



# Bloom Ate Liv as Said Before

Character, Recurrence, and Structure in Joyce's *Ulysses*

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Character, Recurrence, and Structure in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

by

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*For Christine*

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## Abstract

The sheer diversity of language in James Joyce's *Ulysses* is alone enough to unnerve the prospective reader. The text sweeps between the consciously literary, erudite diction of Stephen Dedalus and the more pragmatic, abrupt diction of Leopold Bloom, bridging the gap between these two with a third distinct voice, that of the narrative itself. The novel concludes with still another voice, the lush flow of Molly Bloom's thoughts. To add, as Joyce does, to this widely varying mix of language the parodies of style which appear in much of the text results in a truly daunting sea of words, the crossing of which causes second thoughts in even the most ambitious modern day Odysseus.

This thesis proposes a solution. Rather than locate the textual base in an ambiguous and inconsistent style, as many critics have by suggesting the early style of the novel is more open to readers, I suggest that the foundations of the novel may be found in the main characters. Using a theory of David Hayman's concerning the arrangement of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*—"nodes," recurrent signifiers in the text which grant readers "the pegs upon which to hang a reading"—I demonstrate that each of the major characters contains, in the language of which Joyce constructs them, the static points upon which Joyce builds the vast textual unity of *Ulysses*.

The thesis is divided into two primary sections. The first of these I devote to Stephen Dedalus, in which I study the sort of signifier the text associates with him, and prove that the words of which he is made recur to provide the reader with the sort of "peg" of which Hayman writes. The second section does likewise, examining the ways in which Bloom's words reappear in nodal form during the text and the stability which results from those recurrences. Both the Stephen and the Bloom section are divided into smaller sections which focus on specific examples of nodes built from each character's language. I end discussion of Stephen and Bloom with a study of the "fusion," as Joyce called it, of Stephen and Bloom and the implications of this fusion for the nodal system. I conclude with a brief third section—"inevitably," as James Maddox says—about Molly Bloom and her relation to the nodal structure. Ultimately this thesis contends that, through the systematic use of recurrent signifiers in relation to character and plot, Joyce develops the web of stability that underlies the novel and prevents it from collapsing into a heap of so much linguistic rubble.

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Short Titles:

JV: Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1978.

PA: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1991), Everyman's Library Edition.

U: *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), Hans Walter Gabler edition, incorporating his corrections. Citations of this text will use Gabler's system of line numbering.

UA: Frank Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988.

UAC: James Maddox, *Joyce's Ulysses and the Assault upon Character*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1978.

UL: Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

U: RE: Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses: Revised Edition*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

WT: David Hayman, *The "Wake" in Transit*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990.



The writer must get into touch with his reader by putting before him something which he recognises, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to co-operate in the far more difficult business of intimacy.

—Virginia Woolf, "Character in Fiction"

STEPHEN

*(looks behind)* So that gesture, not music not odour, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm.

—*Ulysses*, 15.104-107

## Introduction

Mr Bloom is hungry and must eat. He has a "human plumpness . . . on his brain," memories of happier times now gone (*U*, 8.637). To feel better, to lift that weighty plumpness from his mind, he must eat. He locates and enters a restaurant; and finds spread before him a grisly scene where dehumanized men glut themselves feverishly, "wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging" (*U*, 8.655-656). One man spits "back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it" (*U*, 8.659-660). Mr Bloom, having determined to "[g]et out of this" charnel house scene, casts one more look over the restaurant's interior:

Other chap telling him something with his mouth full. . . . Table talk. I munched hum un thu Unchster Bank un Munchday. Ha? Did you, faith?

Mr Bloom raised two fingers doubtfully to his lips. His eyes said:  
—Not here. Don't see him.

Out. I hate dirty eaters.

He backed towards the door. (U, 8.691-697)

Beside eliciting feelings of disgust, this scene does all in its power to dislocate the reader from the narrative. Here, fantastically, eyes may speak the languages of the tongue; men are reduced to animals, whose speech is subhuman and spewed from behind mouthfuls of chewed food. Even the psychological experience that drives Mr Bloom into the restaurant (*U*, 8.637-639) is marked by startling syntax: "A warm human plumpness settled down on his brain. His brain yielded. Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely

craved to adore" (*U*, 8.637-639).

With such unusual manipulation of language the norm in *Ulysses*, it is small wonder that any approach to reading Joyce's novel demands a reevaluation of the nature of fiction. Things we might have come to expect from a novel—a dominant tone, a single dominant character, a clear, consistent style—are disrupted in *Ulysses* as Joyce plays with language, form, style, breaking laws of sentence structure without qualm.

In the earlier portions of the novel, Joyce tends to do this in subtle fashion, slowly increasing the visibility of his transgressions as the text proceeds. The story opens, therefore, in seemingly innocuous fashion, depicting the introduction of a single character greeting the fresh day atop a tower. We feel, as we enter the text for the first time, comfortable with our grasp of the narrative world. A scene of light mockery in the bright Irish morning unfolds before us:

Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressinggown, ungirdled, was sustained gently on the air behind him on the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned:

—*Introibo ad altare Dei.*

Halted, he peered down the dark winding stairs and called out coarsely:

—Come up, Kinch! Come up, you fearful jesuit!

Solemnly he came forward and mounted the round gunrest. He faced about and blessed gravely thrice the tower, the surrounding land and the awaking mountains. (U, 1.1-11)

Clearly a character moves in the scene before us. We suppose him to speak as we

draw information from the words on the page; the image of him raising his bowl towards the heavens and intoning with the voice of a solemn priest forms in our minds. Conferring meaning upon the marks scattered on the page, we see this Buck Mulligan garbed in an ungirdled yellow dressinggown, blessing "gravely thrice" his surroundings. And we accomplish this by knocking the scone of convention against the arrangement and use of the words. We determine first of all that this figure which seems to come from the stairhead, to bless "gravely thrice the tower," has a *name*, which is crucial in the mind for identity.

Convention grounds the initial reading for us; we think we understand the action due to precedent, i.e., the ways in which language has been used in the past.

Yet *Ulysses*, located like any literary text within a tradition of language, does not remain conventional for long. Shortly after the appearance of another character, Stephen Dedalus, an unconventional element presents itself in the text and begins to disturb the pleasant sense of clarity, the sense that it is possible to draw meaning from the arranged words of the text, that we as readers wish to have from the text. Stephen at this point is not made to speak any words himself: "sleepy and displeased," he has thus far only "leaned his arms on the top of the staircase and looked coldly" on Buck Mulligan. Mulligan meanwhile, for the space of a few lines of text, continues his mockery of the Catholic Mass, finishing finally with a parody of the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ:

[Buck Mulligan] added in a preacher's tone:

—For this, O dearly beloved, is the genuine christine: body and soul and blood and ouns. Slow music, please. Shut your eyes, gents. One moment. A little trouble about those white corpuscles. Silence, all.

He peered sideways up and gave a long slow whistle of call, then paused awhile in rapt attention, his even white teeth glistening here and there with gold points. Chrysostomos. Two strong shrill whistles answered through the calm. (U, 1.20-27)

All proceeds fairly conventionally to this point. The setting is not otherworldly; the character on whom the just-awakening text focuses seems not unusual, if somewhat blasphemous. But something intrudes on our comfortable sense of the conventional. A disembodied word, *Chrysostomos*, breaks into the flow of the narrative and fractures the understanding of the text we have gained thus far. What purpose does it serve? Neither part of speech—audible to both characters—nor of complete sentence—subject, middle, predicate—*Chrysostomos* is inserted here as a reminder that all texts consist of words. It stands as a signal of disruption in the apparently seamless world of textual narrative: the world of words is thrown off balance by the irruption of *Chrysostomos*. It does relate to the appearance of Buck Mulligan's "even white teeth glistening here and there with gold points," but what is its immediate source? An omniscient narrator? A character? At this point in the text, without information drawn from elsewhere in the novel, we cannot know. We understand only that it appears and that it interrupts the flow of language in such a manner as to throw us, the readers, into a state of uncertainty. Critics point to this word as the first glimmer of the interior monologue, Stephen's mind "shifting her dragon scaly folds" (U, 2.73-74) in preparation for the many words that will flow through it during 16 June 1904. Hugh Kenner names it "the book's first Greek word" and suggests it "might have been an epithet for nimble-tongued Ulysses and . . . is a typically erudite Stephen-joke. It is also the book's first flicker of the interior monologue" (U: RE, 35-36). Very likely this is true. But

at first reading the word seems out of place and forces one to reassess the nature of the narrative.

Whatever else he may be doing with the imported Greek word, Joyce reminds us by placing *Chrysostomos* here in the middle of what is otherwise a "normal" paragraph of text is that any story—related orally, written in a notebook, typed in a fine font on fine-quality paper bound between the covers of a high-quality hardcover book—is a construct of words. Conventional usage allows us to ascribe meaning to words, though no natural bond exists between word and object signified. The ability to perceive in a text that which we call a fictional character is likewise dependent on convention. A story, generally but certainly not in all cases, involves the use of what we understand in our reading to be people. It seems to us that characters in a story are individuals whose actions and thoughts have something of reality to them; that characters, depending on the ability of the author to manipulate language, *exist*: they appear to die, to sleep, to love, to eat, to speak, to laugh. In short, characters appear to live as we do, to suffer the same indignities all flesh and blood humans suffer, as they move from moment to moment in the textual world. But this semblance of life is simply part of the illusory nature of fiction, and the reader should take care not to confuse reading for living. The mind should be aware of the vehicle of the art; in the case of the novel, aware that the text is, in the end, just words: "All is words, words," writes Kenner. "All the book, [*Ulysses*] has been insisting, is words, arranged, rearranged" (JV, 48-49). Yet Joyce casts a powerful spell with his writing; so powerful, in fact, that some critics, confronted with odd intrusions into the text, resort to speaking of a narrating force—the "arranger"—that is "a figure or presence that can be identified neither with the author nor with his

narrators.”<sup>1</sup> In short, Joyce, even as he insists on the priority of language, makes it difficult, by the illusions he creates with words, to grasp the machinery of his novel. We must be careful to remember that any sense of the experience of events described in a text drawn from a fiction results from the illusion woven by the arrangement of language by the author or storyteller, in such a manner as to resonate with the human understanding of *things as they are*. Once we admit to ourselves that a text is only words, the illusion begins to fall away. We find open before us the workings of the text that combine to create that illusory feeling of experience. Despite any sense we have that a character has life in the pages of a book, the character, like the whole of the text, remains a collection of words.

A character, then, is a collection of language. So is a cheap advert in the Help Wanted section of the Daily News. To distinguish a character in a text there must be something particular about that language which makes it part of a character. As we see in the opening scene, characters—Buck Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus, in this instance—have the ability to move, to speak, to parody, to engage in dialogic conversation; they have, in short, the capacity for reason, the ability which is most commonly marked as that which divides man from animal. The use of reason suggests a consciousness at work, an individual mind attempting to arrange perceived scraps of information in an intelligible order from which meaning may be extracted. The suggestion of a working consciousness implies in turn a character. Stephen and Buck Mulligan ask and answer questions with a semblance of reason, and give therefore the sense of consciousnesses behind the text. The words attributed to the characters are not

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1. David Hayman, *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 84. Hereafter cited in the text with the prefix MM.

the consciousnesses of the characters but simply “coloured signs”(U, 3.4) of them, elements that gesture toward a real consciousness. A brick building, for example, may be a character in a story but only so long as we have suggestions of a consciousness—not necessarily a human consciousness—located in that building; without consciousness, or rather signs to that effect, it becomes background setting, thematic setting; but not a character. The words associated with a consciousness in a text may imply or gesture toward the nature of that consciousness, but the words themselves cannot encompass that consciousness.

That words are merely signs of ideas or things in a text seems clear; but how are we to tell which words associate with which character? Convention offers help in the forms of names and pronouns. Names and pronouns are frequent signs by which the reader may determine which character acts or speaks. We consider a scene or dialogue presented to us by the text, and, judging from the use of pronouns—which by convention of use in the English language designate gender or lack of gender—are able to understand which words to attribute to which characters. We have become so accustomed to using names and pronouns that we forget what, precisely, a name signifies. A name, like any other word, stands in place of a thing or idea. Repeated, regular use of a name causes us to associate a particular name with an object, a person, a place, a ceremony. Understanding the ways in which a word gathers meaning by association is crucial for understanding the nature of character in fiction, especially in *Ulysses*, as Joyce manipulates repetition for the purposes of plot and, more radically, for structure in his book. In a novel where Joyce seems consciously to make style opaque,<sup>2</sup> thereby limiting access to the plot, familiar words and phrases can act as touchstones of memory, points which offer the

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2. See *U: RE*: “The new stylistic complications . . . tend rather to screen than to clarify the chain of events” (101).



reader some ground on which to stand while attempting to perceive anything recognizable through the complex veils of style.

Joyce's characters in *Ulysses* are nothing more at root than series of complexly interrelated signifiers. This is nothing surprising. Joyce could not entirely escape the vehicle of his art, even, after *Ulysses*, in the unparalleled experimentation of *Finnegans Wake*. What is more striking about Joyce's use of character in *Ulysses* is his appropriation of character for the purposes of structure. Possessing a fairly superhuman ability with language, Joyce sets about defining a new method of arrangement in fiction, based in the textual space of character. Words themselves are fickle creatures, given to change and instability; witness the revolution in criticism and interpretive methods following the publication Jacques Derrida's theories. But the character-based ordering structure of *Ulysses* is less concerned with the potentially ephemeral meanings of words than it is occupied with what results when words and phrases recur systematically in a text. Joyce borrows the rhetorical device of repetition and then expands it so that it becomes capable of supporting the weight of an entire text. He spreads it across his novel in such a way that the repetitions stand out to the reader and provide a web of powerful links in what might otherwise be a disjointed text.

The scene atop the tower contains a hint of this in Stephen's memory of his mother. In the space of five pages one sentence associated with Stephen's memories of his dead mother, not necessarily originating in Stephen, is repeated nearly word for word:

Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute reproachful, a

faint odour of wetted ashes. (U, 1.102-105)

In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wetted ashes. (U, 1.270-272)

The first sentence does not mirror precisely the second, but the repetition looks remarkably like the first, enough so that we take from it the idea that this sentence marks in some manner the mind of Stephen. Yet the repetition does more than that: it establishes, very early in a lengthy novel, the device of recurrence; it instructs the reader to be aware of repetition. At the outset, this might not seem crucial. But as the text continues, Joyce complicates things by incorporating unfamiliar or antiquated styles into the book, by including unprecedented elements that shake the foundations of fictional convention. With each turn of the page, the reader must rely more and more on perceiving recurrent details to make sense of the plot and, more fundamentally, the nature and arrangement of the text.

We tend to describe the process of reading as a movement through time towards an indeterminate future—which, in one sense, it is—speaking of the “early” parts of the story, measuring progress in a text by “how far” we are; and we use all these terms despite the fact that all words in a text exist at the same time. The illusion of words passing in time is created by our limited ability to perceive and understand only small groups of any textual whole at one time. The reader makes connections in a text with the aid of memory, “exercising the mnemotechnic” (U, 17.1422) in order to create a sense of unified plot and story, adding information to previously gathered information in an effort to invent

the illusion of a coherent whole. Recurrent words and phrases assist the reader in this process; in *Ulysses* they mark a device of arrangement and the prime source of stability. In his study of *Finnegans Wake*, *The "Wake" in Transit*, David Hayman discusses the ways in which the device of recurrent signifiers offers a basic underlying structure for what he names an "essentially anti-narrative nodality:"

As used here, the term "node" applies to a more or less clearly developed and displayed cluster of signifiers to which reference is made systematically in the course of the novel. Such clusters tend to generate, above and beyond the structure of chapters and sequences, a coherent but unhighlighted system of relationships.

(WT, 37)

Though Hayman has something different in mind when he makes the above assertion, his description of what he considers the most fundamental method of organization in the *Wake* comes as near a definition of character in *Ulysses* as is possible. Character in *Ulysses* tends not only to be a "cluster of signifiers" surrounding an unarticulated consciousness, but tends additionally to be made up of *recurrent* signifiers, "signifiers to which reference is made systematically in the course of the novel."

Despite the appropriate wording we find in Hayman's definition of a "node"—which, I intend to argue, is the capacity in which characters of *Ulysses* act—we must be careful to make distinctions between the nodal structure of *Finnegans Wake*, on which Hayman focuses his attention, and the idea of character as a system of recurrent signifiers. Hayman suggests recurrent scenes, not characters, as nodes in the *Wake*, and holds that there are conventional uses

of the "node," the recurrent signifiers, which aim to "help establish the 'symbolic,' 'thematic,' or 'motival,' status of a given image or body of images," uses against which Joyce consciously sets the "non-narrative or narrative-resistant structure demanded by the *Wake*" (WT, 37). *Ulysses* does appear in the vein of the former; but it has an additional nodal level coexistent with the conventional usage which works more as Hayman describes the nodes in the *Wake*. Like the *Wake*, *Ulysses* has a tendency to place the obstacle of language between narrative and the reader, particularly by arranging language in certain obfuscating styles. To prevent the text from becoming entirely incoherent, the nodes must be, as Hayman points out, "capable of carrying structural weight":

The sort of non-narrative or narrative-resistant structure demanded by the *Wake* necessitates a device that works more like a melodic line upon which variations can be played but that remains capable of carrying structural weight. If the nodal systems contribute ultimately to rhythm and coherence, their immediate role is more obvious and direct: to supply the pegs upon which hang a reading and to give readers a sense of confidence in the writer's control over his language.

(WT, 37)

The characters in *Ulysses*—most especially the characters on whom the text focuses, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom—are the very "pegs upon which to hang a reading," the collections of signifiers with which they are associated acting as nodes, points of stasis in the text which offer the reader steady ground in an otherwise unpredictable textual realm.

In an effort to keep things relatively uncomplicated while exploring the relation of character to structure in *Ulysses*, I have divided the majority of this

reading into two parts, one focusing on Stephen Dedalus, and the other on Leopold Bloom. Within each larger section I have arranged the discussion in the following manner: introduction to the language of each character, a general look at the ways in which Joyce manipulates each of those languages to the advantage of his book, and close studies at specific, outstanding examples of Joyce's use of nodes in relation to each of the characters. As she concludes *Ulysses*, Molly concludes my thesis, putting into perspective the extent to which Joyce relies on recurrence to construct his text.

I must point out that this thesis is not meant to be a comprehensive study of all recurrence in the text. I have selected a few of the more readily available threads of recurrence for my discussion, but will leave others unexplored in an effort to keep this reading shorter than it might otherwise turn out to be. Another *caveat*: the complex tradition of Joycean scholarship leads me to write occasionally as though the characters themselves generate language in the text, though obviously Joyce is the author of the novel. I write in this manner because of the peculiar nature of narrative in *Ulysses*, which frequently gives the sense of creative spirits that are somehow unconnected to the author; hence Hayman's "arranger."

Hayman himself, despite his admirable explication of the *Wake*'s inner workings, curiously does not grant the possibility of the same method of structure to *Ulysses*. In *The "Wake" in Transit*, he states "The nodal procedure inverted Joyce's practice in *Ulysses* and set off a narrative revolution that has yet to run its course" (WT, 41). He attempts to articulate Joyce's "practice in *Ulysses*" in his *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning*, where he argues essentially for an arrangement of the novel based on "parallelism and interrelationship," an assertion which on the surface is an acceptable description of the book's inner

workings (MM, 84). But Hayman distorts this assertion into a misleading hypothesis about "balance" in the novel: "In terms of Joyce's schema," Hayman writes, "'Proteus,' a 'Monologue (male),' is balanced by the 'Monologue (female)' of 'Penelope'" (MM, 85). But Hayman projects substance where little or nothing is to be found. He conveniently says nothing of the other technics Joyce lists in the Gorman-Gilbert schema, none of which provide a similar sort of "balance"; and he ignores the Linati schema entirely, which does not provide evidence of the structure for which Hayman looks. (Joyce, moreover, is famous for taking back things he says about his texts: he eventually removed his support for Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses*, a book that Joyce had helped to create, telling Vladimir Nabokov not only that the use of Homeric parallel in *Ulysses* was nothing more than "[a] whim," but also that his work with Gilbert had been "[a] terrible mistake . . . an advertisement for the book. I regret it very much."<sup>3</sup>)

Furthermore, Hayman projects his notion of balance on the text despite textual evidence to the contrary, interpreting a scene in "Proteus" as a description of Stephen masturbating so that it would provide a balance to Bloom's masturbation scene in "Nausikaa": "[W]hat critics have long thought to be a 'symbolic' urination by Stephen actually focusses a concealed auto-erotic passage and a latent thematic" (MM, 126). This argument suits his purposes perfectly, offering a neat parallel in the text that would seem to support his claims.

Hayman's understanding of *Finnegans Wake* "inverting" the structural practice in *Ulysses* turns out to be more a defense of his earlier work than an honest observation of the workings of *Ulysses*. On one level this thesis is an attempt to prove that Joyce had developed the nodal method, to a certain degree, before he wrote the *Wake*. With that goal in mind, I demonstrate that the

3. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 616n. Hereafter cited in the text with the prefix JJ.

character-related recurrence of words in the text provides the very sort of nodes of which Hayman writes. But Hayman alone does not lead me to write this thesis. James Maddox notes in the introduction to his *Ulysses and the Assault on Character*, that "[a]mid the book's movement from the clear to the opaque and from the specific to the general, character is the closest thing to a constant" (*UAC*, 49-50). Maddox's keen eye picks up a great many qualities of Joyce's characters in *Ulysses* which have helped to shape my discussion, not the least of which are his observations of Joyce's manipulations of stasis. Taking my cue from both Hayman and from Maddox, I attempt in this thesis to describe the ways in which character becomes the "closest thing to a constant" while using the specialized terminology Hayman develops in his admirable articulation of a compositional technique; and the result is a new way of understanding, through explication of the nodal system, the complex machinery of *Ulysses*.

Stephen Dedalus



Words, Words, Words

To those who have read *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus seems already a familiar voice, with whose moods and modes of thinking in the reading of *A Portrait* we become intimately acquainted. Before *Ulysses* even begins, Stephen as an individual consciousness is already unique, constructed in such a way as to render him distinguishable from other characters by virtue of his highly specialized voice. Kenner remarks that "[w]hat the first readers of *Ulysses* were meant to know of its author may be gathered from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*" (U: RE, 6). This is true of Stephen as well: what the readers of *Ulysses* were meant to know of Stephen may be gathered as well from *A Portrait*. In his first novel, Joyce creates an immutable link between Stephen and words. More precisely, Joyce establishes Stephen as a place in text where arrangement of language attains a level of importance on par with plot. In short, Stephen becomes associated with words as few characters in English fiction are. And when the reader takes up *Ulysses*, there is Stephen, all his many signifiers floating on the pages of the text, the essence from which he forges self-identity—language—the same as it is in *A Portrait*.

Words are notorious for their inconsistency, their tendency to shift in meaning over time. As characters in texts are at root only words, it would seem to follow that the notion of grounding a reading on character is inherently *unstable*. But characters themselves, known for the equivocality of their perceptions, do not provide the stable foundation on which a reader may build an understanding of *Ulysses*: Bloom lies frequently; Stephen at points is so vague

about his relation to others that one hesitates to believe him.<sup>4</sup> Rather it is through the repeated use of certain words—whence the definition of character—that Joyce's text binds itself into a more or less coherent whole.

As a character, Stephen's qualities of stability are perhaps less readily apparent than Bloom's. Bloom is a mature individual, already rooted entirely in his habits; James Maddox points out that Bloom's day is a series of departures from himself which always include a return: he is rooted in himself.<sup>5</sup> Stephen, on the other hand, is "a dispossessed," as he characterizes himself (*U*, 3.184-185), homeless and essentially friendless—"I will not sleep here [Martello tower] tonight. Home also I cannot go" (*U*, 1.739-740)—and remains little more than an individual of tremendous but unrealized potential, still the artist as a young man, not yet the artist. However, Stephen has distinct voice—says Maddox: "[a] paragraph of Stephen's speech or thought is a collection of allusions which have clustered around one *idée-mère* like pins around a magnet" (*UAC*, 102-103)—and as such does tend to prevent the reader from mistaking a different character for Stephen. By virtue of Stephen's vast vocabulary and his tendency to recall words and phrases across wide intervals of text, Stephen, or rather the

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4. For the most explicit instance of Bloom lying see *U*, 17.2250-2268. For a famous instance of Stephen's equivocal perceptions see *U*, 1.630-632. Here Stephen says silently, thinking of Mulligan, "He wants that key. It is mine. I paid the rent. Now I eat his salt bread. Give him the key too. All. He will ask for it. That was it his eyes." The pair of sentences—"It is mine. I paid the rent."—has caused a good deal of critical controversy, because historically it was Mulligan's prototype, Oliver Gogarty, and not Joyce who paid the rent for Martello tower; yet here Stephen seems to be asserting that he pays for use of the tower. Some critics have suggested—Kenner, among others—that Stephen thinks of what Mulligan would say if Stephen tried to refuse him the key, proposing that the sentences should be read thus: "It is mine [Mulligan's]. I [Mulligan] paid the rent." In any case Stephen offers the reader no direct help with which to clear up his nebulous silent remarks. See also: Kenner, *U: RE*, 55-56.

5. See *UAC*, 49-50.

collection of words that Joyce associates with him, does in fact turn out to be a location, or production site, of nodes in the novel.

Certainly by convention we come to know what to expect of a character; and with a willing suspension of our disbelief we participate in the illusions of fictional text. Convention too dictates the illusion of passing time, so that we have phrases such as "character development," implying that characters, like living beings, experience the passage of time and are changed by those experiences. This convention might seem to make it all the more difficult to prove that Stephen's language reappears as nodes in *Ulysses*. It seems to suggest change as a principal part of character, and to be, therefore, contrary to constancy. Stephen himself ponders the mysterious force of time and the changes which occur during its passing, wondering at the way the body "weaves and unweaves" the substance of the flesh (*U*, 9.376), replacing all the many millions of cells that make up the body so that the body of the past cannot be truly connected in any substantive sense with the body of the present; the past body is made of different cells than is the present body. Whilst thinking over his debts in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, Stephen latches on to one debt in particular, a pound lent to him by A. E (George Russell). Inwardly conversing with himself, he asks:

Do you intend to pay it back?

O, yes.

When? Now?

Well .... No.

When, then?

[....]

Wait. Five months. Molecules all change. I am other I now. Other I got pound.

(U, 9.197-206)

The point Stephen argues with himself is that he has no obligation to pay back the pound since the substance of the Stephen who received the pound has nothing in common—"Molecules all change"—with the substance of the Stephen who now sits in the company of A. E. Similarly, one might argue, the words of a character "all change"; and the character becomes, as the text progresses, *other* than he or she was. But Stephen refutes his own argument—and, implicitly, the understanding of character as the site of perpetual change—when he recalls a thought he has earlier in the novel concerning Aristotle's assertion that the soul is the form of forms (U, 2.75-76). He notes silently: "But I, entelechy, form of forms, am I by memory because under everchanging forms" (U, 9.208-209). Memory of experience connects the discontinuous bodily units, the everchanging molecules. Once having had this thought, Stephen affirms that he is now that which he was before "by memory": "I that sinned and prayed and fasted," and "A child Conmee saved from pandies," both of which are memories of events detailed in *A Portrait* (U, 9.210-211).<sup>6</sup> The mind retains past experience though the material of the body does not.

In this brief aside, early in Stephen's explication of *Hamlet*, rests a key to the idea of character as the site of nodes. Stephen refers consistently to certain words, phrases, ideas, throughout 16 June 1904; the text associates with Stephen, systematically, certain signifiers as well. The end result is that the signifiers, connected by memory across long pages of text, bind earlier sections with later—and later with earlier during further readings—in the text and offer the reader a semblance of stability in a text remarkable for its rapidly shifting styles. Much as memory links the past self to the present self, Stephen's recurrent

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6. Cf. *PA*, 183-191 (Stephen praying and fasting); 56-70.

language, which Joyce frequently gives the look of memory, connects past text to present text.

Hayman claims in *The Wake in Transit* that "in casting those disparate but profoundly symbiotic sketches [early work on the *Wake* which Hayman claims are the parts of the "prime nodal system"] as the contact points of his fiction, Joyce set in motion the nodal procedures that would guarantee coherence" (WT, 35). Obviously *Ulysses* is not the *Wake*; but the two texts have in common a nodal structure though those structures themselves are not semblables. Hayman further points to the "survival and eventual location [of the sketches] in the beginning, middle and end of the [*Wake*]" as evidence of Joyce's commitment to "the unification of [the early sketches]" (WT, 34-35). In essence, Hayman argues that, by virtue of the placement of these sketches and the fact that "reference is made systematically" to them during the course of the text, these sketches act as nodes and supply an underpinning structure for Joyce's final novel. This is likewise true in *Ulysses*, wherein important words, marked so by Joyce's use of them, recur throughout the text, beginning, middle and end.

The most notable characteristic of Stephen Dedalus is his preoccupation with language, out of which Joyce selects words and phrases for repetition. From the start of *A Portrait* to its consummation and on through the point at which Stephen departs from the textual scope of *Ulysses*, he possesses a fascination with words, with words' sounds, the use of words in relation to other words. While at Clongowes College as a small boy Stephen—or the narrator standing in for him—ponders the word *suck*:

Suck was a queer word. The fellow called Simon Moonan that name because Simon Moonan used to tie the prefect's false sleeves behind his

back and the prefect used to let on to be angry. But the sound was ugly. Once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel and his father pulled the stopper up by the chain after and the dirty water went down through the hole in the basin. And when it had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder.

(PA, 8-9)

Compare that precocious study of a word's nature with two of Stephen's meditations on language in *Ulysses*:

His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of air: mouth to her moomb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth moulded issuing breath, unspeched: ooeehah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayawayawayawayaway.

(U, 3.401-404)

#### RHYMES AND REASONS

Mouth, south. Is the mouth south someway? Or the south a mouth? Must be some. South, pout, out, shout, drouth. Rhymes: two men dressed the same, looking the same, two by two.

(U, 7.713-716)

In these brief passages are clear examples of the latent constancy not of Stephen's language, per se, but of his *use* of language. Despite the fifteen or so years in the character's life which separate to the two, these analyses appear similar, both demonstrating the character's attraction to language and to the sounds of

language as young Stephen and Stephen at twenty-two struggle to locate meaning in words, in the shifting uses of words, in the sounds of words. Stephen seems doomed to brood on language all his life, if the examples of his behaviour in *A Portrait* and in *Ulysses* are any indication.

Joyce does not ignore the possibilities that Stephen's fascination with language opens up for *Ulysses*. Because Stephen retains such a highly specialized voice and because Joyce gives Stephen unique phrases, the recurrence of Stephen's language becomes easier to discern in the text. When, for example, Stephen recalls the dream of his mother, the arrangement of language, the relation of word to word, is unlike anything in the text with the exception of the recurrences of the language *in* Stephen's memory of the dream. In short, the uncommon look and sound of the language causes the memory of the dream to stand out from the page and stick in the mind of the reader. When Joyce reuses fragments of language drawn from Stephen's memory, the original occurrence of the dream is immediately recalled due to the peculiar nature of the words Joyce attributes to his character. Stephen's words always have the potential to turn into nodes simply due to his peculiar use of language; and Joyce turns this tendency to the advantage of his novel.

This is still more evident in the way Joyce introduces Stephen into his text. The first word Joyce uses to describe Stephen—with the exception of Stephen's names: "Kinch," as Mulligan calls him, and his full name—is "displeased," a term which sets Stephen's mood for the remainder of the chapter and in fact for much of the text (*U*, 1.13).<sup>7</sup> But early on the text cannot reach Stephen: so long as Mulligan speaks and mocks and spouts words, the narrative center has its locus in Mulligan, with Stephen on the periphery, silent,

<sup>7</sup> See also *U: RE*, 38, for a fuller discussion of the implications of the first word with which Joyce describes Stephen Dedalus.

"displeased and sleepy," who speaks "quietly," "with energy and growing fear," "gloomily," all of which modifiers contribute to the creation of Stephen's displeasure (*U*, 1.47; 1.60; 1.90). We would think, having read *A Portrait*, that Stephen, the development of whom occupied the pages of an entire novel, would take narrative precedence at once upon his entrance into the text; but Joyce confounds expectations. Rather, he looks "coldly," speechless for the nonce, on Buck Mulligan, whom he will later call Ireland's "gay betrayer" (*U*, 1.405). Stephen himself speaks only at rare intervals during the first several pages of text, but the text offers to the reader a collection of words to associate with Stephen, among which are numbered the above extracted words and phrases. Stephen appears at the call of Mulligan in "Telemachus" in the role, it seems, of servant, and he is none too happy with his position of servitude. While Mulligan jokes and chatters, Stephen is described with words such as "gloomily"; he "wearily" follows Mulligan halfway to the parapet; he "suffers" Mulligan to take from his [Stephen's] pocket his handkerchief (*U*, 1.36-37; 1.70-71). He is, we gather from these words, in an unpleasant living situation.

Not until Mulligan ceases his chatter long enough to shave his face in silence does the narrative attention begin to focus on Stephen. And just at the point when Stephen comes in to his own, as it were, the narrative tone reflects the emergence of Stephen's mind. Note how the text portrays Mulligan as he lapses into silence to give more attention to his shaving: "[Mulligan] shaved evenly and with care, in silence, seriously" (*U*, 1.99). There is a suggestion here of a person struggling to find the appropriate word with which to describe Mulligan's act of shaving; this person tries several modifiers on for size, not entirely satisfied with any of them. The play with syntax and sentence structure recalls Stephen's attempts to gain mastery over language in *A Portrait* and



prepares the text for the shift from Buck Mulligan to Stephen. Additionally, it initiates the process whereby Joyce constructs nodes from Stephen's language, for without dislocating the narrative to Stephen, the reader would get little of the source material Joyce uses to create the nodal structure.

Kenner's understanding of narratology in Joyce helps explain the shift and the resultant change in the language of the narrative. He posits a narrative mode in Joyce that he calls the "Uncle Charles Principle," which he claims "entails writing about someone much as that someone would choose to be written about. So it requires a knowledge of the character at which no one could arrive by 'observation,' and yet its application to the character seems as external as costume, since it does not entail recording spoken words"<sup>8</sup> (JV, 21). In this instance—i.e., the shift from Mulligan to Stephen as focus of the narrative—Mulligan's silence in shaving allows Stephen's voice to influence the manner of the narrative, with the result being a search, recalling Stephen's play with language in *A Portrait*, for the proper modifier in which to encapsulate Mulligan's actions. Beyond the implications this might have for the constitution of the narrator this early in the text, the lull allows the transition from the voice of Mulligan to the mind of Stephen, in which the reader finds: words, words, words.

### *Amor matris and Love's Bitter Mystery*

Stephen, perhaps disappointed by his inability to hit upon the right wording with which to render a fine verbal depiction of Mulligan (assuming his

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8. The Uncle Charles Principle is named for Stephen's uncle in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. See the second chapter of JV, "The Uncle Charles Principle."

is the voice which describes Mulligan), turns away from his shaving acquaintance:

Stephen, an elbow rested on the jagged granite, leaned his palm against his brow and gazed at the fraying edge of his shiny black coatsleeve. Pain, that was not yet the pain of love, fretted his heart. Silently, in a dream she had come to him . . . . Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting.

(*U*, 1.100-110)

It is difficult to say for certain whether we have entered the head of Stephen Dedalus at this point in the text. This paragraph does not explicitly give the sense that Stephen produces words without the mediating force of the narrator, as opposed to the overt suggestions of Stephen's silent monologue just one page later where we do enter Stephen's thoughts: "Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked cracked. Hair on end. As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It asks me too" (*U*, 1.135-137). A clear demarcation exists here between narration not produced by Stephen—the "omniscient" narration—and that produced by Stephen, designated by the appearance of the word *me*. But in the silence that arises during Mulligan's even, careful shaving, such a division is not as evident. The paragraph is a slow progression from the external to the internal—from cuff inward to memory of a dream, from cuff outward to all-encompassing sea, from sea inward to memory of the death of Stephen's mother—which is to say that not all the words have their source in Stephen; but all the words, according to

Kenner's principle, are arranged in an order very much like Stephen's diction, text about Stephen "much as [he] would choose to be written about."

Two qualities of the passage immediately stand out from the page. Stephen, as noted earlier, harbors an obsession with language, which manifests itself in all the words of the paragraph at hand: we see here the artist in the act of composition, working in all he knows in order to create an object of art, perhaps out of habit, possibly out of some sort of awareness of the status of the novel *as* a novel and himself as a character in that novel. The construction of the long middle sentence ("Silently, in a dream . . ."), the description of the ghost in the dream, has the feel of a practiced speech which has been repeated several times, repeated and revised in a search for perfect balance in the sentence, the sort of play we, having read *A Portrait*, might associate with Stephen.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, this elegy on the death of his mother, this composition of his dream into coherent language, serves to suggest Stephen's method of composition to the reader. I note above that a play between the internal and the external is strong in the passage; but the play has a purpose, and that purpose is to render apprehensible the process by which Stephen goes about composing. This is the second quality of the passage: a remarkable ability to accumulate external images and make them internal. Stephen's secondhand clothing, which shrouds his wasted body<sup>10</sup> in

9. Dermot Kelly, in his study *Narrative Strategies in Joyce's Ulysses* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), notes that the sentence in which Stephen recalls his mother's visit to him in his dreams "does seem to be intoned again in admiration" (10). *Narrative Strategies* will hereafter be cited in the text with the prefix NS.

10. Stephen eats very little on the day of 16 June 1904. In "Telemachus" he is described eating, but it is clear that he does not eat very much (*U*, 1.360-380). Later, in "Eumaeus," Stephen tells Bloom he hasn't eaten since "some time yesterday" (*U*, 16.1574), by which Stephen means 3 June, a claim which turns out to be something of an exaggeration as we see Stephen eating in the first episode. In any case on 16 June Stephen eats very little but drinks enormously.

the tangible world, becomes in Stephen's eyes and thought processes the wasted body of his mother "within its loose brown graveclothes." The "great sweet mother" sea in Mulligan's perception seems to Stephen a "ring of bay and skyline [that holds] a dull green mass of liquid," which in turn becomes "the bowl of white china" that contains "the green sluggish bile" his mother coughs up in the agony of her approaching death.

We come away from this paragraph filled with the understanding that Stephen is constantly in the act of composition. His fascination with language combined with his mind's tendency to absorb and reshape the external physical world into internal collections of language result in this ongoing state of composition. Joyce manipulates Stephen's compositional process for structural purposes, i.e., for the recurrent signifiers that constitute nodes. To accomplish this, Joyce refers at intervals to Stephen's compositions, spreading them across the text in order to provide the reader with points of familiar language or use of language. With the aid of these familiar points, the reader can begin to build interpretations of the textual events. The remarkable thing about the way Joyce accomplishes this is his fusion of Stephen's identity to the structural mechanics of his novel. Obviously, a good part of Stephen's identity revolves around Stephen's understanding of himself as an artist; and as such Joyce presents him composing bits of literature perpetually. But these small compositions also become recognizable as a linguistic portion of Stephen and have the potential to recur in the form of nodes.

Such potential is realized frequently in the text. In "Proteus" Stephen modifies a poem found in Douglas Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht*, thinking: "He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss" (UA, 62; U, 3.397-398). The reader finds in "Aeolus"

the version Stephen writes down:

*On swift sail flaming  
From storm and south  
He comes, pale vampire,  
Mouth to my mouth.*

(U, 7.522-525)

This recurrence is the very picture of a node. A series of words which Joyce creates in association with Stephen reappear, modified only slightly, in relation to him. Joyce clearly establishes a link between the chapters, a link which suggests the sort of "unhighlighted relationships" which Hayman describes in his understanding of the nodes in the *Wake*. Joyce manages to combine structure and theme in this reappearance of signifiers: the recurrence has significance for the development of Stephen's character in relation to the story—Joyce juxtaposes Stephen's more or less plagiarized lines of poetry with *The Parable of the Plums*, wholly Stephen's creation, at the end of the chapter—and it provides an anchor of recognizable language which the reader may use to ground a reading.

Joyce creates a more powerful node with the aid of a poem by Yeats, first establishing a connection between Stephen and the verse and then causing it to recur several times in the novel. After hearing Mulligan recite three lines of the song, Stephen improvises silently on Yeats's "Who Goes with Fergus?" He annexes the words and makes them his own in a small uninterrupted moment of composition:

Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the

mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White  
breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand  
plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords. Wavewhite  
wedded words shimmering on the dim tide.<sup>11</sup>

(*U*, 1.242-247)

Everything he associates with the poem contributes to the composition. The "deep wood's woven shade" appears here as silent floating woodshadows skimming past the tower. "Lightshod hurrying feet," people wading in the shallows or kicking as they swim in deeper regions, replace Yeats's image of dancing on the shore. Stephen apparently knows that this poem, which appears as a song in Yeats's play *The Countess Cathleen*, is meant to be accompanied by harp, as his image of "a hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords" suggests.

Stephen's improvisation on the poem not only exists as an act of composition but as a recurrence of the poem itself, suggestive of the ways in which Joyce will extend the lines of the poem over the pages of *Ulysses*: more overt repetitions of Yeats's song occur later in the book and drive home its importance as a stabilizing or unknotting factor. Generally, Stephen wears lenses constructed of a long literary tradition through which he tries to make sense of his surroundings and condition. But Yeats's poem is apparently more important

11. The full text of Yeats's poem: "Who will go drive with Fergus now, / And pierce the deep wood's woven shade, / And dance upon the level shore? / Young man, lift up your russet brow, / And lift your tender eyelids, maid, / And brood on hopes and fears no more. // And no more turn aside and brood / Upon love's bitter mystery; / For Fergus rules the brazen cars, / And rules the shadow of the wood, / And the white breast of the dim sea / And all disheveled wandering stars" (*The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, (New York: Scribner Paperback Poetry, 1989), 43).

for the workings of the novel than an average allusion by Stephen, for even Stephen's memories of his mother are screened through the filter of "Who Goes with Fergus?"; the poem acts a mediator between himself and the pain caused by his mother's death. Joyce's highlighting of the poem, as in Stephen's use of it to probe at the wound of his mother's death, causes the node dependent upon it to become relatively easy to recognize in text. Ellmann writes, in *Ulysses on the Liffey*, "[t]o Mulligan [the snatch of the poem he recites] is a catchphrase, to Stephen a reality," a statement which aptly defines the way Stephen appears to relate to the world through language and little else. Stephen's serious approach to the poem marks it as one of the fundamental elements around which Joyce constructs Stephen; and recurrent uses of "Who Goes with Fergus?" prove its importance to the structure.

Let us leave aside Yeats's poem for the moment and turn attention to one of the earliest examples of the repetition of words associated with Stephen, one to which I have already made reference: the dream of his mother. In the first episode, the diligent reader will notice, Stephen repeats silently a lyrical description of the way his dead mother appeared to him in his dreams. Hayman notes that, in the nodal structure he attempts to explicate in *Finnegans Wake*, "[a]t some point in the text a significant cluster of closely related details will coalesce," and that "[T]he result is a first nodal level" (WT, 37). Likewise this example of the roots of Stephen as a node: the repetition, nearly word for word, of a single complex sentence within the span of five pages is almost sure to catch the reader's eye; and, as a consequence, cause the reader to suspect something of significance is suggested by it. As Hayman has it, the cluster "coalesces" into a state of importance.

Hayman also writes that nodes "may be built around or evolved from . . .

anything remarkable enough to be isolated by the reader" (WT, 37). In the example at hand—i.e., Stephen's conception of the dream of his dead mother—the reader finds the material that will return to shape the very climax of the book. Deep into the "Circe" episode, a chapter which projects the content of the mind on to reality and makes explicit no distinctions between what is real and what is not, Stephen's mother, dressed and acting as he remembers her from his dream, comes to him:

#### THE MOTHER

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

#### STEPHEN

*(horrorstruck)* Lemur, who are you? No. What bogeyman's trick is this? [ . . . ]

#### THE MOTHER

*(comes nearer, breathing upon him softly her breath of wetted ashes)*  
(U, 15.4172-4181)

The language with which Joyce describes The Mother recalls strongly the way in which Stephen remembers his dream. A look further at this climactic scene reveals other subtle details drawn from Stephen's memory of the dream:

#### THE MOTHER

*(a green rill of bile trickling from a side of her mouth)* You sang that



These are elements plucked directly from the initial chapter of the novel in which the reader first discovers Stephen's broodings on the death of his mother: the breath of wetted ashes from the ghostwoman, the green bile "which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting" (U, 1.110).

By the time the reader reaches the point in the text at which Mary Dedalus rises through the floor to confront her son, the text seems almost out of control; not as in the last portion of "Oxen of the Sun," where language begins to fragment toward unintelligibility, but the reality, the world which the reader struggles to create from the information on the page, is filled with contradiction and seemingly random irruptions of text. Reality is influenced as much by projection of the internal as by external phenomena and the possibility exists that the reader might lose track of plot and lose sense of the story at all. Kenner notes, in his essay on the "Circe" episode in *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays*, that "[c]learly the reader in quest of a surface realism he can believe must pick his way very carefully, assaying every phrase with suspicion."<sup>12</sup> But by virtue of the significant cluster of words which the reader has learnt to associate with Stephen, the reader is able to recognize the arrival of Stephen's mother for what it is: a portion of Stephen the character, a cluster of words with its source in Stephen's mind. To wit, Stephen's status as a node allows the reader to retain some grasp on the situation at hand despite the wild fluctuations of the textual reality. It does not resolve issues of the "reality" of what takes place in "Circe," but it does begin to provide a basis on which to build interpretations of the text.

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12. Clive Hart and David Hayman, eds., *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 347. Hereafter cited in the text with the prefix JJU: CE.

This part of Stephen, by which I mean the part that has to do with his dead mother, provides a noticeable vein in the text. In the second episode the phrase "an odour of rosewood and wetted ashes" appears again as Stephen's thoughts turn once more to motherhood, providing the first suggestion of evidence of a systematic repetition in the text which points toward Stephen's status as a node (*U*, 2.145-146). The third episode continues this system of repetition as Stephen still again wonders at the qualities of reproduction, naming his mother "a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath," a paraphrase of the ways in which he has referred to her up to this point in the text (*U*, 3.46-47). And the reference does not end there. In "Scylla and Charybdis," the ninth episode, as Stephen struggles against the preconceptions of Shakespeare to which his listeners cling, the ring of memory echoes in his head, triggered by a word; and again his thoughts turn to the death of his mother:

—[ . . . ] She bore his children and she laid pennies on his eyes to keep his eyelids closed when he lay on his deathbed.

Mother's deathbed. Candle. The sheeted mirror. Who brought me into this world lies there, bronzelidded, under a few cheap flowers.

*Liliata rutilantium.*

I wept alone.

(*U*, 9.218-224)

Clearly this memory, or rather the words of which it is comprised, occupy a significant part of that collection of words which the reader comes to know as Stephen Dedalus. "*Liliata rutilantium*," a Catholic prayer for the dying (*UA*, 19), echoes frequently in Stephen's textual space in close association with his dead mother (*U*, 1.276; 1.736-738; 9.222-223; 15.4264-4265), effectively becoming a sign of dead Mary Dedalus. The prayer frames the whole of the text in which Stephen is

present, appearing finally just as Stephen departs from the novel (*U*, 17.1380-1381). Such clusters of language—which, in this instance, if not verbatim duplications of the initial verbal renderings of Stephen's conception of his dream, at least gesture toward the same notion—act as the foundation for the nodal character Stephen Dedalus.

It is important to note that all threads or seemingly particularized streams of language of Stephen Dedalus are interrelated. The preoccupation with the manner of his mother's death does not stand self-bounded in the text as an autonomous string of recurrences: it spills over into all realms of the language that serves to represent Stephen's thought. I remark above that Stephen in part uses the poem "Who Goes with Fergus?" to construct an identity for himself, and hence one may point to the recurrence of words and phrases from the poem as instances that suggest Stephen's nodality: in "Proteus," a repetition of the line "*And no more turn aside and brood*" (*U*, 3.445); beaten, drunk, Stephen lies on the street in "Circe," mumbling fragments of verse from Yeats' poem (*U*, 15.4929-4933; 15.4940-4943). Joyce frames the portion of *Ulysses* comprised of the *Telemachia* and the *Odyssey* with Yeats's song, giving the book a structure similar to that which Hayman perceives in the *Wake*: nodes occurring beginning, middle and end. But this poem is furthermore ineluctably connected with Stephen's memory of his dying mother:

Fergus' song: I sang it alone in the house, holding down the long dark chords. Her door was open: she wanted to hear my music. Silent with awe and pity I went to her bedside. She was crying in her wretched bed. For those words, Stephen: love's bitter mystery.

(*U*, 1.249-253)

Once the text has presented this connection to the reader, all references to Yeats's poem begin to evoke the memory of Stephen's mother, which in its turn offers the reader familiar clusters of language. As in the initial chapter where Stephen affixes "Who Goes with Fergus?" to the process of his mother's death, so in "Circe" the mother's spectre connects the two—"You sang that song to me. *Love's bitter mystery*"—in such a way as to bring about the manner of "coalescing" of which Hayman writes.

### The Horde of Heresies and History's Nightmare

Following the point at which Stephen assumes narrative preeminence in "Telemachus," Mulligan, who may have seemed playful and harmless at the beginning of the episode, seems more and more the antic, hostile, an opportunist. As he talks with Haines toward the end of the first episode, Stephen claims to be the "servant of two masters . . . And a third . . . there is who wants me for odd jobs" (*U*, 1.638; 1.641). The two, Stephen says to Haines, are the Catholic Church and the British Empire; the third he does not reveal. Haines blames history for the suffering of the Irish people, driving home for the reader the point that Stephen as an idea of a human consciousness is located within a history of human beings. But beyond that Stephen is a character within a literary tradition, meaning—whatever his desire to fly free of history's net—that he may only be defined in relation to that which has preceded him. Immediately following the point in the text at which Haines remarks "—It seems history is to blame," the narrative breaks off on a tangent which details in greatly reduced fashion the history of heresy in the Church (*U*, 1.649). Whatever the source or

nature of the passage listing the "horde of heresies,"<sup>13</sup> this aside is written after the style of Stephen Dedalus and concerns the sort of issues which most occupy him (*U*, 1.650-665).<sup>14</sup> History as Stephen knows it has undergone "slow growth," accumulating hates and distrusts and time as it moves toward an ineffable end; to his mind it moves moving towards "one great goal, the manifestation of God," as Mr Deasy asserts in the "Nestor" episode, but to block his progress as an artist and to chain him down in a predetermined superfluous place of life (*U*, 2.381).

The heresies signify Stephen's desire to fight the force of history. All the heresies in the list have something to do with the nature of God, in particular the relation of the Father to the Son. Stephen later connects this theme with with his theory of *Hamlet* and with his own relationship to his own father. More importantly, however, the words with which Joyce composes Stephen's thoughts on this matter recur significantly throughout the text and furnish still more evidence of Stephen's nodality.

Haines triggers the theme in Stephen's head, remarking absently in the "Telemachus" episode on *Hamlet* that he had "read a theological interpretation of it somewhere . . . . The Father and Son idea. The Son striving to be atoned with

13. Kenner suggests that the passage exists outside "clock time," a sort of textual improvisation having the look of Stephen's internal perpetual state of composition, not located in the narrative. Kenner thinks it "exists *alongside* the narrative, with Stephen's presence to excuse it" (*U: RE*, 98). However, Stephen is aware of the passage and interpolates it into his meditation on the consubstantiality of the Father with the Son in the "Proteus" episode. Cf. *U*, 1.657-658 with 3.50-51.

14. As is evident in the "Proteus" episode during his meditation on fatherhood.

the Father" (*U*, 1.577-578).<sup>15</sup> As I note above in the discussion of the type of words associated with Stephen, the text gives a list of heresies in "Telemachus," nearly all of which have something to do with the relation of the Father to the Son. Difficult as it is to attribute this list directly to Stephen, it seems clear nonetheless that text demands the reader associate the list with him. After the initial discussion of the Father/Son issue in "Telemachus," Stephen returns to the theme in "Proteus," using the words used in Telemachus to facilitate his silent musings on the matter and thereby establishing the sort of link of which I write above. "A *lex eterna* stays about Him. Is that then the divine substance wherein Father and Son are consubstantial?" Stephen thinks while walking the strand. "Where is poor dear Arius to try conclusions? Warring his life long upon the contranymagnificandjewbangtentiality" (*U*, 3.48-51). The words here in "Proteus" rely heavily on the list of heresies which rings suddenly in "Telemachus," and the similarities of the two such that the result is the occasioning of a node.

After "Proteus" the words with which Stephen conceives his deliberation on the Father/Son motif appear most noticeably in "Scylla and Charybdis" as Stephen explains his theory of *Hamlet*, depending upon his earlier words on the Father and Son in order to make his point. Father Shakespeare speaks "[t]o a son . . . the son of his soul, the prince, young Hamlet and to the son of his body, Hamnet Shakespeare" (*U*, 9.171-172). Stephen moreover describes the playwright as "the sea's voice, a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of

15. The word *atone* has its root in the combination of the words *at* and *one*, rendering the meaning essentially "to join in harmony" (see Oxford English Dictionary entry on *atone*, v.). It is therefore remarkably appropriate for Haines to use the word *atone* in reference to the Father and the Son, in that Stephen later will labor over the notion of consubstantiality, the Father and Son being at one but yet not the same being.

his shadow, the son consubstantial with the father," a series of words remarkable for their similarity to earlier considerations on the same theme which the text attributes to Stephen (*U*, 9.479-481). In effect, the text creates touchstones for the reader, who, during the reading, will likely come to points at which the text becomes resistant to interpretation. The recurring signifiers offer assistance especially during chapters in which the style, detached from the consciousnesses of the main character yet borrowing from the vocabularies of the characters, presents itself as a barrier between action and reader; Dermot Kelly offers the phrase "translucent narrative screens," appropriate in the sense that plot is still evident behind these styles but not always as clear as it might be (*NS*, 4).

"Oxen of the Sun," which consists largely of a series of parodied styles drawn from English literary history, lays abstruse language against abstruse language, covering over the action of the plot—at least in the earlier portions of the chapter in which Joyce parodies early English works—with convoluted syntax and obscure, even obsolete, words. The reader has ample opportunity to lose way in the unfamiliar linguistic landscape; but nodal Stephen, the words that have accumulated around that name, stands out as the manner of peg of which Hayman speaks. Note in this passage how Stephen returns to his earlier concern with relation between Father and Son; returns, in fact, to the majority of his musings about which we read earlier in the novel:

[Said Stephen:] Mark me now. In woman's womb word is made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh that passes becomes the word that shall not pass away. This is the postcreation. *Omnis caro ad te veniet*.<sup>16</sup> [ . . . ] Entweder transubstantiality oder consubstantiality but

in no case subsubstantiality. (*U*, 14.292-308)

16. "All flesh shall come to thee." Latin. See *UA*, 62. Cf. *U*, 3.396.

These are words which have lodged in Stephen's mind; or, rather, are lodged in place of Stephen's mind. The reader has access to them despite the styles, and may use them to navigate through the text.

Much as he keeps up an ambivalent affair with the dogma of the Catholic church, Stephen maintains a strange relationship with the history of his home nation. In order to understand Stephen's relationship to history, it is necessary to discuss that relationship in two parts, despite the simple fact that these two parts are indivisible in the text: a relationship as a human consciousness to accumulated time; and a relationship as a character, a construct of words, to accumulated literary history. History is, for Stephen, a stage set, a series of givens upon which and in relation to which lives are constructed. Joyce, having filled Stephen with an acute awareness of Ireland's past—an awareness that goes as far back as the early scenes in *A Portrait*—scatters Stephen's meditations on that past through *Ulysses* and links them with recurrent signifiers.

"Nestor," the second episode, especially sets motion Stephen's thoughts on history. The chapter opens with a history lesson, Stephen teaching others, even as Stephen struggles to understand a point about history he finds in Aristotle. It is here in "Nestor" that Stephen's struggle as a human consciousness to relate to events which preceded him is most evident. While sitting with the students over whom he has only the merest control, Stephen thinks: "For them [the students] too history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawnshop," the implication being that Stephen himself considers Ireland a pawnshop, a country stripped of dignity by the ravages of history (*U*, 2.46-47). The image, and some similar language, reappear in "Oxen of the Sun," when the conversation turns towards England's abuse of Ireland and the Irish people (*U*, 14.571ff.). History for Ireland is precisely the nightmare from which Stephen



claims to be trying to awake (*U*, 2.377). Mr Deasy, the head master of the school at which Stephen teaches, calls Stephen a “fenian,”<sup>17</sup> and seems to expect Stephen to act in the capacity of a fenian, viewing all Stephen has to say as though it came from the throat of one who affirmed the fenian worldview (*U*, 2.272).

Stephen’s encounters with reminders of Ireland’s status as a subject to the British crown recur several times in the text: in his fear of Haines and Haines’s intentions (*U*, 47-63); in Stephen’s *Parable of the Plums* (the statue of Nelson; *U*, 7.917ff.); in the scene of “Oxen of the Sun” I mention above; in the language he speaks, English; and especially in the “Circe” episode during his confrontation of images of Ireland’s subservient history. He runs afoul of Private Carr and Private Compton, two British military men stationed in Dublin: “You are my guests,” says Stephen to them. “Uninvited. By virtue of the fifth of George and the seventh of Edward. History to blame” (*U*, 15.4370-4372). The second climax (the first being the appearance of Mary Dedalus) of “Circe” that follows involves Stephen’s direct confrontation of the occupying Brits, a possibility which runs through his head all of 16 June 1904.

In addition to his relation as a human consciousness to the history of the nation of his birth, Stephen as a human consciousness must reconcile himself with his familial history. Most notable in the first episode is Stephen’s severed bond with his mother; but while the second episode deals in part with the continuation of this theme—Stephen, while helping Sargent with some mathematical problems, contemplates *amor matris* and his own past similarities to Sargent as a gangly adolescent—it occupies itself more and more with the

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17. From the OED: “Fenian: f. OIr. féne ‘one of the names of the ancient population of Ireland’ (Windisch), confused in modern times with *fiann* fem. collect., the name of a body of warriors who are said to have been the defenders of Ireland in the time of Finn and other legendary Irish kings.” The usage in *Ulysses* refers to Irish nationalists.

relationship of the son to the father. This theme, toward which the text gestures in the list of heresies in "Telemachus," furthers Stephen's meditations on history as he considers the flesh and blood which is supposed to have generated him. Like Telemachus in *The Odyssey*, Stephen wonders at the link between father and son, the generational bond.<sup>18</sup> He encounters several fatherfigures during the day: first Deasy in "Nestor"; next Kevin Egan in the memories of Paris Stephen calls forth as he walks on the strand in "Proteus"; Myles Crawford, editor. Yet in spite of his meetings with these figures Stephen remains fully aware that he is his father's son.<sup>19</sup> He seems to sense that the accumulated failures of his father shall be his inheritance, and consciously avoids Simon Dedalus for the entire day of 16 June 1904. At one point Stephen scarcely acknowledges that he knows the man (*U*, 16.378-379). To wit, Stephen fears that he, like his father, is doomed to become "a praiser of his own past;" that he, Stephen Dedalus, will, by the force of history, become indistinguishable from Simon Dedalus, his father (*PA*, 303).

This fear comes through in Stephen's thoughts as he converses with old Deasy. While waiting for the elderly schoolmaster to return from the hockey fields, the narrative and Stephen's train of thought blend to form this paragraph:

Stale smoky air hung in the study with the smell of drab abraded leather of its chairs. As on the first day he bargained with me here. As it was in the beginning, is now. On the sideboard the tray of Stuart coins,

18. In response to Mentès' question "'Are you . . . the very child of Odysseus?'" Telemachus answers, "'My mother says indeed I am his. For my part I do not know. Nobody really knows his own father'" (*The Odyssey*, I:207; I:215-216, tr. by Richmond Lattimore).

19. See *U*, 3.45-47: Simon Dedalus is to Stephen "the man with my voice and my eyes."

base treasure of a bog: and ever shall be. And snug in their spooncase of purple plush, faded, twelve apostles having preached to all the gentiles: world without end.

(*U*, 2.199-204)

Deasy's house is a house of the past—"as it was in the beginning, is now"—and suggests some of Stephen's mistrust of the vicious cycle of historical event, of precedent. It also connects secular history with ecclesiastical history in Stephen's use of the Doxology as a way of defining cyclic history. Deasy rambles on, repeating tired advice, to which Stephen silently responds: "The same room and hour, the same wisdom: and I the same. Three times now. Three nooses round me here. Well? I can break them this instant if I will" (*U*, 2.233-235). Is this a symptom of the paralysis which afflicts so many Dubliners, which affects, more importantly, Simon Dedalus and which has drawn him to the life of poverty he now leads? Stephen would break free from the anaesthetic force of history and claims to Deasy that he is trying to awake from the nightmare which goes by the name history; but having made this claim he wonders, "What if that nightmare gave you a back kick?" (*U*, 2.379) The possibility exists that Stephen may not succeed in his fight with history, with the supposed tendencies of his genes, and will end up like his father, a praiser of his own past, doomed for a certain time to walk the earth. In fact, several characters notice a striking similarity between Stephen and his father, most notably Myles Crawford. Crawford, in response to Stephen's suggestion that the group gathered in the newspaper offices adjourn for a drink or two, cries "—Chip of the old block!" an outburst which links and blends Stephen with Simon (*U*, 7.899). Earlier in this same episode—"Aeolus"—the reader sees Simon Dedalus leaving the same offices for precisely the same purpose: to go boosing (*U*, 7.351-354). Kenner suggests that

Stephen, faced with having “misconducted himself into virtual nonexistence,” “may as well succumb to his destiny and start drinking in earnest. [ . . . ] He is, no doubt about it, Si Dedalus’ son” (*U: RE*, 60). It is almost as though Stephen were in a position in which he must choose between two parents: the parents being, in this case, his father, whom Stephen names “the man with my voice and my eyes”; and literature. Clearly Stephen has built himself in large part on the books he has read—his consciousness fairly rests on literary allusion—yet his flesh is the flesh of his father and his proclivity, like his father’s, is for drink; Stephen, for much of the text, seems almost a reiteration of his father in his tendencies.

The powerful connection in the text between Stephen and his father assures the recurrence of certain phrases. In particular, words relating to his father become attached to Stephen’s musings on Sabellius’ heresy; and the complex interweavings of Joyce’s nodal structure continue to stabilize the text.

### Shakespeare

The only tangible substance in a text is words; and Stephen, the figure in literature, is not made of cells originating in his father and in his father’s father but is rather a construct of language. This means that, like a child formed of the genetic material of its parents, Stephen the collection of signifiers is formed at least partially from the words of literary works which preceded him. Stephen recognizes a multitude of literary parallels appropriate to his position; and it is around these literary ancestors that he develops himself as a literary figure. In the process of developing Stephen’s literariness, Joyce causes a sizable number of literary allusions to recur in the text, for thematic and structural reasons; and the most prominent of these allusions come from Shakespeare.

Shakespeare is present in certain ways for the duration of the novel, but Joyce makes Hamlet—the play and the dramatic role—the most apparent element of Shakespeare. Hamlet is a very conspicuous part of the Telemachia, and assures that the reader will associate the play with Stephen by attributing to him a novel theory concerning the nature of the play. Haines clumsily strengthens the likening of Stephen to Hamlet with his comparison of Martello Tower, Stephen's residence for the time being, to Elsinore, the castle in which the majority of *Hamlet* takes place (*U*, 1.566-568). Even before Haines makes his observation about Martello Tower and the area that surrounds it, Stephen presents himself as Prince Hamlet by refusing to wear anything but black, calling to mind Hamlet as he insists on wearing the trappings of mourning in memory of his dead father (*U*, 1.112-122).<sup>20</sup> And as if these relatively overt links to *Hamlet* were not evidence enough of Stephen's self-construction around literary figures, the final word of the first chapter seals the connection once and for all: "Usurper" (*U*, 1.744).<sup>21</sup> The systematic repetition of allusion to Hamlet so early in the text establishes one of the firmest nodes, providing familiar language most chapters of the novel.

The "Nestor" episode does not present the Hamlet parallels so openly as does the first, yet it keeps Shakespeare in the reader's thoughts by introducing an apothegm of Iago's into Mr. Deasy's speech. Significantly Stephen notes that it is Iago who remarks "*Put but money in thy purse*," because in his casual murmur he suggests that he has a firm knowledge of Shakespeare's play (*U*, 2.239). Stephen has an everpresent awareness of Shakespeare, a fact that writes large his association with the English poet, consequently linking to Stephen recurrences of

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20. Cf. *Hamlet*, I.ii.64ff.

21. Cf. *Hamlet*, I.v.32ff.

allusion to Shakespeare.

The possibility of Stephen's self-construction Shakespeare's language—in this instance, on the figure of Hamlet—becomes reality in the third episode, "Proteus." In this chapter Stephen begins to interpolate lines from the text of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* into the flow of his shifting thoughts at moments which suggest particularly his identification with Prince Hamlet. He drops a line of Polonius into the middle of a paragraph remarkable for its self-reproach and disgust with his own naivete, scorning his past goals, imagining a man like Polonius listening but not paying any attention to the words, much as Polonius treats Hamlet (*italics added for emphasis*):

Reading two pages apiece of seven books every night, eh? I was young. You bowed to yourself in the mirror, stepping forward to applaud earnestly, striking face. Hurray for the Goddamned idiot! Hray! No-one saw: tell no-one. Books you were going to write with letters for titles. [ . . . ] Remember your epiphanies written on green oval leaves, deeply deep . . . Someone was to read them there after a few thousand years, a mahamanvantara. Pico della Mirandola like. *Ay, very like a whale.*

(U, 3.136-144)

From here the text departs from overt discussion of Stephen building himself in the role of Hamlet, but a few pages later his status as "a dispossessed" rises again in his consciousness, which in turn calls forth *Hamlet*: "So in the moon's midwatches I pace the path above the rocks, in sable silvered, hearing Elsinore's tempting flood" (U, 3.280-281). Curiously Stephen does not make himself only Prince Hamlet but renders for himself a shifting role, Hamlet the son and

Hamlet the father, befitting the chapter paralleling Menelaus' contest with shapeshifter Proteus in the *Odyssey*. But given the nature Joyce attributes to Stephen—i.e., the tendency to cause by alchemy of the mind external experience to become internal composition—it is not surprising to find that Stephen builds himself not only on the characters of the play but on the text of the play itself. He cloaks himself in the language of the tragedy, using the words of the text as a method of self-definition.

For the reader this act is especially crucial for understanding the nodes in *Ulysses*. Words and not cells are the building blocks of the consciousness of Stephen Dedalus, words which gesture toward but do not encompass the individual being that he is. Repeated words become as familiar as facial features. Such is the case of the nodes built around Shakespeare's language. When the "cocklepickers" pass Stephen on Sandymount strand, they pass "a side eye at [his] Hamlet hat" (*U*, 3.390). Clearly Stephen is not Hamlet; but in words and associations Stephen conceives of himself in a situation like that of Prince Hamlet and consequently appropriates lines of text with which to frame himself and his perceived struggles. But these lines of *Hamlet* only stand in place of Stephen's travails; they are signifiers of what he endures and therefore serve to defer the explication of Stephen as an entire consciousness. By the time the reader has completed the Telemachia, the first three episodes of *Ulysses*, it should be apparent that signifiers which Stephen draws from *Hamlet* furnish a large portion of the literary construct to which Joyce fixes the name Stephen.

But it is the recurrences that are crucial for the constitution of a node. Shakespeare's language reappears with reassuring frequency. In the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode (chapter nine) Stephen reveals his theory of Hamlet to which Mulligan alludes in the first chapter. His hypothesis of the nature of the play

conflicts remarkably with the running silent monologue—perhaps in this instance it would be better to call it a dialogue of the self, in that Stephen plays two sides of a conversation—an inconsistency of self which, as Stephen is well aware, reflects indecisive Prince Hamlet's psychological struggles. The resultant tone of Stephen's silent speech is bitter and ironic and self-deprecating, as befits a man playing Hamlet. The narrative, which seems shaped primarily by Stephen's perceptions of his surroundings, is sharpwitted and sarcastic: through Stephenlike description and linguistic play come such lines as "—The sense of beauty leads us astray, said beautifulinsadness Best to ugling Eglinton"; "—Gentle Will is being roughly handled, gentle Mr Best said gently"; "—It is clear that there were two beds, a best and a secondbest, Mr Secondbest Best said finely" (*U*, 9.735-736; 9.793; 9.714-715). The narrative is unkind to others in the room as Stephen is unkind to himself. Stephen works out his theory "battling against hopelessness," proclaims himself tired of his own voice, asking himself bluntly "What the hell are you driving at?" and when pressed "promptly" denies that he subscribes to his own hypothesis (*U*, 9.828; 9.846; 9.1067).

Nonetheless Stephen continues to clothe himself in the words of Shakespeare, silently uttering to himself "They [those listening to Stephen expound his theory] list. And in the porches of their ears I pour" after finishing a long point of his theory of Shakespeare's relation to the tragedy (*U*, 9.465). These words, altered slightly here by Stephen to fit the circumstances, come from the lips of King Hamlet; in context they reveal Stephen's method of internal composition.<sup>22</sup> Stephen has a tendency, as I have stated above, to appropriate the words of others—particularly he borrows words and phrases from established "literary" sources—and adapt them to the varying situations or states of mind in

22. Cf. *Hamlet*, I.v.63. Hereafter cited in the text with the prefix *Hamlet*.



which he finds himself. Stephen deftly weaves phrases borrowed from the works of Shakespeare into his theory, altering them to his purposes. While talking of Shakespeare's shaken self-confidence, Stephen describes him thus: "His beaver is up. He is a ghost, a shadow now, the wind by Elsinore's rocks or what you will" (*U*, 9.478-479). The language is cribbed out of Shakespeare, "His beaver is up" from *Hamlet*, "what you will" the second half of the title of *Twelfth Night*.

Yet Stephen is a character in a text, and as such is the servant of the author's whims; Joyce is the third master to whom Stephen alludes "who wants [Stephen] for odd jobs," and one of those odd jobs becomes nodality (*U*, 1.641). The literary language which Joyce crams into the textual space of Stephen works on many levels, the nodal level being one of the most important. This is especially true when it comes to the Hamlet fragments which recur in the text. Even when the reader moves from chapters which Joyce centers around Stephen, the Hamlet strain is evident. When, for example, Stephen passes briefly into the narrative in "Hades" as Bloom's carriage makes its way to the graveyard, Joyce describes him as "a lithe young man, clad in mourning, wide hat" (*U*, 6.39-40). The allusion would be less obvious to someone relatively unacquainted with *Hamlet*; but to one more aware of that play, the connection is clear: Hamlet wears "the trappings and the suits of woe," an "inky cloak," as a sign of his mourning (*Hamlet*, I.ii.76ff.); the link between the description of Stephen and the text of *Hamlet* becomes unmistakable. While the recurrences of allusion to Shakespeare do tend to be more subtle than some of the other nodes formed from language Joyce associates with Stephen, they are so frequent that it is difficult to miss them.

I do not wish to suggest, by the length of this section that Shakespeare is the only or even the largest source from which Joyce takes words to create the

nodes inherent in Stephen's construction. Shakespeare can hardly help comprising a large part of Stephen if for no other reason than Stephen speaks at length on the man and his plays in "Scylla and Charybdis," but it does not necessarily follow that Shakespeare's words, or the Hamlet identity in which Joyce shrouds Stephen, will most frequently appear in the capacity of nodes. The majority of the material explicitly concerning Shakespeare appears in a single chapter, and only a tiny portion of that ends up contributing to the nodes which Joyce bases in Stephen.

Stephen for the first three chapters of the novel is essentially the locus of narration, once he takes center stage away from Mulligan. Stephen's mind becomes the place in which the reader interprets the action and inaction of the *Telemachia*; language is cast out of and pulled back into the mind of Stephen Dedalus in a way that makes it clear that nearly every word in the first three episodes of text orbits around the idea of Stephen's consciousness. The consciousness, ineffable, acts as the centering point, the node to which the words are related, but also provides the stabilizing elements by generating recurrent signifiers. Despite the narrative's increasing distance from the main characters as the text advances toward its end, despite the intrusive and obscuring styles, we maintain a bond with those characters thanks largely to the repetition of signifiers, which allows readers to apprehend the workings of his novel.

Leopold Bloom

### Reading the Text of Mr Bloom

Even as the reader becomes comfortable with the workings of Stephen's mind and begins to recognize the sort of signifiers which tend to occupy the space the text supplies in place of his consciousness, a tremendous textual quake shakes the novel and 16 June 1904 starts once more, returning the reader to 8 a.m., dislocating the narrative from Stephen Dedalus entirely. "Mr Leopold Bloom," Joyce writes at the start of the "Calypso," as if composing the opening of some wholly different work, "ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls" (*U*, 4.1-2). It hardly seems necessary to compare this sort of diction with Stephen's "Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes" (the opening of "Proteus," (*U*, 3.1-2)), or to note the fairly stunning differences in the first flicker of Stephen's consciousness—"Chrysostomos" (*U*, 1.26)—and in Bloom's—"Made him feel a bit peckish" (*U*, 4.8-9). The contrasts in language, generally speaking, appear more than self-evident.

Yet it is important to retain a basic understanding of the first words that the text associates with Bloom, for if nothing else it is an immediate suggestion that the words with which Joyce constructs the character Bloom will be unlike those of Stephen in almost every way.<sup>23</sup> Whereas Stephen is the picture—portrait—of the mind in the act of composition, accumulating and reforming words to fit to his conception of himself and thereby broadening his textual territory, the words proffered by the text to the reader which gesture toward the consciousness of Leopold Bloom tend rather to suggest a mind not given to the

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<sup>23</sup>. See *U: RE*, "The Hidden Hero," 46.

"literary." But this in no wise suggests that Bloom is not intelligent. In order for Joyce to create the modern Ulysses, he must endow Bloom with certain characteristics for which Homer's Odysseus is notable; and the language with which Joyce creates the person of Leopold Bloom reflects his status as the Ulysses figure. Like Odysseus, Bloom is a "man of many ways," skilled in his own manner with the weaving of words.

It is difficult to characterize precisely the language which the text associates with Bloom, in that, unlike Stephen—whose voice seems consciously shaped by the mold of the language of literary works; whose voice, in fact, seems at times a hybrid of all western literary history—the signifiers that Joyce substitutes for the consciousness of Bloom have very little in common with whatever narrative voice exists in the earlier portions of the novel. The marked difference between the narrative language and language the text highlights as Bloom's has led to a critical viewpoint which holds that an unarticulated narrative force tends to express that which Bloom might only feel but to which he might not give linguistic form. Kenner, for example, writes: "Bloom's unspoken words, are they Bloom's? Not wholly" (*U: RE*, 69). He cites a passage from the first Bloom chapter in which the text evokes an exotic Eastern atmosphere to demonstrate this "duet" of language which surrounds the idea of Bloom:

Might meet a robber or two. Well, meet him. Getting on to sundown.  
The shadows of the mosques along the pillars: priest with a scroll  
rolled up. A shiver of the trees, signal, the evening wind. I pass on.  
Fading gold sky. A mother watches me from her doorway. She calls her  
children home in their dark language. High wall: beyond strings  
twanged. Night sky, moon, violet, colour of Molly's new garters.  
Strings. Listen. A girl playing one of those instruments what do you

call them: dulcimers. I pass.

(*U*, 4.91-98)

““What do you call them: dulcimers,”” writes Kenner, “is unmistakably Bloom, no doubt fumbling for a classroom memory of ‘Kubla Khan’.” “But,” he asks, ““their dark language’? . . . no, those are not Bloom’s words, they are surely James Joyce’s, supplying a phrase that shall bridge the text’s continuity across an instant Bloom did not verbalise, merely felt” (*U: RE*, 69). The implication is that all words which may appear in the interior monologue of Leopold Bloom may not have their source in Bloom. In *Joyce’s Voices*, Kenner comments further on this phenomenon:

Joyce’s minor virtuositities are so deft, so frequent, so normally confined to one exact word or two, that we may quite fail to notice his reversal of the normal practice of fiction: it is in the little bits of narrator’s machinery, introducing speeches, specifying places, getting things and characters from place to place, that the language is apt to be especially inventive, and it is the words of Bloom that are apt to be flat and ordinary. The odd effect is that Bloom seems a great comic creature, his locutions crisp and bright and unpredictable.

(*JV*, 31)

Still, whatever the source of this “bridging” language, the fact remains that Joyce, in linking these words to the language Bloom himself appears to produce, suggests to the reader that the words form part of the fictional literary construct of language which bears the name Leopold Bloom. In short, the cluster of signifiers which gesture toward Joyce’s notion of Bloom’s person will include those words which may not be, in any traditional sense, Bloom’s; and therefore

any such words have the potential to contribute to the creation of a node.

Joyce establishes this very careful relation of signifiers almost as soon as the second portion of the novel begins, demonstrating in some small way the technique through which he builds the core of Bloom's character. Combinations of words like those to which Kenner refers stand out from the page immediately as the reader begins the first Bloom chapter, "Calypso." In the space of ten lines, Joyce provides the basis for some part of the cluster of language which stands for Leopold Bloom's consciousness, rendering up for the reader an image of a man aware of and comfortable with the physical nature of being. To do this, Joyce must present a mixture of what one might call "standard" narrative language and distinctly bloomian diction. But, as in the opening of the "Telemachia" section of the novel, Joyce is reticent to give the reader quick and direct access to the character's thoughts, and consequently the "bridging" words are the majority. Surely, as the reader will conclude having read further of Bloom, sentences like "Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine" (*U*, 4.3-5) arise not out of Bloom's consciousness but out of the author's sense of the character: such a statement is a generalization the author includes to put into words that which Bloom, to restate Kenner's point, "does not verbalise" but "merely feels."

These ten lines act as the first signification of Leopold Bloom and as such should remain strongly in the reader's mind throughout a reading of *Ulysses*. But there is still another level of significance in the language of the opening lines of the fourth chapter, a level to which Kenner makes tacit reference but refrains from explicating. He notes, in studying the beginning of the first chapter containing Bloom, that "[t]hough neither Smollet nor Dickens any more than Henry James would have written down [the word *urine*], we seem back in their

domain" (*U: RE*, 46). Kenner suggests that "he exists, does Mr Bloom, comfortably in fiction's familiar world of nouns," an assertion which goes a long way toward helping the reader grasp the sort of words Joyce is likely to attach to the linguistic body of Leopold Bloom (*U: RE*, 46).

Yet Kenner, perhaps thinking it obvious, makes nothing of the simple fact that the first paragraph of the chapter contains within it nothing of Leopold Bloom's "internal"—as the fiction of the novel would have it—construction. In removing the reader from Stephen's experimental linguistic realm to the "domain" of such authors as Kenner mentions, Joyce prepares for one of the most radical aspects of his text: the subversion of literature's standard language—"fiction's familiar world of nouns"—for the purpose of establishing a method of narration which links character securely to the formal arrangement of the narrative. The series of nodes which are based on the language Joyce attaches to Bloom rely heavily on the "familiar world of nouns," for it is this world, as Kenner writes, in which Bloom feels "comfortable"; Joyce draws from this world tired everyday language and adds new energy and meaning to it, makes the mundane signifiers textually crucial; and then causes these newly charged words to recur systematically, in the form of bloomian clusters, across the pages of the text. Hence the organization of the first ten lines of "Calypso": it begins in the domain of Dickens and James and gives the impression of an objective narrative voice, but as all of the Victorian language of these lines suddenly becomes subject to the one sentence among them which appears out of place: "Made him feel a bit peckish" (*U*, 4.8-9). This abrupt observation irrupts into the Victorian narration, and, by virtue of its unusual placement and agrammatical arrangement, causes all which preceded it in the chapter to become dependent upon it for meaning. Without the "Made him feel a bit peckish" the opening to



this chapter would offer the reader an entirely different idea of Leopold Bloom. As it stands, however, the reader has the potential to receive a fine though partial understanding of that which Joyce perceives to be important in Bloom's character. Note that the "gentle summer morning everywhere" does not elicit in Bloom an emotional response but a feeling of hunger, a feeling of basic physical need (*U*, 4.8). (Stephen, at the same hour of day, does not perceive "gentle summer morning everywhere" but enters 16 June 1904 "sleepy and displeased" and seems to suffer from a sort of emotional oversensitivity, even for the "artistic temperament."<sup>24</sup>)

The immediate association of Bloom with the "inner organs of beasts and fowls," like "Made him feel a bit peckish," acts as a sort of catalyst that allows for the formation of a textually significant cluster. Stephen, textually and personally, makes himself of words, fills the far-folding bends of his mind with language and the polished stones of fine phrases.<sup>25</sup> Bloom, in contrast to the mass of words which the text offers as Stephen Dedalus in the *Telemachia*, eats "with relish" all manner of extremely "physical" meats, the organs which give life to "beasts and fowls." Where Stephen has in his mind an overabundance of fine phrases—the "roar of cataractic planets" (*U*, 3.403), the brazen cars of Fergus, the heresy of Arius—the text reports of Bloom that "[k]idneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray" (*U*, 4.6-7). Bloom has not words but kidneys in his mind. This in contrast to Stephen's supersaturation of signifiers lends promptly to the reader a textual flag

24. See also *U*, 1.218-222 for one of the many examples of Stephen's hypersensitive ego.

25. Joyce notes in the schema he gave to Carlo Linati that there are no organs corresponding to the chapters of the *Telemachia* because "Telemachos non soffre ancora il corpo (Telemachus does not yet bear a body)" (cited in Ellmann, *UL*, 186ff.). Stephen is all internal; words are his only substance.

which not only highlights the different ways in which the two characters approach their existence, but emphasizes also a method by which the reader may distinguish to some degree a node created with a cluster of Stephen-words from a node built on Bloom-words. Clearly the text sets out to portray two very distinct characters; indeed, in the lengthy catechism of which "Ithaka" is comprised, the narrator asks, "What two temperaments did [Stephen and Bloom] individually represent?" to which the text responds, "The scientific. The artistic" (*U*, 17.559-560). Arguments concerning which label goes with which character notwithstanding, it remains sure that Joyce recognizes and highlights the fact that Stephen and Bloom are built on very different foundations.

It is difficult to describe in a single word or phrase the sort of language which stems from Leopold Bloom. To make a generalization concerning Stephen's tendency with language—toward the literary—is considerably easier, although one must be careful to note that this is a tendency only, and like all generalizations fails in certain instances. But Bloom? Finding even a place from which to make a generalization about Bloom's sort of language can be daunting. Kenner tries many angles of attack. At one point, as he wrestles with the two voices which characterize the early Bloom chapters, Kenner claims a certain phrase cannot have its source in Bloom because it is too long: "[Thinks Bloom] 'I suppose he'd turn up his nose that that stuff I drank. Vintage wine for them, the year marked on a dusty bottle.'" (8.1154) The year marked on a dusty bottle," Kenner writes, "seems too many words for Bloom's swift thought" (*U: RE*, 69-70). But Kenner takes no issue with the Bloom sentence, twelve words long, that appears just prior to the phrase to which he directs attention. Furthermore, Kenner claims in *Joyce's Voices* that Bloom is the potential author of the "Eumaeus" episode, perhaps the most longwinded chapter of the novel (*JV*, 36-

38). If Bloom "writes" "Eumaeus," in which, as Kenner notes, "[o]nly Bloom uses polysyllables" and acts as if he "reserve[s] the most stylish lines for himself," it would seem to follow that Bloom has no difficulty with longer sentences; there is nothing inherently unbloomian in a longer phrase, as the "Circe" episode proves more than once (*JV*, 38). It appears Kenner misdiagnoses a quality of the bloomian language, sensing but unable to define it, much as Bloom "feels" but does not "verbalize" certain things.

The strange quality of the phrase of which Kenner expresses an awareness is not unbloomian length, but an incongruity of signifiers, the juxtaposition of the ordinary everyday words, over which Bloom's mind tends to crawl, with brief, masterful turns of phrase very unlike Bloom in their aptness. The words of which the text constructs Leopold Bloom are, as noted above, in large part a combination of words stemming from the narrative and words stemming from Mr Bloom's "consciousness." The resultant incongruity of language causes Kenner's uncharacteristic error. This phenomenon, this juxtaposition of Bloom's "flat and ordinary" language with the energetic, apt language of the narrative, forms the basis for much of the way in which the text builds the Bloom clusters, combining as it does the internal—Bloom's personal narrative—with the external-general—the narrative outside of Bloom—observing and reporting his actions and demeanor.

Certainly not all phrases which contribute to Bloom clusters have this characteristic juxtaposition; yet there does appear to be a systematic use of such incongruous arrangements of language. Such is the case in the famous passage that includes the phrase "what do you call them: dulcimers" (*U*, 4.98). I will not attempt to outdo Kenner's masterful study of the language in the passage. Rather, I wish to point out the recurrence of the phrase in "Sirens." "Through

the hush of air a voice sang to them," Joyce writes, "low, not rain, not leaves in murmur, like no voice of strings or reeds or whatdoyoucallthem dulcimers touching their still ears with words, still hearts of their each his remembered lives" (*U*, 11.674-677). Kenner explains the passage as "the Arranger rais[ing] his eyebrows . . . at an hours-ago fumble of Bloom's" (*U: RE*, 89), a not unlikely possibility. But the quality of the relation of words in the passage is an already established device in Bloom's character. Notice the fine language of the passage which Joyce juxtaposes with the bloomian "whatdoyoucallthem dulcimers." Bloom himself would never conceive of such a phrase as "leaves in murmur," and yet that phrase appears in close proximity to the quintessentially bloomian periphrasis, "whatdoyoucallthem." The strength of the node that coalesces out of this recurrence is enhanced by the similar quality of language which surrounds the catalyzing phrase "whatdoyoucallthem dulcimers." In "Calypso," the exotic imagery which leads Bloom to think "what do you call them" has a comparable constitution: unbloomian arrangement contrasted with bloomian "familiar nouns." So the generally consistent relation of word to word in the language that Joyce associates with Bloom leads not only to familiar signifiers, but also to familiar arrangement of text: the pattern of Bloom's language can solve even the most complicated styles.

### Strategies of Evasion

Like the sudden displacement of narrative locus in certain of the early Stephen chapters, in which the narrative seems to draw nearer and still nearer to Stephen's point of view until it dives into the flow of Stephen's thoughts, the

narrative locus in the early Bloom chapters tends to plunge into Bloom's mind at odd moments; then just as quickly leap beyond the compass of Bloom's consciousness. Such narrative shifts occur not infrequently as Bloom moves about Dublin in the early morning. Just as Bloom arrives at Dlugacz's butcher shop, the language of the text recalls that of the first paragraph in "Calypso," replete with the imagery of the meat of beasts: "The shiny links, packed with forcemeat, fed his gaze and he breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pigs' blood" (*U*, 4.142-144). This is the external narrative, a combination of phrases and combinations of words that Bloom would be unlikely to use himself,<sup>26</sup> but linked firmly with Bloom simply by virtue of the preoccupation with food and blood and the physical. The language, however, does not have the distinctive touch of Bloom in it; the phrasing is too precise, the metaphor of cooked blood breathing a lukewarm breath too felicitous a choice to arise from Bloom's relatively mundane vocabulary. But words of Bloom's consciousness irrupt suddenly into the beginning of the following paragraph: "A kidney oozed bloodgouts on the willowpatterned dish: the last" (*U*, 4.145). All language prior to the colon belong with the fine words of lukewarm breath from blood, but the swift focus of the narrative on that which is important in context—it is the *last* kidney—belongs to Bloom. For him the physical appearance of the kidney is not so meaningful as the simple fact, crucial to his breakfast, that only one kidney remains and the customer ahead of him might buy it before Bloom himself has the chance.

The above instance of the irruption of Bloom's consciousness from behind the screen of the narrative language serves to highlight a pair of things in relation to the sort of signifiers the text associates with him. First, most

26. Bloom relies heavily on periphrasis to get at the meaning of unarticulated terms which float through his perceptions. See *JV*, 30.

concretely, the text strengthens the link between Bloom and his penchant for the internal organs of beasts, a characteristic which is to mark Bloom at various moments throughout the course of the novel; this habit contributes to the clusters which are the result of Bloom's nodality. Second, in this scene Bloom demonstrates a reticence to allow his internal agitation to manifest externally. Though the narrative expresses clearly this agitation—

"He stood by the nextdoor girl at the counter. Would she buy [the kidney] too, calling the items from a slip in her hand?" (*U*, 4.146-147)—as does the subtle irruption of Bloom's consciousness, Bloom permits himself no overt outward signs of his impatience and desire for the kidney. Rather he plays at a sort of ease, taking "a page up from [a] pile of cut sheets" and reading as though at his leisure (*U*, 4.154). This manner of deferring his anxiety is one of the primary qualities Joyce gives to Bloom, and it shapes significantly the ways in which the Bloom clusters of language select words and phrases for inclusion in the nodal structure.

The text makes sure to render visible this deferral in connection with the chief of all words associated with Bloom. These chief words are those concerning the possibility that his wife, Marion Bloom, *nee* Tweedy, will cuckold him sometime during the day of 16 June 1904. In every chapter of which Bloom forms a considerable linguistic part the words with which the text describes this theme bubble to the surface, no matter Bloom's labors to keep it hidden under mental wraps, out of his immediate consciousness. Joyce arranges this theme, so troubling to Bloom, in such a manner as to make hints given early in Bloom's day sensible only in retrospect; by which I mean a clue in the text regarding the nature of Bloom's fear of cuckoldry may only have meaning during an additional reading, when the reader is already aware of the direction of the plot and may recognize therefore when the text implies that Bloom understands and

is disturbed by Molly's infidelity. Joyce, in short, tends to give the effect first and supply the cause afterwards.

The earliest example of this would be the moment when, having only just returned home from the butcher's, Bloom notices that the post has been delivered: "Two letters and a card lay on the hallfloor. He stooped and gathered them. Mrs Marion Bloom. His quickened heart slowed at once. Bold hand. Mrs Marion" (*U*, 4.243-245). Even the reader well versed in the plot and workings of Homer's *Odyssey* would have little reason to suspect that this boldly addressed envelope is the initial sign of Molly's adulterous intent; Penelope, after all, is supposed to have been faithful to Odysseus during all his long absence. But the reader discovers a couple pages later that Bloom knows quite well what the day will bring:

A strip of torn envelope peeped from under the dimpled pillow. In the act of going he stayed to straighten the bedspread.

—Who was the letter from? he asked.

Bold hand. Marion. (*U*, 4.308-311)

Bloom knows quite well who sent the letter; he knows even before Molly answers "—O, Boylan . . . He's bringing the programme" (*U*, 4.312). Yet the text is arranged in such a way as to prevent the reader from grasping this until later in the day when through Bloom's mind flash certain unspoken details of his conversation with Molly, details which reveal more precisely what takes place at 7 Eccles St on 16 June 1904.

It should seem clear from just these two citations that a unique cluster of signifiers, given in place of Mr Bloom's consciousness, already begins to form

scarcely six pages into Bloom's day: "Bold hand. Mrs Marion." But in no way do these short words bound the recurrent signifiers of Leopold Bloom which appear in association with his being cuckolded by Molly. In the same chapter, Bloom, now in the kitchen eating his breakfast as Molly in their bedroom eats hers, reads over a letter sent to him by his daughter. The letter refers to Boylan—"I was on the pop of writing Blazes Boylan . . ." (*U*, 4.408)—which sets off a series of thoughts in Bloom's mind, all having something to do with what the delivery of the letter from Boylan to Molly signifies: adultery. "Torn envelope," thinks Bloom, recalling Boylan's opened envelope, concealed under a pillow. "Mrs Marion. Reading, lying back now, counting the strands of her hair, smiling, braiding." Whereupon:

A soft qualm, regret, flowed down his backbone, increasing. Will happen, yes. Prevent. Useless: can't move. [ . . . ] Useless to move now.

(*U*, 4.439; 4.445-446; 4.447-450)

Bloom reacts in this way to Boylan's advent throughout the day. The news, or rather, the expectation of his cuckoldry and all signs suggesting it cause in him a temporary paralysis. When Boylan's letter arrives, the text relates that Bloom's "quickened heart" slows "at once." Here as he sits in the kitchen, regret flowing down his backbone, Bloom experiences a similar slowing down; all appears to him "useless" as he ponders what "will happen"; he "can't move."

Recurrent signifiers having to do with Molly's adultery form the core of the clusters which result in Bloom's nodality. The words that gesture toward Bloom's thought processes have a remarkable tendency to turn suddenly towards Boylan's advent and toward all that advent means for the Bloom household.



Any remotely suggestive phrase can lead Bloom toward that which he does not wish to consider but which comprises a large part of the literary construction of Leopold Bloom. Bloom, having retrieved a letter under the name Henry Flower from Westland Row post office (*U*, 5.52-64), runs into an acquaintance of his, M'Coy, with whom Bloom would just as soon not spend any time. The conversation winds from discussion of Dignam's funeral toward the respective singing careers of each of the two men's wives. M'Coy relates briefly that his wife has nearly settled an engagement for a singing performance, to which Mr Bloom responds with news of Molly's coming performance. M'Coy's reaction seems sincere: "—That so? M'Coy said. Glad to hear that, old man. Who's getting it up?" To no one but Bloom does this last question have any pejorative connotations; but for him the question is a blunt reminder of the sexual union to take place between his wife and Blazes Boylan later during the day of 16 June 1904. In Bloom's mind the reader watches words from "Calypso" coalesce on a page in "Lotus Eaters":

Mrs Marion Bloom. Not up yet. Queen was in her bedroom eating bread and. No book. Blackened court cards laid along her thigh by sevens. Dark lady and fair man. Letter. Cat furry black ball. Torn strip of envelope.<sup>27</sup>

(*U*, 5.154-156)

A chain of signifiers linking one chapter with the next begins to make its presence felt as Bloom frames his thoughts with two phrases drawn directly from the language of "Calypso," words which the reader, having seen Bloom replay the images before his mind's eye, should understand as contributing a core

portion of the words the text associates with Bloom.

27. See also *U*: *RE*, 48-49.

It must be noted that additional words are associated with Bloom other than those with their source in Bloom or in the unarticulated narrative force. The questions put to him by other characters have a way of recurring as well. Twice Mr Bloom is asked "Who's getting it up?" in reference to Molly's approaching singing tour with Boylan, to which question Bloom responds with remarkably similar words. To M'Coy he answers, following his silent aside, "—It's a kind of tour, don't you see . . . There's a committee formed. Part shares and part profits" (*U*, 5.162-163). While enjoying a light lunch during the "Lestrygonians" episode Bloom suffers the same question from the mouth of Nosey Flynn, to which Bloom responds "—Getting it up? . . . Well, it's like a company idea, you see. Part shares and part profits" (*U*, 8.773-785). The simple answer to the sexually charged question "Who's getting it up?" would be: not Leopold Bloom. For nearly eleven years he and his wife have not engaged in what would be termed normal sexual intercourse;<sup>28</sup> and today, 16 June 1904, Molly replaces him with another: "Isn't Blazes Boylan mixed up in it?" Nosey Flynn asks (*U*, 8.787-788). Yes: Boylan is mixed up in it: Bloom "shares" and Boylan "profits," taking advantage of Bloom's absence at home to cuckold him.<sup>29</sup>

Bloom is not so weak or feeblewilled as the above instances may perhaps make him out to be. He is, after all, the modern Ulysses, and consequently it follows that he is "the man of many ways," a character of remarkable resources. His "many ways" manifest themselves in myriad forms, as the Homeric epithet would suggest; but—for several reasons—these many ways appear primarily as

28. See *U*, 17.2282-2284. "[T]here remained a period of 10 years, 5 months, and 18 days during which carnal intercourse had been incomplete, without ejaculation of semen within the natural female organ."

29. Bloom does seem complicit in the act, appearing as he does to know in advance the implications of Boylan's visit to 7 Eccles St. See Paul Schwaber, *The Cast of Characters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 92.

skill with language, a subtlety with words which allows him to endure the trials of his Odyssey and return home unbowed to his Ithaka. Bloom may not have Stephen's background in literature; he may lack Stephen's erudition, Stephen's sense of self in language; yet nevertheless Bloom can weave the wind with an orator's tongue when the necessity arises. Such a moment of necessity arises when M'Coy confronts Bloom with the unpleasant question "Who's getting it up?" Bloom's reactions to Boylan's name and all things associated with it should make it clear to the reader that Bloom will do almost anything to avoid reminders of the coming sexual union between Molly and the man "getting it up"; so when M'Coy makes a rough though unintentional allusion to Boylan, Bloom manages, without M'Coy so much as noticing the dodge, to give an answer *a propos* of a different question entirely: "—It's a kind of tour, don't you see . . . There's a committee formed. Part shares and part profits." This in no way answers M'Coy's question but M'Coy seems unaware of it. "—O, well . . . That's good news," he says, after which he prepares to take his leave (*U*, 5.165). Bloom circumvents speaking the name of the man who causes his heart such unrest. Richard Ellmann notes that "Bloom tries to get rid of M'Coy, says he is going 'Nowhere in particular' for fear that, if a destination is stated, M'Coy will offer to accompany him" (*UL*, 42). Bloom, then, exhibits an extraordinary ability to anticipate the tactics of his interlocutors and prepare conversational appropriate defenses.

During the same exchange with M'Coy Bloom demonstrates this in another way aside from the one Ellmann notes above. "[A]nticipating," continues Ellmann, "a well-known manoeuvre of M'Coy to borrow a valise for his wife's putative concert tour, Bloom announces that his own wife is also

touring" (*UL*, 42).<sup>30</sup> This is a clear sign of Bloom's proficiency at reading people. As Ellmann notes with respect to the valise, "M'Coy doesn't ask, and Bloom doesn't refuse, the scene being static. Entreaty and denial alike are unspoken, still Bloom has dodged past this peril" (*UL*, 42). Implicit in Ellmann's explication of the text is Bloom's manipulation of silence. Silence, like the sound of the spoken word, can be a form of gesture; in its own right, silence is a linguistic device, one which Bloom wields masterfully throughout the text.

That which goes unspoken defines in large part the sort of signifiers the text associates with Leopold Bloom. Blazes Boylan, by virtue of all that Bloom associates with his name, is the most notable "unspoken" of Bloom's day,<sup>31</sup> yet Boylan always appears in the text in relation to Bloom. When Boylan is present in the text Bloom is always close by; even in the portion of "Wandering Rocks" devoted to Boylan—which portion gives the closest thing the text offers as a suggestion of Boylan's consciousness<sup>32</sup>—Bloom (unnamed at the time though the text later gives evidence that it is Bloom) appears in the background, a "darkbacked figure" standing at a bookseller's cart (*U*, 10.299-336). The auctorial arranging figure behind the text seems to delight in tormenting Bloom with constant reminders of Boylan, other than Bloom's own high awareness of the coming adultery. The curious thing to note in connection to the text's cruel play is that Bloom, when (albeit indirectly) confronted with Boylan, lapses into a panicked, almost inarticulate mental state. Like the example above in which he feels the "soft qualm, regret" flowing down his backbone, Bloom, facing the idea

30. See also *U*, 5.149. Bloom thinks, as M'Coy speaks of wife's tour, "Valise tack again."

31. Bloom never speaks Boylan's name.

32. "If I am Boylan, man of the world," writes Kenner, "I say things like 'That'll do game ball' and 'What's the damage?'" (*U: RE*, 50). Both of these quotes are taken directly from the Boylan section of "Wandering Rocks."

of Blazes Boylan, finds his mind paralyzed, barely coherent, scarcely able to add one word of thought to the next.

The result of these generally brief Boylan-inspired paralyses tends to manifest in noticeable periods of silence from Bloom; or, if not total silences, at least a great reduction in the amount of his mental action recorded by the text. These reductions are the more apparent because, as Hugh Kenner remarks, Bloom "travers[es] an inordinate number of words" (*JV*, 33); when the text removes the signifiers of Bloom's consciousness, the consequent textual language appears to be suffering from a sort of anemia. The first instance of this decline of bloomian thought comes at the moment when Bloom, feeling "age crusting him with a salt cloak," rushes home from the butcher's and finds the post on the floor (*U*, 4.232). Once Bloom discovers the envelope addressed in a bold hand to Mrs Marion, the text skips; that is to say, a silence enters the flow of the narrative and suddenly the reader sees Bloom "entering the [secondfloor] bedroom," though but two sentences earlier he stands holding the post in the hallway on the firstfloor (*U*, 4.247). The text does little to draw attention to the strange textual silence, moving on further into the plot as though nothing odd takes place in the narrative at this point. Bloom up until this point exhibits a fairly constant flow of thoughts, a mental wordiness which establishes the basis for much of the reader's understanding of his character; he is a veritable tap from which flows a flood of jumbled language. But following his discovery of the letter on the hall floor, Bloom's mind shuts down temporarily, and starts up again, in a much reduced state of activity, only when Molly's call—"—Poldy!" (*U*, 4.246)—to him breaks through the textual hush and gets him moving again. Even after Molly intrudes on the quiet, his internal narrative, in fact the narrative in general, stands in stark contrast to its earlier excess of signifiers.

Joyce frames the scene in which Bloom delivers Molly her mail with Molly exclaiming twice "Poldy!" (*U*, 4.246; 4.268). Between this pair of exclamations, the text presents the reader with remarkably laconic language; Bloom's rambling loose associations are nowhere to be found. Not until Molly directs him to prepare the tea does the narrative resume a state of comparative wordiness.

Later in the same episode, "Calypso," this sort of textual silence appears again, although in a less striking manner, in Milly's letter to her father. "(I was on the pop of writing Blazes Boylan's) song," she writes, innocent of what 16 June 1904 holds for the house at 7 Eccles St.<sup>33</sup> One might think that the text would give more attention to Milly's slip of names than it does. After all, a mere two pages earlier in the text finds Molly casually announcing the letter with the "bold hand" is from Boylan whilst she hides the contents of the envelope from Bloom under a pillow; which envelope, furthermore, Bloom identifies without trouble as a missive sent by Boylan, though the text does not have him thinking the name. So when Milly underlines for the reader's eye the name Blazes Boylan, it would seem to follow that the text would provide a concrete description of Bloom's reaction to that name. Instead he attempts maundering on about Milly's adolescence, employing the sort of mental evasion to which he resorts time and again during the course of 16 June 1904.

But such tactics cannot prevent his mind from harping on the coming events of the day, not after age places a mantle of salt on him, not after he finds Boylan's letter to Molly on the floor. His mental ramblings, which hint at his son Rudy's death and Milly's childhood, finally stumble to a halt when the image of Boylan's handwriting flash again through Bloom's thoughts: "Milly too. Young kisses: the first. Far away now past. Mrs Marion. Reading, lying back now,

33. Bloom thinks that Milly is "[b]etter where she is down there: away" from the slow collapse of the Bloom household (*U*, 4.451).

counting the strands of her hair, smiling, braiding" (*U*, 4.444-446). Immediately following this the reader sees Bloom in the apathy of depression, declaring to himself that he "can't move"; in fact Bloom can barely think, but manages, with the aid of the commonplace (a lifeline to which he particularly clings at harsh moments of the day), to shunt aside the anguish which cripples him and proceed with his day. Especially following the "gentle loosening of his bowels" Bloom begins to regain the ready words, the fluency, his mind demonstrates in portions of "Calypso" in which he is not beset by reminders of his domestic troubles (*U*, 4.460). As he sits "at stool" reading, Bloom conceives of a plan to write a short story in the manner of the one he has in hand:

He glanced back through what he had read and, while feeling his water flow quietly, he envied kindly Mr Beaufoy who had written it and received payment of three pounds, thirteen and six.

Might manage a sketch. By Mr and Mrs L. M. Bloom. Invent a story for some proverb. (*U*, 4.515-519)

The Leopold Bloom who feels, under the influence of Boylan's name, that all is "useless," that he "can't move," would not have the capacity to invent such a scheme. The speech of the body, taking form here in the loosening of his bowels, lifts from Bloom the silence of the mind which descends on him after he twice encounters Boylan's name.

The silences which enshroud those portions of text representing Bloom's consciousness are not limited to "Calypso" but contribute more noticeably to the construction of Bloom's character as the novel progresses. The carriage in which Bloom rides to Dignam's funeral crosses paths with the very figure Bloom least

wishes to encounter and the result is again the stunned textual silence which so marks the above examples. During the journey to the graveyard, words pour from Bloom like wine from an overturned barrel, observing the demeanour of his fellow mourners, marking the route of the journey, musing for the first time on Stephen Dedalus when Bloom sees him walking on the street. Somehow Joyce brings Bloom's mind to stumble to the phrase "[a]s broad as it's long," whereupon the whole of Bloom's consciousness—or at least all of it which the text permits the reader to view—seems to condense into a stunned self-reminder of Boylan's advent, set off in the text as an entire paragraph: "He's coming in the afternoon. Her songs" (*U*, 6.189-190).

He tries distracting himself by passively taking in the passing scenery, but the auctorial hand behind the text will not allow him so easy an escape from his anguish, for immediately following Bloom's self-inflicted and unintentional reminder of the coming events of the day, all occupants of the carriage, with the significant exception of Bloom himself, hail the passing Boylan, who is out "airing his quiff" (*U*, 6.196). The only reaction the reader receives from Bloom here takes shape in a banal, essentially redundant remark: "Just that moment I was thinking," a sentence which, in this extensive text, constitutes an entire paragraph (*U*, 6.197). Joyce highlights this seemingly superfluous sentence—the reader should glean from "He's coming in the afternoon" that Bloom thinks of Boylan almost at the moment the others in the carriage see Boylan—for a number of reasons, included in which, no doubt, is a reminder of the power of the author to coerce events in a text such that the maxim "Speak of the devil and he appears" becomes a literal truth. But setting this sentence off from the rest of the text as a self-contained paragraph acts as a flag to the reader, implying rather than telling the anxiety Boylan inspires in Bloom and further cementing the



textual association of Bloom with silence where Boylan is concerned.

"Coincidental" Recurrences: Bloom and Boylan

The greatest instance of panic and resultant stoppage of word-flow from Leopold Bloom when he encounters Blazes Boylan occurs in "Lestrygonians," just as the chapter comes to a close. All of 16 June 1904 Bloom, in wandering Dublin, runs the risk of bumping into the very man who will cuckold him; in the eighth episode, this very nearly happens. Bloom has determined to visit to the library in order to inspect the statues of goddesses but as he almost reaches his goal, the text thrusts this series of images in front of him: "Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers" (*U*, 8.1168).<sup>34</sup> Bloom's active mind shuts down all but the essential functions, reducing the verbose text in his head to a hysteric repetition of "It is. It is" (*U*, 8.1168).

The previously spongelike perceptions of Mr Bloom, absorbing images of his surroundings, are here squeezed dry by a prospective face-to-face confrontation with Boylan, and replaced with white space: Bloom's surroundings appear in the text as single words; and from them Bloom draws no fodder for free association as he might were Boylan not bearing down on him. Rather, Joyce funnels the text down to short sentences and sentence fragments—"His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right" (*U*, 8.1169-1170)—while Bloom manoeuvres himself away from Boylan toward the gate of the library. The prose no longer flows but stutters like labored breathing, at times cutting off a word before it completes itself.<sup>35</sup>

34. When the carriage passes Boylan in "Hades," instead of physical description of the future adulterer the text offers a "white disc of a straw hat" (*U*, 6.199).

35. See *U*, 8.1188: "I am looking for that. Yes, that. Try all pockets. Handker."

Finally the conventional logic of language breaks down as Bloom struggles to reassert control of himself by touching on the mundane tactile items secured about his person: "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 I yes" (*U*, 8.1191). As the danger of a brush with Boylan passes, words once again begin to flow from the idea of Mr Bloom's consciousness, albeit in a much less coherent manner; and the final exclamation of the chapter—"Safe!" (*U*, 8.1193)—signals to the reader the return of Bloom's relative mental stability; and allows, in a sense, the continuation of the narrative, for a Bloom directly confronted with Boylan loses entirely his veneer of calm mind, causing the language with which the text represents him to spin out of control and prevents the story from progressing further.

Clearly the text binds Boylan to Bloom's heel, as it were, adding Boylan to the mix of recurrent signifiers which constitute the node formed of words drawn from Bloom's character; and, as a corollary, Boylan's intermittent appearances cause the distinctive silences in Bloom. So insistent is Joyce in linking Bloom with Boylan that during the "Sirens" episode Bloom "coincidentally," he thinks, sees Boylan for the third time on 16 June 1904, very near to the hour at which Molly and Boylan have arranged for their tryst to take place (*U*, 11.301-303). The chapter relies almost entirely on Bloom's decision to follow Boylan into bar (where, Bloom hopes, he will "see" his adversary and "not be seen" in the process, much as Odysseus wishes to hear the song of the Sirens and avoid the consequences associated with it (*U*, 11.357-348)), a dependence which further demonstrates a textual bond between the two men.

Or again, in Joyce's *Walpurgisnacht* chapter, "Circe," when the projections of Bloom's mind appear to take physical form—and do, as far as the text is

concerned—the projected narrative of Bloom's mental processes move inevitably toward Boylan, resulting in the "incarnation" of the man himself. Bloom, in the trappings of a "flunkey," shows the projection of Boylan into his wife's room, making himself complicit in the imagined adultery which follows (*U*, 15.3756-3816). Joyce binds Boylan to Bloom for a pair of reasons. First of all, reminders of Boylan allow Bloom ample opportunity to exercise his impressive evasion tactics, whether mental or physical, even as Boylan's appearances stand out to the reader as reminders of the adultery and the sorry state of marital affairs at 7 Eccles. But where structure is concerned, Joyce, in fastening Boylan to Bloom so ineluctably, subsumes Boylan to the character of Bloom, rendering the majority of portions of text in which Boylan appears dependent entirely upon the textual space of Bloom.

The implications of this manoeuver are crucial to the nodal structure. In effect, Boylan becomes a cluster of words, or stands as a symbol in place of those words, which Joyce associates with the primary character Leopold Bloom. The recurrences of Boylan, in the the text of Bloom's thoughts or in—according to the fiction of the text—"physical" form on the streets in Dublin, throughout the text become instances of nodality due to Joyce's insistent connection of Boylan to Bloom. Like the link Joyce institutes between Bloom and physicality with the first paragraph of the first chapter in which we find explicit reference to the modern day Ulysses, the manifestation of Bloom's nodality in the form of textual reference to Boylan provides a glimpse of the basic mechanics of the novel, i.e., the creation of meaning through the systematic reiteration of certain words and phrases pertaining to ideas that Joyce marks out as significant in context.

"Jingle. Bloo." The Mechanics of "Sirens"

No chapter exemplifies this as well as "Sirens." The "Sirens" episode depends in large part on the recurrence of phrases, perhaps modified slightly, to accommodate Joyce's "technic" of the chapter (i.e., *fuga per canonem*). The chapter itself begins with a listing of significant words—an overture of sorts—which will appear during the course of the chapter. The fact that the chapter relies on recurrence of words to create its unique stylistic effects is still more substantial when one realizes that the repeated words which Joyce tends to emphasize in this chapter are those which he has earlier linked with Bloom's character. Joyce makes this clear in the overture of the chapter, though not all the words and word fragments contained in the overture make sense except in retrospect and in relation to the thread of Bloom's thoughts in the chapter. Joyce plays with the first part of Bloom's name, "Bloo," and establishes it as a sign of Bloom in "Sirens" by rendering English phonetic equivalents of the name—"Blew. Blue bloom is on the" (*U*, 11.6)—and thereupon repeating variations of Bloom's name at intervals throughout the overture. "Blew. Blue bloom is on the" is followed by "Jingle. Bloo" (*U*, 11.19), which has significance not only for this particular chapter but stands as an instance of nodality, in that it links Bloom again with Boylan,<sup>36</sup> who contributes, as we have determined, to cases of Bloom's nodality in his recurrent appearances in the text. Furthermore the fragment "Bloo" is not unique to "Sirens," appearing at the opening of "Lestrygonians"—"Bloo .... Me? No" (*U*, 8.8)—and thus providing another link in the text.

"Jingle. Bloo" is followed by "P.S. So lonely blooming," which in turn is

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<sup>36</sup> Joyce in this chapter links Boylan to words such as "jingle" and "jaunty," proper words for a rakish adulterer. See *U*, 11.290: "jinglejaunty blazes boy."

followed by "By bronze, by gold, in oceangreen of shadow. Bloom. Old Bloom," bringing the total number of references to variations of Bloom's name to four, a number which, given that the overture of "Sirens" is some sixty-three lines of text, does not seem to have significance as an example of Joyce's use of the nodal technique (*U*, 11.32; 11.49). But implicit references to Bloom and the signifiers which Joyce associates with him, *and with Stephen*, abound in the overture, including Lenehan's pun on the Rose of Castile—"O rose! Castile" (*U*, 11.14)—which Stephen hears but Bloom does not; a reference to the name Martha—"Martha! Come!" (*U*, 11.27)—a name shared by the woman with whom Bloom carries on a sort of pathetic flirtatious correspondence, Martha Clifford; and a sort of amused reiteration of Bloom's tendency to confuse words—"Naminedamine" (*U*, 11.43)—which recalls Bloom's reaction to the latin spoken at Dignam's burial: "Father Coffey. I knew his name was like a coffin. Dominenamine" (*U*, 6.595).

The overture relates to the chapter in many ways, not the least of which is the suggestion of Joyce's use of recurrent words as a method of providing the foundation on which he raises the edifices of his playful styles; but additionally it underlines Bloom's own nodality, both in the microcosm of "Sirens," which relies on words related in some way to Bloom to develop into the *fuga per canonem*, and in the macrocosmic world of Dublin such as Joyce presents it in *Ulysses*. The clear manner in which Joyce employs the Bloom motif, as it were, in the overture of "Sirens" reflects the way in which Joyce develops the nodal structure of his novel; as James Maddox has it, "'Sirens is one of those chapters which, in its form, stands as an epitome of *Ulysses* as a whole" (*UAC*, 67).

While Maddox does not direct his statement toward the notion of a nodal structure, he does recognize something in "Sirens" which is typical of the text as

a whole; and if "Sirens" stands as the exemplar of *Ulysses*, it follows that the nodal technique is more pronounced, for the most part, in this chapter than in others. Maddox claims that each character brings "with him his theme" in "Sirens," a description of Joyce's method which cannot help recalling the construction of nodes in its suggestions of repeated phrases, musical or textual. Moreover, Maddox notes, almost as an aside, that "[t]his presentation of characters as musical themes is not confined to 'Sirens,'" before going on to assert that "[w]ithin Bloom's mind, as well as within the book's pattern, Boylan—or Lenehan or Simon Dedalus—is a theme played in counterpoint to the thousand other associative clusters within *Ulysses*" (UAC, 67). The language Maddox uses here demonstrates clearly that he senses a method of structuring at work in the text which is highly reliant upon association and significant clustering of associations; he seems to gesture toward nodes in the above sentence. Of equal importance is Maddox's linkage of Bloom's mind with the "book's pattern." In effect Maddox argues that Bloom's mind works associatively in much the same way the novel as a whole does, implying, however purposefully or accidentally, the degree to which Joyce grounds his text in the construction of Leopold Bloom. In the case of "Sirens," Joyce employs a procedure of composition similar to those he uses in writing the earlier episodes—Maddox notes the "dialogue" of scenes between "the gregarious community of Dublin males and Bloom the outsider," "which takes many forms elsewhere in the book" (UAC, 68)—but in a much more compressed form. Joyce packs the chapter with recurring signifiers, in part to attain the musical effects of the fugue but also to create the structure on which the style must be built; and as he does in the earlier chapters, Joyce returns to the primary characters for basic structure.

The ways Joyce employs the Bloom motif in the body of "Sirens" are

particularly telling of Joyce's method of structuring the whole text. Like the overture suggests, Bloom's name becomes a sort of theme in the chapter, appearing, much as the technic of the episode would imply, in variations and at crucial points in the text of the chapter. Joyce exploits Bloom's name in creating "Sirens." Although Kenner, in his discussion of "Sirens" in his book *Ulysses*, claims that "the inexperienced reader" of the chapter "is unlikely ever to be quite sure" what exactly takes place in the episode due to the "onomatopoeic junk" which fills the chapter's text, in actuality the text is not as bad as all that, thanks to the excess of Joyce's use of nodes (*U: RE*, 90; 88). Kenner privileges sound over meaning in this chapter. Though he observes quite correctly that "the balance between sound and sense is kept uneasy" in "Sirens," he tends to treat sound as having the upper hand, naming the recurrences of signifiers "worn fragments of acoustic junk" of the spoken word that Joyce includes in the chapter to achieve the effects of music with written language (*U: RE*, 86; 87). No one can raise a reasonable argument against the goal of Joyce's use of sound in the chapter, i.e., the *fuga per canonem*; but Kenner preoccupies himself perhaps too much with explication of the events of the chapter, which are disguised, as he perceives it, with layers of sound, placed playfully in the episode by the organizing spirit "the arranger."

Implicit in Kenner's discussion of "Sirens" but never brought fully to light is the way in which the recurrence of "sounds" in the chapter relate to the structure of the text as a whole. He notes, for example, this passage:

By rose, by satiny, bosom, by the fondling hand, by slops, by empties,  
by popped corks greeting in going, past eyes and maidenhair, bronze  
and faint gold in deepseashadow, went Bloom, soft Bloom, I feel so

lonely Bloom.

(*U*, 11.1134-1137)

After citing the passage he observes the insistent reiteration of Bloom's name and concentrates almost entirely on the acoustic effect, regarding the Blooms of the passage "three left-hand chords barrumed by a barroom pianist" (*U*: *RE*, 87). His goal is to demonstrate the tendency of the chapter, that is, repeated reversion "to the barroom order of virtuosity" which Joyce includes in the text of "Sirens" (*U*: *RE*, 87). This goal Kenner achieves with his typical interpretive skill. Yet he appears to ignore the implications of the reiterations of Bloom's name for the structure. It does not seem likely, in a text as systematic in its use of language as *Ulysses*, that instances of the primary character's name should not have multiple levels of meaning. In the passage Kenner cites, there is certainly a level at which Joyce uses Bloom's name merely for acoustic effect; but further use of Bloom's name in the chapter demonstrates that the name has value as a thing other than "barrumed" piano chords.

The structural significance of Bloom's name in "Sirens" stands out from the page almost immediately after the chapter departs from the overture and enters the meat of the episode's text. His name appears in counterpoint to the gossiping barmaids while establishing, at the same time, the underpinning theme of the chapter. Joyce makes clear the importance of Bloom's name by placing six variations of it in the space of two pages of text:

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

A man.

Bloowho went by by Moulang's pipes bearing in his breast the sweets  
of sin . . .

[...]



A haughty bronze replied:

—I'll complain to Mrs de Massey on you if I hear any more of your impertinent insolence.

—Imperthnthn thnthnthn, bootssnout sniffed rudely . . . .

Bloom.

[...]

—No, don't, she cried.

—I won't listen, she cried.

But Bloom?

[...]

Miss Douce chimed in in deep bronze laughter, shouting:

—And your other eye!

Bloowhose dark eye read Aaron Figatner's name. . . . By Bassi's blessed virgins Bloom's dark eyes went by. Blue robed, white under, come to me. (U, 11.84-87; 11.97-102; 11.131-133; 11.147-152)

No doubt the assonance of Bloom's name is important here. But beyond that the recurrent instances of his name provide the reader relatively secure points which bind the text of the chapter together. Note how at two appearances of Bloom's name muted flickers of Bloom's thought processes also flash in the textual darkness. Such a method allows Joyce to add language to the collection of signifiers which contributes to the node Leopold Bloom; and at a more basic level offers the reader the reassuring appearance of familiar language. "[T]he sweets of sin . . . for Raoul," recalls instantly the book Bloom peruses in "Wandering Rocks," and the echoes of that scene in "Sirens" emerge as something which has the look of Bloom's own thought (U, 10.585-641). Bloom's

thought surfaces still more apparently in the quintessentially bloomian "Blue robed, white under, come to me," which has Bloom's distinctive associative technique underlying it (from Bassi's blessed virgins to Mariolatry and Mary's traditional image as a woman dressed in blue). As earlier the language which Joyce uses while writing of Bloom has a duet quality, the narrative voice twining with Bloom's fragmentary thought: "Bloowho went by by Moulang's pipes bearing in his breast the sweets of sin, by Wine's antiques, in memory of bearing sweet sinful words, by Carroll's dusky battered plate, for Raoul" (*U*, 11.86-87). In Bloom's mind still ring the words of softly pornographic book he gets Molly,<sup>37</sup> and the coda of this sentence, "for Raoul," appears in the capacity of Bloom's internal monologue.

At this point in the text the relation of word to word becomes more and more complex, and style threatens to bar the reader from the story, but Joyce places among the highly intricate weavings of the *fuga per canonem* signs of Leopold Bloom and thereby discovers a method for reading the chapter, i.e., in relation to Bloom. Though Joyce draws language from other places in the text and scatters them here in "Sirens," allowing words of text which Bloom does not experience to enter, seemingly, into his thoughts, the reader may navigate past the textual pitfalls by a combination of Bloom's name and the piercing of style which is characteristic of a node's appearance.

The Bloom's and blooms and Bloo-s appear with measured calculation in "Sirens," signs of the main character's importance thematically and structurally, (terms that, in this episode and frequently in the rest of *Ulysses*, come so close in meaning at times as to become almost synonyms). For the *fuga per canonem*,

37. And continue to ring in his head even after "Sirens." Cf. *U*, 15.654-655, where wreaths of smoke breathe these words to Bloom: "Sweet are the sweets. Sweets of sin."

Bloom's resonant name offers a wonderful musicality and basic musical theme on which to construct the remarkable text-as-music "Sirens." Structurally, however, Joyce places Bloom's name at intervals throughout the chapter to ground the reader in Bloom, to prevent the text from wandering beyond the man who makes up so much of it: "Married to Bloom, to greaseabloom." "Mr Bloom reached Essex bridge. Yes, Mr Bloom crossed bridge of Yessex." "Bloom. Old Bloom. Blue bloom is on the rye" (*U*, 11.180; 11.228-229; 11.230-231). Such sentences are playful and give rise to notions of an authorial figure capable of arranging and disrupting and alluding to anything it wishes.<sup>38</sup> But the reminders of the character in these and other sentences in the chapter—"wise Bloom in Daly's Henry Flower bought"; "Wise Bloom eyed on the door a poster"; "Winsomely she on Bloohimwhom smiled. Bloo smi qui go"; "warily walking, went Bloom, unconquered hero" (*U*, 11.297; 11.299; 11.309-310; 11.341-342)—bring the reader inevitably back to Bloom, suggesting the extent to which the text relies on Bloom for stability. (Joyce again turns to the truncated form "Bloo" to introduce Bloom into the wild textual landscape of "Circe." See *U*, 15.182ff.)

The chapter is characterized by departures from and returns to Bloom, like the sort Maddox notes. The text swings out to compass the conversations taking place at or near the bar before Joyce bends it back toward the dining room in which Bloom sits with Richie Goulding, a cyclical process which cannot help but demonstrate the textual significance of Bloom and his name in "Sirens" (*UAC*, 67). Certainly Joyce uses Bloom's name in part because it *is* his name and hence the primary way by which the reader identifies him; but the organization of "Sirens" proves Joyce's fascination with repetition—evident elsewhere in the text but nowhere else with such immediacy—with an especial emphasis on

38. Hayman names this spirit, as I point out in the introduction, "the arranger." See *MM*, 84.

Bloom's name.

Joyce does not limit manifestations of Bloom's nodality in "Sirens" to playful use of Bloom's surname, although it seems the most obvious. As I state above, Boylan's appearance in the chapter continues to shape the node which arises out of Bloom's textual relation to Boylan. Other instances include Bloom's covert correspondences to Martha Clifford; Bloom's taste for internal organs—"As said before he ate with relish the inner organs, nutty gizzards, fried cods's roes" and "Bloom ate liv as said before"—(*U*, 11.519-520; 11.569)—and all that Joyce links to it; thoughts of Molly (here almost inseparable from those of Boylan, as Boylan departs from the Ormond Bar for 7 Eccles St); and more besides.

But the most curious appearance of Joyce's method of textual arrangement are the famously out of place lines Stephen thinks in "Scylla and Charybdis." Bloom, listening to the music, happens upon a line of Shakespeare in his memory—"Music hath charms, Shakespeare said. . . . Wisdom while you wait"—to which the text responds: "In Gerard's rosary of Fetter lane he walks, greyedauburn. One life is all. One body. Do. But do" (*U*, 11.904-908). This is almost a precise reconstruction of Stephen's thoughts on Shakespeare in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode,<sup>39</sup> to which, though he has no possible human way of having heard them earlier, Bloom seems to respond, "Done anyhow" (*U*, 11.909).

The recurrence of Stephen's thoughts in a textual space in which he does not appear "in the flesh," as it were, suggests a pair of things, equally important for the workings of the text. First, the recurrence serves as a reminder of Stephen and his importance to the text and the story Joyce tells: it is an occurrence of a

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39. See *U*, 9.651-653.

node created from the language Joyce links with Stephen, a Stephen node, a reminder that the text of which Joyce comprises Stephen provides the same sort of stability the reader is likely to find in Bloom. Second, Bloom is the only one who seems to have any awareness of the intonation of Stephen's words. This may not seem surprising, given that Bloom's musings on Shakespeare prompt the incarnation of the latent reference to Stephen; but the fact that Stephen's words are for Bloom alone implies the bond between Stephen and Bloom, a bond which leads eventually to the ultimate "fusion," as Joyce himself names it,<sup>40</sup> of Bloom and Stephen. In short, the appearance of Stephen's words at a seemingly inappropriate place in the text suggests, among other things, the final cohesion of the discrete Stephen and Bloom nodes into an almost individual collection of textual associations.

The odd irruption of Stephen's words into a chapter in which Stephen would seem to have no part forces us, the readers, to reevaluate our understanding of the mechanics of the text. Joyce allows a fragment of text originally located in the textual body of Stephen, initially unrelated directly to Bloom,<sup>41</sup> to recur in close association with Bloom precisely at a moment of text in which Bloom's language rises out of the sea of the "Sirens" style. The combination of Bloom and Stephen offers a short space of rest for the reader, a moment of lucidity not distorted by the rippling effects of language Joyce uses to achieve the *fuga per canonem*. The moment is the epitome of a node coalescing, albeit in something of an unusual manner: words, through their associative qualities, call up from memory—in this case the memory of the author; it almost

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40. See the schema Joyce gave Carlo Linati. Here cited in Ellmann, *UL*, 186ff.

41. Although Stephen's Shakespeare has much in common with Bloom in certain ways. Maddox: "Bloom . . . resembles the Shakespeare Stephen describes far more than Stephen himself does" (*UAC*, 109).

seems less complicated to call it the text's memory—still other words. The resultant union of language becomes a node in the text.

"Sirens," then, represents in myriad forms the ways in which Joyce applies the system of nodes to the larger scope of the novel as a whole. Combining the variations on Bloom's name with the familiar signifiers he associates with Bloom, Joyce creates a network of stable points in an episode characterized by a highly intricate style which tends to work against the reader's attempts to apprehend the action. By inserting language associated with Bloom at intervals throughout the chapter, Joyce endows the reader with a course along which one may navigate through "Sirens"; it remains to the reader to perceive and follow that course. As long as we remain aware of the pattern on which Joyce structures the chapter, we have the ability to wander freely in the text and yet still pass all pitfalls of style, much as Bloom feels and allows himself to be "consumed" in the music at Ormond Bar but manages to avoid succumbing entirely to Sirens' song (*U*, 11.753).<sup>42</sup>

### "Ikey Touch That"

Wandering defines in large part the nature of *Ulysses* as a text, the novel suggesting wide travels on the part of its characters as they appear now at a funeral, now at newspaper office, now at a bar, now moving at an easy pace through the streets of Dublin. The fabric of the text, too, hints at and even encourages wandering, frequently moving tangentially into a variety of styles. Joyce works this notion of wandering into the very structure of his book, often,

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42. See also *UAC*, 72. Maddox writes: "Bloom . . . goes *Ulysses* one better. . . . Bloom actually breaks the securing ropes and indulges more thoroughly in temptation than Ulysses did. . . ."

having moved the text into the textual realm of a character's "mind," presenting the image of wandering thoughts which seem inevitably to return to certain significant words and phrases. Such a mind Joyce bestows upon Bloom, whose thoughts, as I demonstrate above, return again and again to words pertaining to Molly's approaching adultery with Boylan; to avoid lingering painfully on the adultery Bloom distracts himself with food and the nature of physical matter. The seeming free association, which is a crucial part of the *monologue interior* in the wandering mind, is in fact the consequence of a careful method of structure: the nodal structure.

Yet wandering as a concept is still more important for the construction of Leopold Bloom as a character—i.e., how he conceives of himself—not only because he turns to a sort of aimless wandering to take his mind from the adultery which is to take place between his wife and Hugh Boylan, but also because of the connotations inherent in the image of the wandering outsider. To come to the point, Bloom appears in many ways to represent the Wandering Jew. He is the perpetual outsider; as Ulysses he wanders searching for home; he draws upon Jewish cultural tradition to shape his identity. Not surprisingly, the words Joyce appropriates from that tradition to build Bloom tend to end up in nodes comprised of Bloomian language. What does come as a surprise—at least to someone relatively ignorant where Jewish culture is concerned—is the discovery that Bloom himself is not Jewish despite the many points in the text at which other characters identify Bloom as a Jew.

I will refrain from discussing at length reasons why Bloom is not Jewish but instead will note just a few of them. He does not keep kosher but enjoys a variety of *tref* meats (*U*, 4.1-5; 4.389-396). The name of Bloom's mother is Ellen Higgins, a name more typical of an Irish woman than a Jewish woman; and

according to Jewish tradition Jewishness is passed down through the mother.<sup>43</sup> Writes Kenner, "[W]hether Jewry would have acknowledged [Bloom] is doubtful: Jewish affiliation is traced through the mother, and Leopold's mother Ellen Higgins Bloom had herself an Irish mother, Fanny Hegarty (17.537)"; he also remarks that Bloom "was never circumcised, was baptized a Protestant in consequence of his father's apostasy, and moved still further from the tents of Judah when he underwent Catholic baptism in October 1888 prior to his marriage to Marion Tweedy (17.542)" (*U: RE*, 43). After close reading of the text, it seems fairly obvious that Bloom is not in any traditional sense a Jew. Moreover, Bloom does not give the impression that he has a firm grasp of Judaism. As Maddox notes, "Bloom's actual knowledge of Judaism is slight—only a little greater than his comically scant knowledge of Catholicism" (*UAC*, 118).

The ambivalent nature of Bloom's Jewishness is intriguing; but where the nodal structure is concerned, it is not a matter of particular importance whether Bloom is or is not a Jew. Most important of all is that Joyce links Bloom to Judaism: when a character in the book speaks of Bloom they tend to identify him as a Jew; the narrator of the catechistic "Ithaka" names Bloom a Jew;<sup>44</sup> and Bloom at one point names himself a Jew before a crowd of people.<sup>45</sup> Clearly everyone in the text associates Bloom with Judaism. As a consequence of filling

43. In a drawer Bloom unlocks late in "Ithaka" (chapter seventeen) the narrator lists "a cameo brooch, property of Ellen Bloom (born Higgins)" among the items Bloom stores there (*U*, 17.1794-1795). During "Circe" Bloom hallucinates a brief image of his mother; the picture of her which Joyce presents the reader strongly implies that she is Catholic: she calls out "O blessed Redeemer" and "Sacred Heart of Mary," and carries an *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God"; see *UA*, 457) medal in "the pouch of her blay striped petticoat" (*U*, 15.282-290).

44. *U*, 17.809-810. "How did the son of Rudolph receive the first part? With unmixed feeling. Smiling, a Jew, he heard with pleasure and saw the unbroken kitchen window."

45. *U*, 12.1808-1809: "Christ was a Jew like me."



his text with these associations, Joyce adds words which relate to Bloom's Jewish identity to the mix of signifiers which contribute to the construction of nodes.

So powerful is the link between Bloom and Judaism that it leads Kenner to write as he begins a chapter on Bloom that "[h]is advent has been heralded by Mr Deasy" (*U: RE*, 43); Deasy speaks of Jews as the parasites destroying England. In other words, Kenner allows that Joyce establishes Bloom's Jewish identity before Bloom himself appears—in the conventional manner—in the text, and establishes it, furthermore, in such a way as to cause Kenner himself to speak of Bloom as a Jew despite all the evidence he can locate proving Bloom is not Jewish. This is not to suggest that Kenner mires himself in contradiction: the contradiction is inherent in the text. What Kenner's writing does imply, however, is the strength of the bond between Bloom and fairly all things Jewish in *Ulysses*, no matter Bloom's feeble understanding of the culture.

If we may assume, as Kenner does, that Joyce hides hints of Bloom in references to Jewry before "Calypso," the initial suggestion of Bloom would not be in Deasy's words but in those Haines speaks to Stephen as they walk from Martello Tower into the morning of 16 June 1904: "—Of course I'm a Britisher, Haines's voice said, and I feel as one. I don't want to see my country fall into the hands of German jews either. That's our national problem, I'm afraid, just now" (*U*, 1.686-688). Bloom, we find out as we move over the pages of text, is the son of a Hungarian Jew. Hints such as this and the conversation between Stephen and Mr Deasy prepare the text for Bloom as a figure aligned with Judaism; Stephen's oblique defense of Jews—"—A merchant . . . is one who buys cheap and sells dear, jew or gentile, is he not?" (*U*, 2.359-360)—may even be indicative of the brief connection Bloom and Stephen will ultimately enjoy. But the important thing to remember when discussing signs of Bloom before he becomes a focus of

the text is that those signs become evident only after Joyce makes clear Bloom's association with Judaism. In short, we can call the references to Jews and Judaism in the *Telemachia* insinuations of Bloom only by assuming that, in the context of the novel, Bloom is perceived as Jewish. Joyce does place other Jewish characters in *Ulysses*, most notably Reuben J Dodd (although the person upon whom Joyce bases Dodd's character was not a Jew).<sup>46</sup> For us to perceive the remarks on Jews as references to Bloom, there must be a powerful association between Bloom and Judaism in the text. Indeed there is; and, the connection between the two being so strong, it is not surprising to find that Bloom's Jewish identity comprises a major nodal chain in the text.

The first real sign of Bloom's identity with Judaism comes as he walks toward the pork butcher's in "Calypso." His mind having turned toward the exotic in the passage containing the "what do you call them dulcimers" phrase, Bloom remembers a book called *In the Track of the Sun*,<sup>47</sup> and the image of the sun reminds him of "the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader:"

What Arthur Griffith said about the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader: a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneway behind the bank of Ireland. He prolonged his pleased smile. Ikey touch that: homerule sun rising up in the northwest.

(U, 4.100-104)

While it is always interesting to track the progression of Bloom's thought—the paths are frequently fascinating—the crucial element of this passage stands out

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46. See *UA*, 110.

47. A book which the narrator lists in Bloom's library in "Ithaca" (U, 17.1395-1396).

clearly from the page: "Ikey touch that." "Ikey" is a slang term for "Jew or Jewish," as Gifford points out, but it does not necessarily have the connotations he lists—"smart, alert, artful, clever" (*UA*, 72)—in his description of the word. Buck Mulligan, to cite a contradictory example, uses it in a condescending and derogatory manner when he catches sight of Bloom in "Scylla and Charybdis." We will get to Mulligan's use of the term shortly; but first let us finish our discussion of its initial appearance in the text. "Ikey" can be used in a positive manner but the term itself is designed to generalize about Jewry, to affirm an image of the Jew as avaricious, spitefully cunning, arrogant.<sup>48</sup> Curiously, Bloom feels nothing negative in the word and indeed appears to use it to congratulate himself for remembering the Griffith's allegory; he pays himself a compliment with the word. Here we have a clear instance of Joyce associating Bloom with Judaism, expressing it not through a detached, ostensibly objective narrative voice, but in Bloom's own words. Bloom plainly understands "Ikey" as an expression, relating to Jews, of praise; and he suggests thereby that he perceives Judaism as an intellectual culture.

So Bloom establishes the link between himself and Judaism with a positive use of a potentially negative word. Joyce, never one to let a thread of meaning go unnoticed or unsuggested, causes the word to reappear in reference to Bloom, effectively rendering the word a sign of him. The meaning of the term becomes secondary to its importance as that sign. This is evident in Mulligan's use of the word:

—The sheeny! Buck Mulligan cried.

48. The OED lists these common meanings for "Ikey": "a Jew or someone taken to be or resembling a Jew; also, a (Jewish) receiver, moneylender, etc.; transf., a loafer, a tip, information; (Austral.) a bookmaker."

He jumped up and snatched the card.

—What's his name? Ikey Moses? Bloom.

He rattled on:

—Jehovah, collector of prepuces, is no more. I found him over in the museum . . .

Suddenly he turned to Stephen:

—He knows you. He knows your old fellow. O, I fear me, he is Greeker than the Greeks.

(U, 9.605-615)

To Mulligan, Bloom is a "sheeny"—meaning "[a] Jew. Now only as a term of vulgar abuse," according to the OED—a stage Jew, stereotypical, much in the way Mulligan himself is stage Irish and plays to stereotype. But the negative meaning of "Ikey" which Mulligan seems to attach is eclipsed, to some degree, by Bloom's positive use of it. Joyce destabilizes our understanding of the term by presenting contradicting interpretations of it; and in its destabilized state the word becomes less a thing of denotation as of suggestion or gesture: ultimately we can say only that the word is associated with Bloom, positively or negatively. When it appears in the text for a third time, in "Circe," the meaning is again ambiguous to a certain extent; "Ikey" proves more a touchstone of Bloom, a reminder, an anchor in a wild and rapidly shifting chapter, than a term whose meaning affects the scene in which it occurs. Several women are testifying against Bloom for lewd and antisocial behaviour:

MRS YELVERTON BARRY

Shame on him!

*(A crowd of sluts and ragamuffins surges forward.)*

## THE SLUTS AND RAGAMUFFINS

(*Screaming*) Stop thief! Hurrah there, Bluebeard! Three cheers for Ikey  
Mo! (U, 15.1036-1041)

Immediately after their irruption into the scene, the Sluts and the Ragamuffins retreat from the text; and the scene continues as though they had never appeared.

There are no doubt numerous explanations for their sudden burst of screaming, not the least of which is surely the amusing absurdity of their appearance and what they yell out as they "surge forward." At a more basic level, though, the striking component of the scene is the reference to "Ikey," which at once stands for Bloom's understanding of Judaism and suggests his own relation that culture. Wherever the word appears it immediately brings to mind Bloom; effectively, it stands alone as a node, and the initial occurrence of "Ikey" acts as a catalyst which allows the formation of Bloom's Jewish identity and hence the nodes which Joyce bases in that identity. Following that first instance—"Ikey touch that"—Bloom's relationship to Judaism becomes at once more complex and clearer as Joyce inserts more allusions to Jewry in connection to Bloom.

Many early such allusions return *en masse* in "Circe." Joyce fills "Circe" with mutant variations of earlier portions of the text, images and figures rising up into a scene for the space of just a few words before they sink away under a wave of other images and figures. Comic and complex, "Circe" contains epic material and a technic—"Vision animated to bursting-point," according to the plan Joyce gave Carlo Linati<sup>49</sup>—which highly defamiliarizes the textual landscape. Kenner suggests that "we . . . learn to trust nothing" in "Circe," so frequently does Joyce undermine expectation and convention; as Kenner notes, 49. Cited in Ellmann's *Ulysses on the Liffey*, 186ff.

we cannot assign "elements [of "Circe"] impartially to"either the world of the "naturalistic" or the realm of hallucination (*JJU: CE*, 349). In such a textual space it would seem almost impossible for a reader to retain a functional grasp of the story—"the narrative line," Kenner writes, "[is] less easy to recover than first thoughts might suppose" (*JJU: CE*, 351). Without recognizing Joyce's tendency to rely on repetition to establish foundations in his text, the chapter may come across as a portion of *Ulysses* full of humorous play but which is ultimately impenetrable; not as the fragmentation of language at the end of "Oxen of the Sun" defies interpretation, but as a chapter which removes the conventions of logical plot progression to such a point that the reader must learn a new technique of reading to traverse the expanse of "Circe."

That new technique is the perception of recurrences, the nodes, which in "Circe" appear with above average frequency. Here references to Bloom's Jewish identity appear with remarkable regularity. Not long after Joyce brings Bloom into the chapter, Bloom's father Rudolph enters the text as the stereotypical image of the Jew, "garbed in the long caftan of an elder of Zion" (*U*, 15.248-249). Rudolph speaks in a syntax supposed to be vaguely Jewish—"I told you not go with drunken goy ever. So you catch no money" (*U*, 15.253-254)—and repeats words from a play, slightly modified so that they are directed at Bloom, which Bloom recalls in "Lotus-Eaters" while thinking of his father.<sup>50</sup> Bloom responds with a word he uses in "Lotus-Eaters"—"Mosenthal"<sup>51</sup>—effectively cementing the link and causing the significant cluster to coalesce; Bloom's Jewish identity helps to supply the footing in a slippery chapter.

If the reader does not read "Circe" in relation to earlier occurrences of

50. Cf. *U*, 15.260-262 with 5.203-206.

51. Cf. *U*, 15.264 with 5.200.

Bloom's Jewishness, the chapter will seem to lack comprehensibility. When, for example, Bloom faces trial and is asked to identify himself, he passes off any number of false identities, finally claiming to "follow a literary occupation, author-journalist. In fact we are just bringing out a collection of prize stories of which I am the inventor . . ." (*U*, 15.801-802). Philip Beaufoy, the author of the story with which Bloom wipes himself in "Calypso," arrives on the scene to contradict Bloom. After Beaufoy derides Bloom's character at length, a voice calls out:

#### A VOICE FROM THE GALLERY

Moses, Moses, king of the jews,

Wiped his arse with the *Daily News*.

(*U*, 15.846-848)

This minor tidbit, again a momentary disruption of the proceedings which falls away as soon as it appears, turns out to be the manifestation of a node, combining as it does Bloom's strong link to physical matter—evoked here in the allusion to his defecation at the end of "Calypso"—with the strong bond between Bloom and Judaism which Joyce puts in his book. Like the way Joyce combines the node that coalesces out of language about Stephen's mother and out of Yeats's poem, Joyce here fuses Bloom's concern and connection with physical matter—which recalls Bloom and his favorite meats and some of his tactics of evasion as well as the processes of the human body—with one of the most central elements of Bloom's character, his Jewish identity. Maddox notes "the sense of constancy" that the reader gains from the "touchstones of Bloom's life, the anchoring points which give stability to his other, errant thoughts" (*UAC*, 41-

42). Not only do they give a "sense of constancy" to the pattern of Bloom's thoughts, the touchstones, like the touchstones of Stephen Dedalus, pass on an underlying stability to the rest of the novel. Moving from familiar language to familiar language during the course of our reading, perceiving links in the text, we affirm the pattern whereby Joyce creates the whole that is *Ulysses*: the system of nodes.



"Fusione di Bloom e Stephen": A Coda

Joyce adds a parenthesis in the schema he gives Linati just under the title describing the parallels of the third portion of the text. Below "MEZZONOTTE" (midnight), he writes "(Fusione di Bloom e Stephen)," the fusion of Stephen and Bloom (cited in *UL*, 186ff.). He does not mean that the characters themselves lose all distinguishing characteristics and meld to become a hybrid mass of signifiers drawn from each individual. Stephen and Bloom remain, respectively, Stephen and Bloom. I argue instead that Joyce, in making this statement, tacitly reveals the technique he uses to construct his characters. Maddox remarks on Joyce's use of "touchstones" to forge a stability in Leopold Bloom to counteract the sometimes chaotic flow of language which stands for Bloom's mind. The same is true, we have seen, of Stephen Dedalus. In predicating the final portion of his novel on the fusion of two characters the repetition of whose language provides the most powerful stabilizing force in the text, Joyce produces a grand, final, *male* node, to which the "Penelope" chapter stands as the "indispensable countersign."<sup>52</sup> The close interaction of Stephen and Bloom during the "Eumaeus" and "Ithaka" episodes brings with it evocations of all the varied nodes constructed of the language of Stephen and Bloom.

Like "Circe," "Ithaka" is particularly notable for the reappearance of earlier elements of the text. Yet there is a new quality to the recurrences in "Ithaka": Stephen's language becomes associated with Bloom's; and Bloom's language is associated with Stephen's. Here Stephen's retelling of *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine* or *The Parable of the Plums* implicitly relates to Bloom's Jewish identity in its reminder of Moses (*U*, 17.639ff.). The two also find common ground in Mrs

<sup>52</sup>. Stuart Gilbert, ed., *Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1957), 160.

Riordan, a character who appears early in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* at Stephen's house, and whom Bloom took care off as she approached death (*U*, 17.479-496). In fact, the narrator of "Ithaka" goes out of the way to focus on the connections between the two characters. After reducing Bloom to a Jew and Stephen to an Irishman, the narrator notes "points of contact that exist[. . .] between [Hebrew and Irish] and between the peoples who spoke them" (17.745-746).

Joyce playfully names these connections between Stephen and Bloom, which appear so frequently in "Ithaka," "[c]oincidence" (*U*, 17.635), much as he has Bloom refer to the instances during 16 June 1904 in which Boylan materializes near Bloom. "Coincidence" in *Ulysses*, however, has little in common with the conventional meaning of the term. Recurrence ceases to be coincidence when the recurrent events begin to happen with something approximating regularity. So with the "coincidental" Boylan sightings during Bloom's day. Ultimately, due to Joyce's recurrent use of coincidence, the phenomenon *and* the word itself, "coincidental" recurrence begins to gesture toward the apprehension of an ineffable universal order. Coincidence loses its mask of happenstance and assumes a look of careful method; and when it is brought to this point, we perceive the ordered movement of the chaos of Joyce's language.

### Molly Bloom, Indispensable Countersign and Conclusion

No reading of *Ulysses* is complete without a discussion of Molly Bloom. She has the "last word (human all-too-human)" (*LJJ*, 160), not an insignificant possession in a novel where, as Kenner says, "[a]ll is words, words." "Penelope," the chapter of Molly's last word, stands apart from the rest of the text, thanks to its unique feel; but it also incorporates the preceding text as it rounds off and closes *Ulysses*.

The very different quality of "Penelope" changes the landscape of the text considerably. Joyce presents the reader with one last new style to puzzle over; but unlike the previous styles, neither Bloom nor Stephen are present in the text the way they are in, say, "Circe" or "Aeolus." That is to say, the two bodies of signifiers with whom we associate for the large majority of the text appear in "Penelope" only as pieces of Molly's thought; and generally she does not make a distinction between males, ambiguously naming all of them "he." Note how Molly does this in the following passage: "[S]upposing I risked having another [child] not off him [Bloom] though still if he [Boylan] was married Im sure hed [Boylan] have a strong fine child" (*U*, 18.166-167). She does use the name of her husband and of Boylan, among others, at intervals, but usually chooses simply to say "he." Furthermore, "Penelope" is the only chapter in the novel that is located entirely in a character's mind. "Proteus" comes close, but even in that highly internalized chapter there is a sense of duet between Stephen and the unnamed narrator; in "Penelope" we are wholly encompassed by Molly's consciousness. Consequently, we are subject only to her modes of thinking. No other narrator provides us with the sort of "bridging" words and phrases so visible in the discourse of Leopold Bloom.

Add to Molly's ambiguous use of language, and to the general lack of punctuation, the fact that Joyce divides the sixteen hundred lines of "Penelope" into only eight sentences, and we have what might, at first look, seem even more hostile to a reading than some of the very stylized episodes that precede it. The reassuring textual presences of Bloom and Stephen, at least as they appear in the rest of the novel, are gone; and Molly's voice can take some getting used to before it begins to make sense.

Despite the consciously different use of language in "Penelope," Joyce does not abandon the system of recurrence so evident in the other portions of his book. In a letter to Frank Budgen, Joyce himself notes his use of repetition in the chapter:

[Penelope] begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because, bottom . . . , woman, yes*.

(Cited in *UL*, 164)

Joyce clearly selects words for recurrence in the letter, and a look at the "Penelope" episode reveals that he employs them just as he states. The chapter opens with "Yes because," which, in light of Joyce's comments on these two words, has the same feel as a node of Stephen or Bloom. That "yes because" is a significant cluster is demonstrated by the concluding lines of the chapter and of novel: "I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes" (*U*, 18.1606-1609). The close association of "yes" and Molly's breasts

in these last lines correlated exactly to the first two words of "Penelope," "because"—signifying her breasts, as Joyce writes—linked with "yes."

Joyce frames the chapter with "yes because," but it also occurs repeatedly inside the body of the episode, not simply at its periphery. The phrase "yes because" appears in "Penelope" with astonishing regularity: "yes because theyre so weak and puling when theyre sick they want a woman to get well" (*U*, 18.22-23); "yes because he couldnt possibly be do without it that long" (*U*, 18.76); "would you do this that and the other with the coalman yes with a bishop yes I would because" (*U*, 18.89-90); "we took the port and potted meat it had a fine salty taste yes because I felt lovely" (*U*, 18.131-132); "youre always in great humour she said yes because it grigged her" (*U*, 213-214). The chapter relies on Molly's "yes because" the way "Sirens" depends on Bloom's name, using repetition to establish a regular pattern of signifiers that the reader may use to interpret the text.

But Molly's "yes because" also becomes the catalyst which fuses events and allows Joyce to bring the novel to a close. As Molly begins to drift toward sleep, her thoughts, which have concerned her belief in God, move suddenly to the day Leopold Bloom proposed to her; and the two words "yes" and "because" that help spark the memory:

then they go howling for the priest and they dying and why why  
*because* theyre afraid of hell on account of their bad conscience ah *yes* I  
 know them well who was the first person in the universe before there  
 was anybody made it all who ah that they don't know . . . they might as  
 well try to stop the sun from rising tomorrow the sun shines for you  
 he said the day

(*U*, 18.1567-1572; italics mine)

And again, just as Molly begins to warm to the memory of that day on Ben Howth: "yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is" (*U*, 18.1578-1579). Molly reminds herself of the reason why she married Bloom and uses the key words "yes" and "because" to get to it. By emphasizing these two words I do not mean to suggest that the other key words Joyce lists in his letter are somehow less important to "Penelope." I have chosen to concentrate on "yes because" because it exemplifies the way in which Joyce employs the nodal structure evident elsewhere in his novel.

Neither do I wish to imply that "Penelope" is a self-contained episode. There are clear connections, highlighted by repetition, to other chapters, such as Molly deciding Bloom lies to her when he informs her in "Ithaka" that he eats at "Wynn's (Murphy's) Hotel" (*U*, 17.2258): "the hotel story he made up a pack of lies" (*U*, 18.37). Joyce reworks pieces of earlier text and presents them through the vehicle of Molly's narrative, extending the nodal system into the realm of Molly Bloom. The most important example of this are the memories of the day on Ben Howth when Bloom proposed to Molly. Bloom thinks back on it in a famous passage in "Lestrygonians" (8.896-918), again in "Sirens" when the fragment "Ben Howth, the rhododendrons" passes through his mind (*U*, 11.582), and still another time in "Nausikaa" as he looks over the bay toward Howth: "All quiet on Howth now. . . . Where we. The rhododendrons" (*U*, 13.1097-1098). Molly's return the memory of Howth brings forth this significant cluster one last time, sealing the unity of the text with a familiar set of signifiers.

Yet it is not just the familiarity of language, developed through the system of recurrence called nodes, that ultimately creates the textual unity of *Ulysses*. Rather it is Joyce's unparalleled ability to combine familiar themes with familiar

structural elements that results in the stability of text. He infuses his characters with structurally crucial features even as they act out the themes on which the novel focuses; moreover, the structural features begin to appear in the nature of each character. The most noticeable form of repetition in "Penelope" is in the structure, as Molly returns again and again to the key words Joyce lists in his letter to Budgen. But Joyce also builds into the very being of Molly the suggestion of recurrence in her menstruation (*U*, 18.1104-1125). Her menstruation, which begins rather unexpectedly—"wait O Jesus wait yes that thing has come upon me" (*U*, 18.1104)—is a substantial sign: first, it means Boylan did not impregnate her when they coupled, as she herself notes (*U*, 18.1123); second, it is a sign of recurrence, implied by the cyclic nature of menstruation. Most important of all, it is the unmistakably and wholly female countersign to the male world contained in the textual space of Stephen and Bloom. Molly's countersign and the male sign stand side by side at last to sound a harmonic conclusion to the novel, as Joyce's creation and presentation of her character make one final affirmation of the basic thematico-structural method in *Ulysses*, the nodal system.

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