on . . .
[F] In Grafton street Master Dignam saw a red flower in a toff's mouth . . . .
[F] Master Dignam walked along Nassau street . . .

— sets up a pattern whereby we assume a paragraph's opening sentence will convey external facts, while its body will mingle internal thoughts by young Dignam:

. . . Do they notice I'm in mourning? Uncle Barney said he'd get it into the paper tonight. Then they'll all see
it in the paper and read my name printed and pa's name.

then comes the jolt:

[?] His face got all grey instead of being red like it was and there was a fly walking over it up to his eye.

(251/247-48)

Joyce has destroyed the pattern, and our sense of narrative integrity: The boy's thoughts now head the paragraph, allowing us to misconstrue his gruesome recollection of the dead father as being some preposterous mutation of the boy himself. The ambiguity is soon removed by the "scrunch" of coffin screws, as Master Dignam's thoughts spill on, but the reader has participated in a moment of chaotic intellectual drift at the hands of a "presiding imagination," whose sudden leer belies its otherwise sober frown.

The most far-reaching of Joyce's many narrative ambiguities occurs in the National Library, as Stephen Dedalus arms himself to engage his foes. His realistic preamble to the discourse on Shakespeare —

The flag is up on the playhouse by the bankside. The bear Sackerson growls in the pit near it, Paris garden. Canvassclimbers who sailed with Drake chew their sausages among the groundlings.

— provokes in the young man a revealing thought:

Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices.

(188/186)

In Stephen's disruptive thought lies a paradigm for Joyce's techniques in Ulysses, locally inspired, colorful, encyclopedic, and having the power to engage the reader in an insulting role — that of unwitting "accomplice" to Joyce's narrative chicanery. In effect, the author has invited us to discredit his tale, thereby wrapping our experience of it in an envelope of doubt and implied derision.
Doubt — the heart of ambiguity — became a staple of Joyce's indirect narrative statement in *Ulysses*. Of a friend, Joyce once asked what was "the greater power in holding people together, complete faith or doubt?" The friend chose faith, but Joyce corrected him: "No, doubt is the thing. Life is suspended in doubt like the world in the void." From Joyce's remark, we can detect a humanistic concern for "holding people together," as if people and the affairs of the world were in danger of falling apart (which they were, and are). And we can surmise on Joyce's part a therapeutic vision of "doubt" as a corrective to blind faith or arrogant certitude. Both impulses divorce Joyce's rationale and method from irony's factional thrust — e.g., author and reader against dim-witted enemy — and from its unambiguous ethical message.

Instead, Joyce's fraudulent, countervailing, and poetically intense narrative strategies not only reflect the instability which threatens humanity, but also instill a measure of doubt which can hold humanity together. In the service of doubt, or intellectual instability, Joyce conceived the narrative formats of his "doomed" experiments — *Eumaeus*, *Oxen* and *Sirens*. Doubt courses through the rest of *Ulysses* as well, and to make this point I shall conclude this essay with some speculation, rather than with a rigid summary of techniques — surely by now well covered — which Joyce broached in a spirit of flexibility.

That speculation stems from the fact Joyce chose to tell his story, in part, through the minds of three people under inordinate psychological stress — Stephen, Bloom, and Molly. An early reviewer of *Ulysses*, Arnold Bennett, detected perversity in Joyce's choice of "nearly the dailiest day possible" for the unfolding of his tale, but for the three central characters June 16, 1904 is anything but routine. Otto Fenichel's compendious
summary of findings (essentially Freudian) in morbid psychology supports conclusions about Joyce's three central characters that might otherwise seem obvious: All three are subject to pressures that must render their every thought and action abnormal, and therefore their monologues unreliable, even by standards which look upon deviant human conduct as the norm. Simply stated, Stephen Dedalus cannot properly see the world around him for an entire book. Like Joyce, he is near-sighted, and his glasses have again been broken, an event which traumatized the Stephen of Portrait and which fact we do not learn until the Circe episode. (560/546) Furthermore, Stephen's teeth are rotting (50/51); he is riddled by guilt over the death of his mother (42/43) and the impending collapse of his household. (243/240) He has not eaten since the "day before yesterday" (656/640), but he has drunk enough during June 16, 1904, to hallucinate at times wildly. (580–83/565–568) He has been snubbed by Dublin's literary elite in Scylla and Charybdis, and by the close of the book has no place to pillow his head.

Perhaps more fundamental are the stresses which must disorder the rationality of Molly and Bloom. Molly is on the verge of her monthly menstrual period, an irregular one at that (769/754), and Bloom's appraisal of the emotional chaos surrounding this event —

Devils they are when that's coming on them. Dark devilish appearance. Molly often told me feel things a ton of weight. Scratch the sole of my foot. O that way! O, that's exquisite! Feel it myself too. (369/362–63)

— describes well the feminine mood which has doubtless launched — and sunk — a thousand ships. Furthermore, Molly's thoughts come to us at the end of a long day: It is dawn by the end of the book, and she has consummated a love affair in defiance of a husband whose abstention from
normal sexual relations pains her. None of these factors argue a stable frame of mind in Molly, drowsy though she may be.

In turn, Bloom on June 16, 1904 faces primal invitations to mental disorder: His wife is having an affair he dreads, but which he will not to prevent. His attempts to make ends meet transpire in windy frustration at the newspaper palace of Mlle Crawford. Throughout the day, Bloom is tormented by recollections of Rudy's early death, a circumstance which drives him to pursue a surrogate fatherhood with Stephen Dedalus, himself no center of stability. Finally, in the Cyclops chapter, we learn our most memorable lesson about Bloom's spiritual exile: It seems permanent within chauvinistic Dublin, Stephen's tentative response in the Eumaeus and Ithaca chapters notwithstanding.

Should one agree that Joyce has written a novel based on mentalities subjected to archetypal stress, he can then appreciate the observations of clinical psychologists who state that stress, fatigue, chemical and hormonal imbalance can project the mind into "archaic" and "magical" frames which recapitulate a person's early mental steps from savagery to rationality \(^{18}\) — and which do not make for reliable narrative vehicles. Should we suppose, for example, that Stephen's vision of "piled stone mammoth skulls" on Dublin's Strand is unduly fanciful (42/43), or that his fear of a suddenly-appearing cur on that beach seems exaggerated —

A point, live, dog, grew into sight running across the sweep of sand. Lord, is he going to attack me? Respect his liberty . . . I have my stick. (45/45-46)

. . . a rag of wolf's tongue red panting from his jaws. (46/47)

— we must reconcile our judgments with the fact that Stephen can barely
see his hand in front of his face:

(Brings the match nearer his eye.) Lynx eye. Must get glasses. Broke them yesterday. Sixteen years ago. Distance. The eye sees all flat. (He draws the match away. It goes out.) Brain thinks. Near: far. (560/546)

Confronted by this surprise, how are we to weigh earlier portions of Ulysses which divulge Stephen's thoughts? If the "eye sees all flat" in Circe, how is the retrospective reader to assess Stephen's brief experiment in Proteus, closing one eye, then opening it:

Flat I see, then think distance, near, far, flat I see, east, back. Ah, see now. Falls back suddenly, frozen in stereoscope. Click does the trick. (48/49)

Is there a contradiction here? Does Stephen lose the power of three-dimensional vision in Circe? Probably not: Near-sighted people can perceive depth without the aid of glasses. Furthermore, the Circe passage hints the use of but one eye — "Brings the match nearer his eye. Lynx eye. . . . The eye sees all flat" (My emphases) — and we cannot dismiss the possibility that Stephen, one eye closed, has performed the same experiment he did on the Strand, but is now perplexed by draughts of absinthe. Preoccupation with a reduced, two-dimensional world would perhaps suit his intoxicated state. Or perhaps not.

Too many variables wind through Joyce's narrative formulae to permit self-assured analysis. Physical disorders and mental stress placed on central characters by Joyce — people whose thought molds Ulysses — contrive to place the internal monologues of these people in an ultimately unreliable sphere, one which provokes speculation while never silencing it. No particles of didactic statement clog the pages of this book.

Still, Joyce's narrative impulses were precise, if nurtured by doubt, and the smallest of his phantasms bears concentrated analysis.
VII. Joyce's Creative Dissolution of Meaning

1 Budgen, p. 123.
2 Gilbert, p. 30.
3 Gifford, pp. 215-16.
4 Gross, pp. 73-75, detects Joyce's preoccupation with initials and capital letters — a preoccupation which I would associate with the breakdown of meaning Joyce pursues generally.
6 Burgess, ReJoyce, p. 164.
7 Gross, p. 61.
8 Hayman, p. 33.
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p. 264.
13 Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 567-68.
14 Ibid. It was the period between two wars, the mid-1920's.
15 Quoted in Kain and Magalaner, Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation, p. 174.
17 Of female menstruation, Fenichel, p. 411, writes:

[It] is true that in menstrual depressions, analysis can demonstrate that menstruation is felt subjectively to be a frustration, meaning "I have neither child nor penis" . . . ; yet it is impossible to get rid of the impression that additional purely biological factors are involved . . . .
18 Fenichel, p. 47, writes:

If persons are tired, asleep, intoxicated or psychotic, they think in another and more primitive way. . . . The characteristics of this prelogical emotional thinking . . . . [are] less fitted for objective judgment as to what is going to happen because it is relatively unorganized, tolerates and condenses contradictions and is ruled by emotions and hence full of wishful or fearful misconceptions. This thinking . . . is remote from any logic . . . . It is carried out more through pictorial, concrete images, whereas the secondary process is based more on words. The retranslation of words into pictures in dreams and in fatigue is well known. Preconscious pictorial thinking is a magical type of thinking.

Elsewhere, Fenichel describes the mental disorders associated with alcoholism (p. 379), mourning (p. 395), persecution (p. 428), severe criticism (p. 430), and compulsive daydreaming, in which a person's thinking "is a kind of eternal preparation for actions that never are performed" (p. 50). Most such phenomena, to greater and lesser degrees, weave through the experiences of Stephen, Molly and Bloom on June 16, 1904. While Molly is no tippler, she imbibes sex with primitive gusto, and her drives have been acknowledged on many of the pages of Fenichel's volume about neuroses.
Selective Bibliography of Works Consulted


---


---


Levin, Lawrence L. "The 'Sirens' Episode as Music: Joyce's Experiment in Prose Polyphony." *James Joyce Quarterly* 3 (Fall 1965), 12-24.


Thomas, Brook. "The Counterfeit Style of 'Eumaeus,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 14 (Fall 1976).


