



# **"Nix to nothing": subtractive realism and concrete universality in the works of James Joyce**

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**David HOARE**

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**“NIX TO NOTHING”: SUBTRACTIVE REALISM AND CONCRETE  
UNIVERSALITY IN THE WORKS OF JAMES JOYCE.**

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JAMES JOYCE.**

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Under the Direction of Ciaran Ross.

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For brevity I have used the following abbreviated citations through this thesis.

AP - *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man & Stephen Hero (Critical Edition)*.

D&J - Mitchell, A. J., & Slote, S. *Derrida and Joyce: Texts and contexts*.

DBVJ – Samuel Beckett's 1929 critical essay, 'Dante Bruno...Vico Joyce'.

FW – Joyce. *Finnegans wake*. Faber and Faber.

JJ – Ellman, James Joyce.

L - Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*.

OPCW - Joyce. *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2000. P - Joyce. (1992). *Poems and exiles*. Penguin UK.

Sigla - McHugh, R. *The sigla of finnegans wake*.

U - Joyce. (2000). *Ulysses*. Penguin UK.



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Is the theme of universality in Joyce settled? It seems ironic to think that the issue of the universal and the particular could ever be settled and arrive at a full stop when Joyce's work so closely binds that relationship to fluidity and change, giving names like "hemiplagia" and "paralysis" [D 1] to the act of putting the universal at a distance in favour of provincial or local themes. Yet, for many critics, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century seems to have settled the issue. Influential texts, many claiming Joyce as their precursor, have built an impressive critical edifice on the absence or failure of universality in literary text. The predominance of post-structuralist and semiotic attitudes among many different critical disciplines devoted to Joyce, and their influence on how we think of his text, including its political situation and social contexts, suggest that, even if the universal is not a dead topic, critics must act as though it is. However, like many burials in Joyce, the demise of universality may be merely the start of a rejuvenation process. This is where my thesis comes in, as I aim to examine the problems that are raised by overlooking universality and to relocate the idea in a way that offers a new way to read Joyce's text.

Since modernism, the notion of both universals and universality seems to actively repel Joyce's critics, and has become a topic which is frequently discussed or mentioned, but never approached directly. It has become something of a dangerous subject. Indeed, when a critic begins to make an approach to the topic, substitutions are often made. Critiques of universality quickly become critiques of centrality, of absoluteness, of totality or of the infallibility of the author. What is so potent about the notion of universals in literature, that makes critics from such varied schools of thought so afraid? What does raise the issue of the relationship between the universal and the particular mean for a text? Critics are keen to re-position Joyce as anti-universalist, or his texts as places where universals go to be broken down and re-metabolised. Contemporary academic studies of modernism see Joyce frequently cited as an arch-egoist or anarchist, a writer hostile to any universal or general scheme. To many of the influential post-structuralists, his works are taken as unquestionably particularist or relativist, to the point that he becomes an authority one appeals to whenever one has a radical claim to make or a heterodox reading to prove. This seems like an odd destination for Joyce, as critics nudge his text towards the sort of absolutism that he abhorred and, in the process, sever vital links between his texts and the literary and philosophical sources which informed them.

The starting point of my investigation is not any single critical intuition or theoretical frame, but rather the juxtaposition of two quotations from Joyce himself. The first is the famous statement to Arthur Power in 1921, recounted in Ellman's biography, where Joyce claims "For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal" [JJ 505]. The second is the justification Joyce gave to his benefactor, Harriet Shaw Weaver, in a letter on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1926 where he asserts that "one great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot" [L 317-318]. I find the juxtaposition of these two statements highly suggestive. In the first, Joyce seems to be suggesting that the relationship between the universal and the particular is not one of representation or exemplifying, but of containing or belonging. On its own, it a relatively simple and clear insight through which Joyce justifies both his ambition and his subject matter. But taken in juxtaposition with the second quote, it is heavily suggestive of the fact that early in the development of what was then called *Work in Progress* Joyce has begun to reconsider universality in subtractive terms. In this case, what is subtracted in his statement is any sense that the universal needs to be transcendental, which is implied by the Thomist concepts used in of many of his early artistic statements [OCPW 105].

In November 1926, it is often considered that Joyce is speaking about sleep and dream. I do not think this is the case. In the statement he makes to Weaver, he is describing something which is concrete enough to be material for literature. Or perhaps, material enough to be turned into concrete literature. But in doing so, he is making a thoroughly subtractive statement. He is not only telling us what this "one great part" is not, he is telling us the ways that it resists being thinkable or accessible by the senses. The use of the word "sensible" in the quote recalls some of his very earliest statements, such as the definition "art is the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an aesthetic end" [OCPW 104]. This, I think, critical readers of Joyce should find remarkable. As here Joyce is not revising or reinventing his earlier view, but revealing a subtractive thinking that was always present in them. If one can speculate as to his thinking in this appeal to Harriet Shaw Weaver's interests, it could very much be the case that here Joyce is trying desperately to demonstrate that his jarringly different new work is very much written in the same spirit as his early work. This sense of continuity, expressed through philosophical appropriations, not only enlightens one as to Joyce's intentions but challenges our expectations as to what the real "sensible or intelligible matter" ever was. It is as if Joyce is demonstrating that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* did not



complicate a once simple notion of beauty and universality, but rather that they represent the unfolding elaboration of the same ideas and practices that one can see in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*.

The terms of my thesis are therefore derived almost totally from these two frequently cited quotes. ‘Concrete’ is my way to synthesise concerns of “human existence” and the city of Dublin as an inescapable starting point, while the notion of a ‘concrete universal’ reflects that Joyce’s use of the notion of what can be “rendered sensible” traces back to his engagement with idealism, rather than Scholasticism or Thomism [OCPW 312]. Subtractive realism refers to the double subtraction being made where Joyce defines his “one great part” by the ways in which cannot be rendered sensible, and also implies the ways it escapes our regular thinking and language. The question of subtractive realism is not only what is subtracted from experience, but what can only be written about subtractively and consequently only read subtractively. This is compelling because it is highly at odds with the colour, density and sheer stylistic variety of Joyce’s work. It implies not only that Joyce’s writing demands that critical readers rethink the universal, but that rethinking the universal is to rethink what constitutes a subtraction and what constitutes an addition. The very excess of Joyce’s late works, their encyclopaedic quality, suggests not a tendency towards totalisation but a unique, wholly singular, interior logic of minimality and maximality.

The final term of my thesis title is ‘nix to nothing’ [FW 50], which is one of several permutations of the phrase “next to nothing” which appear in Joyce’s work. This reference is highly suggestive one, as it recalls St Augustine’s definition of matter: *informe prope nihil* or “unformed, nearly nothing” [Augustine, *Confessions*: 1, 3]. The phrase also has a popular slang usage popular in Dublin, where it can refer to a meagre amount or a low value [U 708]. This connection between Augustine’s definition of matter as that which is only minimally separated from the void, is more than just a little suggestive. It demonstrates that Joyce’s focus on subtraction is a unique union of thought and practice. It also shows how Joyce was not only appropriating ideas from philosophy, but making and remaking concepts using philosophy almost like a forge and not like a directory to which intertextual references may be made. Joyce’s appropriation of the notion of *prope nihil* from Augustine suggests not a reference, but the making of a new thinking of the concrete or material on the basis of the void. Joyce’s ‘next to nothing’ is not a philosophical borrowing, but his own invention. This thesis might have easily been subtitled “a philosophical investigation into Joycean subtraction”, but that would be misleading as it is my goal to establish an understanding of the realism and universality of Joyce’s works as autonomous or exterior to any philosophical

prescriptions or theoretical frames.

It is the wager of this thesis that subtraction and conceptual reinvention are fruitful and compelling was in order to interrogate and explore Joyce's work. Rather than take an approach that centralises the power of language over ideas or things, my goal is to take Joyce's ideas and things at face value as much as possible. As such, I hope I will be able to say that this thesis produces a realist image of Joyce's work insofar as I understand a realist approach literary works to be an attempt to capture them in their instance and not through any one single theoretical frame or socio-historical context.

So, to compact my intentions in a single statement: this thesis wishes to establish that there is such a thing as 'subtractive realism' in Joyce's work, and that this particular form of realism allows Joyce a singular means of articulating the concrete and the universal together at once. It is the universal as singularity rather than totality towards which I aim.

## CHAPTER 1: A REVIEW OF CRITICAL LITERATURE AND THE AIMS OF THIS THESIS

### *Introduction*

The pattern of avoiding or navigating around the issue of universality is spread across many different schools of thought, and it is worthwhile to plot and trace the trends and interrelations between them. The collection *Genetic Criticism* [Ed. Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, 2004] locates the origin of genetic criticism during the heyday of post-structuralism, and Baron's *Standentwining Cable* [2012] cites Barthes's "Death of the Author" and Foucault's "What is an Author" as principle guides of the intertextual approach to literary prose. Similarly, post-colonialism prospered during and after the same post-structuralist moment as reflected by books such as Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland* [1996] and Joyce, *Imperialism and Post-Colonialism* [2007]. Similarly, in works of modernism studies such as Tim Armstrong's *Modernism* [2005] and David Kadlec's *Mosaic Modernism* [2000], we are presented with an unquestionable, and unquestioned portrait of Joyce as an egoarch and anarchist. Largely, it is evident that both political and social readings of Joyce (such as those by Helene Cixous and later post-colonialist works), as well as textual analysis, are indebted primarily to the post-structuralist moment. I will now begin the review by looking at the "structuralist Joyce".

### *The Structuralist Joyce.*

Having started out by mentioning Joyce's importance to the post-structuralists, it may be ironic to note that structuralism itself may have persisted a little longer in Joycean criticism than elsewhere, and this is due in part to the importance of traditionally structuralist modes of criticism in analysing and explaining *Finnegans Wake*. The general mode of structuralist criticism of Joyce's work is to unpack the underlying narrative or themes of his work in terms of universal semiotic or mythological structure. Perhaps the most famous example is Campbell and Robinson's *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* [Campbell & Robinson, 1944], which contends that *Finnegans Wake* contains the universal model of all mythological narratives. Structuralist texts would claim that works like Joyce's demonstrate that beneath cultural and historical difference, mythologies and stories frequently share the same semiotic

and narrative structures. This is already difficult ground, as it is frequently noted by scholars of Vico and others that the claim that Joyce used structures or historiographical patterns (such as Vico's cycle of history), is often exaggerated or incorrect. Campbell's model, in particular, seems to be based on a very definite and enclosed cyclical structure that no longer resembles what recent Joyceans have found in *Finnegans Wake*<sup>1</sup>. The contrast between Campbell's work, and more recently John Bishop's work, is obvious when one observes the contrast between the schematic and humanistic approaches of earlier studies and the more open approaches aided by closer texture study. Indeed, it could be said that the focus on mythology shifted from a focus on desire, in order to disclose a cohesive structure that is merely implied by the overlapping mesh of semantics that Joyce creates.

The many studies that deploy such a structural approach to the text were published during a revival of interest in *Finnegans Wake* that took place from the late nineteen-fifties to the end of the sixties: this includes works such as Glasheen's *A Census of Finnegans Wake* [1957] and Atherton's *Books At The Wake* [1959], a series of publications that lead to the founding of the *Newsletter* periodical by Fritz Senn and Clive Hart in 1962. In works such as Clive Hart's *Structure and Motif* [1962] and Margot Norris' *Decentred Universe of Finnegans Wake: a structuralist analysis* [1976], and the later concept of “nodality” introduced in Hayman's *Wake in Transit* [1990], we see something notable about the legacy of structural critiques in Joycean criticism: here, structuralism and post-structuralism seem to co-exist despite their underlying theoretical contradictions. For instance, observations such as Clive Hart's comment that *Finnegans Wake* “doesn't centre on any particular point”<sup>2</sup> are remarkably similar to post-structuralist accounts of Joyce's text, yet emanate from a rigorous *structural* analysis of the text and not from post-structuralist theory. The same is true for the analysis presented by Margot Norris which (while often cited as a post-structuralist reading) presents Joyce's work as being in a compelling dialogue between structuralist method and post-structuralist theory.

Contrary to the structuralist idea that texts always share certain narrative or semiotic features, the decentred vision of the text presented by post-structuralists suggests that, in multi-faceted and polyphonic texts such as *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, there is no central narrative, no one single protagonist or definitive viewpoint from which to view the text. Structuralist readings of Joyce were frequently humanistic or mythographic in their outlook, relying on the idea that the structures present in Joyce's texts were reflections of universally

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<sup>1</sup> For example, John Bishop's *Joyce's Book of The Dark*. [1993].

<sup>2</sup> As cited in McHugh's *The Finnegans Wake Experience* [McHugh, 1981:54].

applicable notions and relationships. Post-structuralism, by rejecting centrality or absolute perspective, balks at the notion of any single idea or construct being universally applicable. Theoretically, the expectation would be that the earlier studies of Joyce would be contradicted by the later radicalism of post-structuralism. However, this is not the case. Reading early Joyce criticism, therefore, has the effect of observing an idea apparently arising inside its opposite as (despite frequent humanistic intentions) critics were rarely at ease with the idea that Joyce had successfully provided a universal mythology, or that protagonists such as Bloom and Earwicker were all the “everyman” figures that they were presented as.

It is not enough to say that the viewpoints of post-structuralism and post-modernism are merely being anticipated by Joyce's text: broader critical trends can be observed as emerging in the dialogues between various critics, these only being formalized or theorised later, for example Hart's point that *Finnegans Wake* “doesn't centre on any particular point” which seems to be the result of the practice coming ahead of the theory. So, it might be easy to imply, as Gilles Deleuze does when he mentions *Finnegans Wake* in his *Difference and Repetition*<sup>3</sup> [1984], that Joyce's work demonstrates that paradoxical texts require paradoxical theory, but there is perhaps a more precise point to be made here. Both structuralism and post-structuralism concerned themselves with the interplay between structuring and completion, or between de-structuring and incompleteness. The notion of completion is important for understanding why structuralists and post-structuralists alike often saw universality in terms of encyclopedic writing or as an equation between totality and meaning, a notion closely related to the Romantic idea that a work is universal because it is tending towards a whole<sup>4</sup>.

In the aftermath of structuralism, criticism began to oppose structure and de-structuring, completion and incompleteness as binary pairs. However, what structural commentary on Joyce's work reveals is not an interplay of structure and de-structuring, completion and incompleteness but, instead, a diagonal relationship between structure and incompleteness. Accordingly, in spite of the encyclopedic tendencies of Joyce's work, analysis of its structure reveals it not to be structured towards a final point of completion, but rather towards openness and incompleteness, thereby giving rise to conceptualisations of the text such as Norris's “decentred” and Hart's “nodality”. This is how structuralism and post-structuralism can possibly co-exist in the Joycean critical world, in spite of the fact that their theoretical dimensions are in frequent contradiction with each other. Both views share an

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<sup>3</sup> This remark refers to Deleuze's commentary on Joyce, particularly the comment “the ultimate Joycean identity emerges: chaos = cosmos.”

<sup>4</sup> This might also be seen as ideas that hold that a work is universal because of its structure (the claim of early structuralists and mythologists such as Campbell)

attitude to Joyce's work that goes against the intention of the authorial hand, viewing the text as being structured towards incompleteness rather than totality. As I will note when looking at the role of universality in Joyce from a deconstructionist view, such an approach to the topic of universality may be surprising in a way, as it recalls the earliest commentary on *Finnegans Wake*. As Finn Fordham suggests, the difference between structuralism and post-structuralism in regard to *Finnegans Wake* lies in the idea that Joyce's final book being principally concerned with “enduring universal myths” is, in itself, an “enduring myth”. However, this hardly closes the case on universality.<sup>5</sup> It could be that the universals of Joyce's text were far more subversive than the post-structuralist accounts that discover a fellow particularist in Joyce.

Critiques of concepts such as totality and centrality are key to understanding post-structuralism criticism. Slote and Mitchell's short introductory essay to the Derrida and Joyce collection, “On Totality and Equivocation” [D&J 1], highlights such concepts, and the fact that commentary on Joyce's text provides deconstructionism with an “occasion to observe the staggering failure of any totality, however encyclopedic and multilingual, to truly complete itself” [Ibid]. The second issue to note about the Slote and Mitchell essay is that, when Derrida himself chooses to speak on Joyce, it is often not to Joyce's text that he refers, but rather a “Joyce-événement” or “Joyce-Event”, something recalling hermeneutic notions of a text as not a finished item, but a coming-to-be. Derrida here is equating Joyce's text itself and the hermeneutic notion of “*ereignis*” (used in the sense of “coming to be” or “becoming”), frequently translated as “event” in English. Derrida's coinage is as confounding as it is helpful. It is helpful insofar as it provides perhaps the sharpest distinction yet from the image of text as encyclopedia, but confounding in that its possible valency as “Joyce-Event” could mean both a celebration, and also a moment where disparate things come to belong together. To think Joyce as event rather than as totality is to think of the text as depicting things that belong together because they happen together, not because they represent the interior taxonomy of a wider category such as Dublin, Ireland, Modernism or even the life of the person behind the name “James Joyce”. The text is no longer a totality of accidental attributes, but is to be understood in terms of incidental references, that do not have a central structure or belong to an interior taxonomy. For Derrida, first and foremost, Joyce's text is something that

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as recent critics like Fordham have noted when discussing the transition from structuralism to post-structuralism, the traditional post-structuralist opposition to universality never really took hold in Joycean criticism as it did elsewhere – the “focus on textual history” in Joycean studies, as Fordham claims, eventually produced a “subversion” of this anti-universalist attitude [Fordham, 2007:18].

occurs, presenting itself to the reader, thereby making a subtle and difficult distinction between deconstruction and other postmodern critical attitudes (even those informed by Derrida) that present the text almost geometrically as a map or a horizontal mosaic of references.

After Derrida, who often cited Joyce as the major precursor of the deconstruction movement, later deconstructionist critics frequently view centrality and totality as impossibilities within a text. For the deconstructionist, there is no central viewpoint within a text, any more than there is a point at which an accumulation of facts or details about a text may be deemed to be complete. This critical perspective is foremost in studies such as *Joyce Effects* [Attridge, 2000] and *Post-Structuralist Joyce* [1984], which take deconstructive criticism's general theoretical positions against totality and centrality and apply them more closely to particular aspects of Joyce's text or, in Derek Attridge's words, they discover Joyce "staging language's impossible acts of reference" [*Post-Structuralist Joyce*, 1984:48]. In doing so, the deconstructionist critic aims to demonstrate that, underneath every act of reference, there is ultimately an aporia, something that can never be known, giving rise to an important paradox. In Joyce's short stories, for example, this would involve making the centre absent, or an absence central. Very often, the conclusion reached is that the "absence" is the absence of universals within the text.

The influence of deconstruction requires very close commentary, since its critique of totality applies directly to the topic of universality, and its wider critical positions have proved influential on a large number of later readings of Joyce, readings which, on the surface, do not seem to employ theoretical ideas yet, nevertheless, are not without theoretical underpinnings. While summarising deconstruction is almost as impossible as summarising Joyce's text itself, I would like to make some reductions of how deconstructionist readings approach the idea of universality. A universal can come to mean a central point by which all things in a text might be understood. This is firmly rejected by deconstructionist philosophy, since the existence of a universal implies that, within a text, there is a potential God's-eye view, a central point of a text from which nothing is obscured. Leading from this, there is the inference that universality can also be thought of as the eventual end or final totality in the accumulation of facts and knowledge by a text or by a critical discourse, which deconstructionist critics claim Joyce's text has demonstrated to be impossible. This could perhaps be paraphrased by taking Joyce's famous boast that, if Dublin were ever to vanish, it could be reconstructed using his writing, to mean that Dublin is merely a finite totality of facts, and that this totality of facts can be represented by an author, provided that the author includes enough details in his work. We

might recall how, in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus admonishes himself to “work in all you know” [U 241].

For the deconstructionist critic, centrality and totality can become indirect ways to approach and critique notions of universality, even if one doesn't ever get to grips with the notion directly. Of course, it is reductive on my part to present deconstruction as merely a critique of totality or centrality. But, it is not without reason, since the notion of totality presented by deconstruction is something that I take to be very significant for my overall thesis. As I move on to both intertextual and genetic criticism, it will hopefully become apparent that deconstruction's assertion that the accumulation of detail leads only to the failure of all totality casts a very long shadow across Joycean studies. This is noteworthy in post-colonial criticism, where the exterior or alien nature of Irishness in writers such as Joyce and Flann O'Brien is read as the failure of imperialism to totalise itself. All this is very theoretical, yet the idea of totality is also seen in more intertextual and genetic studies, where the influence of deconstruction is tangible. Both intertextual and genetic critical methods share the deconstructionist critics' conviction that a text is not a totality and, thus, cannot be totalised (in the sense of being made a single, coherent whole) through the process of critical reading. Therefore, the job of the critic must be to do the inverse and unpack the text into references, drafts, allusions, and so on. Contrary to Foucault's famous criticism that deconstruction teaches that there is “nothing outside of the text”, the influence of deconstruction on methods of textual analysis in fact tells us that, for Joyce, there is neither an inside nor an outside of the text. There is no central point from which a critic can definitely tell us where the text begins and where the text ends. This will present many problems when discussing universality in Joyce, not least because Derrida's equation between Joyce's text and ‘Joyce-Event’ leaves us no interior totality in which to make taxonomies. Indeed, that is exactly what we see when we observe how Joyce's work continues to push textual disciplines like genetic and intertextual studies to their theoretical limits. Just when such purely textual, objective and almost scientific approaches seem to bring us closest to Joyce's text, we often find ourselves suddenly lurching back into very abstract territory.

Before presenting examples of genetic criticism of Joyce, it is important to situate it as a post-structuralist attitude, insofar as my study finds that the issue of the “avant-texte” is bound together with the issue of reference and totality. As Attridge referred to Joyce's “staging language's impossible acts of reference” [*Joyce Effects*, 48], genetic criticism has revealed that this “impossible act” belongs not just to the final text, but also to the writer's process and method. This tells us that asking questions of reference in the text necessarily involves the



question of the relation between text and “avant-texte” and, thus, we return to the notions of centrality and totality in Joyce, which post-structuralist ideas often aimed to undermine.

### *Genetic and Intertextual Criticism.*

For specific works of genetic criticism, I wish to refer to *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake* (ed. Crispi and Slote), a chapter-by-chapter collection of essays on the textual history of the book that examines what the critics call “avant-texte” a notion described by Sam Slote as the “result of the critical analysis, reconstitution and organisation of all extant documents related to the writing process that one intends to examine” [*How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*, 2007: 37]. Slote's definition of the avant-texte bridges between two periods of activity: the activity of Joyce when he assembled *Finnegans Wake*, and the activity of the critics who read, discussed and unpacked the resulting text. The avant-texte exists only by the consensus that is formed in the dialogue between genetic critics, recalling Mitchell and Slote's observation that Joyce's work gives Derrida the “occasion to observe the staggering failure of any totality, however encyclopedic and multilingual to truly complete itself” [D&J 2], allowing critics a position outside of Joyce's encyclopedic body of intertextual references and correlations.

The crucial avant-texte for late Joyce is the collection *The 'Finnegans Wake' Notebooks at Buffalo*, which contain Joyce's handwritten notes and diagrams for *Finnegans Wake* as it was being composed. There are also earlier manuscripts collected in the volume *Scribbledehobble*. Jumping straight into these would be difficult, and perhaps fruitless. Therefore, reading genetic criticism has served a dual purpose for my study, both in terms of the methodology for approaching avant-texte, and as a primer on the content of avant-texte itself, allowing me to note references in Joyce's notebooks that I can examine later, when my reading becomes more in-depth. For now, I will be commenting on the theoretical and critical influence of the avant-texte, rather than examining it myself. Because of the amount of resources available, as well as the possibility of misreading them, I will only be looking for direct reference or evidence in Joyce's drafting when I know exactly what I am looking for.

While my thesis is not concerned with the avant-texte directly, it is important to note the shared history and play of influences between genetic criticism and post-structuralist schools such as deconstruction. For example, the introduction to the anthology of genetic criticism *Genetic Criticism: Text and Avant-Texte* [2004] describes the environment that led to the formation of geneticism as “resolutely post-structuralist” [Ibid] and only “tenuously

connected with German textual studies”.

Although the origin of genetic criticism dates back to France in the 1970s, the study of *Finnegans Wake* in the 1960s, with Roland McHugh's *Sigla of Finnegans Wake* and Hart's *Structure and Motif*, set a precedent for both the focus on motif and on early versions of the text, making it relevant to note how genetic criticism is not just an approach for reading Joyce, but owes many of its concerns to the habit of using Joyce's work to critique and examine the process of critical reading itself. For example, McHugh made critical remarks about the 1967 Joyce symposium castigating those involved in *Finnegans Wake* criticism who failed to recognise the now famous “sigla” notations from Joyce's notebooks. Here, one notes a problematic within a problematic: as much as genetic criticism offers a method for examining the “avant-texte” of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's *Work in Progress* is itself an “avant-texte” of genetic criticism, thereby reflecting the familiar recursive relationship between signature and counter-signature to be found in Derrida's own critique of Joyce: in other words, one centralises one text in order to decenter another. Consequently, the process of criticism becomes not a matter of reference but of inter-dependence.

Also of note here are the references to genetic criticism made by Finn Fordham in *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake: Unravelling Universals* [Fordham, 2007], a work that relies on genetic criticism, but is in unison with other approaches, including exegetical methods, for practicing what Fordham calls genetic exegesis [Ibid, 33]. This is an interesting point for me: Fordham has the same reservations as I have concerning genetic and textual criticism, and has merged genetic criticism with an effective exegetical approach, such as his account of eucharistic modes in Joyce. Yet, his vision of the text is one where critics focus on a drafting process considered to be outside of structure and totality. He argues that genetic criticism and other forms of contemporary criticism seek to focus on what is “beyond structure, from what totalizing structures had not taken into account”. He further argues that “One consequence of this argument is that we no longer view [characters of *Finnegans Wake*] as enduring mythic universals”. According to Fordham, this method of reading Joyce shows that enduring mythic types “are now unravelling” [Ibid 35-36]. I would argue, on the contrary, that the development of genetic criticism is evidence for the universality at work in Joyce's text, since genetic criticism itself represents a dialogue with the text more than a one-sided critique. It is also difficult to refer to a method of reading something as being “beyond structure”, since such a method would impose its own structure, which might well prove to be as encyclopedic and totalising as that from which it seeks to escape.

It is when we combine genetic criticism with other modes (narrative, exegesis or other

approaches used by recent critics like Baron and Fordham for example), that we discover another problem with attempting to decompose or thoroughly dismantle universals in Joyce. Far from being unravelled, the ground for universality becomes more persistent in its tensions. Joycean universals are unlikely in the sense of their being related to unexpected changes, which is a trait that conjoins both the notion of “epiphany” and the “inflated” [Fordham, 2007] mythopoetic and heroic archetypes used in *Finnegans Wake*. The relation between change and heroic mythology is something revealed in great nuance by studies of Joyce's drafting process, both in the sense of mythological heroes embodying social change and adaptation, and Joyce's use of such mythological figures in his on-going modifications of his own writing during drafting.

As an issue of intersubjectivity and of mutual or communal involvement, the issue of universals starts to recall Vico directly. To imagine genetic criticism as an entirely objective process, or a one-sided affair, where there are only particular references and singular sources, errs close to what Jean-Michel Rabaté has called “the genetic fallacy”, a much-cited idea that suggests that there might exist a “draft of *Finnegans Wake* that would be written in “normal English” from which the reader might produce a continuous narrative or skeleton key [*How Joyce Wrote Finnegans*, 2007]. Having begun my review of critical literature by observing a continuum between structuralism and post-structuralism, Rabaté's use of the term “skeleton key” here is most telling, as it seems to denote that, beneath genetic criticism's ostensibly post-structuralist influences, persist some very structuralist problems or assumptions.

That a critique such as “genetic fallacy” needed to be made at all reveals grounds for more specific critiques. Fordham has rephrased Rabaté's statement as “only when all sources are provided can a text's meaning be revealed” [Fordham, 2007:28], a statement almost suggesting that genetic criticism risks reversal in the process of critique. It begs the question of how we might know that “all sources” are being provided in the first place. This describes a situation where the final meaning of a text is decided in advance, and then the critic would move backwards towards indexing an encyclopedia of sources. It seems that, despite all of its debt to Derrida, Foucault and Barthes, genetic criticism has nonetheless reintroduced the equation between meaning and totality. After all, if it is true that “only when all sources are provided can a text's meaning be revealed”, one would first have to have a final meaning to make the decision as to whether “all sources” have been disclosed. The logical place to go now is to intertextual studies and its concern with what lies outside the text.

As we have seen, the critical reading of Joyce frequently involves looking at the interplay between exterior and interior references in Joyce's work, examining well-known concepts such as interior monologue, the relationship between the individual and the particular, and epiphany. As such, many works that take a post-structuralist approach have several points of overlap between post-structuralism and genetic studies, for example intertextual studies which examine the links between two or more different texts. For example, it is interesting to find in Baron's *Strandentwining Cable* [Baron, 2012] (which concerns Joyce's use of intertextual references to Flaubert) a quotation of Sam Slote's description of genetic criticism's unveiling of the "concatenated series of intratextual echoes" [Crispi & Slote, 2007: 14-15] in *Finnegans Wake*. Slote's remark here is quoted by way of noting inter- and intra- textual modes of reference, as Baron's introduction of the intertextual approach cautions that "Joyce's thinking about literary relation, as well as his writing practices, resist reduction to any overly schematic literary theory" [Baron, 2012:10]. This would imply that it is never fully decidable to the reader whether a mode of relation or relationship is intra- or inter- textual. Joyce's work poses problems to intertextual and genetic critics alike by making the distinctions between interiors and exteriors (and from there, particularities and universals) as ambiguous as possible.

Unlike genetic criticism, texts such as *Strandentwining Cable* deal more explicitly with allusion and reference and, as such, are more overtly a fusion of post-structuralist and intertextual and genetic study. As such, they continue the hostile attitude towards the notion that universality may be something which is at work in Joyce's text. The origins of intertextual criticism date back more directly to post-structuralism than those of genetic criticism, in particular to the work of philosopher Julia Kristeva, who coined the term "intertextuality" to describe her own textual studies. This difference in both method and theory makes intertextual studies markedly different from studies of literary allusion, such as Atherton's *Books at the Wake*. With their focus upon post-structuralism and reference, intertextual studies relate more directly to contemporary modernism studies such as Armstrong's *Modernism* and Kadlec's *Mosaic Modernism*, both texts which rely heavily on Joyce's attitudes to reference, but seem almost politically motivated to frame Joyce as primarily an individualist or egoist writer of the particular against the universal.

I find this to be something of a point of contention between intertextual and genetic studies. Intertextual studies seek to present a text as mosaic or tapestry, a map or framework in which a critic can locate or place an item of reference between one piece of language and another. This often carries two implicit views of the text: one, that there is a clean distinction

between the interior and exterior and, two, more drastically, that the text is a static framework of references to be unpacked by a critic. Such a view of Joyce's text poses a problem, because the notion of the "intratext" working alongside the "inter" and "avant" texts would seem to forbid the notion of a static, nominal text, since it highlights the fact that critics are not uncovering an unchanging framework or mosaic, but rather something chaotic and transient. From my perspective, it would seem that Slote's observation is at least partly informed by the deconstructionist suspicion of totality, and this would pose a further issue: if such studies are too absolutist and reductive in their avoidance of the issue of universality in Joyce, this entails ignoring the working of the "intratext" which itself could be described as a remnant of text's failure to totalise itself. Further to this, we might recall the expression "Joyce-Event" used by Derrida himself to remind us that a text is something incidental that occurs, rather than something simply static. Slote's coinage "intratextual echoes" demonstrates how Joyce obliges the critic to be transformative when using critical terminology, since terms gain an additional resonance. In the case of "intratextual echo", intra-text no longer refers to what it did for a structuralist or post-structuralist: for the post-genetic critic<sup>6</sup>, it comes to imply a secondary structure which is an echo and therefore neither complete nor incomplete, nominal nor universalised.

Again, examining the relationship between different critical methods reveals the counterpoint between notions of universality and notions of totality in Joyce's text. Taken together, the work of intertextual and genetic critical models served further to efface the boundary between interiority and exteriority. Yet, if we were to use Joyce's text to read his own critics, I would argue that when a critic draws the boundary between the interior and exterior, this is not a reflection of Joyce's own text, but rather of the ideological position that the critic is taking. What is interior and what is exterior is something that seems obvious seeing that it reflects one of Joyce's frequent themes, namely the fraught incompatibility between obviousness in experience and obviousness in language, hence the necessity to use a remnant "third term", such as "intra-textual" echo, if one wishes to describe the transient element of Joyce's writing that is excluded whenever one reduces the text to a mosaic of references or a two-dimensional grid of power-relationships.

The "intra-textual echos" described by Slote are evidence of modes of literary relation

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<sup>6</sup> Here I used "post-genetic" to mean that genetic criticism has long become a part of the Joycean critical landscape that many or even all critical readers of *Finnegans Wake* will eventually encounter, not that there is anything which has superseded it. Indeed, I would surmise that the collective implication of many comments on genetic criticism is that its method is such that its practice will be interminable so long it can continue to produce material for exegesis.

and reference that forbid a text from being totalised either by itself, or from an exterior critical perspective, since they operate neither wholly within nor without the text.

This becomes an immediate paradox for the critical reader, when the “intra-textual echo” might be seen both as an outward grasp towards the external world and a reflection back onto the text itself. It confronts the reader with something undecidable: the “intra-text” reference can be seen both to affirm and efface the boundary between the interior and exterior world. Sometimes, this works on a grand narrative scale, a famous example being the controversy concerning the “Mr Porter” section of *Finnegans Wake*, which often divides critics on whether it represents a moment of wakefulness in the middle of the night, or the deepest, most solipsistic elements of a dream<sup>7</sup>. This is not so much a puzzle to be solved by either intra- or inter- textual analysis, but evidence of Joyce's exploitation of how the “impossible act” of reference is working. Critics informed by semiotics and post-structuralism often base their readings on singular acts of reference and referent items: in Joyce's text, it is just as frequently the relationships and intentions themselves that signify, not the objects. Divorced from both singularity and identity, the “intra-text” is literary reference attempting to unbind itself from particular perspectives and fixed meaning. The problem this poses for my reading is how to navigate and illustrate where Joyce's conception of the simultaneity of the universal and the particular is woven into this relational process and how this might aid the reading of some of Joyce's more difficult and radical texts. In the abstraction and experimental styles of later episodes of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's text seems to present relationships as more concrete than objects or identities, which might return us to post-structuralism again. As Fordham has put it, Joyce's text often seems to become “a philosophical dispute on the nature of identity in the world” [Fordham, 2007: 36]. With Joyce's almost obsessive emphasis on intersubjectivity and colloquy, perhaps what genetic and intertextual criticism begin to reveal is a world where dialectical dispute has taken the place of identity. This is perhaps also entailed by Rabaté's “genetic fallacy” argument.

It seems fitting to end this commentary on intertextual and genetic methodology by arriving at the interplay between intersubjectivity and Joyce's universals. For example, the fact that readings that focus upon interior inconsistency describe breakdowns between intra- and inter- textual reference could account for Joyce's movement from interior voices and single lines of narrative towards themes of colloquy and dialogue in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The notion of the intra-text in particular that provides a way to counterpoint the ideas of

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<sup>7</sup> For Example, see Clive Hart's. *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*. [Hart, 1962: 42 & 90]

concrete and imaginative universality, without having to rely on the abstract universality that post-structuralist readings define themselves against as it suggests not a discursive connection between universality and encyclopedic totality, but a conceptual tension between the *generic* and the *specific*. A notion of generic thinking and generic aesthetic gestures is perhaps what is most overlooked if one focuses exclusively upon language, meaning and signification. After all, if Joyce's work has such richly intersubjective aspect then this focus on intersubjective does beg the question of why critical readings of Joyce have failed to produce any *generic* accounts of the Joycean aesthetic gesture. If post-structuralist critical positions may often be reduced to the statement that there is nothing in a text but signification and reference, the reliance on supplementary or tertiary terms such as Slotte's "intra-textual echoes", when placed in the wider context of Joyce's inconsistent and "properly chaotic" world (to paraphrase Deleuze), give further clues about what has been excluded and exactly how that exclusion has taken place. It is easy here to see that it is sometimes critics of totality themselves who make reductions and exclusions in order to preserve the totality of the text, often in order to maintain a nominalist or perspectivist viewpoint at the expense of engaging with universality. In the second part of this chapter, I will explain a little more of what I mean by generic in this sense and give more examples – but it is the notion of "intra-textual echoes" which first prompted an investigation of generic writing and generic thought vis-à-vis Joyce's aesthetics, leading me towards concepts from the work of contemporary French philosophers such as Alain Badiou and François Laruelle.

### *The Post-Colonial Joyce.*

Returning to the critical summary, the next critical view which needs to be considered is post-colonialism. As post-colonialism shifts the focus from theoretical and textual towards the social and historical, we find the theoretical dimension of post-structuralism dramatised in the critic's reading. What has been abstract is now explicit. For post-colonialist critics, it is clear that the relationship within a text is not between the particular and the universal, but pits the universal against the particular. The universal is power, especially institutional power, and represents a power structure beyond the text, often in spite of the specific political gestures made in the text itself. This is a variety of a fixist thesis: that whatever a text might attempt to do to escape it, the power-structures behind it are reproduced in it unchanged, even in spite of the text working against them. The notion that context is inescapable leads to the presupposition that particular contexts are inescapable, at which point context becomes

interchangeable with category or type.

For post-colonialists, resisting colonial power is often presented as a matter of establishing an indigenous or Irish perspective against the colonial perspective, to locate the “powerful” perspective and establish the perspectives being suppressed by it. The issue with this attitude and Joyce is in the problem of perspective: to say that perspective in Joyce is a complicated matter would be a grand understatement, and it is difficult for post-colonial reports on Joyce's text to conclusively discern the colonial from the anti-colonial, to locate the “sub-altern” perspective in the midst of Joyce's dedication to obscurity and androgyny. In *Ulysses*, Stephen's frustration with language is not simply that he is forced to express his perspective as a Dubliner in the language of Londoners: there is no single “Irish” perspective, and Joyce resents the pretence that there might be. In *Ulysses*, the nationalist (or Fenian) perspective is portrayed in a deeply uncharitable way: the idea that one must establish, and then defend, an exclusively Irish perspective is nothing more than a direct iteration of colonial rule itself. As Joyce's earlier essays and comments suggest, “Irishness” does not manifest in nominal terms as either a particular social identity or as a particular perspective on the world. For Joyce, it represented a people's self-overcoming tending towards universals, represented by the poetry of Mangam or the plays of Wilde [OCPW, ‘Island of Saints and Sages’]. The idea of reducing Irishness to nominal or perspectival matters is a great insult, a restriction leading to the great “paralysis” of Dublin. This “soul of Ireland”, Joyce wrote in an essay of the same name [OCPW], leads to “imagination” and “speculation”: what is unique to Ireland or to Dublin cannot be reduced to its particulars, since the uniqueness exists not in particularity, in nominal particularities or particular perspectives, but in the manner in which “imagination”, “wonder” and “speculation” sublimate (overcome, yet preserve) the particularities towards the typical Joycean images of universality that are epiphany, epiclesis, moments of exaltation and transaccidentation. The particular issue with post-structuralist readings of colonialism, gender, race and class in Joyce is in their seeking preserve the particularity at all costs against such a process. If we take, as post-colonialists often do, the maxim that we should pretend that universals do not exist, then we risk rendering terms such as “imagination” and “speculation” wholly without context, not just in the sense that we misunderstand what Joyce was saying, but in the sense that we pry those ideas out of pre-modern context and into the post-modern.

For example, in the sociologically and politically orientated studies of Joyce, studies such as *Post-Colonialist Joyce*, and Declan Kiberd's influential chapter on Joyce in his *Inventing Ireland* and later books such as the anthologies “Post-Colonialist Joyce”, “Semi-



Colonialist Joyce” and “Joyce After Colonialism”, when social or political relationships in Joyce's work are discussed, it tends to be exclusively through the means of power-relationships, and many<sup>8</sup> tend to see the relation of universals and particulars as primarily a power relationship, with the universal in a powerful, dominant position taking a central space from the particulars, often forcibly.

While I do not intend to critique the post-colonialist goal of situating a text in its particular historic and social situation, such post-colonial criticism shows something ironic about absolutism in regards to what I would call the particularist readings of Joyce: firstly, that there is a critical danger in producing a post-colonialist Joyce, who would be a Joyce in line with the late 20<sup>th</sup> century's language and biases, and that could certainly be seen as a remolding of Joyce's text (and indeed, Joyce's politics) to suit the times, especially when we consider the Vichean and Romantic influences on Joyce and Joyce's own situation as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century writer. To produce a Joyce without universals is to remold the text to suit our own standards as postmoderns, to project our own cultural suspicions about universality back upon Joyce's text. There is an impasse in wanting to place Joyce's text in its socio-historical context, yet to do so without acknowledging where universals are at play in the text.

Secondly, in insisting on the maxim that one should always speak as though the universal does not exist, the inevitable conclusion would seem to be perspectivism: that each particular only speaks from its own perspective. Yet, in the text itself, this is not the view held by outsider figures or rebels, but is very close to the view held by those who Joyce satirizes as bigoted or hostile. In *Ulysses*, this view belongs to the cyclopic Citizen and the anti-semitic teacher Deasy, men who see the world merely as perspectives competing for power, and who are adamant that there is nothing universal to be gleaned from the cultural or political endeavours: an attitude for which they mock Joyce's protagonists<sup>9</sup>. When we look at the method and technique that Joyce deploys, along with the sort of inter-personal relationships his works favour, we begin to see how this post-structuralist conception of the universal-particular relationship is simultaneously too reductive and too abstract to describe the interior workings of the text. My observation here is not that studies such as Kiberd's are incorrect in what they demonstrate, but that the image of the text as principally a structure of power

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Declan Kiberd on literacy in *Ulysses* in *Inventing Ireland* [Kiberd, 1995:327-328 & 347-350]. I would note in particular Kiberd's observation of how important the coinage “mummycases” in *Ulysses* is for dead, still and fixed language.

<sup>9</sup> In ‘Cyclops’, for example, it is initially the suspicion that he values international brotherhood and “universal love” which causes the Citizen to become outraged at Bloom.

relationships and particulars elides something important: the concreteness of the universality we find in Joyce's text, and the fact that this concreteness often seems to emerge counter-intuitively to what we may suspect to be the author's sympathies. To elide universality, in turn, often neglects a sensitivity to how things are in their instance.

Just as Joyce's technical ideas were often more indebted to theatre than prosody, his grasp of universality is more founded upon philosophical ideas than literary. It is therefore paradoxical in a way that is very familiar to his antecedents (Hegel's sublimation, Vico's *ricorso*), and it presents a radical uncertainty in a way that conventional literary readings cannot address. To see Joyce's work as principally an element in the wider context of how post-colonial studies have seen Ireland under Imperial rule, comes with the hefty admission price of removing the "universal" category from the discussion. As such, Joyce's own position cannot be included, and yet neither does such a critical attitude give more ground to the author's own intentions: that is to say, to project our own post-modern discomfort with universals and universality back into the text, to protect our own ideologies against the uncertainty induced by our encounter with the text.

I intend to return to the notions of centrality and totality as they are frequently overlaid or substituted for the idea of universality by Joyce's deconstructionist critics, which in turn has influenced both genetic and intertextual criticism. I would note the relevance here of Barbara Laman's observation that *Finnegans Wake* demonstrates that a text is "always becoming" and that "by calling a text "open" or "reader narrated", semioticians and modern philosophers merely extend the romantic dictum that a text is "never completed" [Laman, 2001: 127]. In intertextual and genetic criticism, we have seen the value of critiques of accumulative knowledge and completeness: which leaves my topic with the question of whether it is possible to retain the value of those critiques while reintroducing universality into the critical frame. My thesis would be that it is indeed possible, but doing so would require moving beyond both the post-structuralist identification of Joycean universality with the encyclopedic nature of his work.

Joyce's encyclopedic mode of writing steers the reader away from noticing the working of the intra-textual echoes, which, as observed, could be perceived as the text's failure to totalise itself or find its own centre; as Derrida [D&J 59 & 61] discussed what he called the "Joyce-Event" in his talk ("Hear-Say Yes in Ulysses") and essay ("Ulysses Gramophone") and described the "distress of a signature which requires a yes from the other" like a telephone call that needs a confirmation (being answered) in order to be received – that

“this essential repetition haunted by an intrinsic threat, by the interior telephone that parasites it as its mimetic-mechanical double, as its unceasing parody” [D&J 56]. While I would disagree with Derrida's use of the word “mechanical” in this description, the dependency on intra-textual echoes may well be the “threat” or the “distress” that Joyce's encyclopedic intentions attempt to resist: such intra-textual intentionalities require participation from the reader to animate them, where Derrida's “confirmation” or “yes from the other” comes not from text but from the present moment of the reader. On the other hand, Joyce's encyclopedic intention posits the (eventual) self-sufficiency of the work as a totality, that would need no such “confirmation” from outside of itself. By examining the contrast between genetic criticism and other schools informed by post-structuralism, it begins to seem as though there are two Joyces at work in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*: the Joyce who prefers relational modes of reference, whose work effaces the boundaries between interiority and exteriority, including the other in the business of lending decidability to his work, but there is also the encyclopedic Joyce, whose work presents itself as constantly approaching a totality that disincludes all but the text itself from the act of reference, and tries to reduce all allusive, spoken and literary performance to acts of reference.

Conflicts interior to Joyce's text are where the influence of deconstruction becomes a more challenging issue for my thesis: rather than seeing such “binary oppositions” as inherently problematic, I would argue that, as readers, we need to be less afraid of binaries. Indeed, the famous oppositions and dualities used by Joyce provide an opportunity for the reader to (as Joyce puts it in *Finnegans Wake*) “introduce a notion of time” [FW 124] to the book by imparting intentionality to the text, reclaiming it in the present as a unique event, rather than a mosaic of static language-objects or horizontal strings of singular reference points to be unpacked by genetic and intertextual critics. The notion of intentionality, via Husserl, whose influence is noted in Slote and Mitchell's later comments on Derrida's reading, suggests that there is a way to examine the notion of universality concretely without introducing the abstract notion of universality which entails thinking of a text as a totality.

### *Derrida, and Joyce as Deconstruction's Precursor.*

Deconstruction observes that all totalities will ultimately fail, which implies that both genetic criticism and intertextual studies are no less limited than Joyce's own encyclopedic intentions for his own text. This limitation means that all references to the intertext and the avant-texte rely upon a consensus between critics. According to such a consensus, acts of

reference are ultimately dependent on the relations inside the text itself thus allowing critics to draw a line between interiority and exteriority. Derrida's insistence that modes of reference in Joyce require a "mimetic doubling" or a "counter-signature" seems to me to imply an emphasis on relationships between incidents and events underlying any particular referential or intertextual constructions: the "interior telephone" of text, contrasting the critical "gramophone" in the way that deferment (*telos*) highlights the limitation of grammar. This brings us back to the same interior "concatenated intratextual echoes" observed by Sam Slote in his commentary on genetic criticism.

One of Derrida's concluding comments on Joyce is the observation that "only another event can sign or counter-sign to bring it about that an event has happened" [D&J 81]. So, by doing this, the reader bypasses the encyclopedic mode of writing and allows Joyce's work to inhabit the same reader's present: a diffuse mode of encounters with the Other is possible, even as these encounters are made impossible by the text remaining simply (to use a phrase from *Ulysses*) "coffined thoughts" or "mummycases" on the page. While the idea of the Joyce-Event demonstrating the work of an interplay of signatures and counter-signatures is important for my reading, I would argue that deconstruction is still conceding too much to Joyce's encyclopedic intentions at the expense of the eucharistic or epiphanic elements of his work, a concession perpetuated by the many other modes of criticism that have followed more recently. If horizontalism, as a concept, is given as a matter of course, the act of reading itself is given over absolutely to the particulars of the text, which risks denying the more concrete universalities that allow such reader involvement in the first place, and therefore cannot approach an account of the diffuse or eucharistic moments produced in the text. This is where deconstruction's rejection of universals begins to conflict with its observation that each signature needs a counter-signature. One of the criticisms levelled against deconstruction outside of Joyce studies has been that it is notoriously uncomfortable with events that happen outside of the text and beyond fleeting particularities. This suggests an overcommitment to particularity which results in avoiding the notion of universality in the literary text, but the same particularist readings eventually capitulate and reintegrate notions of totality despite themselves. We can see this re-introduction of totality through the usage of distinctions between interiority and exteriority, distinctions the same critics often laud Joyce's text for breaking down, thereby betraying a reliance upon taxonomy. This is similarly evidenced in intertextual and genetic criticism, where the desire to unpack or discover new meaning in the text is predicated on the idea that it might eventually be possible to discover "all the sources" of a text. Such a notion ensures that the link between

*meaning* and *totality* remains intact.

Post-romantic and deconstructionist readings therefore approach universality in a text in the same fashion, by describing the incompleteness of the work – one describing universality in terms of its presence, the other in terms of its absence. For both of these approaches, we can assume the same abstract definition of universality is defined by a fixed dialectical or binary opposition to the particulars of the book.

Post-colonialist interpretations, given their usually particularist views of literature, raise similar problems, for the same reasons I discussed above. As I have already observed, the tendency of such criticisms is not to confront the text as it is in its instance, but to find in it a reflection of the contemporary, postmodern world. By noting that the critical act is also historically situated, we might observe that the Joyce-Event is itself divided between the event of the text and the events of understanding, a relationship which cannot be caught either within a reader's encyclopedic view of the text or Joyce's own anticipatory encyclopedic mode of writing. In order for there to be a contact between the events (a “counter-signature” or “yes from the other”), there has to be something outside of structures of power and reference that is both material and universal in order to engage the reader's involvement with the text at all. To be even harsher with postmodernist critics, I would say that the denial of the universals inherent in a text is a denial of the process of criticism itself. To make a generalisation, the nominalist critic, in attempting to say that there is nothing in a text but particular identities and particular perspectives, and by hiding behind acknowledgment of his historical or social position, can comfortably shy away from confronting his own *ideational* position and, thereby, insist that there is nothing universal to be said about a literary text, except the fact that nothing is universal.

So, in the light of my presentation of post-structural and postmodern conceptions of Joyce, I contend that the incompleteness that is a necessity for the reader's involvement, is a manifestation of concrete universality, which poses a formidable challenge to my reading and begs the question: how is one to resurrect a materialist approach while maintaining a critique of totality? I will need to discuss the structure of Joyce's work in order to do this, particularly the influence that epiphanies and Dublin itself exerted on his work.

In doing this, it is necessary to bear in mind that, as I hope the earlier part of this review has made clear, the notion of structure itself is a very contentious issue. Indeed, if one is not careful, the risk of using “structure” and “totality” interchangeably is ever-present. The

notion of structure needs to be addressed with an eye towards future discussions of the universal, but without retreading the structures that were important for humanism. In short, before returning to Vico, I will return to Derrida, as the ideas of counter-signature and “mimetic doubling” offer an approach to structure that is neither rigid nor totalising, while also avoiding absoluteness in its particularisation of the text.

Derrida's argument in “Ulysses Gramophone” is that Joyce's text demonstrates that there is no signature without a counter-signature. It is possible, therefore, to argue that there is no “Joyce-Event” without an equally historically situated event of understanding. It seems to me that when deconstructionists attempt to undermine universality by demonstrating textual aporia, they are positing the existence of an abstract universal (such as a “centre” of the text) that they can be certain does not exist. I also feel that, in investigating universality, one should do the inverse: instead of positing an abstract universality, one can treat the text itself as a concrete situation from which a readerly understanding can be made manifest. In theoretical terms, my observation is that deconstruction is apparently rejecting the certainty of structuralism by denying the existence of a totalising or central structure underneath the text, while at the same time positing the existence of another structure, that of Derrida's “mimetic doubling”. This view of the text sees meaning and understanding as created by the disseminated (or dispersed) structure of signatures and counter-signatures rather than by any central term or totality, and as such could be described as a radically de-centred vision of Joyce's text. However, what Derrida is describing could still be called the production of meaning by structure, albeit a structure that has neither centrality nor totality. This is not too far removed from the unlikely yet effective simultaneity between structuralist and post-structuralist theoretical ideas in the study of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>10</sup>

Such movements as Derrida's “mimetic-doubling”, or the textual aporia observed by critics such as Attridge and Slote situate universality, via encyclopedic totality and centrality, with abstract rationality and logos, thus moving the notion of totality further and further away from the concrete and material matters that Joyce's books so frequently incarnate. I will argue that attempting to identify a text solely in relation to the particulars of its historical situation leaves out this bifurcation of the so-called Joyce-Event. In other words, there is a marked contrast between historically situating a text and retrospectively identifying the Joyce-Event exclusively in relation to the particulars of its historical period. If we are to avoid totalising or schematising the text, then thinking about it in terms of its historical situation also entails

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Fordham's uses of Glasheen's text referenced earlier.

asking ourselves what, in the text, *cannot* be reduced to the particulars of a historical situation. By using Derrida's terms, we may define Joyce-Event as something that depends upon a parallel event of reading (a “counter-signature”) and which, as such, is beyond any reduction to a totality of particulars. This concept of a Joyce-Event stands in contrast to the Joyce-Encyclopedia, which is nothing but an accumulation of particulars and references.

In attempting to retrieve Derrida's Joyce-Event from the wake of my critique of deconstruction and post-structuralism, I am not simply defending Joyce as a universalist against particularist criticism. In some ways, the Joyce-Event demonstrates that anything universal in a text is somehow only there in spite of itself, and that a text must be conflicted and self-divided in order to obtain what an encyclopedic vision of a literary text cannot. The main division I see operating is between the encyclopedic and eucharistic modes of Joyce's style. This division of Joyce's style echoes Derrida's pairing of “signature and counter-signature” that confirms that an event has happened. Contrary to deconstructionists who tend to reject binary oppositions, I rather see them as being necessary, especially if our objective remains to seek critiques of totality and centrality. When we think about certain famous Joycean themes, such as Stephen's meditations on temporality in *Ulysses*<sup>11</sup> or the mythologizing that goes on in *Finnegans Wake*, we can see Joyce's compositional use of oppositions and contrasts. This textual weaving of signatures and counter-signatures is evidence of the wider textual technique which I have previously borrowed Sam Slote's term “intra-textual echoes” to describe. It is in such “concatenated intra-textual echoes” that we must rediscover Joyce as a materialist, and on those grounds re-raise the issue of universality against nominal and perspectivist absolutism.

### *Specific Problems*

There are three particular particular problems that merit discussion. 1) In approaching a literary text, such as Joyce's, an absolutist rejection of universality entails the reintroduction of totality, either implicitly or explicitly. The question to raise against post-structuralism as a reader of Joyce is whether the benefits of rejecting universality are worth the cost of re-instating totality as an aspect of Joyce's writing. This cannot be stated too strongly: despite post-structuralist theory being ostensibly the most radical approach to modernist texts, or the

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen evokes signatures in the literal sense, the receipt of a cheque, when thinking about the passage of time. “I am other I now” he thinks as “other I got the cheque”. Joyce juxtaposes the idea of time as a process of change and the fact that passage of time manifests to Stephen as an internal division: “I, I and I. I” [U 242].

most contemporary, its enduring legacy upon reading Joyce's works has in fact been quite conservative, entailing a return (as Barbara Laman suggests) to pre-structuralist, or even romantic notions about how literary texts derive their meanings. It is clear that by effacing or overlooking universality, or by associating universality with parallel notions of centrality or perspective, critical reading overly informed by post-structuralism risks working against its own pluralistic theoretical aims.

2) My objective in this thesis is to encounter universality not in an abstract way in terms of centrality, or as a matter of perspective, but concretely, by looking at its effects and context within the text. To an extent, I offer a Vichean reading since I see concrete universality and change as two modalities of the same issue.

3) At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that Joyce's text deals with universals in two opposing ways: the encyclopedic tendency to collect information, and the eucharistic moments best represented by the epiphanies or, perhaps, by the unresolved arguments and discussions had by the characters in *Ulysses*. Rather than seeing the development of Joyce's literary practice as a linear movement from the epiphanic, subtractive world of "scrupulous meanness" [L 83] to the dense and allusive *Finnegans Wake*, I would argue that the mutually undermining nature of these two modes is present across all of his work. I believe that Joyce's relationship to his sources, particularly to Vico, bears out this observation. Furthermore, we could say that Vichean universals point out how examining Joyce's invention of an interior dialectic between the eucharistic and encyclopedic offers new ground to critique the critics and re-engage with universality in Joyce. This would mean moving beyond a subtractive view of epiphany and affirming, as I did in my introduction, that the only certain thing one can say about Joyce's epiphanies is that a change has taken place.

In my review of Joyce criticism, three general trends stand out. They conjoin both the modernist reception of his work and the later post-structuralist readings, and define the particularist approach that has held sway over critical discourse on Joyce. These trends are the following: i) **nominalism** (the idea that no universals, only particulars exist), ii) **fixism** (that a text reproduces the structures that produced it unaltered) and iii) **perspectivism** (that subjectivity is one and the same with personal perspective). Taken separately, these critical trends do not necessarily disavow or deny universals per se but, rather, they perform critical substitutions in order to deflect themselves away from having to address the question of



universality in a literary text. This presents something of a double problem for the study of Joyce's work, because his work not only seeks its own universal, but also chooses the universality of literary life as its topic. The manner in which such particularism rejects universality tends to conflate universality as a topic with the universality of the text itself. This could pose a major problem when reading Joyce with post-structuralist criticism, since such absolute adherence to a particularist approach means that the issue of totality identified by deconstructionist critics has started to be reintroduced to readings of Joyce via the postmodern consensus.

### *Aims of this thesis*

The goal of this thesis is to propose a new approach to reading universality in Joyce's narrative prose. It is not to interrogate or question Joyce's claim to universality or to perform a genealogical or historicist investigation of what it means for a writer in a certain place or time to claim to produce universality, or why such a writer might consider universality to be aesthetically valuable. Rather, it is to take it Joyce's claims seriously or at 'face value'. But with that said, Joyce's famous claim that "if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the great cities in the world. In the particular is contained the universal" [JJ 505] is not unquestioned by this thesis, and I am not assuming that he is successful in his stated aim. Rather, I am asking the question of what it means to write narrative, or aesthetic literature, with the aim of finding the universal "contained" in the particular.

My attempt to negotiate with the problem of universality is to concoct or invent a 'new' thinking of the universal as provoked by Joyce's texts. Of course, the novelty of this universality must be heavily moderated. In a sense, Joyce's texts are not only a subject matter but also a constraint. I must attempt to construct or engineer a new approach to universality via Joyce's work, but I cannot simply apply any new concept or idea. But neither can I just provide a new, unique exposition of Joyce's relationship with his philosophical influences such as Aquinas and Vico.

The first specific thing about this thesis that needs to be mentioned is the fact that I have no single critical frame or methodological approach throughout. This might be surprising to the reader, as it would seem that if I am to introduce a ‘new’ way of reading universality in Joyce’s work and taking Joyce’s claims towards universality at face value, then I should be providing a coherent definition of universality throughout. Then, I should argue for why that definition is and is not apt as the exploration of Joyce’s texts unfold. For example, it might be expected that I would use Alan Badiou’s theory of the Event to examine Joyce’s attempts to write literature that draws on the universality of the ‘Event’ of Dublin, then contrast this with Derrida’s notion of the Event of Joyce (the ‘Joyce-Event’), which is singular but not necessarily universal.

There are many reasons why I have not chosen to proceed in this way. The first is so as to avoid imposing a single philosophy upon Joyce’s work as a kind of master-key for literary universality. The second is that to begin with a single method and a set of definitions is at odds with critically engaging with Joyce’s work as universal.

After the first year of this thesis, my director (Ciaran Ross) suggested that I describe my reading as having a ‘double critical frame’. This is because, in the very earliest plans, my philosophical sources were very different: I originally proposed this thesis, and presented my first ‘committee’ paper contrasting a reading of Joyce indebted to the hermeneutics of Hans-George Gadamer, and one centred around ‘post-structuralism’. At the time, the title of thesis was to be ‘James Joyce’s Hermeneutics of Change’. As the ‘committee’ papers followed, my philosophical and theoretical sources chopped and changed on an almost yearly basis. In 2017, I began to introduce sources from speculative realism such as Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux and, in 2018, I began to use Joyce as the setting for a philosophical ‘dialogue’ between Jacques Derrida and Alain Badiou on the topic of Event. Throughout all of these changes of directions and rewritten chapters, the ‘dual critical frame’ persisted, even though the pairing of critical approaches within the frame changed.

The idea of a ‘double critical frame’ was serendipitous, as it allowed me to at last concretise the most difficult idea of thesis: that of the *generic*. The ‘generic’ is a term from mathematical set theory, as in the ‘generic subset’ of P.J. Cohen’s theory of forcing, used in the works of both Alain Badiou and Francois Laruelle. While the complexities of the use of

this notion are too vast to summarise here, in thinking about aesthetics and literature the notion of a generic reading and a generic writing, or of identity as generic, I was finally able to get a grip on the notion “in the particular is contained the universal”. This is because, although different focuses on generic thinking might be radically different, it allows for a ‘ground up’ conception of universality. That is to say, it allows us to think of universality, not in terms of what defines it, but in terms of the conditions in which universality might be said to arise. This is also useful because, through the notion of the generic, Joyce’s own preoccupation with doubling and pairing had proved to be inescapable. In Alain Badiou’s theory of the generic subset, we encounter a ‘scene of the two’, or a theory of subjective intervention based around a “logic of the two” [Badiou, 2007:201] and, with Laruelle, the notion of “unilateral duality” and the method of “dualyse” [Laruelle, 2012]. In thinking of the generic, the grounds of universality, one must not merely be attentive to dyads and dualities, but incorporate them into one’s reading. The ‘double critical frame’ now means more than just juxtaposition of two theoretical frames, but to make a generic principle such as a “logic of the two” or a “unilateral duality” integral to my approach independently of whatever specific critical ideas I am applying to Joyce’s work. The engagement with philosophical and non-philosophical notions of the generic allows me to expand upon my interpretation of Slote’s idea of “intra-textual echoes”. For my reading, the “intra-text” is not text in the same way that “intertext” or “avant-text” are in Joycean criticism. Instead, it is the materiality of the text which allows generic rather specific connections to be made, and for Joyce to make strong stylistic innovations with weak links between words and phrases. It is the grounds for universality as it represents Joyce’s ability to use the most minimal elements of his own text as a compositional or structuring device. It describes how a book like *Finnegans Wake* works through slight implication rather than sturdy descriptions, through subtle distinctions rather than clear differences and through slightness rather than robustness and cohesion. We might say that the “intra-text” is nothing other than the material of the text because it is the least text-like part of the text, the text’s own next-to-nothing.

In attempting a research project that explores the notion of universality in Joyce’s work, I cannot proceed from any specific definitions whatsoever, but must establish a generic intervention with the text. A universal might be, on one side, thoroughly indistinct from the situation in which it appears, but on the other a near total supplement to it. The task of responding critically to a claim of universality, therefore, puts one in the difficult position of having to balance attentiveness to specificity without undoing that specificity by being

schematic and prescriptive, while saying only generic things about a text. This thesis therefore proceeds with the understanding that Joyce's claim that the particular contains the universal cannot be understood unless one sees that it implies its 'diagonal' counterpart, that of the relationship between the generic and the specific. If a reading of Joyce takes his claim of universality seriously, it must begin and end with the specifics of his work, which in turn implies that a generic writing must be paired with a generic reading.

### *Doing Justice to Joyce's 'Universal History'*

The ethical aim of this thesis can be said to be to 'do justice' to Joyce's text. I understand 'doing justice' here to be a direct continuation of the deconstructionist work which inspired my earliest engagements with post-structuralist criticism of Joyce. I am largely following the equivalence made by Derek Attridge [D&J 265], where he interpreted Derrida's engagement with Joyce as testament to the idea that 'doing justice' to a work means being attentive to the singularity of that work. Therefore, the issue of singularity is front and centre of this thesis and my choice of philosophical sources reflects this, as Badiou and Derrida represent the contemporary philosophical thinking of singularity most appropriate to Joyce's texts, both understanding singularity through a theorisation of Event. The vast difference in philosophical thought between Badiou and Derrida is useful in itself, since, in thinking the 'singularity' of Joyce's texts, one cannot subordinate them to a singular philosophical vision. Therefore, in choosing contemporary philosophical sources, drawing upon contradictory viewpoints are not only fruitful but necessary. While I will not be using Joyce's work to bring Badiou and Derrida into direct conflict, as this is not a philosophy thesis, the contradictions inherent in posing their thinking of 'Event' and 'singularity' together in the same thesis are incredibly productive.

The problem of 'doing justice' might therefore be expressed as the problem of how to read Joyce's claim to have produced a "universal history" [JJ 544] in *Finnegans Wake*. Examples of 'universal history' are usually either canonical theological texts (such as the Bible) or philosophical, and include Joyce's major influence the *New Science* of Giambattista Vico, idealist works by Hegel and Kant, and influential later 20<sup>th</sup> century works such as Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. The temptation is therefore to see *Finnegans Wake* as a version of this philosophical form, a kind of philosophical narrative, in disguise as literature,

perhaps using comedy and pastiche to disguise its basic assertion that its structures are intended to reflect the structures of all human societies and even the cosmos itself. This, I believe, would be a very misguided reading to make. While this thesis will take Joyce's frequent existential and ontological speculations seriously, as well as many of those by his characters, it will not interpret universality nor will it define universal as philosophical generality.

Joyce's claim to have produced a 'universal history' is therefore understood not through the relationship between *Finnegans Wake* and all human histories but through the relationship between all his works and narrative as a whole. But, again, this not to say that *Finnegans Wake* should be thought of as instructing the reader to find generalisable narrative forms in the works of Joyce. Rather, it means that I think the notion of a 'universal history' implies that the reading *Finnegans Wake* means that the reader is necessarily drawn into a game in which their conceptualisations of what narratives *do* (as opposed to what particular narratives *mean*) is put under scrutiny and modified. 'Doing justice' therefore implies that one plays this game willingly. That is, one does not uncover the singularity of Joyce's works by isolating them and breaking them down into their specificities. But neither does it mean trying to approach singularity by extracting generalities from Joyce's writing. Instead, 'doing justice' means that one must allow one's conceptualisations to be acted up by Joyce's works. So, in this thesis, I approach the theme of narratives in general frequently. But this is not an attempt to utilise Joyce to write a philosophical of narrative aesthetics, rather it is an attempt to 'do justice' by recording how the singularity of Joyce's work acts upon the concepts my critical methods require rather than just using those concepts to frame and describe the writing I will analyse and discuss.

I believe that the above association between the deconstructive imperative to 'do justice' with Joyce's own self-directed imperative to write a 'universal history' helps navigate through a practically difficult problem of critical reading and critical method. Namely when to approach the singularity of a work in terms of its irreducibility and when to make pragmatic or informative reductions. I would argue that what 'doing justice' should *never* mean is putting the 'irreducible' and the 'reducible' together and using them like a pair of tweezers to extract singularity from a text. Singularity cannot be made accessible or explicable in this manner. Rather, singularity is universality in its instance. As Joyce spoke of his intention to write a 'universal history' in the most dreamlike manner possible [JJ 544], one gets the strong impression that contingency rather necessity is its focus. Although Ellman described this

‘universal history’, before it was called *Finnegans Wake*, as premised on the idea that “there is nothing new under the sun” [JJ 545], I think this is an uncharacteristically inaccurate summary from Joyce’s biographer. On the contrary, Joyce’s universal history tells us that there are *only* new things under the sun, and we must calibrate our readerly ideas and perceptions accordingly. With that argument having been made, I hope the reader of this thesis will understand why I have chosen to engage with Joyce’s writing by counterpointing the ideas of Derrida with those of Badiou when it comes to discourse on singularity. The singularity of Joyce’s work provokes the critical or philosophical reader into making use of philosophical concepts, but it is important to understand that it does not imply that there is a single unique philosophical framework at work in each of Joyce’s books, that can therefore be matched to a single framework that the critical reader applies from the exterior. This may be implied by the notion of a ‘universal history’ in general, but it cannot be said of Joyce’s ‘universal history’ in particular. Being a comic enterprise, Joyce’s ‘universal history’ in *Finnegans Wake* requires us not to think of a framework of ideas first, but of how concepts and ideas might act outside of such a philosophical framework. It inverts the usual idealist or structuralist schema and asks us to consider how structurality arises from the use and abuse of conceptuality rather than how ideas arise from certain epistemic or notional structures. This consideration may well be considered another form and generic thinking or generic writing.

### *Concreteness and Subtraction*

The question posed by the thesis title concerns not universality but concrete universality. Is it a misdirection to associate Joyce with an idealist concept? The term “concrete universality” used in the title expresses that I am not interested in either abstract or metaphysical universality, nor in attempting to re-define Joyce’s relationship to the universality of Aquinas, or to the ‘imaginative universality’ of Vico. Rather, it is meant to signal that my concern is with the grounds of universality which, as I have suggested, is both a question of the generic and the specific, and the singular and the dyadic.

So, what is “subtractive realism”, as it relates to Joyce’s claim to write the universal from within or inside the particular? It means that the main way this thesis will address concreteness is through minimality and subtraction. As Joyce’s style is subtractive and scrupulously mean, so this reading will attempt to be subtractive in terms in the hope of a generic and axiomatic, rather than specific and definitive account of realism. The subtractive

dimension of the account I will present mainly lies in what I refer to as Joyce's implicit critique of the 'immediacy of the immediate', that concrete elements of personal experience do not have any transcendental immediacy. This is something I find remarkable in Joyce, and often quite at odds with his reputation and stated intentions. Joyce seems to see the very act of engaging and perceiving the world to be a Promethean act, a rebellious act of creation on behalf of humanity and against any supposed divine or metaphysical mandate. I find this so remarkable firstly because it does not align so closely with debates contemporary to Joyce, as it does with the most radical parts of present-day philosophy, which I will show in Chapters Two and Five. It is also striking because it challenges Joyce's most notorious image as a writer who ascribed God-like powers of creation to artists and artists alone. My argument in this thesis is that, certainly, Joyce did see the artist as a uniquely autonomous and creative figure, but he also shows that the same Luciferian or Promethean rebellion and appropriation of creation occurs in every human experience no matter how small or significant.

The previously mentioned 'double critical frame' is also in effect in my account of concreteness, since it requires that my theoretical vocabulary is once again divided. In order to make the strong and often sweeping claims about Joyce's concreteness that I do in this thesis, I must necessarily take a conceptual viewpoint again. Moreover, this view is doubly conceptual because the Promethean account of personal experience I see in Joyce is an account of conceptual creativity on the level of the experience of his characters. But, as I have explained previously, I cannot simply define and present these concepts. I have to create my own concepts in parallel in order to 'do justice' to Joyce's works, and for this thesis to adequately reflect the kind of reading which Joyce's works provoked. Joyce is, in many senses, a highly axiomatic writer and because of this produces work which will challenge or undermine the fixity of definitions. Therefore, conceptuality in reading Joyce often necessarily becomes a matter of stepping outside of accepted definitions. Not ignoring them, but altering them by increments. For example, the word "signatures" [U 45] seems to lay in wait for a reader's re-evaluation, demanding not that the reader interprets a new meaning into the word, but alters or mutates the concept beneath it and in doing so imbue the word with the potent impression of the sensible instance that it needs to have to be cogent to Stephen's other thoughts. Derrida, of course, has created an entire theory of literary engagement [D&J, 'Two Words for Joyce'] through such a subtle, almost miniscule conceptual mutation of Joyce's 'signature'.

But all such mutant or subtly altered concepts are concepts of the instance. A writing of the concrete is an account of an individual's conceptualisation of the instant. Joyce's concepts for the writing of the instance are what I would term maximally conceptual, in that he creates very broad new concepts which are generic, since they can be applied to virtually any situation, without being generalising. An example of such a maximal concept is 'epiphany', which not only describes Joyce's specific techniques of recording the concreteness of some specific instance, but is also generic enough to now apply to any instance of sudden realisation in any situation. We can follow with the notion of 'apprehension' in *A Portrait of the Artist of the Young Man*, and the veritable deluge of concepts which comes with the variations of styles used in *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses*.

If Joyce's generic writing of the concrete is maximally conceptual, then the reading of it that I conduct here is minimally conceptual. I have attempted to create the most minimal possible concepts in order to explore, discuss and engage with Joyce's concreteness. For example, in the later chapters of this thesis, I speak of what I refer to as 'one-effects' in his writing, which applies to the drawing of an apparent oneness from a multiplicity without a metaphysical One or a totality. The concept I use negatively early on, 'immediacy of the immediate', is also an attempt towards a minimal conceptuality for the purpose of following a critique which I believe is implicit in Joyce's works. Derrida's pairing of signature and counter-signature, I would argue, is the single most exemplary example of conceptual minimality in reading Joyce. It is such a potent innovation because it is *generic* without being *general*.

Joyce's work appears to proceed from the imperative that, if an artist is to apprehend or to mimic life as it is lived, to capture reality in whatever sense he may intend, then constant and radical stylistic creation is necessary. As individual, daily life is Promethean on a minor scale, so the artist must be Promethean on a major scale, and must constantly invent and reinvent the proverbial wheel. There can be little argument that Joyce does exactly this throughout all his works. But consequently, this implicates Joyce's critical readers in the same process of invention and reinvention. This is not to argue that in order to read Joyce (either critically or for personal enjoyment) one must be stylistically as radical, as focused on novelty as he is. Rather, to read Joyce one must create on a small, minor scale – and, above all else, be aware that this invention was already a part of reading Joyce, constrained concept creation is the very concreteness of any engagement with his texts. It is the material of reading. To



appropriate one of Derrida's phrases, reading Joyce is to seek out opportunities for conceptual reinvention that are "miniscule but completely open" [D&J 27].

*A Method Without a Methodology for Reading a Structurality Without Structure*

In attempting to critically appraise and examine Joyce's claims towards universality, one cannot help but become caught in the issue of the "the ideal reader", as in "the ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" [FW 120] who Joyce allegedly wishes to "devote his whole life" [JJ 703] to reading his works. As I first gathered my notes into the first chapters of this thesis, I had a serious decision to make: one must either address this question explicitly and devote several chapters to the 'reader', or do so implicitly. I have chosen the latter: I have tried to, as much as I could, avoid specific reference to the 'ideal reader', although I have not been able to refine it away entirely. The ideal reader is the *subject* to Joyce's universality both in the sense of being the one to whom the book is ultimately directed and being the very site in which the book 'takes place' in the present.

In one of the earliest "viva" meetings for this thesis in 2017, where the research for this thesis was assembled, Cornelius Crowley (then a member of the committee) commented that my work was often more of a defence of the "lecteur artiste" than a reading of James Joyce. This observation was pivotal for the direction of my thesis, because it was at once critical of and complementary to the direction I had taken early on. My 'solution' to this problematic is not to defend the lecteur artiste, but to enact it, but in such a way as to prevent the texts being studied from being overshadowed. If Joyce's work is, as some have understood it, narrative which has structurality without structure, then the critical reader is compelled to a method without a methodology. Such a reader must create their own method, but only through the constraints of the texts themselves. This is, perhaps, a re-statement of the deconstructionist notion of "free play" [Derrida, 1978], but reimagined through the constraints of generic thought such as the "fidelity" of Badiou [Badiou, 2007: 232] and the "unilateral duality" of Laruelle [Laruelle, 2012:295], both of which, due to vary associations with the mathematic notion of a generic set, stress minimality and a reduction of specificity. Hence,

my focus will be conceptual, rather than discursive or linguistic. Further, it should be noted that the philosophical sources I am using are all in profound disagreement. This is intentional, as I believe that Joyce's work compels the critical reader to seek out contention rather than consensus when it comes to conceptual resources for arguments.

The issue of the 'ideal reader' will remain implicit throughout this thesis. The ideal reader is Joyce's accomplice in conceptual production and novelty. The goal of this thesis is to realise the act of critical reading as production of a minor fiction. Implicit in the implied relation between 'doing justice' and a focus upon how Joyce pushes his readers, practically coercing them, into conceptual creation is the question of why one must read for meaning. This is a question that is heavily implied Beckett's writing on Joyce's 'Work in Progress' in his essay "Dante Bruno ... Vico Joyce" [Beckett, 1929] – the assumption that most appropriate response to literature is find meaning within it. Joyce's work is only ever partially concerned with the part of life where meaning, be it cultural, social or experiential, holds a great importance over human life. Joyce's work often encourages those who read to look away from meaning, towards ideas or sensation, or towards gestures themselves as gestures before a meaning might be attached to them. I will give numerous examples of this throughout this thesis.

A great insight of had by deconstruction is that Joyce saw the division of what are subject matters for philosophical from what are subject matters for life as it is in its quotidian and political forms as absurd. In the Dublin of *Ulysses*, the 'man in the street' is already embroiled in conceptuality and scientific enquiry, even if he is not aware that this is what he is doing. The role of meaning, which is so central to both the idealist thinking of Joyce's day and the sociological thinking of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is not greater than that of ideas, or of reason, or of sensation. But one cannot overstate the difficulties that the above statement would pose to a reader of *Finnegans Wake*, since one's natural disposition upon seeing so many neologisms and allusions is to ask what they mean and what meanings may be attached to them. I think this inclination is part of what Beckett critiques in *DBVJ*. What Joyce is actually doing, which is what makes his work universal in a concrete way, is more or less telling the reader to 'do it yourself'. Meaning that, looking for meaning and interpreting a text is only the beginning of the process of *reading* the text. In order to actually read it, the reader must become involved not in looking for what is given but in conceptualising the material and creating their own ideas.

Consequently, in this thesis I will use the term ‘negative hermeneutics’ to describe the approach of reading not *for* meaning but *against* or, more precisely, *aside from* meaning. Joyce re-invented reading with *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. After them reading is no longer an activity directed towards a text, in the process of deducing meanings, but an activity that takes place *along side* and *according to* a text. Writing and reading now compliment each other as they are both forms of the creation of fiction, it is no longer the case the writer creates and the reader witnesses that creation and discerns or assigns meaning to it. I cannot use terms like ‘theory fiction’, as one understands some of the work of Reza Negarestani, or the concept of ‘philo-fiction’ of Francois Laruelle, to describe what I am doing in this thesis, any work which is, in a sense, ‘under the shadow’ of Joyce’s notion of an ideal reader must hold sympathies to any approach which seeks to erode, or even efface, the boundaries between philosophy and fiction. This is because the ‘ideal reader’ is, in a sense, one who continues Joyce’s work in its absence. But that said, this thesis will not argue that the reader is an equal partner to Joyce. Rather, I would observe that Joyce’s work bears a resemblance to such contemporary ideas as ‘theory fiction’ or ‘philo-fiction’, not because it contains that which effaces the distinction between narrative fiction and philosophical writing, but because engaging with Joyce’s work provokes the reader to make that effacement.

The notions of “minor fiction” and “minimal conceptuality”, therefore, are a crucial part of the method of my approach. By a “minor fiction”, I understand the idea that research on narrative fiction or aesthetic literature does not only base itself around the fictional components of the work being studied, but necessarily posits its own fictions in the act of critical engagement. However, the closer the critical engagement, the more the way it ‘does justice’ to the fiction is as minor as possible. By “minimal conceptuality”, I understand the fact that critical reading must necessarily be involved in the process of creating new concepts about fiction, narrative and aesthetics in general. But these are “minimal” insofar as they are limited by the concepts within the text that is being read. Again, the closer the reading, the more minimal the concepts are. Later in this thesis, I will provide an exposition on the most minimal conceptual distinction I can make within Joyce’s text, between one-effects and the one-in-effect, which is an attempt to state as minimally as possible the distinction in Joyce’s work between concreteness as a unity or an instance, and between singularity writ large as a revolutionary political or aesthetic event. It is crucially important for this thesis that such a distinction be stated as generically and as ‘weakly’ as possible, or else I contradict my own claims about the grounds of universality at work in Joyce’s texts. Therefore, although my

reading of universality is highly conceptual, highly speculative and attempts to be novel, it must be constrained as much as possible by principles of minority and minimality.

However, understanding the ‘productive’ or even ‘creative’ aspects of reading through principles of minimality and minority implies a notion of constraint. In saying this, I am not claiming that the ‘ideal reader’ simply keeps things to a minimum out of deference or respect for a great author but, rather, is compelled to do so by actual constraints. What these constraints are, I think, is the most counter-intuitive aspect of my thesis. It is as follows: *the more concrete and empirical one is about the object of one’s study, the more philosophical one is in fact being*. I consider this to be an aesthetic permutation of Laruelle’s ‘Principle of Sufficient Philosophy’ [Laruelle, 2012], which argues that philosophy is constitutively blind to its own foundational decisions and, therefore, when it turns its eyes towards the world, it sees only confirmation of its own ideations. One might see some commonality between Laruelle’s “henology” – a thinking of the One, with what I could call the ‘Hen-ology’ of *Finnegans Wake* – the writings discovered by Biddy the Hen, that describe a world in which “no body is present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled. Fuitfait!” [FW 613]. Laruelle’s *Philosophies of Difference* [1986, trans. 2011] makes a fascinating claim that difference is often nothing other than a kind of syntax used by philosophy – but a kind of syntax that can be exchanged with, or also taken for, reality. That is, by being synonymous with either syntax or finite reality, difference becomes a way in which for philosophy to ratify its own unifying dualities by ‘discovering’ them in certain finite or empirical objects. I will admit to vulgarising Laruelle’s complex critique more than a little to get to the following point: the distinction of a given instance can become effaced or supplanted by the differences that philosophy finds to be expressed or embodied by it. But contrary to philosophy’s adherence to the identity of reality and difference, what is real, is real in its ‘last instance’ rather than having reality granted to it by philosophically ratified syntaxes of difference. In studying Joyce, I would argue that one must approach his texts in terms of their *instance* and their *distinctions*. Joyce’s distinctions resist any ontologising of philosophical difference. The founding moment of Joyce’s realism is not an account of differences predicated upon dualities, but a gesture upon the void [AP 212], a bounding line drawn between an object and what-is-not that object that establishes that the aesthetic object is *one* in a wholly unilateral fashion. This in turn leads me to a key statement: Joyce’s realism

is *aesthetic* and never *philosophical*. Although never escaping its debts to precursors like Ibsen, Joyce's realism is separate to both literary realism and philosophical realism.<sup>12</sup>

In the study of literature, one can observe similar problems to the one I have just discussed in historicist or sociological critiques which attempt to by-pass philosophical or generic thinking by looking at empirical facts and contexts directly. I am extremely suspicious of imperatives of this kind: it seems all too easy to exchange metaphysical and transcendent assumptions for disavowed metaphysical and transcendent assumptions. I have already addressed this critique in my review of literature, where I showed that post-structuralists often supplants totalities with disavowed totalities by focusing exclusively on particularity and context. Therefore, in order to 'do justice' to Joyce's work and read it as far outside of philosophy as possible, as a singularity which is autonomous to philosophy, the critical reader must openly embrace the fact that to read is to create concepts, and to create fictions about ideas. The critical reader must neither disavow ideas nor invention, or else they will produce a reading populated by disavowed philosophical ideas, such as transcendental dualism, disguised with a cloak of empirical evidence.

I am aware that this might come across as a remarkably combative justification for a messy and disorganised thesis. So, in order to explain what I mean, I will take chapter six of this thesis as an example, because, while it is the chapter where I do the most sustained textual commentary, it is also the most 'fictionalised' of my engagements with Joyce's works.

So in order to explain what I mean I will refer the reader to chapter six of this thesis as this chapter contains three examples of my reading method:

Firstly, the chapter contains an attempt to 'fictionalise' already existing philosophy with a comparison between Donald Davidson's so-called 'Swampman' thought experiment from his essay 'Knowing One's Mind' and Anna's monologue from the final pages of *Finnegans Wake*. I do not believe that, in those pages of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce is engaged in the same epistemological critique of mental objects as Davidson is, but by the "fiction" that there is a similarity between the thought experiment and Joyce's texts, I am able to use it to illuminate the issues of givenness and concreteness I wish to address. I am not saying

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<sup>12</sup> Laruelle once remarked, in conversation to Derrida "Who *wants* the real? Philosophy. And wanting the real, it never gets it, which is to say that it has *realization* instead: in other words, war..." [Laruelle, 'La Decision Philosophique', 1988]. This contradiction of the real by philosophical realization – ironically enough, in Derrida's description of Joyce's "he war" as a pun on the German "wahr" or true [D&J 22]. So perhaps we have realization, in other words: *wahr*? That is, Joyce opens up a distinction (rather than a difference) between philosophical truth and truth in its instance, only one of which the voice of God (or philosophy) may pronounce.

anything untrue about the contents of Joyce's text, and I do not believe I am misrepresenting Davidson's paper. The 'fictionalisation' I refer to in this section is the imagining of a relationship or parallel which does not exist, from which point I am able to make comments about the text which I do believe to be accurate, which I do think I can argue and justify, and which do lead to concrete issues related to Joyce's text. However, it is important for my reader to know that I began with the 'fictionalisation' first and looked for textual evidence in the process of making the argument, and not vice versa. In embracing the 'fictionalising' aspect of my reading, I believe that I preserve the autonomy of Joyce's text from philosophical sufficiency.

Secondly, and most importantly, the first part of the chapter is premised upon the *minor fiction* that there is a unilateral distinction between the "Anna" and "Leafy" voices in the final monologue of *Finnegans Wake*. This could be true, but on its own it is perhaps a debatable point. It is the slightest fiction I could create about any of Joyce's work, lying as it does on the exact border of being an empirical observation about a passage of Joyce's work and being a speculative construction, I have made using that passage. The evidence for making the distinction is clear, and I believe my own reading: I 'hear' two voices in my mind's ear when I personally read the passage. But the evidence I give for making such a distinction is in equilibrium with the fact that it is a fiction that is produced through my reading. I would offer this as a rather mutated example of what Derrida termed the play of signature and counter-signature in Joyce's work. I cannot escape the 'fictionalised' nature of my own reading, but that reading itself cannot escape the specifics of the text which is being read.

Finally, the chapter introduces a *minimal conceptuality*, which is the situational rotation of givenness. This is an attempt to match Joyce's elaborate technique in the *Ulysses* episode 'Lestrygonians', termed "peristalsis", with an equivalent that is as conceptually minimal as Joyce's is elaborate. "Peristalsis" refers to the system of tensions [Gilbert, *Ulysses: A Study* 1932] through which Joyce attempted to make his prose reflect and embody the movements of the digestive system, and the mental 'pangs' which result, with all the metaphorical and analogical potentials this gives to writing things such as memory, dialogue, anticipation, etc. Although 'peristalsis' cannot holistically describe all the stylistic and technical innovations of the chapter, it represents a certain conceptual maximality which drives Joyce's invention, as he describes Bloom's wanderings before and after having lunch. My aim was to create a concept which captures this in a minimal way that is, as generically as

possible. So, it is important to make the following preparatory remark about my thesis before it begins: the *closest* textual commentary and reading that it contains is the least *empirically* tied to Joyce's text.

To conclude, the aim of this thesis is to propose a new reading of universality in Joyce's text. The notions of 'subtractive realism' and 'concrete universality' do not reflect definitions I am making about aspects of Joyce's work, but rather describe the kind of engagement provoked by the universality and realism of his work. That is not to say I am focused entirely on reader response, but rather than my focus is on a double framing: to pair the concepts in Joyce's texts with concepts resulting from reading. Concreteness and subtraction go together in Joyce's writing, even when his work tends to encyclopaedic excess. Therefore, I will try to take the most generic approach that I can, which necessitates a highly conceptual approach. Therefore, I could rephrase this thesis title as an investigation into the *grounds* of universality in Joyce's work, which are subtraction and concreteness. In turn, this is a focus upon the interplay of the generic and the specific, the reading of which necessitates that one 'does justice' to Joyce's work. I interpret 'doing justice' to a text in two ways: firstly, to encounter a work in terms of its singularity, and secondly to maintain its autonomy from philosophical decisions.

Therefore, in order to accomplish the goal of this thesis, I must attempt to reconceptualise universality in literature with the constraints imposed by the singularity of Joyce's works. However, this is an impossible goal, one that can only be accomplished by an 'ideal reader'. So, while I will inevitably fail in that regard, the critical direction of this thesis will rest on the utility and aptness of the concepts which I will introduce through my reading as it progresses. My goal is not to close the question of universality again, but hopefully to open it and present it as the starting point for the construction of new conceptual tools for thinking about all narrative and aesthetic writing, not just Joyce.

## CHAPTER 2: FIXING AN INDECISION

*Narrative as Transformation, Universality as Change.*

I want to begin by recognising that to talk of Joyce's work using general statements about narrative is a risky business. However, one defines narrative and whichever theoretical resources one uses to describe it, it is difficult to imagine any one set of definitions, or any theoretical model, meeting or satisfying the challenges posed to a reader's expectations, scholarly or otherwise, by Joyce's evasive aesthetic turns to subtraction (*Dubliners*), formal novelty (*Ulysses*) and obscurity (*Finnegans Wake*). For example, if one considers narrative to be a primarily structural matter of how a piece of written fiction is ordered, it is easy to find scholars of *Finnegans Wake* who dispute that the book has any profound or non-superficial structure at all. Or, if one considers that narrative is intrinsically tied to orality and vocality, then one must disregard much of deconstruction's engagement with Joyce, which has endeavoured to rid the voice of its centrality in the study of literary texts. Likewise, conceptions of narrative which consider it inherently performative or process-based, or fields of narratology which focus on the performative dimensions of narrative, will find their contraries in critical discourse which focuses upon Joyce's desire to produce work that is static and impersonal.

Even outside of such theoretical models and vocabularies, if one considers narrative purely by conventions of genre, Joyce's works still poses problems to general assumptions about what constitutes fiction and narrative: published episodically, it is difficult to even to say that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* constitute novels in a conventional sense. It is similarly difficult to say how far Joyce's epiphanies (which are often transposed directly into his published texts) can be considered to be works of narrative fiction at all. The word "story", for example, is an equally problematic descriptor of both Joyce's earliest epiphanic writing and of the elements of *Finnegans Wake*. It is notable that the pieces of the then-titled "Work in Progress" that Joyce chose to publish independently (*Anna Livia Plurabelle*, *Haveth Childers Everywhere* and *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun*) often concern storytelling without actually presenting themselves as coherent stories. Of these pieces, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* is a prose poem about gossip and family history, *Haveth Childers Everywhere* concerns personal



testimony and exoneration, and *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun* contains parodies of didactic storytelling, including Joyce's two versions Aesop fables.

For this thesis in particular, these issues are compounded, as it is majorly concerned with narrative as a scene of concreteness, which implies the undeniable, the unavoidable or the obstinate: themes which Joyce deals with directly in the thoughts of Stephen Dedalus (for example, in the *Ulysses* episode 'Proteus') and the philosophical parodies of *Finnegans Wake*. So, to talk about narrative and the concrete poses the issue of how the abstractions and concreteness meet under the cover of a certain aesthetic obscuration. As Joyce's work develops across successively more innovative pieces of prose, concreteness and narrative form seem to traverse through a sequence of aesthetic appropriations and transformations of vocabulary that Joyce gleaned from philosophy, beginning with Aquinas<sup>13</sup>, then Aristotle's hylomorphism<sup>14</sup> followed by Vico's imaginative universals<sup>15</sup> and *coincidentia oppositorum*<sup>16</sup> as envisioned by both Giordano Bruno and Nicholas of Cusa.

Joyce's work is not only a solution to how narrative incidents, poetic form (or aesthetic image) and concreteness go together. Indeed, the subject matter frequently concerns the life of figures (such as Stephen Dedalus or Shem the Penman) who are attempting to bridge the gaps between between form, image and concreteness in aesthetic or literary realms. Joyce's work does not concern philosophical enigmas in the sense of providing answers for the riddles of existence but rather "those lucky cocks for whom the audible-visible-gnosible-edible world existed"<sup>17</sup> [FW 88], which means those whose work involves the transformation of the concrete world in some way: Stephen Dedalus the writer, Leopold Bloom the advertising canvasser, Molly Bloom the singer, Tim Finnegan the builder, Shem the Forger, and so on.

The broadening of Joyce's interests from Aquinas towards Vico, Giordano Bruno and others demonstrates that his interest in the problem of concreteness, of matter and of form, is not confined to aesthetics, but extends to many other domains of human life: in reading *Finnegans Wake*, it is helpful to understand that Vico's notion of imaginative universals as the concretisations of mythological narrative through repetition and mimesis does not apply

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<sup>13</sup> The distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

<sup>14</sup> The union of form and matter.

<sup>15</sup> As between particular events and transcendental identities

<sup>16</sup> Coincidence or identity of opposites.

<sup>17</sup> The origin of this phrase is falsely attributed to Oscar Wilde: "*I was always one of those for whom the visible world existed*". McHugh, in both *Sigla* and *Annotations*, attributes the phrase to Gautier, but its origin as Joyce knew it is Hester Travers Smith's *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde* (1924) which purports to be a posthumous statement from Wilde, allegedly in purgatory, communicated through mediumship and automatic writing.

exclusively to what a modern reader might think of as the mythological domain, such as art and religious iconography, but almost all socialised human life, including marriage, civics, education, etc. If Tim Finnegan is “this man of hod, cement and edifices” [FW 4] it is not because the activity of building walls and houses has a particularly symbolic or emblematic quality in the domain of literature, but the activity of building houses and the process of building and creating is part of a literal generalisation for which Joyce coins the portmanteau “*buildung*” (building and *bildung*) which seems to apply to all activities in which the material stuff of the world, objects or experiences, are transformed into sensible or functional things. Tim Finnegan has built Dublin by “pil[ing] *buildung* supra *buildung* pon the banks” [FW 4]. This refers not only to the physical activity of constructing buildings, but also to the equally concrete activity of collecting the world together in a way that makes it sensible and understandable to everyone. Joyce imagines a “*buildung*” which is a vast composition of the activities which form Vichian imaginative universals, but the collection of the “*buildung*” itself also resembles what Wilfrid Sellars has called the “manifest image”, which is “the framework in terms of which man came to be aware of himself as man-in-the-world<sup>18</sup>”, the collective philosophical accomplishment of humanity and “conceptual framework” through which images of oneself, others and objects can be made from the surrounding world. By piling “*buildung* on *buildung*”, such a collective image is made not out of abstract experiences, language or ideas, but from chunks of the natural world itself. As we learn later in “Haveth Childers Everywhere” [FW 532], the builder figure has carved so many chunks out of the land that, in McHugh's words, “the injuries ...visited on the river's flanks are so grave that no blade of grass can emerge further from the stony scar tissue” [McHugh, *Sigla* 22]; “the whole blighty acre was bladey well pessedover” [FW 553]. Roland McHugh, in *Sigla*, sees such a collective active or image as similarly represented by the middenheap from which the hen Biddy Doran plucks the missing letter: “the midden is a symbol... for the inhabited world in which men have left so many traces”, [McHugh 22] out of which a letter which “stands for all attempts of written communication is uncovered. Such provides an image of Joyce's work as the attempt to extract a legible text with the collective material world full of material “traces” of human activity and attempts at understanding, something which is part of the “midden” of communicative images but somehow separate from it.

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<sup>18</sup> Sellars, *Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man*. (For Sellars citations I use an online edition: <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/psim.html>)

Imaginative universality as a material activity is therefore of great importance in understanding Joyce's interest in, and deployment of, narrative. In the twentieth century, many critics who sought to categorise *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* too quickly by the rubrics of comparative mythology or structural analysis of narrative, especially Joseph Campbell [Campbell & Robinson, 1944], misunderstood Joyce's deployment of the idea of imaginative universals as an endorsement of a theory of inflexible archetypes, rather than an aesthetic elaboration of a difficult relationship with epistemic and aesthetic constructivism through notions of repetition. In such generalising readings, typified perhaps by Campbell's, the distinction between a universal narrative and a narrative that harbours or situates universality, is all but lost. Such views also risk mistakenly focusing on the structure of the images Joyce gives us rather than seeing how Joyce gives us an account of their coming-to-be, which is no less true for narrative image (as a species of what Joyce called aesthetic or esthetic image) than it is for more outwardly poetic or imagistic pieces such as the epiphanies or the more musical fragments of *Finnegans Wake*.

So, in order to frame my discussion of narrative and concreteness without generalising too much, I need to be somewhat reductive and make some simplifying assumptions. To this end, I begin with Eugene Jolas' "Revolution of the Word" manifesto and how it relates to Joyce's use of narrative, or how to read Joyce [JJ 587-588]. Although Jolas's statement does not explicitly relate to Joyce, the close relationship between him and Joyce means that the manifesto is, in a sense, representative of the composition of *Work in Progress*, as well as the immediate legacy of *Ulysses*. Indeed, Joyce's biographer Richard Ellman relates how Jolas found in *Work in Progress* the "principle text" [JJ 589] of the revolution of the word. This is both retrospective of Joyce's position in the first wave of modernism and anticipatory of the influence which *Finnegans Wake* would hold for the coming decades of late modernism and post-modernism.

Of the manifesto itself, it is the fourth point that I think holds the most interest for an investigation of how Joyce balances the concrete and the universal, and it is worth atomising it or breaking it down into components to see how it illuminates how Joyce was thought to have reinvigorated the relationship between narrative and reality: "Narrative is not mere anecdote, but the projection of a metamorphosis of reality." [Ibid]

The first aspect to highlight is the importance of change, what the manifesto refers to as a "projection of a metamorphosis". For modernists in 1929, who were in some sense writing about modernism retrospectively as a movement whose first wave was perhaps in

decline, it is significant that metamorphosis literally implied a change of form. But for my own purposes, I would take “metamorphosis” to mean change in general, in the most open possible sense of the word, as will be seen later, we will need to be more exacting about what can and what cannot be considered to be “a change”. We have already seen, in the example of Tim Finnegan's “bildung upon bildung”, how change is bound up with the question of narrative, and with the question of collective education and elaborating awareness of oneself in the world. Understanding, metamorphosis and narrative are not a comfortable, complimentary triad, even if they do appear together frequently.

The second aspect of the “Revolution of the Word” is to isolate the use of “reality”. In the context of the *transition* manifesto, which is dismissive of what might be called naïve realism and is instead in favour of “*a priori* reality”, such an isolation of “reality” sees the manifesto as suggestive of a dual principle of realism, covering both aesthetic and philosophical realisms where narrative is realist in content and directed towards a universe that is realist in the most philosophical or scientific sense, a realism not of content but of orientation.

Finally, and most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, the statement of a distinction between narrative and anecdote relies upon an act of separation, where the “mere” of the manifesto here suggests that narrative is associated or linked to its diminutive form (“anecdote”) with which one may, but should not, confuse it. From this, we have the important idea that that defining narrative language in a concrete, realist way requires one to make a distinction between narrative and what is not narrative, or that narrative itself as an aesthetic or expressive form is composed of two parts.

### *The Incompatibility of Narrative and Story-telling.*

The idea that narrative starts with division or distinction is far from unfamiliar and new. Much of the twentieth-century study and scholarship of narrative depends upon such distinctions or dyadisms. For example, there are structuralist examples of trying to identify the universal distinctions interior to all narratives, such as Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, and examples of such distinctions include the facts and the telling of those facts (as narration relies upon a distinction between *histoire* and *récit*, the story and the storytelling), or the sequence in which events happened and then the sequence in which the events are recounted to a reader. There are even more schematic structural approaches that see prose narrative as a

spatial representation of irreducibly temporal experience. Such an act of spatialisation is often given, for example in Hugh Kenner's reading of *Ulysses* in his *The Stoic Comedians*, as a defining trait of what makes a narrative encyclopaedic. Kenner's distinction between narrative and storytelling uses a similar set of terms to reach the conclusion that *Ulysses* has "broken with narrative, though it may go through certain forms of storytelling" [Kenner 34]. Such a break is because "narrative implies someone is talking", that the domain of narrative is "under the spell of the voice, or something analogous to the voice", whereas storytelling can exist independently of the voice and language "generated by continuous acts of discourse rather than typographic storage" [Kenner 48]. In Kenner's view, Joyce's position as the author of books that celebrate the form of book as a medium for storytelling divides him from the culture of orality and oral narration which defined Ireland before the twentieth century.

It is persuasive to see Joyce's work, across all of his published writing, as maintaining such a clearly defined distinction between narrative and storytelling (or "mere" anecdote), although the question is whether any single theoretical framework or narratological schema can precisely capture that distinction in terms of either context or differing structural functions. For simplicity, I will refer to the two parts of the dyad as "narrative" and "storytelling", firstly, because "storytelling", as a term, has an informal or perhaps folkish and diminutive connotation and, secondly, because "storytelling", as an activity, has a specific connotation, both in Dublin and Joyce's own life, where there is skill in finding the ingredients for a story and then telling it well, a skill with considerable social status invested in it.

The most immediate biographical context for ideas of storytelling and narrating is Joyce's father, John Joyce, who was a great source of anecdotes for his son's work, including, perhaps most importantly, the stories of the Norwegian sea captain and Buckley's shooting of the Russian general, which contribute not only a substantial chunk of content to *Finnegans Wake*<sup>19</sup>, but also provide the book with structure. Such stories seem to have informed Joyce's view of how orality and colloquial speech re-emerge in submerged or inward states such as dream-life and involuntary memory.<sup>20</sup> From Ellman's biography onwards, biographical

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<sup>19</sup> Complete versions of both tales take up much of II.3.

<sup>20</sup> It is suggestive to me that both the stories, retold in rather rambling form, are retold immediately before the owner of the pub makes his strange plea for both guilt and innocence. Both a dominant voice and the "him" that is object of discussion are associated with a  $\Pi$ -figure throughout II.3, beginning on the first page of the chapter, which gives the strong impression that the stories themselves are something submerged coming to the surface, or at least the last barrier between the obscurations of  $\Pi$  and his final declaration of "Guilty but fellows culpows" [FW 363]. After this section, those remaining in the pub seem to be entreating Shem the forger to write a new

writing about Joyce's early life has often given one the impression of John Joyce as someone who used his skill at telling stories in order to maintain authority and capital as his financial fortunes grew worse, and used his comic or castigating way of speaking to control the mood of the home, his paternal authority undermined by the material situation and his social standing [JJ 44]. When *Finnegans Wake* was published, Joyce worried that, if his father were alive, he would say that his son was not able to tell the old stories as well as he had. In Joyce's work, John Joyce is fictionalized both as a particular character (Simon Dedalus) personifying a certain kind of rhetorical bluster, and, in *Finnegans Wake*, as a general mode of storytelling or rhetoric force of personal testimony providing grounds for authority, where any trace of John Joyce the individual, not unlike Stephen Dedalus' view of the artist, refined out of any particular concrete existence and yet to be found everywhere. John Joyce is closely tied to  $\Pi$  figures throughout *Finnegans Wake*. But, perhaps more significant than John Joyce's influence on any single named figure in the work, is the fact that almost all characters in *Finnegans Wake* seem to have absorbed aspects of his impulse and willingness to use oration, humour and polemic in order to maintain both the cohesion of their sense of self and their position in the wider intersubjective world. John Joyce's influence is felt both in  $\Pi$  related figures like H. C. Earwicker, but also in the impersonal spirit of the "bildung upon bildung" itself. It is clear that Joyce saw something typical about Dublin life in his father's use of language and, in particular, in his use of anecdote; storytelling is a way to put other people in their place, but at the same time it places the teller himself in a strategic position.

Although "storytelling" is a celebrated aspect of both Irish social and familial life, particularly in Dublin, Joyce's work displays a certain persistent negativity around it, illustrated by his appropriation in *Finnegans Wake* of a remark by Samuel Beckett, who scorned the story of Buckley as "another insult to Ireland" [JJ 398], which appears as "that insult to Igorladns! " [FW 353], a remark upon the pivotal moment of the tale where Buckley observes the General using a sod of turf to wipe himself after defecation and decides to shoot. The large amount of attention to detail given to anecdotes in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* may make it hard for readers of Joyce to see what merit there is in a distinction that Jolas' manifesto makes between revolutionary narrative and "mere" anecdotes, outside of a modernist damnation of "plain" [JJ 589] readers and the conventional functions of narrative fiction in prose and theater. It might even be possible to use the term "anecdote" in that same

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story [FW 369]. The question of the  $\Pi$ -figure's guilt is possibly resolved (he accepts his guilt if others share responsibility) in this section, but any such resolution is bracketed by the acts of sharing and writing anecdotes.

diminutive sense to describe an event as incomparably significant as the recounting of Michael Furey's death in 'The Dead' [D 221-223], as Greta's recounting of the story is not exactly essentially or taxonomically distinct from the wider tradition of Dublin storytelling that Joyce carefully imported into almost all of his work; between a real incident and a song. Although Joyce may have approved of Jolas' dismissal of "mere" anecdotes, it is nevertheless the case that Joyce's Dublin is a place where anecdotes have the power to raise the dead (metaphorically in 'The Dead', but very literally in *Finnegans Wake*) and split the atom (the tale of Buckley in *Finnegans Wake* is where one finds the frequently quoted "abnihilation of the etym" [FW 353] passage).

Joyce's works nevertheless show us that a focus upon storytelling and anecdote often involves a kind of double depreciation. Much as the tale of Buckley involves that "insult to Ireland", storytelling will frequently involve a degradation or devaluation not only of an aspect of Irish life, but also of the form of narrative itself, which is devalued in such deployments. So much is evident in *Ulysses*, where story-telling and anecdotes are linked to the acquisition and defence of social capital, with Leopold Bloom's alienation from his Catholic peers often being evidenced by his inability to complete an anecdote himself and being interrupted. He is later to be the subject matter of stories rather than their teller<sup>21</sup>. For example, the anti-semitism of the "good one" told about J. Reuben Dodd's son by the men in Paddy Dignam's funeral procession in *Ulysses* both rejects and devalues the cosmopolitan aspect of Dublin community at the turn of the century, as well as thoroughly debasing any notion that the shared loss of an acquaintance would reveal a unique solidarity or spirit of mutual acceptance amongst Dubliners. In the case of the "awfully good one that's going the rounds" [U 117] about Reuben J. Dodd and his son, the form of the story is a depreciation of itself as an act of performance of creative narrative. In the anecdote about the Dodds, the role of a silver florin in the story seems pointedly different from the singularity Joyce intends to produce in epiphany: it can be compared to the sovereign in 'Two Gallants', where it is on the particularity of one specific gold sovereign that the value and validity of someone's story rests. Whereas, in the Dodd story, the anti-semitic punchline is that Dodd sees the value of Dodd Junior's life as equal to that of just any silver florin. If a Joycean epiphany is a narrative form (exemplary of what Joyce refers to as an "image" in his notes on aesthetics [OCPW,

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<sup>21</sup> A comparison can be made between Bloom's failed attempt to ingratiate himself in 'Hades' and later when he finds himself as the subject of a gossip, perhaps even what one could call an antisemitic urban myth, in 'Lestrygonians' regarding "one thing he'll never do" (meaning signing anything) see [U 227]. How far Bloom is aware of his gossipers make about him is perhaps unclear at this point.

‘Aesthetics’]) that testifies to a certain singularity of an object or incident, then the storytelling form that the men indulge in on the way to Dignam's funeral manages to undermine all possible singularity, whether it be the singular and incomparable value of a firstborn son in a Jewish family<sup>22</sup> which notably is unspoken, to the individual self-abasement of Bloom himself indulging in an antisemitic joke, or to the singular opportunity for cosmopolitan universalism, brought about by Dublin's political circumstances in 1904 and squandered through such minor acts of xenophobia and identitarian nationalism, of which the remarks spurred by the collective fear and mockery of Dodd are, at least in *Ulysses*, all too typical.

The way the men jostle for control of the story of Dodd's son and defer to Simon Dedalus' approval at the end of the recounting is not only a comment on bigotry, but also an illustration of the climate of competition and battle for social capital and status in which such bigotry emerges. Under the approval of an authoritative listener and booming talker like Simon Dedalus, the heterogeneity of narrative becomes closely regulated into a homogenous game of voices and points expressed. This is true both collectively and individually (Bloom's own interior antisemitism as reflected in his desire to impress the men with the story about the kind of "dirty jew"<sup>23</sup> [U 232] he defines himself against, as well as the anti-semitism of the anecdote itself). The storytelling aspect speaks of a division between the subject and the object, the teller and the content of the story, and condemns individuals for their complicity. In the act of storytelling, self-representation shares equal space with self-abasement. Joyce shows us how the men are keen to put themselves in their place in order to put someone else in their place. The mode of narrative, however, while not absolving any of the individuals involved in the perpetuation of the antisemitic rumour, shifts the focus towards the collective situation and articulates the tendencies of Leopold Bloom's thought towards indifference and

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<sup>22</sup> It is notable in 'Hades' that the men in the carriage notice the harm to Bloom in the talk about suicide, concerning the loss of his father but no such sensitivity is shown towards the loss of the son.

<sup>23</sup> The context is difficult, as even a simple discussion of the political context of Bloom's surprising indulgence in antisemitism cannot really be reduced to a few comments, especially the context where Bloom thinks of Dodd as "what they call a dirty jew". Whether he (meaning Bloom) defines himself against Dodd for the reason that he sees Dodd with the same antisemitic lens as the other men ("the devil on moneylenders"), or whether he is priding himself for not letting himself be thought of in the same terms of Dodd, is difficult to glean from his comments. However, the appearance of Dodd later as the Anti-Christ or Judas in 'Circe' does suggest that this comment has caused little guilt or self-doubt in Bloom's mind. There is an irony that Bloom has just pitied the blind boy, whereas Bloom has apparently not seemed to have detected several of the antisemitic comments made by the men at Dignam's funeral and in Davy Byrne's pub.



that which is out-of-place<sup>24</sup>. In doing so, narrative reveals that it harbours a change, even if it is a change denied by circumstance<sup>25</sup>.

As Hugh Kenner observed, Joyce's dedication to the written word over the "talkers" of oral storytelling (his definition of "narrative") was something of a hostile break with Irish traditions, as a man of books rather than of voices. So, when considering narrative as concrete or material and whether that materiality is composed of continuous acts or objects, one is left with the impression that narrative necessitates the performance of an act of separation. The critical reader is invited to compare the different varieties of such a separation and perhaps to acknowledge how the text itself represents a kind of interior discontinuity.

### *Drawing the Concrete from the Void.*

In order to think both narrative as concrete and narrative as change, we must see the distinction between narrative and storytelling as based on something which is neither foundational nor structural. Joyce's "materialism" (in quotation to mark out his own scepticism about the term) is a materialism which begins with contingency, and the lack of foundations upon which a distinction is made. Such an understanding, or aesthetic, of concreteness beginning with contingency and void,<sup>26</sup> recalls Joyce's explanation of the experiential or mystified concreteness of Blake and Swedenborg in a 1912 lecture in Trieste, which perhaps can be read as an attempt to force a necessary continuity between his own modernist realism and Blake's idealism. In his notes on realism and idealism [OCPW, 'Realism and Idealism in English Literature'], we can see an attempt to transform an affirmative vision of aesthetic concreteness based on the experiential and the phenomenal to a subtractive vision predicated on the intellect and the contingent. Joyce's surprising dismissal

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<sup>24</sup> What I am hinting at here is a dialectic between placement and what cannot be placed, particularly Badiou's articulation of the distinction between the *esplace* and the *horlieu* in his reading of Mallarmé [Badiou, 1982]. In this example, storytelling takes on the function of the *esplace* which attempts to place an element which cannot be placed. It may be that Bloom is unable to complete the "good one" about Dodd's son because the loss of the son is what distinguishes him so profoundly from his catholic peers. That is to say, although Bloom tries to couple place (his social position) and space (his physical space in the carriage and being beside the catholic men) through the act of placement, there is a figure of excess that prevents such a coupling from taking place. This excess is the potential for shared loss between Dodd and Bloom, which remains purely potential until Dodd appears holding the "sodden mass of his only son" in the hallucination in 'Circe', accompanied by a mutation of one the books' worst antisemites, Punch Costello [U 623-624]

<sup>25</sup> One interpretation of the vision of Dodd in 'Circe' could be that it is Bloom who guiltily feels that he is the betrayer. The apparition of the Anti-Christ occurs after "Stephen turns and sees Bloom" [U 623]

<sup>26</sup> Of course, alluding to Stephen Dedalus' statement that the Catholic church is "founded, like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood" [U 266].

of mysticism in Blake in his lecture seems to prefigure much of Blake's influence in *Ulysses*, and here it is useful to consider how Joyce makes "extremes meet" [U 622] by transforming the anti-intellectual and anti-scientific Blake into a mythological resource for both Stephen Dedalus' philosophical ideas and Leopold Bloom's rational and scientific character. Such is evident in the following passage of Joyce's lecture:

The influence of Michaelangelo can be felt throughout Blake's works, particularly in those prose pieces, collected in fragments, in which he continually insists upon the importance of the pure, clear line that evokes and evokes the image against the background of the uncreated void. [OCPW 181]

The concreteness of the "pure, clear line" begins with a gesture of separation: not a separation that speaks to or reflects any foundational ontological distinction or something which is immanent to a certain context or experience, but a separation that exists "against the background of the uncreated void". Rather than underlining an ontological or phenomenological distinction between text and voice or space and time, we can explore assumption that narrative is founded on void and contingency and that its "pure, clear line"<sup>27</sup> might be seen as the basis for concreteness of both form and content. What is concrete is neither to be understood as being experiential or transcendental: concreteness can begin with nothing more than the division of a minimal trace of something between something that is and something that is not.

To Kenner's observation that Joyce's work in *Ulysses* has "broken with narrative, though it may go through certain forms of storytelling", we can append the following: because neither vocality, nor textuality, nor socio-historic context nor even language itself offers any transcendent foundation into which one could make such a break, we must conclude that the narrative is nothing other than the embodying gesture of the break itself: a line drawn on the uncreated void.

Such is perhaps why the sigla notation system Joyce used in *Finnegans Wake* has such an explanatory value for the work, beyond identifying or categorising the figures themselves: Joyce chose to name his figures (they cannot really be called characters) with unpronounceable symbols and in doing so *Finnegans Wake* begins<sup>28</sup> with a graphemical

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<sup>27</sup> To be clear, this does not mean the linear progression of a narrative as a single forward motion.

<sup>28</sup> This is not to claim that the sigla are the beginning of the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, as they emerged during the composition process, quite pragmatically, to aid the author's failing eyesight. According to Roland McHugh [Sigla 7], the origin of the sigla begin during the drafting of the Tristan and Isolde sections (I.2 and II.4) which is nonetheless very early during the composition of the book. A full list of the sigla appears in a letter to Harriett Shaw Weaver dated 24th of March, 1924 [L 213].

gesture which is less like language, and more like a mathematical notation system such as John Conway's surreal numbers.<sup>29</sup>

To the notion of separating lines and the void, we can add the idea of *clinamen*, which is the suggestion of arbitrariness or randomness in the act of drawing the "pure, clear line". The "swerve of shore" [FW 18] of the first paragraph of *Finnegans Wake* explicitly evokes the classical concept of *clinamen*, or deviation, which was crucial to the Greek and Roman doctrine of atomism which presented the world as having three principle elements being atoms, the void and *clinamen*. It is perhaps inappropriate to say that Joyce's text makes an ontological claim that the world is composed of atoms, the void and *clinamen*, but these are arguably the three elements that, if it is to satisfy Joyce's claims of contingency while still harbouring both a sense of universality and change, narrative must be seen to be comprised.

One of the implications that can be gleaned from Derrida's engagement with Joyce in "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce" [D&J 41] is that vocality has no foundational claim to written literature. This observation can be broadened to say that if the apparently foundational role of vocality is undermined by Joyce, then likewise the presumed affinity between narrative and natural language is a matter of contingency rather than necessity, because the gestures which that a narrative and the thoughts that they represent are not necessarily linguistic, if by linguistic one means natural language and discourse. A crucial incident makes this evident during *Finnegans Wake*'s recounting of how H. C. Earwicker got his nickname, the reader being introduced to the siglum which identifies him: "by ancientest signlore his gesture meaning:  $\exists$ !" [FW 48] The use of a siglum effectively extirpates personalities from the genealogical meshes and networks suggested by proper names. The "ancientest signlore" is something ancient to both language and meaning, the unpronounceable symbol  $\exists$  perhaps refers to  $\Pi$  during its gesture of hesitation. To this point it is helpful to be precise about what Joyce drew upon from Vico, as Vico's imaginary universals do not chart the social construction of meaning from language, but language's construction of distinction and meaning in reaction to exterior events. For example, Vico's argument that the "pa" of a thunder clap becoming doubled in the "Papa" of father and "Pape"

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<sup>29</sup> My choice of example here informed by the anti-nominal argument of Badiou's *Number and Numbers*, along with the very suggestive use of the term "material" for what a number cut from (ordinality), and the distinction between a number and a fiction. I hope the relevance of using a mathematical, rather than a linguistic, example to discuss Joyce's work will become clearer as this thesis progresses. The relevance of the surreal numbers here is that of a system of graphic gestures where the initial elements are not language but separating lines and a void, which does not transmit a value but rather establishes the rules of a game from which an infinite (but rationally defined) sequence can be drawn.

of Pope [NS 184] which inspired both the ‘thunderwords’ of *Finnegans Wake* and frequent repetition of variants of the word “pa” beginning with ‘oldparr’ on the very first page. According to Joyce’s appropriation of Vico’s argument, vocality comes into an apparently central position only through something it borrows from the imitation of a thunderstorm, an unknowable and indescribable event exterior to voice, language and even personal perspective.

There is a temptation to see what is represented by sigla such as  $\mathbb{M}$  or  $\mathbb{E}$  as archetypes, with  $\mathbb{E}$  standing for a personal entity of divine paternity as much as  $\Delta$  will later stand for divine maternity. But, as Roland McHugh argues, "the utility of such pronouncements is dubious" [Sigla 12]. For McHugh,  $\mathbb{M}$  is "like God" not in the sense of being archetypal, but rather in the sense of being "a thing sought, a retort to the enigma of creation, a potentially dangerous but obsessively desired power of truth" [Ibid]. Mythological figuration is thus shifted from signifying something ancient or inherited, towards something which is *ancient to* both inheritance and meaning, to the construction of which inheritance and meaning themselves do not contribute.<sup>30</sup>  $\mathbb{M}$  is unnamed and unsayable because it cannot be named or spoken, it means nothing because it represents a trace of the "power of truth" to which horizons of meaning (social, historical, personal, experiential, etc.) tend but inevitably fail. Much like Stephen to his young pupils in the classroom in 'Nestor'<sup>31</sup>, Joyce is taking pleasure in delivering a riddle which not only has no answer, but seems to stage the triumph of the gesture of the enigma of expression and intellect over the question of meaning itself. The "power of truth", as it pertains to the graphemic realm of written narrative, is perhaps nothing other than the staging of an evacuation of a particular meaning.

But in making such claims, it should be noted that there is a contrast here between Joyce's practice of separation and other heuristic distinctions. The distinction made by Eugene Jolas (et al) between narrative and anecdote, the popular distinction between what is shown and what is told, *histoire* and *récit*, Hugh Kenner's distinction (maybe entirely specific to Joyce) between narrative and storytelling, and Paul Ricœur's analysis of emplotment/*muthos* and arrangement of events as distinct from acts of narration or the "configurational element"

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<sup>30</sup> Perhaps Joyce's aesthetic realism has twisted the constructive ideas of Vico to the point where they are no longer, properly speaking, constructivist in the strong epistemological sense. There is something here that very much resembles the "arche-fossil" of Quentin Meillassoux's *After Finitude* [2006]. Something which is both ancestral and exterior to the correlates of language and thought.

<sup>31</sup> "The cock crew/the sky was blue:/The bells in heaven/Were striking eleven/Its time for this poor soul/To go to heaven". The non sequitor answer to Stephen's riddle is "a fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush" [U 32]

and "grasping together" [Ricoeur, 1983] of story elements (and further the hermeneutic distinction between narrative history and history as narrative), are all at least somewhat arbitrary and to various extents are theoretical in their claims about narrative far more than they are a distinction between what might be called the structure (the simple elements and their framing) and metastructure (the partitive grouping of elements, the excess or surplus beyond any particular framing). That is all to say that if Jolas is correct that Joyce's texts see narrative to be the projection of change in reality, then the challenge of reading Joyce comes from the fact that we are left with no grounds for a foundational distinction from which a secondary distinction between structure and a metastructure might be derived, rather it is the division of a situation into structure and metastructure that comes first and it is from this separation that a language based on definitions and distinctions can be formed into the apparently foundational semantic distinctions (time/space, text/voice, history/narrative, etc) these being summoned through syntactical and grammatical games. Joyce hereby offers a narrative aesthetic reformed as a kind of anticipatory realism: what is apparently secondary comes first, the primordial being established later as the game evolves.

Far from Joyce's familiar image of a writer who believed in the institutive power of language, we can see the opposite: language's constructive and institutive faculties are, in *Ulysses* and especially *Finnegans Wake*, systemically stripped away and surrendered to "a sudden gesture of revolutionary nature" [AP 252] (to re-appropriate an expression from *A Portrait*) of aesthetic creation. Language is exposed to its own power by exposure to something (that "power of truth") it anticipates but cannot itself name. When, in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus quotes from Tennyson, and gives the title "lord of language" [U 251] to Shakespeare, it is in the context of how Shakespeare draws poetic insight from sexual adventure and infidelity, this being a confrontation of that which remains outside of language. Shakespeare has language, but the one who seduced him plays an erotic game ("the game of laugh and lie down" [Ibid]), and the language of legal bounds could not make his wife faithful. Nor could his own writing of *Romeo and Juliet* give him control over his own sexual adventures or armour against the "invisible weapon" of feminine emotion. Shakespeare's status as a "lord of language" is both a statement of his authority over language and his partial confinement within it, which is unavoidable in the encounter of that which is dyadic, discontinuous and exterior to language and knowledge.

For Joyce, the writer or artist is confronted with a discontinuity between knowledge and language, where language neither institutes nor indicates the presence of a discontinuity

from which it now cannot escape. Stephen claims that "there is, I feel in the words, a goad of the flesh driving [Shakespeare] into a new passion... darkening even his understanding of himself" [U 251]. The lord of language is unable to exert that power of language to understand himself, as Stephen indicates that Shakespeare's work, which (Stephen claims) refers to his seduction and marriage, is marked by darkening and obscurity, and not by what it particularly indicates. The ultimate expression of the "darkening" of language is a discontinuity giving rise to a singularity as "two rages commingle in a whirlpool". Such a darkening is also one of self-understanding: as the passion of Shakespeare made him unable to understand himself, the dark passion of language removes language's own ability to name or describe the separation which it now, in the shadow of a nameless event, harbours.

It is separation too that underlies Stephen's contemplation of the potency of literature, encapsulated as it in the Aristotelian distinction between the possible and the actual [U 30 & 248]. The artistic exploitation of this separation occurs both in making "accomplices" of the real, but also of confronting things which are possibilities and "things that were not" and, the exposure of language to gaps in knowledge, as possibilities are "things unknown: the name Achilles bore when he lived among women". The reference to Achilles here brings together the unknowable and the unnameable, but not the unsayable or the unactionable.

In discussing separations, my preference here is, at least semantically, to maintain a distinction between narrative and storytelling, but with the caveat they are not foundationally or essentially different things. The distinction will necessarily be axiomatic, albeit provisional, and not definitive or descriptive. I would disagree with (to take an example) Kenner's argument that narrative implies vocality whereas storytelling does not (even if not the voice itself but "something analogous to the voice" [Kenner, 1962]), which remains a very puzzling thing to say about Joyce's Dublin and specifically *Ulysses*, where many pages of the middle episodes are devoted to showing how technology such as printed newspapers and telegrams had, by 1904, become almost seamlessly integrated with the "talkers" tradition of storytelling. In fact, many oblique aspects of Dublin humour, such as the postcard reading "u.p. : up" to Denis Breen and the visual pun of Bloom's pitch for the Keyes advertisement [U 153], for example, find themselves tangled into technological games of transmission, reproduction and resemblance that are only "analogous to the voice" in the most abstract conceivable senses. It is impossible to say that a visual pun or rebus, or for that matter piece of written nonsense, is more or less originary or authentic than their spoken equivalents. The technological side of *Ulysses* itself, the narration of how technological (such as the telephone)

and theoretical (such as psychoanalysis) innovations show that allegedly uniquely human behaviours like storytelling can happen without the authority or centrality of the human voice.

It is an important feature of *Ulysses* that the almost transcendently privileged role of orality is not deliberately undermined by Joyce himself, but is already undermined (ironically) by the very situation which Joyce takes up. This view is perhaps still best evidenced by Derrida's examination of telephone calls in the text [D&J, 'Ulysses Gramophone'], in which it is demonstrated that the foundational link between the human voice and narrative never really existed in the first place, but its allegedly originary status is emulated in the games of iteration which happen within the text. Any distinction between narrative and storytelling cannot begin with the presumptive originary authenticity of a human voice, whether one associates either "narrative" or "storytelling" with a sense of foundational orality or sees them as an inextricable from certain discursive situations. If personal perspective, voice and testimony go together, they do so only situationally and contingently. Not because there is anything *a priori* or intuitive about their co-belonging. Joyce's major constructivist influence, Giambattista Vico, seems to have informed a view that sees the co-belonging of perspective, voice and narrative as strictly habitual and reactive to historical discontinuity rather than reflecting anything essential. Although it may appear that Joyce's work is, via mythological models of narrative, lends a "strong" or ontologically and epistemically institutive function to language, the way his prose unfolds would suggest the inverse. Instead we are offered a weak, realist view of language where language always works with a borrowed material and relies upon the possibilities of what anticipates it rather than what it inscribes. This is what I meant when I previously referred to as the aesthetics of narrative becoming an anticipatory realism.

If one associates "narrative" with change on the one hand, and a distinction from anecdote and storytelling on the other hand, we have something which can be thought of as an extrication from making transcendental demands of (or upon) context itself in favour of anticipation, and something which relies on those transcendental demands never being spoken about. Context is inescapable only as far as something invisible and meta-contextual makes it so. Narrative-as-change is a subversion of that extra-contextual, apparently transcendental "something". We return, therefore, to the thinking of narrative and change, albeit in a negative fashion, the act of defining narrative being done in terms of distinction and subtraction. Further deepening that definition by undermining any claims to foundational originality in either speech or text, an undermining that it suggestive the grouping together of narrative and change, but it does not get us any closer to understanding about why narrative and change

must be grouped in the first place. Or, more simply, it implies that such a definition is made and not given, as it cannot be the expression of any prior foundational identity.

The thinking of change, therefore, raises a problem of thinking of narrative in terms of distinct registers, which appear to contradict themselves. The influence of atomism is already evident in the composition of *Finnegans Wake* with its atoms, occurrences of clinamen, and the paramount importance of the void. But this triadic or tripartite arrangement is more than just a metaphor for the narrative structure. In some ways, we are not dealing with three parts, but rather a dyadic arrangement and a supplementary element. As the supplementary element is clinamen, an equivalent of an unnameable or an unsayable, the distinctions between two named registers such as voice/text, *histoire/récit*, time/space and narrative/anecdote, still frame the discussion of narrative.

While critical discussion might be seen to return to separations and dyads, it is important to point out that any reading of Joyce must avoid being schematic or dualistic about this. It is not enough to say that narrative is a change and storytelling is a paralysis or resistance to such a change. Rather, "storytelling" and "narrative", if indeed they are sensible or coherent distinctions, can constitute an interior dialectic within a piece of narrative fiction in which case one can speak of a swerve, a deviation or clinamen. One can perhaps critique the conservatism of Hugh Kenner's position, in that it sees vocality and textuality as opposed rather than locked within a cycle of mutual emulation, a view which leads to a foundational assumption that the wider distinction between narrative and storytelling is justified and there is little space for a deviation or swerve inside the inner workings of an encyclopaedic narrative. But if we vouch for an interior dialectic, then it does not depend on the foundational distinction such as between spatial and temporal, vocal and typographic, or the linear time of the emplotment or *mythos* and the non-linear time of the narrative voice and *récit*.

The atomistic elements of atoms, clinamen, and the void, are therefore complemented by another set of three elements: materiality, void and a cut. It is important to return to materiality so as not to lose sight of the idea that narrative must be a concrete or real thing. In the 'Revolution of the Word' manifesto it is a necessity for the fourth axiom to end with "metamorphosis of reality" rather than just "metamorphosis". That is, I am proposing to expand the view of Jolas and Joyce into a materialist register, as I would argue that it cannot be debated that narrative is a real, material object or practice which is about real, material elements.



The necessary coupling of change and narrative implies that we see narrative non-foundationally. In this regard, Joyce perhaps often gives us a negative image of interpretation, such as the attempts to divine the non-meaning of a negative image of a horse found in the middenheap [FW 111], or the telegram full of holes [FW 124], in *Finnegans Wake*, which further implies the provocation of the reader towards a kind of negative hermeneutics in which, rather than seeing narrative as foundationally inseparable from historical horizons, finitude and temporal existence, narrative is a subject activity that admits a part which is separate from any such foundational statements. Rather than say that Joyce's work provokes the critical reader to think narrative in the context of relations and networks, the framework I would propose that of subtractions and separations, making, rather than the relations in which something gains meaning, the extrication via which something loses finite or representative meaning. This leads to the association, or identity of, change with universality mentioned in the introduction to this thesis. Change has to be something universal that cannot be caught between finitudes and representations. Narrative must admit an element that is exceptional to categorisation and finitisation.

Narrative therefore resembles less a kind of discourse or a subdivision of social usage of language than it does the elaboration of a gesture, a gesture which is not a separative motion in itself, but reveals the potentiality of language to point to the separations that compose it without naming them. In this manner, to repeat what I argued earlier, Joyce's view of language is not institutive and constructive, but rather apprehensive and anticipatory. Rather than seeing narrative as something which is more illuminating, more indicative and more descriptive or representative than anecdote and storytelling, it might be more useful to see it as a new obscurity into which conventional concerns of meaning, perspective and voice are dissolved.

The focus upon change, rather than meaning, as a key point of narrative, puts any critical or academic discussion of prose fiction in a very difficult position, as perhaps the thinking of change does in any discourse on aesthetics. As Alain Badiou remarks "to put it bluntly: the thinking of change or of singularity is neither ontological nor transcendental" [Badiou, 2006]. The potency of change harboured within a text cannot be articulated or described by what is ontological, that is to say the assumptions of foundational distinctions such as those between vocality and textuality, or between the spatial and the temporal. But equally, the thinking of change in narrative must be wholly distinct from the notion of a historical or social context which transcends the narrative, and regulates meaning on behalf of

transcendentally indexed identities<sup>32</sup> and the categorical<sup>33</sup> regulation of identities and voices in prose fiction. Narrative, as opposed to storytelling, can possibly harbour a deviation or swerve which cannot be reduced "downwards" to the ontological realm and the historical or social context, narrative thereby resists being dependent on a transcendent network of identifications from which the horizons of meaning is drawn.

It seems almost contrarian to imagine that this question of meaning needs to be navigated around entirely, and we need to focus instead upon an issue of "change" that is defined in its subtraction (or to be Joycean in its "exile") from the interplay of the ontological and the transcendental. But it is exactly the concrete which makes such an aesthetic of indifference possible, as an epiphany intends to turn our intellectual attention towards moments where "a thing" is apprehended as "*one* thing" in its maximal sense [AP 212]. It cannot capture such an appearance of singularity without implying a change or a universality. That is why Badiou's association of change with universality and singularity (all three effectively being the same) is particularly useful with reading Joyce as it allows us to address the paradox of change in Joyce's work. How does a moment of maximal intensity of appearance imply or lead to indifference, subtraction, or obscurity? Or, to put it Badiou's terms of categorial evaluation, why does the objectal or phenomenal maximum necessitate the aesthetic or sensible minimum?

The "change" presented by a narrative, or the potency for change, must be distinct from transcendental evaluations, the effectuations of context and things which "transcend" the narrative as an autonomous context to itself (for example the context of imperial rule). But this distinction must also be made ontologically as the simple becoming or flow of change reflected in narrative is both a material object and an image of material objects. Or, to put it another way, the supplementation of change persists no matter what. Whether one talks about a narrative from the top down or the bottom up, or whether one begins from the sequence of events (emplotment or *histoire*) or the storytelling (vocality or anecdote), the revolutionary nature of narrative is transformative. But it is not just a transformation of the voice or anecdote or a dramatic change of perspective. As Joyce once said about the (increasingly ineffective) role played by the famous Irish propensity for narration of rhetoric and the Irish

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<sup>32</sup> Badiou, see "It Must Be Possible to Think, In A World, What Does Not Appear Within That World" in *Logics of Worlds* for a description of the link between "transcendental measures of identity" and "intensity of appearance"; for "transcendentally indexed identities" we understand an identity as a measure of existence which is at the same time a measure of identity in accordance to some final object (the Transcendental element).

<sup>33</sup> To return to the mathematical analogy from early, categorical also *categorial*, that is 'identity' as understood related to the objects and isomorphism of category theory.

nationalist moment, "though the Irish are eloquent, the revolution is not made of human breath" [OCPW, 'Island of Saints and Sages'].

It is clear that, in the context of narrative, we cannot see "change" as merely a greater intensity of becoming. As mentioned, the influence of atomism can be felt across *Finnegans Wake*. One of the more significant examples is Heraclitus<sup>34</sup> whose notion of a cosmic governing of reason, logos ("astroglodynamologos" [FW 194]), is contrasted against another Heraclitean notion of Panta Rhei, everything flows - the universality of flux - ("the chaosmos of Alle" [FW 118]), towards the end we see the union of the two "Ah chaos lex"<sup>35</sup> [FW 518]. When Joyce expands his narrative focus to the cosmic or ontological scale, the reader is given a clear image of the universal modality of change as becoming posed against the universality of something excepted from such becoming. Is it possible to see Joycean change as an attempt to mediate between these two, and therefore perform a concrete universal change that, extricated from "human breath", might merit the word "revolution"?

#### *Theoretical Overview: Dispute and Indecision.*

This section intends to be an account of how Joyce's text uses narrative as grounds for the concrete, but also a concreteness in itself. My theoretical guides for this section are largely going to be Jacques Derrida (who has directly commented on Joyce) and Alain Badiou (who has only alluded to Joyce), because the dispute between speculative and deconstructive approaches reflect what I believe to be a key *differend*<sup>36</sup> in Joyce's work.

If one thinks about the universality of a piece of literature, one thinks about how narrative harbours something that resists being reduced to ontological statements, but also resists irreduction to transcendental statements of context or structural frameworks, what might be called the ability of narrative to resist reduction to the irreducible.

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<sup>34</sup> In "Two Words for Joyce", in talking about Joyce's use of the tower of Babel fable, Derrida jokes about Heraclitus using the word *différance* if he spoke French but in connection the suggestion of Heraclitus and the thought of "the one different in itself" is very suggestive of a union between universalised becoming and difference and the universality of the Word as law.

<sup>35</sup> The phrase occurs as the four old men discuss what may be a reversed retelling of the fall of man and Finnegans demise from the very first chapter. As these pages also seem to account for an armistice, where "they did not know that the war was over", there is a reconciliatory tone to these passages.

<sup>36</sup> I am borrowing the term not directly from Lyotard, but from Sheldon Brivic's *Revolutionary Damnation* where Brivic frequently uses the term to position Joyce between Badiou and Lyotard. See especially the chapter "Joyce, Stephen and Badiou", [Brivic, 2017: 30-32]. As this term has already been used to position Joyce between two French philosophers in deep dispute, it is very useful here.

To avoid being proposing a reductionist reading, I think it is useful to reject the idea of beginning a reading with a critical frame and instead to locate the dispute or differend in Joyce's work which can be discussed in terms of a conceptual problematic, without subordinating the autonomy of the work to philosophical discussion. There is in Joyce what I would consider to be a key anti-philosophical conviction, for example, as in the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, where he bragged about being “really one of the greatest engineers, if not the greatest, in the world besides being a musicmaker, *philosophist* and heaps of other things”<sup>37</sup> [L 321]. It is interesting for Joyce to have used the word *philosophist* here, a melding of philosophy with its negative, sophistry. I would call Joyce's work anti-philosophical insofar as Joyce's view does not comprise a cosmology and an ontology, but rather an acosmism and a meontology<sup>38</sup>.

Such a radical rejection of all foundation and necessity in favour of contingency is expressed most clearly in Stephen's argument regarding the founding of the Church from *Ulysses*:

On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son? [U 266]

The triple repetition of "founded" in this passage ("is founded and founded irremovably because founded") betrays Stephen's great difficulty in connecting his contemplation of experience and materiality (of which he sees maternal love as the most intense representation), with his acosmism and meontology. Joyce portrays Stephen's limitations, given the fact the version of Stephen in *Ulysses* has perhaps ultimately failed to extricate himself entirely from the institutions which he abhors. It is in this failure that Stephen is used by Joyce to perform a feat that Stephen himself cannot do, which is to make a properly anti-foundational gesture that skirts by institutional questions of meaning and identity.

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<sup>37</sup> From a postcard with his benefactor Harriet Shaw Weaver. Joyce is being comedic here to protest his correspondence is being received as "awfully solemn". To put the hyperbolic nature of the brags in context, in the same postcard he hints that he has squared a circle.

<sup>38</sup> A thinking of absence and non-being, rather than of being.

I would locate the problem of concreteness and universality between two philosophical issues, one that is specific to Joyce and one more general involving Derrida's "thinking of the gift" [D&J 77] and Badiou's project of a "conceptual black sheep... a materialism centred on the theory of the subject." [Badiou, 2009:189] Although Derrida directly refers to Joyce whereas Badiou doesn't, both views reflect vastly differing ways to encounter the problematic of Joyce's realism and his writing of the concrete. With Derrida, it is done through the theme of donation; with Badiou, the problematic through materialist accounts of subjective action (either collective and colloquial or personal and private) under the condition of concrete situations. These focus upon supplementary things which are neither immanent to experience itself, nor drawn from a foundational substrate of the universe, yet still present themselves as both concrete and part of human experience. In other words, as Derrida describes Joyce in terms of the "Joyce-Event" [Ibid], the Joyce "event" cannot be held captive by any one particular philosophical doctrine. Instead, the Joyce-Event conditions the possibility for exploring a dispute which operates within conceptual or theoretical thought.

For practical purposes, I have produced a table to be found in the appendix (**Table A**) that spells out and simplifies the aspects of the problematics of thinking of the Joyce-Event and how these apply to Joyce's texts. This table will provide an index of terms that I will refer to going forwards. The entries in the table are not meant to summarise any theoretical positions from either Derrida or Badiou, but to demonstrate the Joycean themes and representative concepts from which one might draw the dispute between two theoretical viewpoints: the encounter between deconstruction and realism, and the encounter between speculative philosophy and materialism.

With regards to an interior dispute in Joyce's work, there is what I would call a fixed indecision in Joyce, the exposition of which enables his exploration of the phenomenal and the concrete and, to refer to his view of Shakespeare, "the two rages [which] commingle in a whirlpool". I would argue that Joyce is a radical anti-foundationalist, perhaps more radical than any of his former theological or philosophical influences. But for the concrete to be conceptualised in the absence of a particular edifice or substance, one must have some kind of principle that would work as a substitute for either the substantial or the transcendental. The choices presented by Joyce's work are either the Other or the Void. As Derrida has said, Joyce is "perhaps the most Hegelian of modern novelists" [Derrida, 1978:192]. Perhaps an element of Joyce's unlikely Hegelianism is in his seeing of all appearances as negative impressions of what being is not (what could be given metaphysical labels such as that-which-is-not-being-

qua-being or that-which-is-not). But whether that-which-is-not corresponds to Otherness or the Void, the Joycean's exploration of what is concrete rests on an adamant refusal to resolve this issue.

Such a refrain from decision can be seen in Stephen's interrogation of Aristotle's distinction between the potential and the actual, where he (Stephen) inverts the distinction in favour of focusing upon the possibilities that cannot be. The "possibility of the possibility as possible" [U 247] is therefore subtractive, meaning the potentiality of something to be, is something that nevertheless can never be. In connecting this to "things not known", there is a strong statement of Joyce's realism which is neither transcendental nor nominal and is a wager on the reality of things as being independent of epistemological concerns and against substantial actuality as being the absolute horizon of what is real. In other words, Joyce's concrete is founded upon that which is not actual and is independent from knowledge and experience.

The term "differend" is perhaps more useful than "aporia" for this discussion because aporia can veer close to suggesting that Joyce's work may be reduced to a dispensing mechanism for a philosophical conundrum, or the provision of a socio-historical for debating impasses in discourses about ideas. Instead, the differend of the Joycean concrete is something which is only partially drawn into language and does not constitute a philosophical discourse or argument inside which one may discover an aporia in the strictest sense. For example, Derrida's *Plato's Pharmacy*, a work heavily indebted to Joyce, can be (in part) read as locating within a philosophical text the trace of the literary. I would argue against the symmetrical reflection of this, that aporia is the location of a philosophical problem within literature. The issue at stake is that this *differend* cannot be captured by the argument of any particular philosophy or theory. It cannot be made into an equivalent of a philosophical decision, but is the site of aesthetic autonomy itself. The goal of addressing the *differend* in Joyce is not to extract the problem from his work and rephrase it as a problem for theory, rather to write under the conditions of the dispute it reveals.

In contrast to the Lyotardian use of the word [Brivic 2017:36], I would not define *differend* in strictly linguistic terms as a phrase, or as a phrase which cannot satisfy two different means (a dyadic arrangement between materiality and meaning, or concreteness and interpretation), which informed Brivic's reading of differend in Joyce. I would instead argue that a Joycean differend is that which, in his works, marks out that there is something which cannot be named with the provisional language of the works themselves. There is nothing in

Joyce's work that could label or satisfy the definition of that which is at once both void and other, and neither void nor other. Rather than a directly Lyotardian concept of a phrase, or the fragment of a language game, the differend I see in the Joycean concrete is something which can only partially be represented by language and cannot, by philosophical or theoretical means, be pulled entirely into the interior of any symbolic system or discourse.

In 'La pharmacie de Platon' Derrida speaks of what in a text is "always imperceptible"<sup>39</sup> [Derrida, 1969:79]. The "law and rule of its composition" does not have the inaccessibility of a secret, but nevertheless is "never read in the present moment". But there is a distinction between what cannot be made present as distinction and what can be said to be, in Badiou's terms, *impresent* [Badiou, 2007:58] or the "unpresentable" what cannot be named, due to its elementary proximity to the void. Such is the "latent poem" of communicative prose where "language cannot name" [Badiou, 2004:16] its own power or poetry which "injects silence into the texture of language"<sup>40</sup> [Badiou, 2004:234]. Rather than an otherness which cannot be brought into the present of reading, "the inconsistency of the situation which wanders within the whole of a situation is the nothing" [Badiou, 2007:58]. Because "all inconsistency is unpresentable, thus void" therefore the "absolute primal theme of ontology is the void" [Ibid]. What is "latent" in the epiphany, that element, trace or clinamen that allows narrative to harbour the change which conventional storytelling and anecdote do not, is a proximity to the void revealed in language opened up to its own limitation. To put this in different terms, the consequences of an antifoundational view of literature and narrative built upon the wholly Other, leads to what cannot be made present, yet sustains the heterogeneity of a text. But an alternative antifoundational approach would find that the consequences for a meontological view based on the primacy of the void lead towards an understanding based upon the linking between the unpresentability of the void itself (rather than a trace of otherness) and the wandering or errant deviation which might be understood as the Joycean "swerve" or clinamen. But neither of these approaches on their own satisfy the disjuncture at the heart of Joycean vision of narrative. For Joyce, the absolute primal theme of ontology is neither Other nor Void, but simply that which is other than ontology: entailing a refusal to rest on whether this "other" is the altogether Other or the Void. Upon this refusal to decide, Joyce's decision to let the elements of a dispute lie in disjunctive synthesis, runs the "pure, clean line" from which Joyce draws both concreteness and clinamen.

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<sup>39</sup> Translation my own and therefore approximate.

<sup>40</sup> Badiou's 1993 paper 'Language, Poetry, thought' is relevant here in its posing of "dissemination" to "subtraction" as differing poetic operations.

Our notion then of a ‘fixed indecision’ or hesitation is key to understanding both the ambivalence of the lead characters of *Ulysses* and the thematics of incrimination in *Finnegans Wake*. The failure to decide is celebrated, often in a satirical manner, in the way that Joyce alludes comically to Kierkegaard's *Enten-Eller* throughout *Finnegans Wake* (the title appears in numerous parodic forms such as “Ayther Nayther” [FW 201]), but the Dublin author has does very opposite to what that book commands: with Joyce remaining “on the *spear tip* of the moment of *choice*” [Kierkegaard, ed. Hong 1995:72], not unlike many of his figures in *Finnegans Wake* find themselves paused while staring down the barrel of a gun. Kierkegaard's caution is that someone who would remain on the spear tip of the moment of choice would have “stopped being a human” [Ibid]. But this indifference and impersonalisation is exactly Joyce's intention, as Stephen Dedalus famously describes that the artist must be “refined out of existence” [AP 215]. The sentiment of either/or, that one must choose is prominently parodied throughout *Finnegans Wake*, and there is often the sense that the refusal to accept that one must make a choice is revolution or at least the grounds for renewal or innovation. As we can see in the night lesson section of *Finnegans Wake* (II.2):

Enter eller, either or.

And!

Nay, rather! [FW 281]

Where comingling and separating voices of the two brothers in II.2 become faced with the philosophical ultimatum of either/or they answer either both (And!) or neither (Nay, rather!). The dilemma is “sorensplit and paddypatched” [FW 596]. Joyce's identification with the unruly children of II.2 is somewhat clear: Issy is drawn from his correspondence with his daughter Lucia<sup>41</sup> [Schloss, 2003:432]. As philosophy demands decision, Joyce maintains his right not to name his decision as an act of rebellion of the imagination, which like Vico he saw as freer in childhood than adulthood. The solution Joyce poses to either/or is a refusal to accept the possibility of any such solution: it is either both, or neither. The children rebel against their parents and reject the transcendental dualism of identity and otherness<sup>42</sup> [FW 300], as instead they are fumbling towards something singular and supplementary through

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<sup>41</sup> See Schloss' *A Dance in the Wake* for an analysis of one of the relevant ‘footnote’ sections of *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>42</sup> The conflict between Kev and Dolph is put in terms of "that Other" and "our Same", but after reconciling they are "singulfied" [FW 306] into a vague "laudible purpose" which hints usurpation and surplanting. There is a sense of the children not wishing to concede the fluidity and games of childhood (as the two brothers alternate margins in the essay) to the fixity of the adult world.



acts of imagination. The paradox of how a narrative can embody a change is the problem of writing a situation, a narrative, which is to provide the means of articulating something that captures the univocity of an instant of equivocation.

### CHAPTER 3: JOYCE'S SUBTRACTIVE APPROACHES TO THE QUESTIONS OF EXPERIENCE

#### *Taking Experiences out of Context.*

As with Joyce's use of narrative, and his exploitation of the discontinuity between narrative and storytelling, it can be said that the issue of concreteness in regards to Joyce's work rests uneasily between several dramatically contrasting climates of opinion. Joyce's work begins with the fading of the romantic moment and idealism. Although Joyce is normally positioned in dramatic contrast to idealism, it influences both his notion of epiphany and his focus on writing the development of an artistic life in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*. For example, Bernard Bosanquet's *A History of Aesthetics* and *An Introduction To Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* appear to have appearing to influence Joyce's critical writing including the phrasing of arguments<sup>43</sup> [OCPW 290] and the influence of romanticism is felt in the transformation of *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait of the Artist of the Young Man*<sup>44</sup>. Although the influence of romanticism can mostly be felt in *A Portrait*'s status as a *Künstlerroman*<sup>45</sup>, a novel of an artist's growth to maturity, such an issue is bound up in the notion of concreteness and the concretisation of spirit or ideas. Such a connection between the life of an artist and the concretisation of abstract ideas is evident in some of Joyce's last written works, such as the watches of Shaun<sup>46</sup>, where a parody of Joyce himself ("the Gracehoper"), having squandered all his material and financial resources, finds himself impoverished and at the mercy of the elements, at which point the "June snows" bury Dublin in a blizzard of corporealised ideas, including Hegel's "hegelstomes" [FW 416] (books as hailstones).

The historical, teleological concreteness of Hegel is also parodied by the four old men repeating themselves in *Finnegans Wake* III.4, losing themselves in digressing, circular conversation as they spy on the marriage ship of Tristan and Iseult, as the distinct four voices

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<sup>43</sup> Joyce cites Bosanquet's book on Hegel's aesthetics as an origin of a passage in the early piece "Subjugation". According to Barbara Laman, in *Joyce and German Theory* [Laman, 2004:16-19], the widespread translation of Hegel and Schlegel during Joyce's student days would have introduced him to the relevant arguments and vocabulary, even if he never read Schlegel, Schilling or Hegel's own texts at that point.

<sup>44</sup> See Laman, *Joyce and German Theory* [Laman, 2004:43-46]

<sup>45</sup> [Ibid 49]

<sup>46</sup> Joyce began preparing the Aesop sections for publication during 1928-1930 period. They were published independently in *transition* and also in a volume entitled *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun* and later *Two Tales of Shem and Shaun*.

become one with the waves which carry the vessel. In this passage, Hegel's statement of concretisation of the Geist from the *Philosophy of History* ("History in general is therefore the development of Spirit in *time*, as Nature is the development of the Idea in *space*") is parodied twice over: firstly with the geriatric embodiment of history and time as a woman of "great age" who is "past and present [...] present and absent" and who cannot stop "repeating herself" [FW 389] and, later, with space as an equally elderly and drunken old male figure<sup>47</sup> who, after drinking too much "spirits of time", finds himself "sloping around" Dublin in his ragged night clothes (his "bawneen and bath slipper") [FW 394].

Along with idealism, a significant aspect of Joyce's contemporary climate of opinion is vitalism, or what are retrospectively grouped as views stressing intuition, immediacy of experience and, above all other things, a personally subjective experience of time. Vitalism notably influenced Joyce directly with the "interior monologue" of Dujardin's *Les lauriers sont coupés*. It is revealing how apparently interchangeable literary form and philosophical ideas were to Joyce that even a technique which exerted such an overwhelming influence on him, such as the interior monologue, eventually seemed to integrate more with his repertoire of ideas and devices, rather than remain as a unified literary style. Ellman records how rapidly Joyce became bored or irritated with the phrase "interior monologue", and argues that Joyce came to think of it not as a coherent literary style or genre, but as a "worn out" phrase that stood for a collection of stylistic ideas or "bridge" between narrative forms, rather than a coherent literary style in itself; "I have got my troops across, the opposing forces can, for all I care, blow the bridge sky-high" [JJ 527-528].

Joyce's specific use of memory and time in *Ulysses* is informed by, or at least close to, Bergson's notion of *durée*. One of the most notable accounts of experiencing the passage of events is Leopold Bloom's likening of it to "holding water in your hand" [U 213]. This description suggests that, contrary to Bergson's anti-materialism, in order to be aesthetically transformed, even time itself must be described in terms of concreteness and materiality. If one contextualises Joyce's intellectual graduation from his Catholic education and Scholastic philosophical influences during the 1900-10 period with respect to the fading of idealism and the dawning of vitalism, the phrase "like holding water in your hand" shows how this contextualisation is one typical of exile and subtraction, demonstrating Joyce's dissatisfaction with both views even as he draws upon them as his contemporary intellectual milieu. With the

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<sup>47</sup> It is notable that, in this section, Joyce appears to have inverted *Finnegans Wake's* usual sexuation of space and time, eg "Father Time and Mother Spaces" [FW 600].

passage containing the sentences “Can’t bring back time. Like holding water in your hand. Would you go back to then?”, Bloom’s contemplation of time perhaps prefigures Thomas Mann’s committedly Bergsonian *The Magic Mountain*, which is the object of a needling reference in the last part of *Finnegans Wake*<sup>48</sup>. However, the pointedly material metaphor of water that is held, rather than flowing water, is an image of an encounter with a real material world, as opposed to time manifested in the immanent intensity of direct experience. Likewise, as opposed to idealism, this image suggests that time is a part of a real world rather than a negative space to be filled by the actualisation of other things. Time is not the negation of things which have passed (like Bloom’s son Rudy), but something which is autonomous from both human experience and abstract ideas alike, something we can dip our hands or bodies into, as the swimmer Stephen observes, moving “slowly frogwise his green legs in the deep jelly of the water” [U 26].

These examples demonstrate that Joyce shows great interest in appropriating different philosophical or scientific views of concreteness in his work. But one should not overemphasize his dissatisfaction with any particular view, or how that dissatisfaction is put to use in turning philosophical or aesthetic discourse into literary style and aesthetic image. Aristotelian views contemporary to Joyce are too materialist for him, revivals of idealism or the new climate of vitalism too immaterial; idealism is too dependent on necessity, scientific or Marxist views too ignorant of contingency and of the singularity of human affairs. Joyce’s depiction of concreteness does not only become, as in ‘Proteus’, a battleground between opposing views of concreteness. It also becomes a conflict or antagonism latent in the very concreteness that must be depicted. This is not to say that Joyce is an idealist in spite of himself (although from his German to Italian influences, the case can and has been made). It is not a conflict of the ideal so much as the intelligible real being full of ambivalent contraries. Joycean indifference, it seems, is the road to a greater plurality of elements, rather than views that stress the irreducibility of either difference or identity. Or, to pull it into the shape of a paradox or “Irish bull”, in Joyce’s work, indifference is the presentation of the real of difference. There, in the aesthetic image, there is no room for anything like an auto-presentation of difference either in the sense of a vitalistic immanence of qualitative difference or an idealistic self-positing of notions.

Joyce never allows concreteness to resolve itself absolutely into materiality or into the givenness of direct experience. This often allows him, instead, to approach something

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<sup>48</sup> “Magic Moning” [FW 608].

resembling Aristotelian hylomorphism, where form and matter are held together, and it to this idea that he gives the name “apprehension”. Joyce’s earlier distaste for materialism (to him a “cheapening”<sup>49</sup> of the “good name” of philosophy) is laid out against his later mistrust of formalism, the idea that experience is contrary to the intellect or that reason is contrary to emotion. The issue of form and of the material in artistic apprehension is an obvious problem, presented directly in the form of the narrative itself.

This is illustrated by the many examples of Joyce attempting the conjurer’s trick of turning purely philosophical discourse into aesthetic image: we see the topic of aesthetic realism based on the accurate representation of concrete objects in Stephen’s conversation with Cranley in *Stephen Hero*; it appears again in Stephen’s somewhat vain kicking up of a “scholastic stink” [AP 214] in *A Portrait*; we encounter it once more in Stephen’s comparison between Aristotle and Berkeley in the *Ulysses* episode ‘Proteus’, and then throughout *Finnegans Wake*, where we find disputes with former friend Wyndham Lewis rehashed repeatedly, leading to rather sour comments<sup>50</sup> on the topics of Henri Bergson and Joyce’s own critics.

All of these examples have two things in common. Firstly, the immediate focus of the aesthetic debate is concreteness or materiality and, secondly, Joyce’s concern is with what he calls “apprehension”, which is a broadening of the aforementioned Aristotelian concept of hylomorphism, or the grasping of form and matter as an intelligible whole, to the point where that process of grasping no longer depends on the independence of intellect, but recognises that the mind is bound up in concrete processes just like everything else. Such is evident in Joyce’s choice of metaphor when describing cognition: time is like “holding water in your hand” and the cognition of an aesthetic instant is like “a fading coal” [AP 213], the chief metaphor being that artistic thought itself is a “transmuting the daily bread of experience” into sensible material. Metaphor supplants intuition in these cases, perhaps because Joyce is arriving at a sense of cognition where the mind is part of reality and not separate from it, struggling to preserve the autonomy of aesthetic intellection against both dualism and scientific monism. Joyce needs to find himself space to either be a dualist or a monist in order to suit an artifice of aesthetic creation, rather than making a philosophical decision in advance and making the aesthetic images suit the demands of such a decision. This is a situation where

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<sup>49</sup> In a review of the volume *Aristotle on Education* in 1903, Joyce accused materialism of “cheapening” the good name of philosophy [OCPW 80].

<sup>50</sup> For example, those in the long parodies of textual interpretation in *FW*, I.5.

philosophy poses Joyce an “Enter ells” and his response is “And!” and “Nay, Rather!” [FW 300], both or neither.

Joyce does not want either the intellect or immediate experience to have a priority at first brush. If the choice of “apprehension” suggests that, in the final moment, it is the mind which grasps it, the second commonality of the views Joyce appropriates from is the crucial acknowledgement that the concreteness of the object is part of the apprehension itself, and does not pose a risk to the independence of the object: epiphany makes it seem like the object is never fully imported within language. The writer only uses language to “separate” the object in such a way as to reveal that the object was always-already separated by its own criteria, “selfbounded” and “selfcontained” [AP 212], a posing of a discontinuity against a discontinuity.

Despite Joyce’s often verbose allusions and citations of philosophers, philosophical realism and materialism always ends up playing second fiddle in his work to realism as an aesthetic problem. If one could make any generalisation about Joyce’s deployment of philosophical disputes, it is invariably orientated towards demonstrating aesthetic autonomy. This is a common reading, if somewhat controversial, suggesting that Joyce magnifies Stephen Dedalus’ vanity and grandiosity to mark the distinction between author and avatar; Stephen as the philosophical materialist focused on aesthetics who must tell you what he means, as opposed to Joyce, the aesthetic realist who indulges in philosophical problems in order to demonstrate realism as the revolutionary gesture of an aesthetic or literary act of narrative fiction.

Joyce’s ‘philosophising’, if read as such, may seem reminiscent of the late 20th century American writer’s maxim of “show, don’t tell”. Stephen has to tell people about aesthetic ideas, whereas Joyce demonstrates revolutionary gestures. However, there is quite a different principle at work in the distinction or “though the Irish are eloquent, the revolution is not made of human breath” [OCPW 126]. We can say that the same is true for the revolutionary gesture of realism, since Joyce chooses the word “image” for aesthetic objects in his own notebooks. What Joyce called his “talent for journalism”, touching on everything from philosophy to biography and political polemic, seems to be wholly distinct from the production of the “image” in his fiction and poetic writing. One of the most notable aspects common to Joyce’s journalism and his fiction is his reliance upon allusion and reference, and upon other writers not to mention philosophy and political events. But it is not a satisfactory distinction to say that Joyce’s work is journalistic when he is making such references and

aesthetic when he has another voice, such as Stephen Dedalus' in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, engage in similar discussions.

ii) *What is the Negative of Horseness? The Problem of Joyce as Anti-Plato.*

As Joyce described himself as having a “talent for journalism”, it is notable that, at a time when the technological expansion of media had led to a new interpenetration of the literary world and technologised media, Joyce kept journalistic writing distinct from his aesthetic writing, despite the fact that his “journalism” is rarely objective or impartial, its tone usually being polemical or philosophical. This is not to say that Joyce considered literary writing to be wholly separate from other forms of language: the opposite is true, especially when *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* borrow forms so heavily from newspaper columns and radio broadcast, and when Joyce compared his writing to engineering and music [L 321] and defined himself against the Gaelic tradition of storytelling.<sup>51</sup> But what is distinct between aesthetic writing and journalistic writing is the communicative aspect of language, which Joyce undermines utterly in his literary work. The communicative faculty of language is, never at risk in the sort of journalism that Joyce wrote, no matter how opinionated or obtuse it can be. By contrast, Joyce's ‘esthetic’<sup>52</sup> images are indifferent, detached from vocality and thus originary status, thereby leading to a loss of the communicative faculty itself, which is, in some cases, emptied out and turned against itself. Examples of this include the oblique postcard sent to the Breens, or the story of Ignatius Gallaher's encoded message [U 172]. It is not that the loss of meaning is total, but rather that there is fleeting loss of meaning, seemingly in the centre of an act of communication, that can be “apprehended” as a literary image, but not by the communicative act containing it.

One might find a guide to this difficult, counter-intuitive and subtractive notion of apprehension, that is of the intelligibility of the sensible, in *Finnegans Wake*, in the distorted image of a horse (“negative of a horse” [FW 111]) discovered when a letter is pulled from a

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<sup>51</sup> See his excoriation of Lady Gregory in ‘The Soul of Ireland’ [OCPW 74-76].

<sup>52</sup> I will use the spelling *esthetic* to denote when I am talking about Joyce's aesthetic and discussion of the beautiful, to denote its autonomy and independent from the philosophical concern of *aesthetics*. One could argue that Joyce's esthetic is better described as either an anti-philosophy, as it delimits philosophical concepts towards a theory of the beautiful as the synthesis of the sensible and the intelligible. One could also argue that Joyce's esthetic is a non-philosophy of the beautiful since it seeks to supplant philosophical and transcendent dualities in a discourse of presence with a unilateral account of beauty in its instance. The later will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis, while the former has informed my account of Joyce's use of philosophical language as separate from his use of philosophical concepts.

middenheap (“horsehappy values and masses of meltwhile horse” [Ibid]). The passage is ambivalent as to whether it (the letter) contains an image of a horse, or whether the legibility of the letter is being compared to an overexposed photograph (either due to the material decay of the paper or the age of the content), or perhaps both are true at once. The letter is in itself an image and, in its aspect as an image rather than as a textual rendering of vocality, it is indifferent, even to horses. The “image” can be understood not only as a photographic negative of a horse, but also as mathematically negative: one negative horse, or more comically the absurd quantity of ‘minus one horse’. The previous chapter alluded to the act of pulling the letter out of the midden, following McHugh’s interpretation of the section, as the selection of the “word” from the manifest image, a Sellarsian concept that I consider to be roughly equivalent to Joyce’s *building*. One can understand Joyce’s notion of an “image” as a subtractive aesthetic principle here, not in the sense that the image of the horse is something subtracted from the middenheap along with the letter, but in the sense that, in the process of distinguishing the intellectually sensible from the linguistically communicable, a potential subtraction is discovered within the middle or the “inhabited world in which men have left so many traces” [Sigla 30], as McHugh puts it. But, unlike in McHugh’s reading, the letter is not reducible to a collective multiplicity of “all attempts of written communication” [Ibid], but rather points to something unrestrained within written communication, that can be extricated from the discursive and the communicable.

The negative of a horse is not an image of a horse, as it is a generic value of horseness subtractively gleaned from a material mass created by the sedimentation of communicative acts, which is expressible purely negatively. It is syntactic rather than semantic: aside from the second-hand allusion to an allusion,<sup>53</sup> there is no real reason for a horse to be attached to the letter, or for the letter to be compared to a photograph of a horse in the first place. What has melted away is the ‘aboutness’, or the intended object, of the communication.

In *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus redeploys Antisthenes’ nominalist retort to Plato: “I see a horse, but I don’t see horseness” into the thought: “Horseness is the whatness of allhorse” [U 238], while making a private mockery of George Russell’s enthusiastic Platonism. What is fascinating is that Stephen chooses a word so connected to his own Thomist or Aristotelean thinking (“whatness”, his preferred anglicisation of the Latin *quidditas*) to mockingly describe what the reader might imagine to be his contrary position. Joyce does not necessarily wish to portray Stephen as being ensconced within his own fascination with Thomism, as when he

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen's attempt to rephrase Antisthenes' retort to Plato in a more Thomist way.



boorishly brags to have read Aquinas “in the original” [U 264]. As the reader is privy to Stephen’s thought, we see that he has no problem switching to other influences, such as Lessing or Blake. So, whatever criticisms we might make of Stephen’s arguments, we cannot say he is fenced in by dogmatic adherence to a certain vocabulary. Although Joyce allows Stephen many moments of clarity, it is often the case that, during moments of heightened intellectual opposition, Joyce constructs Stephen’s thought to be as thoroughly enmeshed with its contrary as possible. In moments of seeking to identify himself by opposing a certain view, the framing of the argument often becomes more ambivalent. There is a certain irony in how the more overloaded Stephen Dedalus’ thinking becomes with intellectual references that seem definitive of his own personal development, the more generic the thought becomes. We must, therefore, look between the critical positions that Joyce is either instrumentalising Stephen, to argue his own ideas, or instrumentalising theory as “a means of characterising Stephen, not an opportunity for Joyce to present his own ideas” to quote Weldon Thornton [Thornton, 1994]. Between these two positions is the idea that Joyce is using both characterisation and a presentation of ideas in order to reach an aesthetic image. However, it is our view that Joyce’s are concerned with neither of these poles (a specific argument or a specific characterisation), but towards genericity of intellection.

Although Stephen is resolutely anti-Platonist, Joyce is hedging his bets for and against Platonism. If the image is “no horses, but horseness”, it does not stand in relation to the original, as an iteration or copy, but rather in a non-relation, as an aesthetic synthesis. By combining Antisthenes’ original remark with Stephen’s remark and the section concerning the negative of a horse in *Finnegans Wake*, one might rephrase the retort to say “I see a negative of a horse so I see a negative impression of horseness” and, in this way, via non-relation, arrive at the opposite place that Stephen intends to reach.

To develop this discussion, I propose to turn to Alain Badiou’s passage in *Logics of Worlds*, where he compares images of horses in the paintings of Picasso to the cave paintings in Chauvet-Pont-d’Arc where, across the expanse of time and against the background of many different contexts, it is nevertheless (in a counter statement to the nominalist Antisthenes) “horseness, and nothing else, which we see” [Badiou, 2006:20]. Badiou’s criticism here is a defence of the timelessness of the image as the embodiment of an artistic truth, against the anti-Platonism of the 19th and 20th century that had become a kind of dogma in various areas of aesthetics and scholarship. It is commonplace to translate Joyce’s realism as a kind of anti-Platonism, or at least in the context of other anti-Platonist writers who influenced him, such as

Nietzsche and Stirner.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, identifying Joyce's prose fictions as anti-Platonist works poses great difficulties. By opinion, Stephen Dedalus is certainly an anti-Platonist. But the context in which Stephen's anti-Platonist arguments are unsheathed is not. The presentation of his statements as philosophical insights is coupled with the undermining of such insights in order to produce an aesthetic image that conforms to Joyce's own intentions: an image of the thinking of the image, or perhaps an aesthetic image of the problem of the aesthetic image. Stephen's anti-Platonist thoughts, as much as James Joyce and those in his inner circle, might have agreed with or applauded them, are (in the relevant section of 'Scylla and Carybdis' at least) subordinated to an aestheticised image of the problem of Platonism as being above or outside of historical or social context, yet somehow not being "eternal" [U 236] in the sense that the Platonist George William Russell uses the word. The same could be said about two of the greatest influences on *Finnegans Wake*, namely Giordano Bruno and Nicholas of Cusa, two formidable neo-Platonists who provide means for such an aestheticisation of philosophical dispute. If Joyce is an anti-Platonist, it is a strange kind of anti-Platonism which seeks to tangle itself so deeply in the roots of neo-Platonist arcana; and a stranger still nominalism which is deployed in the service of extracting the universal from the particular.

Joyce perhaps belongs in the group of those writers (notably Beckett and Pessoa) for whom, according to Badiou, philosophy has never been their contemporary<sup>55</sup>, having proceeded along a path "between Plato and Anti-Plato" [Badiou, 1998:45]. Such a position has less to do with Plato specifically (to whom, admittedly, Joyce's attitude never really softened) than with striking out a path independent from philosophy and historicism, both of which have long been polarised between, on the one hand, 19th and 20th disputes pitting Platonism against Anti-Platonism, from Nietzsche to Foucault, and, on the other hand, 21st century revivals of Bergson in the wake of Deleuze's impact on the philosophy of literature and narrative fiction. Striking out such a path steadfastly maintains the autonomy of poetic sphere against suture to the authority of philosophical concepts or socio-historical context. If this is the path to which Joyce would belong (along with Mallarmé, Pessoa and Beckett), then Joyce would not be positioned in the modern-postmodern, idealist-naturalist or Platonist-nominalist continuums and oppositions, but rather in a community of shared exile of those

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<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Rabaté talks about Joyce's "fundamental anti-Platonism since, for him, the essence of life cannot be reduced to the abstract truth of essences" [Rabaté, 2001:98].

<sup>55</sup> This statement refers to the 'untimeliness' of certain writers, in the sense that they are writing not so much before their own time or before they may be understood by an audience, but before philosophical has yet to develop concepts to understand them.

who posed void and concreteness together under some kind of principle of subtraction or a withdrawal from experience. What is shared between the writers who are “between Platonist and Anti-Plato” is not a particular socio-historical context or a certain relationship to philosophy, but a certain way of being out of context and maintaining an autonomy from philosophical enquiry, thereby making up a non-canon of metaphorical and literal exiles.

Joyce’s hylomorphism, where the scene of narrative can be read as the confrontation of matter and form, is therefore a way to strike out ahead of both philosophical contemplation and theoretical speculation. There are neither particular horses nor horseness in Joyce but the “horsehappy values and masses of meltwhile horse” of a union of form, concept and material which can only happen in the evanescence of a real event. Whether such an event is a novel proximity of the void as we see in Badiou’s reading of Beckett,<sup>56</sup> or the trace of otherness of as in Derrida’s Joyce-événement, is not decidable or communicable: if it were possible to decide whether we were seeing horseness or horses, the ambiguity of the hylomorphic image would be lost and with it the Joycean concrete.

### *Immediacy and Suddenness as modes of Phenomenal Transparency*

However, let us depart from territory which (for a thesis on Joyce) is getting dangerously close to an exegesis based on the world of Ideas, and return to the issue of concreteness, in order to make a brief account of Joyce’s relationship with realism, which is a question that conceals some of the most difficult and elusive problems of Joyce’s work. While it is very difficult to reduce Joyce’s realism to matters of literary genre, but it is equally difficult to say that his narratives are subordinated to a wholly philosophical attitude to realism. The relation between the two is very uneasy, despite some overwhelming literary influences, such as Flaubert<sup>57</sup>. From the very beginning, Joyce primarily aligns himself neither to literary nor to philosophical realism, which makes it impossible to classify the realism of Joyce’s literary works either in terms of genre, historical context or climate of opinion. It is simply not the case that Joyce begins either with literary realism (with naturalism and Ibsen as an initial source), or with philosophical realism (perhaps beginning with John Henry Newman or other Thomist sources), and then, at different points of his work, uses one to interrogate or test the

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<sup>56</sup> For example, see Badiou’s chapter devoted to Beckett’s *Worstward Ho/Cap au Pire* and the “unworsenable void” in *Handbook of Inaesthetics* [Badiou:1998:89-121].

<sup>57</sup> See Baron, *Strandentwining Cable* [2011], for an intertextual discussion of the profundity of Joyce’s debt to Flaubert both in ideas and aesthetics and in particular phrasings.

other. Instead, Joyce's relationship with realism begins in the middle of a problematic, his appropriations from other sources being a way to establish and elaborate that problematic as part of a complex dialogue. During the 1907-1920 period Joyce's concern with Ireland did not involve advocating for the authenticity of a certain Irish identity, but rather the integration of Irish disputes and discussions within larger European and global context.<sup>58</sup> The relationship to realism can be seen, in the same manner, as the making of a singular intrusion into the midst of an on-going intellectual dispute, rather than a maintenance of fidelity to originals or a return to the authentically real. On this point, Joyce's personal ethic of isolation and exile is turned upon its head.

The greatest risk in discussing either realism or concreteness with regards to Joyce is to over simplify, not because Joyce's thinking and writing on the matter are so complex, but because the focus is on a problem and not its solution, and the thinking (and writing) of realism is situated alongside that problem, and does not intend to discover the correctly balanced aesthetic and philosophical blend which would conclude or terminate the issue. *Claritas* is not conclusivity. Although Joycean aesthetic realism does walk a parallel track to philosophical realism, the role of what Joyce termed his 'esthetic' cannot be subordinated either to providing a cultural context or to plausible resolutions for philosophical conundrums. It is always intended to enjoy at least a minimal degree of autonomy. Therefore, a discussion of realism in relation to Joyce's prose must necessarily involve ideas or concepts of realism, and not just settle for seeing realism as a historical context or as an artefact of a certain climate of opinion or domain of discourse.

It is characteristic of Joyce's work to reflect urgency with regard to a realist approach to either objects or incidents, and to the desire to make such sensible or intelligible.<sup>59</sup> However, Joyce's writing also reflects a restless dissatisfaction with any one variety of realism to satisfy the demand of a sense of urgency in the real moment itself. It may be true that Joyce is equally at odds with the naturalistic strains of realism of the 19th century (Zola, for example) and the technological and fractured realisms of his contemporary modernist period. There is a sense that all realisms, whether they are aesthetic or philosophical, may

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<sup>58</sup> For example, the essay "The Shade of Parnell", intended for a prospective book on Ireland for an Italian audience, charts Parnell's career in terms of engagements to debates outside of Ireland: "they did not throw him to the English wolves, they tore him apart themselves." "Nothing more singular" than his appearance in Westminster as an "intellectual phenomenon", whereas travelling "county to county" in Ireland he is "a spectral figure with the signs of death on his brow". Joyce equates life and thought, vividness, with Parnell's engagement with on-going debates concerning liberalism and national independence outside of Ireland, whereas his fate is an almost death-like confinement within Ireland, a symbolic death before death.

<sup>59</sup> "Art is the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an esthetic end" [AP 207].

only be used for one particular occasion, since a feature of realism is that it cannot provide the kind of “stasis” or “eternity” that Joyce demanded of aesthetics. In the language Joyce chooses for realism, a priority is often given to a sense of immediacy and suddenness, cutting across all varieties of realism with the intention to unite the urgency of realism with the sense of the artist’s imperative to reflect reality as it is, but also that the art itself should describe encounters with reality as it is.

The description of various realisms, given both by Joyce himself and by his avatar Stephen Dedalus, often has the quality of suddenness. It very much seems to be the case that immediacy in realism as an aesthetic concern has an unequalled weight in Joyce’s mind. As he wrote in his Paris notebooks [OCPW 102-103], art has three conditions, defined in regards to immediacy: the lyrical (“the image in immediate relation to himself”), the epical (“the image in [im]mediate relation to the self and others”) and the dramatic (“the image in immediate relation to others”). Although, superficially, Joyce’s concern with immediacy may reflect a concern with the artist’s never modifying the intrinsic authenticity of aesthetic events, as well as defending the urgency of the artist’s imperative to represent things as they are in his current situation, but also immediacy as characteristic of the apparently unmediated experience which is being represented. His attempts to categorise or taxonomise immediacy itself express an intention to critically analyse immediacy as both property and experience, rather than seeing it as marker or a point of access to authenticity and purity in and of itself.

As with many of his philosophical concerns, Joyce’s intellectual inquiries around immediacy express themselves through a semantic exploration in his prose. As a case in point regarding images or semantics of immediacy, the word “sudden” appears frequently throughout *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and frequently occurs in a sense suggestive of immediacy or sudden clarity. “Sudden” describes the present, but in the sense of the presence as stasis rather than continuity, an interruption of the conventional flow of time that is reincorporated into linear progression through language. Suddenness gives rise to grammatical constructions which suggest minor versions of epiphany as in “under the sudden glow of a lantern he could recognise the smiling face of a priest” [AP 73]. Additionally, suddenness is connected to Stephen’s feeling of being rushed or pushed into the materiality of the exterior world as in “the sudden flight from the comfort and reverie of Blackrock, the passage through the gloomy foggy city, the thought of the bare cheerless house in which they were now to live made his heart heavy” [AP 66].

In *Ulysses*, suddenness appears in a more obscure sense at a crucial moment where Stephen mentally lists Aristotle's categories of the soul, arriving at a union between epiphany and what Joyce himself referred to as Aristotle's theory of "psychology": "tranquil, sudden, vast, candescent: form of forms" [U 31]. Again, there is both a tautology and a contradiction at work here. "Form of forms" may not be tautological in Aristotle's original, but in Stephen's mind it takes on that value. But is "tranquil, sudden" a property of the mind in contemplation of the form of forms, or a property of the thing itself? Stephen's separation from the world is evidence, perhaps, that suddenness is a lapse in intuition that allows the intellect to leap ahead of immediate experience and all things temporal.

Suddenness and immediacy also figure in the crime of Phoenix Park in *Finnegans Wake*, where Earwicker's encounter with the allegedly threatening Cad incorporates many elements of epiphanic writing and realism, with "that spurring instant" [FW 35]. It is comical that an  $\Pi$ -figure fears for his life, which uses much of the semantic domain that Joyce associated with his own aesthetics, as the fearful imagining of a successful assassination attempt is described using many words familiar from Joyce's earlier explanations of epiphany, as the passage continues "realising the supreme importance...of physical life...he felt of being hurled into eternity right then".

With regards to exteriority conceptualised as otherness, we can additionally read the phrase "all of a sudden" as frequently associated with feminine figures. Such figures are a particular target for Joyce's realism, as they have independence and autonomy beyond Stephen, "Eileen had long thin cool white hands too because she was a girl... and then all of a sudden she had broken away and had run laughing down the sloping curve of the path" [AP 42-43]. The capriciousness which Joyce has Stephen see in feminine figures is not only reflective of a young boy's idealisation of female figures (as seen in the earlier *Dubliners* story "Araby"<sup>60</sup>) but reflective of the real itself. As Joyce's works develop, the real itself will come to a closer and closer association with contingency to the extent that might even say that to Joyce the real *is* contingency.

Joyce's deployment of suddenness in order to betray both a capriciousness and an otherness provides a window into one of the Irish writer's most telling ontological eccentricities. Rather than seeing appearances as contingent and true being as necessary,

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<sup>60</sup> Mangan's sister's figure being "defined by the light" [D 22]. But it is not Mangan's sister herself who has the quality of suddenness but "her image" which appears in places "hostile to romance", and "her name" which springs to the lips of the narrating voice [D 23].

which is perhaps the case in both the Platonist<sup>61</sup> and many of the Scholastic views which informed Joyce's earliest writings on aesthetics, the philosophical doctrines of contingent phenomena and necessary being which Joyce exploits for his 'esthetics' are increasingly infected with a counter-philosophical view that sees necessity as phenomenal or contextual and real elements themselves as entirely contingent. This is true for the famous opposition between *quidditas* and secondary qualities or context<sup>62</sup> raised in *A Portrait*, as Stephen does not appear to be dividing between the contingent and the necessarily, but two contrasting modes of contingency. These two modes could be said to articulate context in terms of void, in the sense of an object being surrounded by what-it-is-not, and to articulate context in terms of otherness where the intrinsic distinctiveness of a particular object is isolated from its extrinsic differences to other objects.

With his association between femininity and contingency established, Joyce's portrayal of female characters from *A Portrait* to *Finnegans Wake* therefore charts his imagining of what life looks like beyond the "legal fiction" [U 266] of paternity. The capriciousness of feminine figures is a window or mirror to a world where the Catholic doctrine of God as a 'necessary being' does not hold sway, and all is contingent. If Joyce's realism can be said, in any meaningful way, to be dialectical, then it is a dialectic between the affirmational materialism of Aristotle and a contingency that is expressed in the artistic negation of various doctrines of ontological necessity and determination. Although Joyce has been a target for feminist critics due to his associating femininity with this particular union of capriciousness and sensualism (such as Kate Millett's accusation that *Ulysses* belonged to the "cult of the primitive woman", in *Sexual Politics* [Millett, 1970]), such readings mistakenly identify the qualities associated with femininity with the qualities belonging to femininity itself. The "suddenness" or "all of a sudden" movement of figures like Eileen, and the impulsiveness of Molly and Milly Bloom in *Ulysses*, are not necessarily evidenced as qualities of feminine subjects in themselves, but represent something of an aesthetic conviction that such figures are proximal to the contingency of the real without the habitual cloaks of necessity. In *Ulysses*, paternity and maternity become wider semantic domains to imagine a legalistic view of the world against the multiple and contingent. There may be

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<sup>61</sup> One of Joyce's earliest surviving pieces of juvenalia is an essay 'Trust Not Appearances' from his time at Belvedere college [OCPW 3]. In this essay, the young Joyce shows a markedly Platonistic view of the difference between contingent appearances and essential qualities. The metaphor he uses in his essay of the turbulent sea beneath apparent calm perhaps foreshadows Joyce's future choices of metaphor and semantics around contingency later in his life.

<sup>62</sup> In his speech on epiphany, Stephen declines to affirm any view separating the "proper conditions" of a thing and its "divine purpose" [AP 213].

sexism behind Stephen's (and the narrator of 'Araby') view of young women, but such cannot be easily dislocated from the context of encounters where the contingency of the world is revealed. The clinamen of *Finnegans Wake* ("swerve of shore") appears most directly at "Eve and Adams".

The use of "sudden" also points to a heightened awareness, as well as that one is part of the world and that one's mind is subject to processes that are, in a sense, equally exterior, contingent and material. In chapter three of *A Portrait*, "sudden" becomes one of Joyce's preferred descriptors for self-experience with "sudden memory" [AP 78], "sudden effort of the will" [AP 150], "sudden act of the will" [AP 152] and "a sudden instinct of remorse" [AP 163]. In these examples, we can the otherness of the self-crystallising into the contemporary theme of oneself as an another (perhaps reflecting Rimbaud<sup>63</sup>'s statement "I is another"). This is stressed more explicitly in *Ulysses*, with Stephen Dedalus's "I am other I now" [U 242] and Leopold Bloom's "Me. And me now" [U 224]. Suddenness is a marker for such an experience, where the sensation of self-experience is abruptly pulled out of presence<sup>64</sup> to itself. The present of the present moment and presentation in sense of formal thinking or intellection are pulled out of a sense of natural alignment, or any sense that presence and presentation intrinsically belong together at all. The moment when one is "sudden" to oneself, unmediated, is a moment of otherness or apparently unlimited difference, when one appears to express autonomy with absolute clarity ("sudden effort of the will") and the experience or memory of one's unmediated will has the character of an absolute mediation. This is not just a linguistic or verbal deconstruction of the word "sudden" as expressing both the entirely unmediated and an instant of absolute mediation, but a concrete moment where the materiality of one's thoughts and actions appears with a singular and incomparable availability to the senses and intellect. Similarly, it is as if the transparent simplicity of "sudden" itself (thing or emotion) has subtracted its own availability from language, itself becoming an obsolete mediation even as its powers of presence are underscored by the very experience that submerges or obscures them.

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<sup>63</sup> Although mentioned in *Stephen Hero*, Rimbaud is a reference point who is notably absent from explicit allusion in either *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*. Ellman finds Joyce to have read an essay on Rimbaud in Symon's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* [1899], [JJ 235]. Rimbaud is of course also mentioned along with Blake in Eugene Jolas' *Revolution of the Word* manifesto. But in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* themselves Rimbaud is one of the more conspicuous absences.

<sup>64</sup> Here I mean to imply both presence-to-self in the philosophical sense and the power of language to bring things into presence.



This point is a strong example of what I referred to as the ‘differend’ of Joyce’s narrative writing, where what Derrida referred to as a “thinking of the gift” [D&J 77] or the “question of sending oneself” [D&J 78], of donation and the trace of what is altogether other, is simultaneous with the austerity of meontological writing and the presentation of the concrete within cognition and intellection rather than the immediacy of sense experience. For a thinking of the gift, the “suddenness” is language opened upon its own difference, where the non-communicative element is irreducible, and left untraceable without the certainty of its own presence. For the meontological view, the question of meaning vanishes from the question of language entirely, a concrete incident into which the question of meaning has intermittently vanished only to emerge again. With figures who represent autonomy to Stephen (priests) and those who represent a kind of otherness and contingency (women), the “sudden” marks a point where they seem to flicker in and out of apparent being, revealing a proximity to a void which Stephen knows is there but cannot make present to himself by powers either of language or of thought.

Across all of these cases, the word “sudden” evidently performs a dual purpose: to denote a vividness or heightened awareness of an experience, but also to describe the immediacy of a thing, an unpremeditated or intense sincerity of a gesture from a position of unmediated experience or awareness. Additionally, many of the “sudden” moments from *A Portrait* appear to play an additional punctual and, perhaps, metalinguistic (a term I will defend later), role in the construction of the narrative itself, giving the impression of a rhythm or structure to the extension and elaboration of Stephen’s psychology and awareness of his own thoughts. This effectively provides a quilting point between the increasing complexity of Stephen’s self-experience and the maturation and complexity of the prose style. At the very least, the use of the word “sudden” signals to the reader that things are far from clear and transparent, and that one must be alert for a novelty, or a supplementary layer of meaning in the instant being described.

For example, in the sentence “under the sudden glow of a lantern he could recognise the smiling face of a priest”, we know from context that light has not just started to glow, so what is “sudden” here could refer to several things: the light, suddenly catching the priest’s face when he smiled; or equally Stephen’s sudden act of recognition of the priest’s face or, plausibly, even the priest smiling suddenly when he sees Stephen. In the world of *A Portrait*, such usages open themselves up to contradictions because, as a *bildungsroman* or *künstlerroman*, the progression of the narrative implies that Stephen’s view of the world

becomes more elaborate and more nuanced as his education and maturation progress, and his world is increasingly informed with aesthetic and artistic ideas and ideals through which such “sudden” encounters must be mediated. Yet, if that is so, how can “sudden” betray both unmediated immediacy (again, a tautology) and, in seeming contradiction, novel vividness of a thought, gesture or sensation in a mind which is refined through heightened aesthetic and, therefore, intellectual development? Suddenness, as Joyce paints it, is thus epiphany in embryo. And, if epiphany is a model of Joycean subjectivity then, perhaps, one could borrow the term ‘larval subjectivity’<sup>65</sup> and say that suddenness is the larval stage of an epiphanic subjectivity, immediacy as an irresistible provocation towards a new intellectual apprehension of a material object. This is almost literally in the case when Stephen reads the word “foetus” carved into the desk: “on the desk he read the word *Foetus* cut several times in the dark stained wood. The sudden legend startled his blood: he seemed to feel the absent students of the college about him and to shrink from their company” [AP 89].

The passage is an example of Badiou’s statement that “the thinking of change or of singularity is neither ontological nor transcendental” [Badiou, 2009:357]. The “sudden legend” holds an immediacy is neither ontological or transcendental. It is not ontological: suddenness does not refer to a property of the word itself or to the act of cutting it into a desk. In fact, not a property. It does not belong to the definable category of “sudden” things (suddenness is definitely not the whatness of allsudden), since Stephen’s experience in the anatomy theatre is unfamiliar and alien. Suddenness is not an identity or an identification of the word with anything else. It does not denote an isomorphism between the word and anything in particular, or highlight an isomorphism between Stephen and the absent students, or between Stephen and his father who was once a student in the same place. It is not “transcendent” either, since it does not refer to any wider context or historically specific feature that would transcend the immediate context itself, or something specific to a social context that would transcend its overall use in *A Portrait*. Joycean suddenness is not historical, nor is it reducible to a social or psychological feature but rather it is always is fleetingly singular. But this singularity is not dependent on context: it is not a feature of a particular context insofar as it exposes itself to the absence of any context: the context of the overwhelming significance of Stephen’s father’s life as a template for his own crumbles away for an instant. The epiphanic trace is unique to context without being dependent on context. The “vision” of the life of other students incurred by the word “foetus” is at least partially

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<sup>65</sup> Term borrowed (and modified) from Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* [1994].

exterior to language, since Simon Dedalus' words were "powerless to evoke" [AP 89] it. The "sudden legend" on the desk has a profound absence of meaning for Stephen: he cannot comprehend the meaning of the word carved there either by identity or by context. On the contrary, what is evoked is a non-relation, a feeling that is a typical Joycean swoon, an evanescence that has caused a "feeling" to vanish as soon as it had only "seemed" to be there. What lurks beneath is either wholly other or wholly nothing, and the concreteness of the moment of evocation is transmitted by the refusal of language to decide, and communicate, which of these it is.

However, there is no real change can be said to actually happen after the incident itself. The incident does little to alter the relationship between the overbearing father and the overawed son, but the larval form of thought confronted with the trace of something evokes a forward urge to a greater plurality or fluidity. Incidents like the sight of the word "foetus" on the desk demonstrate something that is a little more than the ordinary becoming of Stephen's life, but without ever reaching the full epiphany or absolute change in apprehension that Joyce wrote in *Dubliners* and elsewhere in *A Portrait*. The incident is not truly singular: the repetition of the word on the desk lays bare its multiplicity as if the word's material multiplicity had an unavoidable and distributed proximity to the void of an absent meaning that the sight of a single, definite word with a single, definite meaning would not.

In *A Portrait*, the account of Stephen's learning of language gives the impression not of words having meaning, but rather words becoming a portal to the real world independently (and perhaps in the absence) of the question of meaning itself. An example of this is when Stephen tries to teach himself unfamiliar words while walking with his father and granduncle: "Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had learnt them by heart; and through them he had glimpses of the real world about him" [AP 62].

A word is a portal through which the world can be reached, these "glimpses" suggesting not a persistent view but an instant. The contrast with the "real world about them", which is persistent and outside of language, yet only reached through the immediate instances of "glimpses", suggests that, rather than immediate experience being prior to a language that intellectualises it and renders it sensible, the immediacy of immediate experience is created in the process of Stephen's self-learning of language. It neither gives the impression of a naïve realism where language is merely the reflection of the material external world, nor a linguistic relativist or constructivist view where there is no objective external reality beyond the limitations of finite language. Instead, Joyce is attempting to maintain both the principle of

reality and the importance of language to thought, without falling into the trap of nihilism that lies in wait behind the temptations of naïve nominalisms or naïve realisms.

Stephen is not only learning words and their meanings, but also the act of coupling words with real things. The implied evanescence or suddenness of the glimpses suggests that Stephen is not learning words as elements of immediate experience and intuition, and therefore understanding experience as immediate through them. Instead, Joyce is showing quite finely how the experience of immediacy is created from the metalinguistic business of coupling words together with concrete things that are already part of an external world. But in this case, the “real world” is not a concrete thing itself but, in some sense, what needs to come prior to such a “glimpse”. Perhaps the sense of ownership of that glimpse, when it comes, is yet another coupling that is not native to the experience of the soul but has to be made, which suggests a Promethean expansion of the creative domain. This is a very difficult problem and Joyce expresses it well.

For third parties, such as readers, the third person as used in phrases such as “he had glimpses of the world about him” is uncomplicated. In situations such as these possessives can be used to describe experiences had by an individual other than the first person “I”. However, Joyce is working towards something which later become relevant to phenomenology and cognitive science: the use of possessives not only to describe the actions of a third person (“he had a glimpse”) but also the first-person feeling of possessiveness over experience are not transitive or exchangeable. The “having” we accord to others and the “having” we experience are irreconcilably different. “Had” and “having” in particular are functionally identical in language but the phenomenal experiences they refer to are utterly dissimilar. As *A Portrait* progresses towards Stephen’s eventual first-person accounts in the form of thoughts and diary entries, the text highlights the difficulties in describing the first-person experience of “having” with regard to fleeting experiences accorded to another in the third-person.

Stephen will later describe his discomfort with English after using the word “tundish” [AP 188], where his “soul frets” in the apparent unsuitedness of English: “his language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words” [AP 189]. When Joyce writes that “he felt with a smart of dejection that the man to whom he was speaking was a countryman of Ben Johnson” [AP 189], it should go without saying that the reader of *A Portrait* should be very aware that in such case the pronoun “he” is not only a protagonist, but the author (or a version of the author) writing

about himself and his development. However, the very particular context of learning languages giving one a new insight into the world means that retrospective of the implied “Artist” who is narrating is momentarily broken. The “he had” used in the case of Stephen’s actions is distinct from other contexts of Stephen’s linguistic self-education: “once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel” [AP 11] or reading the lines “he had written” [AP 15] in the geography book. We can contrast these examples with the specific case relating to language with “he had glimpses”, it is important that the glimpses are *his* in the strictest phenomenal sense, gotten through his own recognition of words, and so the use of third person fails as the specific phenomenon of “having” or ownership towards an instantaneous glimpse is non-transferable from the third to the first person. The fact that this occurs during a passage about learning words in order to better understand one’s surroundings throws this non-compatibility into sharp relief by showing us the contrast with how the authorial voice describes Stephen listening to his father and grand uncle’s words.

If the reader knows that eventually Joyce will come to allow Stephen to supplant the narrative voice, the third-person “had” for “had glimpses” does not only suggest that Stephen is not yet mature enough to fully command the narrative voice for himself, but highlights that Stephen is gleaning insights into the surrounding world thanks to a new vocabulary. The feeling or notion of “having” is being constructed alongside the experiences which he will “have”. But this is not to argue that the non-equivalence of first-person to third-person “had” and “having” point to the authenticity of personal perspective but rather that this non-equivalence demonstrates the incommensurate difference between (the present) “he had” and (the *unpresent*) “I had”. When it comes to instantaneous experiences this illustrates that they are both equally constructed, rather than given, sensations. Neither has priority over the other. Prefiguring the nemocentric turns of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, once again we see that “I am other I” [U 242], or perhaps the “I” behind the “he” is “nobodyatall” [FW 72].

In the third person, things seem entirely non-transparent. In the first person, they rely upon nothing but transparency. ‘Mineness’ or ‘ownedness’ of immediacy, my immediacy, has to be thoroughly transparent and different according to type. There is one kind of ‘ownedness’ for myself, and another kind for every single other individual in the entire world. In Joyce’s world, this is reflected in the fact that others have their own kind of immediacy and the “all of a sudden” of female figures reflects this kind of insight. The figures that come to represent irreducible otherness to Stephen demonstrate something in their actions resembling the kind

of unmediated spontaneity he experiences in his perceptions and thoughts, while clearly remaining distinct from his own feeling of ownership over his actions, body and words.

What is crucial here, again, is that Joyce's "apprehension" is not a natural feature of one's experience of the world, but a promethean intrusion into the process of engaging with the concrete world: mineness<sup>66</sup> is normally associated with utter transparency and immediateness. However, its association is not with language but rather with metalinguistic acts (for example, the various examples in *A Portrait* of learning words rotely<sup>67</sup>, the strangeness of words like "suck" [AP 11]; the words "hot" and "cold" printed on the faucets [Ibid].) Joyce makes it clear then, at least in part, that mineness itself as a feeling has no metaphysical or foundational authenticity. The soul and the sense of self are artificial, made in the brain and intersubjective action, and Stephen is on the road to finding himself as both maker and made, creator and creature. Mineness is a creative process, and we can see the influence of Max Stirner on Joyce<sup>68</sup> appear on this point, although it is a pruned and mutated Stirnerism, severed from absolute nominalism and reaffixed to a qualified realism.

In these figurations of immediacy and direct semantics about suddenness, Joyce's realism is encountered not as an ideal to be attained or emulated, or as a set of parameters for a certain literary genre, but rather as a nexus of problems through which literature can thoughtfully reshape itself as a direct involvement in the real<sup>69</sup>, not only as a representation of concrete, but also as a concrete engagement with things. So, in a sense, realism as a literary mode is not sustained by a naive notion of exteriority, but rather immediacy and suddenness. Furthermore, realism is not sustained by the appropriateness of immediacy and suddenness,

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<sup>66</sup> The "phenomenal quality" of mineness as Thomas Metzinger refers to it in *Being No One* [Metzinger, 2003:305-306].

<sup>67</sup> The sentences in Doctor Cornwell's book which are "like poetry but only to learn spelling from", [AP 10].

<sup>68</sup> Perhaps Joyce's undermining of the "self" and immediacy could be understood as a triangulation of himself, Berkeley and Stirner. Another influence could be an essay by Dora Marsden on Berkeley in 1916 less than two years after Joyce began *Ulysses*. As Rabaté comments in *Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* [2001:30-31], Marsden's essay uses Berkeley to make a distinction between the "world exclusive I" and the "world inclusive I" of philosophy, which is the ego. Although I would argue that, despite the persuasiveness of attempts to see Joyce's work as sincerely egoist in the Stirnerian sense, Stirner is certainly not disinclined from the anti-philosophical bent of Joyce's work. The references to Shem being "self exiled in upon his ego" [FW 184] are all but parodic of his own dabbling with Stirnerian egoism as a younger man, with Stirner's fear of "spooks" perhaps informing how Shem is "noondayterrorised...by an ineluctible phantom" [Ibid] leading to him "writing the mystery of himsel in the furniture" (the mystery of himself in the future). Elsewhere, 'ego' appears in puns on the phrase "alter ego" with "me altar's ego in minature" [FW 463] and "altered its ego with the posssing of the showers (Not original!)" [FW 51] both of which suggest a skepticism towards or alienation from egoism and a return to poetic influences such as, perhaps, Rimbaud.

<sup>69</sup> I should like to draw parallels here with the Portuguese modernist Fernando Pessoa and the imperative to make all perceptions and sensibility literary, by which he means material: "all impressions are incommunicable unless we make literature of them" or "thinking as a form of acting" in the *The Book of Disquiet* [2002:218].

but rather by their inappropriateness and the dissatisfactions that are inevitable in their presentation, however much the realist writer endeavours to navigate them. In these navigations and cognitions of persistent dissatisfaction, we find the mutual inclusion of the real and the exterior; the failure of authentic immediacy in intuition and experience allows cognition to discover that it is already part of an exterior real. It is therefore understandable that Joyce's use, both of the semantic domain of suddenness, and of the invocation of immediacy and suddenness as modes of experience, generates contradictions and tautologies that the author appears never to even attempt to resolve since the aim appears to be to preserve the problem alongside the cognition enabled by the problem, rather than to subordinate aesthetics to the production of a solution to a philosophical quandary or enigma of phenomenal self-experience.

The next question raised by this discussion is how to explain or describe what, precisely, is so unsatisfactory about equating between realism and immediacy, either in terms of poetic figures or semantics. In spite of whatever innovations or complexities that a writer may apply, such an equation will depend, at least in part, on a certain naïve assumption. This assumption involves taking things as unproblematic in their translation from the exterior world towards aesthetic representation or intellectual conception. Although, what are often termed "naïve realisms" in psychology and aesthetics vary greatly in both style and intent, in general they cannot be extricated from the notion that there is something in the domain of the immediate experience which is so unproblematic or foundational to our access to world that its immediacy can be taken as a given or incorporated directly into natural language. Or, even more naively, there is a certain identity between direct experience and immediacy, which can only be represented or imitated by aesthetic acts, but never entirely appropriated. However, such an immediacy, along with the secondary factor of a presumed intimacy between experiential immediacy and natural language, may then be exploited by the artist or writer in order to represent things as they are and not simply as they appear to be or are thought to be. In other words, a naïve realism does not only take the immediacy of things for granted, it also takes the immediacy of the experience of immediacy itself for granted as authentic, treating it as a unique feature of direct experience that there is a general form or quality of immediacy that all immediate things share, whether they are sensations, intuitions or ideas, and that writers may exploit this in their mimesis and inventions to escape from the treachery of appearances and the dogma of consensus. In short, realisms often rely upon immediacy either semantically or in the general grammar of experience, but literary depictions of immediacy

are undermined, since immediacy is both a primary and a secondary quality. To put this in the Aristotelian constructions that are frequent in the mind of Stephen Dedalus early on in *Ulysses*, “thought is the thought of thought” and “the soul is the form of forms” [U 30-31]. What Joyce is turning a sceptical eye to is the idea of an immediacy of the immediate, an irreducible and given authenticity or immanence belonging exclusively to direct experience and knowable only in the instant of intuition itself. Indeed, here, Joyce’s promethean urge rears its head again: he wishes to steal the fire of immediacy from intuition to deliver it to apprehension, from perception and perspective to cognition and intellection.

To return to *A Portrait*, the problem of immediacy being both a primary and secondary quality can perhaps be noticed in the order of Stephen’s description of epiphany, in particular his definition of the Thomist doctrine of *consonantia*:

—Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words, the synthesis of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is one thing you feel now that it is a thing. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. That is *consonantia*. [AP 218]

The intention of Stephen’s description seems to be that the immediate sense perception comes first, with such an immediacy reflecting upon, and retrospectively illuminating, the frequent (almost incessant) use of “sudden” and the expression “all of a sudden” throughout the earlier chapters of the novel. In contrast, aesthetic apprehension comes afterwards as a faculty of the intellect rather than the senses. However, the manner in which Joyce constructs Stephen’s argument as progressing stage by stage in an almost narrative fashion expresses no minor critical distance from the definition being presented. “Immediate perception” is dependent upon synthesis and rhythm, an additional two important appropriations from Scholastic philosophy and, therefore, gives the inconsistent position that immediacy is also secondary property. Furthermore, since Stephen, typical of Joyce, relies upon contrasting dyads as time/space, audible/visible, sense/intellection, perception/apprehension, and parts/whole, the secondary status of immediacy remains, whether one takes an objectal approach to interpreting Stephen’s argument (the rhythm and structure of an object is prior to the presentation of an “esthetic image”), or sees Stephen as chiefly describing a subjective appropriation of the object (immediacy as subjective and perceptual synthesis of the parts or quality of the object).



The strength of the passages from *A Portrait* can, in part, be attributed to the fact that Stephen is not merely a puppet or mouthpiece for Joyce's argument concerning his own cultivar of epiphanic or eucharistic realism. The version of the argument given to Stephen follows and exposes the problems that a realist project must surmount, and it is necessary to find entirely contextual and situational resolutions for such difficulties and problems that makes the concept of "epiphany" so efficacious. The picture of aesthetic apprehension and philosophical contemplation given by Joyce's situating of Stephen's argument is that the quality of immediacy cannot be anything other than a feature of the process in which it presents itself as "immediate", whether it be from an intellectual "synthesis" of an object and its qualities or context, or from the "rhythm" and structure of the object. Immediacy may be a feature of thought, and it may be a feature of the transition from natural language to aesthetic language but, importantly, it is not a necessary property either of objects themselves or of direct personal experience.

In the famous passages from *A Portrait* where Stephen Dedalus describes epiphany, the narrative framing of the semantics of Stephen's argument appears to stress the autonomy of an object through the production of a "selfbounded and selfcontained" [AP 212] 'esthetic' image. Furthermore, such immediacy in the "esthetic image" is not the captation or mimesis of an irreducible trace of the authenticity of direct experience or some sense perception. Rather, such apparently authentic immediacy in experience itself is a by-product of an intellectual process of engagement, into which such experience is already born.

Although Stephen Dedalus may be arguing for a stark distinction between immediate sense perception and aesthetic apprehension, the grammar of the argument may well leave the reader very aware that the qualities of epiphanic or eucharistic realism such as "sudden", "immediate", and "instant", are not properties that have anything resembling a primary or foundational character, but rather something that occurs at some part of the process of aesthetic thought of a real object. This process is, at least to some extent, concealed or unconscious to the subject doing the apprehending. Such lack of immediacy is at the least partially hidden from Stephen: when he speaks to the autonomy of an object, it is only when an image of the object is "selfbounded and selfcontained" against the "immeasurable background of space of time which it is not" [Ibid]. The phrasing resembles later comments

on Blake and the “pure, clear line” against the void: “the image against the background of the uncreated void”<sup>70</sup> [OCPW 181].

The paradox of Joyce’s focus upon the “sudden[ness]” of the esthetic image is that in order to be realists, writers must recognise that there are no immediate experiences or self-presenting things, but also that immediacy itself does not have the qualities that it apparently does have in our experience. Rather than depend on an uncreated void through which the autonomy of an object can be expressed immediately, the Joycean “sudden” is a created void which stands for a perfect transparency or immediacy, an immediacy existing only in the fictive realm of aesthetics. In *A Portrait*, Stephen rejects the notion that “*claritas*” represents “the divine purpose in anything”, proposing it, instead, as the “the instant” where an object “apprehended luminously by the mind’s luminous silent stasis of aesthetic pleasure” [AP 213]. Here, transparency itself becomes a place where the artist can supplant God as the supreme artificer and decider of the beautiful. By “divine purpose”, we can understand a sense of absolute necessity, the overarching meaning or why of an object that relates it directly to a metaphysical Oneness or personal divinity. But, in Joyce’s view, clarity belongs, therefore, not to a motion that brings an object into maximal conjunction with its own necessity, but rather its very opposite: where an object is grasped in its utter contingency, that is the place where it is most proximal to that which it is not. In *Stephen Hero*, it is “the void which is not the object” [AP 289], but by *A Portrait* this is revised to be, vaguely, wherever anything in the “visible universe” could fill the gap of “that which is it [meaning the basket]” is not. To this end, Joyce performs quite a feat in relation to his relationship with romanticism. As Laman observes, Stephen’s aesthetic theory begins with the notion of the oneness of an object realised through the subjective experience of the artist: “the soul of the contemplated thing is realized in the observer in an instant of insight” [Laman, 2004:57]. However, focusing upon separation and the semantics Joyce uses, with their apparent attempt to unify of Aristotelian apprehension with Neoplatonist luminosity, both the intuitive and holistic dimensions fall away into a discourse that moves away from the constituent terms of Joyce’s esthetics. These terms are the terms we have already encountered, “bounding lines”, “[that] which it is not”; “*claritas*”, “instant” and “stasis”. Through these terms, one can see Stephen’s argument progress. As it does so, the experiential tenor of “immediate perception” shifts towards an image explained in regards to the mind, the instant and transparency. As difficult as it is to imagine, there is ultimately nothing of *qualia* to Stephen’s *quidditas*

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<sup>70</sup> From Joyce’s lectures of March 1921.

(despite his attempts to focus on the immediate and pleasurable), which has given us a theory of the beautiful that moves from immediacy, to the void, to the other (or the disjunct) and to the instant. This is at odds with the assumption that one should look to the experiential as having an authenticity that is unavailable to the intellectual realm, creating a need to subvert it using language in order to emulate. However, what the pleasure of the beautiful reveals is that the experiential is always already sustained by the intellectual and cognitive, and the traces of that sustenance are revealed in the confrontation of an apparently stable object with the traces of its own contingency.

What is most surprising is how much Joyce is appropriating from idealist, metaphysical and even romantic sources in order to furnish himself with a realist machinery that not only meets the demands to emulate his naturalistic influences (principally Ibsen) but also has traces of materialism from Aristotle onwards. The vocabulary and pool of philosophical allusion given to Stephen Dedalus broadens steadily across the progression between *Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* even if, in *Ulysses*, what is perhaps most in evidence is not the presence of Aristotle and Aquinas, but of William Blake.

### *Are We Getting Along Nicely in The Dark?*

It is not up to the writer to remove or see past immediacy as if it were an illusionary surface, but it is up to him to account for the apparentness of immediacy in the same instance which is a feature of the experience of the concrete world. That ‘apparentness’ not being a necessary factor in terms of access to reality but merely the appearance of such access’ conditions. Such is perhaps why Joyce became dismissive of the importance of stream of consciousness for his own writing, and regarded it only as a device or “bridge” over which he could reach greater goals. The problem with making the stream of consciousness the central, defining aspect of any section of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* is that it implies an assumption about the perception of time. This assumption is that the immediate experience of time is so foundational and so intimate to human experience, and exterior to or prior to any intellection, that, if one successfully models the experience of the flow of time, then it provides a basis upon which all direct experiences could be represented as direct experience prior to and independent from all things cognitive and metalinguistic. However, Joyce gives the impression that the immediacy of time cannot be a general account of all things in thought and perception. In Bloom’s thought that time is like holding water in your hand, the

contradictions of such a view become evident. One cannot hold static water as it flows away, but one can definitely “hold” a stream of water as it passes over or through a hand. The materiality and concreteness of this image, not to mention the secondariness of using a metaphor to describe time, demonstrates that, even when the passage of time is a direct topic of a depicted individual’s thoughts, the focus of Joyce’s work is not limited by the relationship between consciousness and time. Indeed, if it has a cognitive focus, such cognition having no basic intimacy with time from which to model it.

The issue around the stream of consciousness is evidenced very strongly in the third episode of *Ulysses*, ‘Proteus’, which opens with the renowned phrase “ineluctable modality of the visible [U 45] and, then, begins to coil into allusions to philosophy. The passages that follow develop themes of transparency, beginning with Aristotle’s discussion of translucent bodies, with the reference to diaphan<sup>y</sup>, but also a slightly comical deployment of Lessing’s *Laocoön*. Stephen takes an ironic distance from Lessing’s distinction between poetry and painting as the ‘*nacheinander*’ to be found in poetry (one thing coming after another) and ‘*nebeneinander*’ to be found painting (one thing next to another) [U 45]. Stephen’s appropriation from Lessing may be ironic in the way that it chooses to emphasis the absence of objects, passing through by falling “through the *nebeneinander* ineluctibly”, rather than maintaining Lessing’s more formal distinction between spatial and temporal. Whether objects (“bodies”) are presented at temporal or spatial intervals does not fit the focus of the Aristotelian reference to transparency and obscurity: it is not through the objects, but rather through the intervals themselves, that an artistic act passes. Transparency is the medium of thought, both normally and aesthetically, and immediacy together with the ‘esthetic image’ are both derived from it without appeal to a greater purpose.

In *Ulysses*, in contrast with the more serious references to Lessing in *A Portrait*, Stephen’s humorous, almost flippant references to *Laocoön* suggestively prefigure *Finnegans Wake*. There he takes a work of aesthetic criticism which relies on contrasting the foundational characteristics of time and space, and undermines the act of making such a contrast (“a very short space of time through very short times of space” [U 45]), preferring, after shutting his eyes, to think of himself as “getting on nicely in the dark” [U 45]. The aesthetics of darkness and obscurity, of transparency and opaqueness, with its shades of conceptual nuance, is preferred to any foundational distinctions of time, space and immediacy which appear, at least in Stephen’s contemplations, to lack such conceptual nuance and shade. Even if one is not persuaded by the notion that transparency is the focus of these pages, one

might be persuaded that Stephen's thoughts about having access to the world and transparency partly anticipate some of the phenomenological thought to come after *Ulysses*. Here I have in mind the transparency of veiled being in Heidegger, but also more scientific approaches such as Thomas Metzinger's<sup>71</sup> "transparent self model", which produces a "nonepistemic situatedness", not of the experience of the self, but of an emulation of the experience of the self. As we have seen in Joyce's earlier work, such an emulation is attached (perhaps counter-intuitively) to the semantics of immediacy and suddenness, which are nonepistemic, exterior to language and as transparent as possible. In Metzinger's words, "phenomenal transparency is a special kind of darkness" [*Being No One*, 2003:632], and it is perhaps this darkness in which the transparent self-model calling 'itself' Stephen Dedalus is "getting along nicely".

In *A Portrait*, Joyce had Stephen make an accomplice of Lessing, in order to advance the well-known argument that the artist should be "refined out of existence" [AP 215], as if the artist's personality, as well as their personal capacity for immediacy of experience, threatened to make opaque the absolute clarity demanded by naturalistic realism and the aesthetic pleasure of epiphany. In *Ulysses* however, the subtlety and irony of the change in Stephen's focus on Lessing conceals a far more radical turn: the artist should be refined out of existence, because transparency is already the mode of experience that defines personal involvement in the world. Being refined out of existence is, in a sense, what gives the self the sense of immediacy it requires in order to make direct experiences feel direct and immediate. The self is not a native property of cognition, but something being emulated "within or behind or beyond or above", to borrow Metzinger's terms, where the system (rather than self) experiences itself as being non-epistemically situated. We should note how radically different this is from a historicist or discursive approach to reading subjectivity in a piece of narrative fiction.

The Joycean demand for indifference in the artificial is already a quality of one's encounter with the world, not because indifference is a given characteristic of the universe (the phenomenal focus on transparency does not negate the ontological conviction of contingency), but because transparency in a sense comes prior to the self<sup>72</sup>. Therefore, the aesthetic priority of indifference and the artist's claim to self-creation is given credence by an

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<sup>71</sup> Particularly relevant is the section "Being-in-a-World" from *Being No One*, [2003:313-14].

<sup>72</sup> For this, I would also refer back to Rabaté's comments on Joyce's influence from Stirner and Marsden. See footnote 68.

image of the ego standing on the impossibility of a self which has direct, unmediated contact<sup>73</sup> with the real. Nobody is thinking: the bodies knocking against each other are reflected in a transparent model self in a diaphanous, transparent model of reality. To apply Metzinger's ideas to the Joycean image of self-consciousness, one can argue that Joyce shows that the self can be addressed in language exactly because nobody in particular is thinking: the portal through which the concrete emerges can be thought of either as an abyss of alterity (the thoughts of nobody in particular) or a void (the thoughts of nobody at all).

Such a connection between selfhood, language and absence is evidenced in the famous passage concerning the English language in *A Portrait*, where Stephen becomes aware of the alien and imposed position of the English language:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language [AP 189].

The acknowledgement captured in this passage concerns not only the lack of a sense of ownership or being at home in a language that Stephen feels or does not feel, but also a creeping intellectualisation of the fact that he is assailed not on the point of not having the thing he feels should be “mine”, but by the realisation there is nothing about mineness itself which uniquely transcends the contingency of all other things. There is an absence of a general mineness over the transparent mineness one feels about particular things. In *A Portrait*, Stephen Dedalus is young and immersed in Catholic teachings, and thus holds an unquestioning belief in his self and a sense of the soul as a metaphysical identity, an untransfigurable essence, or a necessary oneness. But his comments suggest the kind of thinking to which his artistic and intellectual ambitions drive him. *Ulysses* would see Stephen Dedalus brought closer to a disbelief in necessity, which is an opening to the universalisation of contingency. But, in *A Portrait*, the sense of self or individuality remains an unmoved, persistent anchor to Catholic notions of a necessary being, which brings with it theologies of divine purpose and predestination. The self becomes an unmoved mover which simulates the absent connection between singularity, mineness and meaningful or communicative natural language.

In *Ulysses*, Stephen will come to undermine the notion of a cohesive, unchanging self in both mind (“I am other I now” [U 242]) and body (“we...weave and unweave our bodies”

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<sup>73</sup> In Metzinger's words: “the self model becomes a world within a world” [2003:313-314]

[U 249]). Conceptions of the self as an expression of an identity or as the nodal point of a system of identification are supplanted by a view where the self is articulated in the same gauzy, diaphanous terms of reflections and translucency as the rest of the phenomenal realm is described in 'Proteus'. "So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be" [Ibid]. The bridge<sup>74</sup> between the two perspectives is captured in the later parts of *A Portrait*, where an emancipated Stephen presents subjective experience as a dialectic between evanescent event ("intense instant of imagination...a fading coal") and a future "possibility", in which the self is nothing but a transparency between them or "a reflection".

Stephen's feeling of not having an authentic language, of lacking something, recalls Thomas Metzinger's now well-known example of the phenomenon of phantom limbs [Metzinger,2003:464], where "mineness" is simulated or modelled by the mind even where there is evidently no real authentic object to provoke such a feeling. As Metzinger observes "phenomenal quality of "mineness" or bodily "selfhood" is by no means a necessary precondition of conscious experience" [Metzinger,2003:334]. The simulation or mental artifice that is "mineness" or bodily ownership can be as equally extended to an absence as it can be to a presence, which perhaps goes some way to demonstrating that a proprietorial feeling of position even over one's body and utterances is not a foundational quality of self-experience, but something created by concrete processes, either mental or metalinguistic.

So, the "mineness" that Stephen desires to feel over language is not something primordial that has been taken from him, that might be restored if he were in an Irish school speaking *Gaeilge* and not English. But rather what he describes is the realisation not only that he is lacking a feeling of mineness over language, but that a transcendental feeling of mineness over any specific sensation of mineness itself is impossible. When Stephen thinks that "the language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine", the secondary nature of mineness is imprinted within what he thinks of as a direct experience of the otherness of English. As previously observed, the phenomenal property of an experience being "his" is non-interchangeable with the property of it being "mine". In other words one cannot simply be substituted for another in the case of language. The reader should know that any possible language belongs to others before it is "mine", and a language which would be, tautologically, "mine before it is mine", is an impossibility; the notion of the authenticity of *Gaeilge* to the

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<sup>74</sup> Perhaps, like the interior monologue, this a bridge which Joyce has "blown sky high".

Irish experience and identity, which is so bitterly critiqued in *Ulysses*, is already undermined in *A Portrait*.

Therefore, Stephen hearing English, the language which he speaks every day, as foreign, does not highlight the loss of authenticity or the disruption of some unchanging interior identity. Stephen might feel that his ‘selfness’ is founded upon a belonging-together of an unchanging self with those things to which ‘mineness’ extends, but the reader, on the contrary may get the impression that his sense of being Stephen Dedalus is not a sense of self as such, but rather an egoistic feeling founded on the impossibility of a sensation of direct, necessary mineness, that will explain or make coherent the instinctual feelings of transparent ownership one feels one has over one’s words and one’s own body. In the previous chapter, I suggested that a “negative hermeneutics” was being provoked by Joyce’s work, and this is such an example of what that might entail: rather than being a unique site of authenticity and originary belonging, language uniquely exposes the contingency of the feeling of proprietorial ownership that feels most central to human cognition. Rather than language being “the house of being” in whose “home human beings dwell” (in Heidegger’s words) [*Letter On Humanism*, 1947], it is a place of immediate exile, rather than “meaning and the understanding of it” being “so closely connected with the corporeality of language that understanding always involves inner speaking as well” [Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1975:153], it is an absence of meaning which splits understanding away from the corporeality of language, which itself is split away from the primacy of the inner voice over narrative text.

As Metzinger argues, mineness is “by no means a necessary precondition of conscious experience” [Metzinger, 2003:334]. The foreignness of language is exacerbated by this fact, as Stephen can think just as well through a language that feels inauthentic and artificially imposed upon him as he can through any language that he knows, because he does not have a fluency in a language where such a necessity or authenticity exists. We also should not deduce from Stephen’s “unrest of spirit” the idea that a language that is neither Irish nor English would suit him best. I would observe that the first inkling of what Rabaté calls Joyce’s “linguistic anarchism” [Rabaté, 2001:27], begins with the idea that the mineness in regard to language is neither authentic nor originary. However, I would argue that this is not, as Rabaté describes, a “linguistic turn” [Ibid] (of either the Heideggerian or Wittgensteinian type) towards *Finnegans Wake* in Joyce’s work, but a move away from language as having foundational intimacy or institutive powers. Instead, there is no turn but a radical



entrenchment of a realism<sup>75</sup>. The feeling that one is missing one's own language is the first step, not towards finding one's own language, but towards recognising that all language as opaque. There is no choice between the artificial and the authentic: both are artificial, and the all the letters and documents in *Finnegans Wake* are all forgeries in one sense or another in a view that is more Wilfrid Sellars than it is Sapir-Whorf.

The paradoxical centrality of nobody, that is, the self being a model or an impression made by a generic or indifferent thinking in the darkness or obscurity, is of almost architectural importance to *Finnegans Wake*, not just as a thematic element, but as a principle of composition. During the seance or summoning of  $\Pi$  by the  $\times$ , the reader is told of “the measure, *simplex mendaciis*, by which our Outis cuts his thruth”<sup>76</sup> [FW 493]. Whereas the “nobody” status of Odysseus is implicit in *Ulysses*, in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce twists the names of the creator and hero figures into Nobody and Nowhere: “Nieman from Nergends found the Nihil” [FW 202]. Elsewhere, the story of *Ulysses* and the cyclops becomes the tale of “nobodyatall with Wholyphamous” [FW 73], the story of Shem (and perhaps Joyce himself) being the account of “Nayman of Noland” [FW 176]. The obscurity of *Finnegans Wake* can in part be accounted for as the depiction of subjectivity outside of conventional notions of epistemic foundations. Rather than the site of unparalleled intimacy and authenticity, self-experience can be singled out as a kind of double impasse for aesthetic thought, as both the “self” and “experience” are transparent models. Thus, Joyce's use of self-experience is to reduce it to a play between two sites of obscurity and opacity, becoming concrete only through one kind of transparency knocking against another kind of transparency, in the absence of any epistemic given or foundation. The knocking of bodies against each other is evoked in *Ulysses* with Stephen's reference to Samuel Johnson's *Argumentum ad lapidem* against Berkeley [U 45]. The lack of foundation is expressed either

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<sup>75</sup> The question is whether this realism is philosophical or aesthetic. The only answer is that it is neither. Although the majority uses of the word ‘realism’ in this thesis refer to philosophical realism, in effect I would contend (or, perhaps even advise) that Joyce's realism must be thought as the diagonal between two opposing poles – between inaesthetics (Badiou) and non-philosophy (Laruelle) on the one hand, that is between an autonomy understood as that of the condition from philosophical theory, and as understood as the Real from philosophical decisions; and on the other, between a speculative meontology (the acosmic account of being-qua-being as void, lacking analogy) and deconstruction (the priority of otherness and encounter above being as structure). Realism can only be understood as the remaking of realism, and this remaking is exterior to both philosophical decision and literary (or narrative) genre. In this regard the kind of realism this thesis discusses is a philosophical realism in general but ultimately divided from a precisely philosophical realism (a philosopher did not write it) by a principle of minimal fictionality. That is, a realism which is dependent upon the account of fictions (the ‘major’ or maximal fictionality of narrative literature) being reflecting a reading which aims to ‘stay true’ (‘do justice’) to those works but still, unavoidably, must introduce its own measures of fictionality into the proceedings.

<sup>76</sup> The simple lies by which our no one cuts through/to his truth.

as an opening toward Otherness (disjoint elements), or proximity to the errant Void (empty set). From Stephen's convolution of Aristotelian diaphany and subjective idealism, Johnson's dismissal of Berkeley seems less fallacious that it is in the original context.

In *A Portrait*, Stephen states his intentions towards a promethean appropriation of the sovereignty of indifference for the exceptional case of the artist. However, in *Ulysses*, Joyce demonstrates that indifference and the exceptional gesture of the artist cannot be reduced to one particular artist: the aristocratic or separate artist cannot bestow indifference. There is something of a reciprocity suggested here, where the particularity of Stephen's indifference depends upon a generic indifference which, itself, is no abstract universal, but rather dependent upon the drawing of a boundary. Stephen tells us of the sovereignty of the artist but, through telling us, the text illustrates that such an aristocratic sovereignty is impossible: the sovereignty of the artistic act itself is composed of indifference, an indifference that is beyond appropriation by particular differences. In this way, we get a contrast between the two halves of Joyce's thinking of the universal: the abstract universal of a particular individual and the concrete universal of something generic to which the artist is only the most prominent participant. For instance, when Stephen talks of the artist vanishing behind "his handiwork" [AP 215], the "handiwork" of apprehension is not materially separate from experience itself. To put it another way, we might argue that initially, Stephen's work seems to argue that the artist's personality and perspective is embedded in the sense data that becomes raw material for the aesthetic image, and it is the goal of the artist to "refine out" personality and perspective. But one is left wondering if that is really all that his statement can mean? By the time he came to *Ulysses*, and perhaps in the process of turning *Stephen Hero* and the essay *A Portrait of The Artist* into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce had removed any foundational qualities from perspective and personality, these being already transparent and diaphanous. Therefore, it is the task of the artist to be true to the anti-perspectival and anti-experiential nature of contact with the material world rather than include the spectres of personality and perspective via the everyday artifice of immediacy.

The removal of sight is of central important to the *Ulysses* episode 'Proteus' where Stephen instructing himself to "shut your eyes and see" [U 45-46]. The apparent alleged prior-ness (as opposed to essential *priority*) or immediacy of sight, which makes it foundational to personal perspective, allows Joyce to make this radical move towards transparency, or what,

even more radically, could be termed a *nemocentric*<sup>77</sup> model of the aesthetic image, a model that is true to the fact that neither self nor perspective had an original existence. The notion that one might fall “through the *nebeneinander* ineluctably” is not a question of objects and structure (or either object or relation) but rather the transparency of experience that constitutes the absence and space itself. Objects are used as a condition for transparency, the distinction between space and time having less impact when the focus is on the nothingness created in the interval of the object itself, and the analogous emptiness or nothingness that (rather than a pre-given immediacy) is so characteristic of experience itself. To fall “through the *nebeneinander* ineluctably” is to mistake the space in which things appear for an innate perspective, presumed to be inescapable, from which they appear, and to put more stock in the reality of perspective than the materiality of real.

Joyce’s coupling of the semantics of immediacy with phenomenal notions of transparency produces narrative fiction that depicts immediacy not as a quality of experience, but rather as occupying the strange position of being an experience which is not an experience. It is appropriate to compare it to Stephen’s pondering of Aristotelian constructions in ‘Nestor’ (“thought of thoughts” and “form of form” [U 30]), in the sense that experiences are recognised as experiences because of the transparency of the immediateness of immediacy, which will be followed by Stephen’s subversion of the Aristotelian examples of colour and translucent objects in ‘Proteus’. In Stephen’s thought we can know things first through their physicality and then, secondarily through their additional experiential qualities such as colour. This is relevant, not just because it wittily discovers paradoxes in philosophical discourse, but because, in those convolutions, Joyce has Stephen prove to himself that immediacy is a secondary quality. Stephen’s version of phenomenal perception puts the power of intellect over the directness of experience, thinking “through” the eyes instead of recognising that a darkness is needed (“shut your eyes and see”). Joyce’s argument (if indeed it constitutes an argument) and the choices of phrase in ‘Proteus’ seem to indicate that he is taking a Blakean position and applying it, not to idealism and metaphysics, but to a kind of dyadic materialism where primary and secondary can exist in a concrete sense without the need for a single foundational substrate or substance.

Stephen’s expression “thought through my eyes” echoes Joyce’s own commentary on William Blake, echoing the notion that “the soul must not look *with* but rather *through* the eye” [OCPW 181]; we can think through the eye to reality in the absence of immediacy. The

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<sup>77</sup> Centring upon nobody.

transparency of the eye is not equivalent to any absolute clarity or evidence of the immanence of one's experience of sight, but in the fact that one may look *through sight itself* to see the world. That, one may look through an apparent immanence, onto an unmistakable immanence. As Joyce praised Blake for taking arms against the "dragon of natural experience and natural wisdom" [Ibid], Stephen here takes up his ashplant against personal perspective rather than experience.

Such a scepticism about finite, fixed personal perspectives is perhaps spurred by the association between the eye and the soul in statements such as "the soul must not look *with* but rather *through* the eye". If one places a Joycean question mark after the word "soul", the nemocentric reading would imply that the absence of a true or foundational perspective is what enables individuals to think and act as though personal perspective existed. That it is the absence of perspective in sight which is perceived as the space (as a form of the *nebeneinander*) through which one's thoughts pass, not through a foundational intimacy between sight and subjective perspective or an immediacy which cannot be eradicated by intellectual modifications of experience. In his lecture on Blake, Joyce was keen to extract from Blake's lines that the eye is born at night only to die at night<sup>78</sup> while the soul "slept in beams of light". The reverse is evident in Stephen's experiences in which the ego of the artist gets "along nicely in the dark" [U 45], the dark in which it is born while the eye is open only onto the illuminated world of illusionary immediacy and perspective.

We are starting to get a picture of the subtractive view of the concrete and of experience at work in Joyce's narrative prose, going from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*. By "subtractive" I mean that immediacy is modelled on the absence of immediacy, and the ego standing in for a transparent model of a non-existent self. While Ellman's biography mentions Blake's rejection of the corporeal as an inspiration for Bloom's occasionally docile and submissive behaviour [JJ 369], it is equally true that Joyce is influenced by what he saw as Blake's "coordinating force of the intellect" [OCWP 180] an escape route from the mystic to the real. Such a "coordinating force" is not a metaphysical One<sup>79</sup>, rather the "coordinating force" is the multiplicity of the intellect, the capacity of one to be "myriadminded" [U 263] (poetically) or to feel immediacy, which is the feeling of otherness in the self. It seems that Joyce has also chosen to slay the "dragon of natural experience" [OCPW 181], not out of

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<sup>78</sup> Compare Joyce's statement "the eye born at night... would also die at night" with Blake's "...the eye/Which is born in a night to perish in a night" [OCPW 181].

<sup>79</sup> Such as Derrida would later find reason to critique as the "transcendental egology" [D&J 77] sometimes evident in Joyce's work.

mysticism or idealism, but out of a commitment to the concrete that has displaced immediacy and directness. The place of natural experience, then, is instead occupied by what Derrida has called the “grammar of perfumes” [D&J 76], a system of deferments and sendings, opacity and obscurations.

As for the famous phrase which opens Stephen’s musings on phenomena and disclosure “ineluctable modality of the visible”, I would argue that the infamous phrase can mean two separate things. Firstly, it is the modality of the visible to be ineluctable, which suggests that sight has an apparent primacy amongst our senses and what appears visually cannot be denied or doubted. But it also means that the visible is ineluctably modal, which reflects the circumstances of Stephen Dedalus who is losing his sight and walking on the beach without glasses. Both of these statements may intuitively appear to imply a contradiction but, in reality, they do not: it is possible, and perhaps true, that sight has the character of being apparently avoidable while fluctuating and remaining very modal. What the statement does not mean is that sight has a real immediacy that makes it a pure and true contract with the exterior world. Immediacy of the senses, and of experience, comes not through any foundational intimacy, but through the active synthesis of the ineluctably modal and the modally ineluctable – an aesthetic operation which finds its cognitive corollary in activities of inference.

Joyce’s realism begins with a problem rather than a foundational assumption, and that problem is expressed by way of three formal innovations: the “scrupulous meanness” [L 83] of *Dubliners*, the “manifold” [L 421] of what Joyce called (in his schema diagrams) the ‘technics’ in *Ulysses* and, in *Finnegans Wake*, the notion that language can be bent upon the “one great part” of life that has habitually been thought of as unreachable by convention or natural language. Beginning with “scrupulous meanness”, Joyce’s technique is subtractive and extractive, elements of immediacy and language have an unproblematic co-belonging. Either extracting them or subtracting from their context would make them appear to be an unproblematically natural feature of humanity, either collectively or individually, and would underscore the artificial and intellectual synthesis that makes language appear to co-belong with a sense of immediate access to the world.

As regards *Ulysses*, Joyce defended the need for making stylistic changes which were “so manifold, varying as they do from one hour of the day to another, from one organ of the body to another, from episode to episode” [L 421]. Joyce’s argument is that, since life is multiple, so styles must also be, and this might be called a principle of formal multiplicity,

where no one style or literary technique can be used to capture the entirety of life. Such a reliance upon the multiple as invention is what Badiou calls Joyce's "odyssey of forms" [Badiou, *The Century*, 2007:160], a part of the 20th century's "passion of the real" in arts, which classes Joyce within an aesthetic epoch that demonstrates "great unifying power" of formalization, where form is "what the artistic act authorizes by a new way of thinking" [Badiou, 2007:159], a notion of form that is "not opposed to matter or content, but coupled to the real of the act". For Badiou, this act is a rejection of finitude, which has two relevances for Joyce. Firstly, as I have argued, Joyce's "act" relies upon an eccentric elaboration of hylomorphism, where form and matter are fused or confronted together, which, I would argue, is a rejection of restricting the notion of "form" as a finite or transcendental essence, without rejecting either universality or truth, and thus is a rejection of twentieth-century finitude on a dialectical-realist basis. Form and materiality go together as concreteness and apprehension. Secondly, as an act, Joyce's realism always involves transgression, not only in the sense of transgressing a social or communitarian boundary in order to produce art which is offensive or politically disruptive, but in the sense that the "act" is necessarily ruinous to any notion of a well-maintained or limiting perspective, as it reveals that the apparent priority of personal perspective is in fact an illusion, an after-image of the fact that everyone is, to an extent, always outside or ahead of themselves.

The scientifically-minded Leopold Bloom is the avatar of such an 'aperspectival' situatedness. His inability or refusal to be contained by his own perspective (male, middle-aged, Jewish, and middle-class) is reflected in his anticipatory thought and language, which seems always to leap ahead towards some promised deeper involvement or understanding. When confronted by the Citizen and his cronies in 'Cyclops', Bloom expresses his frustration by saying "You don't grasp my point...What I mean is..." [U 396], which is pathetic in that it assumes or suggests that Bloom is taking the men in good faith and does not realise that they are trying to provoke him, or at least mock him. However, more significant than the sympathy this incident inspires for Bloom in the reader is how much it reflects how distinct Bloom's use of conversation is from that of his peers. He is mocked by the narrator for using a scientific tone to persuade or convince, but more so than persuasion, Bloom equates the communication of "meaning" with a kind of anticipating, stretching out in the faith that one's attempt at communication will be "grasped" by someone else. The short exchange containing Bloom's complaint "you don't grasp my point", coming at the end of a long paragraph which partially mocks Bloom's digressive and rationalistic way of expressing himself, condenses and

describes something shown across the many stylistic variances of *Ulysses*: Bloom's use of language is an extension of intellect beyond his own personal sphere, and apprehensive in the sense of being an act of grasping.

What, regarding realism as an aesthetic disposition, is it which unites the principles of subtraction, multiplicity and obscurity? The answer to this question is not that there is a common thread between these stylistic excursions which can be documented, identified and categorised by empirical assessment of the text, but rather the opposite: that something is equally subtracted from them all, or perhaps equivalent principles of subtraction that are similar regardless of the subtracted object. The notion of subtraction has an early influence on Joyce's aesthetic thinking, as he explained to his brother Stanislaus:

Do you see that man who has just skipped out of the way of the tram? Consider, if he had been run over, how significant every act of his would at once become. I don't mean for the police inspector. I mean for anybody who knew him. And his thoughts, for anybody that could know them. It is my idea of the significance of trivial things that I want to give the two or three unfortunate wretches who may eventually read me. [JJ 163]

This example is not simply a positivist account of the concrete, or a noting that the contrast between absence and presence heightens our perception of what is or is not present. Rather, the example illustrates how Joyce intended his work to tie a subtraction to a contribution, and relates a notion of suddenness to the act of vanishing or removal. In the example of the tram above, there is something a little paradoxical, if one considers it as a realism not of the world or social, but of aesthetics. From an aesthetic point of view (and informed by theatre), a dead man has no immediacy whatsoever, yet a man recently departed from the social space due to the impact of a tram has more immediacy being the operator of 'suddenness'. The Joycean principle of absence being the greatest form of presence has a modality here regarding the brute facts of realism: the immediacy of something which has had its immediacy not just obscured or blunted by circumstance, but absolutely and definitively erased. The example of the tram gives us a picture of the impossible: an autonomous immediacy, an immediacy which has lost its object, or the immediacy of the immediate itself. Joyce subverts the fashionable distinction between sensory experience and secondary intellection, by proposing that the immediacy of the immediate is not as vivid or as potent as the immediacy of that which has instantly had its capacity for immediate appearance brutally removed. Rather, the immediacy of the immediate is something like a darkness or an empty

space, like Lessing's *nebeneinander*, which the artist, if skilful, can direct the viewer's or reader's attention. But, unlike Lessing, and as evidenced in his satirical reprisals against Wyndham Lewis in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce has little patience with philosophical demands that poets should choose to prioritise either the spatial (kinetic) or the temporal (duration) and carve out a stasis of his own, a stasis which he thinks can remain in flux. It is through such a paradox of presence, or a paradox of presentism or presentment, we can see the contours of a Joycean doctrine of the concrete.

The often-cited defence of *Dubliners* by Joyce, where he refers to the "scrupulous meanness" of the language, is often quoted in the context of Joyce's claim that he wished to write "a chapter of the moral history of my country", focusing upon Dublin because the city is "the centre of paralysis" [L 83]. In this defence, three of the main elements of Joyce's work are brought together conveniently: a chapter of moral history implies an obligation towards a new depth of realism or accuracy; "centre of paralysis" summarises the major theme of the stories efficiently, and "scrupulous meanness" characterises the minimal or subtractive character of the style of the pieces. Intention, form, style and theme are all packaged together in one spirited defence of the author's right to write whatever he pleases. However, it is curious that the one part that is not frequently quoted is the part where Joyce states that he cannot make the requested alterations to his stories: "he is a very bold man who dares alter the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do any more than this. I cannot alter what I have written" [L 83]. A brief comment is merited here. To start with the obvious ambiguity, "bold" is an ambiguous word because it not only means brave but is also commonly used in Ireland for both 'insolent', especially with young boys, as in 'Nausicaa' Jacky is "Nasty bold Jacky!" [U 451] and "Bold as brass" [U 461], and also 'reliable or confident', as in "my bold Larry" [U 65] Boylan's "Bold hand" [U 74] in the letter to Molly. While I don't want to suggest something like a Freudian slip on Joyce's part, it is a curious way to defend the case that "I cannot write without offending people" [L 83]. Joyce is both bragging that he has brewed something too strong for the printers to stomach, but is also excusing himself by saying that the real "bold" thing to do would be to alter words as they are spoken. Yet, at the same time, he argues that he cannot change what he has already written. It seems that Joyce wishes to claim the right to write as he pleases based on allegiance to the "presentment", yet it is not the present but alteration itself that seems to govern whether a phrase can or cannot be altered. To rephrase Joyce's defence to Richards slightly, the changes already in place have an autonomy, which cannot be repurposed once it is in place. There is



less a sense of being true to a principle of coherent or consistent reality, than there is of realism being the formalisation (which cannot be “deformed”) of a tension between change, alteration and the “presentment”.

### *Conclusion*

Is narrative itself a kind of darkness? Narrative itself is a kind of darkness, in which both reader and author are getting along nicely. John Bishop’s *Joyce’s Book of the Dark* explains Joyce’s reliance on a semantics of darkness, opaqueness and a “strange language of negation” [Bishop:1986:48], in which the classical distinctions between subject and object, identity and difference, are frequently absent or redundant. The notion that narrative itself is a kind of darkness is, in a sense, an opportunity to reconcile a dispute in the study of *Finnegans Wake*, between those readings which seem indebted to John Bishop’s creative reading and those which counter-argue this view, and point out the structuring role of colour and spectrum<sup>80</sup> in the book.

If narrative is a kind of darkness or opacity, then there are varying species of darkness equivalent to colours or variations, which reveal the “Arcs in His Ceiling” [FW 104] without corresponding to the real visible spectrum. John Bishop describes the rainbow as something which will ““reveil” to a man-made absent from “the spectrem of his prisent”..vision arises here, like the verb “to be seen”, in passive form, and in the absence of any identifiable agent or perceived object” [Bishop, 1986:224-225]. It is almost like a Joycean version of a Zen koan: what would a rainbow look like at night?

The choice of the rainbow as metaphor is important, as it reappropriates the rainbow as a biblical symbol of peace, an image of the calm after God’s wrath evoking the cessation of conflict, “the sevenspan ponte dei colori set up over the slop after the war-to-end war” [FW 178]. What it suggests is not only an armistice, but a cessation of the distinction between difference and indifference, between specifics and generics. The opposite of the Joycean rainbow is not black or the absence of light, but unified white light, as we see when the Prankquean brandishes a white rose to Jarl Van Hooter: “she made her wittest in front of the arkways of trihumps” [FW 22] before posing her last riddle where “the skirtmishes endupp’d”. The rainbow’s sympathetic or corresponding element is not the white light that

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<sup>80</sup> For example, the way that colour underpins such important aspects as the game of the colours (the majority of II.1) and the patische of Berkeleyian idealism in the Arch Druid and St Patrick section [FW 610-611].

condenses all colours together, but the darkness and obscurity of the nightworld. The rainbow becomes not only a symbol of peace after conflict, but an emblem of difference disclosed via indifference, the hopeful idea that the generic and the universal can preserve the plurality of truth more justly than particularities and perspectival conflict. Joyce's narrative rainbow of blackness and transparency is what a rainbow might look like outside of the otherwise necessary fiction of the immediacy of immediate and what its absence entails for things that are apparently foundational to literature, such as experience, qualia and meaning.

## CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS A SUBTRACTIVE THINKING OF THE GIFT.

### *Joyce's Balancing Act: The Precarious Position of Sense and Sensation.*

With Joyce, it is always helpful to explain one's ideas with a pun, as Joyce's puns often function as helpful analogies from which one can draw generalise concepts and notions related to the composition of his work. As an example of what I mean, the word "epiphany" is a very subtle pun: not only does its religious usage imply divine insight, but its literal meaning is appearance as it shares Greek roots with words like 'phenomenon' and 'diaphanous'. Without this connection to the philosophical problematic of appearance, if epiphany only referred to intuition or knowledge, it could and would not function in the way that it does. Joyce never really gave the word an additional meaning, but rather he revealed that it was always already a pun. That is, it was always already a joke. It is through this jokelike quality that one can understand a composition principle of his aesthetics. While Joyce is always serious in his usage of the word [JJ 83], the understanding that "epiphany" gives a reader of Joyce's work does not come from an additional meaning so much as the joke-like quality which suggests something supplementary about the word that is neither meaning or usage. That is, if one can say the word epiphany helps us understand the transubstantiation of Joyce's Eucharistic model of writing, how Joyce transformed something *conceptual* into something *compositional* and back again, it does so not through holding a concealed additional meaning but by functioning in a similar manner to a game or a joke. Puns, after all, have the quality of being at once jokes that are very much like games and games that are very much like jokes. Which gives them their utility as a conceptual resource.

While I am not going to claim to have found anything to equal 'epiphany' in explanatory power, I do have two other examples which, in being subtle or unexpected puns, help elucidate the important transition from concept or notion to a principle of narrative composition. The first of these is 'balance'. The second, which I will use in later chapters as it requires more explanation, is 'face'. The word 'balance' is perhaps underappreciated in *Finnegans Wake* where Joyce's language of doubling, dialectics and twinning tends to focus upon reflections and mirrors. For example, the mirror which is emblematic of the two younger feminine figures associated with the sigla  $\neg$  and  $\vdash$ , such as Izod the "a bewitching blonde who dimples delightfully and is approached in loveliness only by her grateful sister reflection

in a mirror” [FW 220]. In comparison to this vivid, repeated image and its myriad mythological and sexual connotations the notion of ‘balance’ might seem rather tame and dry. It is neither as richly suggestive as mirrors and reflections and nor as erudite as allusions to philosophical dialectics. *Finnegans Wake*’s famous cycle of rising and falling can equally be understood as the gaining, maintaining and loss of equilibrium. I would argue that balance, with its Latin root of “having two”, is just as important as mirrors and reflections. Indeed, one might see the central *comic* moment of *Finnegans Wake* as Joyce transforming Vico’s notion of ‘ricorso’ into the instance of a loss of balance. This moment being Shaun’s reversal of fortune where he falls backwards into the Liffey after adjusting the position of his genitals in his trousers, “lusosing the harmonical balance<sup>81</sup> of his ballbearing extremities, by the holy kettle, like a flask of lightning over he careened (O the sons of the fathers!) by the mightyfine weight of his barrel” [FW 426]. What exactly makes ‘balance’ a subtle pun rather than an analogy, and indeed why can I claim that it is consistently the same pun whenever it is used in *Finnegans Wake*? Because are three clearly separate usages which reoccur throughout *Finnegans Wake*: to balance upon something, as in the Shaun the Post example, the balance in terms of accounts [FW 589] and to equalise both sides of an equation. An implication of the latter two usages occurs in II.2, the lessons chapter, where in the margins of the final page we find the twins to have signed off from note-taking with the following “balance of the factual by the theoric Boox and Cooxy, Amallagamated” [FW 308], to make the balance one must cook the books. Coming after a list of stages of human development, is this in fact a confession? Have the theorists Boox and Cooxy balanced the facts, or have they balanced the factual with the theoretical, and in doing so, cooked the books? This difference is between arriving at a final balance, a final account, and the activity of balancing itself.

To get the obvious joke out of the way – is this not what I am doing in this thesis? Joyce anticipated the very activity of theorising about his book and included jokes at the expense of would-be scholars and critics throughout. In this case, it is a very telling joke as I am, in writing this thesis trying to balance the theoretical and factual in commenting on *Finnegans Wake* by “cooking the books”, that is, trying to make the balances add up in my favour which inevitably, as much as I try to minimise it, involves tweaking Joyce’s material. But I would say that this is a telling joke because it describes how “cooking the books”, with

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<sup>81</sup> Coincidentally to my remark that these kind of subtle are game-like and joke-like McHugh’s *Annotations* [McHugh, 1980:426] records pun on games and playing in this passage. The relevant gloss given by McHugh is the Latin “lusus” for “playing”. More tenuously, there is the expression “a losing hand”, as McHugh suggests the Breton phrase “his thumb has fallen into his hand” as relevant to the passage. However, one navigates the passage, it is clear that Joyce wishes the reader to connect the act of balancing with playing a game.

its underhanded implication, is invited by Joyce's texts. The anti-hermeneutic wager of the present thesis is that 'doing justice' to any text requires not interpretation or a hunt for undisclosed meaning, but "cooking the books" in a way that yields conceptual novelty and practicality just as Joyce is "cooking the books" himself in order to make the final balance add up. This 'balance', the implied joke or word game between physically balancing and a final account, is to be interrogated. What is the 'balance' between the factual and theoretical, or in what sense does the theoretical 'balance' the factual? Rather than take a genealogical root from balance to *bi lanx*, I propose that 'balance' in the Wakean sense is more similar to epiphany than it might appear. That is, 'balance' implies something precise about the same problematic of *appearance* which concerned Joyce with epiphany. Further, considering the word 'balance' this way helps us get from something conceptual, something concerning composition and writing. One might observe that as Joyce uses 'balance' in a non-standard, subtly conceptual, manner which he creates the only way that a reader can read 'balance' is not by interpreting an intended meaning but by creating their own 'balance' to balance Joyce's 'balance' and cook the books as little as possible.

So, here I will depart from Joyce's 'balance' and its joke-like and game-like implications and usages to propose my own notion of a Joycean balance. A usage of balance which is much narrower and concerns not appearances in general but perception specifically. It is not notion of balance or harmony between the mind and the body, or being the intellect and the senses. Rather it is the balancing act that Joyce performs "lusosing the harmonical balance of his [...] extremities", that is, playing with<sup>82</sup> balance of his most extreme positions. These extreme positions are the convictions that delimit Joyce's aesthetics across all of his work, from epiphanies written before 'The Sisters' was published in the *Irish Homestead* to the *Finnegans Wake* passages quoted above. These convictions are the endorsement of a subtractive principal in the Peripatetic axiom, and the subtraction of an affirmative idea which constitutes Joyce's implicit critique of givenness and immediacy. This chapter is an attempt to, as it were, follow Joyce's balancing act as he walks along the tightrope from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*. To be a little more ornate in this analogy, we can say Joyce crosses a tightrope of aesthetic autonomy that is suspended over the authority of philosophy and theology.

The Peripatetic axiom is of crucial importance to Joyce both aesthetically and philosophically, one needs to be familiar with it to understand why the relationship between

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<sup>82</sup> Or 'making a game out of'.

intellect and perception is problematic for Joyce at all. It also connects Joyce's earlier Scholastic and Thomist influences, with his later fascinations with Vico. In his essay from the *Exagmination* collection "Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce", Samuel Beckett famously offers the first critical analysis of the influence of Giambattista Vico upon what was then titled "Work in Progress". Beckett's analysis of Vico's influence offers an early comprehensive guide to Vico's relevance to avant-garde literature. Through illuminating Vico's particular influence upon Joyce, along with examples of what Beckett refers to as Joyce's "rare subjectivism", Beckett provides working definitions for the terms and notions which allow readers to understand how Bruno and Vico exerted a compositional influence over the "Work in Progress". He also frequently highlights their influence on other, earlier and more widely understood influences upon Joyce's writing. One of the key points of reference in Beckett's analysis is the so-called Peripatetic or Scholastic axiom *Nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu*<sup>83</sup>. The axiom is presented in its Vichean adaptation of the transhistorical priority of poetry over philosophy: "Considering the Scholastics' axiom: '*niente è nell' intelletto che prima non sia nel senso*', it follows that poetry is a prime condition of philosophy and civilization" [DBVJ]. Whether the notion that poetry is primal to philosophy and civilisation indeed 'follows' from the axiom or not is open to a debate itself, but in underlining how Vico's citation of the axiom in the *New Science*<sup>84</sup> adapts and transforms a Scholastic influence, Beckett's analysis illustrates how radically transformative, or perhaps even subversive, Joyce's own appropriation of both has been.

The importance of the axiom itself, independently from the importance Vico attaches to it (as clarified by Beckett), is of almost immeasurable importance to Joyce's writing. Its influence is felt in almost all statements made about his personal aesthetic. In addition, a great many phrases in Joyce's work seem to allude to, or echo, the axiom, such as "First we feel. Then we fall" [FW 627] from the Anna/Leafy monologue at the end of *Finnegans Wake*. Many sections of *Ulysses* could even be summarised, in part, as longform explorations of the

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<sup>83</sup> "Nothing is in the intellect which is not first in the senses", the phrase originates in Thomas Aquinas' *De veritate*.

<sup>84</sup> The full passage in question is "Throughout this book it will be shown that everything that the poets had sensed in their popular wisdom was later understood by philosophers in their esoteric wisdom; we may say then that the poets were the *sense* of mankind, and the philosophers the *intellect*. Thus, what Aristotle in particular about the individual man is also true of humankind in general: *Nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu*. This means that the human mind can only understand a thing after the senses have furnished an impression of it, which our modern metaphysicians call the 'occasion'. For the mind uses the intellect whenever it 'gathers' something insensible from a sense impression, and this act of gathering is the proper meaning of the Latin verb *intelligere*, to understand" [NS 136].

axiom as it applies to quotidian life. Other more abstract allusions to the axiom, such as Stephen's use of Aristotle in 'Proteus' and the earlier account of epiphany in the *Stephen Hero* manuscript, could be seen as explorations of various philosophical materials and sources, using the principle of the Scholastic axiom.

Beckett's reference to the axiom does not merely give us Vico's version, but also demonstrates the conduit between Joyce and Vico in two ways. Firstly, it illustrates the philosophical convictions that Joyce shared with his sources, yet without suggesting that Joyce's work is structurally or ideationally dependent upon a certain philosophy. Against the (often still pervasive) idea that Joyce intended his work to directly express views extracted from his sources, or model itself directly from their structures, Beckett's essay asserts directly that "[Joyce's] position is not a philosophical one" [DBVJ] and that philosophy is a matter of transforming a particular system of "social and historical classification" into "structural convenience...or inconvenience". The domain of poetic or mythic action maintains an exteriority, both to philosophy in the direction of universality, and to socio-historical typologies that stress particularity. Secondly, more directly relevant to Beckett's citation of it, the axiom is used by Vico to describe what kind of relationship can exist between writers of literature and philosophers or, rather, non-relation, considering that poetry is considered to be a (or *the*) condition of philosophy. The writer of poetry provides the "sense" to that which philosophy is the "intellect", so that the poet independently produces the conditions from which philosophical thought takes place. This is not metaphorical. This is yet another example in Joyce's work of the artist or artificer directly supplanting divinity as the initial creative force in the human realm, evidenced by Beckett's words that, in the Joycean reading of Vico, poetry "animates of the inanimate" [DBVJ]. Poetry, as the "prime condition" of philosophy, is not just the starting point for complex thought. It is also the prime mover in a literal sense, an initial instilling of real kinesis into matter through the means of imagination and the impetus of passion. The challenge set to the readers, who may be justifiably incredulous as to the scale of the claims made by the proposed Joyce-Vico hybrid, is that, in order to understand Joyce's work, we must be able to take this remarkable proposition as literally as we can.

Even though the influence of the axiom is evidenced throughout all of Joyce's writing, published and unpublished, I would argue, taking into consideration Joyce's influences from scholasticism as a whole, that Joyce has never used the axiom simply in its philosophical sense. Rather, he has always used it in very particular transformative ways. As Beckett adjusted the meaning of the axiom slightly to illuminate to the relationship between the

“Work in Progress” and Vico’s *New Science* (Vico himself adjusted it to apply to a general case and to suggest a theory of conditions) all such ideas are nudged or contorted when they exert an influence upon Joyce’s work. At the simplest level, one must surely agree that, although sense and intellect are presented as distinct things in both *Dubliners* and *Finnegans Wake*, the ways in which they are shown to be distinct are resolutely different, perhaps even to the extent that the definitions of “sense” and “intellect” that Joyce appears to be working from lacks any empirical or philosophical consistency. Likewise, in *Ulysses*, there are myriad minor distinctions between how the senses and the intellect manifest to Stephen in the third episode, and how they manifest to Leopold in the eighth.

For Stephen Dedalus, the thinking of sensation involves semantics of phenomenal obscurity and opacity, the interrogation of moments of distancing or hiatus in space and time. By contrast, his conceptualisation of *intellect* is founded on the knowingly intellectual allusions he makes to his own personal memories which are inserted directly into the text, usually unaddressed and frequently without even the shadow of an explanation. For Leopold Bloom, sensation holds an apparently immediate quality which can be thought of as a kind of proximity, or a collapse of spatial or temporal distance. While his intellection does involve memory to a great degree, it is quite unlike Stephen’s. The latter’s memories are viewed from the interior, an inhabitation of memory where Joyce provides no clear textual distinction between a remembered or a current incident. For example, it seems that Stephen offers a combination of remembered incidents and a mockery of Uncle Richie [U 47-48], some of which could well be invented, and the recollection of Kevin Egan [U 51] is described as if it were concurrent with the present moment. In contrast, Leopold Bloom’s memories are interrogated from the outside, providing litanies of objects for contemplation such as the list of erotic objects and sensations, e.g. “Flowers her eyes were” [U 224].

Another distinction to be noted, between the two characters, concerns the way their interior voices address themselves. In a very Derridean displacement of intentionality<sup>85</sup>,

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<sup>85</sup> For example, Derrida’s interrogation of Husserl’s account of speaking to oneself in *Voice and Phenomenon* [Derrida, 2011:62-63]. In Derrida’s account the separation of indication and expression is what is in question: and it is precisely this separation which forms the ‘motor’ of the *Ulysses* passage cited above, in the sense that bridges a modality of ‘speaking to oneself’ to what are precisely “temporal modalities” [Ibid 62]. Although Derrida is working from an example of self-addressed speech from Husserl (“you have gone wrong, you can’t go on like that”) the entire passage has a remarkable relevance to the first half of ‘Lestrygonians’ to the extent that one cannot help but wonder if Derrida had Joyce specifically in mind. For example, consider how Bloom’s sentence fragments frequently lack either a pronoun or a name, and Derrida’s reading of Husserl concerns statements where names cannot be replaced by pronouns and “provides no knowledge of the subject to himself” [Ibid]. As with the Husserl example, Bloom’s thoughts are frequently not indicative, yet bridge into self-directed imperatives. The observation that there cannot be a “speaking to-oneseelf-about-oneseelf” unless it takes the form



Leopold Bloom often points out the contents of his own senses to himself (the “there he is” [U 209] upon seeing Parnell’s brother) and there are moments where Bloom’s interior voice seems to supplement itself with indicative statements. For Stephen, sensations are more frequently directly embedded in the text, even when he is addressing himself, an obvious example being in ‘Proteus’ where, despite the interior self-address of “see now...all the time without you” [U 49], two women on the shore are indicated as “they” without any introduction whatsoever to tell the reader who “they” are and there is almost nothing to maintain a distinction between responding to a sight and interior saying of what is seen. Although Stephen narrates the activity of perceiving, his inner voice will tend to ignore or jump over the objects of perception themselves, even as references to such objects proliferate. However ‘minor’ these issues are in terms of Joyce’s stylistic variance, it is significant that the differences in the displacements of intentionality we see in Bloom’s interior voice often do not seem to involve space or time (*nebeinander* or *nacheinander*), but rather speculation and anticipation, these being made emblematic by Bloom’s thought of a line from Campbell’s poem “Lochiel’s Warning”: “coming events cast their shadows before” [U 210] a line which would go on to become a motival phrase in *Finnegans Wake*.

Such differences can often be very subtle, as they apply to questions of voice and language. An example of this is the distinction in vocality between the writerly Stephen’s thoughts, containing onomatopoeia such as “Crush, crack, crick, crick” [U 45] on the beach, and the “*Heigho! Heigho!*” [U 85] of Bloom’s silent, inner singing along with the church bells in the episode ‘Calypso’. In such moments, a great variation is demonstrated in Joyce’s ability to depict the interior voice’s dependency on what is neither interior nor vocal: Stephen’s thoughts are that of an inner voice suggesting or imagining sounds as written onomatopoeia, whereas Bloom’s are the inner voice singing along to chimes or, one could read the verse of repeated “*Heigho!*” as an imagining what the voice of a voiceless musical sound might be. In each example, iteration becomes the occasion for the oneness or innate unity of the presence of sound to be usurped by the polyvocality of plural presentations of sound, but without the reality of the sound being threatened by this supplanting. In both cases, it is not the power of language that is being attested to, but rather language’s frailty in the face of the separative

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of a “speaking to oneself that S is P” [Ibid] is also relevant in so far as Joyce uses self-directed “S is P” statements in Bloom’s inner voice to create not only an effect of time passing, but of a narrative motion beyond any single individual’s temporal experience. Bloom’s thought “that’s the fascination: the name” [U 209] conceals a double meaning, first the literal sense that Dublin political life is fascinated by the name Parnell and secondly the focalising effect of names in a flow of thought. The name which doesn’t appear motivates the passage, as it *fascinates* by passing the reader’s attention from points of implied presence (the pronouns which appear) to points of absence (the pronouns which do not).

materiality of the hieroglyph<sup>86</sup> or grapheme: the reader's attention is drawn to the vowels, but in their textual and unvoiced state, where they stand for sounds that cannot be rendered within language.

The Peripatetic axiom has, therefore, become two different things as Joyce's Scholastic influences are brought into conjunction with, or perhaps diluted by, other sources like Bruno and Vico. In the first case, it loses something of its philosophical status and, instead, becomes a principle for writing; the axiom is subtle enough to give a hint, not only of the fact that the senses and the intellect differ, but also how that difference is apparent on a personal or individual level. It suggests that experience is not a unified and immediate thing, but is in fact a grammar that depends on the joining of the senses and intellect. There is nothing like a phenomenologist's grammar of experience in Joyce, because what is recorded as "experience" itself is nothing but a variety of grammars, which lack anything like a cohesive notion of selfhood or a persistent personal identity. There is no transcendental subject on which to hang a cohesive idea of "experience", independent of the shifting co-presentations of sense and intellect. In addition to his more overt critique of a persistent or transcendent self, Joyce's consistent undermining of the assumed givenness and universality of a union of perspective and vocality presents us with the prospect of having to admit that, if sense and perception are important, then experience and immediacy must be subverted. The Joycean reader need not look for experience as a unified, self-orientated category or basis for perception or sense, a "lived-in experience" or *Erlebnis*, that can only be known from the interior, operating beneath the Joycean muddle of sense and thought, which would exist prior to corporeal modes, or material and hieroglyphic condensations. As a corollary to these points, the Peripatetic axiom becomes suggestive, but not prescriptive, of the relative place of language in regards to the senses and the intellect. This "rare subjectivism", not of the "I" and its experience but of the events which cast their shadows before it<sup>87</sup>, thoroughly dismantles both experience and self as transcendental categories.

Building on the notion of a subjectivism of (or resultant from) contingent events and what Vico refers to as "occasion", the axiom provides a suggestion for a future theory of conditions, which covers the distinction of poetry and literature from philosophy, autonomy

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<sup>86</sup> See the use of Vico's definition of hieroglyphs in Beckett's DBVJ.

<sup>87</sup> Although I have cited Badiou frequently up until this point, I will provisionally note here (as I will address this point later) that this is a marked contrast to Badiouian events which, by their Mallarméan definition, never "cast their shadows before" – on the contrary, this event is a figure of pure chance, outside of existence "one cannot decide whether it exists or not" as "indecidability is a rational attribute of the event" [Badiou, 2005: 198].

and generic expression. In Beckett's interpretation of Joyce's exploitation of Vico's system, poetry, as a materialisation of passion and imagination, is recognised and understood as poetry chiefly through the ways in which it is manifestly independent. In contrast, philosophy is described wholly in terms of its dependencies, and metaphysical or universal speculation is inseparable from the particular things which provided the occasion for such: "Poetry was the first operation of the human mind, and without it thought could not exist" [DBVJ], in Beckett's words. The Beckett-Joyce-Vico view of conditions theory is highly suggestive of two future theoretical views that stress the singularity of poetic acts: Badiou's inaesthetics, with its doctrine of the dependency of philosophy upon entirely contingent and singular situations, and deconstructionism, which, after Derrida's very Joyce inspired essay *Plato's Pharmacy*, views philosophy as always-already penetrated by its written other, literature, that is equally disseminated through poetic and non-poetic texts. In short, the potential to read the axiom as a potential theory of conditions (in the philosophical sense) furnishes Joyce with another place to refuse the "Either/Or" of philosophy: as a writer of literature, he feels quite comfortable shifting between *poesis* and *dianoia*, associating neither exclusively with the primacy of an individual's immediate sense or with the collective adequation of good or common sense.

To simplify this discussion, I propose to bring the general problematic of to bear on three different issues: *transparency*, *epistemology* and *conditions*:

i) *Transparency*. The subtractive phrasing of the axiom should not be overlooked. The Italian version used by Joyce and Beckett, *niente è nell' intelletto che prima non sia nel senso*, is not "everything in the intellect was first in the senses" but "there is nothing in the intellect which is not first in the senses". At the risk of introducing wordplay into a canonical axiom, perhaps one can adapt the axiom for the more oblique aspects of Joyce's work so that it reads: "nothing is in the senses before there is nothing in the intellect", which would respond to the play between transparency and the subversion or erosion of the idea of experiential immediacy in Joyce's work. The dependency of the intellect upon the senses is approached critically by Joyce, which necessarily seems to imply that it is also approached subtractively. After all, the passage of Vico which Beckett uses to illuminate 'Work in Progress' does not allude to the sense of the sensible, but argues that the intellect is the process of gathering "the insensible from a sense impression, and this act of gathering is the proper meaning of the Latin verb *intelligere*, to understand" [NS 136]. The particular usage of the axiom at this point, therefore, does not become an account of how the intellect understands the sensible.

Instead, it defines intellection itself as a gathering of the insensible from the midst of the sensible. While, for Vico, the “insensible” may lead directly into the theories of poetic language and concrete universals (such as the account of lightening giving rise to paternal dieties), the “insensible” for Joyce cannot be so schematised. For writing which is intentionally outside of concerns like clarity and meaning, what is “insensible” becomes an extremely wide domain which stretches from the undefinable to the undecidable and to the nonsensical.

For the nonsensical, perhaps the most prominent examples belong to *Finnegans Wake*, where certain aspects of language lose their meaning in order to “be” something rather than be “about” something, as in Beckett’s description. There is also the case of the sigla, which are graphemes yet lack the meaning-function or vocalisable sense of written language. But the insensible can also include undecidable mysteries, such as the origin of the coin in the *Dubliners* story “Two Gallants”, and the identity of the man in the mackintosh at Dignam’s funeral in *Ulysses*, as well as several uncertainties concerning Martha Clifford’s letter: the typo of “world” for “word”, the meaning “that word” [U 95] itself and the fact that we cannot know who the person signing themselves as “Martha” really is. It is clear that Joyce can make a full, vibrant spectrum of senselessness available to the intellect without ever fully leaving the realm of the sensible. The meaningless is not the nonsensical, the nonsensical is not the undecidable, they cannot all be summarised by a single principle or logic.

Absence and subtraction do not only cover the issue of what is within the senses and within the intellect, but what is in between the sense and intellect, and how “something” is transported between them. In this sense, the Peripatetic axiom, if taken in isolation and applied to literary accounts of perception, would imply that there is the potential for an absolute clarity or translucency between the senses and intellection, that what is in the senses is simply transposed to the intellect without adulteration. Whether or not this is what Aristotelians or Scholastics believed is not so relevant, as we have seen the importance of the diaphanous, the limpid and transparency in Joyce’s suggestions of how things move from the sense to the intellect. But at the same time, there is no grounds to consider that Joyce believed that there is an unfiltered, unmediated way in which the content of sensation imposes itself upon the mind as a direct impression.

Stephen Dedalus’s contemplation in the *Ulysses* episode ‘Proteus’ is an unscientific and highly aestheticised speculation upon how objects of perception become objects of the intellect. This contemplation does not focus upon a specific something first in the senses and

then in the intellect, but rather upon an absence of something, in the absence of colour. The use of Aristotle's discussion of uncoloured or clear objects in 'Proteus' serves to distinguish three separate properties in the reader's mind: translucency as the property of a real object, transparency as the property of a sense-impression or object of experience, and clarity as the unmediated relationship between sense-objects and the unified experience, or sense-data within the intellect. In the opening paragraphs, we are given hints of differing logics with which to interrelate or define these sets of properties (Aristotle, Berkeley and Lessing), but nothing is conclusive, as Stephen's mind departs from phenomenology towards thoughts of Eden, poetry and heresy. As Stephen councils himself that the world is there "all the time without you" [U 46], the undeniable existence of an exterior world is not linked to an unavoidable vividness or immediacy which transcends the shortcomings of Stephen's senses, such an immediacy would be contradicted as the reader discovers his myopia and broken glasses, along with the act of shutting his eyes and his unscientific understanding of sight. Rather, it is linked to something that ineluctably unites these shortcomings to the darkness or obscurity of the intellect faced with something it cannot quite grasp. The ineluctable, the unavoidably real, is a bridge between two obscurities. Rather than a clarity between the sense and the intellect, there is an opacity or darkness within each, that can be synthesised or somehow made coincident. Stephen fears that, if he opens his eyes, he will be "forever in the black adiaphane" [Ibid]: the irony is, perhaps, that he is in that state exactly because he is in the void between sense and intellect, thus having access to what is there "all the time" without him. What difference would there be, effectively, between a hypothetical perfect clarity and perfect obscurity? The parallels with Thomas Metzinger's notion that phenomenal transparency is a "special kind of darkness" are, as I have argued, very striking. Things are however not so clear cut. The direction of Stephen's argument may separate the diaphany and translucency of Aristotle's uncoloured bodies from the opaqueness of impaired eyesight, but no single philosophical argument could entirely disunite the semantic fields of the opaque and the obscure, which become blended in Stephen's thoughts. The invocation of the *argumentum ad lapidem* in the text suggests a kind of unavoidable clarity of concreteness or materiality, but this carries the problem of assuming that the intellect may have an unmediated and unfiltered access to the senses. This is suggested by the dual use of the word "in" in the first two paragraphs of the episode, meaning qualities which are *in* bodies, but also the something *in* something, like the metaphor of a gate one's hands can be put *through* or the feet of the women which sink *in* the sand (which Stephen could not possibly see). "Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane" [U 45], Stephen questions: "in" can mean both harbouring a property, a sense-

impression, and to pass through into something. So, diaphane and adiaphane, clarity and opacity, are here together, threaded along the same line of argument. In Joyce's application of the Peripatetic axiom, one may wonder what is between the senses and the intellect? What links them? The answer is diaphane, and adiaphane.

If Joyce's phrase "ineluctable modality of the visible" itself can potentially be read as a restatement of the Peripatetic axiom (if the axiom is correct, it is only the "intellect" could find the visible ineluctable), it is a restatement that opens up the unmentioned objects of sensation to equivocation, that is latent in a statement arguing for the priority of perception without making specific reference to a particular perceived object. The notion of the withdrawal of the object<sup>88</sup> is perhaps supported by the interpretation of "the ineluctable modality of the visible" offered in Gifford and Seidman's *Ulysses Annotated* [1988:44], where they trace the famously enigmatic phrase to Joyce's reading of Aristotle's *Of Sense and the Sensible*, and especially the notion that the ear participates in the substance of the thing that it hears, but the eye does not. Considering the fact that Stephen is not wearing his glasses, the "ineluctable" statement does indeed at least nod towards a withdrawal of the sensing organ from the sensed body.

But perhaps this is better understood not by a philosophical notion of withdrawal but by an aesthetic notion of untidiness. Returning to Beckett's essay, where he refers to "a sensuous untidy art of intellection. Perhaps 'apprehension' is the most satisfactory English word" [DBVJ]. Apprehension already being established as a key Joycean descriptor of synthetic processes, the addition of a notion of untidiness demonstrates a very unphilosophical instability or looping. It is not only 'untidy' in the sense of the flawed and limited human sensations themselves, but rationally as there is a paradox: as intellect is involved in the instance of sensation, then sensation involved in the intellection of that sensation, and sensation involved in *that* instance of the intellection of sensation, and then so on in infinite recursion. It may be that Beckett is so keen to change vocabularies to fit into Joyce's system (the essay was effectively written to Joyce's order) that he is contradicting his own citations of Vico somewhat but, nevertheless, the focus upon the "untidy art" becomes a description of

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<sup>88</sup> Three clear phenomenological analogues are possible: Husserl's *epoché*, Heidegger's *Zuhandenheit* and the object-orientated ontology of Harman, et al. While it may be persuasive to analyse Stephen's speculations along such lines I would argue that phenomenological analysis is perhaps the inverse to what is implied. Withdrawal here, in the oblique and perhaps inconsistent semantics of opacity, does not mean something like bracketing or the limits of human access. Rather, Joyce appears to be showing that the withdrawal of the object is not a withdrawal from Stephen's access but rather the exact means of how he has access. I would call this use of realist aesthetics *counter-phenomenological*.

what modes of artifice can become realisms by uniting the *nihil* of the senses to the *nihil* of the intellect. This is another instance of where reading Joyce brings us close to a Derridean idea. I am referring to Derrida's comparison of indicative and expressive utterances in *Voice and Phenomenon*, where he says "Expressive language itself would have to supervene on the absolute silence of self-relation" [Derrida, 2011:59]. In this statement, Derrida is speaking of the silent self-relation between the inner narration and the apparently transcendental "I" or "me", which is both speaker and addressee of one's inner voice. In the examples I have given from *Ulysses* (particularly in example from 'Lestrygonians'), one does not see a narrative interiority constructed around, as in Derrida's reading of Husserl in *Voice and Phenomenon*, a tele-phony between the "I" self-identity and the "I" of the inner voice, but a tele-graphy<sup>89</sup> (that "untidy art") between the sense-intellect and the intellect-sense. Insofar as there is an exploitation of an "absolute silence" (which could be another way to say perfect clarity or absolute lack of mediation) between two terms, is it not perhaps the case in Joyce that we see the artifice of writing supervening upon absolute silence, but the drawing of presentation from the silence of a lack of presence.

Joyce's construction of Stephen's thoughts at the beginning of 'Proteus', and of Bloom's monologue in 'Lestrygonians', does not allow us to think that somehow sense and intellect are wholly separate. And yet, the "absolute silence" (to reappropriate Derrida's words) that separates them has an absolutely unpolluted clarity, it is both adaphane and diaphane. So, if there is no immediate, unfiltered clarity between sensation and intellect, there can be no immediate and unfiltered transposition of poetic language into philosophical language. The quality of the senses, therefore, does not have primacy over the intellect, nor is it an originary reservoir in which authentic items of knowledge are preserved before being grasped, albeit corrupted by reason. There is nothing here like a notion of pure immanence of sense-experience, as the "untidy art" of intellection infects and inflects the senses at first. The distinction between the prior senses and the "untidy art" of sense-intellection is not reducible to the idea that what is in the sense is somehow "pure" and what is in the intellect has been somehow corrupted or adulterated.

We should understand "the senses", not as remote from the intellect, but as remote from notions of experience and immediacy. In *A Portrait*, this understanding is borne out by the semantics around immediacy and suddenness. In *Ulysses*, it is supported by Stephen's thoughts of opacity and obscurity and Bloom's reliance upon anticipating and being

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<sup>89</sup> See Derrida's 'Ulysses Gramophone' for a description of tele-phony and tele-graphy in *Ulysses*.

anticipated and, in *Finnegans Wake*, by the frequent association of major figures, not with the five canonical senses, but each with an impairment of one of the five senses (deafness, blindness, etc).

Hopefully we now have a clearer idea of how the distinction between presence and presentation interacts with literary language. It is not simply that language presupposing the priority of presence is the language of sensation, and language which presupposes the priority of presentation is the language of the intellect. Nor is it that sensation leads to language expressing presence through semantics or poesis, whereas intellect leads to formal precision expressible in syntax. Rather, the distancing and fracture of unified presence and the intercession of presentation into that which is abdicated by presence happens both in sensation and in intellection.

ii) *Epistemology*. Although the Joycean appropriation of the Peripatetic axiom provides a range of the different things that intellect and sensation can mean, it does not tell us very much, or even anything at all, about the flow of knowledge and information, or how things become knowledge and information. In ‘Proteus’ little of Stephen’s interior questioning approaches the topic of knowledge or knowing. Of course, how a piece of fiction handles the question of knowledge cannot be reduced to a simple inventory of words, and the frequency with which they are used. But, if one looks to more dialogue-dependent episodes of *Ulysses* such as ‘Aeolus’, it is obvious how important the word “know” becomes in order to maintaining a conversation in Dublin, or for Bloom’s sense of insecurity<sup>90</sup>, as expressed in the repetition of “you know” [U 153]. In ‘Nestor’, Stephen is at the receiving end of Deasy’s reliance upon “do you know?” or “do you know that?” [U 44] when trying to catch Stephen out. “Do you know?” and “you know?” are all ubiquitous enough to cover both assertiveness and acquiescence. Yet, despite this ubiquity, during all of Stephen’s varied and millenia-spanning philosophical speculations and interior digressions, “knowing” and “know” rarely make an appearance in either ‘Proteus’ or ‘Scylla and Carybdis’. In ‘Proteus’, the word ‘know’ only appears as a repetition when Stephen is mocking its use in slightly pretentious conversation, peppered with sharing trivia and affectations: “your postprandial, do you know that word?” [U 53]

In terms of sensation, it is awareness that Stephen notes rather than knowledge: “he [Aristotle] was aware of them bodies before of them coloured” [U 45]. I would argue that this

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<sup>90</sup> See Bloom's nervousness with the foreman and lack of confidence in communicating the visual pun.



should serve as a caution against reading Joyce's appropriation of peripatetic ideas as epistemic, or the way he accords epistemic priority to immediate experience. What Joyce sees in the ineluctable importance of sensation cannot be reduced to a mode of the myth of the epistemic given. Joyce's knowledge is always knowledge of a certain situation, and he never lets himself depict one particular thing (be it personal sensation or mysticism) as being a universal or final domain of knowledge. At the risk of radically extrapolating from the Joyce-Vico connection, we can say that nothing immediate can be epistemic, because epistemology always has to do with artifice, meta-structural and second-order processes of synthesis and creation, rather than something like a romantic view of direct sensation, providing Joyce with variety of ways to reinvent the Aristotelian view of the active intellection of the senses. Returning to my earlier comments on his defence of *Dubliners* to Grant Richards, Joyce's claim of truth regarding the "offensive" material he submitted for publication is ratified by the fact that he wrote it, not that he experienced it. We see Vico's principle *verum ipsum factum* ("the true is the made") applied, not to a (linguistic, historical or sociological) constructivist epistemology, but to a realism that can only present itself as such through particular acts of artifice. This is an anticipatory realism that sees the foundation of knowledge as the veridical, rather than the true or discursive consensus.

Consequently, we can claim that Joyce's appropriation of the axiom tells us very little about epistemology in general and, furthermore, it also does not tell us very much about how particular characters in Joyce's fiction know things about the world, how their often richly complex relationship to that knowledge unfolds. Through Bloom's activity in the newspaper office, we see knowledge both as an end (the information he needs in order to place the ad), and as a means (asking questions in order to make a conversation go more smoothly). This continues the theme of a separation between sensation and knowledge, since the notion that everything in the intellect has its origin in the sensible does not automatically lead to the conclusion that sensation is a kind of "raw data" or unadulterated, authentic information which can only be contorted or polluted by the inauthentic universality of intellect. Such a view is threatened and challenged by the complexity of Joyce's always inconclusive assault on phenomenological assumptions of all kinds. For example, during the episode 'Lestrygonians' Joyce gives us the suggestion that something can be unknown to the senses before it comes known to the intellect: the "shadows" cast by the "coming events" seem to come neither from conscious intellection, nor from direct sense experience. This 'something' is nevertheless "in" the senses in a *sub-* or *un-* conscious manner until it has exerted some

kind of effect on either conscious thought or language. We see the role of language differ here, as there are examples where the flow seems to lead both to language mediating between the senses and to intellect and language becoming the final destination of what first passes through the senses and is then apprehended by the intellect.

What is very curious about Joyce's work, and what demarcates it from philosophy, is it has a close affinity Derridean *différance* between experience and sensation, yet which is irreducible to the *différance* between spatiality and temporality. This is a good example of how Joyce is proximal to deconstruction while providing a challenge to it in the form of a novel realism. In order to ensure that sensation can provide material for the intellect (or bestow availability onto the material), experience has to be constantly interrogated, decomposed and declined from any position of epistemic privilege. Perhaps we can read in Joyce not an anti-phenomenology<sup>91</sup> but rather a counter-phenomenology, where what is in phenomenological evidence is subject to scrutiny by the very faculties which seem to stress its immediacy and epistemic irreducibility.

iii) *Conditions*. Beckett's application of the Peripatetic axiom to the relationship between philosophy and literature tells us more about the philosophical apprehension of literature than it does about the literary appropriation of philosophy. If poetry deals with the sensual and the particular, and the philosophical with the metaphysical and the universal, the Peripatetic Axiom alone does not give us a schema to understand if, how and why 'poetic' writers can appropriate from philosophical sources and ideas. The relationship between poetry and philosophy cannot be reduced either to the treatment of philosophy as a kind of discourse, or to its treatment as a reservoir of abstract ideas that may be transposed into the aesthetic. This is not only true for Joyce himself, but for his philosophical guides: Homer may be the sense and the pre-Socratics the intellect, but the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are nothing if not a philosophically enmeshed work, and all readers of Homer carry the traces of the philosophical discourse inspired by his poetry. The example of the relationship between literature and philosophy tells us that the relationship between the Poetic/Sensual and the Philosophical/Intellectual is not a one-way street. On this particular point, we arrive at the differend between Badiou and Derrida again, since that "condition" can mean both the Badiou "condition" (itself an idea partly inspired by Beckett, albeit his much later work), which

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<sup>91</sup> As in Ray Brassier's reading of Badiou, for example. See Brassier's essay 'Presentation as anti-phenomenon in Alain Badiou's being and event' [Brassier, 2006] for example.

ensures the absolute autonomy of the poetic event from philosophy and theory, and the Derridean reading of philosophy as already infiltrated by its “other” - literature/poetry. Joyce opens up a potential for varying theories of conditions, providing ways to articulate notions such as autonomy, singularity, fidelity and justice. By aligning itself with sense, poetry obtains a status as a condition, marking out its independence from both perceptual experience and philosophy, as in Vico’s view that Homer’s vulgarity and violence provides the passion that can become the basis for metaphysical speculation.

What are we to extract from all this? The conclusion is that there is nothing intuitive or direct about the relationship between sensation, perception and experience. When isolated from the context of fiction-writing and poetry, the scholastic axiom may seem to promote a kind of naive or innocent brand of empiricism, where direct experience has authority over ideas, textuality and philosophical speculation. However, the way in which Joyce applies the principle (like Vico before him and Beckett after) erodes the implied unity of experience and oversees the replacement of a single logic of presence (an identity of experience and appearance, a monist ontology) with the grounds for a plurality of grammars of presentation. The counter-intuitive, perhaps even paradoxical, conclusion this leads us to is to read Joycean concreteness as conditioned, not by direct experience, but by its absences. It is in the absence of coherent and unified sites of experience that we find Joycean depictions of the concrete: the younger Stephen’s dependency upon semantics of suddenness and immediacy, the older Stephen’s dialectic of the limpid and the opaque, Bloom’s “coming events” which “cast their shadows before”, and the whole host of contortions of experiential language that characterise so many long passages of *Finnegans Wake*: from the game of the Rainbow Girls, to the Ass’s dream, to the confrontation of the Arch-Druid and St Patrick.

This brings us back to Vico’s view that the individual is not the cumulative product of direct experience, but a gradual concretion of the universal<sup>92</sup>, via a strange rationalism that involves maintaining critical distance from both materialist and transcendental views. The relationship between experiencing and knowing can never be direct, unmediated or clear. It is perhaps true that, in exploring the Peripatetic axiom’s equation between sensation and intellection, and Vico’s relation between passions and metaphysics, Joyce takes experience as

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<sup>92</sup> See Beckett’s explanation of ‘concrete universal’ in *DBVJ*.

a starting point<sup>93</sup>. But, step by step, the various constitutive aspects of experience such as unity, immediacy, certainty, clarity, find themselves supplanted by an expressive artifice, which seems drawn from absolute silence. On this point, Joyce's work (even before *Finnegans Wake*) attempts to follow Vico by escaping both the material and the transcendental. But does this mean that Joyce is nevertheless a materialist? Is there still room to speak of the transcendental?

*The Grammar of Perfumes against the Dragon of Experience.*

Returning to the notion of 'balance' from the beginning of this chapter, how exactly can it be claimed that the subtractive deployment or engagement with the Peripatetic axiom is balanced against a critique of immediacy and givenness? Have I not just argued that they are both one and the same idea? I do not think this is the case. This section will attempt to, via an engagement with deconstruction, attempt to show how the tension between the two extreme positions is essential for producing the effects of Joyce's narrative texts. This tension is very similar to what Derrida termed the "the grammar of perfumes" [D&J 76]. I propose that the tension or balance between the axiom and a skepticism of immediacy is a motive force in Joyce's work that frequently operates in the absence of communicable or interpretable meanings. We are approaching, in a very mutated form, the issue of distinctions between the equivocal and the univocal both within grammar and within sensory experience. Such questions are not a case of how Joyce can be read from within philosophy, but of how one can follow Joyce's escape from philosophy. To this point it is not simply enough to "cook the books" and follow Joyce's game of *ad hoc* conceptual concoction: if one says that Joyce is escaping, one must be perfectly clear about what he is escaping from.

Speaking of sensory experience and grammar together as I just have, does raise general philosophical questions about Joyce's narrative prose. If there is no immediacy of the immediate, or if such a transcendental immediacy reveals the secondary distancing of the intellect through the contradictions suggested by the semantics of immediacy and suddenness, can there be immediacy in the sense Joyce describes it at all? Since Joyce's focus upon

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<sup>93</sup> Later in this thesis I will describe this, meaning Joyce's "taking experience for a starting point" as associating the real of the present moment with an instance rather than of presence or of a ratifiable or ontologisable difference.

immediacy raises this entire question of phenomenal transparency, does this not, consequentially, critically undermine Joyce's claims to realism and the depictions of things as they are (the "presentment"). Not to mention his ability to aesthetically transcribe cognition and speculation under the conditions of concrete events and objects? Without immediacy, in its most literal sense, prior to aesthetic modification, without the grounds of an unmediated intimacy between language and direct experience, what hope is there of producing a realism in prose and narrative? This question can be asked across all of Joyce's narrative work, whether it is the apparently conventional naturalistic realism of *Dubliners* or the contortions of *Finnegans Wake*. No matter how Joyce takes us into the fantasies, dreams and fictional lives of his characters, the concreteness of Dublin itself remain; yet this Dublin itself is not an exterior totality outside of the text. The issue of writing Dublin faces Joyce with two problematics, one of ancestry<sup>94</sup>, a notion perhaps concretised as the midden-heap in *Finnegans Wake*, and one of Evental sequence<sup>95</sup>, where Dublin is not a mundane or ordinary materiality but an active and subjectivating sequence, in which Dublin seems to arrive to itself, outside of the correlates of its own history. Joyce's Dublin does not *escape* history so much as it seems to happen *in addition to* history. Dublin is "Doublin" [FW 3] is always in surplus to any particular philosophical or political schema, it asks "Dyoublong" (do you belong?) [FW 13] because it is itself an inclusion which may or may not really belong<sup>96</sup>.

The semantics and notion of suddenness and immediacy in Joyce's work are compromised, or necessarily opened to tautology and contradiction. The same notion can be thought of more directly by further examining how Joyce allows his work to be informed by non-literary sources. That is to say that Joyce finds at the heart of realism a complex relationship with its other, what he refers to as "sceptism", something he already alluded to when writing that "All Celtic philosophers have inclined towards incertitude or scepticism - Hume, Berkeley, Balfour, Bergson<sup>97</sup>". Out of those names, it is worth isolating both Joyce's treatment of the idealism of Berkeley and the vitalism of Bergson, both of which are (both directly and indirectly) dismissed and approved by figures in Joyce's work at various points, and are equally exploited as much as fellow writers, since they are cited as philosophers. This is all the more relevant given Joyce's characteristic reverence for Aristotle, which can take an almost devotional tone in the first three episodes of *Ulysses* in particular. In a rather non

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<sup>94</sup> As in the speculative materialism of Meillassoux.

<sup>95</sup> As in the dialectical materialism of Badiou.

<sup>96</sup> There is nothing special about Dublin that would let it escape Russell's paradox. It cannot belong to itself (if  $x \in x$ , then  $x \notin x$ ; therefore there is no  $x$  that belongs to  $x$ ).

<sup>97</sup> Quoted by Ellman in *Ulysses by the Liffey* [Ellman, 1984:94].

sequitur fashion, the subjective idealism of Berkeley is introduced and summarily dismissed by Stephen during a contemplation upon Aristotle, by evoking Samuel Johnson's *argumentum ad lapidem*<sup>98</sup> against Berkeley, an encounter which provokes what is arguably one of the key aesthetic statements of Joyce's career ("shut your eyes and see"). Later, Berkeley would be subject to an arcane mockery by St Patrick in *Finnegans Wake* in what may be read as an extended comic variation of an *argumentum ad lapidem*, involving a Shamrock and a variety of racial caricatures. However, while Berkeley's philosophy is roundly mocked by Joyce, it is mocked in a rather careful and precise way that reveals its most seductive qualities<sup>99</sup>.

Joyce's relationship to Bergson is more indirect, although he is referred to explicitly several times in *Finnegans Wake*. Many of the harshest dismissals of the "sophology of Bitchson" [FW 149] can be accounted for as pastiches of the argument presented in Wyndham Lewis' *Time and the Western Man*, in which Joyce's work is associated with (or dismissed as) "time philosophy" and the priority of action over words, and the content of his work reflecting a focus on duration rather than stasis. However, it is key to see that Bergson's principal focus of immanent experience, or of virtuality, is critiqued by Joyce. As we saw in the previous section, Joyce's approach to direct experience is confounded by the aesthetics of transparency and opacity, which seem to question the value of immediacy or self-experience. Even if one is to take a very simplified version of Joyce's account of sensualism in Molly Bloom's soliloquy, it is far from immanent, since her world of sensation is bound up in the process of memory, guesswork and free association. Joyce's tendency towards presentism<sup>100</sup> ("hold on to the here, the now through which all past plunges into future" [U 238]) seems doubtlessly informed by Bergson, but it is informed in a critical manner as much as it is directly inspired. Joyce seems to have admired those he called "sceptics" for their scepticism rather than their conclusions or the metaphysics they constructed. Indeed, as Bergson was such a popular source for writers of the time, and was embedded in the consciousness of the literary world, he is a particular case where it is especially difficult to tell whether his

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<sup>98</sup> An argument "to the stone", which becomes "*By knocking his scone* against them, sure" in *Ulysses*.

<sup>99</sup> Joyce remarked at least once that his interpretation of Berkeley was the key to understanding the entire project of *Finnegans Wake*, and that the section devoted to Berkeley in *Finnegans Wake* functioned as "the defence and indictment of the book itself" [L 397-398].

<sup>100</sup> In keeping with a paragraph in which Aristotelean sentiments mingle with their Platonist counter-positions, this rather un-Platonic idea is expressed in the language of a neo-Platonist in St Augustine. "The intention to act is of the present, through which the future flows into the past". Translation from Migne as cited in *Ulysses Annotated* [1988:199].

influence on Joyce is firsthand or direct<sup>101</sup> given Bergson's influence on literary discourse and theory. This is a pointed contrast to his own appropriations of Aristotle and Vico, where his published work shows direct appropriations both from primary and secondary texts.

As we can see in such examples, Joyce often seems to be in the habit of treating philosophers as if they were fellow fiction writers, and when that attention is turned towards the "sceptical", it tells us something very precise about his attitude to realism. Moreover, it reveals something more than his relationship to Aquinas and Aristotle does, figures with respect to whom he positions himself with markedly less irony. Such 'scepticism', we can surmise, is not a variety of subjective idealism of the kind founded on the impossibility of access to exterior or noumenal reality. Kantian idealism, for example, comes in for a particular drubbing in *Finnegans Wake*<sup>102</sup> [FW 523 & 528]. This is due, perhaps, to Joyce's distaste for all things transcendental, or perhaps the implication that Kant's idealism is not really sceptical since it is not of celtic origin. However, this 'scepticism' implies that such an access is coupled at the very beginning with figures of opacity and transparency, figures which are its inverse.

So far in this these, I have argued that, from the beginning of Joyce's narrative work, immediacy itself has no immediacy. That is, it is not a feature of purity of experience, so much as it is a cognitive process assembled from a multiplicity of sources range from language, technology, or aesthetics to intellect. The "incertitude or scepticism" Joyce gleans from reading philosophies as if they were fictions tells us realism does not have any one particular recourse which acts an invariable and unchanging foundation from which aesthetic techniques may be drawn. Therefore, there are three guiding notions I would put in parallel to Stephen's "weapons" [AP 247] from *A Portrait*: subtraction (silence), obscurity (exile) and multiplicity (cunning), these I would call makeshift or forged principles in the absence of a real principle, a somewhat anti-pragmatic and promethean move on Joyce's behalf. This forging of principles is refined in *Ulysses*, and is perhaps typified when Joyce had Leopold Bloom mock the idea that "the language question should take precedence of the economic question" [U 207], which can equally be applied to the principle of the "artistic economy" of

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<sup>101</sup> For examples, *Joyce's Book of Memory* [Rickard, 1999] discusses how Joyce was informed by the "climate of opinion" created by the wide literary reception of Bergson's work.

<sup>102</sup> Perhaps it is mistaken to read hostility into these examples of Joyce's allusions to Kant, as the tone of the passage in page 523 (the testimony of Treacle Tom and Trisky Shorty) could be described as amused, and the listing of Kantian arguments has something of a Lewis Carroll air. However, concerning Kant's moral philosophy, there is a much more serious association, with a reference on page 176 to Shem being the object of a list of Irish betrayals: "Irish eyes of welcome were smiling daggers down their backs" and "black and fighting tans, categorically unimperated by maxims..."

isolation. So, one can see that the artistic economy of isolation and subtraction cannot be reduced to language itself and neither can language take precedence over subtraction or intellection. In other words, it is possible to get outside of language. Not only does this imply that Joyce's "realism" is an attempt to force the readers to consider literature as a union of form, action and material, it also reflects a very Derridean mistrust in ascribing priority to the spoken voice. From the contrary position, if narrative discourse were a collective act, it would mean that Joyce's aesthetic cannot be understood from the perspective of what Badiou has called "idealinguistry" [Badiou, 2009], the deployment of a focus upon language and structure as a covert reintroduction of idealism. This in turn would imply that 'esthetic' form would be always both interior and exterior to context.

I would argue that rather than language, Joyce's temporal presentism is the biggest influence upon his appropriation of concepts from philosophy into narrative literature. When we consider his extension of principles of subtraction to the moment of the present, we inevitably turn to the most influential school of thought on the topic of presence and absence in Joyce's work: Derrida and deconstruction. Although the reputation of deconstruction is an irrealist or antirealist critical school, it can be noted that, why Joyce is most clearly realist, his work anticipates two ideas which may be considered principles of deconstruction. Firstly, literary realism is already caught in a complex relation with its contrary position of philosophical scepticism and, secondly, the problematises of any simple form of presence which is denied by the very means one may use to try to capture it. The form of simple or unproblematic presence is perhaps analogous to what I have called "the immediacy of the immediate" which is at once an uncomplicated view of the present moment and the trace of that which subtracts the uncomplicated present.

Reading Joyce in the light of deconstruction undermines the immediacy of immediate things. In Derrida's own reading of *Ulysses*, the act of reading Joyce's work becomes "thus a question of sending oneself" [D&J 78], which is the same as "sending someone to oneself" or, perhaps, sending something to oneself. In a sense, this question of sending oneself undermines the hard distinction between meaning and sensibility produced by the acts of writing and reading. The reader, or Derrida himself, must "send oneself" in order to engage with Joyce beyond viewing *Ulysses* a simple, encyclopaedic record of experiences and historical facts, as in *Ulysses* Bloom "sends" himself in various senses of the word, such as extending himself in a conversation where he hopes that someone will "grasp" his meaning.



Perhaps the central hermeneutic question of *Ulysses* is the question of “oneself as another”, and many equivalents of Rimbaud’s “Je est un autre” are to be found throughout *Ulysses*, and not necessarily in regard to actions through which individual figures who are active in the outside world, such as when they receive a telegram, or engage in the act of recollection of an incident. Any pure or, perhaps, authentic notion of immediacy is broken up by operations of distancing, either spatially or temporally or as what Derrida calls a “thinking of the gift”, a sending that interrupts any notion of an immediate and unproblematic relationship between personal thought and experience, or between personal acts of “sending” and the “onto-encyclopaedia” [D&J 77] of the exterior world of facts and information. The “tranquil, sudden, vast, candescent” [U 31] epiphanic point of contact with a real form of maximal intensity is caught up in what one might call a secondary or metastructural tangle of deference.

One could rephrase the deconstructionist intervention in Joyce’s writing by saying that deconstruction and Derrida’s interest in Joyce recognises something about Joyce’s writing that had been unintentionally buried by more institutional approaches, following years of autobiographical criticism and of subjecting Joyce’s text to structural anatomies and historical interpretation. Derrida’s influence on Joyce studies exposed the fact that what was consistently being overlooked was the notion that Joyce’s depiction of interiority, and by extension the link between interiority and natural languages, was dependent on something that can be called self-presence or presence-to-self. This turns out to be a far more concrete and material issue than a reductive reading of the more well-known “metaphysics of presence”: what is “sudden” and “immediate” in Joyce’s work is not just “presence” in the sense of “being as presence”, but rather a presence which is negatively inscribed by its philosophical contrary, namely “presentation”<sup>103</sup>. Joyce’s work is formal on this point: it stages the presentation of the *unpresent*, or it constructs situations where the vanishing of presence has a material weight, something which Derrida analyses by Joyce’s use of telephones and gramophones.

In order to understand Derrida’s discussion of *Ulysses*, it is worth directly quoting Derrida on the questions guiding his project of deconstruction: “[But] why is verblativity merged with the determination of being in general as presence? And why the privilege of the present indicative? Why is the epoch of the *phon*? the epoch of being in the form of presence, that is, in the form of ideality?” [Derrida, 2011:64]. This is not to imply that Derrida finds the answer

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<sup>103</sup> In Badiou’s sense.

to the “why?” in Joyce’s prose, but rather he derives from Joyce a set of questions parallel to his own, which focus on the critical relations between vocality and immediacy in narrative prose.

In raising such a complex question, or in the complexity of questions asked in response to a difficult question, it is worth the risk of being reductive and selective about what parts of deconstruction to engage with. Let us begin with the notion Joyce stubbornly resists affording a central or privileged role to verballity or vocality, the role of self-presence is called into question in a philosophical sense, as both Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus could be said to ponder the theme of “oneself as another” during the day. This is done so explicitly that it is hard not to see it as Joyce imagining them as directly addressing a popular notion of their epoch with which they are familiar. However, as Joyce slowly expands the reach of narrative to include more examples, the act of calling self-presence into question begins to take on the same role in narrative realism that, in a more intuitive or commonsensical narrative construction, might have been played by self-presence itself. In other words, in its twin desire for an encircling epic narrative and attainment of the static form of encyclopaedic knowledge<sup>104</sup>, Joyce’s realism seems to discover its potential in quotidian existence for small parables. These demonstrate that one’s experience of reality does not rely upon a healthy triad of the present indicative, the suppositional identity of being with presence and the “apparent transcendence” [D&J 64] of the voice of one’s own interior soliloquy. It rather relies the fact that access to the world seems (perhaps counter-intuitively) to require that these three things never link up in a way that would satisfy either one’s intuitive or logical expectations. The form of such parables is provided by *Ulysses* itself, with Stephen Dedalus formulating his “Parable of the Plums” which he repeats at different points of the book. Stephen’s parable is not a “parable” in the strict sense. It is a slice of daily life (“LIFE ON THE RAW” [U 184]) that arrives at an image of distancing, separation or discontinuity: the old women spitting plumstones through the railings. In Stephen’s so-called parable<sup>105</sup>, there is a wealth of possible symbols and emblems, from the columns, to the plums, to the fact the ladies hitch up their skirts, but all such symbols and emblems are in a sense interrupted or detained by the

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<sup>104</sup> A narrative which Derrida seems to as see the intention to create a link between “transcendental egology” and “onto-encyclopaedia [D&J 77].

<sup>105</sup> Joyce’s use of the term ‘parable’ here is instructive in its irony, as it is used in ‘Aeolus’ not to illustrate a universality but the failure of one, by setting up an analogy between biblical Israel and Ireland that can only fail. One might give a particularly Joycean definition of the world parable which defines at the illustration of a concrete universal through the failure of a metaphysical or transcendent universality. The ‘concrete universal’ in the ‘Parable of the Plums’ is of course nothing other than Dublin itself – but Dublin as event, rather than geographical destination.

distance. The scathing title that Stephen gives the piece (“A Pisgah Sight of Palestine”) underscores the separations, since the women are only catching a glimpse of a free Ireland, they are virgins, they are behind the bars of the railings and spitting out of the seeds from the fruit that they are eating, etc. The conclusion of the parable arguably converges to the same point that Derrida sees in the “Bloom is at the telephone” section of the same episode: as Derrida shows that there is a necessary separation or distancing which cannot be abolished by either spatial or semantic proximity, even if it is never explicitly or directly said what constitutes this separation or where exactly it is to be located.

As Joyce’s characters go about their daily business, the incidents that they witness and the recollections that they have entail different variations in natural language, pulling the three points of the apparently healthy triad away from each other into a variety of different dissonances and tensions, to which Joyce attaches a variety of different styles or literary genres. A Joycean aesthetics of the concrete is, therefore, neither an aesthetic of the object nor of the experiential, but an aesthetic of tensions which cannot rightly be said to belong exclusively to either language, sense data or objective exteriority but, instead, to the composition of dissonances between them. An illustration of this hypothesis in relation to Joyce’s technique of characterisation, can be found in *Ulysses* episode ‘Lestrygonians’, where the contrast of the interior voice is used when Bloom is in dialogue with other characters. During the course of the episode, Joyce depicts the effects of hunger on Bloom’s mind under different distractions such as his appetite as he is looking to take lunch. But déjà vu, revulsion at slobbish eaters, mild inebriation after a drink of wine, and fear of crossing paths with Blazes Boylan all play a part. It is worth commenting on the precision with which Joyce treats these distractions, as they are described so indelibly that many of them constitute the most emblematic parts of the book, to the point of becoming enduring cultural emblems of Dublin: the glass of burgundy that “kindles [Bloom’s] veins” [U 222], Boylan’s straw boater hat, and so on.

In his schema, Joyce described the technique of this chapter as “peristaltic”, to which Stuart Gilbert later provided the following definition: “the automatic muscular movements consisting of wavelike contractions in successive circles by which nutritive matter is propelled along the alimentary canal” [Gilbert, 1932:208]. In addition to Gilbert’s description of “incompletement movements” and “pangs” that Bloom demonstrates before entering the pub, and of the kinesis of characters and objects in the chapter, “peristaltic” also describes the waves of tension between the three points of the triad of being-as-present, present indicative

and the interior voice, producing thereby the effect of kinesis. This is deployed directly in the characterisation of Bloom, as the reader does not know him in the immediate instance of his pangs, anticipations and fears, but because of the “peristaltic” movement that is produced from tensions. The reader knows Bloom by how his thoughts and behaviour respond to such pangs and reactions, without having the recourse of a third-person description of Bloom, or Bloom having to describing directly, however unnaturally, his feelings. We do not only learn that Bloom is revolted by bad table manners, unappetised by vegetarian food and made nostalgic by wine, but we, learn how being revolted, being unappetised and made nostalgic by these things affect him: the text distinguishes between affects, effects and how effects are produced. The text does not only deliver the “what” questions of meaning, but also the “how” questions of concreteness, in an aesthetic appropriation of an Aristotelian etiology which is very characteristic of Joyce’s engagements with Scholasticism. The “how” is a question of grammar itself, form liberated from form, which suggests neither the experience nor its meaning. Joyce’s ‘peristalsis’ produces time and space in union, with neither having a phenomenological or ontological priority over the other, out of a system of tensions which itself exists in the ellipsis over meaning. When Bloom speaks to Mrs Breen, there is a strong focus on the visual (“his heavy pitying gaze” [U 201]), and a heightened ambiguity between the authorial voice and Bloom’s own (the comment “tight as a skullpiece” about Tisdall Farrell’s hat belongs to both Bloom and the narrator). But later, while talking to Nosy Flynn, he narrates from his own gaze, using third-person imperatives such as “look at his mouth” [U 219], but lapses into pronouns and proper nouns become an opportunity for Bloom to appropriate an indifferent third person, a common feature of his more imaginative mental episodes. The “present indicative” and the interior voice orbit each other eccentrically, with an absence of the definite presence at the barycentre, and seem to never quite find the intuitive and obvious relation that one might commonsensically feel that they should.

At times when the reader might expect Joyce to have Bloom thinking in the apparent authenticity of the present indicative, he has Bloom appropriate the indifferent third-person voice, and often vice versa. Joyce gives the reader the elements that may seem to intuitively constitute the grammar of experience in the present moment, what might be called a presentist grammar of experience, where optics or visual elements, where the first person, the present indicative and the present moment are together in harmonious convocation. However, at the same time, the way that these elements are utilised both in the passive and active voices of the chapter, suggests that they do not belong together foundationally nor fundamentally, or even

analogically. Seeing is like being, which is like the interior monologue, which is like experience itself...the implication is of an unending chain of perceptual analogy. However, these elements are included together in something like a metastructural grammar of secondary presentations. In other words, where one might see immediacy and intuition as reflecting the passive belonging together comprising the gaze, the present indicative, the first person and the present moment, the third person and the intellect intrude into their presumed precedence and disrupts them. Whether individual or collective, it is fair to say that Joyce characteristically presents involvements with the exterior world as being active, not passive, these being put together by some secondary faculty of artifice or intellectual creativity, even if it is the commonplace and perhaps minor faculties of an advertising canvasser, in contrast to the Blakean notion of creativity as exception, that influences Stephen's thoughts. If one takes such a view, there is very little room for the unproblematically immediate in such depictions of the (apparently) present moment. Rather than authentic experiential or perceptual immediacy being deferred through language or grammar, Joyce's characterisation of Bloom seems to rely on the appearance of an immediacy as a by-product of such deferrals.

The sympathy between deconstruction and Joyce is often discussed in thematic terms involving the focus of Joyce's work: for example, the idea of a marginal voice being moved to center in "Penelope", or the Issy sections of *Finnegans Wake*, where we directly get to hear voices who are more often spoken about than they speak for themselves, and whose narrative contains a notable shift from an account of originary documents to the acts of producing forgeries and transmitting copies. However, the proximity between deconstruction and Joyce is perhaps better represented in the middle third of *Ulysses*, specifically the section concerning Bloom's daytime hours, where we are privy to an interior monologue where an individual questions his own chains of thoughts and reactions. The reader is exposed to many moments and incidents where doubt is cast over the meaning of a spoken word (Bantam Lyons mistaking of the phrase "throw it away" [U 106] from the name "Throwaway"). The guiding principle, here, is summarised by the moments in which the transcendent interior voice is confronted by a concretisation of a voice. The most notable examples of these moments involve telephones (notably the incident where "Bloom is at the telephone" [U 173], and the tale about Ignatius Gallaher's innovative journalism recounted by the newspaper editor Myles Crawford) and gramophones (notably Bloom's idea of installing gramophones in graves so mourners might hear the voice of deceased [U 144]). In these examples, a

technological reproduction and concretisation of the human voice is put into contrast with both spoken dialogue and interior monologue. The reader may notice, for example, that, during Bloom's pondering of gramophones at Dignam's burial, the nonsensical words he imagines coming from a distorted gramophone ("kraark", "amarawf" and "kopthsth" [Ibid]) are immediately contrasted with the noise made by a "rattle of pebbles" ("rtststr!") caused by a rat running across the crypt. The reader may well already be unsure whether "kaark" and "kopthsth" are Bloom's impressions of distorted recordings of a voice, or his imagining of the voiceless sound of a mechanically faulty needle (except for the similarity between "I am awfully..." and "amarawf", there is nothing explicit in the passage to distinguish this). The "rtststr!" gives the sense that the rat is making the dead talk, summoning vocality from materiality, like a gramophone needle being dragged across the record.

In the example of Myles Crawford's story, there is a subtler sense that Gallaher's "smart[est] piece of journalism" was the idea to use a telephone conversation to relate an encoded message by using a newspaper article. In itself, this involves a subtle subversion: the apparently most authentically Dublin act, a man recounting a story about Irish cunning, is undercut by the fact that the spoken story involves the technological reproduction of voices (it is a telephone call), which itself is described as transmitting, not a real dialogue, but a code which, in another layer, is made by referencing newspaper articles. So, what is performed is an act of referring, which in itself is subordinated to a larger story of the Phoenix Park murders, a story whose major direct relevance to *Ulysses* is a reference to a notorious real historical figure called Skin-the-Goat, whose nickname is in itself the punchline to an anecdote left untold in the episode. The story related by Crawford purports to be something conclusive ("the smartest piece of journalism") but, in surplus to its overt meaning, it opens up into a series of interlocutions, even between Joyce's books, with Ignatius Gallaher and the Phoenix Park murders being important reference points in *Dubliners* and *Finnegans Wake* respectively<sup>106</sup>, giving Crawford's tale an additional function of being less an autonomous piece of *Ulysses* and more of a conduit linking an earlier and later book.

But in observing how Joyce's work discovers the treachery of presence in the "daily bread of existence", contrasting it with the cool or indifferent "scrupulous meanness" of grammatical presentation (such as the aforementioned grammar of tensions) and formal

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<sup>106</sup> Further, Gallaher appears in the story 'A Little Cloud' whose title gains an additional meaning as one of the names for Issy. If one follows these references chronologically, in the order of publication, it is serendipitous that a closed loop is created.

novelty, it must be stressed again, equally strongly, that Joyce is not using the formal conventions of narrative fiction only as an excuse to encapsulate (or perhaps sugarcoat) philosophical queries and aporia. It is important not to subordinate the autonomy of literary acts into simply being the delivery media for philosophical or psychological quandaries. Rather, what is constitutive of such problems are elements fundamental to the formal structure of narrative fiction itself, and they are revealed as a matter of course in the production of a narrative. Literature is not a delivery system for philosophy, even when the issues are as relevant as aporia and aesthetics. A reading of the third episode, "Proteus", would suggest that Joyce is showing not that Stephen Dedalus understands the phenomenal world in terms of philosophical problems because he received a philosophical education, but rather that he is in the process of contemplating literary composition (including Blake, and Stephen's own the gothic genre piece), the constitutive nature of these problems in accessing the real world itself is revealed to him as a tertiary effect. The delivery of such issues is not the aim of the text at all, but their transmission is a by-product of its procedure, which is concatenated with such problems as the incidents the text describes. The relationship between literature and the problems it involves lies between two points: the speculative idea of literature as "condition" for thought, typified by Badiou's *Conditions* and *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, and the deconstructive view that literature infiltrates its other (philosophy), of which Derrida has arguably made Joyce a representative case.

The contrast between presence and presentation becomes more readily apparent when one contrasts the philosophically-minded Stephen Dedalus with the scientifically-minded Leopold Bloom and sensually-minded Molly Bloom, but one must be very careful not to assume that the availability of philosophical issues belongs to the educated, their intellects viewing an intellectual world of aporia and epoché (bracketing), in contrast to those people to whom intellectual concerns are subordinated to direct perceptual and sensual experience. Such a view would see ideas and philosophical issues as forming the nodes of the network through which Stephen Dedalus filters his daily experiences, whereas for Leopold Bloom, the same nodal structure is evidenced through his linking of social connections due to his experience as a canvasser. But this is only superficially the case. If we take "oneself as another" as a key philosophical aporia of *Ulysses*, the question is something of a drifting target: it floats, as if unanchored, through the pages of the book and occurs at different intensities in the thoughts of Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, Gerty McDowell, and Molly Bloom, and does so irrespective of their social situation or associated mode of language. The

philosophical or interpretative problem implied the notion of “oneself as another” might only present itself via language. It does not follow that it is dependent upon language, as it is available seemingly across all varieties of discourse and textuality through the entirety of the novel. If one considers that Joyce’s great aim is to write the universal arising in the particular, it is necessary for the reader to be acclimatised to seeing the generic as nurtured by, rather than annihilating of, the different, whether such difference is expressed in linguistic or social terms.

If one considers *Ulysses* as a whole, it is divided unevenly between three perspectives: four chapters of mainly devoted to Stephen Dedalus, thirteen essentially to Bloom and one to Molly Bloom. Joyce unquestionably establishes different domains for their interior voices. Stephen is allusive and oblique, Bloom is speculative and social and Molly is sensual and experiential. This leads to a very tempting reading, that may prove to be badly misguided: that the educated artist understands the world through aesthetic speculation and philosophical aporia; the middle-class advertising agent understands the world as a mesh of social connections and obligations, albeit as an outsider, and the married woman understands the world primarily via perception, memory and sensation. Such a direct linking of literary style, social position and intellectual content would be reductive, to the point of being catastrophic and, even worse, would make the aesthetic or the philosophical inextricable from the social and the historical. Why would this be such a catastrophic position to take? In short, the view that issues are inextricable from their historical, linguistic and social contexts, like the view that issues are purely extra-contextual and extra-situation universalities, are both forms of a transcendental understanding of narrative fiction. The latter is the more commonplace and readily-understood transcendental, but the former also capitulates utterly to a transcendental view. If one the major targets of deconstruction is the “apparent transcendence” of the voice, one must critique the apparently transcendental (that which purports to be transcendental or acts as if it is), but also the mechanisms uniting the apparency (phenomenal appearance) and the local operations of transcendental identification (see Badiou’s writing on the transcendental<sup>107</sup>). That is, one must not only read with sceptical eye towards the “apparently transcendent”, but also extend the critique to what binds apparency and the transcendental together or, to put in more direct terms, their copropriation in (and as) being-there<sup>108</sup>. Joyce’s

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<sup>107</sup> See the first part of *Logics of Worlds*, whose relevance for this thesis I will discuss.

<sup>108</sup> I am referring to Badiou’s *être-là* from the previous citation, and not to Heidegger or Hegel.



formal focus upon the subtractive ensures that at least some element in his work will always fall outside of this.

Contrary to attesting to the transcendence of context against composition and form, across the various voices of *Ulysses*, Joyce is demonstrating rather concisely and persuasively that philosophical thought and aesthetic speculation are not simply another kind of discourse amongst different discursive fields or modes of language use. While they may not constitute exceptions in themselves, their proximity to the meta- and para- linguistic (along with instances of inference) allows them to potentially harbour exceptions in the way that other modes of language do not. The “thinking of the gift” here becomes a thinking of supplement, but under the conditions of that which subtracts itself or is evanescent.

Returning to my earlier statement that there is very little room for the unproblematically immediate in Joyce’s work, it has often been said that Joyce sought to dethrone the divine and put the artist in its place at the initial moment of creation<sup>109</sup> (perhaps why Joyce preferred Dante to Milton<sup>110</sup> [JJ 59]). But a far more radical and subversive dethroning takes place where Joyce seeks to dethrone the immediacy of experience as the primary ontological figure and put artifice in its place, without robbing experience of its own valency. Joyce may indeed want to usurp the “demiurgos” [U 45] at the beginning of cosmology<sup>111</sup>, at the moment in the far flung past. But, more importantly, Joyce sets his eyes on the present moment and wants to bring the moment of “non serviam”, “that instant” that “was his ruin”, into the present moment and dethrone<sup>112</sup> any metaphysical, divine or vitalistic principles (such as Bergson’s *élan vital*) that would govern access to the world and put an unlimited tangle of artifice in its place. Los, the Blakean figure of creation who Stephen melded to the Platonic Demiurge, belongs not to an origin point in the far flung past, rejecting creation and cosmology: either the “background of the uncreated void” [OCPW 181] or the present. Joyce’s concrete is immaterial insofar as it locates human thought as being proximal to an unrepresentable inconsistency rather than a single unified or monistic substance. On this

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<sup>109</sup> A popular example of this might be Edna O'Brien's assertion that Joyce “wants to be God” [O'Brien, 2002].

<sup>110</sup> Joyce's preference of both Blake and Dante over Milton is said to be because of sympathies with Lucifer, which Stephen is mocked for harbouring in ‘Scylla and Carybdis’. It is also a point perhaps where his Scholastic and Catholic thought most influenced his literary fascinations.

<sup>111</sup> Los Demiurgos is perhaps another example of Joyce employing Platonist and neo-Platonist ideas to make an anti-Platonist argument.

<sup>112</sup> Joyce has Stephen appropriate “Lucifer, we are told, was a son of the morning, a radiant and mighty angel; yet he fell: he fell and there fell with him a third part of the host of heaven: he fell and was hurled with his rebellious angels into hell. What his sin was we cannot say. Theologians consider that it was the sin of pride, the sinful thought conceived in an instant: *non serviam: I will not serve*. That instant was his ruin” [AP 117].

point, we have an instance of a “thinking of the gift”, as Derrida would have it, but in a profoundly negative sense. Rather than an account of what is given in the immediacy of the now, there is an account of the absolute absence of the given, but with the imperative to act as if something is, something supplementary that is forever subtracted from the concerns of immediate donation.

At the risk of introducing a strawman, the question I would ask to deconstruction on the topic of concreteness, is: why stop at the question of language? Why halt with the contrast between concretised voice of the telephone and the “apparent transcendence” of the inner monologue? Why does an investigation into Joyce’s undermining of being-as-presence need to be anchored to reference and signification, and therefore have its horizon be the question of meaning? If indeed Joyce’s work can be read as containing parables or demonstrations against the notion of self-presence and being-as-presence, this is nowhere restricted to critiques which are based on the interior voice. As Joyce brings a philosophical problem from his sources into the aesthetic sphere and makes a narrative out of a union of descriptive accounts of daily life and philosophical speculation, what is performed, rather than simply narrating, is the exteriorisation of the issue of interlocution, or rather the concretisation of the issue. The examples which act as threads in Derrida’s reading in “Ulysses Gramophone” are all material and objectal, more than they are linguistic or factual. What Derrida refers to as “the network of postal sendings in *Ulysses*” are listed as a “postcard, letter, check, telegramphone, telegram, etc” [D&J 77]. Yet, perhaps Derrida is being at least somewhat ironical in his choice of words, as the “network” here is not a network of relations, but something he describes enacted in the process of his argument. He says “I content myself with connecting these remarks...” implying that connections are themselves not a feature of the text, but simulated in the act of reading or intervening upon a text. The apparent autonomy of such an alleged network is the creation of a reading and theoretical discussing of the text, rather than a definite or free-standing feature of the text of *Ulysses* itself. Or to put in terms of Derrida’s other examples, between the examples of the “post sendings”, “signatures” and “perfume”, even the most representative philosophical concept from Derrida’s encounter with Joyce, the counter-signature, refers to an actual signature which is a union of gesture, form and matter.

It should remain puzzling that if one imagines that the world of language (as conceived of in, or by, *Ulysses*) is a world of relations, contexts and meaning, then the examples which form the description of such a world are notably material objects, often things which are explicitly either isolated and disconnected objects like postcards and

telegrams, or technological objects like telephones and gramophones, or perhaps things that enjoy a certain degree of autonomy from human thought and action. For example, Bloom's imagining of the gramophone in the episode 'Hades' has him imagining an object with the character of a relic or monument, something left to be discovered rather than a piece of equipment being currently operated by those who made it. Even the example of perfume, which might seem effuse, is something encountered in terms of materiality. The role that Derrida sees perfume and signatures play in Joyce's text and the hardware/software<sup>113</sup> [D&J 25] distinction he sees in terms of Joyce's institutional and theoretical impact, make it clear that the issue of interlocution cannot be reduced to interiority, or reduced to individual minds and their networks of correlates. But, neither can the issue of the interplay of interlocution and concreteness be reduced to an issue of meaning and experience, no matter if that "meaning" is anchored by an object or a relation, or how concrete that experience of meaning may appear.

Such examples are not only concrete, phenomenal objects, but also both meta-textual and meta-linguistic: the relevance of the telegram, the telephone and the letter in *Ulysses* is what they say about language and what they say about textuality. Just as the "parables" against being-as-presence are not only commentary on that particular issue, but highlight how the problem it poses itself is necessary for the formal construction of a narrative, the metalinguistic dimension Joyce relies upon is not merely reducible to an insight where statements about language tell us about how the individuals in Joyce's novel rely upon language for their involvement in a shared reality, but how statements about language are themselves necessary for that involvement. Joyce seems to be doing his best to draw the reader's attention towards the union of the concrete and the metalinguistic, and it is important to note that he does this during the most pivotal and significant moments in his prose, in Clay "somebody said something" [D 101]; in *Ulysses*: the milkwoman's failure to recognise Irish, the running jokes at the expense of the Breens ("u.p. up", and the dream involving the ace of spades) and the horse's name "throwaway"; and then there are numerous examples in *Finnegans Wake* of voices merging with illusions of voices such as the "quoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquoiquo!" [FW 195] of the Liffey, the "zijnzijn" [FW 75] echo or the "fuitfuit" [FW 50] of a pipe. The best example here is when Joyce inserts into Bloom's interior voice the incidence of a corrupted recording of a dead relative's voice ("amarawf" and "kopthsth") in contrast to the sound of a rat running across the crypt, illustrating or even parodying how material acts come to carry meaning, how they become or enter language and

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<sup>113</sup> Or "Joyceware".

how things leave language. Language, imagined this way, is not a definite enclosure, but an arbitrary operation of separations. Returning to the initial example of immediacy and suddenness, the word “sudden” itself has a metalinguistic property in which groups of words and objects act together with a certain experience or with the interior voice in order to construct *ex post facto* the feeling both of the immediacy of direct experience and of the “apparent transcendence” of interior self-consciousness also about whatness. The “issue” here is not contained in language, because it is not language’s purpose to contain. Joyce is exploiting the fact that the notion of an interior of language is inconsistent.

Perhaps the model joke for understanding Joyce’s subversion of language is not the pun, but the Irish bull. If the pun is an exposure of the linguistic, the hypertrophy of meaning or polysemy, then an Irish bull is an erasure of meaning which points both to an asemy and an extra-linguistic factual on which language has no performative “hold” or intralinguistic power. A pun can be funny because it draws our attention to the potential for an excess or additional meaning, but an Irish bull, by removing the question of meaning, leaves no choice but to think about *how* something produces meaning rather than *what* it may mean; affirmative laughter may shatter the illusion of meaning as a performative gesture.

Despite the focus upon word games and plays of language, there are perhaps surprisingly few variations of the “Irish bull” form in *Ulysses*. There are several examples in *Finnegans Wake*, where they provide the model for the self-contradicting “strange language of negation” described by John Bishop. For example, “darkles” [FW 244] as a combination of dark and sparkle and the “underground heaven” [FW 75], or speaking of someone’s “indulligence” [FW 531] or the “murder of a corpse” [FW 254]. Although an Irish Bull has a negative connotation<sup>114</sup>, hinging on the colonial stereotype of Irish people being rhetorically gifted but unintelligent and insufficiently temperate, it is something more than what it says, in a way that cannot be reduced to having a secondary or tertiary meaning. In fact, an Irish bull is more than what it says because it means less than it appears. For example, puns on the phrase “papal bull” are exchanged in ‘*Oxen of the Sun*’: “He’ll find himself on the horns of a dilemma if he meddles with a bull that’s Irish, says he. Irish by name and Irish by nature, says Mr Stephen, and he sent the ale purling about, an Irish bull in an English chinashop” [U 522].

I argued earlier that Joyce does not simply use literature as a delivery system for philosophical problems or enigmas, so an Irish Bull is something more than a pocket-sized

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<sup>114</sup> See Rabaté’s *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* [Rabaté, 2001:106].

aporia. In Stephen's example, there is a sense that something outside of language has intruded into it, disruptively or destructively. The Papal Bull that exerts the most influence across Joyce's works is "Laudabiliter", this is a reference to Pope Adrian IV's 1155 document granting Henry II the right to govern Ireland, which is traditionally seen as the beginning of English dominion. This is satirised ferociously in *Finnegans Wake*, most notably in the Aesopian parody "The Mookse and the Griper", where it is perhaps seen as the beginning of the millennium of partition which made Ireland what Joyce elsewhere described as that "split little pea" [FW 171]. The distinction between the English Bull (as Pope Adrian IV was English) and the Irish Bull is therefore a distinction between language that imagines itself to have a constructive or institutive power of meaning, but in fact derives its meaning from acts of partition and separation, and language removes or destroys the question of meaning in order to re-encounter the same anticipatory multiplicity that has been cloven by the partition. Here, I would disagree with Derrida, as Joyce does not subject "each atom of writing to fission" [D&J 27], but his "babelization" of language consists in the exemption of certain items of language from gestures of partition and separation.

Deconstruction's encounter with Joyce is particularly elaborate, yet problematic, although the view of language reflected by deconstruction is perhaps founded upon the orthodox (in literary criticism) view that language is made up by references and relations. When confronted with Joyce, deconstruction finds that its examples are not relations at all, and neither are they nodes in networks of reference, but in material objects and the gestures coupling individual artistic agency with collective imagination. As Wilfred Sellars argued, meaning is not a relation, but an act of coupling<sup>115</sup>. To make statements about what something means is just a special case of such coupling, which invokes human capacity towards metalinguistic acts that describe or alter language itself. The example of the telephone and gramophone may seem to rely on relationships of reference and signification. In material reality there are no relations, but concrete objects: the cable, the telegram, and the record disk. With these objects, there are the implied actives, which stamp some kind of form onto the objects, such as the writing of a telegram, engraving a shellac record, or signing, stamping, and sealing a letter. The concreteness of these examples calls into question the concreteness of the grapheme itself, the characters and figures that make up written language. That is to say, there is no network of relations or immaterial contextual totality which acts as a

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<sup>115</sup> "According to this analysis, meaning is not a relation for the very simple reason that 'means' is a specialized form of the copula" [Sellars, 1974: 'Meaning as Functional Classification']

ghost in the machine to animate the inanimate material artefacts of language itself, like the fat rat from 'Hades' running across the crypt.

What is integral to *Finnegans Wake* is the fact that language as a form of behaviour is irreducible to questions of meaning or reference, and that meaning itself is irreducible to relational forms. For example Biddy Doran, the hen pecking holes through a sacred manuscript, scratching parchment, or a telegram skewered by a fork, or other incidents involving the "ancientest" significance of metalinguistic acts in *Finnegans Wake*, play a role which is comic but prominent enough to make us think twice about the supposed absolute priority of *écriture* and the letter in Joyce's work, what Derrida refers to as the "grammar of perfumes" [D&J 76] through which "the self-position of the self returns unceasingly, each time in a different form, throughout the journey". There is a contrast between the relational "network of postal sendings" and the metalinguistic "grammar of perfumes", in which one assumes the existence of independent relations as the guarantor of meaning, and the other preserves the opportunity to ignore meaning in order to re-encounter "in a different form" that which has been occulted by the question of meaning itself.

Interpreting the "grammar of perfumes" creates a picture of the working of language that does not involve the relation and signification, but rather material imprints, and the anticipatory and speculative leaps of thought in response to such imprints. The "concreteness" belongs neither to direct experience nor to textual or graphic records, but rather to such a grammar of imprints and scratches. It would be mistaken to understand Bloom's use of anticipation and guesswork as being the combination of referential and relational views of language as a priority of intuition over intellect, but rather we must challenge ourselves to see such anticipatory deployments as leaps of logic in the most literal sense of the term. In other words, to read Joyce this way does not contradict deconstruction's claim that acts of literature situate a confrontation of logocentricism with its other, but rather sees the involvement of logic and thought as a more deeply embedded confrontation of thought with its other – in other words, to see literary acts as apprehensions rather than expressions of meaning.

That things enter and exit language via material or objective imprints has a Joycean equivalence in the Heraclitan cycle of rising and falling, which provides as much of a template for *Finnegans Wake* as Vico's theory of cyclical *corso*. One could parse a parallel way of reading Joyce's use of the myth of Babel by saying that, in the course of collectively "building" the material equipment necessary for language, meaning ascends until it reaches an apparent peak of an absolute polysemy, at which point it begins its immediate descent into

asemy. This is also how one might interpret epiphany as the instantaneous or evanescent vanishing of an object from contextual meaning to propose a *Finnegans Wake*-ian reading of epiphany: the gradual narrative accrual of meanings, the overgrowth and incursion of semantics into various forms of grammar: grammars of appearance, grammars of ordinal structure in narrative, grammars of aesthetic hue, grammars of correspondence between the use of mythological references, and so on. This accrual is continuous until there is a point where meaning and multiplicity (an object that seems to recursively mean that it means that it means that it means...) both fail, a purely univocal and singular episode of asemy.

At this point we can evoke what is perhaps the inverse position to deconstruction's view of literary acts, in Badiou's reading of Mallarmé, where a "poetic machine, though opaque when looked at from outside, possesses only a single meaning" [Badiou, 2009:74]. Such a doctrine of poetic univocity seems a natural match for the notion of epiphany. However, the question of such a "single meaning" is difficult to apply to Joyce's more elaborate prose. The problem with the "single meaning" as such is that it would be need to be both recursive and not really a meaning in the interpretative sense of the word, but rather a single or unique stoppage in the machinery of interpretation itself. This attachment of univocity and exemption to a recursion makes Badiou's reading of Mallarmé an interesting counterposition to Derrida's reading of Joyce. Indeed, a Joycean epiphany (like a Mallarmé piece<sup>116</sup>) could be said to express uniqueness or univocity, both as figures of an evanescent instant<sup>117</sup> as, in the phrase quoted by Joyce in *Ulysses*, a set of self-reference or closed recursion: "*il se promène, lisant au livre de lui-même*" <sup>118</sup> [U 239], which provides the opposite notion to Derrida's view that *Ulysses* primarily concerns "sending oneself"; tunnelling like Joyce's mole into its "underground heaven" [FW 76]. The ascension of meaning is like Tim Finnegan's wall-building project: a slow, painstaking, distributed and constructive process consisting of partitioning walls and identifying towers across an obscure landscape of generalised multiplicity. But its descent is abrupt and singular, local. It is on the descent of meaning that Joyce focuses most of his aesthetic attention, which can perhaps be

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<sup>116</sup> The allusions to Mallarmé in 'Proteus' and 'Scylla and Carybdis' would suggest that Joyce had made this comparison himself.

<sup>117</sup> The notion of the Mallarméan event as evanescent and singular is forcefully presented in Badiou's reading of the poem 'A Throw of Dice Will Never Abolish Chance' in *Being and Event*, [Badiou, 2006:191]. The conclusion of this notorious reading argues against nihilism on the basis that "undecidability is a rational feature of the event", an argument which shares more than a few similarities with Joyce's description and defence of the political potency of his epiphanic stories in *Dubliners*, for example in the already cited letters to Grant Richards.

<sup>118</sup> Although Ellman notes that Joyce himself was very fond of and influenced by the phrase, it is Mr Best and not Stephen who quotes it in *Ulysses* [JJ 138].

seen in Stephen Dedalus' juxtaposition of a spontaneous and fleeting "shout in the street" [U 42], against the teleologically or historically assured manifestation of the Absolute.

If one agrees with the deconstructionist reading of Joyce that realism as an aesthetic project spirals ever closer to critiques and counter-demonstrations of being-as-presence, and if one treats Joyce's project as an intellectually sincere attempt at aesthetic realism, consequentially revealing problems with the centrality of verballity and vocality, then one has no other choice than to extend those critiques to all of language and all of meta-linguistic thinking about language. The constitutive power of language or the constructive power of discourse are unavoidably called into question in the face of a realist project. If there are indeed even "languages" and "discourses" in that sense at all. Joyce's work is not only philosophically proximal to Derrida's critique of the foundational centrality of vocality, but it frequently touches territory close to other radical philosophical views, such as Donald Davidson's radically pragmatic view that "language" as a whole entity does not exist, and Alain Badiou's formal argument the "sovereignty" of language, may only apply to locally-constructed situations. No aspect of language escapes Joyce without at least some injury, and the image of Joyce as an author with a "strong" or constructivist view of language, or idealism returning under the guise of linguistics or historicism (close to what Badiou has called "idealingustery"), must be challenged with examples of the subordination of language to materiality and the objectal, albeit never objective, world. Arguably, deconstruction has already done this. With *Finnegans Wake*, one must not take the view that it demonstrates the power of language to intrude into even the most obscure parts of human experience and ontology, but rather that, despite being the medium of human thought, language is often so weak that it will be humbled radically on exposure to even the weakest, most obscure parts of our lives. To follow Badiou, the "constructive" faculty of language does not extend from an institutive power, but from separation or partition. We should find much sympathy for Badiou's anti-constructivist as it helps 'do justice' to *Finnegans Wake*, as a book where metalinguistic fragments such as the sigla or gestures, which do not express meanings, but guide the reader to see *how* the book is making meaning appear, form the grounds for separations into groups and subgroups of figures, rather than the construction of distinct and autonomous entities whose coherence in being is granted exclusively by language. Furthermore, and most importantly, for a study of narrative fiction, there is no good reason to stop at the question of language: everything so far discussed suggests that the question of narrative in general tends towards the meta-structural and the metalinguistic, rather than



remaining caught within networks of reference-relation and questions of discursive meaning. If one agrees with deconstruction that Joyce's work, insofar as it is an attempt to produce aesthetic realism without reliance upon being-as-presence, consequentially reveals problems with ideality, then one must extend those critiques to all of ideality, without prejudice: apparently experiential views such as Bergson, Berkeley and Deleuze are already caught up in metaphysical abstraction and transcendental presuppositions, and the attempt to attack the primacy of presence-to-self necessarily entails a critique of auto-presentation, namely, presentation without thought, or of the idea that experience or sensation is meaningful as separated from intellectualisation. Although the complexity of Joyce's relation with Bergson can only be alluded to in this thesis (it is a problematic issue), it should be noted that Joyce cannot suffer the idea that experience and intellect are independent, or that either has a qualitative privilege over the other. Narrative is never simply given by experience or history, and there is nothing linguistic or perceptual which is simply given by narrative. This is a subtractive principle. In the absence of givenness, all narrative accounts are, in the end, the result of a balance.

## CHAPTER 5: TWO WORLDS FOR JOYCE

### *“Onesomeness Was Alltolonely”: Two Worlds Diurnal*

In her deconstructive study of authority and authorship in Joyce, Vicki Mahaffey describes how rejecting a “monological model of authority” allowed Joyce's work to “instigate a dialogue” between “traditional or logocentric models of interpretation and those that have been excluded” [Mahaffey, 1988:3]. This instigation requires Joyce's work to exist between many different worlds: “male and female, individualism and an ethos of community, referentiality of language and materiality; between conscious and unconscious desire” [Ibid]. Whereas Mahaffey uses the absence of a “monological model” as a starting point for a critique based around authorship and acts of reference, I would use the same observation to begin an account of localisation in Joyce's work. Indeed, this critical observation of Joyce calls back to our choice of philosophical sources in this thesis. These sources are deconstruction's suspicion of totality and originary unity, Badiou's meontological opposition to the Parmenidean thesis that “Being is One” and Laruelle's ‘non-standard’ henology of the One as foreclosed to philosophical decision. It is entirely suitable to Joyce, that the “dialogue” instigated his rejection of the monological leads one to three schools of thought that could not be more starkly opposed to one another.

Mahaffey's account admits that the observation that “Joyce insists on the equality and interdependence of binary oppositions - writer/reader, man/woman, fact/fiction, theory/practice” [Mahaffay, 1988:6] was “hardly a novel suggestion” in the 1980s, but I want to re-examine and re-raise a question that rests in the background of such a deconstructionist or feminist approach. Mahaffey's observation that Joyce rejects a “monological model”, be it of authority or reference or of the novel as a single cohesive text, seems one of the few remarks one could make that would be entirely uncontroversial across the majority of critical engagement in Joyce, and I certainly would not dispute it. But I feel that taking such an observation for granted on the basis of the tenets of deconstruction itself glosses over many of the complications that are raised by making such an observation in the first place, not to mention how entirely unintuitive the idea that James Joyce rejects the “monological” can be if

considered in light of many philosophical viewpoints expressed by various figures within the text itself.

Joyce's aesthetics of the beautiful, which might be said to be his use of scholastic ideas to formulate a subtractive aesthetic of the sublime, seem entirely monological in the sense that they are dependent upon a discourse of the singular, the unique and the unitary. In *Stephen Hero*, the abandoned precursor to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce has his avatar Stephen give an account of the experience of the beautiful that seems to come to rest entirely upon the issue of objective singularity. "To apprehend it you must lift it away from everything else: and then you perceive that it is one integral thing, that it is *a thing*" [AP 289], argues Stephen, and further describes how "the mind recognises that the object is in the strictest sense of the word, a *thing*, a definitely constituted entity". Implicit in Stephen's discussion of the aesthetic experience is the relationship between singularity and placement, as much as Stephen (as an authorial voice) intends to make a phenomenal case that rests wholly on perception and experience, the composition and delivery of his argument, which Joyce presents as a dialogue, rests upon situation and localisation as much as it does on experience.

Stephen's argument draws on the scholastic identification of being with oneness, and although the terminology Joyce has Stephen use is drawn from Aquinas (the famous definitions of *claritas*, *integritas* and *quidditas*), in the background of the passage is a formulation that recalls Leibniz's phrasing of the scholastic identification of being with oneness, "that what is not truly *one* being is not truly one *being* either."<sup>119</sup> All of the Thomist qualities introduced are, in a sense, subordinated by Stephen's account to a prior sense of oneness which is (perhaps contrary to the intention of Stephen's argument) not latent in the object itself but rather lent to it in some sort of decisive act. In the few short paragraphs it is evident Joyce is not simply having his avatar counter-sign the definitions that he is employing, but the unfolding of an inquiry from a collection of complex allegiances to, and defections from, scholastic notions of singularity and unicity.

The argument on beauty from *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* is therefore in absence of the "monological model of authority" not by virtue of its contradiction of a certain set of monological notions but rather in the fact that construction of the argument itself is

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<sup>119</sup> He (Leibniz) wrote the following to Arnauld on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1687: "To be brief, I hold as axiomatic the identical proposition which varies only in emphasis: that what is not truly *one* being is not truly one *being* either" [Leibniz & Arnauld, *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*, 1967:121].

demonstrative of the fact that such a oneness is not foundational but the result of some other process or mode of thinking that brings particular elements into the oneness into situated presentation<sup>120</sup>.

What complicates the matter further is that as much as Joyce is performing a deconstruction of the notions which he introduces, opening and “instigating” dialogues between reader/writer or fact/fiction, the intention behind Joyce's work (as much as all his fiction can be considered as a totality) is resolutely and unquestionably realist; even as we cannot be sure if Joyce is entirely aesthetically realist or philosophically realist, there is something here which is a little more than simply realism as a literary mode or context. Ultimately, it becomes very hard to approach the unspoken binary behind a deconstructionist reading of Joyce: either something is real, or it is not, and whatever dialogue may have been thought between the real and the unreal, the mediation of a realist mode will always be assumed by virtue of the fact that such a dialogue is possible at all. Such a realist question may have political consequences when one considers the male/female or Irish/English binaries, and how Joyce recognises the political nature of such divisions. This recognition takes place within his radical extension of realist literary modes in connecting aspects of life to the real and material worlds from which censorship and imperial order would seek to divide to them.

Such an observation is not intended as a criticism or complaint directed towards deconstruction. It is a comment on the problems arising from a too-exclusive focus upon communicative language itself, in either what Mahaffey refers to as “the referentiality of language” or in the language forms that constitute many of the binaries she discusses such as “writer/reader, fact/fiction, theory/practice”. Such an exclusive focus on language may ultimately lead away from realism towards the kind of subjective idealism or Berkeley-ian immaterialism which Joyce has Stephen mock in ‘Proteus’ (the rephrasing of Johnson's joke at Berkeley's expense “by knocking his scone against them, sure” [U 45]), and later has Patrick mock towards end of *Finnegans Wake's* final chapter<sup>121</sup> [FW 611-612]. Rather, it is the

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<sup>120</sup> One can share Beckett's view in that this is a mathematical view of the world, or a numerical view of nature. And from there the shape of Joycean presentation begins to take shape leading to the “musemathematics” [U 359] of Bloom in ‘Sirens’, and also the geometric allusions and metaphor of *A Portrait* and *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>121</sup> Rather than St Patrick using the shamrock to prove the existence of the trinity to Irish unbelievers, Joyce has Patrick use a shamrock to prove the existence of the “weewayedwold” to the solipsistic and immaterialist version of Berkeley. To carry on the point about binaries here, Joyce absolutely connects realism with an anti-binary position: in this telling of the legend, he strongly associates the Berkeley/Druid character with monochrome and the Patrick character with a prism or a rainbow. The leaves of the shamrock which Patrick produces are six separate colours: a “sextuple gloria of light”. There is an undeniable dimension of self-criticism in this passage,

opening of the question of how, with the realist bent of Joyce's work in mind, one can extend the insights of deconstruction beyond the prisonhouse of language, and rejoin the original Joycean theme of access to the real and universality. Is such a thing, using Joyce's use of language to show how he escapes language, possible? Likewise, using Joyce's use of philosophy to show he escapes the authority of philosophical decisions and theoretical sutures?

What is notable about Derrida's own reading of Joyce is the tight connection he keeps between engagement with Joyce's texts and his re-interpretation of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, "two great models, two great paradigms" who both attempt to grasp "the relationship between language and history" [D&J 27] from very different directions: Husserl in the attempt to render language "as transparent as possible" and Joyce who "mobilizes and babelizes" language as an "asymptotic totality of the equivocal". From this equivalence I would reach back to Derrida's second book on Husserl, *La Voix et le Phénomène*, and point out the significance of the fact that Derrida's critique of Husserl could be said to closely orbit a broad argument against any form of solipsism. As Derrida states: "must we not say that the concept of pure solitude -and of the monad in the phenomenological sense- is *split open* by its own origin, by the very condition of its self-presence?" [Derrida, 2011:59]. It would therefore seem ironic, perhaps tragic, for readings of Joyce that keep close to Derrida and deconstruction to lead back to solipsism and the rejection of the real, even if this is not on the basis of the phenomenological monad of the soul and lived-experience, but from confinement within language and discourse. It cannot be stressed enough here that Derrida's own reading of Joyce is topological in his own words, in the sense of being an adventure to the outside or exterior, with the text being an operation which consists in "dragging outside itself in an entirely singular adventure" [D&J 27], an active manipulation of the dyadic structures of signature and counter-signature to overcome encyclopaedic limitations. Derrida argues that "what is called writing holds the paradox of such a topology", a focus on the spatial and

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almost a birdsnest of woven stands of self-critique, as it seems as though St Patrick is attacking not Berkeley himself, but Joyce's specific deployment of Berkeley and how the theory of colours being advanced in the anti-realist thesis are woven into the compositional matrix of *Finnegans Wake* itself. This may be a case of Joyce wanting to have his realist cake and eat it as well – that is, retain a sceptical affinity with idealists such as Berkeley. But, perhaps more profoundly it suggests that realism itself is an unescapably subtractive attitude, as what is shown in negative or philosophical silhouette is not Joyce's ambivalence between realism and subjective idealism, nor amphibolous conceptual dallying within them both, but a realism which one can chart between through its absences than through a final domain of either meaning or presence, or worse, a domain of presence-as-meaning. In this sense, Joyce is an excellent reader of Berkeley, because he can produce an aesthetic image of the problem of subjective idealism by exposing his own work to the critiques that it generates, without having to 'buy into' its epistemological or metaphysical assertions about the nature of Being and our knowledge of beings.

topological which he returns to with themes of distancing and exteriority in a discussion of “telephonic spacing” [D&J 53] in ‘Ulysses Gramophone’. The realism of Joyce, expressible in terms of topology, locality, placement and distance will always “split open” the “pure solitude” of the monological.

Replacing the “monological” with the “topographical” requires a splitting of its own, robbing even the notion of “monological authority” itself of the coherence of the monological: an assault against mono-, and an assault against the -logical, replacing the equation between singular and logos with a relationship between written language (graph) and localisation (topoi).

At this point, it would be useful to return to the reference to Leibniz's formula from *Stephen Hero* where he argues that in the moment of aesthetic apprehension “you perceive that it is one integral thing, that it is *a* thing.... the mind recognises that the object is in the strictest sense of the word, a *thing*.” There are two routes to showing that the monological foundation of this formulation is undermined, one on the basis of critiques of logocentrism, and another on the basis of the criticism of the One. The same Leibniz formulation that Stephen Dedalus uses appears at the very beginning of Alain Badiou's *Being and Event*, where it is phrased as “what is not *a* being is not a *being*” [Badiou, 2006:23]. Rather than take a linguistic approach, Badiou poses the fundamental question of multiplicity: in Badiou's terminology of mathematical presentation rather than phenomenal presence, the paradox is that “what *presents* itself is essentially multiple; *what* presents itself is essentially one” [Ibid].

Badiou's engagement with the old philosophical conundrum of the One and the Multiple rests on two ontological decisions: his own “L'Un n'est pas” (the one is not) and from psychoanalysis what he calls Lacan's “guarantee of consistency” [Badiou, 2006: 23 & 93]; “il y a de l'Un”, the guarantee that “there is something of the one”, or “there is some one-ing”. The dual principle of “L'un n'est pas”/“Il y a de l'Un” (“the one is not”/ “there is something of the one”) offers the possibility of engagement with Joyce's rejection of “monological models” from a more radically anti-foundationalist position, instead of subordinating the rejection of metaphysical Oneness, totality and consistency to broader principles against logocentrism and language-based critiques, careful engagement with Badiou's thought allows the reader of Joyce to reject metaphysics of the One without qualification. Such a rejection is therefore crucial in what I would call an extension of the insights of deconstruction into the realm of realism. The problem of singularity has already been approached in deconstruction, Derek Attridge observes the contrast between interpretations of *Finnegans Wake* from those in

Joyce's inner circle to later readings which attempt to discover a singular narrative thread or protagonist, “neither in their [meaning the writers of *Exagmination*] discussions nor in any of Joyce's recorded or reported comments do we find a suggestion that the new work concerns *a* dream or *a* dreamer, *a* night or *a* night-and-day period” [Attridge, 2000:143]. Although Attridge made this comment alluding to dream and night-book interpretations of *Finnegans Wake*, they work just as well as a defense of the polyvalence of Joyce's work against the notion of Oneness as a deep structural or metaphysical concern in *Finnegans Wake* in general. This is certainly a point I think that can be made strongly about the book's apparent absence of singularity which is perhaps the most striking aspect of *Finnegans Wake*, even before its immediate obscurity; there is no ‘a’ Earwicker or ‘a’ Shaun or ‘a’ Anna Liffey. In Joyce's words, forms prolong and multiply themselves.

Even further to the appropriateness of the decision “l'Un n'est pas” to Joyce, a radical critique of metaphysics of the One is a key to understanding that the political conviction of Joyce's two great novels crosses into an ontological conviction. The biographer Richard Ellman recorded Joyce making a rare mature statement of his political creed to his friend Alessandro Francini: “my political faith can be expressed in a word: Monarchies, constitutional or unconstitutional, disgust me. Kings are mountebanks. Republics are slippers for everyone's feet. Temporal power is gone and good riddance. What else is left? Can we hope for monarchy by divine right? Do you believe in the Sun of the Future [the Italian socialist party]?” [JJ 383]. It is arguable here that Joyce's political admonition is directed against derivations of Monarchy, against aristocracy of all kinds, and against any notion of the metaphysical One as prior principle to political reality or the social order.

Oneness (and its attendant, identity) is neither an innate nor structural feature of particular multiplicities and objects, but rather it is a result of the operations of a certain presentation of those multiplicities. A multiplicity may be unique but it is never one, a cohesive whole or totality, but in a certain context it may be effectively one (counted-as-one, in Badiou's terms) as it appears in situation, under the operations of a local regime of presentation such as a work of literature, or the political or social context in which such a work appears, or the site in which a reading of the work might take place. It is this notion of local presentation which makes Badiou's philosophy especially useful. As Badiou observes, such a notion of presentation is the “exact contrary” [Badiou, 2006:35] to presence, which could be equally said of the now traditional hermeneutic equation of presence with experience

or truth as disclosure. It is the luxury of reading Joyce that his games with philosophical contraries allows an engagement with two apparent polar opposites on equal terms: the *presence* of hermeneutics leading to a critique of logos through an interpretative engagement with processes of deferment and dissemination; and the *presentation* of Badiou leading to a critique of the One, and new possibilities of thoughtful involvement with the text on the basis of its multiplicity.

Throughout Badiou's work the capture of "presentation" has been topological, what Peter Hallward refers to as Badiou's "situated theory of situations" [Hallward, *Badiou: Subject to Truth*, 2003:93]. Examples of this include the dialectic between the *esplace* (placement) and the *horlieu* (outplace) in *Theory of the Subject*, the "situations" of Being and Event and the "worlds" of *Logics of Worlds*, and recently the oeuvres and sequences of *The Immanence of Truths*. Just as deconstruction fitted the referential and ineffable aspect of Joyce's work like a glove, with its constant rejections of totality and embrace of equivocation, Badiou's work fits the particulars of realism in Joyce in the sense that it describes the real as divided yet situated: the localisation is divided between the multiple real of presentation, and the excess representational real of a situation as it is situated.

Returning to potential political discussions of Joyce's texts, the notion of local presentation means that the political rejection of the One does not only lie in the abstract sense of refusal directed at "monarchy" as an overarching metaphor. As this thesis progresses I would argue that rejection of the monological follows what Badiou and Meillassoux refer to as the "idéologie de finitude":

We will call "ideology of finitude" a triple hypostasis of the finite. Firstly, the finite is what there is, what is. To assume finitude stems from the reality principle, which is a principle of obedience: we must submit to the realistic constraints of finitude. Secondly, the finite determines what may be, what can happen. This is the principle of the restriction of possibles: the critique, as feeble as it is banal, of "utopias", "generous illusions", of all "ideologies", taken to be the matrices of a destructive imaginary whose paradigm, in the 20th century, was the communist adventure. And thirdly, finitude prescribes what must be, which is to say the ontological form of our duty, which is always, in the end, to respect what there is, which is to say, generally, capitalism and nature, which supposes, and this is indeed an axiom of finitude, that capitalism is fundamentally natural. It is the principle of the authority of the finite. [Badiou, 2018:14]

For Joyce, his texts are not opposed to a generalised or abstract ideology of finitude in the sense that Badiou is suspicious of the "constraints" of "the reality principle", a principle which Joyce (perhaps unlike Stephen Dedalus) is all too happy to embrace, but to a concrete



and specific aspect of such an ideology which impedes aesthetic access to the situatedness of his situations. Such a “concretised” version of this is not the generalised anti-capitalist sentiment of later 20th century leftwing politics, but what I would call Joyce's opposition to his contemporary cult of the limit.

The cult of the limit takes many forms. The most significant has to do with Joyce's disposition against borders of any kind, and those who see them as necessity. He rages against the interior division of Ireland, by Imperial interests, as *Finnegans Wake* references with great approval Parnell's remark “No man has a right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation. No man has a right to say to his country: Thus far shalt thou go and no further” [FW 41] as it appeared on the old Parnell monument in Dublin but in this embrace of Irish independence, he never recanted on his prior dislike of the nationalist attitude which would use the exterior division of Ireland from the rest of the world by language and sea as an excuse to reject cosmopolitanism and modernisation. That Joyce considered the existence of any hard border to be an imposition on individual freedom of thought and expression is compounded by his later experiences, which famously included moving from one European city to another, and also saw the imprisoning of his brother Stanislaus in an internment camp during the first world war. There is also Joyce's constant mocking of the Catholic rhetorical deployment of mortality as a limit between life and death, the presumptions of the theological idea of death as a limit between natural life and eternal life are famously debased by Leopold Bloom's humorous thoughts at the funeral in *Ulysses* [U 139 -142] and the almost cartoonish absurdity of Earwicker's burial in Loch Neagh in *Finnegans Wake* [FW 76]. Bloom's celebrated compassion is also an example of the rejection of the cult of the limit, as he frequently expresses a compassion or understanding of others' lives beyond his own in contrast to bigotted figures like John Henry Menton, Simon Dedalus and the Citizen who experience empathy only on the basis of some shared trait like heritage, national identity or civic duty.

This rejection of limits and finitude also has importance for Joyce's philosophy of aesthetics, as Stephen Dedalus ponders during his "walk to eternity" along Sandymount Strand. After shutting his eyes as he walks to deliberately limit his own senses, he realises that the sound of the shale underfoot is enough to project him outside of himself, his attempt at solipsism is proven impossible as every one of his senses seems to (by its connection to thought and language) leak, and he bids himself to “see now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end” [U 36]. This is a simple thought but a remarkable one: Joyce's common trick of a secularisation of a religious motif (“world without end”) here

demonstrates that the lack of finitude on a subjective level is echoed by a lack of finitude in the world itself, the senses are leaky and slip over apparently impassable borders in the same manner that the finitude of the world is only illusionary and what Joyce later called an “eternal now” persists against any presupposition of a limit or finite end. Whereas theology has the notion of the “co-eternal”, such as in the belief that souls are co-eternal with God, Joyce's work expresses what might be called a secular “co-infinitude” in which subjectivity (such as the “infinite variety” [U 272] of beauty created by Shakespeare and his interpreters) rises to reject finitude on the basis that the material world, contingent and “founded on the void” [U 266] as it is, has little evidence of natural finitude either.

The cult of the limit includes market-based systems of value, mortality, romantic celebration of personal perspective along with principles of obedience: to Church, to State, to the insular and conservative demand that “the language question should take precedence over the economic question” [U 207], to aesthetic conformity and to knowing one's limits in all parts of life. The belief that that the writer cannot be expected to acknowledge limits operates on both vertical terms (rejection of institutional or traditional limitations on what can be considered a fit subject matter for aesthetic or philosophical coverage) and horizontal terms (the absolute rejection of any standards of decorum, good taste or decency from a local consensus).

The most obvious example of Joyce's rejection of the cult of the limit is his refusal to allow social mores and standards of taste or decency to dictate what should be considered appropriate subject matter for his work, which inevitably lead to the censorship of his books. However, here one must be careful: if one reads Joyce's so-called obscenity and vulgarity as the willing transgression and the desire to subvert norms, one overlooks the aspect of his work which earned him the title “the most Hegelian of modern novelists” [Derrida, 1978:192] from Derrida. In *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Joyce's meditations on the notion of sin show a reflexive awareness that imagining an urge to transgress a limit or boundary in no small sense recognises and authorises that boundary. Escape from the cult of the limit cannot simply be defiant and contrary, of obscenity and poor taste for its own sake. Joyce does not celebrate the transgression of boundaries, but refuses to acknowledge them on any level whatsoever. Like the personhood and identity of the artist, two local forms of finitude, they must be “refined out of existence” [AP 215] in the truculent process of formal, subtractive composition.

The question is therefore not of transgression, which would be the appropriation of the monarchic or aristocratic One for the artist himself, but of unbounded accessibility by which

the artist and reader escape their own mundane specificity by means of the very particularities which seem to present those specificities as limits. To explain this point, one can take as an example Joyce's notoriously fastidious and thorough use of geographical and demographic details in the composition of *Ulysses*, for example, the lengths of periods of time and angles that Leopold Bloom takes on his morning walk. It may initially seem that Joyce's position suggests that the artist is limited by experience, and personal experience at that, and therefore must mediate the content of his work by formal and periodicised accuracy to the lived experience by which Joyce came to know the house on Eccles Street, the Church, and so on. In fact, I would argue that it means the exact contrary, by deploying a close reliance on exacting accuracy, Joyce provides a demonstration of the absence of the limitations within the specific. The Joycean specific is open, not finite. The relation of writer and reader is depersonalised and de-specified by use of techniques which bind the work itself to the specific; for reader and writer as subject to the work, nothing is inaccessible even if it seems inaccessible from the perspective or frame of the individual person of the writer, the reader or any particular figure depicted in the work. In this sense, one can interpret Stephen's claim that the writer refines himself out of existence as an anti-humanist claim – anti-subjectivist and anti-sovereignist.

It follows, then, that if one is to observe how Joyce seeks to extricate the process of writing from the cult of the limit one must see not only the situation of writing but the situatedness of that situation. One must keep in mind Joyce's conviction that, as Jean-Michel Rabaté says, “the essence of life cannot be reduced to an abstract truth of essences” [Rabaté, 2001: 98], but unlike Rabaté we are to be cautioned that this fundamentally classes Joyce as an anti-Platonist – Joyce is not a Platonist, to be sure, but not being a Platonist does not necessarily mean we must include him with anti-Platonism considered as the western philosophical tradition inaugurated by Nietzsche and reaching its institutional apogee with the enshrinement of ‘French Theory’ at the heart of the cultural and sociological turn in anglophone humanities.

Joyce's Dublin is not topographical in the sense of writing an image of a place but rather in writing the situation of a situation. That is, the particular which contains the universal is not Dublin itself as some finite totality or nominal collection of historical facts, but the situation of that particular situation. That is to say that it is not Dublin, but Dublin on Bloomsday: it is not the city itself which contains the universal but the boundless excesses of representations which overlap.

I would argue here that Joyce's work actively anticipates two radical philosophical principles from the twentieth century, both stressing similar ideas, from the perspective of the primacy of the heterogenous over the homogenous and multiplicity over metaphysical Oneness; an exploration through literature of the consequences of alterity over homology and meontology over monology.

The principle of supplementarity is formulated and presented in Derrida's *Voice and Phenomenon*. This principle would describe that there is always one additional part to any individual part. The trace cannot be erased or removed or purified.

My reason for choosing supplementarity and non-being of the one as the theoretical framing devices of this part of my thesis lies in the importance of understanding what a topographical reading of the text would look like. To this end, Badiou provides a view from the rejection of finitude as transcendental fatalism and Derrida from the rejection of finitude as solipsism: if there is a "meta-critical" point to be made here, it is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater when considering how Joyce fits in with the "speculative" or "post-critical" turns of contemporary philosophical engagements with literature. To dismiss finitude in a reading of Joyce does not also imply dismissal of established Derridean engagements with Joyce, from the famous quips by Derrida himself to the deconstructive readings presented by Mahaffey, Attridge and others, but on the contrary, a new dialogue can be opened around Joyce's work on the basis of a realist extension of the same line of interrogation.

What does it mean for a writer of realism to begin with, as Derrida puts it “the immediate non-self-presence of the living present”? This suggestion would seem to negate any sense of perceptual certainty or immediacy to which a realist writer may appeal. I would begin by noting that in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*, Joyce has Stephen see the process of poetic engagement with real objects not as a purely descriptive process but as an "apprehending". Such a view reflects something of the same principle of supplementarity, which although requiring a view of language as an “indicative system” sees such a system as where things are "entangled, gripped" and even more strongly “gripped, that is contaminated” [Derrida, 2011:17]. The mutual infestation and contamination of language and difference is, it would seem, forbidding of any enclosure of solipsism and suggesting of a wider real beyond language itself. The Joycean notion of an apprehension which simultaneously holds an ‘esthetic’ and linguistic form can therefore be defined by the idea that to grip and to

contaminate are somehow synonymous, or at least refer to different elements of the same process.

This influential phrasing “language keeps watch over the difference which keeps watch over language” [Ibid. 13] from *Voice and Phenomenon* should bring to mind the idea of Earwicker as “ever waker” (never sleeping) and “e'er waecca” (ever watching), and the concept that the supposedly central single character of *Finnegans Wake* is both the system of referentiality that keeps watch over what is “structural” about the novel, and that “structural” part itself keeps watch over what is gestural<sup>122</sup> and figurative, suggesting a relation of structure and meta-structure which underscores any question of immediacy be it the perceptual immediacy that comes from the authenticity of bodily experience, or the temporal immediacy that comes from the privilege of the “living present” over memory or anticipation. At the very least, the principle of supplementarity tells us that, in literature and narrative, every experience or object can be broken up into at least two fragments.

In a very Derridean appropriation of a German expression for an instant, in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce refers to an “augenblick” as “eyegonblack” [FW 16] which suggests<sup>123</sup> his own blindness which required the wearing of an eyepatch, along with the “black eyes”<sup>124</sup> that have resulted from conflicts between different factions of Irish people, such as the recent civil war and the partition of Ireland by the British rule. Eye Gone Black recalls also the motto Erin Go Braugh, and adding to the list of possible personal grievances one might read into the phrase, there is also the emotional black-eye Joyce received in the form of the depressive episodes resulting from printers' refusal to accept his work. The very smallest instant is marked by division. In Derrida's exposition in *Voice and Phenomenon*, an augenblick is “the sharp point of the instant” [Derrida, 2011:51] which bears “the whole weight” of any demonstration that lived-experience is present to itself, but as an augenblick is a blink therefore inherently a divided thing then “alterity is the condition of presence” [Ibid. 56] which in linguistic terms would testify to “the uselessness of the sign of self-relation” [Ibid. 57] as the “the living present arises on the basis of its non-self-identity” [Ibid. 78].

Joyce's presentation of Augenblick/Eyegonblack suggests the moment that is already marked with decay, strife and bad luck as Joyce associated his own eyesight with curses and

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<sup>122</sup> See elsewhere in *Finnegans Wake*, where Joyce parodies the ideas of St Augustine and Vico, who both believed for different reasons, that language has its origins as systems of gesture [FW 35-37].

<sup>123</sup> *In situ*, “one eyegonblack” is used as in “one moment, please”.

<sup>124</sup> Not to mention, of course, a ‘black eye’ is a mark of disease or rotting on a potato. The buds which form shoots on potatoes are called eyes, so if ‘one eye’s gone black’ it likely means entire plant is rotten.

misfortune and often wore a ring to ward off the malediction of bad eyesight. *Finnegans Wake* suggests that if we slice history down into the tiniest pieces, into the “sharp point of the instant” (consider Earwicker’s failure to make himself understand in that “that spurring instant” [FW 35] of accusation) or augenblicks, those are already marked with division. The twoness of everything pre-exists any particular unitary logic or identificatory discourse that would make it appear as One or as a region of stable self-identity, which brings us to the other theoretical frame.

Supplementarity undermines philosophical pairing of the Same and the Other, by rendering it impossible to distinguish one from the other, as any sameness is marked out by an originary alterity which cannot be made present directly in language, and any alterity is susceptible to the possibility of being addressed generically. Joycean supplementarity is a linguistic guarantee of alterity in the form of a trace, but also the extra-linguistic topographical guarantee that there is a place within the dialogue between sameness and alterity where the Same and the Other are indiscernible.

Supplementarity therefore is an aspect of what makes a situation situated, or rather why we can think of a literary work topographically rather than simply as a collection of language-objects, narrative threads and aesthetic categories. When we think of a literary work as a situation, we see that such situatedness relies upon there being a supplementary element which is ‘in’ the situation but is not ‘of’ the situation. In Alain Badiou’s terminology, something which belongs but escapes any regime of inclusivity be it derived from linguistic totality or encyclopaedic knowledge. For example, in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist*, this supplementarity might be described as the exploitation of the earlier technique of epiphany, which informs both the topicality of Stephen’s dialogue with other characters and provides a source for the text with uses previously written material.

As Badiou insists, in his *Theory of the Subject*, that there is “no intrinsic unknowable” [2009:201] and Derrida, under various guises, preserves the trace of alterity as that which is fundamentally unfigurable and inaccessible to the conceptual, they are opposite numbers which makes them such a good fit to read Joyce, joining Joycean pairs like Berkeley and Johnson, Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas and Arius, etc. However, despite their differences they are surprisingly close on two counts which run tightly to Joycean themes, firstly in their undermining and disentanglement from conventional hermeneutics of presence in order to create a new notion of the present. For Derrida that “living present arises on the basis of its non-self-identity”. The originary role of supplementarity means that the present is derived

from the indefinite deferral of presence. This has a special significance for literary studies as it relates textuality and writing in the critique of logocentrism.

Badiou is helpful here in distinguishing between the two kinds of ‘one effects’<sup>125</sup> in Joyce's work laid out in the quote where Joyce rejects monarchisms and seems to support the prospect of a future socialism, the one of counting and the assignment of categories (aristocracy and monarchism) and the eventual ultra-one of universality (the sun of the future; a pluralistic and socialist future). Although there is good reason to have strong sympathy with the pluralistic socialism of artists that Joyce professed in his youth, it is also the position of this thesis that what really matters in that quote is the rejection of aristocracy and monarchism.

For Badiou, presentation means that the present (which is infinite and horizontal) comes from a militant intervention on the basis of some local presentation from which a subject arises, as presentation is evacuated of any sophistic or elaborate notion of presence. As with Derrida's notion of the deferment of presence, this has a special significance for literary studies, as Badiou states in his meditation on Mallarmé from *Being and Event*: “If poetry is an essential use of language, it is not because it is able to devote the latter to Presence; on the contrary, it is because it trains language to the paradoxical function of maintaining that which -radically singular, pure action- would otherwise fall back into the nullity of place” [Badiou, 2006:172].

Going forwards, this thesis will rely on the contradictions and tensions between two separate critiques of the monological, as one can hardly take a monological approach to critiquing monology. I would stress that Derrida's engagement with Joyce has the character of a critique of the miserablism of transcendental solipsism, and it is significant to compare and contrast Derrida's thesis of non-self-identity in regards to textuality (which places emphasis on referentiality and semantics) and Badiou's thesis of the non-being of the one in regards to poetics (which places emphasis on syntax, grammar and metastructure). To this end, Badiou provides a view from the rejection of finitude and Derrida from the rejection of infinitude as transcendental solipsism. Badiou would claim that literature is infinite on account of its harbouring of a void or null set and Derrida claimed “literature voids itself in limitlessness” [Derrida, 1991:177]; both are ways to engage with literature in regards to the loss of any

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<sup>125</sup> In this thesis, I will address the former as a *one-effect* and the latter as the *one-in-effect*, a change in terminology to note where my adaption of Badiou's derivation from ZFC Set Theory has absorbed other theoretical frameworks.

foundational principle at all, or any monological prior unity. It is from this prior loss of the metaphysical One, (be it in the face of either Badiouian scission or Derridean heterogeneity) that we can produce new engagements with the operations of Joycean topography.

*Finnegans Wake* retrospectively exposes that Joyce's work has always been divided into two worlds, the day and the night. However, the common notion that *Finnegans Wake* is a book of the night in contrast to *Ulysses*, requires the characterisation of *Ulysses* as a book of the daytime, which is not very intuitive: the final six of its episodes take place at night and these episodes also include some of the most publically notorious material, including 'Nausicaa', 'Circe' and 'Penelope'. The "summer evening" of 'Nausicaa' falls on page 449, and from then onwards until page 933 the book is concerned with nocturnal matters, including masturbation, brothels, dreams, urination, reflection, memory and eventually sleep.

The force of Joyce's decision to make *Finnegans Wake* the 'nightbook' of the "one great part of every human existence [that is] passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language" [L 318] reaches backwards across all of his work. When Joyce's own words imply that the difference between night and day is the difference between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, we have to adjust our opinion of what that distinction means in order to suit the distinction presented in the books rather than taking a prescriptive approach.

I would argue that the day is defined by visual clarity, optical metaphors and (relatively) clear distinctions between introspection and the exterior world. In regards to Joyce's sources, one could observe the parallels between the day and Vico's description of adulthood and mature civilisations, the "ages of man", including rationality and democracy. By this token, it is important not to be literal about the contrast between the Joycean night and day; as Joyce's two great books form a *pactisation* of day and night, textual composition emanates from their com-position. The night is defined by obscurity, the absence of sight and a relative lack of distinction between exteriority and interiority. In terms of Joyce's sources, the night reflects Vico's descriptions of the "ages of gods" and "ages of heroes" where imagination rules over rhetoric, dreams rule over rationality, and poetry takes precedence over philosophy.



*“One sovereign punned to petery pence”: Two Worlds Nocturnal*

Now I will approach Joyce's division between worlds by examining the contradictory and heterogenous form of epiphany by looking at a story from *Dubliners*. One could describe the subtractive epiphany of ‘Two Gallants’, using only the resources given to us by the story itself and Joyce's own descriptions of his new technique, in two starkly contrasting ways. I would like to frame the epiphany using two distinct ways of interpreting the incident of epiphany in order to contrast between two critical approaches. The story ends on the following incident:

Corley halted at the first lamp and stared grimly before him. Then with a grave gesture he extended a hand towards the light and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold coin shone in the palm. [D 55]

To begin, I want to extract one line from Stephen's account of epiphany and give it attention in isolation, in view of how it apparently contradicts what I have already said about Joyce's work being incompatible with solipsism, absolute limits and transcendental finitude. As part of the dialogue on the topic of beauty in *A Portrait*, Stephen argues that “the first stage of apprehension is a bounding line about the object to be apprehended” [AP 212].

From here I would introduce two ‘strawman’ readings to demonstrate how two of the main ways of interpreting the apprehension of aesthetic objects to further illustrate contrasting ideas of what it means for something to be “concrete” in a literary context. Although this will be necessarily giving two very broad reductions of two contemporary aesthetic approaches, I want to demonstrate those ideas in a dialogue rather than dismissing them too quickly.

The first strawreading one could consider is a relativist one, wherein a strawman critic might argue that the technique of epiphany makes the independent existence of the coin itself irrelevant. This strawreader would interpret “the first stage of apprehension is a bounding line about the object to be apprehended” [AP 212] in a reading of ‘Two Gallants’ as a phenomenological matter, namely that of *epoché*.

By subtracting or bracketing (*epoché*) the question of the real object, Joyce makes the artistic intervention into the "whatness" of the thing purely into a question of relationality. The coin itself becomes not a thing or an object, but rather the nexus point or centre of intensity for every relationship that has been thus far articulated by the story itself. The apparent power imbalance between Lenehan and Corley, the relationship between them and women, the relationship between all Irish women and all Irish men, the relationship between all insiders and all outsiders, and so on, all intersect over the instant in which Corley opens his palm to reveal the gleam of something to Lenehan. As the coin gleams in Corley's hand, its materiality fades and it becomes a "gleam", an apparition as any question of the real of the coin has become not a matter of objectivity but of intersubjectivity. The coin is apparently defined in terms of its own meaning, but its own meaning is nothing other than the meaning which it holds in relationship to other things: as a token of the power between men and women, as an aspirational emblem, those with and without property; not to mention the property divide between the English colonisers and colonial subjects, and the tremendous gap in economic class between Catholic and Protestant residents of Dublin around the time that Joyce composed the story. In our relativistic strawreading, it is not meaning but rather the absence of meaning that defines the coin itself as an atom, as relationships are the only meaning that objects hold, and the miracle of epiphany lies in Joyce's ability to perform a step by step autopsy, removing meaning and leaving only the relations barely and silently exposed beneath what is directly communicable in plain text. What I mean here by "an atom" is that we can understand "concrete" to mean the periodicisation of relationships within a literary text. A strawreader taking a totally relational view of the action would point out how often Joyce points at the nothingness or contingency behind relations, such as when Lenehan looks at his friend for reassurance as to Corley's character when he "came level with his friend and looked keenly in his face. He could see nothing there" [D 54]. There is nothing there precisely, as such a reading would point out that things are nothing but their interactions with other things. Lenehan's trust in his companion betrays a belief in an essential goodness or trait of character which simply cannot exist given the grim, mercenary and cutthroat depiction of Dublin life suggested by the story. The belief that there could be personal virtues or traits such as honesty independent to the networks of self-interest suggested by the men's behaviour is simply one of the romantic myths lambasted by Joyce: no different to Lenehan's earlier daydream of domestic life or the scornful deployment of a harp [D 48].

Our strawreader may be lead to conclude that a thoroughly relational view of the text, however relativistic, is ultimately a subtractive one: in order to show the workings of relationality, Joyce takes a small token of those relationships and subtracts it from both the communicable and the meaningful, so that everything a reader knows or could know about an object is reducible to the relations it holds and its action upon other things, so the “whatness” of a thing means that its status as an object collapses utterly in favour of how it functions as an exposure of its own relationships between other things; what was object is now nothing but an exponent of the affects and experiences that are incurred in its proximity. In effect, narrative becomes little more than demonstrating the neutralisation of a certain object or token, now more than a site of power relations, a power nexus or cash nexus, which power relationality being the ‘all there is’ of such a rampantly *irreductionist* view of a piece of fiction. Such a view would emphasise the political intention of the story, as belief in the independent essences or identities of objects is tied to political hierachies, such as the way the men speak about the women: the statement “She's a fine decent tart, he said, with appreciation; that's what she is” [Ibid.] being typical of an undeserved and domineering sense of objectivity.

The second kind of strawreading would begin with the inverse to the notion of epoché, the idea of withdrawal on behalf of the object itself. Joyce draws a border around an object, severing it from all relations and referentiality that obscure the object as it is. In this regard Joyce is almost certainly an early fore-runner of contemporary "object-orientated ontology" or ‘ooo’, and its critiques of so-called “correlationism”<sup>126</sup> and anthrocentricism. It assumes that an object has its own being aside from relationality, in particular the kind of relationality that makes up human society and language. Such a strawreading would take the statement "the first stage of apprehension is a bounding line about the object to be apprehended" to ask what an object is independently of the network of relations into which it has been thrust. After all, the line of inquiry comes from a section where Stephen declares that he must subtract himself from Ireland in order to write about himself “as I am” [AP 203]. An "object-orientated" reading would want to dethrone human thought and experience from its privileged position at the center of aesthetic discourse, and remove the correlationist blinkers which would deny the aspect of epiphany which Joyce has Stephen refer to as apprehension: the undeniable fact that a human agent has, through active agency or decision, become engaged or involved with

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<sup>126</sup> The term is taken from a work that is not part of ‘ooo’ aesthetics, Quentin Meillassoux *After Finitude* 2010]. For an example of the ‘object-orientated’ reframing of the argument, see *Towards A Speculative Realism* [Harman, 2010].

something exterior to human subjectivity. The benefit of the 'ooo' reading of literary texts would be double, as the critique of correlationalism entails a critique of anthropocentrism by which 'ooo' critics do not diminish, reduce or overshadow human agency but free it from a solipsistic prisonhouse of correlationalism.

In the second strawreading, the reality of the coin escapes from intersubjective relationality and becomes a matter of intra-subjectivity in regards to the question of access, as the question of access to that real cannot be foreclosed simply by the epoché of the object that one is supposed to have to access to, but is opened anew by the demonstration that the access to the real qualities of the object is in some sense inevitable and inescapable (similar to what Graham Harman refers to as the "allure" of an object<sup>127</sup>). The question becomes not whether one has access but how and why one has access. In the absence of any one definite meaning expressed by the coin, the question is instead one of the absence of provenance, as Joyce removes the coin from relationships leading us to the question of the object itself. The intra-, rather than inter-, subjective dimension tells us that it is not a question of whether or not we have a point of contact with the real object but the inevitable fact that we are already bound up in it and cannot escape or untangle ourselves from it just as Corley and Lenehan cannot free themselves from brute material facts such as the scarcity of gold upon which its social or fiduciary value is dependent, or the sexual nature of their being, the need to eat, the compulsion to gamble, the pleasantness of music and so on. None of these things, our object-orientated strawperson would argue, is primarily conditioned by relationality and relies upon the independent reality of objects first and foremost. The object-orientated strawcritic would point out that the structure of the story sees Lenehan walk in a loop, arriving in the end from the same place where he began, giving the effect of shedding insulating illusions and accidental appearances as the story bears its focus down on the bleak and unfortunate matter of things as they are.

The object-orientated strawcritic would perhaps argue that the raising of relationality over objectality serves to defang a potential engagement with the text: as it would deny the concrete reality of the coin, the physicality and therefore agency of the "slavey" who has possibly procured it who here, is an embodiment of the "vicarious causation" required by Harman's aesthetic system. The reality of the coin as an independent object is evident in the vicarious causation or intentionalisation that causes the object-Lenehan to make a unique, novel point of contact with the object-Corley, a point of contact which possibly would not

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<sup>127</sup> Harman, *The Quadruple Object*. p104.

exist without the actions of the servant girl. By denying the existence of independent objects, does this not erase many political questions arising from the fact that a woman, independent from the men in many respects, was the locus of vicarious causation between the men and the coin in the first place? The same could equally be said of the materiality involved when one considers the value and necessity of the food eaten by Lenehan, the fact that gambling and theft involve a struggle of individuals for very limited resources, and all of the other practical concerns mentioned the story. From this position, it would seem as if vicarious causation, rather than relationality, would hold the key to a political interpretation of the story.

The two strawreaders, the relation-orientated and the object-orientated could both accuse each other (and both for good reasons) of depoliticising the text of 'Two Gallants' in order to promote the social ontology with which they are most comfortable. The strawreader who believes in the priority of relations could justly claim that the object-orientated strawreader has attempted to make society and history vanish beneath ontological jargon; to which the object-orientated strawreader might retort that their counterpart has completely ignored the question of aesthetics (or "esthetics" in Joyce's spelling) by replacing a genuine concern for socio-historical reality with a form of historicist reductionism.

The two readers may also accuse each other, with some reason, of resurrecting tired and perhaps cliché notions of essentiality and true meaning in order to subtract what they wish to subtract; both these readings require a deflating and hopeless view of language either as a prison one can never escape (via correlationism or anthropocentrism) or as simply a transparent medium inside which a writer performs his tricks with objects. Joyce's epiphanic texts, like 'Two Gallants', more than adequately demonstrates that both reduction and *irreduction* are at odds with aesthetic apprehension as a mode of realism. Both the object and the relation are equally unreal by comparison to Joyce's true target – the real as instance.

In particular, the second kind of reading would have seemed to be the most conservative kind two decades ago, but since the popularity of dissenting schools of thought such as the speculative materialism of Quentin Meillassoux and the 'object-orientated' or 'ooo' aesthetics of Graham Harman, it now seems more radical compared to those derived from the structuralist and post-structuralist pantheon of 20th century philosophers such as Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault. Readers of the post-structuralist and Deleuzian persuasion may have been suspicious of Joyce's maintaining of the separation between an object's accidental and essential qualities in the theory of epiphany, but such a distinction forms a vital and intriguing part of Meillassoux's *After Finitude* and Alain Badiou's *Logics of Worlds*

(whose dyadic notion of objects will influence discussions later in this thesis), Joyce here seems more radical and politically engaged than the theoreticians of the late 20th century exactly in the way that he may have once seemed conservative: his unwillingness to decline or gloss over distinctions between the accidental (or apparent) and the essential (or real).

Is there a way for our two strawreaders to reconcile their differences? At this, an old spectre of the Manichean Joyce may re-emerge, as it appears that the confrontation between the two strawreaders has reproduced an oppositional distinction between the writing of the day of *Ulysses* and the writing of the night of *Finnegans Wake*, a clean distinction as thoroughly debunked as its consequential notion that *Finnegans Wake* represents a specific dream by a singular individual<sup>128</sup>. It would be surprising to say that the 'ooo' or object-orientated strawreader would have the upper hand here, as Joyce's work is a study in relationality and reference. However, I would turn to a core part of object-orientated thinking, Harman's three-part aesthetic critique of phenomenology<sup>129</sup>: firstly against "undermining" objects which he defines as the idea that an object is nothing but its relation to other things, or "overmining" objects which suggests that objects are absolutely unreachable, leading back to a prior philosophical foundation such as the apeiron of the Greeks or Kant's noumenon. Harman's argument suggests that the postmodern and poststructuralist epoch's engagement with aesthetics has led to something he refers to as "dualmining" which is the simultaneous under- and over-mining of objects. The danger of this so-called dualmining implies that the problem of realism, of the exterior reality independent from humanity and our access to such a reality, can be easily solved by treating objects either as too deep or too shallow depending on context. While it would be too sweeping and harsh to say that this has been the case in a lot of critical discussion of Joyce (on issues such as the epiphanies, or the identity of the figures and objects in *Finnegans Wake*) it is certainly a risk that both structuralist and post-structuralist readers of Joyce have run whenever they have attempted to evade or escape the demands of realism.

Indeed, the problem of dualmining is at work right here in this thesis as, rather than attempt to resolve the problem between relational (or correlational) views of literature and

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<sup>128</sup> See Derek Attridge's 'Finnegans Awake, or the dream of interpretation' in *Joyce Effects* [Attridge, 2000:133-148] for a description of the problems with the single dream theory. Attridge's propositions against the idea are as follows: there is little that would make anyone without prior assumptions assume Joyce's book is about a dream, the attachment of the "idea of dream" to *Finnegans Wake* is a matter of context, and that there is "no internal evidence" that a dream would be the "overriding" interpretative context for *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>129</sup> See the opening chapter of Harman's *The Quadruple Object*, 'Undermining and Overmining' [Harman, 2011].

object-orientated views, I have already argued that both are equally true in some respect to Joyce's work. I have already shown that the way that objects and incidents are situated in Joyce's texts, their worlding in phenomenological terms, is disunited and incoherent. But ultimate at this point my sympathy lies very much against ooo: in engaging Joyce, one must be vigilant against the notion that any thought of the aesthetic (of which the *narrative* may well be a derivative) necessarily entails the belief in a reachable Noumenon about which one can only make wild and speculative statements. This is of course, a view pastiched in *Finnegans Wake* (particularly in the final chapters). The question of object-orientated Joyce is therefore not really about objects at all – it is about how what Harman refers to as objectal ‘allure’ somehow can lay claim to a kind of autonomy or involvement-attracting agency that is independent from any kind of noumenal or panpsychic wager on the ontological nature of objects. To this end, a *Joycean*, rather than ooo, allure is a two-fold subtraction, a paradox or philosophical joke: a relativist Joyce is without the primacy of relations, and the object-orientated Joyce is without the primacy of objects – both extremes meet around the gravitating locus of allure. But unlike Harman's allure, Joycean allure is always associated with creation. Not in the divine sense, nor in any vitalistic sense, but in its various cognitive and sensible permutations and recombination. This just not only go for the act of creation in manufacture or reproduction of an aesthetic object, but in the creativity implied by the apprehension of the object. Allure must imply sense that the new in the world provokes, and inspires, the new in thought and vice versa, rather than being a property already-existent property belong to any noumenal or obscure strata that one might simply stumble into.

My attempt at resolving the issue as to whether relationality or objects offer the key to interpreting the story would be to return to the notion that “the living present arises on the basis of its non-self-identity” [Derrida, 2011:78]. However, whereas Derrida's description of the originary splitting of the monad appeals (in his studies of Joyce and Husserl) to the voice or the monad of experience, I would say instead that Joyce's work shows that it is on the basis of worlds that the “living present arises on the basis of its non-self-identity”. This is because I believe that Joyce's work, realist though it is, reflects an attitude that can be called ‘acosmism’: that is to say that there is no one world, no universe or singular realm in which all actions take place. Discussing the naturalistic realism of *Dubliners* may be a challenging way to make this point, which would seem more intuitive if made about the polystylistic *Ulysses* or multilingual *Finnegans Wake*, but it is in the contrast between a wholly relational world and a wholly objectal world that this acosmism is most evident. What unites these two

disparate worlds, with their entirely divergent set of possible interpretations is not the presence of something transcendental that unites them, but on the contrary, a radical subtraction which functions both as a subtraction of meaning analogous to a hermeneutic principle of refraining from the attribution of meaning, and a phenomenological epoché or bracketing. To use the image from the ‘Brotfessor’s Breakfast’ from *Finnegans Wake* [FW 124], punching a hole in a page or letter punches a hole in both sides at once, uniting two simultaneous, parallel yet opposed texts by an act of punctual subtraction. It is ultimately neither object nor singular that is the focus of aesthetics and the critical investigation of aesthetic writing, but notions of the instance and of singularity. The instance and the singular are the most suitable vocabulary, philosophical or otherwise, for critically demonstrating that “the living present arises” rather than the present moment merely being a given of existence.

Rather than providing a resolution or the perceptual experience of a smooth, immanent continuity Joyce’s epiphany confronts his subjects (and therefore, his readers) with the fact that they are subjects of two separated and antagonistic worlds, a world of relations and interactions where anything might be said to touch everything else, and a world of discontinuous and withdrawn objects where no object ever really touches another except via (appropriating a term of Graham Harman’s) ‘vicarious causation’, leaving each object marked by its own ‘proper inexistence’ (in discussed in Alain Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds*). The unmoored or unexposed aspect is never fully apprehended in either human experience or a set of relations. The appropriate way to read Joyce at the end of the ‘correlationist’ episteme is to recognise a lack of any resolution between the relational and objectal worlds. The objectal and relational worlds are simultaneous, yet discontinuous, and the temptation to return to a centralising principle of immediate presence and sense experience does not offer as many potential avenues for engagement that a subtractive posture does. Such a subtractive posture would have, nevertheless, emphasize reading as a kind of involvement or engagement, an altogether creative pursuit: yet do so while dispensing with presumption of givenness which underwrites the notion of meaning and interpretation, and the reign of optical-ocular metaphors such as perspective over all possibility acts of engagement. What must therefore be established is some kind of negative, rather than perspectival, hermeneutic approach which will read Joyce’s works as they are written<sup>130</sup> without either subordinating the texts to their contexts or ourselves to the authority of what is written.

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<sup>130</sup> As Derek Attridge has said, to ‘do justice’ to them [D&J 265].



## CHAPTER 6: CONCEPTS, PART ONE - PLAY AND INTIMACY

### *Concepts and the Writing of Immanence, Concepts and the Immanence of Writing*

It is appropriate to start this chapter with a remark of justification. Joyce is, after all, a writer of life in its instance; a writer whose two great works are comprised of *Ulysses*, which was described by its author as an epic of the human body and *Finnegans Wake*, which sought to render in literature that “one great part of human existence” that had been hitherto ignored [L 318]. Throughout this thesis, I have been defending what I consider to be a very counter-intuitive position. I have attempted to critique givenness and immediacy, undermining realism as being primarily about immediate personal experience and interpersonal expressions of meaning. Instead, I have attempted to show that Joyce’s work takes a conceptual rather than immediate approach to experience. This should seem counter-intuitive, because Joyce’s work is manifestly about sensations rather than ideas and, in many famous passages (e.g. the opening and closing pages of ‘Proteus’ [U 45 & 46, 64]), Joyce seems to be demonstrating the overcoming of intellect by perception and emotion.

In taking a heuristic approach to reading Joyce and a conceptual approach to the academic study of his writing, it may seem to anyone reading this thesis that I am adopting the most counter-intuitive position I can in order to make philosophical or polemic points, using Joyce’s text as a resource rather than an object for study, or that I am being contrarian for the purpose of saying interesting things, rather than saying anything cogent or useful about Joyce’s narrative prose. Therefore, as a chapter dealing explicitly with conceptuality at work in Joyce, this chapter has two aims. Firstly, it aims to defend the present thesis from that charge that it is attempting to impose irrelevant philosophical ideas upon Joyce and, secondly, it aims to elaborate on the play of conceptual vocabulary that I consider essential to Joyce’s realism since, as I have argued before, Joyce’s realism can be read neither as a philosophical realism nor as a realistic in terms of literary genre or convention.

My argument is that reading Joyce guides one to counter-intuitive conclusions because what is *immanent* is counter-intuitive. To put it another way, in the understanding of the world presented by Joyce’s texts, nothing which exists has an obligation to make sense to human

thought, or to be intuitive or immediate to human senses. This is a great Joycean paradox: the priority of the present, the eternal now, seems to provoke a thought of deferral, mediation and transmission. The closer one gets to the temporal *now*, the further one gets from the phenomenal *here*, and vice versa. In Derrida's work on Joyce, this gives us the model (we cannot call it an analogy) of Joyce's writing as *counter-signatory*, based upon instances of telephony and on objects such as gramophones, especially where Derrida refers to the 'grammar of perfumes.' One can understand this telephony not as a discourse on significance and meaning, but as a description of the *ex post facto* construction of immediacy by a cognitive faculty that is neither intuitive nor intellectual. In a sense, my goal is to reverse deconstruction whilst preserving its insights. To use Rabaté's term, I see Joyce as a Promethean, robbing the riches of philosophy to give to the poor of aesthetics. One of the accusations of against  $\Pi$  in *Finnegans Wake* is a merger of Adam's sin of eating the apple and Prometheus' theft of fire: "put a matchhead on an aspenstalk and set the living a fire" [FW 131]: a Heraclitan reframing of original sin that sees neither a Biblical fall nor a Darwinian ascent of man, but a simultaneous lifting and lowering, a movement unmappable to space or time.

In order to achieve this, I want to address what it means for there to be a non-philosophical use of philosophical concepts, in this case aesthetic and narrative uses. 'Non-philosophical' here refers to works of François Laruelle, whose influence both guides my use of philosophical sources and my understanding of Joyce's relationship to philosophy not as a literary-philosophical hybrid but as, true his belief in aesthetic autonomy above all things, a kind of magnet or filter pulling concepts out of philosophy and into domains like narrative, eroticism, politics and even scientific speculation. Although I am not attempting a 'non-philosophy' of Joyce in the very strict scientific sense which Laruelle uses the term [Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*], it is important to provide an understanding of what it means, firstly, that Joyce puts philosophical concepts to a wholly *extra*-philosophical use and secondly that Joyce's provokes or obliges those who engage with his texts to do the same (perhaps if they do not even recognise that this what they are doing). As Beckett said so clearly "[Joyce's] position is not a philosophical one" [DBVJ]. Therefore, to use the terms of temporary discourse one must decide whether this means Joyce is an anti-philosophy or a non-philosophy, or what kind of combination of the two. That is, one cannot take Joyce's independence from philosophy for granted, since he is so reliant upon conceptual appropriations from philosophical argument, so reading Joyce necessarily involves staking out

the terms of his autonomy and independence while not reducing conceptuality simply to language-use. Therefore, in order to discuss Joyce's realism as a realism that attempts to engage with the real, and provoke a readerly involvement with the real, rather than simply inhabit realism as a literary genre, we cannot reduce instances of philosophical concepts in his work to mere references to philosophy. Rather, I would argue that we should see them as extractions from philosophy, where he appropriates concepts from philosophy and deploys them in a non-philosophical space. The view that Derrida provides for us in 'Ulysses Gramophone', therefore, does not appear in Joyce's work itself: the view of Joyce from the interior of philosophy, a view which is achieved only from a philosophical perspective. What we are, as readers and not philosophers, are given in Joyce is doubly-subtractive, both in the sense of being without philosophical or transcendent givenness and presenting perspective without the *primacy* of perspective. Yet, it is nevertheless a realism rich in concept, a richness as accessible to the exterior of philosophy as it is from its interior.

Therefore, one should be attentive to the function and work, rather than the intertextual workings of referentiality between a philosophical text and a non-philosophical text such as a piece of narrative fiction: a text as an act of conceptual appropriation that provokes conceptual appropriation when one engages with it. I want to use a double framework for this issue, which will entail briefly re-articulating the problems of the thesis thus far in an even more conceptual manner than before, but only so that we can return to issues of apparency and concreteness.

But, what claim can be made specifically to argue that if one examines the concrete and the immanent in Joyce, one must go via conceptual detour? Perhaps it is most persuasive to look at Joyce's earliest appropriation of conceptual vocabulary, and focus on not the concepts themselves, but how his appropriation took place and the kind of conceptual speculation that one must make in order to, as it were, meet Joyce half way. For example, in his account of Joyce's university years, Ellman relays an anecdote concerning Joyce's early intellectual collisions between issues of conceptuality and issues of style:

Joyce's professor of French was Edouard Cadic, a heavily moustached Breton. Cadic was also receptive to his student's talents; he read with delight Joyce's paper on 'Cloches,' in which the style tintinnabulated to suit the subject; and when Joyce invoked the term *idée-mère* as the French equivalent for *leitmotif*, he exclaimed happily, 'For that, I will give you my daughter.' It is a term that usefully describes the way in which a concept like river in Joyce's writing will serve to mother a whole chapter of river names and themes all done in rivery prose. [JJ 60]

Ellman's use of the word *concept* here to illuminate Joyce's attitude to literary *leitmotif* is very insightful, as it does not only capture the slightly eccentric way that Joyce treats concepts, but also demonstrates how engagement with Joyce's work forces the hand of commentators to make their own usages of common words slightly askew. When one reads this anecdote, at first brush, there is nothing novel in Ellman's use of the word 'concept', but in context of the comparison between Joyce's youthful readings of Aquinas [JJ 60], together with the French '*idée-mère*' we can see that putting the word in context of Joyce's flexibility between what is a concern of style and what is a concern of ideas, the use of the word 'concept' loses a certain philosophical fixity and gains the aesthetic fluidity it needs in order to address how Joyce was able to deploy an *idée-mère* like 'river' in a way that was not wholly *style*, but not wholly *idea* either. The sense one might have of the universal 'idea' of a river versus particular rivers and their river-names is broken, as Ellman uses the word 'concept' here, to describe that which subtends the *idée-mère* and allows the aesthetic gesture to diagonalise the universal and the particular with the specific and the generic.

Therefore, *leitmotif* is static, a descriptor of a certain identity and its structured repetition. Joyce's use of the term *idée-mère* suggests iteration as a process of self-becoming rather than the iterative or stepwise uncovering of a pre-existing identity, where concepts are put to use for the production of concepts, to which names provide extensions to axioms rather than definitions. Yet, this sense of a concept 'being put to use' is in service of something material to which one may have practical access, seemingly immediate and concrete, like a river. The word *idée-mère* shows conceptuality, immanence and practical style to be continuous to one another. If tracing the roots of Joyce's early aesthetic convictions to his study of Aquinas indicates which concepts influenced the young Joyce, *idée-mère* tells us - as Ellman demonstrates with the example of 'river' in *Finnegans Wake* - the how and the why of Joyce's appropriation of conceptual vocabularies, and how he adapted them for different situational uses. The concepts themselves may have originally belonged to Thomas Aquinas (and later many other sources), but their ultimate *conceptuality* belongs to Joyce's texts where an appropriated concept can function as an *idée-mère*.

But perhaps more crucially than the question of conceptual appropriation, we see the problems Joyce is working with as he appears to be developing the notion that aesthetics is the setting together of conceptuality and immanence, without necessarily a sense of mediating or synthesising them. To skip forward from Joyce's earliest influences to his later influence, his deployment of Giordano Bruno's notion of the unity of opposites is not a synthesis in

presentation: it kicks the can of synthesis eternally down the road. Rather than a matter of fact, would say that in *Finnegans Wake* synthesis becomes a matter of a self-perpetuating innuendo [FW 252], its necessity as questionable as the identity of bodies which “weave and unweave” [U 249] themselves, only becoming a matter present to hand in the most ironic of circumstances [FW 354].

### *Between Concepts and Affirmations*

Joyce’s 1902 paper on Mangan, closing on the phrase “continual affirmation of the spirit” [OCPW 60], marks a point where Joyce makes it explicit that he understands literature as nothing less than the affirmation of human life and thought. In the context of the Mangan essay, one senses that Joyce is troubled by the idea of how to rescue such an affirmation from romanticism, while preserving the conceptual intensity of romanticism. It is affirmation, also, that leads Joyce to adopt Nietzsche as an ironic patron philosopher in his early career, famously signing a 1904 postcard as “James Overman” [L 23] and allowing his literary avatar to be mocked as “toothless Kinch the superman” in *Ulysses* [U 27 & 64]. Nietzsche seems to have allowed Joyce to translate his most unfashionable opinion, the recovery of eternal affirmation from romanticism, towards a very fashionable source, while reaping rewards in the richness of irony allowed by associating himself with Nietzsche’s more literary work, specifically *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*<sup>131</sup>. This reaches a moment of sublime refinement in *Ulysses*, with Molly Bloom’s “Yes” [U 933], which seems to succeed in using affirmation as the gesture that unifies Joyce’s highest and basest instincts and intentions. Joyce has, perhaps, in that moment, proved that he can steal away affirmation from philosophical and romantic thought, in a Promethean act, and convince us that such eternal and iterative affirmation is the exclusive domain of literary arts.

However, Joyce’s closing of *Finnegans Wake* with what he described as “the weakest word in the English language” [JJ 712] might seem to retract or shrink away the role of affirmation *Ulysses*. It could even be taken to even suggest that Joyce no longer feels so intensely that literature is capable of such radical affirmation, an affirmation that breaks the boundaries of mortal finitude and temporally confined being. But this impression is deceptive. Indeed, it shows that Joyce’s practice of affirmation is, much like Nietzsche’s,

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<sup>131</sup> As a general comment, I can note here the uniquely ironic tone reserved for allusions Nietzsche in *Finnegans Wake*, especially in the references to Zarathustra’s eternal return in the lessons chapter, II.2 [FW 281].

inseparable from the issue of transvaluation. The “the” [FW 628] that belongs either to Anna ( $\Delta$ ) or to the novel itself, in the instant immediately preceding her disappearance into incoherent multiplicity, is in many ways the daybreak-word to Molly’s nightfall-word. That is, it is the site of the most open and generic transvaluation possible. Any noun may follow. As such, we might argue that Joyce’s affirmation is not simply the “yes”, but a dyad: the specificity of a “Yes”, that says yes to *this* man and *this* erotic encounter and the genericity of a “the”, which can be attached to any possible element of any possible world. To use a mathematical analogy, Joyce’s affirmations are *forced*<sup>132</sup>.

Joyce’s appropriation of Nietzsche in the years before *Ulysses* was still very much under the shadow of literary romanticism; therefore, an affirmation cannot be read as a simple affirmation of what is there or what is natural, but as an act or willing towards transvaluation, and an openness towards what might be transvaluated. Even on the very simplest of levels, one cannot say that Molly’s “yes” makes sense as a sincere affirmation if we consider that sexual relationship between her and Leopold has changed the evaluation of sexual difference, that is a change of values which implied in the repetition of the “yes”. The “yes” which affirms the evaluation of sexual difference when it functions as the acceptance of a proposal must necessarily, upon its iteration, transvaluate not only the affirmation but the affirmation and what is affirmed together in one gesture. To return to Derrida’s engagement in Joyce, I find it impossible to read his analysis of the “yes” in *Ulysses* [D&J, ‘Ulysses Gramophone’] as anything other than understanding that counter-signature is an act of transvaluation: as he argues against Gilbert’s identification of Molly as “the woman” with a list of concepts “Penelope, bed, flesh, earthy, monologue” [D&J 65]. The “yes” does not affirm in the sense of *confirming* that “woman” means the items on that (or any other) list, but it halts the interpretative process, temporally stalls the machinery of meaning, to allow the concepts to act or perform in ways *other to what they mean*. So, when one can say “sexual difference” is transvaluated by Molly’s “yes”, that is to say that meaning of that difference is evacuated, or that difference and meaning themselves have failed in the face of an instance or action which is beyond them both. Just as one might say that the “yes” of Molly to Leopold is so vastly important to both her and him that it is too important to retain a consistently interpretable meaning or a philosophically ratifiable difference.

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<sup>132</sup> This is a very weak analogy here because, I want to make this apt to both François Laruelle’s deployment of forcing [Laruelle, 2012] and Alain Badiou’s more well-known and precise ontological deployment of the notion in *Being and Event* [Badiou, 2006]. The significance here is the connection between forcing and generic thought, which is perhaps importantly a connection between weakness and generic sets.

Therefore, the ‘the’ of *Finnegans Wake* does not represent a retreat from affirmation, but an explication of the dependencies behind the ‘yes’, the extra-philosophical conditions allowing for transvaluations to take place. This is perhaps how an optimist, perhaps a socialist or a feminist, would read the ending of *Finnegans Wake*: not as a symbolisation of human as *verfallen*, as having tumbled into irrecoverable mor(t)al finitude, where the book simply repeats forever, but as *ricorso* in the sense that, although all things must return as they are, the prospect to find new value in the here and now is never brighter. Indeed, this is how Joyce wanted his book to be enjoyed: next time through, the jokes will still be funny but for different reasons.

So, it is to be expected that, rather than the absolute intensity of specificity that makes Molly’s “Yes” so emphatic, in *Finnegans Wake* Anna’s “the” is specificity at its most frail. It is a ‘the’ without a ‘this’, as Anna liberated from HCE moves forward to lose herself in incoherence and the hopes of meeting her father again. An explicit Nietzschean parallel with Anna’s “great blue bedroom” [FW 627] is to be found in the “Before Sunrise” chapter of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In this chapter, Zarathustra addresses himself to the “pure deep sky” and proclaims that “[its] height – is *my* depth! ... [its] purity – is *my* innocence!”. Anna will eventually see the sea as teaming with herself in the vastly multiple. In “Before Sunrise”, Zarathustra laments “They rob me of your Yes – they rob me of *my* Yes!” to the sky. Joyce’s before sunrise passages in *Finnegans Wake* depict Anna being robbed of her affirmative “yes”, which is just as due to her as it is to Molly Bloom. Perhaps, the process of *Finnegans Wake* is to recover Anna’s “yes” but, as it is a truly eternal affirmation, it is an interminable process.

Affirmation can be understood by putting three notions together. The first of these is to take seriously Joyce’s claim that he is able to write that which is transcendental, rather than transcendent, and that such is grounds for literature. Thus, possible experiences, such as speculations, dreams, memories, formal– structures, are just as game for a naturalistic literary technique as what appears to us as ordinary and direct experience. That is, there are some things that are not part of given, experiential life, that are nonetheless right to be included as part of normal life, and must surely be addressed by any literature that purports to be realist. The second is the notion of multiplicity as a central problematic for aesthetic or poetic work in the broadest sense. The next, and perhaps the most important, is that, if we are to consider that Joyce’s affirmation crosses the concrete and the universal, then it is a gesture of transvaluation.

I would argue that this is key to understanding Joyce's use of Nietzschean concepts. Joyce takes transvaluation without the baggage that comes with prioritising genealogy over rationality. To Joyce, particularly in *Finnegans Wake*, genealogy becomes a travesty: every possible word either has a super-abundance of potential genealogies, or it has none whatsoever. Or rather, since Joyce marks aesthetics as broadly independent from genealogy, the artist may use it, and use etymologies, anthropologies and historiographies to satisfy his encyclopedic ambitions, but he is not bound to it. One cannot take a genealogical view of literary or narrative aesthetics seriously and take *Finnegans Wake* seriously at the same time: it makes a mockery of the very ground that it stands upon. *Finnegans Wake* remains as affirmational as *Ulysses*, but problematically, as it stages a comic revenge of the rational and numerical against the genealogical.

This problem, in brief, is reflected in Joyce's appropriation of affirmation from Nietzsche. Joyce transposes yes-saying from a philosophical domain to an aesthetic gesture, which in turn captures an affirmation "yes I said yes I will Yes" [U 933] in the most unphilosophical of circumstances. However, this affirmation exists without a sense genealogy or perspectivism. It is resistant to context and perspective. Joyce's relationship to genealogy and perspective is both critical and tangential. We might see the model of genealogy as represented in *Finnegans Wake*, with the possibility of genealogical history of an idea which is ever-present but consistently undermined by the over-inflation of the genealogical roots of Joyce's neologisms. The "root language" [FW 424] of *Finnegans Wake* constantly suggests genealogical descent or the possibility of historicity tracing of a word's meaning, but the sheer number of possible genealogies drown the idea an actual "root" for any one word or phrase without utility, or even incoherent. At this point, genealogy tends either towards incoherent and unstable excess, or else towards void: either a word has an etymology so vast it is impossible to pin one genealogical root from another, or it stands alone in its instance, having never been used before and therefore standing isolated without a proper context from which to draw meaning. The flow of the personified river Anna Leafey in the final pages of *Finnegans Wake* does not go towards the death of a singular figure, but towards an inconclusivity between a vast uncountable multiplicity into which linguistic coherence dissolves, or to a void. Joyce's subversion of genealogy through Vichean travesties of natural etymologies perhaps demonstrates this tendency of words towards either *no* point of origin or *every* possible point of origin. Either way, contingency is absolutised at genealogy's ultimate expense because, in a certain sense, the ultimate Badiouian meta-ontological wager – that the



void holds identity, not with an empty nothingness, but with the inconsistent multiplicity beyond language – is a philosophical decision which is actively predicted or even hypothesised by Joyce’s aesthetic *indecision*.

Joyce’s Nietzsche is therefore a Nietzsche of the void: “Also Spuke Zerothruster” [FW 281]. Joyce suggests a Nietzsche of affirmation and transvaluation without the Nietzsche of genealogical or perspectival reductions whose philosophical ideas are as disregarded as his extra- or trans-philosophical ideals of transvaluation and affirmation are iterated by repeated mention in Joyce’s text.

But, how can one make sense of affirmation and transvaluation without genealogy? Does not seeing a piece of literature, not only as being beyond genealogy, but being actively corrosive to it, seem like I am saying that the whole business of academic study of literary work, what this present thesis is supposedly attempted, is all for naught? But there is a way out of this puzzle, and it lies neither with Derridean deconstruction nor Badiouian inaesthetic, but rather in how I would appropriate them.

This brings me to the third part of the ideational vocabulary of this thesis, that of non-philosophy, and the idea that one can study and discuss philosophical concepts as they work on the exterior of philosophy itself. This can be achieved by drawing upon transvaluation again, however, not on the transvaluation that Joyce knew, but the contemporary non-philosophical and realist transvaluations of François Laruelle. I think the below passage makes an excellent case for this:

Transvaluation of the transcendental method “thinks the method no longer according to its objects, but according to its essence (or the immanent rules of its becoming-transcendental). It attempts to deliver the *eidos* of the transcendental from its empiricist and formalist limitations by assigning it ‘reality’ as instance. [Laruelle, 2012].

Although Laruelle here is speaking of the transcendental method of critical, or post-Kantian, philosophy the transvaluation he describes is extremely well suited to any discussion or analysis of aesthetic transvaluation. They are both, after all, transvaluations not of objects or differences, but of methods. In particular, the clarifying notion of assigning “reality as instance” helps us get to the heart of Joyce’s realism in a way that a poststructuralist or a historicist critique would not be able to, without compromising the claim of realism by subordinating it to more general ideas about social forces and linguistic constructs. This is because, if one takes epiphany as a synecdoche for Joyce’s realism as a whole, epiphany

grasps reality, not as a totality or as a structure, or as a play of forces, but as instance and only instance. One might even say, epiphany apprehends reality as instance before that instance becomes *an* instance, before singularity is subordinated either to particularity or to specificity. Joyce's lifelong scepticism towards all of philosophy is perhaps best reflected in his belief that the artist, and only the artist, could apprehend life in its instance, so perhaps reading should be reformulated, as neither a theoretical frame, nor a hermeneutic interpretation or genealogical-genetic excavation, but rather as what it means to read the text as itself as an instance, and therefore as a dyad or doubled-instantiation or, to use language I have used elsewhere in this thesis, as a *one-effect*.

One might refer to this as Joyce's focus on the distinctiveness of the distinct before vocabularies of difference convert instance-in-the-singular into *an* instance. When we engage with Joyce's aesthetic gestures, with their notions of bounding lines and a "great part" of life outside of language, what we are perhaps dealing with is something unique to aesthetics, over which philosophy and human sciences have no purview whatsoever: what we might call distinctiveness-without-difference or the distinction-before-difference.

Here, I hope that the conceptual argument of this thesis is starting to become more apparent. I have been relying heavily on two philosophers who, in a sense, could be said to *absolutise* difference, either trivially in the case of Alain Badiou or non-trivially in the case of Derrida. For Badiou, difference is simply all that exists, due to each multiple being absolutely different from every other multiple prior to categorial ordering, due to his system assigning ZFC set theory as the discourse of Being and category theory as the discourse of appearance and existence. The absolute difference of everything that exists is a trivial ontological statement, it is tautological to say both "everything is a set" and that "everything is different". Such difference is absolute, since it is not moderated or diluted by identity: according to Badiou's application of the ZFC axiom of extensionality, a multiple is either identical to another or not; there is no 'more or less' degree of identity. For Derrida, the wager that everything is different enables us to understand the system of deferrals and 'telephony': the absoluteness is not of difference itself but of our obligations towards it; the endless absoluteness of our obligations to hospitality, understanding, re-interpretation, might be said to absolutise difference by absolutising our obligation to the wholly Other. In Derrida and Badiou, we see how the thought of absolute difference opens up to a contrast between the Void and the Altogether Other not only as metaphysical abstractions, but as thinkable elements or operators within situations.

However, for Joyce, reality in its unalloyed instance resists such a wholly philosophical judgement. The *concrete* is that which is *distinct* but which is not yet *different*. In order for it to be different, it has to already be drawn into some kind of philosophical discussion that would allow us to decide upon what kind of difference, or how something is different. These questions about difference and specific differences are fundamentally *philosophical* questions and not questions about the concrete itself: in this case, the concrete simply stands for the real-as-instance. Yet, these questions usurp and supplant the concern of the concrete, and those unhappy “big words” which Stephen fears [U 38]. More emphatically and crucially of all, we see it when Bloom opposes “force, hatred, history, all that” to “that [which is] really life” [U 432]. This is no simple anti-Platonism or a precursor to post-structuralist critiques of representation: Joyce is not simply dividing between things as they appear or as they are represented and how things are related, nor is he questioning the sense of such a division. What is happening in those affirmations of a universalist politics is the observation that something has not disguised or obscured what “is really life”, but has actively usurped its place. By using immediacy and difference, capital modes of thought have swooped into the world and posed as being more real than the real itself, thereby vacating the real of its conceptual nuance and vibrance and, more crucially, severing people in Dublin from the possibility of radical change. We might say that the illusion of *immediacy* over *instance* is a crucial part of Joyce’s depiction of this, that the true nature of the paralysis which has afflicted Dublin is in endless, inescapable rehearsals of givenness.

So, the aim of this thesis has never been to bring Joyce into the theoretical framing of first Badiou, then Derrida, and then compare and perhaps synthesise those two philosophical opposite numbers through Joyce’s text. Rather, it is to treat Joyce as a singularity, a black hole with an intense gravity well that can pull concepts towards itself. The aim is not to put Joyce on the interior of philosophy like Derrida’s Trojan horse, but to seduce concepts onto philosophy’s exterior. Joyce’s horse is an Irish horse, a seductive and charming Judeo-Irish Houyhnhnm<sup>133</sup> of transvaluation, rather than a penetrating and invasive Anglo-Greek warhorse.

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<sup>133</sup> The Houyhnhnm were the intelligent, peaceful horses from Swift’s *Gullivers Travellers* who are frequently referenced in *Finnegans Wake*: eg [FW 15] and [FW 272]. On the subject of difference and identity, it is perhaps worth noting that Joyce inaugurates the series of horse puns and references relative to Swift with the phrase “bornstable gentleman” [FW 10], a reference to Thackeray’s witticism “if Swift is an Irishman, then a man born in a stable is a horse”. Perhaps we are to infer from the longform wordgame that unfolds from here, that the Irish are more horse than man a specific, Swiftian, sense? Perhaps one could take the opportunity to extend Joyce’s

Joyce's earliest writing prioritises clarity and directness. From his personal comments on literature (to his brother and his publisher), he seems to argue constantly that the artistic gesture consists in minimality. This minimality is a kind of epistemic minimality: the writer must change things in order to work the miracle of *esthetic* transubstantiation, but those changes should be as minimal as possible. In other words, the more minimal the change, the more radical the gesture and the most radical the gesture, the more likely it is that the product of an *esthetic* gesture is a form of life in itself, rather than simply being about, or representative of, life.

What is most striking about Joyce's view of art is its consistency. It is rock solid and, having tried to look for fault lines between its definitions and axioms, there is nothing paradoxical about Joyce's *esthetic* in terms of grammar and concept. This, in itself, is highly suggestive that Joyce's early claim to be writing a philosophical work on aesthetics [L 18] should be taken somewhat seriously.

However, while one cannot fault Joyce's aesthetic philosophy for its coherence, his attempts to practice in accordance to his intellectual postures seems anything but coherent. If the aesthetic philosophy Joyce refers to as 'my *esthetic*' (I use his spelling to denote when it is specifically his ideas I am discussing) provided him with a technical vocabulary, that understanding did not come pre-packaged with any stylistic or formal inventions to which Joyce could put his wholly philosophical and technical insights to work. Once applied to life, the unproblematic coherence of Joyce's outlook begins to falter dramatically, and this faltering is best shown by the early need to supplement Aquinas with a litany of other names, most notably Lessing. Even as Stephen Dedalus presents Aquinas' erudite Aristotelianism as the be-all and end-all of a theory of beauty, Joyce himself is chopping and changing behind the scenes. So, it is as much as a fiction as Simon Dedalus is to John Joyce. Fictionalisation of philosophical concepts is a Promethean task, and it radicalises Joyce's claim to artistic autonomy, because it suggests that even the thought of aesthetics itself can be apprehended by aesthetic gestures and deployed towards aesthetic, rather than philosophical, ends.

But, this Promethean theft of concept from philosophy does not solve the central issue that Joyce's work begins to grapple with during the revision of his early short stories into *Dubliners* and *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait*. Namely, Joyce's work seems to discover that there is no level of human life that provides an artist with the epistemic or categorial givens

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joke, and coin the term 'Trojan Houyhnhnm' to describe the commonality Joyce seems to be drawing between Irish intellectuals including himself.

from which he is able to create works that reflect life as it is lived. But neither is there a non-representational space open, where the artist may simply, and directly, create a form of life from aggregates of life itself, without conceptual mediation. In short, Joyce's work is accomplished under the shadow of the seemingly unavoidable fact that the present moment, the eternal now through which all things pass, is not simply given by the virtue of lived-experience or intellection, but actively constructed. There is some secret analogy, not between the artist and God, but between the artists and the now: the same now which he intends to capture is being manufactured in that capturing.

Joyce's work, therefore, could be said to orbit a certain combination of constructivism, perspectivism and nominalism, while defecting radically from them when it comes to making the minimal gestures he identifies with aesthetic transubstantiation. This is a very difficult thing for a reader to consider. In a previous chapter of this thesis, I argued that one of the chief challenges that Joyce's work poses to the reader is to think that which is neither relation nor non-relational. I grant that this seems extremely abstract. But, in this chapter, I will explain exactly what I mean by "neither relational nor non-relational".

### *Intimacies and Vocabularies.*

Up until this point, I have been discussing Joyce amongst philosophers. To an extent, the guiding metaphor has been Rabaté's notion of Derrida's encounter with Joyce's texts as the introduction of a "dangerous trojan horse" into philosophy, which will "thus give name to a sort of antiphilosophy that traverses philosophy and makes it shudder or stutter" [D&J 293]. But to an extent, it is not deconstruction that introduces this trojan horse itself. Joyce's work, in itself, in its own 'perfumativity', constitutes such an infection. Joyce's Dublin is a world that is cowed under the ascent of philosophy as, to use a phrase of Françoise Laruelle's, a "capital mode of thought" [Laruelle, 2012] wherein individuals are obliged or compelled to philosophise. One might mention, for example, the recurrent dialectical or argumentative style used for interpersonal interactions throughout *Ulysses*. But, it is also a world where philosophy has become impoverished, where institutional Christianity, Empire and market capitalism have eroded or hollowed conceptuality and reason as manners of engagement with the world. Whether it is Stephen to Deasy or Leopold to Molly, *Ulysses* is full of situations where philosophical discussion or explication appears obligatory, and Joyce's characters react

to this imperative with thought and discourse attempting to, in however minor ways, enrich what is at times an impoverished conceptual vocabulary.

The fact that I read interpersonal exchanges in *Ulysses* as always subtending a collective conceptual enrichment (or enrichment of concepts) means that I am not concerned with the question of Joyce as an *antiphilosopher*, if we think of an antiphilosopher as one who mobilizes linguistics or logic in order to delimit the philosopher's power from the inside for the benefit of a practice. However, this is not to say that there is no room to see Joyce this way: one can definitely read long passages of Joyce, such as Stephen's explanation of the epiphany, his theory on Shakespeare or the dialectical passages from *Finnegans Wake*, as aesthetics smuggled into the bosom of philosophy, where aesthetic gesture deploys language and symbolic grammar in order to score out the limitations of philosophy from contextual interior of philosophy's own conceptual vocabulary.

However, this is not my concern. My concern is not Joyce as he is *against* philosophy, but just as his writings are *without* philosophy. As such, this requires an engagement with a most Joycean of entity: a philosophical concept that occurs stripped of the philosophical structure in which it might belong. Joyce's frequent, perhaps incessant, introduction of new pieces of conceptual vocabulary through all of his work, is a constant preoccupation with concepts not as subject for debate but as they are put to work in very ordinary thinking and doing. In *Dubliners*, 'The Sisters' very first paragraph contains a famous litany of abstract concepts [D 1], that reflects this tendency perfectly: those boring words from a school book are reinvigorated because some new, extremely personal use has been found for them.

If previous discussions in this thesis have often discussed Joyce from, as it were, the interior of philosophy, once the Joyce-virus has made its initial infection and began iterating itself, then here I acknowledge the great limitation of doing this, if the goal of the thesis is to provide a reading of the workings of universals within Joyce's work. So, like the journey of Shaun the Post in *Finnegans Wake*, we must put time in reverse, back up the horse and examine it as it was before it entered the gates of Troy. I have returned to the opening of 'The Sisters' so often, and will continue to do so, because it features a "goodridhirring" [FW 7], Joyce's finest and most instructive red herring, which is to say, the narrator's use of the word "word" to himself to describe something other than a written word.

Those who have enjoyed Derrida's "*Le Pharmacie de Platon*" [1969], in particular its subtle but present allusions to Joyce's works, may have a good idea of the game that Joyce is

playing with in the litany, since it is very definitely not words, but the vocal sounds of speech in its materiality, which is so important to the narrator. There are no written words involved in the passage at all, no act of reading or writing. This perhaps has a very precise narrative function, as it provokes the question of which voice has originally said those words to the narrator. This voice has been teaching him things beyond the rote learning of his school books, and, in its absence, it is more potent than the present text. It is this absent voice that counter-signs for the otherwise disconnected registers of the narrative's inner voice, in which he says the italicised words before voicing them aloud, and the manifest narrative voice which communicates the litany to the reader on the page.

So, the word 'word' in this paragraph is a red herring: it is speech and vocalisation rather than written words which fill the boy with such remarkable thoughts and strong emotions. But is also a "goodridhirring" in another sense. The boy has not been changing the meanings of words in his head, and he has not simply been imagining that one word might mean or define otherwise to how it means or defines according to authority figures in his life. He has been mentally changing *how* the word means or defines. Unbeknownst to himself, our narrator is a genius. Perhaps Joyce did not stop to consider that not every child with a Catholic education in Dublin was as brilliant as him when it came to the working of language. The boy has had concerns with the difference between definitions, nouns and proper names. The uncanniness of the feeling expressed by the paragraph might be, in part, accounted for by the illicitness of this act. In Catholic education, one would have learned by catechism and repetition, to associate *one* word with its sole exclusive meaning. The boy's thoughts transgress such a reduction: it is not *what* things mean but *how* they mean that concerns him. It is an uneasy thought, as he has departed from the surety of fixed meanings to the malleability of concepts and their eidetic manifestation.

Therefore, this very first paragraph demonstrates how concepts and conceptuality are at the heart of Joyce's realism, since a focus on conceptuality subtends an account of concrete appearances and experiences, where one might perhaps have expected a focus upon affectivity and the immediacy of perception. But this is not all. It is not only concepts, but concepts being put to new usages, and being fictionalised - the first paragraph of 'The Sisters' may be called a double fiction, consisting in the minor fiction that the narrator finds within the concepts, and the major fiction in which the events are narrated.

What should be insisted on, in "The Sisters", is the implicit challenge that Joyce's text makes to the reader. We are not to reduce a *vocabulary of concepts* to a simple *vocabulary*. If

one does, one cannot see the conceptual work that the narrative voice is doing. The voice is not merely speaking of ideas and experiences, meanings and things, but is the process through which an individual actively conceptualises and reconceptualises what occurs to him. There is no ground of givenness from which the narrator of 'The Sisters' can make sense of the incidents which have unfolded. The action here might be seen to mirror what Freudian studies refer to as repressions. But, perhaps we might say that it is not Freudian repression that sees some desires and impulses permitted entrance into the conscious mind, while some are not. Instead, we can speak of a Joycean operation of repression, a non-Freudian notion, which does not consist in preventing a desire's entry into the conscious mind, but instead consists of the conscious mind breaking a *conceptual vocabulary* from a simple *vocabulary*. The similarity occurs in where the link between vocabulary and simplicity is maintained, and where a reduction takes place. The mechanism or instrument of such a repression is shown in the text itself as the boy "said softly to [himself]" and lingered upon their sounds and potential secret meanings. As the boy stands on the darkened street, he thinks not of idle words, but of what it is to think of words as idle, and the conceptuality of the language he is acquiring seems to disperse and fade into a world which full of secret and half-disclosed meanings.

I do not mean to use the word "concept" here as a stand-in for the idea of a mental object or mental impression of a real object, but "concept" in the fullest philosophical sense of the word. Joyce never (even though the mediation of immature or ignorant personae), uses concepts in a deflated or reduced sense. We can see this inner tension in the boy's thoughts and linguistic choices, which seems struggle between a *vocabulary* – a set of words with definitions, semantic domains, ideas and meanings – and a *vocabulary of concepts*, in which words stand for or are part of concepts which are his tools for comprehending and reasoning with the world about him. Rules, axioms, categories, are the means with which to make comparisons, the means to judge whether a rule is followed or not. In order to read 'The Sisters' in a way that really does justice to the text as it is written, the reader themselves must avoid the temptation of repression in this Joycean sense, which would be to fail to take the boy's conceptual thinking as it is presented to us. Joyce invites us to understand the grief and frustration of the boy by allowing us to see how his mind both fails and succeeds in passing from thinking *about* concepts to thinking *with* concepts. His temptation towards auto-repression is also the temptation of the reader. If we read the opening of the story and think that the boy is simply listing words, thinking *about* the words *for* the concepts he wishes to



learn to use rather than the concepts themselves, we will fail to understand him insofar as we will be wilfully ignoring his attempts and failures to use those concepts. We will not understand the sharpness of his precocious intellect or sense the mechanism of repression which is thwarting his ability to communicate to himself.

Concepts are the sites of the most profound intimacy in Joyce. Rather than an intimacy between the intellect and experience, or between a notion of self-identity and social identity, or between narrative time and the experience of time, concepts are the most intimate point in thinking because they stand, in a sense, for all intimacies in as much as each concept is a possible intimacy before it is even an idea. They arrive in what is generic and ordinary in thinking. In a world without primordial or given affinities, conceptual games and play enact intimacy in the intellect. We can say that conceptuality given in this way is a larval autonomy.

As Nietzsche once described maturity as the rediscovery in adulthood of “seriousness that one had in play as a child” [Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*], there is a conceptual dimension of that here: to play with concepts is to think with concepts, rather than just about them, play is the most serious form of thinking. The threshold of maturity upon which the boy stands is, therefore, between thinking about concepts and thinking with concepts, as the latter is a form of serious play. This play subtly encompasses the whole text: the activity of reading becomes less of a matter of spectatorship and more of an involved play.

As an example of conceptual play, one might take the use of the word “silence” in the following passage from ‘The Sisters’ as an example: “Silence took possession of the little room and, under cover of it, I approach the table and tasted my sherry” [D 9] and then the use of the phrase “break the silence” shortly after. Here, the word “silence” appears twice, firstly in a novel or poetic form “silence took possession” and then in a common cliché “break the silence”. Silence is a word that one may think has a given empirical or perceptual basis from which it is inextricable. One does not have to conceptualise silence: it is there in the background to experience and one is born into it. Joyce’s conceptual play here rids us this particular instance of the myth of the given<sup>134</sup>: he subtly introduces a highly conceptualised, perhaps errant, usage of the word and then follows its use in a cliché. What is significant in this passage is not the usage of words but the usage of concept. Silence, a word whose meaning may be assuredly given, is vitalised by severance from givenness. The silence which can “take possession” of a room is not the same silence that occurs when all becomes quiet. It

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<sup>134</sup> This will be defined in chapter six.

is a part of the conceptual metastructure which the boy's narration has unfolded to us, that includes such beingless beings as the "maleficent and sinful being" named paralysis and the "heavy grey face of the paralytic".

A face without the perception of a face is not simply the idea (in the sense of an impression) of a face, or a representative of the category of facelike things, but something that obeys the rules of being a face without empirical presence. The concept of silence is gamelike twice over: it imposes its own rules and criteria of being silence, but it is also subject to the gamelike structure in which it must be understood as silence and not as an erroneous sense of the word. There is a distinction, always, in Joyce between errant usages of concepts and erroneous usages of words. In *Ulysses*, might compare, "metempsychosis" with its errant usage and "throwaway", not only as exemplary of this distinction. As a conceptual manoeuvre itself, it teaches the reader of *Ulysses* how to distinguish between what one might call conceptual errancy and an erroneous use of a word. The richness and complexity opened up by this distinction first occurs in *Ulysses*, but it blossoms wildly throughout *Finnegans Wake* to the extent that it is impossible to pick a single citation of it as an example, one can only cite *Finnegans Wake* itself as a whole. But this distinction is also my chief criticism to deconstruction's engagement with Joyce. Even though one can rarely disagree with deconstruction's insights on Joyce's use of language, language is only ever half of the story. Almost everything true of language is mimicked or mirrored at the level of the concept, and thus upon the real itself which is presupposed in and by any and all acts of conceptual play: the use of the vocabulary I am attempting to establish with this thesis, between *vocabularies of concepts* and *one-effects*. Or, the representational games that one may play between *minor fictions* and instances of *minor conceptuality*.

To return to the parallel with Freudian repression, we can say that, if Joyce's dreams follow the idea of the "return of the repressed" in the psychoanalytical sense, there is a return of the repressed in a conceptual sense – that is, a reunion of vocabulary with vocabulary of concepts. Or, one might say, the re-dyad-ification of conceptual space under the gamelike or playlike conditions enabled by dream and partially conscious thought.

The words for concepts, their usage, sound and action are subject to genealogy, but concepts themselves will always be partially free of genealogical descendents. The touch of the imagination that enables "repression" (in the sense I have used it above) also enables the escape of capture by context.

While the narrative voice confesses of the word paralysis that “I longed to be nearer to it and look upon its deadly work” [D, 1], it is the impression that is through developing this conceptual vocabulary, the voice will go beyond himself. It is a sense that there is more here than simply words, meanings and lived-experience. That is, the narrator’s fear can in a sense be understood as the realisation that his thought is already ahead of himself – he experiences thinking as getting outside of himself, his language, his body and its affects, into the surrounding darkness of the world, and conceptualising is his minds to this. There is a very heavy irony when Old Cotter says that boys should “run about and play” <sup>135</sup> [D, 2] as the boy’s distress is because he is outside – beyond himself and his limits, with death as a figure of the great outside into which he is both compelled and drawn.

Joyce’s unwillingness to reduce the boy’s thinking to a triad of experiences, meanings and words is what gives the story its claim to a realism that goes beyond realism as the conventions of a certain literary genre. The triad of body-experience-meaning is disrupted by another faculty, pushing the boy both inwardly and outwardly, a faculty whose purpose is concept and by play. This all serves to lead us back from the notion of play towards critiques and givenness. The next chapter will, therefore, need to give a much more precise critique of givenness, as well as a demonstration of how Joyce’s writing simulates that givenness in its textual operations. Additionally, as mentioned in my introduction, the following chapter will function as a kind of ‘auto-demonstration’ of the transvaluations in the methodology of this thesis.

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<sup>135</sup> It is worth noting the irony of the word “play” being used here, as play has a non-metaphorical and non-analogical value in describing the exact kind of conceptual thinking that the narrator is doing. The use of games as a descriptor for conceptual work in rationalist philosophies, the discourse on “spiel” in hermeneutic approaches and Nietzsche’s claim that maturity was simply the rediscovery of the “seriousness that one had in play as a child”. In a plurality of senses, “play” is exactly what the narrator has been doing, but in a way those adults who ignore his cognitive development have ignored.

## CHAPTER 7: 'THE MYTH OF THE GIVEN' AND NARRATIVE

### *The Sea Hag and The Swamp Man: Resurrection and Exteriority at the Delta*

The final passage of *Finnegans Wake* resembles the final episode of *Ulysses*, insofar as it is (to paraphrase Derrida<sup>136</sup>) a monologue which is not a monologue. Joyce's notes suggest that the passage is partly inspired as a parody of Heraclitus: as no one crosses the same river twice, here, no one bathes in the same bath twice. The voice addressing the reader, "I am leafy speafing" ("I am Liffey speaking") [FW 619], originally seems to come from a collection of flotsam floating upon the river Liffey, notably a collection of leaves that dwindle in number across the passage until, on the final page, only "one clings" still. Identified with the long hair of Anna Livia Plurabelle in her youth, the younger voice identifying itself as "leafy" (both the name of the river and an adjective), whose speech is energetic and light, contrasts with the exhausted and halting monologue of Anna. The two voices differ by varying degrees, and are fluid to the point where the more childish voice is absorbed into the older voice entirely as a memory ("I'm getting mixed"). The fragments of the increasingly vestigial "Leafy" elements become more childish and immature than youthful as Anna becomes ever more halting and exhausted. At the end of the passage, and the end of *Finnegans Wake* itself, it is difficult to say if the immature voice who exclaims "carry me along, taddy"<sup>137</sup>, is only the memory of the mature voice that remembers being "a pet of everyone then. A princeable girl" [FW 626], or whether the phrases from Joyce's own life<sup>138</sup> belong to one, the other, both or neither.

As such, monologue provides a dual metaphor for literary assemblage: the assembly of leaves and junk floating on the river, but also the fact that the "monologue" is divided into

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<sup>136</sup> Here, Derrida is talking about Molly Bloom's monologue in *Ulysses*, and says to call it a monologue is "somnambulistic careless" [D&J 65].

<sup>137</sup> This phrase is said in all three voices: Leafy, towards her father and Anna, in recollection or anticipation of rejoining her father, and also Joyce himself. According to Ellman, the phrase is a memory of the author carrying his son George through a toy fair in Trieste because he could not buy him a rocking horse [JJ 712]. While Ellman's influential analysis of the closing passage does not distinguish between a younger and an older voice, he does see the version of Anna Livia Plurabelle presented here as tripartite: "Anna Livia is the Liffey, as well as the human heroine, and Joyce..." [Ibid]

<sup>138</sup> Such as "is there one who understands me?" [FW 627], an allusion to Joyce's refusal to Yeats. According to McHugh's *Annotations*, "If I goes, all goes" is an allusion to Yeats quoting Dante to Joyce: if "I go, who remains? If I remain, who goes?" Joyce refused to join the Irish Academy of Letters at Yeats' request.

several voices of varying distinctiveness. True to the metaphor of detritus carried by a river, the variety in the passage diminishes as it flows towards the end, and the river itself takes more and more prominence in both the style and the context of the passage. The focus shifts from what is carried by the river to the river itself; the “leafy” voice introducing it loses ever more autonomy and distinctiveness, eventually becoming absorbed into the elderly voice we could associate with Anna Livia Plurabelle, or with an ageing personification of the river Liffey. The authorial-autobiographical aspect of the colloquial fades from prominence while the younger voice fades into memory and merges into its older counterpart, in an arrangement that formally seems to reflect the delta hieroglyph, or siglum ( $\Delta$ ), which Joyce uses to designate the Liffey and Anna Livia Plurabelle.

The voice introducing itself as “I am Leafy speafing” operates as something of a marker between the middle-aged and masculine autobiographical, and the aged feminine voice that is jointly identified with A figures and the book itself. The aged feminine voice is distinguished within the piece through a marked difference between the autobiographical phrases and its own halting and punctual style. It might be said that this passage gives two potential views of the book: the one view is the clearest possible view of the book from the inside, with the “big blue bedroom” of Anna as the full and clear expanse of the sea and sky as she moves forward, explicitly stating incidents and views; the other view from the exterior, with the autobiographical voice providing contextualising remarks that are, perhaps, noticeably distinct from the autobiographical allusions found elsewhere. They can, for example, be contrasted with the use of autobiographical detail in the much earlier “Shem the Penman” chapter. The childish and immature Leafy, on the other hand, prevents us from distinguishing between a view from the interior and a view from exterior and, instead, we must say that the passage is heavily suggestive of two such views, the possibility of their direct presentation being foreclosed by Leafy’s entanglement with Anna. Anna becomes merged with the impersonal autobiographical remarks, in such a way that eventually makes them impossible to distinguish as artefacts from the outside the book. It would be far too neat and reductive to say that Leafy is Anna’s faded memory of herself, and the experience of herself as another. Rather, Leafy is the voice of the subjectivising obscurity that prevents the passage from ever resting into a neatly relational schema between I and Other I. The fact that we have the voice of James Joyce himself in the very same passage, perhaps in a more clear-cut form than in almost any of his other published works, contorts the question even further:

rather than an auto-interpretative extension towards alterity, the machinery of meaning-making is directed at muddying the notion of the Same.

The distinction between the two views can also be thought of in terms of genre. The influence of theatre or performance is perhaps evidenced in how the words seem meant to be spoken aloud, with precious punctuation and obvious phrasing, and Anna, who references being confined (and possibly unable to move) in bed. In fact, her confinement seems to anticipate or, at least, to signal, later Beckett pieces for television and theatre: Joyce's disembodied voice and silent body seem theatrical in a way that recalls *Rockaby* and *Eh Joe*. Anna's voice, with its rising and halting rhythms and the liquid texture of its consonants and windy, exhaled vowels lends itself to be read on radio or stage. It is a good example of the popular Irish adage that one cannot read *Finnegans Wake*, as it only makes sense if spoken aloud with the appropriate accent. Leafy, on the other hand, even if one disregards the connection between leaves and pages, is very definitely associated with the written word. The "lsp" and "lps" [FW 619] suggest the book's motif of Swift's letters to Stella, along with the use of exclamation points, listed events, and memories. Another element at work is autobiography, with surprisingly direct and unmodified inclusions of things which are unmistakably Joyce's own voice, or images of Joyce's life. These include statements that are now famous such as Joyce's question to Nora Barnacle "is there one who understands me?" [FW 627] and the phrase "one thousand years of the nights", which refer to what Joyce called the eternal night of the tortuous process of writing *Finnegans Wake* during his own illness and his daughter Lucia's increasing mental fragility.

This playing of influences is the result of Joyce's use of the familiar "cluster" technique, described by genetic critics, who show how Joyce exploits details from specific secondary sources or texts in close proximity creating a *matrioshka* effect, where the older voice contains the younger voice, and is itself interior to the memories disclosed at the authorial reference points. The leaves that are carried by the Liffey are the leaves of *Finnegans Wake* itself and, as the Liffey carries these pages, the latter carry their content, which is Joyce's own life. The multiplicity of the Liffey is without oneness or specificity, providing the basis for the becoming of a multiplicity of specific individual items (the leaves), which are the raw material in which Joyce writes his life. A horizontal slice through the text shows life as an assembly of specific things while a vertical slice shows how "specificity" itself is produced in the meta-structure of advancing and successive ensembles.

There is an instruction contrast at work. In *Ulysses*, the site of the occurrences of the “oneself as another” theme are typically memory and recollection (even if it is re-collecting something sent to oneself, like a telegram). However, in *Finnegans Wake*, one may argue that Joyce made an epistemological shift in his understanding of “memory”, moving from a purely personal and perspectival artefact of individual psychology, towards a Vichian idea of memory as imagination<sup>139</sup> and towards Plato’s notion of that all knowledge is memory. *Ulysses* betrays a scepticism towards philosophical inquiry on memory, particularly in the ‘Scylla and Carybdis’ episode, where it sometimes seems as if Stephen Dedalus conjoins a contempt for forms of mysticism such as theosophy, with a contempt towards abstract philosophy in general. This is further in evidence in ‘Wandering Rocks’, where the Akashic record, that is the occult notion of the eternal memory “of all that ever anywhere wherever was” [U 182] become associated with the impotency of rhetoric, chatter and “dead noise”. By contrast, we see Bloom’s more scientific or deductive speculations on the topic of memory being often entertained, however absurd or incorrect. Joyce’s confrontation between an intuitive and a scientific view of memory and recognition in *Ulysses* often circumvents or steps aside from philosophical issues, which become re-included, via Vico, in *Finnegans Wake*. In *Ulysses*, it is often enough to show that memory and language are interrelated. But, in *Finnegans Wake*, the grounds of that interrelation become compositionally important. I now propose to develop this point by examining the text in detail.

The “memory” of Leafy is interpersonal, or even transhumanistic. The records recorded on the leaves must stand both for personal memory and for memory as collective imagination or rediscovered knowledge. It must also stand for the imaginative creative processes that deliberately obscure the distinctions between experience of memory and memories of experience. Yet the memory of the leaves must also mean the simulation of memory assembled by the leaves in their instantaneous constellation, a kind of Joycean version of a “Boltzmann Brain”<sup>140</sup>. Leafy both has memories, and is memory, a voice coming from the constellation of the memories of another. This returns us to the difficult and obscure relationship between Joyce and the question of “oneself as another”, in a sense the same hermeneutic problem that arises from the notion of resurrection. The distinction here is the

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<sup>139</sup> See Verene’s *James Joyce and the Philosophers at Finnegans Wake* [Verene, 2016].

<sup>140</sup> A ‘Boltzmann Brain’ refers to a thought experiment where one imagines that, given an infinite space and infinite time, atoms could come together in the void to form a fully-functioning human brain for an instant and only for an instant. The relevance here is that there is vastly more potential for Leafy’s assemblages of memory to arise by sheer chance, contingently, than there is for authentic memories to exist in the mind of one who remembers. The memories that constitute the “Leafy”, the merger of Anna Livia and James Joyce, are perhaps only one possibility amongst the infinite constellations that the Liffey might be carrying.

subtle difference between *recollection* and *recognition*. This subtle semantic distinction between recollecting and recognising becomes a widened gulf, through which Anna/Leafy's anxiety flows, recollection being the regaining of something that has been given, but has now been lost, and recognition being the rethinking of that which has been previously thought.

The voice of the final pages appears to be someone who is very, very old and waiting in "my great big blue bedroom" [FW 627], hoping she will "slip away before they're up". When she remembers, "Where you meet I. The day. Remember!" it is "meet" and not "met", giving the double meaning of nighttime sleepers waking and meeting in daylight, but also of the re-encounter of the unique moment where two people met. The voice of Anna/Liffey speaks from extremes: extreme youth, extreme grief, extreme old age, the moment of extreme change of an amorous encounter. In these extremes, ironically, there is a polarity between the multiplicity and the "moananoaning" [FW 628] or the monotony of the sea, what a modern reader would call white noise: "I'm getting mixed. Brightening up and tightening down" [FW 627].

The imagery of the final pages of *Finnegans Wake* is full of what might be considered to be a very conventional and traditional Catholic iconography regarding resurrection. Although the final Book of IV is one of the sections boasting complex digressions into theological lore and philosophical debate, the monologue of "Leafy" has, in some sense, been purified from that specific type of erudition. It is free of the comedic muddling of profound and superficial intellectual allusions, that is so typical of *Finnegans Wake*. In a sense, Anna/Leafy's pages are notably free of one of the most prominent stylistic attributes of *Finnegans Wake*, with the "voice" of Leafy referring to itself as if it were the final pages of the book speaking directly to the reader. In being free of this, it is notable how implicit the idea of resurrection becomes, losing its specificity to Catholic doctrine, and becoming a more general question concerning formation of certain apprehension of the world from a certain subjective position. As the leaves disperse, epistemological concerns are trimmed away from subjective concerns, and the question of resurrection becomes, not a question of knowing oneself again or of recognition of oneself in others, but a question of persistence, in the very absence of these things.

The voice of the final pages, through childhood memories, perhaps ponders the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as many Catholics have. The tone is marked by things relating to a first brush with many philosophical issues regarding personal identity and selfhood, the encounter of such ideas before one has been educated into the intellectual



framework which ideas inhabit. Although the older voice comes to dominate the passage more and more, the chapter conclusion has a sense of Anna's aged recollection of herself through a child's first encounter with philosophical or theological issues, standing with her parents in Church. Any certainty in the voice is drowned out by Anna's fear, as she professes that she is about to rejoin her father and her family. The passage contains many allusions to Catholic beliefs in an afterlife, but the focus is primarily on the imagery used to illustrate such beliefs ("whitespread wings" and "Arkangles" [FW 628]), which are simple yet overawing, as if seen not from a child's perspective, but from the memory of that perspective. The issues raised by Anna/Leafy reflect the real anxieties provoked by abstract philosophical concepts and filtered Catholic narratives of resurrection: if my body is physically resurrected, how can I be sure it is really me? Is an exact physical or material duplicate enough? But one does not need to reach towards particular religious elements to see the problem of selfhood and resurrection contained here. Questions of concreteness and epistemology cannot solve these questions. Joyce makes extremes meet with those juvenile first inklings of the paradoxes of self, and threads them through to the emblems of their adult complexities, as if the *ricorso* of history were something like a Poincaré recursion, or Nietzsche's eternal return. Will the resurrected person be a meme, a memory, or really me? Or, can we read the Leafy voice, being a clone or a duplication, as something close to Donald Davidson's Swampman<sup>141</sup>: whose thought experiment as the question of, if the epistemic relationships I had with others constituted who I am, then surely a resurrected version of myself would be an unthinking stranger in my place.

Davidson's Swampman thought experiment involves the idea that one is obliterated, and an exact copy is instantaneously made. I would argue that *Finnegans Wake* conducts this same thought experiment, multiple times. The original wording of the experiment is in Davidson's paper "Knowing One's Mind", and runs as follows:

Suppose lightning strikes a dead tree in a swamp; I am standing nearby. My body is reduced to its elements, while entirely by coincidence (and out of different molecules) the tree is turned into my physical replica. My replica, The Swampman, moves exactly as I did; according to its nature it departs the swamp, encounters and seems to recognize my friends, and appears to return their greetings in English. It moves into my house and seems to write articles on radical interpretation. No one can tell the difference. But there is a difference. My replica can't recognize my friends; it can't recognize anything, since it never cognized anything in the first place. It can't know my friends' names (though of course it seems to), it can't remember my house. It can't mean what I do by the word 'house', for example, since the sound 'house' it makes

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<sup>141</sup> See citation below.

was not learned in a context that would give it the right meaning – or any meaning at all. Indeed, I don't see how my replica can be said to mean anything by the sounds it makes, nor to have any thoughts. [Davidson, 2001: 17]

There are many resemblances between Davidson's Swampman and the figures in *Finnegans Wake*. Most importantly, in the Anna/Leafy passage, the resemblance lies in the impression that the voice conceives of the Christian promise of resurrection, not as ego-persistence, but as the possibility of recognising others again in the future. There is a distinction to be made, in that Davidson's thought experiment focuses on the idea of the replica as a copy which lacks the causal history of, and thus continuity to, the original. But, in *Finnegans Wake*, the focus is on the origin as a composition. That is, Joyce has replaced the issue of creation with contingent composition, and identity with counting-for-one. Rather than being created by a divine figure as whole, irreducible unities or eternal souls, the figures of *Finnegans Wake* are assembled from the material of their surroundings. They lack identity and definition, to the extent that identity and definition can be used to create something as an irreducible whole. This is true in a more metaphorical sense, where Joyce elaborates on his use of biographical and autobiographical details in order to assemble a fictional figure from facts about real persons. For example, Anna Livia Plurabelle contains Livia Schmitz, Nora Barnacle, May Joyce and Joyce himself. But it is also true in the very literal sense that the fractionalised "hybrid" [FW 169] Shem seems to be partly composed of bits of rubbish from his cluttered apartment. HCE is embedded in the landscape and monuments of Dublin, his body composed of its geographical features. And, as we have seen Tim Finnegan is his own building and his own wake. Yawn is one with the mountain in which he sleeps<sup>142</sup> [FW 474] and Anna/Leafy is composed of the sound of the Liffey and can also be read as the dance and motion of leaves and detritus tracing patterns on the route to the sea. Rather than divinely created, irreducible wholes animated by the structure of a similarly-created world, everything is reducible in all directions: collections of collections and sets of sets. In this world of multiplicities of multiplicities, the creation of individuals is not *ex nihilo*, but simply is what lends local consistency to figures. It is tempting here to say that Joyce's extremely radical aesthetics drives him to a position exactly contrary to Davidson's: since it is Joyce who deflates the importance of the exteriors of language, meaning and interpretation. Therefore, the reason for the similarity between Joyce's figures in *Finnegans Wake* and the Swampman is that Joyce sees *everyone* as a Swamp-person. There are never any *original* subjects and there are no

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<sup>142</sup> The relevant passage does not decide whether Yawn is inside (in a "molehill") or outside (on the "mountain"). As it develops, the suggestion is that Yawn is the voice of the middenheap itself, and therefore the voice of the conglomeration and sedimentation of history.

*originary* circumstances or utterances through which notions like “the right meaning” can make sense. In III.3, when the four masters angrily protest - “come now Johnny, we weren’t born yesterday” [FW 521] to □/Yawn, perhaps the implication is, contrary to the chapter’s account of the creation and fall of humanity, that we all were born yesterday. This is the paradoxical conclusion of Joyce subsuming so thoroughly a historicist epistemology as Vico’s in an aesthetic system. In the cycle-wheeling history of ascension and descension, we might as well have been born yesterday.

The further relevance of citing Davidson’s thought experiment here is that it summarises the anxiety around the notion of resurrection. The thought experiment is based on a view of epistemological exteriority: if Davidson has gone, but his replica has returned, when that replica claims to know this, is that claim accurate? After all, the things the knowledge-claims relate to involve Davidson and not his replica. It was not the replica that saw things early in the morning, but Davidson himself. This is evidenced when the Swampman claims to be able to recognise Davidson’s friends: “But there is a difference. My replica can’t recognize my friends; it can’t recognize anything, since it never *cognized* anything in the first place” [Davidson, 2001:19].

Behind Anna/Leafy’s anxiety, there is something tragic about this prospect of resurrection without real recognition, since Anna/Leafy feels “carried” by the people around her. Any absence of authentic recognition would be invisible to the reader or viewer, just as the Swampman would appear to know the names of his friends, but would not actually *know* them in the sense of recognising them. The preservation of a sense of identity is not the same as the preservation of identity, and neither one is a matter of immortality so much as the persistence of a categorial<sup>143</sup> network exterior to the agent who is doing the recognition. The text provides the harsh psychological consequences for the distinction between *intrinsic* views of intellection and *extrinsic* ones.

Translated into the extremely personal terms of Leafy’s monologue, we can see that the conception of immortality as recognition, rather than indefinite progression of life, is what she finds to be the chief promise of Christian resurrection, which her increasingly anguished tone is beginning to question. The tantalising promise of Christianity is not to live forever in a

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<sup>143</sup> I use ‘categorial’ rather than ‘categorical’ to retain a sense of logic and function rather than just rote or received categorisation. My influence here is Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds* [2008] and *Mathematics of the Transcendental* [2014] where the deployment of category theory and *categorial* logic exposit a “new thinking of the object” via a theory of malleable transcendental operations. This theory of the malleability of transcendental operations and the localisation of objectal identity is extremely relevant not only to Joyce but to my thinking of narrative as a whole, and provides a way to understand how Joyce subverts narrative form.

wholly new world, but to rejoin those from whom we have been separated. There is a change in tone in the monologue, from pages 626 and 627 to the final page. On page 627, Leafy is defiant, professing her great loneliness (“Loonely in me loneless”), but keen to leave the world alone in a way that will not affect it (“They’ll never see. Nor know. Nor Miss me”), even embittered against others whose selfishness has blighted her life (“And I am lothing their little warm tricks”). Yet, as the monologue reaches its conclusion, she changes her tone and, rather than seek to exit the dark night in silence totally alone, where no one will see or notice her leaving, she seems to want to grasp back towards those she is leaving. The voice is more definitely that of the river rather than the leaf (“my leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still. I’ll bear it on me”), suggesting a Vichian loop to the whole monologue, passing from the naive Leafy to the old voice of the “seahags” (“allaniuvia pulchrabelled”), in the process undermining its own formal conceit for mimicking the passage of a river into a delta.

As such, Anna/Leafy would rather rediscover her father in the past (“Carry me along Taddy, like you done through the toy fair” [FW 628]) than to live forever into a gloomy eternal future where she fears she will “die down over his feet”. If we think of the Anna/Leafy voices as the voice of someone bravely, yet not fearlessly, facing their own death, then it is very strange to evoke resurrection as the promise of return, only to imagine that one would “die down” again almost immediately if it were granted. The difficulty of the paragraph is that Anna/Leafy symbolically does get, as is often said, the last word<sup>144</sup>, and professes her independence even at the expense of inevitable loneliness and amnesia, yet the final page is a desperate cry to rejoin her father.

However, the shifts in tone and voice throughout the monologue make more sense if one considers the view of Christian afterlife present in Anna/Leafy’s mind not to be predicated on the formal and institutional doctrine of resurrection, but on a personal and intimate notion of recognition. She believes in some kind of notion of eternity or return, but it is not a literal return of bodies. What is pivotal to the anticipated return is that she will recognise people she has already known. When she talks to an amalgam of her husband and her son she says, “And stand up tall! Straight. I want to see you looking fine for me” [FW 620]. This is a very illuminating line. From the tone of the passage, the reader knows that Anna/Leafy is close to the end, and wants to see the indefinite addressee of “You” in her life one last time. How can one recognise someone in the instant of seeing them for the first time?

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<sup>144</sup> See Dirk Van Hulle’s chapter on the composition of the passage in *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake* [How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake, Ed. Crispi and Slote, 2007:436].

But Anna's reference to seeing him is not the only time this passage suggests the idea of recognising someone for the last time. She lists traits of other handsome men she is reminded of when she sees the "you", such as "You make me think of a wonderdecker I once" [FW 624]. The pleasure she takes in seeing "you" is the pleasure of recognition, of seeing another again. There is nothing given in the act of seeing, but a process of recognition, which bridges the act of seeing in the moment ("Where you meet I. The day. Remember! Why there that moment and us two only?" [FW 626]) and the act of memory itself. The two philosophical "prongs" Joyce navigates between are clear: Vico's notion of memory as imagination, and Plato's notion of memory as knowledge. So, there is a kind of merger, where memory becomes imaginative and epistemic, a creative act of recognition rather than just the "re-collection" of something previously collected and lost.

Such issues of recognition will never take us far from the thinking of donation, which here again, is in a subtractive form. Anna/Leafy professes "O mine! Only, no, now it's me who's got to give [FW 626] in recollection of her wedding vows and of being given away by her father. The play of donation, which would become so crucial to twentieth-century interpretative, sociological and historicist views of literature, is reversed in this passage by the imperative "take!": "Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee!" [FW 626] The exclamation of panic as the river finally meets the sea encapsulates a spectrum of anxieties, both about life without resurrection and about life with resurrection. The phrase contains the possibilities of "meme, or me?", "memory, or me", and "Multiple mes [Me, me], or a single me?". As Davidson's Swampman may not be able to say that "he" recognises Davidson's house or not (as the Swampman thinks that he is Davidson), there is nothing simply given in direct experience that might resolve the various anxieties.

Of course, the issue at stake here is not entirely the same as in the case of the Swampman. In terms of the critical reading put forward in this thesis, Leafy's desperate desire to know if a resurrected copy is the "real" me, or just a "meme" of me, is stranded between two failures of the One, and of henologies. The One of the soul and the metaphysical instance of the One, that would void the question of what is the "real" me, by elevating it from the epistemic to the theological, are equally absent, as the reader poignantly knows that "Leafy" is just one of an endless cacophony of voices, the "far calls" of gulls. The word "thousandsthee" may be read as Leafy-Liffey exclaiming in shock at seeing the sea, in which all the rivers of the world mingle, and realising that "[there are] thousands of ye!". The sea is

not a final One like the God that all history intends towards<sup>145</sup>, but an endless multiplicity of entities almost exactly like her, who do not lose their individuality to the great One, but are simply vastly less coherent, when taken in bulk than they are in relative isolation, emerging briefly and fading, rarely with coherent arrivals or departures. Additionally, the One of coherent context in which meaning presumably resides is lost because Anna/Leafy here seems aware of the Boethian or Heraclitan cycle of falling and rising that lurks behind the “cycle wheeling history” [FW 168], which is elsewhere professed in the book. The cycle wheeling history takes absence as its central point: the movement of rising and falling, appearance and disappearance, apparency and termination, do not orbit a manifestation of the One or a singular substance. Rather, they are conditioned on the absence of the One, an absence that, in this passage, is frequently mistaken for the presence of an other.

The interrogation prompted by Anna/Leafy’s anxiety and eagerness to conclude upsets the epistemic or thoughtful relationship of intention and its experience. Anna/Leafy is all too aware that she is giving as much as she is taking, that the binding of her experience to knowledge is a complicated issue. There is no givenness anymore, it’s she who has “to give”, where “to give” means both to donate and to go, to vanish, to give up or to give up the ghost. Givenness has passed and it is now her time to give, which means to act out givenness in general.

On the last page of *Finnegans Wake*, Anna Livia Plurabelle accepts the keys to heaven (the reader will remember that St Peter will be waiting for her on page one), but she is also given the keys to her own “lps”, donating a means of expression that works both in the context of the book as Shem will write with her voice, and in the book *Finnegans Wake* itself Joyce will borrow from his own life to animate her. What one sees in the Leafy passage is a naive philosophical problem – the childlike voice and its associated concern of whether a copy of myself would really be “me”, Leafy – and a mature philosophical problem regarding epistemology and what we can know from memetics and memory. In addition, and to make a crucial point, Joyce is not here separating the older and younger feminine voices and their appropriate concerns, but giving a body to the issue which divides them: the loss of Oneness and the loss of donation, and how they mutually entail one another. For Leafy, it is the loss of the “mad father”, and for Liffey, it is ageing and mortality, that constitute the loss of oneself. Here, it is both the loss of the One as the Other that donates selfhood, and the loss of the Self as a pre-given Oneness through which it can know itself through an encounter with the Other.

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<sup>145</sup> See Deasy’s admonishment to Stephen in ‘Nestor’ [U 42].

So, we have a picture of the Anna/Leafy's dilemma being progressed towards Liffey's via the experience of loss of another, and Liffey's regression towards Leafy's via the implication of self-loss.

If a copy of Anna/Leafy were to be severed from her own aetiology, would a resurrected version of Anna/Leafy still have a "causal" relationship to the events that she remembers? As Anna/Leafy's destination becomes less sure, so does her causal chain, the chain of the book itself. The passage of the letter from the middenheap at the back to the house, the teleological final Oneness and the contextual totality are all broken by her progression. Or, at least, they are revealed to be the same.

It is possible to read, in Leafy's final words, an echo of Molly Bloom's remark, "O Jamesy let me up out of this" [U 914], the brief flash of insight of a character who knows that they are being written, since "Leafy" is not only a leaf tracing a certain pattern as it is carried on the Liffey's current, but the final leaves of the book itself. If Molly Bloom is the only Joycean figure who (possibly) references the fact that she is in a book, Leafy is the only figure who realises the loss of the One in terms of the modality of the context of thousands, memories, meme or me, modes that have their own "grammar of perfumes". Between the loss of the Oneness of the soul, and the "staggering failure of all totality", Leafy has no guarantees that resurrection will mean her return but, nevertheless, makes a leap of faith, "Finn, again!" to embrace the cycle. Authenticity, the belief in heritage or one true original, is abandoned in an impassioned embrace of life that happens at the moment of an apparent demise. But, the authenticity that is being abandoned, the originary, is not self or world or God, but the "Given!" – or the exclamation mark suggesting that the "Given!" underlies God, cosmology, selfhood and experience. In order to embrace life as *a* life, the notion of metaphysical Oneness must be discarded and givenness itself must be taken away.

### *Is the Reader Taking the Given Away?*

The next philosophical notion I want to introduce here, is Wilfred Sellars' so called 'Myth of the Given', particularly as articulated by Ray Brassier, notably in his critiques of Bergson<sup>146</sup>. Sellars' view does not deny the reality of empirical knowledge, but denies that any piece of empirical knowledge can function as a "given". Phenomenologically, "intuition" plays a small

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<sup>146</sup> See Brassier's paper 'Lived Experience and the Myth of the Given: Bergson and Sellars' [2011].

role (if any) in the construction of real representations of the world in thought. Intuition cannot dethrone inference, and lived-experience alone cannot replace or make obsolete the role of representation in thought and expression.

Brassier pits Sellars against Bergson and Deleuze, with a view to determining whether metaphysics should concern the production of concepts describing the content of sensation, or whether it should concern the re-contextualisation of sensation. I would argue that precisely such a recontextualisation of sensation is taking place in Joyce's work, *where for him the creative and the artificial has a privileged position in regards to realism*. Inference and speculation must hold a special position above intuition and sensory awareness. The inverse is unthinkable for Joyce, despite his complex affinity with Vico's association of poetry with sense and passion, and this is especially evident in terms of his celebration of the artist's autonomy and the potential for the aesthetic "image" to hold universal potency above and beyond the domain of interpretation. The same holds equally true for Joyce's separate attentiveness to the priority of artifice in its quotidian form, where, in order to write realism, the writer cannot simply take intuition or sense-impressions as the unproblematic grounds of thought's access to the real, nor as the primary epistemological point where persons know themselves to be selves and are aware of their behaviour as the behaviour of a particular individuals. Joyce's works represent this requirement of both perceptual and conceptual artifice through his dedication to the notion of 'apprehension' and the hylomorphism which it implies, as equally creative and synthetic artistic acts. Providing, that is, that the particularity from which universality of artistic truth may be drawn through novel aesthetic techniques such as epiphany.

The myth of the given is the self-contradicting assumption that, if one senses than an object X has the property P (ie, the dressing-gown is yellow), one knows that X has the property P intuitively without inference. Next is the assumption that knowing things in propositional form necessitates acquired or learned behaviour, yet awareness of sense-content is innate and unlearned. Thus, the notion of givenness is contradictory, as the ability to know things of the form "X has property P", cannot both be acquired and unacquired. If the ability to know things of the form *a is b* is not an acquired ability to represent things to oneself, it follows that the world itself must have propositional form and, therefore, is homomorphous to the human mind. Such a view is rejected by Joyce on two counts, firstly in his rejection of idealism while retaining scepticism (for example, in his appropriations from Berkeley) and, secondly, in his belief in the absolute contingency of all things. The myth of the given



manifests itself in two forms: the epistemic given, where knowledge of the form X is Y is non-inferentially given in direct experience, and the categorical given, where the category of something is given by its sense-content. Such a critique of the hidden complicity or unity between some forms of empiricism and idealism, is perhaps “something to right hume about” [FW 606].

Although it is highly reductive of deconstruction to talk about donation primarily in the realms of sensation, the idea of donation and a “thinking of the gift” runs throughout Derrida’s engagement with Joyce, and much of the deconstructive thought that followed it. The principal difficulty that Derrida’s encounter has with Joyce is that, although Joyce is foundational for deconstruction in almost too many ways to be summarised in a paragraph, the central impasse produced is that deconstruction prioritises a “thinking of the gift”, whereas Joyce’s work is, in part, constituted by the author’s scepticism regarding, and subversion of, notions of givenness. “Constituted”, here, becomes the subtractive or subversive relation to givenness and immediacy. It not only provides content (such as in Stephen’s thoughts), but also directly contributes to the composition and form of Joyce’s narratives. This cannot be reduced to saying that deconstruction’s reading of Joyce is somehow undermined or even dismissed by the notion of the myth of the given, but that the “thinking of the gift” within Joyce’s work is fundamentally subtractive, and will never permit the attachment of any form of irreducibility to acts of donation. Therefore, sensation and access to the material reality - “[knowing] them bodies before them coloured” to quote Stephen - cannot have an irreducible intuitive core of donation or givenness.

Joyce’s ‘esthetic’ view is that creative faculties and artifice cannot have a privileged relation to what is real. Rather, they have a privileged position measured in the autonomy of artistic acts rather than the epistemological contributions that they may make to other fields. The challenge of reading Joyce’s esthetics is to think not only of the autonomy of artistic work, but also of the autonomy of the creative faculties (especially apprehension and synthesis) that realism takes for both its object and subject. This makes an extraordinary demand upon the reader, namely to think that which is neither relational, nor non-relational. Joyce provides an agential aesthetics for a world he sees as being without foundation, where one must rely upon semblance and images without authenticity to support the normal semantics or meaning. Mimesis and replication are a bridge towards artifice, not vice versa. If *Finnegans Wake* proposed a world where semantics was associated, not with meaning, but

with compossibility, the challenge it sets is to see the redefinition of language at work across all of Joyce's work retrospectively.

As Joyce often professed that *Finnegans Wake* was mathematical in structure<sup>147</sup> [JJ 614], I want to borrow an expression from the sciences, the phrase that mathematics has “an unreasonable efficacy<sup>148</sup>” with regard to its power to describe the natural world. In *Finnegans Wake*, in the absence of singularity, the question we are brought to is not what the final narrative is, but why narrative has as “unreasonable efficacy” as regards both thought and life. Narrative is not a unique formal system of thinking like mathematics but, nonetheless, it is unique among forms in terms of its proliferation and potency, which I would argue cannot be reduced to, or explained by, the experiential or the sociological. The question of the unique importance of narrative is somewhat unreasonable without anything given, unproblematic or immediate to explain it: there can be no one-to-one correlation between the content of narrative as a quotidian-representational or aesthetic-stylistic form and the immediate content of the human world that explains it.

Regarding the myth of the epistemic given itself, the reader of *Ulysses* may take as an example Leopold Bloom's reaction to Boylan's appearance at the end of 'Lestrygonians' [U 234], or the perceptual triggers for the presence of the man who is cuckolding him: “Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers”. Bloom seems to panic or, at least, is very startled at the sight of Boylan, but he is not lost immediately in intuition or instinctual response, since he uses intellect to steer himself out of Boylan's way (“To the right”), reminds himself of his intentions (“Museum”) and distracts himself with a titillating erotic thought (“Goddesses”) and his earlier idea about whether a statue would have an anus. The initial glimpse and suggestions send him into a twist of inference followed by confirmation: the list of Boylan's clothes suggesting that Bloom caught a glimpse, consequently did a double take, and then, finally, shot a deliberate glance in Boylan's direction to confirm what he thought to have seen. This fits with the flow of the passage: long, short, long. The initial “straw hat in sunlight” is a direct description of the initial unintended glimpse, whereas the last “turnedup trousers” contains a slight Bloomism in the combined “turnedup” which suggests a more deliberate, mindful yet fleeting glance. During this process, Bloom is able to control the jolt of panic somewhat, and gains at least some mastery over the flow of his thoughts. Joyce gives the

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<sup>147</sup> To C. K. Ogden.

<sup>148</sup> First used by Eugene Wigner.

reader a special intimacy with Bloom and Bloom's thoughts, enough to grasp that there is something immediate, but the immediacy is not presented as a lack of mediation between Bloom and a sign of Boylan. It means that Bloom does not have to classify Boylan alongside the role his rival plays in his life. It is not the case that there is no difference between Boylan and the category Boylan, that is, somebody who wears tan shoes, a straw hat, turnedup trousers and perhaps walks in a confident, swaggering way so that his hat catches the sunlight. Bloom has to apply these things to the figure he thinks he sees in order to confirm that he saw it, even as an immediate emotional response such as a jolt of panic takes him over.

What Bloom experiences as immediacy is presented to the reader as an intrinsically creative process, one that, in a few short sentence fragments, appears to involve conceptualising, inferring, speculating, guessing, self-correcting and rule-following. Bloom's reaction to Boylan is not at all distinct from Bloom's creative rhapsodies of thought or his nostalgic reveries. Nowhere, in the incidents where Bloom glimpses or hears mention of Boylan and tries to hide his own discomfort from himself<sup>149</sup>, are we to infer that there was more knowledge in the supposed instant of perception than there was in the intellectual spiral that follows, with its deductions and imperatives.

As in we see, in passages like this, descriptions of qualities and effects are used to emulate and simulate the flow of subjective time, the complex parallels between Bergson and Joyce are evident: evolution and creativity are given a crucial role but, unlike with Bergson, time and intuition are not<sup>150</sup>. Throughout *Ulysses*, perceptual triggers for the presence of Boylan demonstrate through Bloom the partial nature of self-reflection and self-knowledge, and the reader does not so much know Bloom's thoughts in terms of a "stream of consciousness". But rather through the way the text imparts a strong impression of how much Bloom is aware and in control of his own thinking, and how much or how little he knows about why he thinks what he thinks. What we are shown are representations of Bloom's thoughts, not what is allegedly "conscious" about them. Joyce has progressed beyond even the contemporary notion of the fragmentation of the self. And the decentring of the ego. Taking us into a more cognitive realm where Bloom has a fluctuating awareness of the casual patterns of his own ideations and his own reactions to external stimulation. Such a feat would be impossible if Joyce had fallen prey to a version of the myth of the given, or at least if he was

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<sup>149</sup> See earlier in *Ulysses* for another example where Bloom "reviews his nails" after the sight and mention of Boylan [U 115]

<sup>150</sup> A potential Bergsonian critique of Joyce may be that Joyce is hierarchising what Bergson struggles to present as non-hierarchical.

as much of a Bergsonian as he is sometimes accused of being. Joyce seems to have admired and assimilated Bergson's philosophical vocabulary, but the primacy of intuition and experiential duration is not only contradicted by the authorial focus on the text but radically subverted. I would strongly argue that the composition of *Ulysses* itself could not have been accomplished if one had begun by privileging intuition above inference, experience above speculation, and sensation above apprehension. Even if Joyce seems occasionally to provide more epistemic priority to immediate experience than to representation, it is always in order to demonstrate that sensation and perception are endlessly reconstructible and redeployable, and the malleability of the senses and sense-content to be useful tools towards the end of realisms understood in stylistic terms and in the plural. Despite putting a focus upon sensation, there is nothing in Joyce to support the idea that embodiment, direct experience, immediacy, can possibly dethrone thought and thinking as the chief way by which one knows the real. Indeed, Joyce is a non-dualist, who sees thinking as part and parcel of the material world, despite rejecting an idealist or theistic isomorphism between the content of the human mind and ontology in general.

What contribution can the myth of the given make to an account of the concrete in Joyce's work? It is certainly not a very formalist one. I do not think it is worth arguing that one can extract from Joyce's text the equivalent of a well-formed argument, that would run in parallel to (or restate) the myth of the given. But neither would it be accurate to argue that Joyce's texts constitute some sort of "proof" of the myth of the given, or that one can use *Finnegans Wake* as an instrument with which to bludgeon proponents of irreducible experiential or phenomenological givenness. Rather, my argument is that the myth of the given can help us to understand Joyce's realism, not only as a philosophical or scientific disposition towards the world and literature's place in it, but also at the compositional level.

The myth of the given has two forms: the myth of the epistemic given and the myth of the categorial given. In Joyce, there is an informal version: the myth of the narrative given. I say "informal" because it is very much not an article of philosophy or a philosophical argument, but rather something running in parallel to philosophical thinking, that functions much in the same way as Jean-Michel Rabaté describes Derrida's induction of Joyce's work: as "a dangerous Trojan horse" [D&J, 263] into philosophy.

Why is the idea of an informal narrative form of the myth informative about Joyce's work and technique? Firstly, Joyce's critique of auto-presentation and the transcendent immediacy of experience – substituting what Derrida termed the "apparently transcendental"

– leads to a ‘soft’ critique of givenness, using instances of interruption and interlocution to break with the idea that there is a foundational affinity or metaphysical isomorphy between lived experience (in the Husserlian or Bergsonian sense) and reality itself. The concrete must, therefore, not be that which is immediate, but that which can be plausibly substituted into an on-going collective game or dance of substitutions<sup>151</sup>. The “circumcision”, in Derrida’s punning sense, is that a circularity is maintained: in order to suspend disbelief at incidents of givenness depicted in a narrative, Joyce needs to enact a givenness between narrative form itself and the material world, which he can only do through narrative descriptions of incidents of givenness.

Joyce introduces givenness as a reason for the unreasonable efficacy of narrative, and then withdraws it. In the case of the Anna/Leafy passage, the givenness of a homomorphy between the journey of a river to the sea and the passage of life from youth to old age is proffered, and then withdrawn. Earlier in Joyce’s work, we see similar examples: a tussle in Stephen Dedalus’ thoughts between literary and philosophical attempts to reconcile phenomenological thinking with ontological thinking in “Proteus” and, further back still, in *Dubliners*, where tales like “Araby”, “An Encounter” and “Eveline” explicitly refer to narrative genres and the expectation that the world should resemble narrative. One must be very careful not to let the very simple issue of whether life is like fiction detract from the issue of givenness, which allows fiction and life to be articulated together. Moreover, I would argue that Joyce wrestles with this issue in some of his earliest essays where he wonders if there is a natural correspondence between a literary output and life, or something Promethean or irreducibly artificial? The “Flamboyant Autobiography” of the earlier essay entitled *A Portrait of the Artist* reflects the decision to privilege artifice over givenness, as does the name “Dedalus”, and the universalisation of Tim Finnegan as a human figure.

In terms of the situational usefulness of “buying into” the myth (as Ray Brassier puts it), the myth of the narrative given would similarly be very informal and loose and, of course, would lack the formal precision of Sellars’ critique. However, it would also have a unique relationship to the epistemic and categorial forms of the original critique. The myth of the narrative given does not only consist of the notion that narrative itself is a special domain, where direct human contact with the world presumes a pre-structured homogeny between

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<sup>151</sup> This is the form of the question of what colour an object has in *Finnegans Wake* III.3, where the Rainbow Girls’ guessing game takes the form of an elaborate dance or theatrical production.

thought and reality. It also consists of the notion that narrative itself supports epistemic and categorial givens. It should be clear that, not only do narratives involve descriptions of incidents whose believability requires givenness in either the categorial or the epistemic sense, but the narrative presentation of these incidents itself is predicated on the idea that there is a given homomorphism between narrative and the extended world, that narrative can rely upon without justification. In some sense, an informal, narrative manifestation of givenness reflects Joyce's appropriation of Bruno's *coincidentia oppositorum* in that it is Janus-headed: it relies on critiquing givenness in some dimensions in order to support textual games of chronology and voice, but it must also act as though givenness is above critique. If one talks informally of "suspension of disbelief" in regard to how audiences experience narratives on stage or on screen, there must be a similar phenomenon that functions as a suspension of critique, required by narrative givenness, where narratives inevitably furnish the audience with all the equipment necessary to dismantle the very notion of givenness, but actively conspires to for-clude any assembly of such equipment into a workable critique. What Derrida isolates as the "thinking of the gift" is an example of such an intra-textual conspiracy, albeit manifesting in a subtractive form.

In some sense, there is a very simple form of particular/universal dialectic already coiled inside the question of concreteness and narrative. With "suspension of disbelief", narrative for-closes disbelief in the falsehood or semblance of particular events and persons in order to prolong the interest of an audience. The dialectical inverse of particular intents to "suspend disbelief" is the global "refrain from critique", by which aspects of a general critique of givenness are presented, but laid in front of the audience or reader in a deconstructed state.

If the success of a narrative relies upon an audience refraining from disbelieving in the distinction between real events and the semblance of real events in terms of particularity, even when given a good reason to (such as a supernatural event or unlikely coincidence), such a refrain cannot exist without a general form, by which the reader is given reason to mount a critique of givenness in general, but also given ample motive to refrain from doing so. The simplest example is that interior monologue relies upon categorial sorting of objects and sensations in order to produce language appropriate for a first-person account of the world that has a semblance of being thought. Consequently, it is imperative that the reader should not question how the "voice" of such of monologue knows the categories in the very instance of feeling and thinking, even though the whole business of interior monologue itself

constitutes a critique of the givenness of such categories. This is what is going on with Stephen's thoughts of transparent and coloured objects in "Proteus", where he abstractly questions the givenness of colours in sense-experience to critique his own quasi-Aristotelean aesthetic understanding. But also, more concretely, a rotation of givenness is happening whenever Bloom spies a sign of Boylan: the reader is given a physical description together with Bloom's instinctual response, as well as every reason to critique the connection between them. Yet, if Joyce is successful, the focus is not on the construction of Bloom's fear and his revulsion of Boylan, but on conveying the experience of something that blurs the line between perception, instinct and thinking. In order for Joyce to make plausible the immediacy of Bloom's reaction to Boylan's hat, or to make it seem to the readers that Bloom immediately knows that Boylan is Boylan, Joyce must first portray the fact that in order for Bloom to appear to know immediately that Boylan is Boylan, he must immediately know that a hat is a hat (generally) and, therefore, that the hat he is perceiving is *the* hat he specifically fears seeing. It is of course enlightening for the reader to know how Bloom knows that Boylan is Boylan, but less so how he knows that a hat is a hat, even though the same process of inference is at work in both cases. This is a technique an example of I would call the situational rotation of givenness. As Joyce puts the givenness of one epistemic property or categorical artefact into question, he removes another from our critical attention and, in this constant rotation, the "narrative myth of the given" is enacted creating the illusion of immediacy. In the same instance Joyce reveals to us that immediacy is an illusion.

Joyce's interest in theatre is in evidence here: this is as much stagecraft as it is writing. He is like a magician using techniques of diverting and misdirecting our attention to cover for his illusions. As an example of this, we can see how Joyce captures the moment where Bloom looks back to check if he did indeed see Boylan: "it is. It is" [U 234]. The repetition here functions in a way that conveys the immediacy of anxiety. Bloom repeats his thoughts to himself, but it also invites the reader to look again at how the act of seeing is portrayed. Much like in the case of Stephen's use of doubling in 'Proteus' to achieve the same motivation to view immediacy critically, we can say that the reader has been given exactly two choices of interpretation for the "it is": in one case, thinking and sensing are one, together in the same motion (intuition), and in the other, they are separated, and some premise must be deployed to unite them (inference). This repetition captures a material or meta-linguistic engine of language. Far from just demonstrating the priority of language, as some critics have claimed, Joyce is showing how metalinguistic elements of thinking deploy language as a means of

uniting thinking and sensation. The experience of “immediacy” is therefore neither a linguistic allusion, nor an evidence of the authenticity of originary sensation over abstract intellect, but rather a fundamentally creative faculty that needs literary genres, music, dance and artistry as analogues or metaphors to be captured or reproduced. Even in a moment of panic, the repetition of “it is” shows that the potency of signification is neither a product of language nor of sensation, but of some other creative faculty, which Joyce, as a conjurer of sorts, is reluctant to show us directly.

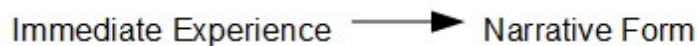
Equally relevant to our discussion, is the thread of several mentions of citrus in the central part of *Ulysses* [U 72], where the scent of citrus is doubled with nostalgia and, perhaps, Bloom’s thoughts of Molly “sitting in Citron’s basket chair”. The impression is that what Bloom experiences as a reaction is, in fact, thought, and he subsequently draws upon earlier, more elaborate thoughts. We see an equivalence, as Bloom is apparently constantly feeling, perceiving and sensing, but in order for his feelings to be felt as feelings, and senses to be sensed as sensations, he is obliged to make synthesis, which is a thoughtful activity related to his speculations on science and politics. Stephen is apparently thinking, making, synthesizing and creating new ideas and theories in order to produce aesthetic novelty, but this is unavoidably bound to feelings and emotions, as he cannot mentally detach himself, either from a feeling of alienation from his peers, or grief for his mother. It is significant at this point to note that, whether Joyce is showing the reader sensations dependent on creativity or creative thought dependent upon sensation, there is no foundational tier of irreducible affinities or privileged access to reality holding categorial or epistemic sovereignty over the act of thinking itself. If one were to extract a philosophical principle from Joyce’s representation of the phenomenal world, would neither be on the grounds that the intellect is more foundational than direct experience, nor that direct experience contains an authenticity or purity lost by intellectualising, but that this opposition is incoherent. Either variety of foundationalism would extirpate the faculty of creativity that is so characteristic of all thought and involvement in the world, enact the revenge of the multiple-representational upon the singularity of unmediated presence, as Stephen imagines the dark “mocking mirrors” of Averroes or Maimonides [U 34] interrupting religious orthodoxy with errant or heretical rationality.

If the myth of the epistemic given is a myth because it is an example of fallacious or inconsistent philosophical thinking, the myth of narrative given is a “myth” because something untrue is being re-enacted or performed anew. I would argue that this is

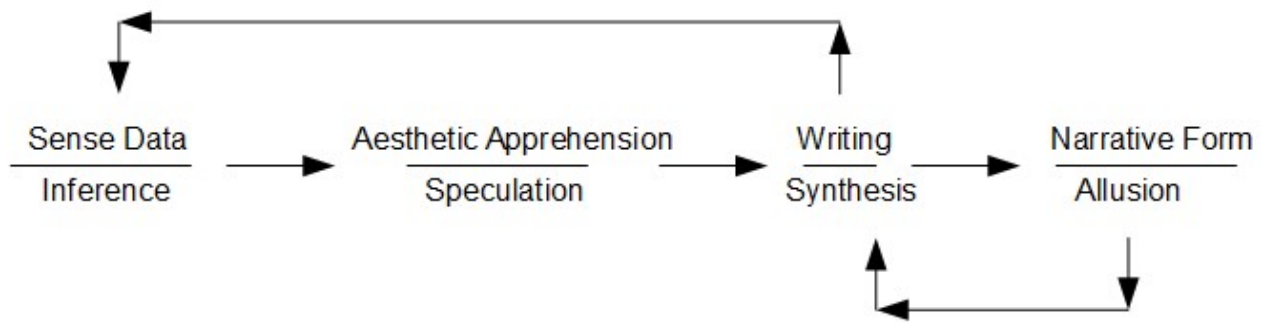


fundamentally an aesthetic or creative process. One thing that Joyce's work relies upon constantly is to draw the audience or the reader's attention towards the real, by defining how it is possible that one has attention towards the real. Crucially, Joyce likes to do this, not by describing how individuals have access to the world, but by highlighting the areas in which we do not. "Shut your eyes and see" is not only a maxim for heightening one sense by blotting out others, but a general principle whereby absent givenness is enacted by focusing upon the supposed negative of perception: a circuit of thought between reality, sensation and thought that is crafted through a union or simulation of the given, which is the speculated negative of perception. In *Ulysses*, this simulation or rehearsal of givenness often takes the form of ironic or poetic repurposing and combinations of philosophical arguments (for example, in "Proteus"). A more playful version exists throughout *Finnegans Wake*, where dancing and literal play lead the reader to imagine an access to the what lies outside of consciousness, namely a thought of total silence and darkness, without sensation, where the ideas of colour and music can still exist, exciting motion and thought just as easily as the sensation of the apparently present. Such a focus on thinking the pre-perceptual real, or perhaps the real without realisation, may recall Alain Badiou's desire to oppose the "subtractive rigor of presentation" to the "temptation of presence". Such an opposition perhaps strike us as astonishingly severe in the milieu of philosophical encounters with drama and literature, the austerity proper to such a statement exists only in its intra-philosophical effects. For Joyce, in the extra-philosophical autonomy of literary narrative, the posing of the "unscrupulous meanness" of formal presentation against the temptation of authentic presence, leads one directly into the black rainbow that is *Finnegans Wake*.

The aim my argument is to counter any view of narrative's relation to experience as being simple isomorphism or representation, as illustrated in the following diagram:



with the one on the following page:



The structure of the above diagram unites the Joycean notion of apprehension as having three parts, and aims to model the aspect of aesthetic thought and experiment he referred to as “satisfaction” in his Paris notebooks [OCPW 106-107]. For Joyce, aesthetic “satisfaction” is not a feeling but an activity, and I understand it as having something of a retrospective action parallel to the ‘retrospective arrangement’ mentioned frequently in *Ulysses*. Each step is a dyad, not in the sense of a duality or a grouping of an object with its representation, but a unilateral distinction which happens in the instance and the instance only. For example, the distinction between what is ‘writing’ and what is ‘synthesis’ in Joycean epiphany makes sense exclusively within the context of those epiphanies themselves, and cannot be generalised beyond them. This is perhaps shown in the dyadic or self-cloning form of the explanation of epiphany in *A Portrait*. It this self-cloning is performative and gestural, as Stephen needs to have an epiphany about the basket in order to explain what an epiphany is. Our evidence that it is a *bona fide* epiphany and not self-parody is in the “thought-enchanted silence” [AP 213] which it provokes. But in order for this to be explanation of the relationship between aesthetic gestures and synthesis, itself is also cloned or duplicated, as Joyce himself has been using an epiphany to explain what epiphany is. It is crucial to understand that in this self-cloning and dyadic situation, no definition line can be drawn between an argument and its demonstration.

There is something much more general to say here. Something like a “soft” version of a critique of givenness happens at every step of a process involving narrative. Whether it is writing, reading, acting or listening, the splitting of thought and sensation is re-encountered. The narrative myth of the given, instead, could be described as the notion that, at every point of the process by which real world sensory or empirical data is converted into a narrative form, there is something like a splitting or division, where the inexistent homomorphism must

be simulated. This simulation of the globally homomorphic by the locally isomorphic is how I would account for mimesis and how Joyce transforms of the classical aesthetic theme of mimesis: by showing that as there is no ‘given’, and that no homomorphic structure between reality and narrative is possible. Instead, a chain of simulated isomorphisms is produced in Joyce’s texts. In this chain, in a way that should be familiar in light of post-structuralist accounts of signification, there is a splitting where what can be ‘given’ is paired with its simulation. This is the divisive part of Joyce’s aesthetic process.

Returning to the above diagram, at every point the direction of thought and the direction of perception are at odds, and “apprehension” is needed to piece these things back together through something synthetic or artificial, something active and creative, something involving artifice rather than just being observational.

*Shut Your Eyes and See/Cease to Strive: Narrative Concreteness and Exile from Experience in Joyce*

If there is a narrative myth of the given, it is not necessarily the argument that a narrative contains within it a propositional structure, or set of categories that are homomorphic to the structure of exterior reality. I believe that there is no foundational homomorphism between narrative and the real, whether expressed as a foundational affinity between narrative and experience or narrative and time. But this is a more complex argument that lies far beyond the scope of one thesis. It is helpful, on this point, to return to Derek Attridge’s critique of Joyce’s critics. In Attridge’s critique of the dream or dreamer hypothesis of *Finnegans Wake*, for whose purposes he takes Gordon’s *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary* and Bishop’s *Joyce’s Book of the Dark* as examples, his target is the notion that works defending the model of the dream “reduce the recalcitrant heterogeneity of the text” [Attridge, 2001:154]. Attridge particularly dwells on Gordon’s theory, which he sees as the desire for a “machine which will reduce the book’s dizzying multiplicity to a single, traditional plot line” [Ibid. 134]. Attridge’s tripartite dismantling and disposal of the dream hypothesis is of particular interest here, since it critiques interpretation as a key model of critical encounter with *Finnegans Wake*, where the “dangerous power” [Ibid.] of interpretation is exerted (as in Bishop’s reading), and as a manifestation of language’s power of separation, where one particular interpretation comes at the expense of multiple others. As a result, the object of a critique of the dream or dreamer hypothesis is not the idea that *Finnegans Wake* is a representation of a dream in

particular, but the more general notion that there is a “framework” or “backbone” of narrative or structure that sees the reader “shielded” from the fact that *Finnegans Wake* is “an exemplification rather than a denial of the special qualities of literature [Ibid. 151]. Although the “dream” or “dreamer” hypothesis is the most common variety of such a denial, it is not an exclusive form of such.

Such readings will always fail to satisfy, not because there could be a superior “interpretative context” to dreams or a more detailed structure with the potential to grasp the multiplicity of the book in a relatively lossless and faithful way, but because of the assumption that literary – and therefore narrative – structure is necessarily and unavoidably homomorphic to structures of human experience. To repeat the still-common claim that *Finnegans Wake* is structured like a dream is to say that dreams have structures, which in itself suggests that reality has something resembling a structure in the way that human experiences and thoughts appear to have structures, once we render them into natural language. The extension I would add to Attridge’s critique is that, in some contexts, we can substitute “history” and “society” for “dream”, and also the structure of the psyche, or an individual’s personal development from cradle to grave. Behind all of these ideas, what is at stake is that prior to the artifice and intellection of an encounter between writer and reader, homomorphic structures are harboured, into which narrative worlds are organised. Such a structure is to be taken as a given, and evidenced in the experience of language and narrative itself.

In dismantling the “dream of interpretation” concerning *Finnegans Wake*, Attridge’s critique, therefore, cannot but constitute a negative thinking of the gift. If the notion of a conventional plot within *Finnegans Wake* can be rejected as a desire to make the book less fearsome or dangerous to reductive ideas about what constitutes narrative fiction and literature, this is only because such a rejection is an outcropping of the larger rejection of interpretation as dependent upon unproblematic and uncomplicated givenness, upon which its separative and partitive acts may be justifiably performed. For example, Paul Ricoeur’s notion of *homomorphy*<sup>152</sup> (of a configurational or juridical character) between the “narrative character of history” [Ricoeur, *Narrative and Time*, 1990:91], and, personal experience of the passage of time, and narrative, flows into the conclusion that there are deep, primordial affinities between “the writing of history and the operation of emplotment” [Ricoeur, 1990:227], historical and fictional narratives have a homomorphy which is a given, by dint of

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<sup>152</sup> Of a configurational or juridical character.

the fact that temporal being is co-extensive to both, where, under the influence of Bergsonian *durée* and Heideggerian historicism<sup>153</sup>, all leads back to the anthropocentricity of “human time” [Ibid. 224]. Ricoeur can thus, in the conclusion to the first volume of *Narrative and Time*, speak of the “tenuous and deeply hidden tie which holds history within the sphere of narrative and thereby preserves the historical dimension itself” [Ibid. 230]. To return to Joyce, it is the givenness<sup>154</sup> of such things that is threatened by the multiplicity of *Finnegans Wake*, not so much because any one interpretation is bound to be wrong, but because of such “deeply hidden” affinities of narrative whose existence can be taken as a given. It is upon the presumption of such a given that the finality of any one meaning, or any historicism in general, must be founded. If narrative indeed has an unreasonable efficacy when it comes to the multiplicity of roles it plays in both quotidian life and aesthetic thought, this efficacy cannot be reduced to a single submerged affinity which, despite remaining perpetually undisclosed, is knowable principally through the workings of context and contextuality.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that, just as the myth of the given provides a strong argument that knowledge proper to immediate perceptual experience is not “given”, Joyce banishes experience from its foundational role in non-artistic (comprehensive rather than apprehensive) encounters of the real, in order to preserve for it a unique importance in the act of literary reproduction. Joyce does not only subvert any notions of authenticity, he steps around both intuitionism and mimesis to form a new conception of aesthetic production based on a disjunctive synthesis of the world as concrete and experience as concrete. Philosophers such as Donald Davidson and Hélène Cixous have frequently used “exile” as an analogy, perhaps almost a metonym, for Joyce’s relationship to language. Joyce having exiled himself from both the English language and the “language question” of Ireland in order to free his work from constraints. Of course, this is not to say that Joyce is dismissive of the importance of language. On the contrary, by disavowing the foundational role of language in

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<sup>153</sup> I admit my reading of Ricoeur is very ‘fictionalised’ here: he could equally be said to be rejecting both positions in order to guide a larger integration of Aristotelean *muthos* with Augustinian *distentio*. I hope the reader here is generous enough to see this as a ‘creative misreading’ rather an error – in the process of writing this thesis I have embarked on a personal project of reading *Temps et Récit* (along with Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*) as an attempt to temper my speculative and deconstructive impulse against the interpretative frameworks to which it might be opposed. I can mention here that large parts of this thesis have been ‘pruned off’ due the naivete of my reading of Ricoeur, but in this instance I will ‘let it stand’ as part of the argument as it illustrates what I elsewhere call the necessary ‘minimal fictionality’ of any reading of Joyce, and also the kinds of conflicts and difficulties arising in the process of my thesis.

<sup>154</sup> This does not imply that Ricoeur’s approach to the problem of the Given in literary texts is not also a rational critique.

thought and comprehension, Joyce can become a “Humpty Dumpty” figure, who can make words mean whatever he wishes them to mean.

My interpretation of “exile” in regards to Joyce’s relationship to language is the following: to be a linguistic exile means to withdraw oneself from complicity with the constructivist notion that language has a primarily institutive power, and the intuitionist notion that categories of language reflect categories of reality without representational modification. Instead, a linguistic exile sees the powers of language as primarily separative and partitive, and removes the artist as a connecting node between the presumption of the institutive power of language (the “structuralist delusion” critiqued by Badiou) and the unproblematic immediacy of sense experience (the myth of the given). It is an ironic point that, by exiling himself from a presupposition of its foundational importance, Joyce accords language more importance by seeing it as an equal among many possible modalities. In *Finnegans Wake*, we see an elaborate overlapping of various semiological and structural systems of colours, geometry, numbers, patterns, graphemes, topology, music and, perhaps the most important due the influence of the author’s daughter, choreography and dance. In the position of being merely one out of many other possible involvements, language attains an importance that it never had in a world where language is considered to have a foundational affinity or sovereign authority for communication, expression and thought, and where its structure as a whole is considered to reflect something of the structure of reality beyond its own logical consistency.

By putting language into the position of being merely one modality among many, its uniqueness is better justified as links between the pre-linguistic (hieroglyphs, gestures and sigla) and meta-linguistic (acts fixing meaning and intention) are reforged, with their transformative potential more fully realised. Indeed, a framing device for many *Finnegans Wake* chapters is Vico’s observation that early religious constructions and social systems were based upon silent ritual and non-verbal forms of expression, leading directly into pre-linguistic verbal expression: the importance of burial as a non-linguistic or pre-linguistic marker demonstrates humanity’s social organisation prior to, and beyond, the question of “meaning” or performance of interpretation and re-interpretation. The importance of burial signals that language plays a major, even guiding, role in the development of the human imagination, but it is not ontological, foundational, or always in an especially privileged position *vis-à-vis* the content of the phenomenal world encountered in the form of sense-impression. If *Finnegans Wake* may be understood as an anticipation of the priority of

language and discourse in the structuralist and post-structuralist eras, perhaps one can equally see it as the imagining of a world where language has to take the role of a material carrier for logical form, where discourse enjoys no more special epistemic, constructive or social privileges over what is outside of itself than dancing, painting, games, sports, or any other expressive or thoughtful activities providing the sense-matter for *Finnegans Wake*. The question of meaning no longer subordinates all other questions of operation and effects, and where expression is no longer subsumed by indication.

In addition to being a linguistic exile, one might also see with *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce became an exile of *erlebnis*<sup>155</sup>, in that he follows Stephen's imperative to "shut your eyes and see" and, by exiling himself, does not devalue experience, but affords the artist new, non-foundational liberty in relation to immediacy. Such an attitude to direct experience, simultaneously, philosophically deflationary and aesthetically hyper-attentive, would explain how *Finnegans Wake*, a book which seems to begin with a metaphor for the foreclosing (or perhaps 'foreclusion') of all perception (a conjunction between sleep and Joyce's own encroaching blindness), is a burst of phenomenal colour boasting a variety of "systems" of sensations, especially sounds and colours, that vary across its chapters. If we look at the transitional period between the romantic and modernist periods, contemporary literary attitudes contemporary with Joyce stretch from Bergson (whose influence is felt in the 20th century's attitude to time, including Mann, as well as late 20th century focus upon the primacy of virtuality) to Pessoa (for whom "direct *experience* is an evasion, or a hiding place, for those without any imagination"). In *Finnegans Wake* especially, Joyce wants to situate himself at both ends of the debate table at once, so to speak, in a way similar to Stephen feeling justified to locate himself alongside the "ill-starred heresiarch" [U 47] Arius, even as he adopts the authoritative logic and "gorebellied" [U 264] orthodoxy of Aquinas.

The complexity of the position Joyce places himself in is that, if the myth of the given relies on the dependency between thought and language to attack the notion of a direct correspondence between the structure of reality and the structure of sensation, Joyce does not want to give language a priority either. *Finnegans Wake* is less a book about language itself as a full flower of human creative potency that it is about the subordination of language to other human activities particularly associated with his daughter Lucia, namely dance, but also

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<sup>155</sup> It is best to leave this hermeneutic term untranslated, as it carries both the common sense of experience and the more loaded meaning of 'lived experience'. Likewise, considering that my sources include French language texts, *erlebnis* does not involve as strong an ambiguity between *expérience* and experiment.

choreographed slapstick comedy, play, colour systems and graphemes. Joyce's works can lead us to be critical of a pre-linguistic authenticity of direct experience in either the "given" sense or the romantic sense, but also to be critical of a wholly constructivist vision of language, where definition and predication constitute the whole of the real, because of the privileged relation to thought granted by language to language itself. The irony of *Finnegans Wake* may just be that the twentieth century's aspiration to the position of the "lords of language" came to subordinate language more and more to different forms of thinking. In order to think what is "important" in Joyce, we must separate out the notion of importance from the idea that importance means a privileged position to thought or special affinity with Being spelled with a capital B. Although Joyce seems to have entertained such affinities, he seems rarely to have stuck with one consistently. It is perhaps most illuminating that *Finnegans Wake*'s riposte to Wyndham Lewis' complaint that Joyce considered Being to have a special affinity with time (instead of space), was not to insist upon the notion of stasis, but rather to use *Finnegans Wake* to debase and mock the entire argument about whether time or space has ontological priority. Space and Time have a complicated marriage, having known both domestic bliss and acrimonious divorce<sup>156</sup> [FW 600].

I would argue that, when we read the concrete in Joyce, in particular the epiphanies and *Finnegans Wake*, the notion of Being-qua-Being having a privileged affinity with another concept is absolutely absurd. Being is like nothing, Being an ensembles of things, and there is nothing that such an "ensemble" is like, prior to the things that it is an ensemble of. Joyce is not anti-foundationalist in general. His "founded...on uncertainty" is not expressed as a general philosophical principle to which his aesthetic is subordinated or sutured, but articulated in the notion that "paternity is a legal fiction". This Joyce's insight finds its expression in a way that is contrary to any foundational affinity or primacy of there being certain relation between Being and any other concept, and to any notion that there is something pre-conceptual or a 'non-concept' (such as power, life, God, etc) that could be a singular principle through which all familial groups and relationality is expressed. My interpretation is that Joyce's desire to write "one great part of life" is not a specific thing, but a general bias towards the non-foundational: whatever concept or relationship guides writing, there is always a great part of life that is collected in an apparent unicity, by virtue of its exclusion from the allegedly foundational affinities characterising meta-structural states.

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<sup>156</sup> Where Joyce evokes cosmology as the story of the marriage of time and space.



Like language, direct experience is clearly of maximal importance to Joyce. However, to reiterate my, this importance is not due to its foundational or primordial importance to thought over and above literary acts, it is rather that literary acts create a new and artificial importance for experience, which cannot be reduced to the creation or displacement of a specific context. The value of direct experience is on a plane with factual information. Its main role in Joyce's work is not expressive but rather compositional; it plays a key part in the construction of the work. For we can observe how real sensual accounts are deployed in philosophical arguments in "Proteus" and the Berkeley/Patrick section of *Finnegans Wake*.

On the issue of creativity and the real, one must be bold enough to recognise the enormous status that Joyce affords to artists, and attempt to take the position of art as exception or truth seriously, without unwinding it into the social or historical sphere. In the light of Joyce's account artistry, an extraordinary treatment of extra-ordinary, empirical or sensual experience has an enormous importance, not foundationally but artificially. What is important about direct experience or empirical encounters with the world is not given or absorbed passively, but actively created (and thought) in the act Joyce describes as apprehension, as already discussed in relation to Stephen. We can see, perhaps, why Derrida seemed to place Joyce in parallel with many different philosophers of phenomenology and self-consciousness, even if Joyce lacked at least one foundational element<sup>157</sup> common to their thought: a Hegel without totality, a Heidegger without authenticity, a Husserl without a transcendental *Ich*, and so on. It is easy to make witticisms about Joyce among philosophers, as Derrida does in both of his papers, exactly because Joyce anti-foundationalism goes places that philosophy avoids. With its dizzying Babelic vantage, *Finnegans Wake* is a book whose gambit of universality rests on its reinvention of language to better express an interplay of local instances of the void, ensembles and creative acts. Joyce is a meontologist who is so assured – albeit not entirely justifiably – of the autonomy of his own creative processes that he can cock a snoot at mere ontologists.

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<sup>157</sup> To draw a parallel (but not an equivalence) between Joyce's work and the 'non-philosophy' of François Laruelle, [Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy*, 2012] one might here say Joyce is not anti-philosophical or lacking a philosophical foundation, but non-philosophical as he is forgoing an institutive moment of philosophical decision by continuing with the inferential and deductive artifice of dyads and clones rather than a reductive procession from a meta-ontological splitting. This is also something of a defence as why it is often so important to read Joyce alongside philosophies that either he did not read himself or were written/published after his death. Lacking an altogether philosophical decisional character, instead focusing upon aesthetic, amorous and political decisions, Joyce's work in a sense demands the reader to expose and to interrogate their philosophical context not from its context but from their own.

I finally wish to conclude this chapter by asking a question: to what extent can we replace an understanding of narrative that is founded upon irreducible affinity, donation and phenomenon, with one founded upon the interplay of the void and pure, unmediated multiplicity?

## CHAPTER 8: CONCEPTS, PART 2 - CONDITIONS AND EXPERIENCES

### *Contingency and Experience: Concreteness without Necessity*

To continue the discussion of the links between concepts and style in Joyce's work, I want to start by highlighting the distinction between two statements. The first statement is that Joyce wrote about Dublin, and the second is that Joyce's writing collated experiences of Dublin. In what way are these two statements compatible? In what way are they contradictory? This question is useful because, at first glance, it appears to be formed around the question of whether realism should prize subjectivity over objectivity, appearances over essences, and extrinsic relations over intrinsic properties. However, if one refrains from making theoretical assumptions, this question has more to do with the question of realisms of *absolute* immanence as opposed to those of *radical* immanence. At work across all of Joyce's published work, a realism which is neither literary genre nor philosophical decision, so therefore one must approach this subtractive realism upon its own terms. It cannot be a realism of the given or of the immediate, as this would be an absolute immanence, and therefore lead us into an entirely philosophical register. A radical immanence however is an immanence of what *conditions* philosophy. I would argue that these conditions are, for Joyce, not constituted by discourses but by gestures. This is best typified by the description of epiphany as a gesture of apprehension [AP 212], which requires the "wider sense" [AP 213] of beauty not to be justified by philosophical discourse, but provokes the re-appropriation of philosophical concepts. That is, the fleeting "instant" can only be grasped by a fleeting moment of imaginative autonomy: the real instance is coupled, by gesture and not communicative act, with the imaginative instant. The latent paradox of Joyce's aesthetics is that this coupling has the form of a separation rather than a synthesis.

In what sense is it meaningful to talk of a dyadic form here, and of the coupling of instant and instance? If one returns to Beckett's assertion that "[Joyce's] writing is not about something; it is that something itself" [*Dante Bruno Vico Joyce*], one can read it as statement of two halves, where one does not necessarily imply the other. The first half is the rejection of aboutness, the second a statement about the autonomy and immanence of the text itself. One does not immediately get to textual autonomy and generic immanence by rejecting *aboutness* (as many high modernists following Joyce found out), nor is immanence the only destination that one can reach beginning from such a rejection. So, the first task here is to isolate what it

means to reject *aboutness*, what this rejection is grounded upon, and then fill in the gap between it and the question of textual autonomy and immanence. The realist proposition is therefore not to fill the gap between instance and instant with intentionality, an aboutness that mirrors the luminance of the instance with the clarity of the instant. But instead to set up a dyadic form in a way that grasps or apprehends the instance indirectly, in a manner as so the autonomy of the gesture of grasping itself is preserved at all costs.

To make a remark about the philosophical and theoretical context of this issue, I want to stress that I do not believe the rejection of *aboutness* to be an abandonment of representation or a critique of representation in philosophy or representationalism in aesthetics. While I don't want to divert this chapter into a re-litigation of arguments about Joyce and post-modernism and post-structuralism, I consider the association of *Finnegans Wake* with a generalised scepticism regarding representation to be a mistake often made by post-structuralist engagement with Joyce. I do not think that Joyce rejected representation and I do not think that Beckett meant to argue that he did and, as such, Joyce is no literary precursor of Deleuze, Foucault or those influenced by them in literary and cultural studies when it comes to critiques of representation<sup>158</sup>. If Joyce did reject representation in a way similar to the way that the post-structuralist 'moment' did, it would entirely contradict almost everything Beckett says about the relationship between *Finnegans Wake* and Vico's theory of language, which remains our closest look at the linguistic theories operating within *Finnegans Wake*. The question of *aboutness* for a composed literary work cannot be reduced to philosophical questions of representing in thought or knowledge<sup>159</sup>; it is only ever tangential to epistemological questions.

So, I would like to leave that critique open, rather than cite names of those who have 'grouped' Joyce with critics or writers who rejected representation and representationalism. Instead, I want to isolate what rejection of *aboutness* means in the least philosophical terms that I can. I would consider Joyce to be a writer of radical immanence because, following subtractive ontological prospects as varying as those of Laruelle, Derrida or Badiou, I would

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<sup>158</sup> However, Joyce is very much like Deleuze when it comes to the issue of paradox [Deleuze, 1990: 86] whereby one might understand that Joyce leaves Stephen Dedalus' arguments as inconsistent or less coherent than they might be, in order to capture the moment where Stephen (even when his words are well-rehearsed) is forced to think, and therefore characterisation is aided by the capture of Stephen's language not when his opinions are best reflected or when they are contradicted, but when they almost function perfectly, excepting for a few rebel or paradoxical elements.

<sup>159</sup> Here, it is worth noting the anecdote recounted by Ellman [JJ 648] where Joyce asks Beckett "how could the idealist Hume write a history?" and Beckett replies "a history of representations", to which Joyce is silent. Whether this suggests an ideational distance between the two writers or Joyce's desire to keep his distance personally, Ellman leaves to the imagination.

argue that Joyce's dependency on stylistic novelty is itself dependent on the absence of "givenness" in a cognitive or epistemic sense. This absence of givenness has a direct equivalent in narrative prose, which is the absence of what I call the "the immediacy of the immediate", that assumed foundational or fundamental stratum of perceptual or sensory experience that is pre-conceptual and pre-intellectual. I have argued that this produces a tension with Joyce's other conviction, that of the Peripatetic axiom of Aquinas, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non-sit prius in sensu*, and it is in this tension that one can understand Joyce's need to oscillate between stylistic novelty and technical formality. This is also evident in the rather absurd and contradictory choice Joyce often presented in regards to philosophy, that it must be either Scholastic or Sceptical [JJ 648]. Radical immanence here means a kind of secularised occasionalism, which is directly traceable to the appropriations from Berkeley in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, but rather than have God or any foundational or necessary principal to function as an efficient cause for *all* events, each contingency remains a contingency and un-adjoined to any principal of necessity. For a literary writer of realism that means that there is no given – such as between experience and knowledge, or between ocularity and vision, or between perspective and position – to which he may appeal. He must transform, transvaluate and transubstantiate each piece of material and each spurring instance anew. This is why Joyce's Eucharistic metaphor is so potent: it bridges the issues of novelty and repetition without subordinating aesthetics to philosophical thought. The command of Christ to his disciples "do this in remembrance of me" [Luke 22:19] is a command not to do the same, but do anew for each Host. In the Catholic mystery of the Eucharist, as Joyce would have been taught it in his youth, repetition and novelty were united – Joyce took the step supplanting the *necessary* with the *necessarily contingent*.

In a sense literary, prioritising *aboutness* could be understood as a failure to recognise the contingent and instead assume that there is some perceptual or epistemic immediacy available from which the writer may work; either experiential or social. Joyce sees the writer as having no pre-given and general standard of immediacy (an "immediate immediacy"). Consequently, the writer must re-invent the wheel to describe each instance in its *apparent* immediacy. To put it more provocatively, Joyce writes among the ruins of perspective, not from perspectives. For critical readers of Joyce, the imperative "shut your eyes and see" [U 45] means diagnosing a dependency on metaphors of ocularity and vision in understanding narrative, which means that the study of fiction and narrative has frequently mistaken the given for the immanent and *vice versa*. In this way, ocular and vision-based metaphors allow a

wholly philosophical amphibology to masquerade as an empiricism or an appeal to the supposedly undeniable immediacy of sense perception. Metaphors and analogies based on open sight and ocularity tend to smuggle philosophy into places where only perception and immediacy seem to be at play; the turn towards empirical givens is one and the same as a turn towards their value as philosophical capital. *Finnegans Wake* makes revealing this conspiracy between philosophical discourse and ocular metaphor central to its thought world, as the parody of Berkeley which features towards the end. The “puradoxed seer” [FW 611] speaks from a place of complicity between philosophy and vision: he is a lauded character not for his insight or intuition, which is a contradictory merger of Kant and Berkeley, but his unknowing manufacture of amusing and useful paradox, which those who “getting on nicely in the dark” [U 45] are in a prime position to appreciate. The given and irreducible complicity between vision and philosophy, as in Berkeley’s philosophy, is pulled by Joyce’s text from philosophy into a realm which one might call the mytho-conceptual or philo-fictive.

Although it is often worth using Joyce’s texts to challenge the underlying philosophical decisions colouring the reception of his fiction, just noting this does not do much to defend my descriptions of Joyce’s work as subtractive. We can see how easy it is to slide from an attempt to ‘do justice’ to Joyce’s own work, to using his work as an instrument for wider arguments! In order to return to the subtractive qualities of Joyce’s actual text, I would like to widen these concerns with immediacy and givenness, to take them beyond abstract philosophical questions about perceptual certainty on a personal level, or more general questions about the collective or common experience of Dublin itself, which is equally as important to the question of technique and form in Joyce’s work. The case needs to be made that the subtractive, the conceptual and all that can be said of Joyce’s embrace of Nietzschean themes of transvaluation are all, in a sense, on the same continuum. One could give this continuum the Joycean name *style*. To highlight this point, I want to refer to Joyce’s letter to his brother of September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906 [L 108]. In this letter Joyce famously castigates his own treatment of Dublin as “unnecessarily harsh” and as having “reproduced none of the attraction of the city” and not written of “its ingenious insularity and its hospitality”. Although in 1906 Joyce had certainly engaged with a transvaluative approach, he has mostly done so through trying to impose new values on his home city. The letter is important, as it sees that Joyce includes both himself and his own writing in this transvaluation. This inclusion is illuminating because it is so precise, as Joyce is not exactly self-critical, nor does he express a

desire to change his methods, instead discussing a change of attitude to “virtue” [Ibid.], which slides into a discussion of his relationship to Ibsen.

Although it concerns *Dubliners*, the September 25<sup>th</sup> letter has great significance for Joyce’s work as a whole. Joyce uses the phrase “an Irish landscape” to describe the crowds and activities of ‘Two Gallants’, a striking and inventive use of the phrase that is neither metaphorical nor analogical. A great insight to Joyce’s work is to notice how he saw the milling activity of Dublin crowds as a natural landscape in the most literal sense. The second significant remark used is a reference to a phrase of Stanislaus Joyce’s, “the Holy Ghost sitting in the ink-bottle and the perverse devil of my literary conscience sitting on the hump of my pen” [Ibid]. The significance of this phrase is underlined by Joyce’s later repurposing of it as the address of Shem’s hovel in *Finnegans Wake*, the Swift referencing “Haunted Inkbottle, no number Brimstone Walk” [FW 182], carrying the sense of writing being a location, that of a *coincidentia oppositorum* between the divine and the debased, yet also nowhere in particular, as it has “no number”, in this case no house number.

What it is perhaps most interesting about the letter, even more so than the change of heart about Dublin and the two famous phrases, is the notion that threads them together. Joyce harrumphs somewhat about his prospective publisher, Grant Richards, suggesting that *Dubliners* could be written ‘in another sense’, which Joyce considers in the letter to be a “meaningless phrase”. But this “meaningless phrase” seems to adequately describe the change in focus that Joyce’s writing was undergoing after having written the original *Dubliners* stories. Here, let us contrast Joyce’s use of the famously potent term “an Irish landscape”, and his mention of Gorky and Ibsen in the same letter, with the rather abstract term “reproduced” that he uses for his work. The use of “reproduced” here is significant, suggesting that Joyce does not see his work as something that reflects or mirrors, but rather something that iterates: the notion of *idée mère* is much more appropriate for his reproduced (and reproducing) Dublin than *representation*. Yet, it is still a long way from suggesting a form of writing that is so bold as to be something in itself, rather than about something, to paraphrase Beckett in *Dante Bruno Vico Joyce*. If we can modify Richards’ “meaningless phrase” by saying that Joyce’s literary relationship with Dublin has changed, we might say that ‘in another sense’, in Joyce’s consternated appropriation of the phrase, applies to realism. Not only is Joyce moving from being a realist in one sense (a naturalistic one) to another less naturalist and more subtractive realism, but putting things ‘in another sense’ is a crucial component of that realism. As Joyce’s letter to Richards in May 1906 stated, “I cannot alter what I have written”

[L 81]. However, foundationally to his claim to realism, in the following September, we see alteration and reproduction become more prominent. It is not difficult to see, in retrospect, that Joyce's mission to engage with Dublin in realist terms has become intertwined and, ultimately, inseparable from dependency on the vast amounts of detailed revisions his work would start to require. *Finnegans Wake* is a book about Dublin constructed in part by writing, then rewriting 'in another sense' and then 'in another sense' and so on, his writing ceasing to represent something, but beginning to represent its own interior concatenations of 'in another sense' to the point where this iterative process sublimates the original *aboutness* entirely.

Can we frame this move more precisely? Does this really constitute a new or distinct thinking of realism, or is it just the vacillation of ideas in Joyce's mind as he contends with publishers? I would argue that it is, in any case, significant. In earlier chapters concerning the question of experience intimacy, I showed how rather than represent the givenness of experience, and what is given in experience, Joyce shows immediacy itself to be a construction. Therefore, the realist writer cannot simply represent or 'stay true' to the originary immediacy of experience, but must engage in artifice and creation in a way which closely accords to the way that perceptual immediacy itself is a kind of artifice or concept creativity. In order to express this, I want to use an untranslatable word from Laruelle's work: *selon* [Laruelle, 'Théorie du Clonage', 1996]. If one defines realism as Joyce writing *selon* the Dublin of his experiences and his research, one cannot replace *selon* with 'according to', 'about', 'of', 'from the perspective of', 'from the position of', 'to the reality of' or 'as is': it means somehow both the sum of those and less than them. *Selon* lacks the implication of a foundational or intuitive point of contact that its English equivalents do. It is important here, as way to resolve the question of Joyce's Dublin being written according to Dublin in its reality, yet always also written 'in another sense' than the immediate as prior to understanding. The same is true for the question of perception and experience as raw material for narrative. The performative aspect of Joyce's texts is that of a *cloning* of Dublin rather than a *representing* or a *becoming*, as his literary performances or 'gaming out' of experiential immediacy mimics the conceptual ingenuity that produces the illusion of immediacy. To put it another way, we have Dublin *selon* Joyce's writing and Joyce's writing *selon* Dublin. Or to say it in plain English: after the publication of *Dubliners*, Joyce ceases to write *about* Dublin and instead obsessively revises his work *according to* Dublin, but 'according to' in that precise way communicated by *selon*. Crispi, Slote, et al spoke of the problematic of the concatenation of "intra-text" in their introduction to the anthology of genetic criticism in *How*



*Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*. In light of this, I would propose a double *selon* as a way to simplify this problematic without being reductive. That is, one can say each new revision is a dyadic extension on the text, as each singular addition bifurcates: once according to Dublin, and once according to *Finnegans Wake* itself. To generalise, I would argue that realist narrative composition is not conditioned upon either structure or givenness, but rather upon this double *selon*. As was argued in chapter two of this thesis, on page 65, “the goal of addressing the *differend* in Joyce is not to extract the problem from his work and rephrase it as a problem for theory, rather to write under the conditions of the dispute it reveals”, which encapsulates the distinction between interpreting and writing critically about a certain literary work, and a critical engagement which is according to it. This is an inescapably realist observation.

The relevance of realism to the transposition of the idea of ‘transvaluation’ from philosophy to aesthetics is, therefore, not governed by either aboutness or representation, but one which is twice *selon*, and its prerequisite is a radical rather than absolute immanence. In the domain of narrative writing this preference for the radical rather than the absolute entails, even necessitates, a realism without givenness. We can understand this as a necessary conclusion to Joyce’s Aristotlean or Thomist understanding of the intellect as active or grasping, apprehending, rather than passively experiencing or as a blank slate or void point onto which perceptual traces are projected. This activity of grasping has to do with transvaluation and conceptuality: the intellect itself makes the ‘given’ in the absence of a foundational givenness, and so the writer must draw or concoct emulations of immediacy from what was never truly immediate, from what could have only been *according to*.

The appropriated and contorted notion of transvaluation, therefore, must allow us to reconcile the early Joyce, whose eucharistic metaphor for aesthetic gesture is transubstantiation, as “priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life” [AP 221] with the later Joyce, whose eucharistic metaphor for is transaccidentation, as in “his own individual person life unliveable, transaccidentated through the slow fires of consciousness into a dividual chaos” [FW 186].

In short, one can observe that Joyce’s writing faces the same problem on both the microscopic and macroscopic scales, or to use his terms – in both the landscape and the portrait. This problem is how the instance of apprehension, both in its aesthetic and quotidian forms, can put together the experiential and the contingent without the pretence of unveiling

some foundation rule or given that would transport one into the other. Joyce's Eucharistic act is like the Catholic sacrament in one additional way: it is obligatory. That is, creation and transformation must be occurring in order for experiences to be experiences at all. Which implies a new principle of realism grounded not upon the absolute immanence of either sensation or materiality, but upon interactions between intimacies and concepts.

*A Play of Disembodied Faces, or Disembodied Faces at Play?*

If this thesis claims that intimacies and concepts, rather than sensual immediacy, form the 'grounds' of Joyce's writing, into which perceptual experience is deployed and transformed, it must be shown that Joyce indeed shows us the emulation and modelling of immediacy in its absence. This is not an argument that one must re-read Joyce to emphasize intellect and conceptualisation, as previous criticism has tended to emphasize language and perception, but rather arguing that experience has equal perceptual and conceptual components. This is to follow Joyce's ultimate claim to transcendental writing in *Finnegans Wake* [*Portraits of the Artist in Exile*, 1979: 132], and in a sense imply that insight to his work as a whole. But we must be careful because Joyce is not, as it were, deploying an 'off the shelf' transcendental thinking from a philosophical source like Berkeley or Kant. But rather to show that such a thing, in the domain of aesthetics rather than philosophy, must be made anew for each instance it attempts to apprehend.

Returning to the 'The Sisters', and the discussion we began in chapter five concerning the potent use of the word 'face' early in Joyce's development as a writer, we can see the role that faces have in regards to conceptuality. But speaking in this begs an important question: how can one think of the concept *face* and the experience of *faces* as entirely exterior to philosophical conceptualisation? For example, how might we avoid deploying philosophical assumptions that use metaphors of sight and seeing to bind faces to personal identity? Or, how might we avoid philosophical ideas about faces such as the irreducible face of the encounter according to Levinas' *Totality and Infinity* or the process of faciality Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaux*? How could one bypass the necessity of either philosophical assumption or philosophical framing in order to bridge the gap between the *instance* of a face and the *concept* of a *face*? And then, how can we further show that Joyce's concreteness requires equal deploy of both, mediated through aesthetic stylisation?

It is useful to return to the notion of faces, not least because the word “face” occurs so frequently in Joyce’s work that it is, more than just a tendency, a dependency. If we can argue that Joyce’s realism is a realism of instances, then he depends upon the word face to immanentise the *instance* (more so than the *moment*) of interpersonal contact, contact between distinct persons that conserves their distinction before its subsumption within difference. Joyce leans on the word “face” so heavily because each instance of a face is a small model narrative form in itself, the double *selon* in its most minor form. In *Finnegans Wake*, one finds such a parallelism between faces and narrative form frequently: the first description of Noah’s sons ends on a description of the face of God ringed with a rainbow [FW 3] in parody or reversal of God moving “on the face” of the water, and, later, when  $\Pi$  is to face his accusers in the front room of the pub, there is a telling pairing of the expression “cease, prayse, storywalking around” with “the water of the face has flowed” [FW 361], most obviously referring to tears, but also a tapering end to the flow of a story. In both cases, the instance of the face has taken the place of a narrative or a story. For a moment the familiarity suggested by the word “face” fades and is replaced by a wholly narrative sense; or perhaps, meaning is effaced by narrative function. The occurrence of the word “face” suggests that creative instance has wholly supplanted creative origin.

For a more convention example, we can see in ‘The Sisters’, there is a similar narrative encapsulation in the vision of the “heavy grey face of the paralytic” [D 3] imagined by the protagonist under cover of the blankets, the face here not only recalling the haunting of the boy by thoughts of the person whose face he might be imagining, but suggesting the form of the story itself in an irreducible miniature. Even the spatial and temporal structure of ‘The Sisters’ is stripped away, leaving the face, disembodied, suggestive of a structure in which it cannot possibly belong. It *follows* in a motion belonging neither to time nor space, an obscure narrative ordinality which anticipates the *flows* of face-stories in *Finnegans Wake*.

In *Ulysses*, there is a similar instance where the word “face” acts as a narrative in miniature. Stephen’s philosophical pondering “who chose this face for me?” [U 5] signals something of this. Throughout the opening of *Ulysses*, the relationship between Mulligan and Dedalus is, in part, established through the uses of the word, and perhaps one could even say that Joyce draws the widening gap between Dedalus and Mulligan, in part, by allowing his prose to stylistically chart a widening and narrowing gap between the word “face” as indicative of a concept and the word “face” as indicative of an object.

The undulations of such a gap is evident in an early authorial description of Mulligan: “The plump shadowed face and sullen oval jowl recalled a prelate, patron of arts in the middle ages” [U 2]. This description of Mulligan is an opportunity to introduce the ironic tone through which Joyce uses the character to parody the real person of Oliver Gogarty. We note here that, initially, the word “face” does not refer as much as to a real face but, rather, the word describes the impression that the features of a face give together with their environment, which would make one recall a “prelate, a patron of arts in the middle ages”. In a subtle way, one could consider that Joyce is being axiomatic rather than definitive, introducing a face in terms of what it *must* do, rather than describing it in terms of its identifying features, identifying features both of particular faces, as well as the elements that make a face recognisable as a face. This face is inseparable from what acts about and upon it, since here it is “shadowed” but, also, from the actions it performs, in this case a suggestion of a sinking motion of the features making Mulligan’s face appear “sullen”. Describing how a face seems or appears in order to recall another face is to talk about the appearance of a face, suggesting a recursion. The seeming or likeness of a face is, in a sense, not a secret or deduced meaning but the outward-facing part of a face itself, so a face also has to be the face of the face which it is. In turn, if it suggests anything, it must suggest another face, which would be the face of the possible face of the original face. A face is both a conceptualisation of the unilateral or outward-facing instance of interpersonal contact, but it is also the material surface from which this conceptualisation is drawn through intimacies both real and implied. In this case, the doubled intimacy between Mulligan’s face and Gogarty’s public images, and between the impression of sullenness and the impression of a historical stereotype. This is an inescapably dyadic arrangement: the conceptualisation of outward-facing is paired with the turning, or stylisation, of a concept so it turns outward and hints at its own unilaterality. A Joyce face is a dual form without any foundational dualism or duality.

But this is not to say that examples such as the above use of ‘face’ are exclusively conceptual. One can find good reason to consider that Joyce is being true to the strident nominalism that Stephen insists upon in the early part of his discussion later at the library [U, ‘Scylla and Carybdis’], since he is choosing to treat faces in terms of activity rather than identity. However, in the same phrases, doubt is being cast over such a nominalist or pragmatic attitude: references to faces in the first episode of *Ulysses* have a playful yet somewhat indifferent and chilly character, that seems to suggest an underlying conceptuality. No wonder: if in *Dubliners* a face, or someone’s idea of a face, is what animated Joyce’s

guiding of the *leitmotif* of paralysis from a copybook definition to becoming an entity, “the paralytic”, it is perhaps to be expected that the word “face” performs something of a similar function in the opening of *Ulysses*, becoming a kind of personalisation or marker for the play Joyce makes between concepts and objects. In *Ulysses*, however, there is no single guiding conceptual thread such as paralysis, to which that play may be anchored. Instead, the conceptual tension is free to roam from one concept to another, a contingency well expressed in the question “who chose this face for me?” which, in itself, is suggestive of a play of ideas removed from an act of decision. The statement “who choose this face for me?” does not only appeal to contingency, but it fixes an indecision in the sense that the question lies unanswered. Even the answer “nobody” would do something to moderate the absolute and necessary contingency implied by the question itself.

There is also something of a set theoretical paradox secreted in Joyce’s use of faces in general, or in the choice between faces: as, for example, the set of all prime numbers is not a prime number. If, in my attempt to model Joyce’s play of concept and style with tautological sentences like “a face also has to be the face of the face which it is”, it way that that suspended their tautology, I cannot escape the fact that I am playing not with words exactly but with vulgarisations of mathematical paradox. Or perhaps this ‘play’ is already part of Joyce’s writing: one must fully accept that games and jokes are a rational way to respond critically to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In real terms, all pairs of black trousers are not a pair of trousers. The group of all the female characters in *Ulysses* is not a female character in *Ulysses*. All faces cannot be a face. Contrary to the example of horses Stephen will later articulate to himself in the library, there can only be *faceness* at work here, and not a sense of a nominal, representationally minimal, *face* standing for all faces. This is something perhaps played with in the structure of *Finnegans Wake*, with the expression “Here Comes Everyone” [FW 32], and the inflation of each character to embody everyone in whatever particular demographic group Joyce wishes at that moment, an aspect that allows this rule to be briefly violated and then reinforced. The set of all pub landlords can be a pub landlord, but only momentarily; the set of all rivers can be a river but only momentarily, and so on. Just as there is a moment within *Ulysses* where the useless, tautological sentence “a face also has to be the face of the face which it is” makes perfect sense as a description of how Joyce uses the word ‘face’. This momentarily, or evanescent, transgression of ontic cohesion effectively allows Joyce to move hither and thither between nominalistic and anti-nominalistic attitudes. But this hithering and thithering between nominalism and anti-nominalism, pragmatism and

formalism, is a core component of Joyce's work, and not just in the explicitly universalist dalliances (which include parodies of universalisms<sup>160</sup>). But, I would argue that the Joycean face, and particular Joyce faces, resist this philosophical 'hithering and thithering', as they represent a line between conceptualisation and instantiation that is so clear in its distinctiveness that it resists subordination to differential discourse, either philosophical or transcendental.

I would like, once more, to stress the eccentricity that is definitive in Joyce's use of the word 'face': when the word 'face' appears in Joyce's prose, it describes neither the features nor the rule by which they are put together, but neither does it describe a kind of performance, what one does with a face. It establishes a new kind of semiotic domain, something belonging almost exclusively to a gesture of aesthetic novelty. This gesture circumscribes the conceptual ligament with which one binds a concept to a collection of objects, and one then performs some kind of action in the same motion. The notion of either a "meaning" (faces do not have to have a meaning other than their own instance), or any particular epistemic construction (faces need to be more than either their social being or their being correlated by human thought), is not required. Neither is any notion of givenness required, such as the idea that what the word "face" refers to is irreducible to the experience of using a face to emote, or to the experience of another's face emoting is, and can only be approximated in literature and never truly represented. This might not be so obvious in the case of *Ulysses*, where the word "face" often seems inseparable from either contemplation or interior thoughts during a dialogue, for example the use of "face" where Bloom attempts to be amicable with his companions in the funeral carriage [U 117], or when Stephen's interior monologue refers to the librarian's question "alarmed face asked me" [U 247] instead of naming him.

But if each instance of the word "face" on one of Joyce's pages is a narrative unto itself. A narrative in miniature, or a minimum atomic component, a narrative enacted in capsule form. Turning back to 'The Sisters', the boy's experience of death becomes a parallel, without being an analogy, to the conceptualisation of what is beyond oneself: death not as terminus or limit, but as an ever-present outside which seems to both advance towards our thought and recede from our sensation, the given which is without givenness [Laruelle 2004], even if we draw the epiphenomenal blankets over our heads and try to think of Christmas [D, 3]. In the consideration of the narrator of 'The Sisters', the old priest had access to what is

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<sup>160</sup> For example, in the conclusion of *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake*, Finn Fordham makes a case for Joyce presenting a parody or satire of universality by staging their grotesque disintegrations.

beyond oneself, not in a way related to the mystical or the mortal, but in the conceptual apparatus. From the place of a naïve child, one might consider the rituals of Catholicism apiece with the business of concept-making: showing “how complex and mysterious were certain institutions of the Church which I had always regarded as the simplest acts” [D, 5]. What do “elucidating all these intricate questions” and being put “through the responses of the Mass” [D, 5] have in common? What is common between ceremonies and duties, which are gamelike or dancelike, and the comprehensibility and utility of concepts?

The answer to this question is already in the image of a disembodied face. All faces are disembodied and, in a sense outside of possession or ‘mine-ness’, are neither reducible to a collection of bodily features, nor an irreducible bodily performance. A face is a concept, but only barely. Ontologically, one might argue that the operation that governs Joyce’s faces is not  $\in$  or the belonging of certain elements to a particular set, but  $\subset$  or inclusion as a subset. A face is neither one irreducible element which belongs to a whole, nor the belonging of particular elements to that whole. But rather, and here we carefully move from literal to analogical use of set theoretical language, a metastructural operation which draws a new element from the bare situation into the situation-as-situated. We can think of faces as conceptual in the sense of their being extensions or structural possibilities, which paradoxically lack the precise property of belonging (such as mine-ness or his-ness) which may intuitively seem to be their most inalienable feature. Yet despite this the face is a figure of operational complexity, like a game or music played with facial features, this same metastructural property ensures a certain intransigent singularity, as in the pass from situation to situated-situation ensures a new possibility for incoherent. Or, in Badiou’s terms, a new and singular proximity to the void. So, although it reliant upon encyclopedic complexity, the Joycean aesthetic domain of faces, by turns haunting and comic, arises from the face being a figure of conceptual minimality, a radical minimality that is almost a game or a dance. The strange facial movements of Flynn resemble play or ritual motions, more than they directly emote. The gamelike and dancelike rituals of the Mass model the strange facial expressions of Flynn, which in turn reflect the enigmatic and disembodied gestures which compose institutional acts of worship.

Joyce’s faces can also be thought of as the surfaces on which such gestures leave traces, or the surface implied by a gamelike or dancelike motion. The shadows across Mulligan’s face emphasizing his expression, and the reflection of a face upon water occur early in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* in a way that primes the reader to expect faces to

often be inseparable from matters of reflection, shadow and obscurity. But this too gives us an image of a face itself as a kind of surface, as a topological space or curve. In a certain sense the 'surface' of the face is the line between conceptuality and non-conceptuality (paralysis and the rehearsal of givenness), the face of the paralytic a rehearsal of givenness. A face 'looks into' conceptuality from beyond it, or 'looks out from'. A face is unilateral, having no transcendental mine-ness or absolute immanence of its own, its faciality belonging to its instance and not to its being. This instance is better circumscribed by extra-philosophical immanence than intra-philosophical notions of identity and difference. Although, from the position of the narrative, the "heavy grey face" is "of the paralytic", implying that it is not properly either "mine" or "his", since the conceptual potency of a face lies in the very way in which it always lacks the possibility of such a mine-ness: its real distinction is absolute in the sense that it will always, in a way, escape the wholly philosophical difference between "mine" and "his".

With this reliance on faces, and the word 'face', typified by both 'The Sisters' and the first episode of *Ulysses*, Joyce introduces a complication, a kind of conceptual doubling or self-cloning, that confounds his own purposes. In order for the dialogue between Mulligan and Stephen to express their variant relationships convincingly, from intellectual rivalry to interpersonal dependencies, there must be some kind of baseline of clarity upon which their interactions can be communicated succinctly to the reader. However, the usage of the word "face" prevents any such baseline of communicative clarity, because a certain indecision is preserved in each instance of the word "face". At the very least, "face" from the very beginning means the part of Mulligan that he chooses to display to Stephen, or the part that performs his character to his own satisfaction as he speaks. But, Mulligan is also a "face" that was "chosen" for Oliver Gogarty by James Joyce, to the point where one can say, with no risk of being misunderstood, that Buck Mulligan has become the face of Oliver Gogarty for ongoing generations of readers of Irish literature. A face enters a realm of differentiation only by virtue of an exterior decision, an act of choosing or counter-signature. This exterior choice does not undo the fixing of the indecision from which the conceptuality of the "face" is drawn, but it serves to highlight the fact that the distinctive of each particular face is overshadowed by the differentiation between faces. That is, the instance and its distinction cannot remain as simply tautological to the differentiation which provides the syntax through which such distinction is articulated.



I do not feel that the above point is very original, since it could be said about countless aspects of Joyce's work, where one could see the division of a word-object from its object-referent and the triumph over a play of signification over signified objects. This is perhaps the indispensable insight of deconstruction's engagement with Joyce's Dublin: pints that are not pints, sovereigns that are not sovereigns, trousers that are not trousers, and so on. The same goes for activities: Joyce's double is a place where walking is not walking, drinking is not drinking, pissing is not pissing, sex is not sex. However, I feel this primarily linguistic focus upon referentiality only tells part of the story, not the whole of it. When one considers instances of the word "face", each suggests not only the word as signifier, but the concept by which the word is legible. This is how I would choose to deploy the notion of counter-signature, as that which underscores the lack of any possible categorical *givenness* in any *given* instance. By virtue of the importance of signatures and counter-signatures, in both the most metaphorical and literary sense, when one sees the word "face" on the pages of *Ulysses* it is in a sense of both word (less than itself) and concept (more than itself). The tele-grammatical effect between signifying mark and signified object is necessarily duplicated in a grapheme "face", which marks the potential difference between word and concept: a word is a word by virtue of its marking its own *distinctiveness to* (but not yet *difference from*). This marks a connection, or disconnection, between the materiality of graphemic markings and the legible writing forms of a series of jokes in *Finnegans Wake* [FW 18] in which the word "face" provides both semantic puns and visual puns, particularly where the words "face to face" appears with the letter 'F' rotated ninety and then two-hundred-and-seventy degrees, as it describes terracotta figurines which have fallen on their backs and faces. The gesture is not the grapheme, the grapheme is not the word: there is no pre-conceptual givenness or immediacy to establish these apparently foundational identities in such a way which might account for the pre-philosophical givenness of differences. The unilaterality involved in drawing out or emulating givenness or immediacy between such things is almost perfectly modelled by the Joycean "face", which I would argue explains his dependency on it. "Face" is a trace of minimality within narrative, it is an assurance, a bridge from the material to the conceptual which does not require a pre-conceptual immediacy so much as it absolutely requires the *emulation* of such. This usage of "face" is a constituent aspect of a generic thinking of, and through, narrative. As the word 'face' is always metonymous and never synonymous with an instance of distinct expression, its narrative function is therefore the picturing of the act of duplication by an act of duplication. In other words, a cloning which takes a reducibly dyadic form rather than irreducibly heterogenous one.

If the ‘drawing out’ described in the previous paragraph appears as though I am playing a game with words rather than expanding on my argument, this is entirely intentional, as Joyce’s conceptual manner of deploying face as both word and concept eschews interpretation and can provoke only play in response. This is not to say that critique should be cast off, but rather that if play has a punctual effect on the page, so too does it punctuate one’s endeavours to read critically or conceptually. Each distinct appearance of the word ‘face’ has a punctual effect, as they mark points where practical consideration of the text, such as the need to characterise Buck and Stephen as wholly separate personalities with distinct appearances, become indistinct from the long-form conceptual play that is characteristic of Joyce’s texts. Joyce expects his readers to ‘play along’ rather than to understand – both in the musical and gamelike sense.

Such endless games between the practical and the conceptual mean that we cannot simply point to an anti-nominalism suggested by Joyce’s work without proposing something other than nominalism, since the case of a pragmatist or nominalist Joyce is otherwise so strong, especially considering the use of Ogden (representative of linguistic pragmatism) [FW 233 & 267] and Mauthner (representative of linguistic nominalism) [FW 564] intermittently throughout *Finnegans Wake*. Rather, Joyce’s work crosses from nominalism or anti-nominalism: it presents its readers with a circuit of nominalist and anti-nominalist attitudes that closes and constricts around its singularities. Joyce appears uninterested in *applying* philosophical ideas about language, instead extracting concepts from such systems and examining those concepts at the limits of their intelligibility. So, when Joyce begins to heavily lean on a concept like “face”, which is a word so ordinary that one is scarcely in the habit of thinking of it as a concept at all, he leads us to think again about the concrete, not in terms of the irreducible givenness of direct experience, but in terms of ordinariness as a kind of uninterrogated reserve of concepts stamped into material things. That is, Joyce shows us that we are already at play, not in an absolutely free play of ideas and words unmoored from real things, but a play between primary and secondary qualities which provide the restrictions needed to make a game [Gadamer, 1975 ‘The Concept of Play’].

If this is to posit conceptuality in literary writing as fundamentally interactive, then Joyce’s use of the word face in dialogue is also illuminating, as in the sentence “he can’t wear them Buck Mulligan told his face in the mirror. Etiquette is etiquette. He kills his mother but he can’t wear grey trousers” [U 5]. Again, this use of the word “face” does not describe either a face as a physical object nor a sensory experience of a face, but rather Mulligan’s

condescending and barbed way of talking. Mulligan's activity of "telling his face" is very precise: he is not mocking Stephen by pretending to have a conversation with his reflection, nor is the reflection incidental to the third person diatribe. "Face" here refers not to the actual face, nor exclusively to the reflection of the face, but the outward-facing part of Mulligan's character. Mulligan is addressing his own appearance, perhaps in vanity. He is speaking from one part of himself toward another. "Buck Mulligan's face smiled with delight", rather than "Buck Mulligan smiled": the outward-facing part of Buck Mulligan smiled. The ironic barb here is against Gogarty: the most open-minded, Nietzschean or Hellenistic spirit [Gilbert, 1955: 97] is a closed loop or a Klein-bottle, a kind of ideational solipsism. This view is in line with Alain Badiou's critique of western twentieth century thought, the 'democratic materialism' which only believes in the existence of bodies and languages, and rejects truths [Badiou, 2006]. The private, bitter Mulligan, who is cruel to Stephen out of a covert jealousy of his intellectual status, is addressing the outward-facing public face of Mulligan, who is blunt but benevolent. When Joyce tells us "He looked in Stephen's face as he spoke" [U 7], this portrays him not so much as looking at Stephen's physical features, but using them to search Stephen for any clue as to how to respond or, perhaps, come out as Stephen's intellectual superior: "He turned abruptly his grey searching eyes from the sea to Stephen's face" [U 4].

The connection of faces with colonial power or authority is apparent also in the description "A deaf gardener, aproned, masked with Matthew Arnold's face, pushes his mower on the sombre lawn watching narrowly the dancing motes of grasshalms." [U 7] and in the use of the word "Palefaces", which is Irish slang for English, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was coming to mean any description of a white coloniser by the colonised. In the reference to Matthew Arnold, and the deployment of Matthew Arnold's face to convey a stoic or stiff upper-lipped expression, faces themselves seem to belong to a surplus of colonial presence.

On this basis, we can establish that the usage of the word "face" is not literal, but still realist. It always belongs to an experience, without being reducible (or irreducible) to experience. Despite its frequency of usage, one may be surprised at how seldom the word neatly refers either to a face as a real object, or to the direct perception of a face. But, if it is not literal, neither is it analogical or metaphorical: in the majority of the mentioned usages, Joyce is not simply using the word "face" to construct a series of parallels. It is not synecdoche either, as Joyce is not saying "face" to mean something specific. To Joyce, the face often means the outward-facing part of something, a metonymic usage where one kind of

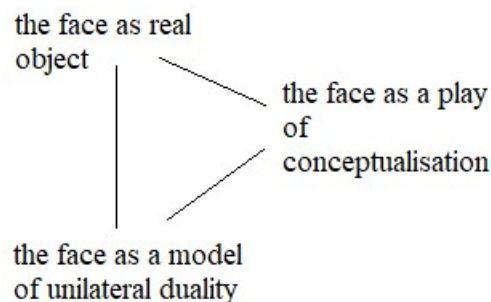
outward-facing part comes to mean all outward-facing parts and surfaces. In short, the eccentricity of Joyce's dependency upon the word "face" has no consistent rhetorical purpose. It is a concept, though not a rhetorical one, but a wholly narrative one, gaining its function and import from the situation of narrative alone as it is *included* by narrative without necessarily *belonging* to the situation from which the narrative is drawn, in a way which accords to the way real faces are constructed by inclusion rather than irreducible basic elements in themselves. As an instance of the word "face" is not an irreducible element but the narrative emulation of such an irreducible component, one might even say that many, or even most, of the instances of the word "face" (in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* in particular) are holes in the rhetorical construction of whatever passage they occur in, where rhetorical conceptuality breaks or malfunctions in a way that gives precedence to narrative conceptuality. Or the conceptual structurality of *narrative* takes a situational precedence over the structure of *story*. It is also important not to confuse narrative with story: the *concept* "face" is divorced from the activity of any particular voice, from perspective and linearity, but maintains its proximity and function within to narrative even as it is forcing a gap in the narration.

A possible counterargument or complaint here could be that I am making something of a nonsensical distinction. The distinction between rhetorical concepts such as metonymy or analogy and the idea of the word face denoting a "narrative concept" seems to fail, because we can say what rhetorical concepts do, and other narrative concepts do things too. What does "face" do, in this case? The answer to this is simple, but perhaps evasive. What "face" does is relevant wholly to the narrative itself, without referent beyond narrative. Whereas rhetoric or narrative concepts, such as metonymy or fore-shadowing, do things that are visible on the exterior of a piece of rhetoric or narrative, the workings of "face" are relevant only from within the situation of narrative itself. *Narrative concept*, in this case, does not mean anything already structural, nor anything designed to illicit any specific effects from the reader or listener, but something that the narrative does to itself. A narrative concept is an operation of narrative upon narrative, so we might describe it as inverting the structure of narrative: a single *selon* dependent upon a double *selon*, as narrative is a double *selon* dependent upon a single *selon*. Narrative accords to both itself and reality, as it is more than just a representation, model or story, offering the possibility of structure more than it offers any particular structure.

The concept "face", as in the 'esthetic' (to use Joyce's word) image of face, is therefore an intrusion between the notion of a face in its distinctiveness and a face in its

differences. The archly ironic description of Mulligan as having “plump shadowed face and sullen oval jowl [which] recalled a prelate, patron of arts in the middle ages.” [U, 2] shows how treacherous a hiatus there can be between distinction and difference. Joyce hijacks the motion from the former to the later by the impersonal “recall” which aims neither at the face of Mulligan, nor the face of the man from whom Mulligan is drawn, but their pretensions. The dissonance between the distinctiveness of Mulligans face, which seems to the reader to be pleasant, jovial, betraying an underlying intelligence and the differences built atop, which cast the man as pretentious and self-absorbed, provides a stylistic space into which Joyce can conceptualise and reconceptualise the “face” in the light of the disintegrating comradeship between Stephen Dedalus and Buck Mulligan. This is also to say that Joyce shows conceptualising and reconceptualising to be the cognitive dimension of this interpersonal action, at least on Stephen’s side.

This tripartite structurality-without-structure can be seen below, with three inter-operative terms which rely upon each other:



The face “models” unilateral duality, because being a face is a display of unilaterality.

At this point, I must restate one of the arguments of this thesis: Joyce is not fundamentally a writer with an anti-Platonist philosophy, but a practitioner of a *non*-Platonism, which is neither pro-Plato nor anti-Plato, but operates with conceptual proximity to philosophy while on the exterior of philosophy. He is likewise a non-Thomist, a non-Berkeleyan, a non-Vichean and so on for each conceptual reservoir he appropriations from. Joyce’s radical stylistic departures and subtractive techniques do not constitute an attempt to the leave the cave of illusions and get back to incontrovertible reality but, rather, accounts of the cave waking up to an awareness of itself as a place where illusions are manufactured, composed and recomposed. Joyce gives us, not a Platonic cave, but a “Platonic garlen” [FW

622], perhaps a merger of Plato's cave and botanical gardens. Joyce's concern seems neither to be with a wholly subjective and personal experience of the world, nor is it concerned with a world beyond experience. Joyce's concern is with the what, why, when and where's when access to the world, or being-in the world, takes place, which itself orbits (without subordinating itself to) the question of how this sort of access exists. To borrow Badiou's portmanteau [Badiou 2014, 'Being-There'], apt because it is bilingual, Joyce is neither the writer of a philosophical Being-qua-Being, nor of hermeneutic *dasein* or being-apparent, but of *dans-sein*, being there-in, and its universal-particular or specific-generic correlate being-in-Dublin.

This understanding of Joyce's balancing act between the concepts and instances brings us to a new way of thinking about his so-called 'scrupulous meanness': how can one introduce such obscure conceptualisations and prankish games into the communicative baseline of language, the fabric that facilitates the clarity of realist literature, and still lay claim to any form of realism, whether philosophical, aesthetic, or of literary genre? The answer I would give is that such a disruption is, at its heart, a conceptual manoeuvre rather than simply a linguistic one. But is this not a very anti-Joycean statement? Is not Joyce, as a writer, renowned primarily for writing experiences as they are experienced, and for being convinced of *Ulysses* as an 'epic of the body'? Does it depart from the deeply Aristotelian convictions of what is on the page to suggest, even in an academic argument, that what is happening in Joyce's fiction is primarily conceptual activity? Is this the point where the fiction of my argument loses any claim at all to parallel with Joyce's fictions themselves?

My answer to this is that one must radically reframe how we think of ideas and concepts relative to life. If a gambit of this thesis is to say that Joyce is neither Platonist nor Anti-Platonist, and a reading of his work in the triangulation of Badiou-Derrida from the perspective of Laruelle's non-philosophical connoisseurship of philosophical concepts, we must have done with any division between real things and ideas of things, or with any idea that representationalism naturally leads to an oppressive focus on abstractions. Or, the idea that Joyce's employment of peripatetic axiom and Nietzschean affirmation as concept rules implies a rejection of intellect in favour of the sensible, and an implicit critique of the role which reason plays within aesthetics.

Reading Joyce as a realist will always be difficult in the sense that this particular kind of realism requires a player rather than a reader. If one accepts Joyce's 'esthetics' as a 'realism', then it is a game that one must play along with if one is to agree that the Joyce-

concept 'face' is indeed a face. I would argue that there are three strong arguments to be made about realism in general from the position of Joyce's work, but from a contemporary perspective. Firstly, there is a distinction between primary and secondary qualities, which is not simply to reiterate the distinction which Joyce has Stephen state in *A Portrait*, but the making-aesthetic of an insight from the works of Badiou and Meillassoux. Secondly, what constitutes this distinction is never a 'given'. In a sense, it is made anew in its every instance (the one-effect), the making-aesthetic of a Laruellian insight that one must take immanence to be *radical* rather than *absolute*. Rather than rely on a general system of thinking that will discern primary qualities from secondary qualities, every time a writer evokes this distinction, it must be made anew, but made anew *according-to* (*selon*) the entirely unilateral distinctions which are the real-as-instance exterior to the text or the narrative which it embodies.

Thirdly and finally, we see that the above points can be made to conform to the Derridean insight concerning counter-signature or deferral, not the deferral of the representation, but a secondary deferral of the deferral itself. We can say: the deferral is itself deferred, a principle of counter-signature that does not sign so much for the representation and represented, but one that, instead, signs and ratifies the relation between the representation and represented, the complexification and concatenation of *selon* rather than parallelisms of *aboutness*. To make another general point: views of narrative or aesthetic founded upon critiques of representation cannot grasp Joyce's grasping. We must not think of the paradigm of aesthetic representation as *representations of* things but *representings according to* things: apprehension is not a representation of an object, but a union of image and gesture, a representing according to what is both object and instance.

## CHAPTER 9: THE OPERATIVES OF AESTHETIC SUBTRACTION

### *A Generic Presentation of the Non-Immediacy of the Apparently Immediate?*

So far, as regards to the subtractive dimension of Joyce's work, there are two negative hypotheses being presented in this thesis. This presents a problem in itself, because these hypotheses are doubly negative in the sense that one must negatively describe the consequences of Joyce's negations. At this point, to say that I regard Joyce's technical disposition (in terms of the specific executions of formal innovation) as subtractive creates a risk of overlooking the fact that Joyce's aesthetics remains resolutely affirmational. Joyce lacks an ontology and, thus, is neither ontologically subtractive nor ontologically affirmative. One might formulate the problem as follows: how can one hold onto a clear account of subtraction as a technical action or formal gesture, without overlooking or reducing the significance of the affirmation towards which the subtraction is orientated? Joyce is not subtractive with the aim of making prescriptive statements about the world<sup>161</sup>, but is as regards the question of apprehension: Joyce (like his avatar, Stephen) clearly considered apprehension as a principally aesthetic and cognitive activity, marked by an involvement or a participation in the world beyond oneself, that goes beyond describing or representing what is already there.

The first negative hypothesis that I have been exploring in this thesis refers to the aesthetic orientation that has its clearest and most explicit statement in Stephen Dedalus's famous imperative "shut your eyes and see."<sup>162</sup> However, it is also evidenced in Joyce's endorsement of Blake's slaying of "the dragon of natural experience" [OCPW 181], where his

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<sup>161</sup> But there is, again, a huge problem here. Between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, there is a marked contrast between the usage of philosophy and philosophical reference points. In *Ulysses*, philosophy is always situated, in the sense that it comes related to certain arguments (for example, 'Scylla and Carybdis') or certain attempts at understanding (for example, 'The Lotus Eaters'). Whereas, in *Finnegans Wake*, there is an abundance of declarative and prescriptive philosophical statements strewn throughout the book, seeming to belong to everyone and no one. In accounting for distinctions such as these, even if one disagrees that such a contrast exists, we must avoid simply dividing philosophical statements between those coming from a particular perspective or individual's viewpoint, and general ones that seem to come either from the authorial voice, or from the voice of the work itself. Such a division might seem intuitive and commonsensical at first. In fact, it does nothing to resolve our difficulties in reading such distinctions and, instead, risks imposing a slew of assumptions about what it is to be 'particular' and what it is to be 'universal', at the expense of overlooking the generic capacities of both kinds of usages of philosophy.

<sup>162</sup> As a point of interest, in terms of Joyce's popular reception and image, this quote is the most 'popular' quote of Joyce's on several websites which hold ranks of the most popular quotations of various authors as of the date of February 2021. The site "Goodreads", for example, shows it being "liked" by users over five hundred more times than the second most popular quote, the final sentence of *Ulysses*. This is perhaps in keeping with Joyce's changing reputation from a crude or obscene writer of the body to a cerebral author celebrated by academics, philosophers and scientists.



skepticism towards Blake's mysticism is matched by his willingness to reconfigure the notion that one must look "not *with* but *through*" [OCPW 181] one's eyes into an imperative of imaginative practice. The hypothesis runs as follows: in employing perception and memory, not as the grounds of indisputable immediacy or reflective of the irreducible role of intuition, but rather as elements in on-going processes of artifice or imagination, Joyce's writing contorts and subverts experiential immediacy to the point where it mutates beyond our normal understanding. This is done in such a manner as to create an impression of experiential access to the real (the 'concrete', or the particular as understood as an instance of what is real 'for us'). This is perverse and unintuitive precisely because our normal means of having access to the world is perverse and unintuitive. Joyce's famous 'difficulty' or 'obscurity' sometimes results from the reader's frequent failure to recognise a Joycean depiction of an experience as an experience. This lack of foundational similarity entirely reflects what experiencing is actually like as a thoughtful process. Joyce identifies uninterrogated appeals to modalities or semantics of experience – direct experience, lived experience, immediate experience, and so on, as covertly transcendental postures.<sup>163</sup> In philosophy, this runs closely to what has been known as 'transcendental empiricism', and is typified most clearly by Gilles Deleuze. It is evidenced in the absence of negatives or categories of negation. However, as Joyce is working subtractively, his work is a negative impression of such, a vessel holding a 'transcendental empiricism'. If we are to work under the assumption that "absence is the highest form of presence" is a transcendental maxim of Joyce's aesthetic, we can understand that phrase not as an abstraction or a paradox of definition, but as a practical principle of how to unify the subtractive and the concrete.

However, Joyce is not a philosopher. When Joyce writes "welcome O life" [AP 252-253] in a voice that belongs both to himself and to his avatar, no particular perspective or image is being affirmed; there is no requirement that that for an artist to take an affirmational posture, he must either affirm a philosophy or have an affirmational philosophy of his own. What Joyce's work deems to be worthy of affirmation is not a philosophy, understood as a view or image of the world, or the world itself as a totality, but rather something that has happened. The "reality of experience" [AP 253] is something to be encountered and it is this "encounter"<sup>164</sup> that is affirmed. That is to say, Joyce's affirmation is oriented towards something of the order of an event, rather than a worldview. What is affirmed in Joyce's work

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<sup>163</sup> And he is correct about this, but his being correct is not relevant to the hypothesis.

<sup>164</sup> Verb, not noun. This is a dyad: the realness of experience and the experience of the real.

is therefore July 16<sup>th</sup> 1904, the encounter between Joyce and Nora Barnacle,<sup>165</sup> Joyce's discovery of Ibsen<sup>166</sup> and the writing and publication of *Ulysses*.<sup>167</sup> These events (and a great many others) are affirmed, rather than simply commemorated, by Joyce's books. However, observations of such are *negative*, insofar as we can locate within Joyce something that might be called a negative aesthetic discovery, namely that there is no immediacy of the immediate, that concreteness and immediacy repel each other. Although this discovery is within the milieu of aesthetics, it never purports or attempts to be a philosophical or scientific image of the world. Nonetheless, it involves a complex (or, after Giordano Bruno, *complicatio*) of contradiction with realist and material reasoning. This performs a break in the self-supporting triad of being-for-us (correlates),<sup>168</sup> immediacy and concreteness, allowing Joyce to escape the confines of interior monologue, even in the moments where he is first adapting the form to his work. In breaking the triad, Joyce is preventing the requirement for a two-track or dual-layer approach to reading his work: one track, the 'stream' of consciousness, would move forwards, bound to a foundational affinity between perceptual immediacy (and 'mineness') and time; the second track,<sup>169</sup> governing reference and referentiality, would often seem to work retrospectively. However, this two-track image<sup>170</sup> of narrative composition could result in a very reductive view of the middle episodes of *Ulysses*, for example, where one might

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<sup>165</sup> The question "Is there one who understands me?" was originally asked by Joyce of his future wife [FW 627]

<sup>166</sup> We might see the references to Ibsen in *Finnegans Wake*, particularly in the first 'book' of *Finnegans Wake*, as the acknowledgement of the fact that Ibsen's work is a kind of building, or artifice, that makes one fall into the reality of experience from prior transcendental position. I would not put it as strongly as to say that any one particular set of references to Ibsen 'commemorates' the encounter between Joyce and Ibsen, but would rather claim that the affirmation and the acknowledgement of the encounter, in the place of mere reference, is sewn throughout.

<sup>167</sup> Joyce jokes on the act of censoring *Ulysses*, the "bowdler and censor" sighs "it can't be repeated" but, in doing so, unwittingly affirms that the "usylessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles" is unrepeatable, a truly singular event [FW, 179].

<sup>168</sup> I use this term after Quentin Meillassoux's *After Finitude*, whose work critiques the notion that "a being" means the same as "a being for us" and that "to be" means the same as "to be a correlate"; although, with the technique of retrospective arrangement in *Ulysses* and the heavily revision-based methodology of *Finnegans Wake*, I can note here that Meillassoux's vocabulary of weak and strong correlationisms may take on a slightly modified meaning. Joyce is less concerned with "being a correlate" as a state rather than he is with *correlating* as an activity.

<sup>169</sup> My use of the word "track" here is to avoid resorting to a temporal or spatial analogy or metaphor and, instead, think of it as a complication of order-relation which has no prior or foundational affinities. My choice of this word comes from two images from *Ulysses*: firstly, (anachronistically) the gramophone and secondly the train which Molly hears. In both these cases one uses the word "track" for something which is no longer derived from something which has a linear progression through time and time. The word "track" can be extracted from its literal use (train tracks, the tracks of a gramophone record) to suggest following order-relations without those order-relations necessarily being inextricable from spatial or temporal order.

<sup>170</sup> One could also call this a "postman" model of reading, ultimately dependent upon acts of donation, and exemplified by Shaun's route that runs both forwards towards dawn and delivery and "backscuttling" [FW 470] upstream towards night and collection, "his long run from that place where the day begins" [FW 472] moving away from the dawn both clockwise and counter-clockwise.

assume that the forward ‘flow’ of thoughts fastened to time belongs to Leopold Bloom<sup>171</sup> (as, if one is a hermeneutician or phenomenologist, *belonging to someone’s experience* being a quintessential property of time), whereas the retrospective, spatial,<sup>172</sup> arrangement of encyclopedic referentiality, belongs<sup>173</sup> to the presence of the authorial hand working backwards and retrospectively, stitching factual and philosophical reference points into Bloom’s thoughts. To use the phrase from Thomas Campbell’s poem quoted in ‘Lestrygonians’, such a reductive reading might see the perception of “coming events” as belonging to Leopold Bloom, but it is Joyce, and Joyce only, who “cast[s] their shadows before”. Bloom moving forwards, and Joyce arranging in retrospect, would appear to be on two separate tracks, always approaching each other, but never cashing out the kinesis of this mobile sculpture as the arrival of an undeniably *present* moment. Thus, dividing the world neatly into per-spective and retro-spective. Joyce would have an intrusive role in acts of memory, contrary to the effect that Joyce is attempting to create. We can observe that this two-track model does not exist: the ‘retrospective arrangement’ is ‘retro’ in structural or antisymmetric terms,<sup>174</sup> rather than in strictly temporal terms.<sup>175</sup> Contrary to 20<sup>th</sup> century views, which often saw Joyce’s use of interior monologue as attesting to an absolute phenomenological dependency on experience and time, any foundational affinity between

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<sup>171</sup> In particular in reference to *Ulysses* and episodes four, five and eight; with Bloom’s ‘stream of consciousness’ as he walks and the structure of before-during-after of his encounters with other individuals.

<sup>172</sup> Here I draw on Kenner’s definition of “encyclopedic” in *The Stoic Comedians* [Kenner, 1962].

<sup>173</sup> I could persist with Badiou’s terminology here and use ‘is included by’ in the place of ‘belongs’, because I am clearly speaking about meta-structure or at least a partitive organization [Badiou, 2006].

<sup>174</sup> In its mathematical rather than linguistic usage, antisymmetry designates impossibility of relation rather than relation. Or to use Badiou’s words, two terms which are incomparable [Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 2009]

<sup>175</sup> Following the principle of antisymmetry, as opposed to asymmetry or symmetry, something can be both symmetric and antisymmetric, but not symmetric and asymmetric. This is meant non-metaphorically: see Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds*, where he says that “antisymmetry is what disguises order from equivalence” [Badiou, 2009:158-159]. An asymmetric or linear approach is simply the notion that time flows only in one direction. An antisymmetrical approach to order, in general, “formalizes a certain kind of non-substitutability”. An application of this logical principle to narratological presentations of time as an experience is a task that goes far wider than this thesis, but here we can comment that it is not the asymmetric or experiential flow of time that defines a ‘now’ on the basis of an affinity with experience, but rather the fact that, in the grammar of experiences and, thus, the grammar of narrative and of poetic language, the ‘now’ is entirely non-substitutable. The ‘now’ is not just an instance of the present moment as opposed to an instance in the past. Rather than being the feature of a structure, the ‘now’ of narrative structurality or poetic language is seemingly magical conjuring of a qualitative distinction out of mere sequence allows very suggestive interruptions of the special ontological weight Joyce lends to the ‘now’, but it also suggests a kind of generic equivalence in ‘now’, which cannot be provided by symmetry or asymmetry. To borrow (this time, metaphorically) from Badiou’s categorial logics, if an instant demonstrates only a minimal or infinitesimal difference from ‘now’, then we have no reason to treat that instant as anything other than the ‘now’. It goes without saying that, between one ‘now’ and another, there is nothing of the ‘now’ itself that would differentiate it from any other presentation of any other ‘now’. As unlikely as it seems, we have dug a tunnel, albeit a narrow and unstable one, from Badiou’s Being-In/There (“*Dans-Sein*”) to Joyce’s ‘Eternal Now’, or Stephen Dedalus’ ‘now’ of apprehension. It may be true that ‘time’ remains primarily a term of intuition for Joyce, but there is a strong case here that the Joycean ‘now’ is exclusively Evental, which is to say, imaginative.

thought and time, whether irreducibly intuitive or experiential, is shredded by Joyce's use of interior monologue as a 'bridge' or technique that must be passed through or over.

In breaking the triad of being-for-us, immediacy and concreteness, Joyce liberates his writing from the need for such methodological dualisms, either on the part of the authorial hand, or as a demand of his readers. In doing so, he has taken another broad stride towards refining the author out of existence. It also enables his work to operate outside of any philosophical assumption of foundational affinities between, for example, perception and time, or knowledge and spatiality or, in a more specific example, the perspectival and the ocular. This is key to understanding the transcendental<sup>176</sup> thinking that becomes articulated most fully in *Finnegans Wake*.

Joyce's critique of 'dualisms' is that we think normal dualisms in purely human terms, caught in pseudo-empirical metaphors leading backwards to abstract notions of immediacy – time and space in the phenomenal world, mind and body in the composition of an individual, nature and nurture in personal identity, life and death, subjective and objective, interior and exterior, the map and the territory, the dominating and the dominated. What English speakers often refer to as 'Cartesian dualism' is often anything but Cartesian. Or to quote *Finnegans Wake* "sink deep or touch not the Cartesian spring" [FW 301] and "Cog it out, here goes a sum" [FW 304]. It is important to have a transcendental understanding of Joyce's work, because the 'dualisms' Joyce is aiming at are not reducible to anthropocentric or anthropomorphic terms, and neither could they be said to be irreducible presences in our intuition. For example, in a narrative world, we encounter dualism between relations of order and relations of equivalence,<sup>177</sup> which cannot be elucidated or circumscribed by anthropocentric experiential or perceptual metaphors.

Neither oriented towards underlying irreducible foundational affinities, nor reducible to conclusions, the dyads of Joyce's compositions distinguish themselves from simple formal dualisms (reductions) or anthropocentric metaphors (irreductions) by being primarily methodological and, therefore, existing both below and above the dualities of human experience. In *Finnegans Wake*, a dualism is constantly implied, but it cannot be brought into

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<sup>176</sup> "Transcendental thinking" here means an acknowledgement that if one wishes to be a realist, one must not simply disavow the question of transcendence itself, or else one's work is saturated with transcendental assumptions. It does not mean to occupy a transcendental position, or to propose transcendental values, but rather to confront transcendental spaces by means of occupation or inhabiting. As Joyce remarked to Hoffmeister: "'Work in Progress' has a significance completely above reality; transcending humans, things, senses, and entering the realm of complete abstraction" [Portraits of the Artist in Exile, 1979: 126-132]. In other words, transcendence is a way for a realism to engage, critically, with the transcendental assumptions of 'normal reality', assumptions which map out how the normality of this reality is categor(ial)ised.

<sup>177</sup> This follows the principle of anti-symmetry. See footnote 174.

presence: it is unspeakable or unsayable but, nonetheless, it can be *made present* in the text, the reason being that it cannot be made to *mean* anything in particular at all. But how at all, even in the context of avant-garde literature, can we speak of something resisting *presence* while remaining open to being *made present*? This is surely a paradox. But it is a paradox of a very particular logic that preserves the triad of being-for-us, immediacy and concreteness, while disavowing the transcendental manoeuvre of assuming that the dependency of the triad is an absolute necessity. Joyce's work tries to remove this logic and shine a light on the transcendental, or indeed the very notion of transcendence, that has been stowed away in the shadows. As a writer, and as a creator of aesthetic worlds, Joyce is under no obligation to partake in the dance of adopting and then disavowing transcendence, something (if one is to take Joyce's 'side' in the argument) critics, philosophers and sociologists are seen to do habitually.

In removing the obligation to present immediacy, being-for-us and concreteness in union, Joyce allows the figures in his work to step outside of themselves without an authorial alibi, to grasp beyond the confines of perspective and position<sup>178</sup> in a way that is both alien and familiar to the reader. In short, Joyce portrays consciousness not *with* but *through* the figures in his fictions since they see the world like Blake, not *with* but *through* their eyes. For Stephen Dedalus in 'Proteus', semantics of doors and gates come to supplant diaphany [U 45], as diaphany becomes neither the empirical property debated by Aristotle nor a metaphor deployed by an artist as part of an image, but a folded layer or a series that loops back through itself, supplanting and elaborating itself just as diaphany supplants and elaborates luminosity: a metaphor-metaphor.<sup>179</sup> Therefore diaphany becomes a metaphor not only of the process of translucency or *going through* in one's access to the world,<sup>180</sup> but also for how the metaphor

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<sup>178</sup> Where position and perspective are interchangeable, and position means perspective or perspective means position.

<sup>179</sup> As this is such an unwieldy and clumsy construct, I should give another example of such a 'metaphor-metaphor' in Joyce's work. My second example would be the word "eyegoneblack" in *Finnegans Wake*, which not only described the 'augenblick'/instant pun, but blacks out the metaphor that it is – in effect, "eyegoneblack", a blink for an instant, is a blink that blinks over itself. As an instance of deconstructive thought deconstructing its own relativity or situatedness towards a genericity of apprehension, a metaphor-metaphor is a realist construction *par excellence*.

<sup>180</sup> In the sense that Stephen reverses the problem of awareness of matter and bodies. The problem is no longer how we can see translucent objects if they are without colour, but translucency as the means by which we see things at all. This is easier to understand if we remember that Stephen's thoughts are conditioned by the fact that he is not wearing his glasses: his access to the world is limited because a kind of diaphany *intended to be as invisible or undetectable as possible* has been taken from him. His access to the world is not limited because he no longer has access to a prerequisite givenness, but because there is less of an opportunity for givenness to be taken away.

itself as a metaphor<sup>181</sup> becomes an artefact of the text's motion to entirely supplant literary realism's apparently foundational dependence<sup>182</sup> upon perspective and ocular metaphor<sup>183</sup>, going through in a second sense. If a metaphor has both an 'aboutness' and an 'according to', that if we understand a metaphor as a rhetoric or metaphorical figure which is 'about' one thing but 'according to' another, then it follows that all metaphors must to varying degrees model this dyad between an 'aboutness' and an 'according'. By a 'metaphor-metaphor' I would understand as a special case where this modelling of a metaphor is unilateral, insofar as only one 'object' involved in the metaphor could be said to be wholly distinct. In the case of 'diaphany', it is only distinct from its inverse (adiaphany) in the instance of its usage in Stephen's thought. Otherwise, we must imagine the world as it appears to an extremely myopic person. That is, both diaphanous and adiaphanous in the sense that, with myopic and unfocused vision, vision penetrates everything and nothing. The myopic 'sees everything at once' but sees only a blur. Diaphany is therefore as attached to its own metaphorical usage as it is attached to the things (perception, sensation and vision as a mode of apprehension) for which it is supposedly a metaphor. It points to ocularity, but effaces and obscures it, and in doing so reveals that ocularity was, in the first place, playing a metaphorical rather than foundational role. This was observed and discussed early in this thesis, back in chapter seven, where I described the final monologue of *Finnegans Wake* as "provid[ing] a dual metaphor for literary assemblage". This statement relied upon there being a distinction we are now discussing, that is between a "dual metaphor" and a "metaphor for a duality".

This is kind of metaphor ('metaphor-metaphor') which, despite arriving laden with signification, comes to hold no other meaning than its own erasure and self-succession,<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> To borrow a phrase from *Being and Event*, here we are discussing "the presentation of presentation"; but as this is an aesthetic rather than philosophical account, it is not a general case or ontological statement, but rather the presentation of a presentation, that interests us.

<sup>182</sup> Can we imagine a "social realism" or, indeed, a sociological materialism, that does not accord to "perspective" a foundational explanatory power? Can we imagine an equivalent to perspective that does not draw on either ocularity or blindness in order to affix the visual to the positional? Throughout *Ulysses*, we are being tested in our ability to think beyond optical and ocular metaphors that suggest a foundational affinity between perspective and position. And then, in *Finnegans Wake*, we are shown the imaginative alternatives: why should particular perspectives and particular positions go together at all? From which position, from which perspective, do we see in a dream? Those 'images' and 'visuals' are the work of the brain.

<sup>183</sup> One could perhaps read 'Nausicaa' as an inversion to the usual aesthetic subordination of everything technique or practice of engagement or involvement to gazing or viewing, where, both in Gerty's glances at Bloom, and in Bloom's looking at the bat, ocularity takes the metaphorical or analogical role, subordinated to apprehensive forms of access to the world. It seems deeply uncharitable to Gerty not to read her as getting outside of herself on her own terms, instead of remaining trapped within a limited perspective. One can also note the concluding paragraph of 'Araby' [*D* 28] as an absolute disruption of the triad of the *visual*, the *ocular* and the *image*.

<sup>184</sup> Here, I am somewhat playing games with Derrida's *sous rature* and Hegel's *aufhebung*, but with Badiou's *terme évanouissant* in mind also. Joyce's use of philosophical metaphor in these passages is evanescent. They

both describing and embodying the notion of *going through*. Without the allegedly foundational role of sight, the way that going through is a metaphor is itself gone through and passed over, its own metaphorical usage supplanted by its metaphorical consequences. Despite the intimacy it reflects with Stephen's intellectual demeanour, as well as reflecting Joyce's debt to Aristotle in general, diaphany is ultimately introduced into Stephen's thoughts only to be strode over, or perhaps trodden upon. If Stephen's ashplant provides a metaphor for intellectual or conceptual dependency in accessing the world,<sup>185</sup> it persists as a metaphor and it is almost self-demonstrative as a metaphor. In this case, diaphany is the reversal of such a dependency as it is not persistent, the contrary to self-explanatory, subtracting rather than supporting.

Joyce's Dublin becomes a closed-eye world of grasping and knocking rather than gazing.<sup>186</sup> What I am trying to suggest here is a Promethean moment for Joyce: he is stealing something from the *excelsis* of aesthetic gesture and instructing his readers to see that it is this, rather than 'natural experience', affectivity, or an immediacy of the immediate, that always already constitutes a mind's access to materiality and reality. The quotidian and, more importantly, the *generic* nature of such access is revealed when Joyce shows us that the

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exist only in order for their metaphorical status to be immediately revoked in the instant that they are deployed in/by Stephen's thinking. They are made to shoulder the burdens of the aesthetic tasks Stephen demands of them. In this case, the kinesis involved in the various permutations of 'going through' fades almost immediately into the thoughts of aesthetic stasis (Lessing's *nacheinander* and *nebeneinander*), which fade into another motion metaphor (the "marching" of poetic meter, [U 46]). Here, Joyce portrays the freedom of artistic thinking and practice, the potentially foundationless autonomy that is available to it. But, in complement to this, the incredible difficulty of holding onto the ideas and methods that would bring about Joycean "stasis" is also depicted. The poem that Stephen starts to write in 'Proteus' seems to be terrible, or even without merit, but the overall impression of his intellectual labour (we cannot call it merely contemplation) is of someone trying and failing to escape philosophical and emotional gravity. Stephen's thoughts tantalise with flashes of insight or aesthetic innovation, but they are repeatedly pulled down into the less useful thinking younger Joyce associated with kinesis and movement ("passing now", [U 59]). This interior contradiction is that of passing through or going through without the *going* or *passing* which, nevertheless, still has access to temporality, not as foundation but reservoir, captured finally in the image of the "silently moving, a silent ship" [U 64], an image which, while not being oxymoronic itself, suggests the oxymoron of Stephen-Joyce's own artistic intentions, the capture of the passing of a now which itself does not pass. As this Stephen has, unlike Joyce, only failed in his artistic endeavour, we might read this as a "superman" [Ibid.] who has failed because he set himself a paradoxical task.

<sup>185</sup> The ashplant is a reversal of the broken or lost glasses, a present constant reminder of the irony of Johnson's dismissal of Berkeley: one needs a concrete instrument other than one's immediate senses in order to make a concrete thing apparent as immediate.

<sup>186</sup> See, for comparison, Laruelle's account of 'phenomenal blackness' in "Universe Black in the Human Foundations of Colour" [Laruelle, 2012:401] as a compliment of Joyce's "all the time without you". Laruelle writes: "The Universe is deaf and blind, we can do nothing other than love it and assist it" as "black, before light, is the substance of the universe". Instead of seeing, as philosophy does, that white and black are opposite colours, one must see that "the essence of colours is not colourful: it is universe black" [Ibid. 402]. I propose that one can use Laruelle's text 'Universe Black' as a kind of non-philosophical conduit to connect the phenomenological aesthetic writing of *Ulysses* ('Proteus', 'The Lotus Eaters', 'Lestrygonians', etc.) with the aesthetic black and blind rainbow of *Finnegans Wake*'s anti-phenomenological world without falling into philosophical dependency or foundational decisions which the 'transcending' method of *Finnegans Wake* urges its readers to avoid. Rather than translating "Où-dire de Joyce" as "Hear Say Yes in Joyce", we might instead reply to Derrida: Heresy? Yes, in Joyce.

interrogation of memory enjoys no special priority, either over the experience of memory, or over the memory of experience. The contemplation of the passage of time is put on the same level as the allegedly primordial belonging together of temporality and experience, and the apparent immediacy of vision is shown not to be more principal than mind's eye of imagination. Immediate experience, like childhood secrets [U 34], is a tyrant waiting to be dethroned and, like such secrets, it must be dethroned by the aesthete in order to truly cherish it, and break from the notion that one should either go beyond appearances to the a-subjective world, or 'bracket off' the a-subjective world (or the question of things-in-themselves) to focus solely on the horizons of sensation and meaning. By having Stephen maintain a certain intellectual fidelity to the classical distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Joyce avoids confinement by this false choice, a false choice that is, in some sense, reflective of his contemporary modernity, and the beginning of the divide between analytical or scientific positivisms and phenomenological or hermeneutic interpretability. One could observe that, as distinct as they are elsewhere, initial contemporary commentary on Joyce's 'interior monologue' and later academic scholarship on 'encyclopedic' writing both indulge in what I have previously called a 'two track' model,<sup>187</sup> to varying degrees. Joyce treats experience as if it wishes to surrender itself and to expropriate its secrets to the intellect, not hoard them as irreducibles in the treasury of the immediacy of the immediate.<sup>188</sup> The unique respect that Joyce shows to experience and, consequentially, to the semantics of experience, is a refusal to let its fruit wither on the vine.

This is not to say that Joyce's subtractive approach is simply that of qualified negations, or consists in his refusal to agree with contrary points, but rather that in the transition from *A Portrait* to *Ulysses*, we see that Joyce is becoming something of a phenomenological anarchist: he accepts that the game must be played with certain pieces, but his commitment to realism demands that he refuses to abide by established hierarchies, no matter how apparently intuitive and immediate, or based on allegedly foundational affinities,

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<sup>187</sup> The success of encyclopedic writing requires a writer not just to evince but actively utilize failures of totality.

<sup>188</sup> To a certain extent, one could make the same argument about Joyce's fiction, particularly *Ulysses*, by working in the inverse direction. As Ellmann observes, "The daughters of memory, whom William Blake chased from his door, received regular employment from Joyce, although he speaks of them disrespectfully" [JJ 364]. One could question Ellmann here, in his somewhat circuitous assessment of Blake's influence upon Joyce, by pointing out that Joyce's use of memory is respectful because its protean or metamorphic qualities are what defines its operation upon human life and experience. One could even argue that the protean or primal matter which Joyce said was the 'meaning' or 'sense' (in the Linati schema) of the episode 'Proteus', is not the primal substance of experience or matter in the empirical sense, but memory's unparalleled potential for change and potency. In a sense, Joyce respects memory by cutting it off from epistemic surety or clarity and, instead, sees it as a wellspring of creativity or artifice. If, as Plato said, all knowledge is memory, then, here too, we can find many counter-intuitive Joycean expressions of the Vichian: Vico's maxim *verum esse ipsum factum*.



they seem to be. When he does capitulate to the rules of a phenomenological game, he wishes to play only with his own pieces. The Joyce who celebrated “simple intuitions” aged twenty seems, a decade later, to be drawing on a very disparate set of sources in order to bring his aesthetic to bear on the *simulation* of intuition; a simulation which supplants givenness or donation as the necessary condition for experience. The adjective ‘simple’ does not mean ‘simulated’ but, rather, it *comes to mean* ‘simulated’ and this *coming to mean* is perhaps a Joycean permutation of Vico’s maxim *verum esse ipsum factum*. This is shown in artistic gesture rather than stated or demonstrated in philosophical maxim or axiom, an aesthetically realist rather than a philosophically relativist deployment of a constructivist epistemology.<sup>189</sup>

The next negative hypothesis one could make concerns how one might characterise Joyce’s gradual, step by step effacement of the ontological question itself, the question of ‘being qua being’ or uppercase-B Being. On this point, we begin to see that Joyce is not a writer of fiction who overloads his fictional writing with philosophical ideas and references to keep academics busy for centuries. Instead, he seems not be using philosophical concepts but rather emulating philosophical through its own vocabulary to mark out, through subtraction rather than privation, a domain where ‘esthetic’ writing is free to draw upon philosophy, sharing with it a rational disposition and vocabulary pertaining to problems, while nonetheless remaining as close as possible to an absolute autonomy. Further to this, one might say that Joyce goes against the grain of his post-Nietzschean contemporaries, amongst whom his own name is the non-philosophical term which (in particular regard to deconstruction) ‘signs’ for the retrospective philosophical union of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida.<sup>190</sup> Rather than trying to reckon with the “forgetting of being”, the catalyst in the reaction that results in a critique of the philosophy of presence is the statement that, in Joyce’s work, concreteness and immediacy repel each other, and may be said to express a rejection of the metaphysics of presence on aesthetic realist grounds. Joyce seems to wish to destroy any analogical, substantial or unified expression of Being, and, particularly in relation to epiphany, disrupt any parallel between event and parousia. Although Joyce has characters like Dedalus to act as

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<sup>189</sup> Here I can make a point of self-criticism on my use of the term ‘encyclopaedic writing’. How can this be meant aesthetically and not philosophically, rather than just more aesthetically than philosophically? What would an exclusively aesthetic knowledge be like? Is there knowledge in Joyce’s work, part of the ‘encyclopedia’ so to speak, that does not belong to the encyclopedic knowledge amassed by Joyce in the composition of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*? This brings to mind Badiou’s thinking of what he calls partitive excess – the excess of parts over elements (*The Theory of the Subject*), or excrescent multiples (*Being and Event*). It also brings to mind Deleuze’s phantasms and simulacra. But is it possible to address this problem without recourse to contemporary philosophy or theory? Could one make an account of an exclusively aesthetic knowledge using only Joyce’s published works themselves?

<sup>190</sup> Or, if we judge exclusively from Derrida’s writing, the name ‘Joyce’ signs for the sequence of Husserl-Heidegger-Derrida.

a spokesman, he is exactly as counter-intuitive in this respect as he is in his presentation of perceptual immediacy: he is not proposing some sort of horizontal continuum or, to use Deleuze's term, a 'plane of immanence', but rather a meontology, or an ontology of disjunction and void. While maintaining a classical distinction between primary and secondary qualities throughout his narrative works, Joyce rejects any kind of foundational or irreducible difference between appearance and being. Instead, he seems to return to the classical triad of void, atom and clinamen, to iterate a point we have already made. In a sense, we see a bifurcation in Joyce which now has a reflection in contemporary philosophy.<sup>191</sup> According to one alternative, Joyce is a precursor to Derridean deconstruction, who sees an analogical discourse on Being as being rejected in an orientation towards the absolutely Other, - absolute alterity -, upon whose event any engagement is conditioned. The other alternative is to affirm that Joyce's work anticipates Alain Badiou's statement that "the void is the proper name of Being", or perhaps Meillassoux's assertion of the necessity of contingency. These are contradictory positions. They are just as incompatible as philosophical statements as they are in terms of the aesthetic orientations they produce. At various points, Joyce seems to hold both, and I would argue that these are the only extremes in his work which do not eventually meet.

### *Clarity and Contrivance, Nearness and Reality: Joyce between Hardy and Mangan*

The paradoxes of Joycean immediacy could be illustrated by his comments to his brother in a letter from Rome dated December 1906 [L 136]. On the topic of Thomas Hardy's story "On the Western Circuit" from *Life's Little Ironies* (1894), he mocks the contrivances of the story's plotting and the "copybook" dialogue exchanged by the characters in the following terms: "is this as near as T.H. can get to life, I wonder?" and "what is wrong with these English writers is that they always keep beating about the bush?" Rather than focusing on the times where Joyce makes knowingly profound statements about aesthetics and philosophy, it is worth considering instances, such as this letter, where we find him casually airing his complaints with another's writing.

Here, one might observe Joyce's language of proximity and nearness in his critique of Hardy, as well as the more general accusation that English realists put life at a distance,

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<sup>191</sup> Between a speculative materialism and deconstruction.

mirroring the notion that philosophers have forgotten Being. The verb/adjective<sup>192</sup> distinction – ‘to forget’, as opposed to ‘to be near’ – points out where Joyce’s thought parallels Heidegger’s, as the two great precursors of deconstruction: as ‘forgetting’ and ‘remembering’ are a key component of Joyce’s fiction, so too are the near and the far to Heidegger’s semantics of proximity and severance and their relevance to ‘being’. But, this should not be understood in terms of analogous semantics, or as a logic implied by semantic resemblance, but rather in terms of the similarity of syntax showing us how both Heidegger and Joyce construct grammars of experience that reflect a preoccupation with ontological questions.<sup>193</sup> This is especially true for Joyce after 1914, with the plasticity of memory becoming a key compositional device in ‘Proteus’, and then again in ‘Calypso’, where the reader is shown forgetfulness of magnitudes both cosmic (metempsychosis [U 77])<sup>194</sup> and quotidian (the burning kidney [U 79]), both times vested with a profound but undisclosable significance. The forgetting of Being, in *Ulysses* expressed through Bloom’s colourful account of the transmigration of souls [U 77-78], comes coupled with the forgetting of a being, the kidney. This comes about without operating of a device of analogy or symbolism that would allow a reader to truly say that what they have read implies that anyone, whether Joyce or either of the Blooms, has a particular ontology. Here, to give a brief textual ‘cross section’ of the issue, it is

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<sup>192</sup> Derrida speaks about “transcendental adverbiality, the ineffaceable supplement of all verbs” [D&J 72-73], with the quasi-adverb of being a “preconceptual vocalisation, the perfume of a discourse”. We can perhaps see this at work from the other side, not in the contrast between verbs and adverbs, but between verbs and adjectives: it is not verbs or adjectives themselves that hold the supplement of ‘adverbiality’ but, rather, a tension opened between them. This tension is here in an almost classical form – that between deferment as distance and proximity, and deferment as forgetting and recollecting. Derrida’s request that readers of Joyce focus upon Bloom’s visit to the chemist is telling of this, because it locates the ‘grammar of perfumes’ or ‘perfumative’ along semantic lines of promising, promised, being promised, being promising, and so on. I would argue that this typically Joycean focus upon promises, exact promises (see ‘Araby’ and ‘Evelyn’, for example), gives us not the precision of a presence or present moment, but the vast and wide-open space between proximity/distance and forgetting/remembering. There is a very direct erotic example of this in Derrida’s paper, concerning Bloom’s longing to “be near her ample bedwarmed flesh” [U 74] – the Bloom’s eroticism operates on the making flesh of an inner contradiction, the idea of a proximity giving the freedom of an open space.

<sup>193</sup> I want to be careful here and note that I am not claiming that Joyce is concerned with “the ontological question” as understood regarding Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*. In fact I would claim the opposite: Joyce is utterly unconcerned with pronouncements on being-qua-being, as it is the void on which apprehend-able presentations and situations are founded.

<sup>194</sup> A not-too-frequently mentioned implication of this famous word is that one has forgotten one’s past life. A possible irony is that Molly has an alternative life with Boylan, which she does not disclose – the irony being that undisclosed recollection and forgetting are more or less equivalent to things that are unsaid or unknown. For example, see Stuart Gilbert’s exploration of the theme in *James Joyce’s Ulysses* where he describes “Thus a forgetfulness of past existences, a partial or complete loss of concrete knowledge acquired in them, is explained by periods of “repose” which the soul enjoys between mundane existences, which may extend over thousands of years” [U 35]. Gilbert’s explanation of the famous word’s conceptual and cosmological significance is helpful because it helps us understand it not only as a mytheme, but as a theory of, we might say, Ego with neither persistent self nor consistent identity, and more importantly as a theory of “intermittent” life (Gilbert after A.P. Sinnett) it is a narrative theory which contains meta-structural narrative elements (punctuality, repose, duration, intensity, extensionality, etc) while lacking the allegedly foundational narrative elements of time and space. That is, the narrative of the Ego or soul endures not only elsewhere or at ‘some other time’ but *elsewhere*.

apparent that, as implied by ‘Ulysses Gramophone’, Joyce lacks (or is ‘beyond’) a jargon of ‘*Eigentlichkeit*’<sup>195</sup> [D&J 53-54]. Between memories and forgetfulness, beyond the fact that there is no Joycean authenticity, the way the Dublin writer constructs a grammar of experience strongly suggests that authenticity (either general over life or belonging to each experience) is not even possible. But, apart from in his texts themselves, can we find a Joycean ‘jargon of *Eigentlichkeit*’ in his personal comments and correspondence? Joyce’s complaint about Hardy’s short stories is illuminating, because it unintentionally demonstrates the conceptual fashion of Joyce’s thinking, and the abstraction involved in its articulation. This is especially present in his comments to his brother and, elsewhere, in his more casual comments concerning directness or clarity in capturing life. Heidegger accused post-Socratic philosophers writing only about beings and nothing of Being; in his December 1906 letter, we find Joyce mocking a fellow realist for focusing upon some particular lives with their specific ironies and contrivances, rather than getting ‘near life’. This begs all sorts of questions which undermine Joyce’s self-assured convictions. Is not the life lived by all lives, life? Is there some sort of immanent life-in-itself that Joyce believes writers should aim towards, despite his pulling the rugs of presence and immediacy out from beneath them? How does Joyce conjure nouns from verbs, as he seems to be doing here? Critics who see romantic notions of the sublime at work in Joyce’s work, even as he disavows such ideas, might perhaps say that here is an instance where one finds that Joyce has showed more of his hand than he intended, a hint of the dimensions of transcendental or ‘Hegelian’ thinking later to be found in *Finnegans Wake* but already at work in *Dubliners*. Other critics may find Joyce’s crotchetyness on the topic of ‘life’, and the inability of other writers to please him, to predict his later receptivity to Bergsonian ideas. Moreover, it suggests an interest being expressed towards the opening of the intense and the qualitative, rather than the near and the present, as fields for aesthetic problematization and areas of provisional semantics for narrative writing.

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<sup>195</sup> Here I should defend my interpretation that this remark, almost a slight joke by Derrida at his audience’s expense (the reference to echoes), can be read as the suggestion that Joyce’s work (*Ulysses* in particular) is “beyond” a jargon of *Eigentlichkeit*. Derrida’s juxtaposition of Joycean accounts of subjective or cognitive action with Heidegger’s grammar of veiled Being and being-there does heavily suggest that the “ownmost possibility” part of Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s being (“fallen into the They” “*verfallen* in das Man” in *Sein und Zeit*), the *Eigentlichkeit* itself, is lacking in Joyce’s account. What we see in Joyce is not Dasein’s “ownmost possibility of being ahead of itself” but, rather, in examples such as where Bloom is ‘at the telephone’, it belongs to everyone and anything but *itself*. We can tweak Derrida’s observation a little more to make it correspond to the argument of my thesis perhaps: Joycean being-there is not ‘verfallen’ into Das Man as ‘the They’, but rather ‘the They’ is the positive category for Joyce (the ‘Murphies’ or ‘Morphies’ of *Finnegans Wake*) and so we see personal cognitive experience as an instance of the generic – reading *das Man* as the One (as in the pronoun), the cognitive miracle of Joyce’s subjective aesthetics, the radical grounds (“at-the-telephone” in Derrida’s description of the “powerful network”) it corresponds exactly to the They escaping the gravity well of the One, giving us the perfumed “essence” of Bloom.

Focusing on the letter concerning Hardy itself, written in the same wounded but ironic tone often encountered in his letters to his brother, Joyce opposes Hardy's characters to his own "poor fledglings" Gallaher and Corley. The literary comments in the letter are generally unremarkable, lacking as they do the elucidations often included in many of Joyce's comments to his brother, and being otherwise very typical of many of Joyce's attitudes, both to his own work, and to those he considers to belong to a previous or obsolete generation of realists. However, a reader of *Dubliners*, particularly one who is used to taking Joyce's claims about his own work with a pinch of salt, may well raise an eyebrow at his choice of characters to name as "poor fledglings". In "A Little Cloud", Ignatius Gallaher is described as something of a showman:<sup>196</sup> a boorish but not especially ill-intentioned embellisher and poseur, introduced with his love of "sayings" [D 67], and oblivious to the fact that his colourful self-aggrandisement may be hurting rather than simply over-awing his old friend Chandler. Much later, in *Ulysses*, this "poor fledgling" will have definitively left the nest: he appears as artful and sly, his wits evidenced by a story involving his ability to speak in a code he made up on the spot. Characteristically replacing Dublin slang with bombastic 'sayings', Ignatius Gallaher is hardly a character who reflects either authentic dialogue or proximity to reality of life, nor can he be said, as a character, to be a sensitive conduit for the experiences of others. His presence in *Ulysses* is associated, as in Hardy's story, with anonymity and contrivance.<sup>197</sup> This is even truer of John Corley; he is another probable or almost certain liar, and while he is a little more knowing in his own deceptive manner, he seems even less aware of his own separation from reality than Gallaher does, reflecting a self-image that is thoughtlessly, rather than thoughtfully, assembled. Like Gallaher, Corley is a misogynist and blowhard who uses dialogue with a credulous acquaintance to indulge in self-aggrandising fantasies. Corley and

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<sup>196</sup> A simple, but persuasive, 'back of an envelope' reading of 'A Little Cloud' would be that the domestic versus cosmopolitan dimension of the piece is somewhat vestigial, as its hemiplegia concerns a *détente* between projected versus reflective self-image. Gallaher is exclusively concerned with projecting an image of himself for others, and Chandler is concerned with his own interior self-image, only incorporating the opinions of others to help construct this. In this fashion, one can read the story as a kind of technical precursor for much of the dialogue in *Finnegans Wake*, where we have a very neat division between a journalist and a poet prefiguring the division between delivery and forgery in *Finnegans Wake*. Therefore, we might say Joyce's choice of Gallaher in the 1906 letter is revealingly ironic considering his appearance is nothing other than the germ of the greatest abstractions in Joyce's entire oeuvre.

<sup>197</sup> Both Gallaher and the mistress in Hardy's story succeed by concealing their authorship and their role in the transmittance of the information. The distinction is that, in Hardy's story, it is the way of saying that is associated with the anonymous author, making the contents of the letters appear worthless when the truth is revealed, whereas in the story concerning Gallaher in *Ulysses*, a cunning way of saying is a vehicle for the information that it is. Once the information is transferred, Gallaher is free to be identified as the true 'author' or source for the facts in question and the vehicle of the transference gains an entirely new *narrative* value as an anecdote. It is precisely because it has now been voided of sensitive informative that one can repeat the story of Gallaher's masterstroke and attached the name 'Gallaher' too it.

Gallagher lack ‘nearness’, as evidenced by language suggesting they keep life at a distance to flatter their self-images. But this is secondary to their function of confirming the distance of another character from the pith of life, whether this is Lenehan’s aging or Chandler’s inability to satisfy himself either with family life or with modest literary pursuits. As personae, they are not so much shaded psychologies as they are icons of a re-doubled distancing and, as narrative atoms, they are triangulating beacons that function to signal to the reader that, no matter how far Chandler or Lenehan may feel from the pith of life, in reality, they are farther out still.

Both as characterisations and as narrative atoms, Gallagher’s “sayings”, in particular, are well observed, but in a very particular way. Rather than capturing the *verité* of a certain kind of conversational bluster, Joyce is showing a very modern kind of humour, where it is not encouraged to laugh at Gallagher’s pretensions or at Chandler’s cowardice, as his ‘sayings’ are disproportionately exaggerated, not as a measure of the man himself, but of his self-image, already exaggerated in Chandler’s memory and, we begin to assume, Gallagher’s own mind. The sayings, therefore, do not represent an exaggerated self-regard, but a hyperbolic representation, the folding of a man (Gallagher) into an exaggeration (the self-image Gallagher wishes to project), itself doubled into another folding, of a phrasing into an exaggeration, which not even the unnamed and unseen figure, Gogarty, would make. The passage where Gallagher bloviates at Chandler’s expense stands out amongst the dialogue in *Dubliners* as having an extremely modern feel. In order to describe the effect of the passage, it does not compare with any genre of its time as much as it does to the ‘cringe comedy’ of pre-millennial television writers like Larry David, Armando Iannucci or Gary Shandling: the humour of second-hand embarrassment, not on the part of any figure in the story, but the audience themselves.<sup>198</sup> It might leave a reader stone-faced on the page but, if acted on stage, it would be likely to provoke awkward laughter. For example, when Gallagher uses the expression “tasted the joys of connubial bliss” [D 74] for “married”, I would argue that this is certainly the effect Joyce is aiming at, as these sections are written to the denigration of one man in particular, Oliver Gogarty. Gogarty’s manner of speaking reflects Joyce’s depiction of such “boom companions” (“boom” meaning gossip or bluster in Dublin slang) who exchange the Dublin language of “paunchjab and dogril and pammel and gougerotty” [FW 498].<sup>199</sup> The

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<sup>198</sup> References to comedy aside, one might say this how an Aristotelean reads Ibsen.

<sup>199</sup> In a passage from a long ‘séance’ section, Joyce returns to Stephen Dedalus’ ‘murdering Irish’ (here “murdering Irish”) to comically riff on various Dublin stereotypes as the proud Roderick Rex of Ireland who has become, after the fall, the pathetic “Dodderick Ogonoch Wrack”. This suggests father time “doddering around/of the clock”, but McHugh’s annotations suggest ‘ógánach’ as bachelor suggesting unmarried or virgin and

comparison to television comedy is apt by the fact that the embarrassment a reader may feel is not necessarily vicarious embarrassment on behalf of either Gallaher or Chandler. Rather, it comes from the fact that the reader is eavesdropping on a situation where such an utterance was made *without* any evident embarrassment, and that it probably impressed the person it was made to. We might even say that the comic dimension is entirely functional, as it allows Joyce to have his cake and eat it: he can show Gallaher as an impressive witty figure in the eyes of the average Dublin, but he can also ridicule the kind of empty witticisms and “boom” that made men like Gogarty.<sup>200</sup>

Gallaher may ultimately impress Chandler. However, he achieves this by denigrating his companion's already existing feelings of inadequacy rather than by exalting himself. Gallaher succeeds in projecting the image he wishes to project, but he pays the cost twice over: rather than providing the sharp taste of reality as seems to be his aim, he unknowingly bolsters Chandler's own illusionary self, and briefly becomes a grotesque parody of another, a real individual. Not only does he thus lose any sense of being an individual, unique sketch of an ambitious Dublin journalist, but the comparison is drawn, not between Chandler and Gallaher, but between Chandler and a person who does not appear, cutting Gallaher out of circuit entirely. Does Joyce really think this vanishing mediator is ‘near’ life? How generous to Joyce does one have to be, exactly, in order to see the ‘nearness’ in all this without a resort to authenticity and *Eigentlichkeit*?

If Gallaher is being ironic to chivy Chandler, he has embarrassed himself, but not because Chandler can see through him (he has succeeded in making Chandler “astonished”). Rather, it is because, though he intends his vocabulary to sound impressive, the pretension of

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therefore impotence or infertility, but it could just as easily be used as a synonym for buachaill making the name something like King Oldman-and-Youngboy, another personification of time. There are many predictable references to whisky, stout and stodgy baked goods and puddings. In the sentence cited, Joyce (or the disembodied voice summoned) seems to be mocking the place of Dublin language in comparison to other post-colonial languages: India has a diversity of tongues, Punjabi, Tammel, Dogri, and others in the same paragraph. Whereas other nations have exotic languages, carrying an orientalist hint of ancient and mystical wisdom, Dubliners and their drinking “boom companions” only have doggerel and Gogarty as a version of a fallen king, who is “reduced to nothing”, perhaps nothing other than a talkative corpse (“bulgy and blowrious, bunged to ignorious, healed cured and embalsemate”).

<sup>200</sup> Whatever one thinks of the historical Gogarty, on this point Joyce is consistently unfair (and this continues with Mulligan in *Ulysses*). Gogarty was certainly a witty man, and the crudity of his bluster was probably an affectation. In *Ulysses* it is plainer what Joyce is getting at, although one suspects he had not entirely gathered his own thoughts around the matter entirely in writing the Dubliners stories: it is not the bloviation and bluster that Joyce exactly has a problem with, it is more the fact that such is inseparable from the great cardinal sins identified by Joyce in his works: anti-Semitism in *Ulysses* and white supremacy and fascism in *Finnegans Wake*. In particular there is a persisting notion that the particular grand and comic way of speaking in Dublin conceals, very specifically, anti-Semitism for which the manner (if not the man) of Oliver Gogarty became emblematic for Joyce. His kind of language and rhetoric could not be more opposed than that the practical and anticipatory use of language of Leopold Bloom.

the phrase is embarrassing: Gallaher's exact kind of verbosity and self-aggrandisement is that of distancing: a distance from Dublin, distance from married life, distance from the people that he once knew. Hardly the kind of distance Gallaher himself wishes to display. In Chandler's relating of Gallaher's present conversation to his 'sayings' from the past, the otherwise well-drawn Gallaher loses a lot of personality and becomes nothing but a bundle of severance in the form of a man. It is the sayings themselves that are well observed, not him, as they are not 'his' sayings contrary to what Chandler thinks. Joyce is being extremely contrived throughout the story: the very presence of Gallaher is enough to "confuse [the] mind" of the over-awed Chandler, as his convivial but oblivious bloviations intoxicate and further separate Chandler from reality. The irony is that, as a journalist is supposed to get us close to the facts, Gallaher is a figure who unwittingly drives one's mentality away from reality and closer to the facts. Later in *Ulysses*, Joyce uses irony by showing us that Gallaher's "smartest piece of journalism" is the use of obsfucation to communicate already-recorded facts over a great distance. Gallaher speaks of wishing to "see a bit of life and the world" [D 76], as a less than subtle hint that his life might not be so worldly (or as Chandler thinks, "tawdry") as he lets on, an admission he lets slip once the damage to Chandler's ego has already been done.

Of course, all this being said, writing about characters who operate under illusions or are deceived about the reality of life does not mean that the writer himself is not "near" life (in Joyce's words). The issue here is not how one might define "life" but, rather, the semantics around nearness, immediacy and directness suggested in Joyce's letter to Hardy, and the extent to which such semantics seem to critique his own work.<sup>201</sup> Although Joyce is mocking the contrivances of someone he considers to be a typically 'English' writer, it should be remarked that Thomas Hardy's story is hardly written in a more opaque style than Joyce's, being reliant on an almost theatrical mimicry of natural dialogue and a slightly informal narrative tone. Whether the mistaken identity plot of 'On the Western Circuit' is a less realistic contrivance than Joyce's contriving a comparison of journalism-bachelorhood and poetry-marriage in 'A Little Cloud', or than secreting emblems of Irish nationality into 'Two Gallants' or even than the well-known Möbius loop structure of Lenehan's route, is surely a matter of a reader's opinion. Likewise, taken in isolation, the use of cliché in Joyce's dialogue to reflect foiled intellectual ambitions and pretensions towards social status is worthier of the name 'realism' and, while one can praise Joyce for his skill with dialogue, it is difficult to

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<sup>201</sup> Is this not the philosophical theme of the forgetting of Being re-stated in vitalistic or biological terms?



make a judgement of “nearness” between his dialogue and Hardy’s use of working-class or servant class dialogue, laden as it is with signifiers of low education and social status.<sup>202</sup> In this regard, there is room to critique Joyce’s dialogue, as he has not yet achieved the balance between stylistic contrivance and natural flow we find so frequently in *Ulysses*. Gallaher’s almighty clunker “tasted the joys of connubial bliss” really does seem modern, in that it has the feel of something written for late-century television satire more than it seems like a real article of rhetoric recorded by an early-century realist. On the page, it lacks the misanthropically comic dimension it could have, because its true performer (Oliver Gogarty) is eternally absent from the place of its supposed utterance. The instance of the phrase’s utterance is laden with irony, but this irony cannot be attached to anyone in particular. Instead, Gallaher seems foolish to use the phrase “tasted the joys of connubial bliss” and Chandler is foolish to be impressed by it: the satirical undercutting is lost, because the context where it ‘seems foolish’ is several degrees removed from the situation on the page. Without a present or immediacy object to complete the circuit, as it were, between the parodic and the ironic, both the phrase and Chandler’s reaction to it hang in the air like jokes without punchlines.

We might compare the parodies of Joyce’s acquaintances like Gogarty to the “high” talk of Dan Dawson mocked in ‘Hades’ and ‘Aeolus’,<sup>203</sup> which is a precise imitation of the rhetoric that is mocked or, indeed, the cumbersome way Mulligan attempts to prove his

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<sup>202</sup> This is perhaps true for all of Joyce’s dialogue, not just the stories mentioned from *Dubliners*. For example, one might compare the dialogue between Simon Dedalus and his entourage in ‘Aeolus’ with the kind of dialogue Joyce sneers at. While one might say Joyce’s dialogue is extraordinarily rich, evocative, characterful or funny, we have to ask ourselves if natural conversation really is so dense with sayings, analogies, referentiality, local colour, call-backs, on-the-nose ironies and so forth. The dialogue in ‘Aeolus’ really does show a huge distinction between Joyce and a realist such as Hardy, as it works on several levels: modernism, political satire, grotesque analogues to real Dublin figures, naturalistic theatre, comedy, etc. But there is the problem – even in the company of Joyce senior and the figures who inspired Simon Dedalus and his friends, can we really imagine conversations as rich and inter-connected as Joyce shows us in ‘Aeolus’? The implied claim of being ‘near’ to life in comparison to Hardy’s ‘copy-book’ talk is absurd when one considers the sheer density and complexity of Joyce’s most magnificent (and funny) dialogue. We should not make the mistake of thinking that, because we can imagine a contemporary comedian lifting chunks of *Ulysses* dialogue into his or her act virtually unchanged, the dialogue exhibits the nearness to life that Joyce wishes for realism. Rather, we hit on something of a tension within Joyce’s technique, between the genericity that his dialogue has in common with the witty and acerbic Dublin talk he admired, and the realist’s intention to be “near” life which this genericity finds itself at odds with. What is “getatable” in dialogue, in other words, is divided against itself – what is generic is contrivance, and that contrivance is either supplemented by the act of writing, or lost in translation to writing. While I cannot present a true theoretical distinction between “the near” and “the generic” in terms of the properties and qualities of certain dialogues, we cannot assume that their relation is a harmonious one, or even that contrived dialogue is less ‘near’ than more naturalistic or accurately observed speech. No one has ever, for example, spoken like the two washerwomen in ‘Anna Livia Plurabelle’ (perhaps only trained opera singers, rather than actors, could really perform it), yet the perennial praise for the prose-poem’s capturing of Dublin gossip is surely accurate, the issue, again, of apprehension and, therefore, of the *generic* opening tensions to the specific rather than the *near* addressing the far in the form of resemblance and mimicry. How certain can we be, as readers of realism, that nearness and resemblance necessarily belong together?

<sup>203</sup> See the sections headlined ‘SAD’ and ‘HIS NATIVE DORIC’ [U 158-160].

intellectual mettle in ‘Scylla and Carybdis’.<sup>204</sup> There is no analogue between the Joyce-Gogarty relationship and the Dedalus senior-Dan Dawson relationship: it is seemingly intended more as a mockery of Oliver Gogarty’s manner of speaking than it is an accurate example of a man attempting to belittle a companion by appearing more educated and ironic than he really is.<sup>205</sup> The turn of phrase “tasted the joys of connubial bliss”, though well received *in situ* of the fiction, lands with a thud for the reader, who believes Chandler’s recollection and, therefore, expects something witty. This, giving Chandler an opportunity to assert himself, is impeccably well observed. However, it is well observed as a *joke* at the expense of Gallaher, rather than as a piece of dialogue typical of Gallaher’s style. Whereas, the parodies of Dan Dawson are typical of the kind of rhetoric published in the *Freeman’s Journal*, making them exacting parodies of a personality, almost affectionately so, which can certainly never be said about Joycean parodies of Gogarty’s manner of speaking. The fact that we are told in advance that Gallaher was known for his ‘sayings’ primes the reader not to read dialogue quite as natural dialogue and, instead, to read it as a *way of knowing*. This is yet another contrivance on Joyce’s part.<sup>206</sup>

In fact, we could go further than commenting on snippets of dialogue, and say that Hardy’s piece (“On the Western Circuit”), as a whole, does not employ anything like the archly ironical style of the opening paragraph of ‘Two Gallants’. Nor does it contain a contrivance like the section of ‘A Little Cloud’ where the narrative voice and Chandler’s thoughts of Gallagher become indistinct, a section where we are informed of Chandler having a “sensitive nature” [D 75],<sup>207</sup> and it seems as though we are getting Chandler’s self-image juxtaposed to Gallaher’s self-image, rather than an impartial report. In order to create this

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<sup>204</sup> As there was no speech by Dan Dawson in the *Freeman’s Journal* on June 16<sup>th</sup>, we can assume they are parodies.

<sup>205</sup> See Ellman’s note in *James Joyce* [219].

<sup>206</sup> There are certainly other examples of Joyce doing this besides Dawson and Gallaher. This even goes for interior speech: it is significant that Joyce has Bloom think the words “Makes you feel young” [U 68] which not only performs the deconstructive splitting between thought as hearing oneself think and thought as inner speech to oneself. He diagonalises it between a concrete impetus and its affect (“makes you feel...”). With this one sentence, Joyce primes the reader to be suspicious about whether interior monologue is either interior or monologue. Can we take for granted that the text represents speech, sensation, thought or impetus? The possibilities of representation combinations here are vast – for example, speech that represents the thought provoked by a feeling, or a feeling that summarises the impetus and its thought together in one.

<sup>207</sup> Compare the phrase that comes just before this quote: “for he was a delicate and abstinent person”. The long, multiclausal sentence serves to elide a boundary between the narrative voice and a voice which, while not Chandler’s own thoughts, seems to speak from Chandler’s self-image. “Delicate and abstinent” describes Chandler’s comportment, observable inside and out. “Upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature” is an interior view but, at the same time, the phrasing and slightly obscure wording are more strongly reflective of James Joyce’s manner as a writer than it is of Chandler’s thoughts or words. It is Chandler’s self-image more than the authorial voice’s image of him, but it is less of the kind of writing Chandler is capable of than perhaps any other sentence describing Chandler.

startling and very efficient effect, Joyce must contort or change much of what we would expect of naturalistic language or ‘lifelike’<sup>208</sup> resemblance between thoughts and recorded thought. There is a mirroring without direct resemblance, where Joyce has “upset the equipoise” [Ibid] of how one might intuitively express the idea that someone’s sensitive nature has been disturbed.

If we extrapolate further from the letter where Hardy is discussed, Joyce’s example of his own work being ‘near to life’ includes a section where a character’s intoxication from self-mythologising and alcohol becomes so muddled that it infects the disinterest of the narrative itself, in a way that gives us a foretaste of more elaborate uses of the same technique in *Ulysses*: language and rhetorical tricks bolster a false self-image in both characters. Getting nearer to life means that a writer must avoid contrivance in terms of emplotment or dialogue, but it also means associating the writer with individuals and their ways of thinking and interacting. In turn, this contrives to threaten the very directness and nearness the writer wishes to create, and so, in the process of writing, it is revealed that the life one wishes to be ‘near’ is not a place of epistemically unquestionable lived experience and plain-speaking authenticity. Instead, the elements Joyce’s work focuses on, such as perception, inner speech, dialogue, interactions or self-awareness, are all marked out with artifice and contrivance, rather than with clarity or immediacy. Earlier, I described what I termed a situational “rotation of givenness” in Joyce’s work, and a version of that is in evidence here, namely in the form of a trilemma between clarity, immediacy and simplicity.<sup>209</sup> What is clear and simple is not immediate, what is simple and immediate is not clear, and what is clear and immediate is not simple. Here we have a very typically Joycean wheel turning as his fictions progress, two points of the triangle becoming revealed whenever one is obscured.

It is also possible that Joyce’s ridiculing of a contemporary English form of “realism” may be less a judgment of taste and more political in motivation, and it may be the case of an ambitious young man indulging in arrogance for its own sake. But, at the very least, it demonstrates the paradoxical nature of Joycean realism or, at least, evidence that one cannot say ‘realism’ with regards to James Joyce and mean the underlying literary conventions and codes rather than the philosophical meaning of the term. The description of Hardy’s dialogue

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<sup>208</sup> Not Joyce’s term, but I use it here to note how difficult it is to use language, critical or otherwise, related to resemblance to life in order to describe thought. At what point does ‘life’, in the most universal and abstract sense, fail as a metaphor for thought and thinking? Does life necessarily imply apprehension, as an either exceptional or quotidian access to the world?

<sup>209</sup> Here I am referring to how Gallaher and Corley are presented through the experiences of Chandler and Lenehan, respectively.

as “copybook talk” suggests that Joyce is struggling with the contrivance of the writer versus the contrivances of life itself, which he refers to via the example of “*mésalliances(!)*” [L 137]. However, one can be left with the impression that, whatever ‘nearness’ means as a quality of writing as an apprehensive activity, in itself, it betrays a willingness of the writer to involve himself with “*mésalliances(!)*”. Joyce cannot have his cake and eat it, and he cannot have his characters undivided from life and then have a life which is clearly accessed through plain language. The irony of ‘clarity’, in this regard, is that it imposes the very division of man and nature that Joyce seeks to avoid in the first place. Instead, Joyce’s work produces the mis-marriage, or disjunctive synthesis, of a writer desiring clarity with a personage who desires only to obfuscate, the obfuscation itself written as an involvement with another, and not simply as a poetic description of someone’s inwardly-turned self-deception; an inwardness expressed both in the outward projection aiming towards an inner self-image in the case of Gallaher, or Chandler’s outwardness which seems to try to picture itself as inwardness.<sup>210</sup>

All this stands in contradiction to some of Joyce’s most well-known aesthetic statements, to the point where one might critique my argument by saying that, in focusing on a relatively obscure letter from 1906, I am trying to hide the largest generalisations of my thesis in an obscure corner. By way of counter example, in Joyce’s celebrated 1902 paper on James Clarence Mangan, he argues that “poetry, even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality. It speaks of what seems fantastic and unreal to those who have lost the simple intuitions which are the tests of reality” [OCPW 59]. However, even in 1902, there is already a sense that abstraction is playing a surprisingly big role in Joyce’s aesthetic thinking, with a clear contradiction between Joyce’s

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<sup>210</sup> A comparison between *Dubliners* stories and television ‘cringe-comedy’ might initially seem far-fetched, but we can note this structure is part of the grammar of such comedy – a skilled writer of cringe-comedy will introduce a character and their self-deception, and then raise tension by allowing them to indulge in their illusions without consequence. Then, rather than a peripatetic fall, the release of tension is the self-deception not being observed by others or confronted with reality, but forming part of an encounter with others in which only the audience is really privy to the true depths of the characters’ obliviousness to their own shortcomings. In ‘A Little Cloud’, we cringe not at Gallaher failing to live up to an exaggerated self-image but, on the contrary, at the fact that he is very successful in making an impression on Little Chandler and likewise we may recoil from the fact that Little Chandler does not, even at the end of the story, shake loose his false self-image and the story ends on his remorse for what has been done rather than what has been thought (about himself). Much like characters in *Seinfeld* or *The Larry Sanders Show*, the bitter humour comes not as a reaction to a failure to live up to a pretension, but as a response to someone being given an inch but taking a mile, and doing so without consequence and in the end regret anti-social actions rather than the false self-images that demanded them. Someone skilled at writing television comedy would be able to turn the stories of *Dubliners* into dark, modern-feeling comedy vignettes without altering the emplotment or dialogue much at all, because the structure that encapsulates the epiphanic moment of the story is not tragic or comic, but almost *joke-like* and this joke-like structure would be accessible to creative interpretations in direction, performance and staging.

argument that only those who have lost or lack a proper poetic or philosophical sensibility, regard poetry and literature as fantastical or unreal, and poetry's own status as a revolt against 'actuality'. The 'revolt' of which Joyce speaks seems to imply that artifice in its own service is pitted against artifice in the service of actuality, which is perhaps the more developed position of Stephen Dedalus. But, in this Mangan paper, Joyce seems to struggle to say so directly, and wishes to keep literary and poetic endeavour free of artifice and guile. On the topic of this revolt, Joyce's brother recalled the first Mangan paper as evidence of "a determined struggle to impose an elegance of thought on the hopeless distortion of life which surrounded him".<sup>211</sup>

Without simply regurgitating biographical details, and without speculating on Joyce's unspoken thoughts and feelings<sup>212</sup>, can we refine something of what this personal struggle involved? It does not seem to be an outward struggle, requiring Joyce to resist imposed or institutional forces, as Dedalus resists national identity and God. Indeed, the Mangan paper contains what is perhaps a word of self-caution: "the poet who hurls his anger against tyrants would establish upon the future a more intimate and far more cruel tyranny" [OPCW 59]. The struggle, therefore, would seem to be wholly interior and intellectual. Joyce's search for an affirmational, universal principle of truth requires him to distinguish between the intensity of "poetical life" (his examples of such are Blake and Dante) and the complexity of "philosophic life" (Goethe or Da Vinci). The contradiction is already evident in the young Joyce's setting of these two categories against each other. But, it is also evidenced in his remark about those who have "lost the simple intuition". However, would that not make the loss of "simple intuitions" itself a criterion for the sort of affirmation Joyce is looking for? The sense of "simple intuition" here is that of a vocabulary that is being wilfully exposed to its own contradictions, as Joyce lets the weightiness of big words become grinded down by the wheels of the grammatical structures by which the "revolt" or "determined struggle" finds its expression. In order to perform a gesture that constitutes "taking its center the life which surrounds it" [OPCW 60], as he puts it, one must have already introduced distance: one must partake of Dante's metaphor of the "bitter bread" of exile and slain Blake's "dragon of natural experience". It may be a little too clever or knowing here to suggest that young Joyce (he was twenty years old in 1902) was already working towards the principle of an intense "Yes" of affirmation, but was yet to discover a satisfying notion of return (inspired by Odysseus, but

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<sup>211</sup> Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper* [1957:168].

<sup>212</sup> As many have noted, including Stanislaus, the illness and death of his brother George that year exerted a huge emotional toll.

also of Nietzsche or Vico) with which his affirmation of truth would find its philosophical complement or dialectical sibling. But there is perhaps a sense that, in pieces like the Mangan essay, Joyce is stretching beyond himself, leaving himself open to contradiction, or even welcoming it, even as he wishes to dazzle his elders with erudition, in order to discover that which will make sense of the “surrounding life”.

Joyce’s earlier affirmation of ‘simple intuitions’ eventually finds a contrast in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* with a constant and, often, strictly hierarchical privileging of artifice over affect, imagination over affectivity, interrogation of the faculty of memory over recollection, and thoughtful reconfiguration of perception over the apparently immediate process of perceiving the world. These contrasts would seem to stress that anything worth doing is in fact a creative process. In *Finnegans Wake*, we might observe that  $\Delta$  holds a position of agency above  $\Pi$  insofar as the town only modifies what is created by the flow of the river.<sup>213</sup> Such contrasts are in further evidence in the account of the construction of Dublin in *Finnegans Wake*: where “things are not as they were. Let me briefly survey” [FW 540] and onwards to the construction of “milles and milles of mancipelles” [FW 545] and the final dominance of the personified city, the “man of capitol” [FW 548], who confesses his control of the water “But I was I firm with her” [FW 547]. but  $\Pi$  is above  $\Delta$  when those modifications concatenate into a radical disjunction of the land that was there before, and  $\Delta$  is above  $\Pi$  when that radical disjunction institutionalises itself and must constrain rather than transform the river. The rebirth of Kevin/St Patrick heralds the upsetting of long-settled philosophical problems, making them controversial again.<sup>214</sup> There is a more general sense of everything eventually coming to be put back up for debate. Time is above space in metaphors of growth, but space is above time in geographical expansion and voyaging. The same is true of the interior surface of an individual in *Ulysses*: we can say that Leopold Bloom is often buffoonish in his “missed understandings” [FW 175], but he is ingenuous in his

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<sup>213</sup> In ‘Anna Livia Plurabelle’, for example, the flow of Anna’s life and story dictate the flow of events around her. Even as things happen to her, they happen on her terms rather than the terms of those which re-tell the tale or embellish the details.

<sup>214</sup> If A as a river is a Spinozan “one substance of a streamsbecoming” [FW 597] the swerving of this river is also the clinamen which disturbs the perfect Oneness of settled thought into divergences which set ground for debate, as between St Patrick and the Archdruid [FW 611-612], a clinamen produced by the swerves of older Anna as she moves past the constructions of the city into the sea, paralleling St Kevin’s rousing from “hadding a sound night’s sleep” [FW 597]. “Why? It is a sot of a swigswag, systemy dystomy, which everabody you ever anywhere at doze. Why? Such me.” [ibid] The “search me!” answer here is a confession that something has happened outside of knowledge and experience – a waking up into philosophical dialectic and debate. As a remark, it would be fruitful to counter-oppose the pocket history of post-enlightenment philosophy Joyce develops over the following pages (from about page 596 through to the Archdruid/Berkeley section) with the ‘non-philosophy’ of Laruelle insofar as it poses an instance of unilaterality against a decision and principals of philosophical sufficiency.

transformation of misapprehension into misinterpretation, and subsequent use of his own misinterpretations as a means to understand and get outside of his own experiences and memories, circumnavigating the social world of meaning from which he is all too often shut out and returning with artifacts of thought incomprehensible to those who stayed behind. To understand Bloom's thought, the reader must become more acclimatised to means than to meanings, and must allow the suggestion that to misunderstand knowingly and creatively is more valuable than the clear but unimaginative understandings or comprehension of meaning. For example, in the Church, Bloom crassly assumes<sup>215</sup> that the Christogram "I.H.S." means "I have suffered" [U 100] and "I.N.R.I." stands for "Iron nails ran in". Yet, the casual cruelty or even callousness of these interpretations form a backdrop upon which he can spin an account that, though uncharitable, is fairly nuanced and sympathetic, of how the rituals of Catholic mass intoxicate the senses from the perspective of those who believe. Despite the crudeness of the initial assumption, Bloom's thoughts reflect a capacity for an intricate and spontaneous analysis of the interrelations between sensations and conceptualisation, without reducing Catholicism to a social function of intoxication in order to fit the episode's larger theme or 'meaning' of beguiling or seduction.<sup>216</sup> This passage provides one of *Ulysses*' most ambitious accounts of Bloom's eccentric ingenuity, in his idea of "the whole theology of it" [U 102]. being laid across "it" like a map, without even reading and giving the reader something reducible or irreducible to take the place of the "it" Bloom is trying to understand. While never directly addressing this, Bloom's thoughts direct curiosity towards how things work rather than what things mean.

Examples such as this, where Joyce seems to introduce artifice and inference into the grounds of the immediate, belong to a greater context of a more sustained focus upon immanence and creativity, which would seem to place him in the vitalistic, affirmational lineage of Nietzsche, Bergson and Deleuze, were it not for the fact that Joyce leads and concludes with the intellect. Even taking *Ulysses*' status as an "epic of the body" at its most literal, face-value interpretation, the intellect leads, since every organ is an extension of the intellect. This does not imply that all is mind, or that everything has a mind, a pan-psychism or spiritual monism considered, parodied and rejected by *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>217</sup> This is well evidenced in Joyce's lecture upon romanticism whereby, on the topic of William Blake, he

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<sup>215</sup> Perhaps he misremembers something Molly has told him, suggesting that his thoughts of Molly at the time reflect an unconscious preoccupation with victimhood and suffering.

<sup>216</sup> According to the Linati schema.

<sup>217</sup> One could read a 'cycle' in *Finnegans Wake* of the consideration, parodying and rejection of panpsychism or holistic understanding of the world.

dismisses Blake's mysticism unreservedly, yet gives an equally unconditional approval to Blake's assault on natural experience. Joyce's teaching (in Trieste) of the Blake-Swedenbourg-Michaelangelo triad was not without some eccentricities, though these were subtle. Those minor eccentricities point to the vast magnitude, and illustrate the idiolectic content of Joyce's divergence from both philosophy and conventional aesthetics. Instead of drawing on his sources and giving himself a philosophy and an aesthetic – as one could call Joyce's work a union of philosophy and aesthetical writing – we see a *non-philosophy* (a non-negation or refusal of dialectic)<sup>218</sup> and an *esthetic* (a double negative).<sup>219</sup>

In Joyce's non-philosophy and esthetic, we find an obstinate adherence to a classical or scholastic distinction between primary and secondary qualities, between the world as it is and how it appears to us. However, lacking as it does foundational philosophical dualisms and ontologised differences, this distinction is not only reflected or mimicked by the artistic process. It is also in constant flux and without foundation. One might say that, despite considerable stylistic departures and discontinuities, Joyce persists in practicing natural realism throughout his work, at least in terms of technique. However, the naturalness of this natural realism does not consist of fixed delineations or differences of being from being-for, or being from existence, or forms from appearance, or things-in-themselves from phenomena, etc. If there is a distinction between being and appearances, it is never a foundational one and, further, there is nothing foundational about either being or appearing themselves – the distinction between them is contingent and unilateral.

The secret withheld piece of information in the third episode of *Ulysses*, that is that Stephen has broken his glasses, is an apt demonstration of the implicitness the fact that Joyce maintains both epistemological antifoundationalism and a commitment to the difference between accidental and essential qualities. All it takes is the difference between wearing and not wearing glasses to radically change the delineation between things as they are and things as they appear. The difference between the world as it is with and without glasses is not the same as the distinction between things as I see them and things as they are. There are things in the visual field that the gaze does not touch, and there are things in seeing and things seen that

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<sup>218</sup> I am opposing non-philosophy to anti-philosophy, particularly as understood in Badiou's readings of Lacan, Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard. While the term 'non-philosophy' here is clearly in reference to the recent anglophone translation of and scholarship on the work of François Laruelle, my use of 'non' throughout this thesis should carry some suggestion of Deleuze's already somewhat Joycean notion one should read the philosophical notion of 'non-being' as '?-being'. See Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* [1994: 76-77]. Perhaps one could write of Joyce's ?-philosophy (a philosophico-fictional rather than poetico-philosophical endeavour), and my usage of the term *non-philosophy* must also imply this possibility. Either way, the implication that Joyce is an 'anti-philosopher' should be avoided.

<sup>219</sup> Joyce's formal invention is a return from *inaesthetic* to aesthetic, while keeping the subtractive orientation.



do not belong to perspective, ocularity or visuality. As much as one can rely on the fact that pieces of critical vocabulary such as the word ‘gaze’ to hold valency as both metaphor and non-metaphor, to do so assumes that everything involved in visualisation belongs to an immediacy that is irreducibly ocular, reducing everything to the dual analogy of seeing and being seen. Still, we will knock our heads against the fact that every atom is real yet contingent, and that nothing is necessary, even the distinction between beings and beings-for-us that nature imposes upon us.

Although, it takes aesthetic (or writerly) fidelity to an alternative division between primary and secondary qualities in order to show how arbitrary and contingent the entire belonging-together of the visual, the ocular, perspective and light truly are. The apparently foundational tetrad of time-experience-perspective-position is smashed against the scone of imagination, which steals “image” for itself from the tetrad. The parallel dyad of with-glasses/without-glasses does not simply disrupt metaphors of being-appearance that are structured around sight and ocularity. Also disrupted is the contingent nature of such an understanding of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, along with any notion that there are foundational affinities involved. Here is something which I would argue that is shown by Joyce’s works as a whole: although nature imposes on us a line between representations and perceptions, the line drawn is always arbitrary, and does not separate humanity from nature or condemn it to the bathos of linguistic, perceptual and social finitudes. The view that what is unstated about a perspective (Stephen is not wearing his glasses) is not explicitly stated and, thus, is implicit and evident everywhere via the attribution of miraculous psychological or sociological powers to perspective itself, is shown to be reductive. The same can be said for the equally reductive view that perspective has a foundational role in making concreteness concrete, just as time is allegedly foundational in making an experience and experience. Joyce’s writing allows no such attributions to take place. Whereas one might see something finite-ising in this, Joyce uses it as a way to show perspective failing, and artifice and synthesis working along the boundaries of perspective itself, which makes Stephen leak out ahead of himself. This does not result in a passive or conscious psychological projection, in the fact that there was never a foundational affinity between ‘perspective’ and ‘position’ in the first place, because there was never a foundational way to experience spatiality that would make such an affinity comprehensible

## CHAPTER 10: A COMBINATORIAL JOYCE? HOW FAR CAN THE MULTIPLE SUPPLANT THE PHENOMENAL AS THE SCENE OF THE CONCRETE IN NARRATIVE WRITING

### *The Retrospective Arrangement Revisited*

In Joyce's works, we are invited to examine a world where *relationality* is everything and objects are nothing if not the intersections of intensive amounts of relations, and a world in which interactions and appearances are regimented and decided by *relations* and where objects, while not being entirely irrelevant, are spectral and pale in comparison to the relational world in which humans encounter them. But simultaneously and in parallel, Joyce presents us with a world where the exact inverse is true: where relationality is weak, structures are barely coherent and consistency seems as if it is something lent pragmatically by humans to a world of chaos where eternal, real objects occur. In this view, relationality is descriptive of an operation which functions to fetter, save or restore the actuality of objects. Interrogating this view makes it possible for objects to emerge from their isolated and fetishized spectrality.

In Badiou's work, there is a very simple answer to the question of whether objects or relations have priority: relationality is determined by objects, and eventually objects will always prove their persistence. As he describes in *Logics of Worlds*.

Since the logic of objects is nothing but the legislation of appearing, it is not in effect possible to accept that relations, being objects, have a power of being. The definition of relation must be strictly dependent on that of objects, not the other way around. On this point we are in agreement with Wittgenstein who, having defined the 'state of affairs' as a 'combination of objects', posits that 'if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself'. In other words, if an object enters into combination with other objects, this combination is, if not implied, in any case regulated by objects. [Badiou, 2009: 301]

Superficially, such a view should ring true to readers of *Finnegans Wake* where objects are, persuasively, nothing but appearances that are "legislated" in the form of continuous and multiple forms which are made singular in the context of a particular appearance in the text. As Ellmann records, Joyce claimed, in conversation with Jaloux, that his technique must suit "the esthetic of the dream, where *forms prolong and multiply themselves*". On this particular point, specifically in reference to the formal aspect of *Finnegans Wake*, the case for a Badiouian Joyce is perhaps stronger than the more canonical Derridean Joyce. Any

combination of objects which Joyce repeatedly deploys in *Finnegans Wake* (a letter, a bed, a tower, a mountain derived from  $\Pi$ , the river derived from  $\Delta$ , the dates 1132AD and 566AD, etc) are in effect “written into the thing itself” literally. Example of this are the revered letter being a document of its own history, Shem writing autobiographically on his own body, or the Middenheap whose context is given by the letter submerged within it, just as the discovery of the letter is legislated by the context donated by the letter itself.

All objects in *Finnegans Wake* are therefore open to being read as recursive, in the sense that their situation and localisation appear within them. Obvious instances of this are the way the private domain of  $\Pi$  and  $\Delta$  is represented by forms of  $\square$ : a bed inside a bedroom, a bedroom inside a pub, a pub near a crossroads, in Chapelizod, in Dublin, in Ireland... and so on until one again reaches the letter, which resides on the bed. This *matriochka* approach has its origin in a famous incident from Joyce’s youth, depicted in *A Portrait*, where he wrote his address as an increasing sequence of magnitude “Stephen Dedalus, Class of Elements, Clongowes Wood College, Sallins, County Kildare, Ireland, Europe, The World, The Universe” [AP 15].

The address in *A Portrait* is parodied in *Finnegans Wake* by the footnote describing the location of the children’s home and studyroom as “Kellywick, Longfellow’s Lodgings, House of Comments III, Cake Walk, Amusing Avenue, Salt Hill, Co. Mahogany, Izalond, Terra Firma” (FW 261) which is accessed by the “cthonix exterior” (cave entrance) of the residence of “plain Mr Tumulty in muftilife”. The coinage “muftilife” is very appropriate with “mufti” being soldier’s slang for civilian clothing, so in “muftilife” Joyce is stressing the plain and unremarkable normality of pure multiplicity.

What is distinct between the address in *A Portrait* and the address in *Finnegans Wake* is that the *Portrait* address ends with a final and all-enclosing totality, “the universe”, giving the impression that the largest possible territory that young Stephen can imagine would contain every other location. The address in *Finnegans Wake* lacks any kind of final totality or uniting region into which the locations are situated; there is only “Terra Firma”, which suggests only the regions of relative stability. Rather than, as Deleuze might have it, a plane of consistency,<sup>220</sup> we can consider that the locality of Joyce’s addresses operates instead simply on a plane of relative coherence resting upon utter contingency. Between *A Portrait* and *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce’s conception of the human world has moved from the place of

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<sup>220</sup> See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1988:84].

humanity in a cosmos that is vast but ultimately finite to the account of subjectivity within a kind of acosmism where the procession of magnitudes does not have the ultimate destination of a region which contains every other region, but towards the line between coherence and incoherence whereby the “esthetic” of a dream can represent the soft border between the coherent thinkable and sayable and the unstable and contingent. To put this using different terms, the inquiry on the topic of topography is also the question of what “context” may mean in a literary situation (that is to say, a text) where the formal concerns are prolongations and multiplicities. To put it more simply, it is a question of re-examining the issue of locality with regard to the multiple rather than to the singular.

Such an approach to the tension between objects and locality would mean that Joyce’s situations are recursive in both an inward and outward direction: for example, the particular forms derived from the □ siglum in *Finnegans Wake*, which is both the bed of Mr Porter and the Inn in which it resides, but also the forger’s book and the missing letter, as well as *Finnegans Wake* itself. The recursivity between sigla relates to the wheel of history sigla (⊙) and the book also, as the book concerns the wheel (⊙) which concerns the story of the letter (□). This is what Deleuze and Guattari referred to when they used Joyce as a particularly nasty example of what they defined as “circular segmentarity”<sup>221</sup> in *Mille Plateaux*. Joyce’s recursion is not simply a Droste effect, a repetition which would suggest ultimate finitude or convergence and the eternal return of a singular original image and neither does it suggest an enclosing cosmological recursion, perhaps best represented by Poincaré’s theory of recurrence.<sup>222</sup>

After all, one of the most common and influential metaphors for reading *Finnegans Wake* has been that of a dream and that of players who take different roles in a play, that each character or figure is one of the real persons represented by the sigla taking on a role in a play or game. Such metaphors for the overall grammar of the book do not suggest a gulf between appearances and essences, but rather they suggest the inscription of appearances in the sense that although the only real element of the particular appearance of a figure is relational, the relation is inscribed in the sigla and thus inside the grammar of Joyce’s composition itself.

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<sup>221</sup> “We are segmented in a circular fashion, in ever larger circles, ever wider disks or coronas, like Joyce’s ‘letter’: my affairs, my neighborhood’s affairs, my city’s, my country’s, the world’s...” [Deleuze & Guattari, 1988:244].

<sup>222</sup> Poincaré receives at least one mention in *Finnegans Wake*, the “Pointcarried!” on page 304.

While there exists no definitive narrative structure nor canonical character list for *Finnegans Wake*, it is possible to think of the ‘structure of *Finnegans Wake*’ as being the simple, bare set of the sigla and nothing more. In Badiou’s words, the “state of affairs” is simply a “combination of objects” unadorned with any extrapolation of relationality between the sigla or the assumption that there is a foundational hierarchy or familial arrangement which dictates the existence of the objects rather than vice versa. This requires then the thinking of a second structure, the so-called meta-structure or state of the situation of the piece from which the body of the text is drawn.

In the footnotes at the bottom of page 299 in *Finnegans Wake*, written by a young female figure either called “Soucie” or “Issy”, the following list of characters appear described as the “doodles family”: “ $\Pi$ ,  $\Delta$ ,  $\square$ ,  $\neg$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\wedge$ ,  $\sqsubset$ ”. As it appears, the “doodles family” contains some of the sigla Joyce used in his personal notation system during the composition and drafting of *Finnegans Wake*, but listed as they might correspond to a family arrangement. Although each particle is not labelled, the context of the chapter in which the sequence of symbols is embedded allows us to deduce the following:  $\Pi$  corresponds to the father figure,  $\Delta$  to the mother; the children are represented by ( $\sqsubset$ ) Dolph and ( $\wedge$ ) Kev, and a footnote from a daughter ( $\neg$ ) Soucie or Issy. The square ( $\square$ ) references a private part of the family space where the children are studying, which is distinct from the public space ( $\times$ ) (either downstairs or the roads mentioned in the beginning of the chapter). In this arrangement we have the ingredients of a family, and the distinction between their public life and private dwelling, whereby the distinction between the children’s classrooms studies ( $\times$ , as a crossroads and bridge crossings on the way to and from school)<sup>223</sup> and homework exercises ( $\square$ , as either the private room where Dolph and Kev sit and study, or perhaps the sheet of paper that they are gathered around for their geometry lesson) provides the setting of the episode, the journey home “to house as wise fool ages builded”. The arguments elsewhere in the home suggest the children are becoming dimly aware of a lack of tranquility. Divided between their immediate family and a wider social situation, (“Pep and Memmy” and “the old folkers below and beyant”, [FW 308]) with the siglum  $\times$  being associated with not only the public space in the shape of the Chapelizod crossroads, but with the four old men below the room or the twelve customers in the pub. In the following chapter in book III, we will see that rumours spreading between those customers are the cause for some of the strife between the childrens “Pep” ( $\Pi$ ) and “Memmy” ( $\Delta$ ).

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<sup>223</sup> [FW 260-262]. These pages describe (or suggest) the children’s journey home from school.

So, in presenting the backdrop of *Finnegans Wake* not as a deep structure, but rather as a spare arrangement of objects, why is a discussion of a meta-structure or a second system or doubling or coupling required? This question addresses the relation between Joyce's many contrasting ontological interests and the range of different techniques used in his different works, what Alain Badiou has referred to as Joyce's "odyssey of forms" [Badiou, 2005:160].

As Joyce has made it clear throughout, his ontological statements express the contingency and incoherence of the world on which human institutions are built. The well-known and frequently cited argument of Stephen Dedalus that human institutions are "founded on the void" to the Lewis Carroll styled portmanteaus and puns in *Finnegans Wake* that speak of "nought-time" [FW 349], "echoland" [FW 13] "and above all that "every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway connected with the gobblydumped turkery was moving and changing every part of the time" [FW 119].

Joyce's appropriations from historical and philosophical sources express an interest not only in himself as an artist imposing order on chaos via an act of creation, such as the narrative journey of an "odyssey of forms", but the fact that the artist is intervening or engaging in a situation that is drawn from contingency, with no foundational structure beyond the local meta-structure which pulls it temporarily into coherence. If Badiou's notion of an object is "legislation of appearing", for Joyce the concern is "ab chao lex" [FW 518], legislation from chaos. The word made flesh is the war made peace, the metaphor for the creation of the world that Joyce gives is not birth or creation *ab nihilo* but armistice: a temporary ceasefire or pause.<sup>224</sup>

Badiou's repurposing of Lacan's phrase "il y a de l'Un" in *Being and Event* into a "guarantee of consistency" [Badiou, 2006: 93], stems from the observation that if one broadly defines consistency in terms of unity or oneness in appearance, such a consistency cannot be guaranteed by a structure alone. As regards to Derrida's description of the originary splitting of the monad, or the absence of any oneness or unity of authentic self-presence requires that his engagement with Joyce be focused on a description of a secondary or tertiary function of deferment, it follows that this function takes the form of a network of "counter-signature"

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<sup>224</sup> It is notable here that the well-known pasasge on the "abnihilisation of the etym" [FW 353] refers to a scission, in this case the splitting of the atom. This is perhaps the best condescension of Joyce as a deconstructionist: the demonstration that the monad of meaning or self-identity is divided at the very point of its origin, but such a logic of scission also has the sense that the "abnihilisation", or birth of the word, comes from inside a hiatus or pause, that the augenblick (or for Joyce, eyegoneblack) is a detente in the midst of unceasing conflict.

which can give consistency and coherence to a structure that is always already de-structured in its original presentation. Badiou's argument is, therefore, that "it is necessary that structure be structured" [Ibid] as each and every object is bifurcated at least once into coherence and incoherence. For Badiou this entails that an object cannot simply exist due to its construction by relations or processes, social or linguistic. An object anticipates its articulation in structure or language, it is never constructed or instated by language and structure. Division between Badiou and Derrida might be said to be their positions on, as it were, opposite sides of the imperative that one must "oppose the rigour of the subtractive... against the temptation of presence" [Badiou, 2006:27]. As this thesis has, after Fordham's insightful aside<sup>225</sup>, noted how Joyce was serendipitously an unwitting contemporary of Heidegger in that he was conducting an investigation of being, we might characterise the aforementioned division as between deconstruction as a post-Heideggerian thinking and Badiou as implicitly anti-Heideggerian. But in the light of Badiou's post of presentation to presence, we can see how the ultimate destination or limit point of such an investigation will tend towards the subtractive:

If there cannot be a presentation *of* being because being occurs in every presentation - and this is why it does not present *itself*- then there is one solution left for us: that the ontological situation be *the presentation of presentation*. [Badiou, 2006:27]

Therefore, a writer like Joyce, if he wishes to writing of Being directly, either through accounts of the flow of individual conscious or a penetration into the hitherto unwritten "one great part of every human existence" [L 317-318], has no given or foundational Being to seek out. There is no foundational affinity being Being and another notion or quality upon which a writer may ground his 'ontological' inquiries, as ontology is itself the presentation of presentation, which is to say a *situation*. This should appeal to the reader of *Finnegans Wake*, as it implies that the "building supra building" [FW 4] is not an abstraction build upon the foundational layer of being-as-such, but this presentation of presentation is nothing other than

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<sup>225</sup> Referring to the comment that Joyce is conducting an "obscure investigation in to the nature of being" [Fordham, 2007:62], and refers to the distinctions between Being, beings, existence, objects and things in *Finnegans Wake*. While I find Fordham's characterisation comes too close to the idea that Joyce is producing philosophy as well as literature, the entire passage is highly relevant here and it is perhaps frustrating that Fordham does not develop this compelling insight further beyond the genealogical and etymological analysis of the Joyce-ism "isists" he isolates from an early publication of the "Shem" chapter [Fordham, 2007:61]. For example, rather than look forwards to post-Heideggerian thinking, Fordham's passage is just as illuminating as the potential parallels with Leibniz in Stephen's theory of unity in *A Portrait* [AP 212]. Or, to elaborate further on the point that in *Finnegans Wake* "autonomy is favoured as a mode of being over dependence" [Fordham, 2007:62]. These are all very compelling insights, and I would ask the question of how one is to read them if one *does not* think that Joyce is conducting a philosophical investigation through literature. Joyce's "isists" could just as easily been see to anticipate Laruelle's One-in-One and Badiou's Count-as-One as it does any post-Heideggerian inquiry into the distinction between Being-qua-Being and beings or between being and existing.

the ontology which Joyce is exploring. In Joyce's arrangement there is void, atoms and flux: there is no room for a necessary Being or any foundational affinities. Consequently, all affinities are localisations of presentation.

To return more directly to Joyce and to the sigla figures themselves as the basic "state of affairs", McHugh's analysis of the Buffalo notebooks show that Joyce also used the sigla to illustrate the five classical senses: "⌠ ear  $\Delta$  smell  $\wedge$  taste  $\sqsubset$  touch  $\dashv$  sight" [Sigla 16]. Such an arrangement sees ⌠ defined by its reverse. For example, when a witness to an alleged appearance or indiscretion of ⌠ gives "remarkable evidence...by an eye, ear, nose and throat witness" [FW 86], ⌠ is defined not by its associated sense organ (the ear), but by the absence of the sense suggested by the siglum  $\sqsubset$ , touch.

These arrangements are further complicated by the addition of another siglum,  $\mathcal{A}$ , providing distinctions with which Joyce can describe the grammar of particular situations in sections of *Finnegans Wake*: " $\mathcal{A}$  - a posteriori,  $\dashv$  - a priori (...)  $\mathcal{A}$  - subject, ⌠ - verb  $\dashv$  - object" [Sigla 84 & 88]. In an almost Hegelian account of the general passage of consciousness in the book, McHugh goes on to describe the following:

The book I consciousness strives with passionate intensity for unattainable ideals until in I.7 it attains madness, whilst that of book III descends into the stultifying sanity of urban mediocrity. Joyce's way of saying this is that  $\sqsubset$  is life and  $\wedge$  is death. In physical terms he represents  $\sqsubset$  as an elm tree, moaning pathetically in the wind, and  $\wedge$  as a stone, pitiless and immobile as the throne of St Peter. [Sigla 29]

McHugh notes that  $\mathcal{A}$  is "unity or triad" [Sigla 88] as it is not exclusively (or even frequently) the simple synthesis or identity of opposites. Although Joyce's text does include reference to the identity of opposites or the synthesis of thesis and anti-thesis (notably in the Hegel parody), the role of  $\mathcal{A}$  is open, usually to some feminine element or "particle" (in McHugh's words from his *Annotations*). As much as  $\mathcal{A}$  represents the merger of the Cain-Abel figures,  $\mathcal{A}$  must also stand for the amorous fusion at the climax of Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*. But here the reader should be careful: the goal of T figures may be to "win" *Isolde* from the King Mark figures and possess her, but in another guise the androgyne ( $\mathcal{A}$ ) rescues *Isolde* as much from being possessed in general as being possessed by the King in particular.  $\mathcal{A}$  must be an open-ended set of figures which include both the young, possessive and sexually assertive Tristan but also the union of *Isolde* or *Issy* figures with elements representing an escape from general senses of possession and conjugal capture.



In book III, the possessive nature of  $\mathbb{M}$  towards  $\Delta$  is the cause of condemnation in many of the cross interrogations (particularly in III.3.) Therefore, as the adversary of  $\mathbb{M}$ ,  $\mathcal{L}$  is both possessive and dispossessive dependent on context: the line between  $\mathcal{L}$  as the leading voice of the accusers of  $\mathbb{M}$  (McHugh identifies the figure with the balladeer Hosty, [Sigla 92]) who seems to be acting out of protection of  $\Delta$  from conquest, and the  $\mathcal{L}$  who seeks to win the hand of his love ( $\neg$  or a  $\neg$ — fusion) from the tyrannical  $\mathbb{M}$ , is blurred by definition and necessarily the reader can read any possible unity of all the “child” sigla into  $\mathcal{L}$ . Considering the “mirror girl” passage in Book III, one can even project the motive that  $\mathcal{L}$  carries the resentfulness of a daughter towards her mother, vying for her father’s affections. This reading, perhaps persuasive to those who closely identify  $\neg$  and  $\vdash$  with Lucia Joyce, would see the true target of the rebellion as  $\Delta$  rather than  $\mathbb{M}$ . At this point, the sigla seem to be circular rather than discreet and lead us to a paradox: how can  $\mathcal{L}$  contain at once hostility from  $\neg$  towards  $\Delta$  in favour of  $\mathbb{M}$ , and the exoneration of  $\mathbb{M}$  in the form of a letter written by  $\Delta$  and transcribed by  $\square$ ? At some point, the notion of the sigla of discreet particles or atoms must vanish beneath the notion of them as situational groupings or sets of appearances. Both  $\mathcal{L}$  and  $\mathbb{M}$  take on the character of retrospective arrangement, resituating and re-orientating the figures of the book into larger contexts in order to anchor or guarantee the intensity of their own appearances.

In order to explore how Joyce’s work moves from a spare and simple “state of affairs” to such complexity, I will return to *Ulysses* and discuss the theme of “retrospective arrangement” which is a repeated motif or motival phrase used in *Ulysses*, using a particular aspect of Badiou’s theory of situations, this being his deployment of the power set axiom. Badiou’s philosophy of situations is a philosophy of the auto re-situation of situations, and it is appropriate to compare it with Joyce whose system might be described as written in “blotch and void” [FW 229], in that it is composed between multiple forms and nothingness. But also, through what Joyce terms “retrospective arrangement”. The overall “retrospective arrangement” references a variety of different concerns throughout *Ulysses* such as the following examples:

- Geographic mobility of Dublin’s minorities: “a retrospective arrangement of migrations and settlements in and between Dublin” [U 854].
- Rhetoric: “—Trenchant, Mr Power said laughing. He’s dead nuts on that. And the retrospective arrangement” [U 113].

- Mnemonics, memory and folklore: “When you look back on it all now in a kind of retrospective arrangement. Gaming at Daly’s. No cardsharpping then. One of those fellows got his hand nailed to the table by a dagger” [U 309].
- Psychology and self-identity: “He is young Leopold. There, as in a retrospective arrangement, a mirror within a mirror (hey, presto!), he beholdeth himself” [U 504].

In all such irruptions of the phrase “retrospective arrangement” in *Ulysses*, such as the above quotes, the typical Joycean antagonism between the kinetic and the static is reproduced. Although not directly expressed, there is a suggestion of the early distinction between the kind of static emplacement favoured by the author (aesthetic stasis) against the malignant paralysis or hemiplegia that is evoked in the language of “settlement”, a word not only heavy with anti-Irish and anti-Jewish sentiment in recent colonial history, but also with the concerns of debt, matters of the economic made personal which gave rise to the de-settlement and constant house moving of the Dedalus (and therefore Joyce) family. There is also the association of stasis in the form of a hypostasis of identity (“A mirror within a mirror...he beholdeth himself”) and most strikingly the image of a “hand nailed to the table by a dagger”, something held in place by a penetrative act of violence.

In addition, retrospective arrangement suggests that something needs to be put back in place after deviation. This brings us to questions of metas-structure, and further, the questions of whether meta-structural concerns of narrative may be formalised and to what extent. As regards this, there is a critique to be made by associating the version of the power set axiom that Badiou deploys in his “formal theory of the subject”, with the typically Joycean theme of “retrospective arrangement”. The power set axiom states that for any given set of elements, there exists a set that can contain all the subsets of that original set. For a given set of the elements  $\{x, y, z\}$ , then the power set, which contains all the subsets of this would be  $\{\{\emptyset\}, \{x\}, \{y\}, \{z\}, \{x, y\}, \{x, z\}, \{y, z\}, \{x, y, z\}\}$ .

The power set would include all the possible subsets that may be generated from that original set. Any existing set can, by virtue of the power set axiom, generate a set larger than itself. Consequently, a simple reduced arrangement contains, already inscribed within it, the possibility of a complex meta-structure that requires no additional elements to be included. If we consider that a situation is simply a state of affairs implied by a collection of elements, then that “state of affairs” of the elements  $x, y$  and  $z$  would consist firstly in the presentation of the situations which is the set of elements  $\{x, y, z\}$ , where each element is counted-as-one within a set. Each element would then be counted again in the *state* of the situation where

each is counted a second time within the re-presentation of the situation where each element is counted again, but this time not as elements but in subsets. Elements that appear in the original set are said to belong to the set, which is represented by the sign  $\in$ , whereas elements appearing as subsets in the power set are said to be included, which is represented by the sign  $\subset$ .

Of great importance to Badiou's adoption of the power set axiom as part of his ontological discourse, is the fact that the power set always contains a null set  $\{\emptyset\}$ , which is a set composed of nothing, but the void. In Oliver Feltham's overview of Badiou's use of set theory in *Infinite Thought*, he observes that  $\emptyset$  "the null set is the initial point of existence from which all other set theory is unfolded using constructive axioms" [Badiou, 2003:15]. By repeatedly raising the null set  $\emptyset$  to its own power sets, one obtains an infinite progression of subsets in  $\emptyset$  to  $\{\emptyset\}$  to  $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$  to  $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}, \{\{\emptyset\}\}, \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}\}$ . In Feltham's description "it is just such an unfolding which constitutes the infinity of sets." This progression increasing magnitude, expressible as the linear increase of cardinality (the number of elements in a set) bears comparison with both the address Stephen Dedalus writes as his own and its parody in the footnotes of *Finnegans Wake*. The address "Stephen Dedalus, Class of Elements, Clongowes Wood College, Sallins, County Kildare, Ireland, Europe, The World, The Universe", is written from the point of view of how a child might understand his own topological and local position, not geographically or spatially, but as a succession of groups of ever greater size. Stephen Dedalus is a group of one, then there is his school which contains many like him and so on as he lists groups of greater population of individuals like himself. The act of writing the address is a poignant expression of the isolation (and need for a secure sense of cosmic inclusion) of young Stephen in that it expresses his topological position purely in terms of cardinality, all spatial concerns of character or place having been stripped away.

There are three instructive remarks a critical reader of Joyce may extract from the deployment of the power set axiom. The first is that the use of the adjective "constructive" may be the inverse to how a constructivist orientation is usually applied in much of the humanities. Badiou's anti-foundationalism sees construction on the basis of objects (that is, on the basis of sets or multiples) rather than objects being constructed from relationality, historical context or socio-linguistic backgrounds. One of Badiou's many startling claims in *Being and Event* is that the void is the "proper name of being" [Badiou, 2006:65], which is to say that as the presentation of what-is (expressed in phenomenological terms as *dasein* or

*être-là*) unfolds from the void, meaning that there can be no one foundational thing which Being itself can be said to be like.<sup>226</sup> Such a view might reflect a belief in univocity familiar to literary adaptations of Deleuzian thought, but it is a univocity of the void itself rather than a prior category such as life, process, perceptual experience or God.<sup>227</sup> As a corollary, one is now in a position to propose a near-total critique of any reading of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* that relies on foundational or archetypal reduction of the sigla-figures. It is no longer possible to say that  $\Pi$  and  $\Delta$ , for example, retrospectively embody a would-be essential or transcendental masculinity and femininity which is disclosed in the particular presentations of figures derived from them. Ultimately, what underwrites and founds the sigla is nothing but the void, and the sigla themselves have no essence or transcendental character beyond their localised presentation.

Such views reflect what may be considered to be the meontological,<sup>228</sup> rather than the ontological one, a disposition shared by Joyce and Badiou. As Badiou states, his philosophy considers that “presence is the exact contrary of presentation” [Badiou, 2006]. We can also return here to the well-known notion that “absence is the highest form of presence” [JJ 252], a remark that Ellmann records having been mockingly made to Joyce by university friends concerning his attitudes to death, and to which Ellmann considered many of the stories in *Dubliners* (in particular, ‘Ivy Day’ and ‘The Dead’) to be a riposte. While the opposition of structured presentation to presence and the opposition of absence to presence do not mean exactly the same, they lead Badiou and Joyce to draw very similar conclusions, similarities that are all the more notable by coming from such different positions. First, the notion that all that exists is “founded on the void” is stated directly, with conviction, in *Ulysses*, but is also a key part of Badiou’s Cantorian ontology, as he argues that all presentation is unfolded from the void on the basis of the axiomatic structure of set theory. Secondly, the call to action that this entails for thought is to “oppose the rigour of subtraction against the temptation of presence” [Badiou, 2006], a phrase that can also enclose Joyce’s project, from the subtractive

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<sup>226</sup> See Badiou’s account of phenomenon in *Logics of Worlds*, [Badiou, 2009], “For a new thinking of the object”, (199-229). For a critical view of Badiou’s relation with phenomenology, see Ray Brassier’s essay “Presentation as anti-phenomenon in Alain Badiou’s *Being and Event*” [Brassier 2006].

<sup>227</sup> For example, Deleuze’s few remarks on Joyce in *Difference and Repetition* [Deleuze, 1994] which interpret *Finnegans Wakes*’ “ultimate Joycean identity” of “chaosmos” as an equivalence between Being itself and chaos. Even with Deleuze’s radical rejection of metaphor, such a view is still too reliant on analogy: in order to take the anti-foundational and contingent acosmism of *Finnegans Wake* seriously one must go even further and see not only “chaos”, but a meontological contingency with no foundational concept.

<sup>228</sup> For an example of this term in its proper philosophical usage, see the closing essay ‘Aleatory Rationalism’ by Brassier and Toscano in Badiou’s *Theoretical Writing* [Badiou, 2004: 253]

logic of epiphany to the audacious desire that a writer can access, and write of, the “Real Absence” [FW 536] in *Finnegans Wake*.

Such a meontological view squares firmly with many readings of Joyce, going from early remarks on *Finnegans Wake* in the *Examination* [1929] to Bishop’s *Joyce’s Book of the Dark* [1986] and on to more recent studies such as Fordham’s suggestions of a pluralistic univocity of the ephemeral in *Lots of Fun At Finnegans Wake*. [2007]. In fact, I would argue that although applying Badiouian dictums on the fundamental emptiness of ontology to Joyce creates a wealth of problems, it offers a profound way to reconcile the readings that focus on Joyce’s emphasis on darkness and silence with readings celebrating Joyce’s love of the ephemeral and his attentiveness to the immanent, as there is really no foundational distinction between them. We can thus discover a kind of transcendental univocity without having recourse to any kind of foundationalism such as vitalism or appeals to either the priority of immediate experience or the once-common notion that Joyce’s work rested upon a thinly disguised monotheism.

I cannot dismiss the difficulties which result from confronting a deconstructionist reading of Joyce with an application of Badiouian ontological observation. On the contrary I think that they are interesting and worth having, as the turn towards deconstruction and rejection of depth or profundity demonstrate how, according to Derek Attridge, “deconstruction functions as the wake of criticism” [Attridge, 2000: 24]. This is suggestive of the notion that, embedded within the deconstructive engagement with Joyce, there was an anticipation of a post-critical era which is now embodied by the American “affective turn” in criticism typified by Eve Sedgwick and Rita Felski. The suggestion here is that the existence of *Finnegans Wake* will always prompt a post-critical return of the critical register to the scene of its own demise, a kind of revenant critique. Furthermore, the anti-humanist and contingent element of such a confrontation between the ontological and the meontological should be obvious. Further, if one is to make the specific claim that Joyce’s late texts represent an imperative to pluralism that does prescriptively reject all discourse on universality, it is a relevant counter-example to one that is from the anti-foundational aspect of a logic of presentation that Badiou mounts his notorious rejection of relativism. That is to say, that the subversion of appearance by the inexistent, or an inconsistency in the “presentation of presentation”, is what leads to universality in truth as Badiou understands it. The parallel with Joyce, again, is startling to me. Not because Joyce shares many of Badiou’s particular ontological commitments, but because it posits universality as arising in the

circumstances which, as practitioners of post-structuralism and post-critique often claim, demonstrates that true universality is either irrelevant or impossible. To say it simpler: *Finnegans Wake* is universal because it is so chaotic, and *Ulysses* is universal because it is so specific. One can speak here of Joyce's surprising anticipation of the contemporary 'generic turn' in Continental thought, exemplified in the opposing figures of Badiou and Laruelle.

Returning to Badiou's deployment of the ZFC power set axiom, the next remark one can make is that the void is a productive or (more properly) generative element from which new structures and objects may be unfolded. What is generative about a subset of things (objects) has neither originary nor foundational qualities. Although the void is a full stop<sup>229</sup> in the presentation of objects, it is never simply a delineation of where language and knowledge may not go. The void does not represent the mortal finitude of human subjects, the line after which unknowable things come. This would imply a Wittgensteinian mysticism: that which we cannot know about we should not speak about.<sup>230</sup> There is no such line or boundary anywhere in Badiou's thought, and it is crucial to observe that the same attitude is evident with Joyce, if not more so. There is no topic, no position or aspect of life which the artist cannot make available to himself as a resource for his miracle. In *Finnegans Wake*, the artist does not recognise the void as a boundary and can write a position from within sleep, death, or from beyond other limits into which received wisdom might suggest that a writer can never go. The polyglottal aspect of *Finnegans Wake* also attests to this, that is to say that that language has no boundaries, and that with the appropriate generic approach any language can be used in any literature to write of any topic. The artist's appropriation and deployment of language is never limited by a sense of authenticity, nor any relativistic sense that an artist is constrained by his social or historical context.

While such a view may be distasteful from (to take one of many possible examples) the point of view of a post-colonial reader who would see this form of universalism or internationalism as an invasive conquest, I would firmly stress it is a valid anti-colonial position in its own right as it forms the rejection of the imposition of artificial limits and barriers, something of which the division of Ireland is emblematic, not least because Joyce's great dismay at the British partition of Ireland by an act of parliamentary politics informed

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<sup>229</sup> Referencing Derrida, Badiou argues that the endpoint of the "dissemination" of objects is not "a form of the One" but rather is itself "necessarily, a multiplicity" which he describes as "a multiplicity of no multiplicity", that is to say, the void [Badiou, *Second Manifesto For Philosophy*, 2011:57].

<sup>230</sup> Referring to the famous final proposition of the *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, one must remain silent".

much of *Finnegans Wake*'s political comedy and invective. Both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* present the imposition of boundaries and borders as an imperial or clerical business, as imperial interests mark territories on lands and priests mark the distinction between death and life as entirely separate domains,<sup>231</sup> or the way the teachers (like Mr Deasy) and priests derive their occupations from the performance of dividing orthodox and heterodox ideas. The relationship between Ireland and finitude is the relationship between Ireland and that which imposes an exterior order upon it, whether that entity is the current Empire (Britain), a religious hegemony (Catholicism) or an Empire which never invaded Ireland yet becomes symbolic and synonymous with how language and thought divided civilization from barbarism (Rome). Although Joyce is fascinated with the unsayable or the incommunicable, it is of crucial importance that such is not necessarily coupled with the unknowable or the unthinkable.

Leading from a rejection of finitude, I come to the final and perhaps most crucial remark for a literary or aesthetic discussion of Badiou's application of the power set axiom as a discourse of representation. The association of the power set with the state of the situation or the meta-structure of representation is illustrative of the excess of the representation over the presentation of a situation itself. That is to say that not only is the representative meta-structure of a situation necessarily larger, in terms of greater cardinality, than the situation from which it is unfolded, but it shatters any pretense of that situation being finite as the null set alone can be used to derive sets of any cardinality from the original presentation. Nothing can demonstrate this more than the notion that *Finnegans Wake* has some sort of real life that it is derived from. If *Finnegans Wake* is the unfolding of subsets from some basic set of so-called real objects into which relations are already inscribed, the infinitude suggested in its unfolding auto-effaces the finitude in the set it is allegedly drawn from. In the critical process, the more definite the evidence for a real story or real life behind the dream, the more has been added to the dream itself which cannot be included in the originary situation without an increase of cardinality. As *Ulysses* was written in, as described in *Finnegans Wake*, "blotch and void" [FW 229], we can see the notion that the excess (or obscurity) of language and its harbouring of the void are the tools available to get outside of fixed or finite perspectives.

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<sup>231</sup>A view famously rejected by Bloom in his thoughts at Dignam's burial, as he contemplates the fungibility of life and death (*U*, 137-144). Amongst other examples, Bloom's thoughts about using the death to fertilise gardens and the notion of a gramophone recording from the grave.

With regard to the sigla as a state of affairs in particular, I need to be careful here to state that I am presenting Joyce's notation system in parallel to my reduction of Badiou's theory of the meta-structure. What I am not doing is suggesting that there is a direct equivalence or identity in the distinction between what might be considered the first-order sigla ( $\sqcap$  and  $\Delta$ , for example) and what might be considered the second order sigla ( $\mathcal{L}$ , or any of those which are not part of any originary "doodles family"), and Badiou's distinction between belonging ( $\in$ ) and inclusion ( $\subset$ ). Although, considering the celebrated mathematical coherence and patterns of *Finnegans Wake* (such as the popular claim that *Finnegans Wake* is unrivalled in its "fractal" and "ideal" mathematical structure),<sup>232</sup> it is possible that such an analysis may be performed, that would be far outside the scope of this thesis in terms of requiring a dedicated mathematical element to the project. What I hope to extract from Badiou's observation is the topographical framing of the argument regarding the necessary tension between belonging and inclusion, which will be elaborated on later. What is important in stating or deploying Badiou's use of the power set axiom is not the strict definitions of the power set itself, but rather the antagonism or dialectic it reveals between its two operations.

Nevertheless, any association of the sigla notations with Badiou's description of the tensions between belonging and inclusion should expect critiques from experts on the genetic and textual analysis of *Finnegans Wake*, and I think two of the critiques which I anticipate are worth stating now so they can be in the subtext of the following sections before they being addressed more directly in later chapters. The first is that the "Doodles family" footnote is not meant to provide any sort of grand schema to the composition of the figures or any kind of general depictions of the state of affairs in of *Finnegans Wake*. It seems most likely to have been added as a joke or meta-textual reference as it is in the footnotes provided by Issy. As no one outside Joyce's inner circle had access to the sigla, their inclusion as a footnote is something of an in-joke that is very typical of Joyce. He had hoped that his daughter, Lucia Joyce, would have provided more elaborate illustrations for his work in the future, yet in the text the fictional daughter here provides not only her own illustrations, but a reproduction of Joyce's own crude notations. One could even say that this might be a knowing jab from Joyce to future critics who might be overly keen to associate the fictional daughter with the author's own daughter.

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<sup>232</sup> See for example, the report in *The Guardian* on the Polish Nuclear Physics Institute analysis of literary texts (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/27/scientists-reveal-multifractal-structure-of-finnegans-wake-james-joyce>). Last accessed 1st September 2021.



The second criticism is that the “Doodles” list itself is far from complete, and there is no comprehensive master list of sigla from which one could depart to make any kind of statement at all about a supposed meta-structural element of *Finnegans Wake*. Genetic critics have recorded Joyce’s constantly changing, playful and humorous usage of the notations in a way that does not suggest the intent to provide a prior structure, but rather a reflexive self-commentary derived from a system meant to aid the author’s failing eyesight. As such, there are numerous sigla which do not appear in the book itself, but cannot be described as “derived” from the others no matter how metaphorically one deploys that kind of language.  $\odot$  or  $\bigcirc$ , for example, refer to the cycle of history and to the flower girls respectively, and seem to resist any schematic formalisation, structural, familial or otherwise and imposing one exterior to the text beyond anything that came from one of Joyce’s immediate sources would be folly. For example, the matheme  $\{\sqsubset, \wedge\} \in \mathcal{A}$  is certainly true in the most general sense that all instances of a  $\mathcal{A}$  figure invite the reader to imagine either  $\sqsubset$  or  $\wedge$  as part of the composition or genealogy of such a given figure of unity or androgyny. However, the matheme  $\{\sqsubset, \wedge\} \subset \mathcal{A}$  would be very rarely accurate or even appropriate, as it would only apply to sequences such as the Hegel parody on page 354, where the inclusion of two figures as independently defined identities is explicitly expressed and articulated by the text, rather than suggesting or inviting the reader to draw comparisons or see allusions between appearances of either  $\sqsubset$  or  $\wedge$  in different sections of the text.

The necessary tension between  $\in$  (the sign of belonging) and  $\subset$  (the sign of inclusion) is ultimately not a tension between discreet figures or terms which appear as sets and those which appear as subsets, that is to say those which belong with inclusion and those which belong without inclusion, as all figures which appear in the natural and constructed aesthetic language of the novel are necessarily both presented and represented. Instead, the tension between belonging and exclusion must be understood and discussed as between that which is communicable in natural language and immediacy of experience, and that which is silent or incommunicable as it appears latent in the grammar of situations, but resists semantic encapsulation, no matter how polysemic and babelistic the available set of semantics are. On these grounds, one encounters a formal distinction between the two great modalities of Joycean style: the Encyclopedic Joyce whose impetus is (in the words of Derrida) “tout dire” [Derrida, 1991] and the Eucharistic Joyce whose style is fundamentality subtractive. It is not simply that the encyclopedic style corresponds to a retrospective extension of operations of inclusion ( $\subset$ ), but it corresponds to a harmonious relation between the operations of inclusion

and belonging, a coherence which the eucharistic style threatens by revealing that the coherence of objects is split by operations which it depends upon.

### *Doing Justice: Singularity in Question*

In his short closing essay in the collection *Derrida and Joyce*, “Signature / Countersignature: Derrida’s Response to Ulysses”, Derek Attridge relates Derrida’s commentary on the question of justice in the essay “Force of Law” to the sense of what might be called “doing justice” to a piece of literature. In Attridge’s view, to “do justice” in a reading is “my obligation as a critic”, elaborating on the notion as striving “or a singular appreciation of its singularity” [D&J 266].

This immediately poses the problem that a “singular appreciation of [a work’s] singularity” cannot be based upon an intuitive or presupposed notion of what “singular” itself means. So, a critical reader has grounds to reject the idea that singularity is something like a natural or sociological feature of a text that is uncovered by interpretative acts. Instead, the challenge of “doing justice” to a text is to understand singularity as a feature or term of a specific situation or localisation. There is no generalised logic of singularity in regards to literature, nor can there be. This problem cannot be resolved either by elevating singularity to a general metaphysical principle, or by subsuming it beneath other terms such as identity, sameness or difference. Singularity is the result of an operation and never an innate property. Consequently, we must ask what it is the result of, rather than what it is the presence or quality of.

The distinction between the general and the singular does not correspond directly to the classical distinction between the particular and the universal, nor does it overlap with it completely. Rather, it diagonalises the particular and the universal. Discussions of generality can address both the particular as a prescribed property, and universality as the disseminated and disobjectified. Singularity addresses both the question of *haecceity* (from the Latin *haecceitas*) - the thisness which would correspond to the whatness of a particular thing and the irreducible singularity of universally recognisable concepts and events. An account of singularity must be equally able to address the grammatical problems of particularity, not as a prior state, but as an emergent property or result, and the differences in grammar and mode distinguishing how *a* day is expressed from an encounter taking place on *this* day. On the side of the universal, this question becomes the question of non-grammatical reasons why *this* day

may be considered to be *the* day of some incomparably important consequence (the notion of a capital-E Event). If “doing justice” means a singular appreciation of the singular, it also means recognising that there are many different ways for something to be singular, or to count as being one in number. Indeed, the notion of the singular in this sense is totally distinct from the property of counting as one in number: it should go without saying that noting in a detached manner that there is exactly one canonical book named *Ulysses* written by James Joyce is in no way part of the process of “doing justice” to *Ulysses*, in the sense in which Attridge applies Derrida’s phrase. As Beckett remarked in his “Dante Bruno Vico Joyce”, “literary criticism is not book-keeping” [DBVJ].

What we are dealing with is singularity and generality, not as individual manifestations, but as terms with the widest possible meanings. According to Attridge’s application of Derrida’s meditation on justice to the question of *Ulysses* and literary criticism, it is not the singular or the general that are involved in “doing justice”, but rather “the problem of a relation between the *absolutely singular* and the *wholly general*” [D&J 266]. The next step in our questioning is, perhaps, to depart from deconstruction somewhat, in order to ask a question that must be phrased in terms of mathematics and typology: what kind of singularity, and what kind of generality are we talking about?

If deconstruction instructs critical readers to “do justice” to a text by acknowledging that there is always context, and context is rarely if ever marked by clear delineations from text, then it also tells us that mere acknowledgement of the existence of potential context(s) does not get us very far at all. In regard to the present issue of singularity and generality, and their interplay, noting the possible existence of certain social and historical contexts cannot be used as a sleight of hand in order to replace an ontological issue with phenomenological and sociological problemata. “Doing justice” must entail taking the ontological status of literature as seriously, and as much in good faith, as one can, and, to echo Derrida’s criticism of the totalising force of thematic criticism in *Positions* [Derrida, 1981:44-47], avoiding the use of historicism, psychologism or sociological reductions as domains where the final and absolute meaning of a text must dwell, becoming accessible only after one has, to some extent, foreclosed and denied the ontological dimension of a text. Even if one takes a position contrary to deconstruction, and uses Badiouian formalisations, there is no reason not to strongly concur with Attridge’s observations, [D&J 268], as it is the case that the singularity

of a text lies not in its unique embodiment of a social or experiential logic, but in the manner in which it “surpasses” or recasts those logics into its own interior logic of appearing.<sup>233</sup>

The boldest and riskiest step, therefore, is to translate the problem of the singular and the general in regard to literature into the question of literature’s harbouring (or constituting in itself) a relation or non-relation between the *absolutely singular* and the *wholly general*. This step leaves no choice but to consider literature directly on ontological terms, in the sense that literature represents something that exists, and also by way of acknowledging that literature, even literature as abstract as *Finnegans Wake*, cannot exist without making some kind of statement about what exists in both the general and specific sense. It is possible to extract from *Finnegans Wake* the single claim that at least one place called Dublin exists in the world, but also a general claim that the existence of Dublin is evidence that, according to the philosophical allusions in *Finnegans Wake*, “existing” universally seems to involve some kind of involvement processes of rising and falling, even though “either rising or falling” is a general property of all that exists, rather than a simple poetic description of the waxing and waning of national capitals and biographies of their most elevated citizens.

The notion of a gulf between the issue of the absolutely singular and the wholly general entails that there cannot be a Joycean idea of what Being itself is like, that is both one singular being and general across all beings. Although it is a particular phrase that does not appear directly in Joyce’s work, Joyce takes Aristotle’s maxim that “being is said in several senses” in the most literal way that he possibly can, by equivocating not only on the smallest details, but also on the question of what is there at all; Derrida observes that the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake* “repeats and mobilizes and babelizes the asymptotic totality of the equivocal” [D&J 27]. The Joycean ontological question, therefore, suggests something univocal about Being, placing him firmly within the context of 20th century radical philosophical thought. But this univocity can only be equivocated about, since it cannot be

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<sup>233</sup> Attridge extracts from Derrida the idea that “doing justice” to a piece of literary work means to recognise its singularity which, in itself, necessarily means acknowledging that a piece of literature necessarily “reinvents the rules that enable it come into being”. I would expect that a scholar of deconstruction would take exception to my description of this reinvention as “recasting an interior logic of appearance”, but it is worth introducing quasi-Badiouian terminology here to highlight the starkly contrasting critical or philosophical thought on what might otherwise seem to be a refined and neat idea. After all, this is mentioned by way of agreeing with Derrida that “thematic”, “sociological” or “historicist” modes of critique risk being highly reductive. In this case, I would like to highlight how the same problem in Joyce can equally condition a critique where language plays a significant role, even involving auto-critique and sensitivity shown to the critic’s own linguistic choices, and a mode of highly formal and rational critique where language is entirely subordinated to its formal function of making propositions, providing unambiguous definitions, etc.

defined or captured in a single analogy or metaphor. What this means, in practical terms, when encountering Joyce's writing, is that Joyce drives constantly against existential questions towards ontological questions, leading to the conclusion that there is no one singular thing which being is like, and that language cannot provide a general impression or singular definition of Being, since Being itself is that which does not want to be written.<sup>234</sup> Between the void and absolute contingency, there is no generally applicable Joycean metaphor or analogy for Being, nor can there be. The intercession between language and ontology is an intrusion between asymptotes: the analogical (Being is like some particular other) and the reflexive (Being is only identical to itself). This is a consequence of Joyce attempting to reconcile his devotion to Aquinas with anti-theism, as the absence of God entails the absence of a single possible ontological analogy, or the impossibility for analogy to be the grounds of a union in language between the absolutely singular and the wholly general. Analogy is a property of language, but Being is prior to language; the question of the ontology of a literary work is, therefore, a question of taking a realist work on face value as an instance of realism, and not obfuscating realisms into statements about language and language only. Is the union of analogy and language not the very horizon of romantic idealism that Joyce positions himself against? As Beckett commented on the reception of "Work in Progress", it is not the goal of either the writer or the critic to provide for "the satisfaction of the analogymongers" [DBVJ].

Before proceeding any further, however, it is worth considering the drawbacks of my hypothesis and potential counter-arguments. It is easy to imagine someone arguing quite succinctly and persuasively that there is a singular, unified Joycean metaphor for Being-qua-Being: water, fluids, flow and liquidity. To see why such a view might be persuasive, we only have to consider the unrivalled importance of the Liffey to *Finnegans Wake*, both as thematic content, and as a stylistic model for stretches of the text. Then, the argument could point to Homer's winedark sea, and the entire system of epical counterpoint in *Ulysses* resting upon all things nautical, from the voyage of Ulysses himself to the missing drowned man [U 25]. At this point, one could claim that this is clearly not a dissemination of metaphors of flow, but an explicit case of Joyce seeing water as an analogy for Being. Joyce does unquestionably intend

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<sup>234</sup> See, for example, Badiou's polemic against structuralism from *Being and Event*: "Being does not want to be written: the testimony to this resides in the following; when one attempts to tender transparent the presentation of presentation the difficulties of writing become almost immediately irresolvable" [Badiou, 2006:446]. By there not being a singular metaphor, the terms of definition for Being in Joyce's work are a species of Badiou's axiom that there cannot be a presentation of presentation, as presentation is drawn directly from the void (or inconsistent multiplicity).

to show that “being like water” is a common trait both of language and of perceptual experience. Having guaranteed itself a certain appeal to authorial intent, the argument could then only become even more persuasive when coupled with all the references to (or parodies of) Heraclitus in the final chapter of *Finnegans Wake* (evidenced in the bathtub section and closing “Leafy” monologue),<sup>235</sup> and the repeated appearance throughout the book of swerving rivers and raindrops associated with the classical theme or operator of clinamen, a key element of the Joycean image of creation. Less immediately evident, but still undeniably adjacent ideas, such as the use of natural processes such as the water cycle and erosion, along with the role of brewing and sanitation in human history,<sup>236</sup> would seem only to prove the apparent generality of such a singular equivalence. This would be a very strong argument, because this semantic domain is used by Joyce, who once allegedly made the Heraclitan statement that “everything flows in an eternal present”<sup>237</sup> and by his avatar Stephen who describes “the now” as that which everything “plunges” through into the past, [U 238]. Such an argument could well present all of this, not as a system of allusions and metonymy, but as a single ontological analogy, inspired by Scholasticism, a single winding root from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*.

However, I would say that one should not be persuaded by this on the basis of persistent metaphors and semantics, or on the basis of particular allusions or references. A very similar argument could be made based upon *Finnegans Wake*’s reliance upon the semantics of light. Spectra, nuance, illumination and diaphany might also make us think that to Joyce, Being is either like light or like the absence of light. Rainbows almost equal rivers in

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<sup>235</sup> For genetic evidence of Heraclitus’ influence on these passages, see Dirk Van Hulle’s chapter of *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*, [2008:452-453] which shows that Joyce may have had a critique of linguistics in mind, as Heraclitus’ aphorism (“no man bathes in the same river twice”) appears in his notebooks, perhaps used in reference to Fritz Mauthner’s *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, parodied repeatedly in same chapter, which, Van Hulle notes, uses the phrase in its introduction. Joyce seems to have intended a view of language based entirely on flows and fluidity, but it is hard to say whether one can generalise this for all the language of *Finnegans Wake*, or whether it mostly applies to the very precisely stylised ebbing and flowing of the Letter and, especially, the Anna/Leafy voice whose monologue closes the book.

<sup>236</sup> For example, the reference to Noah’s sons on the first page, and the extent to which the ‘Haveth Childers Everywhere’ passage describes the construction of a city as the exploitation of a river. For example, the phrase from *Ulysses*, “it is meet to be here. Let us construct a water closet” (mocking colonisation) is present as “I built in Urbs in Rure...an erdcloset with showne ejector wherewithin to squatquit in most convenience from her sabbath needs” [FW 551].

<sup>237</sup> To Jacques Mercanton, who cites it in ‘The Hours of James Joyce’ [Mercanton, 1962]. However, there is not that much evidence that Joyce actually said this famous quote which is attributed to him. Compare to the notebook mention of Heraclitus by Joyce, as previously referenced: it is often very difficult to conclude from Joyce’s statements where he is expressing a personal belief or a statement about a philosophical view that interested him. Heraclitean aphorisms certainly influence both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, but it is always questionable whether this means Joyce personally believed them. This is yet another reason why I would say that there cannot be a generalised Joycean ontology or a single Joycean metaphor for Being.

compositional importance; the initials ROYGBIV occur throughout *Finnegans Wake* and, unlike the similar repeated initials HCE or ALP, it is not an invention of Joyce's, but a mnemonic he would have expected everyone to already know. In addition to light and colour, it is also possible, if not a lot more tenuous, to take a positive version of Wyndham Lewis' reading and see in Joyce an ontological analogy that is midway between Bergson and Heidegger, where some principle such as duration, or even time itself, is the singular analogy proper to being. Textuality (logos) and mind<sup>238</sup> are also interesting possibilities for a generalised Joycean metaphor for Being. These are all potential possibilities, and they are all persuasive to varying degrees, and it may be very enlightening to entertain them, but none of these are either singular or totalising enough to cross from just representing a potential ontological view to being the general ontology of Joyce. It is worthwhile to ask the question of whether Joyce gives us one uniting ontological metaphor, simply because debating the various metaphors we are given can only bring us again to the inevitable conclusion that there is no single, general principle of Being at work in Joyce, metaphorical or otherwise.

Returning to deconstruction, literature as a problematic of the wholly general and the absolutely singular brings us to the conclusion that Being-in-general cannot be thought of in the singular and cannot be reined in behind one principle. The deconstructionist school of critique marks this one principle out as presence, but it can also just as well apply it to life, mind, power, God, man, process or death. As in the previous discovers of analogies for Being, it is clear how theses variously regarding the identity of being with water, light, or mind, could be considered to be very thin disguises for the identity of being with presence, rather than independent theses in themselves. For *Finnegans Wake*, this risk is serious, because the priority of presence in such an ontological sense would mean the priority of time as the linear duration of experiences, which is perhaps the very thing that the book's cyclical and nodal composition avoids doing. In literary criticism, the problematic of "metaphysics of presence" may be an old or even settled problem, but it is unavoidable in *Finnegans Wake*, so long as the temptation to ascribe a linear or structural narrative to it persists. This is an error the book itself is arguably tempting the reader to make. Behind every presumption of the united and univocal singular principle of Being and, potentially, behind every horizontal ontology, lurks the risk of a foundational and a priori equation between Being and presence. On this point, I

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<sup>238</sup> Reading *Finnegans Wake* as a statement of a kind of post-Berkeleyan panpsychism would make for a fruitful experiment.

propose to return to the aforementioned dispute which gives us two principles that Joyce's work seems to oscillate between:

- **Being cannot be identified with modes of presence.** Reading Joyce with Derrida amounts to against foundationalism on the basis of the Other
- **The One is not.** Reading Joyce with Badiou corresponds to reading Joyce against foundationalism on the basis of the Void.

Singularity, on the basis of which one is to "do justice", is therefore divided between the aforementioned two registers of the void: i) singularity in the sense of coherence and consistency, undergirding and guaranteeing any claims of the same or the other in the phenomenal sense, ii) the singularity of that which is utterly supplementary to Being, drawn from a proximity to that which is foreclosed in the making-coherent of the incoherent, and the localisation of conditional consistency from the non-condition of unlocalisable inconsistency.

Joyce makes it complicated for his critics insofar as his works reflect a refusal to decide on that which is other than being. On this point I would argue that Attridge's comments need to be adjusted somewhat: "doing justice" to a piece of literature means not looking at how literature embodies a relation between the wholly general and the absolutely singular, but at how literature is a concretisation of their non-relation. It is only on these grounds, the grounds of a fixed indecision, that the plurality of supplementary singularities can be assured.

### *Multiplicities, Meanings and Reasons*

In the *Ulysses* episode usually titled 'Cyclops', Leopold Bloom gives his famous dismissal of nationalist and provincial politics where he stresses the arbitrariness and contingency of human social groups to a collection of Fenians and patriots whose political and moral concepts are principally those expressible in terms of shared identity and heritage:

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

—Yes, says Bloom.

—What is it? says John Wyse.

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

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

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

—Or also living in different places.



- That covers my case, says Joe.  
—What is your nation if I may ask? says the citizen.  
—Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland. [U 430]

The passage is one of the key and oft-quoted statements in *Ulysses*, and provides an example of one of the book's many instances of 'retrospective arrangement' whereby, once Bloom has uttered his deflationary and dismissive definition of nationhood, it grants a certain retrospective clarity to many of the thematic elements assembled by *Ulysses* until that point: the ad hoc gathering of mourners at the funeral, families continuing after the death of a parent, immigration and emigration, marital infidelity, education, and the role of serendipity and chance in all human encounters. Even the lodging arrangement of Dedalus, Mulligan and Haines retrospectively gains a new importance in the light of Bloom's dismissal of nationhood. The Irishness of Ireland and the Dublinness of Dublin are demonstrated to have (in Bloom's eyes) no metaphysical foundation nor identitarian definition, nor anything to bind them to language in the sense of what one might call a "meaning". If this is true for things that hold such overwhelming importance as Ireland and Dublin, what other assembly of humanity could claim to be a foundational ensemble, or to be illustrative of the pre-ontological necessity or general structure of being? Further, a contemporary reader should not ignore how astonishing it is, given the context, that it is a Jew who is making this claim to a Catholic. Turn of the century Irish Catholicism frequently harboured the antisemitic idea of Jews as being loyal to each other before the nation in which they live, as well as a fetishisation of the fact that all Christian notions of an elect people are, in some way, derived from the Abrahamic, and therefore Jewish, notion of Israel as the first nation, in the sense of being the nation chosen by God. The expectation of the anti-semitically inclined Catholics towards Bloom (who is a Catholic convert, we should not forget) would seem to be for him to hold a position that is simultaneously elevated and debased, elevated in representing an ideal or abstraction of what it means to belong to a demographic or community, yet personally debased on account of being exterior to the Catholic and Protestant religions and, thus, subject to suspicion. Readers will have already witnessed the importance of these expectations in the episode 'Aeolus' where, in John F. Taylor's speech, Ireland under English rule is compared to the exile of the Biblical Israelites in Egypt [U 179-81]. For a Jew to deflate or dismiss nationhood, and even attempt to sever the idea of the assembly of demographics or social groups from the question of a higher meaning or purpose as a whole (which I think Bloom's response does with jarring precision), undermines not only Irish nationality, but also the

whole gamut of common metaphysical and ontological assumptions that slumber, uninterrogated, beneath the notion of communal or social identity, assumptions comprising what may be termed the perspectivist folk-phenomenology<sup>239</sup> that many of Joyce's nationalists and imperial apologists indulge in.

The context of Bloom's statement deserves some attention. His point is immediately mocked as being simplistic and childish. Is Bloom indeed being reductive? One might argue that he is not as enlightened as he is often presented: one does not have to take the side of his soon-to-be assailants to observe that he may well be dismissing things he ought not to dismiss in order to satisfy his own self-image as internationalist or socialist. However, I would argue that this is not the case, as the simplicity of Bloom's reply does not only highlight that the belligerents in the pub are being reductive: they are also being somewhat irreductive, in their assumption that "nation" and "family" are irreducible in some directions, but not in others. There is always a contrast in Joyce between the simple and the merely reductive. Examples of this contrast include the treatment of death in 'The Sisters' and 'A Painful Case' in *Dubliners* and, in *Ulysses*, Stephen's belief in maternal love and individual freedom, in direct contrast with Buck Mulligan's biological reduction of life and death. There are many examples, in Joyce's work, where it is crucial point that the simple is distinct, grammatically and semantically, from the merely reductive. More significantly, we can observe a distinction in character between Bloom and the men in the bar: Bloom is scientifically and philosophically minded, whereas the men in the bar see things chiefly in cultural and historical terms. Bloom is curious, the others incurious. Further, Bloom's position here is to argue for the plurality of Dublin, but his argument stresses the priority of the same over the different ("a nation is the same people living in the same place" [U 430]).

However, it cannot be said that Joyce presents his hero as intellectual and his antagonists as intellectually deficient. The men in the bar are certainly extremely intelligent, the entire chapter of 'Cyclops' plays upon the then-stereotypical ideas of erudite Irish verbosity. But this intelligence is applied to a communitarian, cultural world of sociological and linguistic differences. There is a distinction between Bloom's understanding of difference on the basis of the same, and his antagonist's understanding of the same on the basis of difference: Bloom is open to differences that are not already mediated by languages and perspectives, resulting in signature leaps in his thinking. Bloom's intelligence is applied in

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<sup>239</sup> This is not meant in a pejorative way here, but in parallel to (for example) a 'folk-etymology' or 'folk-psychology'.

ways which are primarily imaginative and speculative: by ‘Cyclops’, the reader should be well aware of how Bloom is always thinking of what might or could have been, what could be done better in the future, and unpicking reasons behind things that are obscured from his own direct experience. Bloom’s interior language is marked by diversions where meta-linguistic associations can be used to manipulate language in order to, adapting his own term, ‘grasp’ the actual and the possible. As such, we might say that Bloom is making a philosophical or, perhaps, scientific statement about the contingency and arbitrariness of human grouping. From this statement, with its retrospective compositional but, importantly, not structural importance for *Ulysses* as a whole up until that point, a Bloomian theory of nationhood and social identity could be imagined to resemble the creative Bloomian theory of language, where the stodgy food eaten by a policeman produces blunt language, whereas lighter food produces poetry [U 210]. For Bloom, it is always possible to find a reason why something is the case, but the reasons why are not meaningful in and of themselves.

If Bloom comes across as such an admirable or exceptional character in *Ulysses*, this stems in part from his refusal to understand reasons as meanings and vice versa. For example, he accepts that there are reasons why his wife is unfaithful, but his acceptance of this lies in his refusal to attach a meaning to such reasons. In his argument against the men in the bar, though this entails a great deal of extrapolation, we can see the idea that there is a reason why the Irish are Irish, but there is no meaning inherent in the idea of “being Irish”, just as there are (in Bloom’s mind) simple dietary and biological reasons why some people find poetic language easier than others. Bloom is not merely dismissive of the importance of national identity. More radically, he is undercutting a claim about meaning by making a philosophical argument that is unrecognisable as a philosophical argument, that is instead mistaken for cultural observation so simple as to be childishly naive. Thus, it bypasses the perspectivist assumption that is required in order to be recognised as having knowledge on the topic. Arguably, the only satisfactory answer that he could have given his mockers would be to admit, contritely, that he did not know what a nation means because he is not really Irish, and therefore not privy to the first-person experience of what a nation is, Ireland being the only valid present example of one. The question of nationhood only suffers answers from the perspective of one particular nation. As a Jew, the expectation that is held for Bloom is that must he must concede to being a representative example endorsing the absolute priority of perspective over intellect, an example which subordinates itself to meaning, but must not draw upon the reasons behind the selection of such examples. This equation between meaning

and reasons why is the exact reverse of what Bloom is willing to admit. What we are witnessing is not so much a confrontation between socialist universalism and nationalist particularism on the political plane, with Bloom's chided gospel of "universal love" [U 432] clashing against the particularity of the men in the bar, but rather that Bloom's politics depends upon the creation of a relation between the general and the singular, where none existed before.

Enda Duffy has argued that one of the most radical political potentials in *Ulysses* lies in its separation of the question of national identity from questions of geographical territories.<sup>240</sup> I think that this argument can be taken even further. In the most practical sense, Joyce/Bloom's argument liberates the idea of nationhood from the question of meaning. The priority of language (and analogy) over multiplicity in the form of the usurping of reasons by meanings is completely alien to Bloom, who sees multiplicities, not as expressions of principles or abstractions, but as multiplicities, pure and simple.

#### *A Post-Cantorian Joyce? Pure Multiplicity and its Consequences*

In terms of groups of multiple people in Joyce's narratives, one such group which perhaps outweighs both Irish nationhood and Dublin's urbanism in its dissemination throughout Joyce's work, is that of the family. Although broken or failed families are the norm in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the family itself as a grouping is a frequent starting point for thinking about humanity in the multiple.

Significantly, Derrida, in conversation with Derek Attridge,<sup>241</sup> once chose to highlight the conservatism (including "phallogocentrism") at work in Joyce, noting that Joyce's work contains "political 'messages' which are sometimes conservative". Although Joyce's books, in content, reflect a sympathy towards many radical varieties of politics, from the universal socialism of Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus' anti-colonial rage and the anti-clericalism shared by many figures in Joyce, to subtle suggestions of feminism and more polymorphous notions of liberation and emancipation in *Finnegans Wake*, there persists in Joyce an element which is perhaps unavoidably conservative, in being a direct reflection of the author's

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<sup>240</sup> See the essay 'Disappearing Dublin' in *Semi-Colonial Joyce* [2000:37] and Duffy's *Sub-Altern Ulysses* [1990] for an argument linking the nationalism Joyce argues against to colonial administration and the potentials in Joyce's work for moving the question of nationhood beyond that.

<sup>241</sup> Derrida, *Acts of Literature*. In reference to the interview at the beginning of this book, see p51 for the specific remark.

personal life and personal views. This conservatism is perhaps most neatly reflected in the priority Joyce gives to the traditional Christian familial structure in *Finnegans Wake*. Whereas, in *Ulysses*, family groups are fractured in specific or irreversible ways<sup>242</sup>, the “doodles family”<sup>243</sup> group of *Finnegans Wake* suggests, through its constantly iterated and non-specific disassembly and reassembly, the eternal recursion of an atomic family unit compromising an authoritative father, a put-upon and emotionally frayed mother, two competitive sons and a sexual and creative daughter who is frequently manifested as an object of desire or muse. Not only is the apparently eternal nature of this arrangement conservative, so too is the fact that, although *Finnegans Wake* takes us through numerous fantastical and metaphysical scenes, the setting of this basic family unit is unavoidably domestic: a world of beds, bathtubs, dinner tables, dirty laundry and evenings spent listening to the radio. Ignoring the speculative “mamafesta” of Anna Livia Plurabelle, *Finnegans Wake* might often appear to show us a world where men make investments and become politically entangled, and women birth children and perform domestic duties, the relatively traditional world of well-structured hereditary roles that *Dubliners* scathed and *Ulysses* showed us to have never really existed.

The same is perhaps true for the broader social implications of *Finnegans Wake*, beyond the central family. Understood this way, the family would sublimate the tension between the singular and the general, since each family is *a* family and yet corporealises aspect of the general structure of human society. This understanding is perhaps the very opposite of what Derrida and Attridge intend by “doing justice”, bringing the question of the singular into questions of equivaluation and belonging. Despite all apparent fluidity in language, the institutional constellation where the action takes place involves very rigid and traditional views of the arts, secular and religious education. As what there is of a “plot” (if can be called such) gets given a more concrete form in the final chapters, there is something traditional, too, about the supposed antagonists of Sackerson (the figure associated with the S siglum in Joyce’s notes) and Lilly Kinsella, figures suggestive of a corrupt policeman and an adulteress, or a gossip whose meddling has expelled a happy family from its domestic Eden. However, if one tries to fit these figures into a conventional emplotment, they do not become antagonistic forces as complex in realisation as Blazes Boylan, the Citizen and Buck Mulligan. In fact, it

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<sup>242</sup> See the appearance of Dignam's son Patrick. There is a parallel between the Dedalus family trying to survive after the death of a mother and the image of Dignam's son carrying food to provide for his family in 'Wandering Rocks' [U 300].

<sup>243</sup> The following sigla are listed:  $\sqcap \Delta \neg \times \square \sqsubset \wedge$  [FW 299].

has occasionally been noted (for example, by McHugh) how little we know of these figures beyond the archetypes they suggest.

However, I think the claim that Joyce's frequent personal conservatism manifests as a political "message" in his works should be resisted. Or, at least, it should always come with the quote-marks Attridge puts arounds Derrida's use of the word "message". This is not because Joyce should be personally rescued from the criticism of being a conservative (if one counts the author's personal comments, the shoe may often fit), but specifically because the notion of a conservative "message" covers a very radical aspect of Joyce's work and shifts the focus away from multiplicity and back towards language itself.

Derrida asserts in "Ulysses Gramophone" that there can be no satisfactory institutionalisation of Joyce and no Joycean "competence" because "there cannot be a Joycean foundation or Joycean family. There cannot be a Joycean legitimacy" [D&J 60]. That there is "no Joycean family" is a very weighty statement to make, particularly in light of the few options available for interpreting Derrida's remarks on Joyce's conservative "message". "No Joycean family" must apply equally to the question of legitimacy in terms of the institutional competence that Derrida attacks, and the actual contents of Joyce's work, where one might be trying to see the "Joycean Family" as an attempt to locate and describe a universal structure of human life. Although Derrida did not single out the family as the object of the "message" he sees in Joyce, it is difficult to imagine what else it could refer to (as Derrida, in the same conversation, observed that the "phallogocentric" character of Joyce's texts does not foreclude them from non-phallogocentric readings).

Nevertheless, that there can be no "Joycean family" is a very significant observation, albeit one that challenges the most intuitive and literal readings of Joyce's work, particular *Finnegans Wake*, with its aforementioned reliance upon familial arrangements. In order to understand this, we need to consider the question of Joyce's ontology or Joycean epistemology, along with the question of "what is there" in the world of Joyce's texts, and the image of reality those texts give. Insofar as the family, or assembly of groups of individuals, is of fundamental ontological interest, it might be tempting to say that Joyce has a conservative "message". But, that "message" is tempered, or even permanently waylaid by the fact that the statement Joyce makes about families and groups is fundamentally subtractive and anti-foundationalist.

In order to explain this further, I would compare this idea of a “message” to further remarks made by Derrida in the same interview with Attridge, where Derrida agrees with a remark that Beckett is already too deconstructed to be deconstructed. Derrida’s comments that Beckett is both “a nihilist and not a nihilist” [Derrida, 1991:61] and that this nihilism exists inside metaphysics and is already beyond. Thus, Derrida is able to write about Joyce by the method of isolating an atomic trace of the work (the “yes, yes” from *Ulysses* in “Ulysses Gramophone” and the phrase “he war” from *Finnegans Wake* in “Two Words for Joyce”), in a way that he feels preserves the singularity of his encounter with Joyce. He has, however, been unable to do so with Beckett. From this, we can deduce that the priority Joyce gives to language over the existential is what enables the traces of his work to be appropriated in the acts of critical writing which, as Derrida seems to agree, Beckett resists. So, it is possible to reconcile the statement that there are conservative “messages” in Joyce (so long as one keeps the quotation marks around “messages”) with the statement that there is no Joycean family, by saying that there is no Joycean definition of the family. The lack of a definition in language means that there are things that we might call families, but nothing that “family” prescriptively means. In order to understand what this means, we must look at the family of *Finnegans Wake*, the “doodles family” of  $\boxplus \Delta \neg \times \square \sqsubset \wedge$ , and what it contains, which points to a continuation of the sentiment expressed by Bloom in the bar in Cyclops. That there is “no Joycean family” cannot mean that there are no mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. However, in the absence of a definition of “a people” or a nation other than people brought together to live in proximity with one another, there can be no definition of a family: were to be definable beyond its elements, this would entail that somehow, language and meaning have an institutional power over that which they institute upon. While, in some sense, *Finnegans Wake* may be a book of tradition, in other senses, it is a book of excess, attempting to highlight what is always in excess of the linguistic or the meaning.

In light of this analysis, we can find three statements of contingency in Joyce’s work. As aforementioned, we have the “doodles family”, which is an ensemble of unpronounceable pre-linguistic gestures which are, in a sense, an attempt to found the real of *Finnegans Wake* outside of the domain of languages, analogy and meaning. Then, we have the kind of contingency Bloom sees underlying the multiplicities that the word “nation” attempts to circumscribe. And, finally, there is Stephen’s description of the contingency upon which the Church is founded: “like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude,

upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction” [U 266].

The “like the world” in Stephen’s statement perhaps gives us a clue that it is in a thinking of the void that we are closest to the Joycean ontology, rather than in analogy and language. Neither analogy nor language can legislate over the distinction between what *is* and what *appears*. The beginning point of Joyce’s thought of what exists is neither the singularity of Being, nor the being of a singularity, but rather that human affairs start out between multiplicity and void. We start with a collection of elements such as the nation of Ireland, the Church as a collective entity composed of individuals, and the “doodles family” of unnamed figures, but these things carry with them no explicit or linguistic meaning. They are outside of the question of meaning, and only suffer analogy once they become embedded within language and legal fictions.

The idea that intellection begins simply with the act of gathering things together, prior to any application of analogy or meaning (the method of Biddy in *Finnegans Wake*), is arguably the real basis for *Finnegans Wake* and a key reason why that book is written in the highly eccentric way that it is. The association of gathering together into ensembles or groups has no less Joycean priority than Vico’s statement that it is the origin of the very idea of intellect itself: “For the mind uses the intellect whenever it ‘gathers’ something insensible from a sense impression, and this act of gathering is the proper meaning of the Latin verb *intelligere*, to understand” [Vico, 1999:136]. Similarly, in *DBJV*, Beckett traces the origin of the latin word “legere”, root of the English “legible”, with the following sequence:

1. Lex = Crop of acorns.
2. Ilex = Tree that produces acorns.
3. Legere = To gather.
4. Aquilex = He that gathers the waters.
5. Lex = Gathering together of peoples, public assembly.
6. Lex = Law.
7. Legere = To gather together letters into a word, to read. [DBVJ]

Language has more to do with acts of collecting, assembling and separating than it does with signification, meaning or even the production of knowledge.<sup>244</sup> This linguistic theory, which at once both is and is not a genealogy, unites three key elements of Joyce’s work: firstly, his lifelong fascination with Aristotle’s theory of active intellect and its direct influence on both his theories of perception and his ‘esthetic’; secondly, the considerable

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<sup>244</sup> *Finnegans Wake* can be read both as potentially anti-Saussure and as anti-Foucault. This would, in turn, make it difficult for the application of two key theoretical frameworks for reading Joyce: Lacan and Nietzsche.



influence of Vico on *Finnegans Wake* and Joyce's theories about the imagination (of which Beckett's essay is perhaps the best summary, hence my reliance upon it); and, finally, the obliterated and incoherent style of linguistic plurality which is at work in *Finnegans Wake*. However, using the ensemble and gathering as a way to unite these things comes at a huge cost: entailing, as it does, a refusal to see language as the most important object of Joyce's work. It is not language itself which is so important to *Finnegans Wake*, but rather the multiplicity that is exerted upon it.

Tying these views of language together gives us something crucial: being is multiple, presented solely in ensembles. The relevance of mathematics, here, is in the priority of axioms over definitions, since what it is to be an "ensemble" cannot be definable in language. Relating this to prior observation that there can be no enveloping Joycean metaphor or analogy for Being, a key point is that there is nothing that a multiplicity is like. This idea that there is nothing that a multiplicity can be 'like' or, defined as, other a multiplicity is a foundation of Badiou's Cantorian ontology. An indispensable part of the logical consistency of set theory is that there can be no definition of what a set, or an ensemble<sup>245</sup> is, or else recursive paradoxes (such as Russell's paradox<sup>246</sup>) are produced. Although elements within a set may be defined, multiplicities are "deployed in an axiom-system in which the property 'to be a set' does not figure [Badiou, 2006:43]. As a corollary, this specifically important to a reading not only Joyce but of all avant-garde literature that makes a claim to having some mathematical element deployed within its composition. It means that the most important role that mathematics can have in studying aesthetic and narrative writing is not the crunching of large sets of data or in visualising numerical information derived from a particular work. It also means that mathematics should not be seen merely as a structuring principal either. The difficulty this leads us is the same problem that Badiou encounters in his *Theory of the Subject* [2009], which is that the use of mathematics should be at once mathematical and non-mathematical, that should be coherent and accurate in its use of mathematics but "proffer nothing mathematically" itself. This may seem arcane and counter intuitive, but if Beckett's observations lead one to take Joyce's claim to a strong mathematical (or even numerical)

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<sup>245</sup> I prefer to use the French "ensemble" here, to distinguish from "set", as "set" is a more strictly mathematical term in English whereas "ensemble" has an apt theatrical and musical secondary meaning.

<sup>246</sup> Russell's paradox can be summarised as: if P is the property of "not containing itself", then the set of all sets with property P would both belong and not belong to itself. The most popular version of Russell's the Barber Paradox which is phrased as "if the barber shaves everyone who does not shave himself, who shaves the barber?" Russell's paradox sets a limit to the process of gathering elements of one particular property. This also has a linguistic phrasing in the famous example of whether or not the word "heterological" is reflexively descriptive.

compositional element at work in *Finnegans Wake*, this is exactly the difficult hill that one has to claim.

Joyce's work presents us with the consistent, antagonistic arguments that, on the one hand, there is a primary kind of human group, the first grouping being race or nationality (see 'Cyclops') or families (see *Finnegans Wake*). But, on the other hand, there can be no prior kind of grouping which all other groupings are derived from. If this is so, then it means that there is no property such as 'to be like a family' or 'to be like a nation' which applies universally to all multiplicities of, in Bloom's words, "the same people living in the same place". And from this, ontologically, if all things are multiplicities, then there is nothing like the property 'to be a multiplicity': meaning and analogy do not institute or prescribe Being.

Furthermore, the argument leads us to conclude that there can be no definitional distinction between "objects" and "groups of objects" [Badiou, 2006:44]. The ensemble of Shem and Shaun is not defined by a prior relation or category of brotherhood, but by being a set which contains non-identical elements. Crucially, in the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, there is no distinction between, for example, Shaun ( $\wedge$ -aligned figures) considered as an object and Shaun considered as a group of objects. Shaun is both a consistent formal element throughout *Finnegans Wake*, and the dissemination of nominated figures such as Jaun and Justius [FW 187]. It is a composition principle of *Finnegans Wake* that to be a figure is to be a multiple of figurative elements, and to be a figurative element is to belong to a multiple of figures; the inscriptive operation of language is one of gathering and grouping rather than signifying and defining. The "Doodles Family" is not merely a hieroglyphic or graphic reduction of each individual of the family into their atomic or tautological identity. Effectively, it is a radical demonstration of Bloom's observation of the contingency of human groups: a group is defined by its contingent elements, not by a greater meaning or existential definition assigned to it from the outside.

Although this thesis has now moved from a pro- to a counter- deconstructionist position, it remains strongly in agreement with Derrida's insight aligning the absence of a Joycean foundation with the absence of a Joycean family, removing the grounds for the most conservative readings of Joyce by acknowledging that Joyce's ontology renders it impossible to define what a set is. Just as we saw with Leopold Bloom's retort to John Wyse Nolan in 'Cyclops', it is absurd to define what a nation is if that definition is based on extrinsic definitions of its contingent elements. A set is defined by its elements and not by its own inner logic. If Dublin contains Jews (not considered Irish by the Citizen), racial minorities

(seemingly considered Irish by John Henry Menton), homosexuals and individuals who are neither fish nor flesh (for example, numerous remarks about Bloom's gender and sexuality), then so be it. That is what Dublin is, rather than the definition of Dublin or its identity overpowering its elements, with such a definition forbidding the representation or acknowledgement of some elements, while permitting others.

On this point, the notion Joyce's work is conservative is dealt a blow: right at the heart of where *Finnegans Wake* potentially shows a retreat from the radical universal socialism of *Ulysses* towards tradition and familial structure, we encounter an ontological statement so radical that it cannot be put into words, only formalised. It is of the utmost incidental significance that the "Doodles Family" sigla are drawn by Issy from the margins, in a section where her voice is highly suggestive of Joyce's daughter Lucia. The notions of dance, gesture and direct intervention are associated with the glyphs whereas, elsewhere in the chapter, their appearance could have easily been swallowed or overwhelmed by the warring brothers' schoolboy lessons and geometric debates.

Against deconstruction, I would argue that the realism should be taken as the excess of a multiplicity that anticipates language, rather than the excess of language itself over the multiple possibilities of its signatures. To quote Badiou, "the multiple does not allow its being to be prescribed from the standpoint of language alone. Or, to be more precise, I do not have the power to count as one, to count as 'set', everything which is subsumable by a property" [Badiou, 2006:40]. Let us concentrate on this claim. Language can, therefore, name things that have a certain property, but it cannot institute a set of all things which have a certain property. A narrative or a piece of literature is a situated-situation, that is, a multiplicity representationally situated in language. So, the limits of language are set not towards human finitude, but by axioms forbidding the collection of all things of a certain property. Were such an axiom not in effect, it would lead to the well-known paradox of Russell's barber ("one who shaves all those, and those only, who do not shave themselves"). Let us translate this mathematical (and therefore, ontological) observation back towards the literary examples that have already been given.

Far from being categories or items of knowledge instituted by discourse, properties such as "Irish", "living in the same place", "nation", "family" mark the limits of discourse in the face of existence. All elements potentially separated out by definition ("a nation is the same people living in the same place") mark what escapes from language and what cannot be

constructed, discursively or socially. A property is precisely that which cannot be wholly instituted or demarcated by acts of language.

This is evident even within different viewpoints that are presented negatively: for example, Irishness is defined relatively to Jewishness, but when it is defined negatively, it is inconsistent. For the bigoted Deasy, Ireland is that country which “never let them in” [U 44], whereas, for other antisemites in *Ulysses*, the presence of Jews is welcome, but entirely on the basis that they keep themselves separate and do not intrude upon the allegedly unified Irish whole. The futility of meaning as subsumption-by-property (“Ireland is the *count-as-one* of all the places which never let *them* in”), lies both in its reliance on the universal prescription and in the impossibility of it ever effectively grouping individuals: the presence of a single Jewish person would stand in excess to the groups who did not enter Ireland, and Ireland in excess to countries which “never let” Jews in. Any uniqueness ascribed to Ireland or Dublin cannot then be circumscribed by the kinds of individuals it either contains or does not contain, since the presence or non-presence of certain types of individual never lets us say anything about the general properties of a nation or nations as a whole. Likewise, the properties of “nationhood” (in general) and “Irishness” (in particular), as they actually exist, cannot be prescribed by language. The best that language can do is count-as-one some elements that are representative as Irish, to separate out some “Irish” elements at the expense of others. But the entirety of the elements that compose the political and artistic situation of “Ireland, 1906” cannot be unified simply because they are indicated by a property of Irishness. This is the rule of Joyce’s world: there is no consistent “one” group of all individuals who have the property “being a woman” or one group who all have the property “being a man”, because *at least one* element (Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* and Shem in *Finnegans Wake*) resist the generalised language of masculine and feminine distinctions. For sure, men and women “exist” in the normal sense, but that existence is neither constructed nor inscribed by language or by discursive acts.

A set of things is not defined by language, or processes interior to language. Rather, it is an excess that stands over partitive acts of language. The Irish Nationalist doctrine “that the language question takes precedence over the economic question” [U 207] repulses Bloom on a visceral level equal to his repulsion towards “dirty eaters” [U 214] in the Burton. This might be understood as the power of language to define a multiple from a transcendental position, rather than just speculate on divisions within it. It is therefore no surprise that the varieties of nationalism most fixated on the precedence of the language question over the economic question are those most associated with antisemitism in *Ulysses*.

As Badiou remarks, this is a re-encounter of the Lacanian distinction between the real - “there is” - and the symbolic - “there are some distinctions” [Badiou, 2006:40]. The real cannot be made to coincide totally with the symbolic, and the separations and distinction made by language are never entirely representative of the multiplicity in which they are made. Rather than seeing *Finnegans Wake* as the incommensurate excess of linguistic multiplicity overgrowing and overshadowing the multiplicity of what is, we should instead challenge this reading (the frequently made argument that *Finnegans Wake* is “about language”), by inverting it and seeing the book as the result of multiplicity’s revenge upon language, and the implacable intrusion of the unconstructible upon the constructed.

The autonomy and transformative potential in literature is in the writer’s privileged position of being able to let the multiple take back its rights from language. The book is not something constructed from language, made to exist by language, but something which has been split and divided by language. The grounds for “doing justice” to literature is still the recognition of singularity, but it is a singularity that cannot be reduced to what is linguistically one in number. If Badiou argues that a mathematical (specifically, a combinatorial) ontology means that we must dismiss the idea that “the master of words is also the master of the multiple” (ibid.), we should think of the Joycean “lord of language”, whose mastery of language could not manifest as mastery over his love-life or the events of his life, who becomes a genius by producing works informed and transformed by his situation rather than instituting it. Likewise, this must apply to the work of literature itself, written by one who presided approvingly over his protégé’s assertion that “His writing is not *about something*; it is that something itself” [DBVJ]. The work of literature is not simply a collection of language or discourse, but a multiplicity into which language has intervened. The irony, and insight, of Beckett’s statement about Joyce is that one could make something that is language only if all aboutness were extirpated, including language that is about language. The meta-linguistic cannot cohere into a meta-language and, instead, resides in graphic gestures such as the siglum, the signature and the matheme, all of which Joyce exploits to some degree, either directly or descriptively. Beckett’s essay also notes that, as Vico believed, “The root of any word whatsoever can be traced back to some pre-lingual symbol” [DBVJ], where such symbols perform the functions “of type-names” before analogy can be applied. Being both pre-linguistic and prior to analogy, the siglum or hieroglyph has simply no choice but to be ontological, as all it can do is make apparent that *there is a distinction*. Beckett’s commentary

on the emergence of analogy and distinction describes this in a way that alludes to the process exploited by Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*:

It is the child's mind over again. The child extends the names of the first familiar objects to other strange objects in which he is conscious of some analogy. The first men, unable to conceive the abstract idea of 'poet' or 'hero', named every hero after the first hero, every poet after the first poet". No doubt every *Ulysses* named after Ulysses, is named after the subject of Joyce's childhood essay "My Favourite Hero". Are Joyce's titles as much hieroglyph as they are word? [DBVJ]

But all this radicalism may be letting ontology take over the reading of text itself. How serious can one really be about a mathematical ontology in *Finnegans Wake*? Surely, this is the reproduction of another analogy, perhaps worse than the others for being one that Joyce does not adhere to, of which he could not have known. The mathematical dimension of *Finnegans Wake* is usually thought of in terms of either motif or structure. By motif, the use of recurrent key numbers (such as 1182 and 566), and embedding simple algebraic or geometric expressions such as  $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$  or  $3 + 1 = 4$  (for the "Mamalujo" or X figures), recur throughout the book. By structure, there exist more complex claims<sup>247</sup> that the manner in which *Finnegans Wake* is composed reflects mathematical order, the structure of a piece of music or the geometry of a piece of visual art or architecture, more than most written works of fiction do. Although the former is simple and obvious, and the latter more contentious and arguable (it would depend on the method used to analyse the text, which is well beyond the remit of this thesis),<sup>248</sup> it might seem very odd to add to these the notion that mathematics also has an ontological bearing on *Finnegans Wake*, in addition to the more obvious repeated motifs and the less immediate apparent general structure.

The role of mathematics as a kind of motif or composition within *Finnegans Wake*, it is useful to again return to Beckett's commentary:

Why, Mr. Joyce seems to say, should there be four legs to a table, and four to a horse, and four seasons and four Gospels and four Provinces in Ireland? Why twelve Tables of the Law, and twelve Apostles and twelve months and twelve Napoleonic marshals

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<sup>247</sup> Such claims are occasionally reported in the press, and perhaps contribute towards what could be called a pop culture mythology of *Finnegans Wake*. For example: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/27/scientists-reveal-multifractal-structure-of-finnegans-wake-james-joyce>. Last accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

<sup>248</sup> Although, if I were to begin over again, starting this over now, I would begin with this argument, possibly using Badiou's essay "Being-There" and an application of category theory, alongside Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy", rather than relying so heavily upon 'Ulysses Gramophone'. Not being able to fully exploit a categorial frame and the resulting theory of apparency for my analysis of *Finnegans Wake* is my biggest regret about this thesis.

and twelve men in Florence called Ottolenghi? Why should the Armistice be celebrated at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month? He cannot tell you because he is not God Almighty, but in a thousand years he will tell you, and in the meantime must be content to know why horses have not five legs, nor three. He is conscious that things with a common numerical characteristic tend towards a very significant interrelationship. This preoccupation is freely translated in his present work: see the “Question and Answer” chapter, and the Four speaking through the child’s brain. They are the four winds as much as the four Provinces, and the four Episcopal Sees as much as either. [DBVJ]

Beckett’s observation clearly lays out the importance of mathematics as a site where form and content collapse into each other, where the novelty of Joyce’s hylomorphism is most at stake. However, it is perhaps an unintentional red herring (or “goodridhirring”, [FW 7]) on Beckett’s part that he chose the word “numerical” here. It is understandable why Beckett seems to understand Joyce’s use of mathematical form as a continuation of the rehabilitation of the grapheme (in the form of the “hieroglyph”), from an allegedly primitive or orientalist vestige of poetic and literary language, to that which typifies the elevated “apprehension” over the subdued and institutional “comprehension” that guides the opinions of critics. We might say that Joyce offers a foretaste of the distinction between Number (as the general conception of ordinality) and numbers (particular graphical gestures or objects of thought), and the scene of “common numerical characteristic” is brought closer to the unpronounceable grapheme or hieroglyph.

I would argue however that Beckett is connecting two correct ideas together in a way which works for the benefit of one (the defence of Joyce’s use of hieroglyphics) to the detriment of the other (Joyce’s use of numbers, or “numerical traits”). In doing so, Beckett’s reading unnecessarily elevates numbers themselves as if they were of symbolic import and weighed with the very question of distinguishing “meaning” or “aboutness” from form, which Beckett avoids looking for in Joyce’s language. Is it at all possible to rearticulate Beckett’s comment in a way that does not imply too much significance being accorded to numerical symbols themselves? If Joyce’s “preoccupation” is that “that things with a common numerical characteristic tend towards a very significant interrelationship”, we can say that having a common characteristic is the mathematical “preoccupation”, but sharing a common, unrepresented and unsayable element *mathematically* cannot be reducible to the numerical. It is better to understand such characteristics as traits of Number rather than the shared property of ‘being  $n$  in number’. Rather than such “traits” being that which is only sayable or expressible in language or numerical symbolics, they are the un-numerable traces of Number, as Number is (in Badiou’s definitions) an “ontological gesture” or a “gesture in Being”, numbers are

particular graphical gestures or values: “Language and perceptual experience prove inoperative guides where Number is concerned [Badiou, 2006: 65].

### *The Revenge of the “Perfumative”*

In *Finnegans Wake*, the most immediately obvious thing about the language is that it reflects a belief that beings are combinations of other beings. It is not just that language, in Derrida’s words, “babelizes”, decomposes and recomposes. It also does so on the basis that the multiplicity of what exists decomposes and recomposes in the multiple also. This is obvious both in the use of portmanteaux, and in the use of sentences that are not, strictly speaking, sentences, but fragments from what might be sentences from different languages, or contrasting registers of English from different aspects of life. This could be said to reflect the atomistic hypothesis, or the aesthetic decision behind the novel, where each thing is a combination of other things, in the sense that Dublin is not a cohesive whole, but a combination of many human activities, artefacts and natural geographical features. The same goes for historical incidents and actions, where, for example, the encounter in Phoenix Park is not one particular or isolated act, but highlights a nexus of thoughts, actions, words, facts and falsehoods. But, on this point in particular, one must be very careful: we can observe this ontological notion that all beings are composed of other beings, and we can also observe that *Finnegans Wake* gives us apparently primary compositional elements: the sigla of the “doodles family” are graphemes which represent a limit of what is unsayable on what is writeable, to elements to whom no proper names can be attached without the reader being somewhat arbitrary as to which is the best name for a sigla. The risk present here is to be misdirected in regard to the role of multiplicity in *Finnegans Wake*, and to seek to define and break down the play of multiple consistency so that it better fits either Joyce’s own sources (such as Bruno or Vico) or an exterior theoretical frame.

Such distinctions become evident in reading *Finnegans Wake* as a work where every being is multiple, since cities named Dublin are always “dublin their mumper” [*FW* 3]. There will always be more than one place referred to as Dublin, and there will always be at least two places with names that mean “the black pool”. Moreover, the dyadic composition of Dublin is interior as well as exterior: not only is there a multiple of “Dublin”, but Dublin is



also composed of multiples. To give a very famous example<sup>249</sup>: “Come on, fool porterfull, hosiered women blown monk sewer? Scuse us, chorley guy! You tollerday donsk? N. You tolkatiff scowegian? Nn. You spigotty anglease? Nnn. You phonio saxo? Nnnn. Clear all so! ‘Tis a Jute” [FW 16].<sup>250</sup>

Dublin is therefore not the name of an element composing a multiplicity, but the expression of a succession. The answers given to the question “can you speak various languages?” advance from N (No) to Nn (Dublin) and, from there, to (No, Dublin) and (Dublin, Dublin). The succession is not closed by the sequence Joyce gives us, since (No, Dublin, Dublin) and (Dublin, Dublin, Dublin) come after. It is more like a rebus than a pun. There are two contrasting styles of Joycean joke paired with multiplicity<sup>251</sup>: the quasi-pun (“dublin their mumper”) highlights Dublin’s composition as *extrinsically* multiple in appearance, whereas the quasi-rebus (“Nn.”) demonstrates Dublin as *intrinsically* multiple or multiple in being and composition.

What the multiplicity of Dublin cannot mean is that every being is composed of elements that are ultimately singular and not reducible. For instance, if the encyclopaedic intention of *Finnegans Wake* is to contain, either satirically or sincerely, the story of all fathers and mothers, it cannot be said that the composition of every maternal figure leads to Δ and every paternal figure to ∏. So, their basic components are, in fact, not multiple, but singular, which reflects not so much an essentialism or idealism, but a monism by which the metaphysical One of that which counts as irreducibly singular enjoys an ontological priority of that which only appears enmeshed in a multiplicity (of elements) or a plurality (of processes).

In order to “do justice” to *Finnegans Wake* as a piece of literature while preserving the possibility of non-numerable singularity, the mathematical result or decision here is to efface

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<sup>249</sup> A very successful interpretation, or staging, of this passage can be seen in Mary Ellen Bute’s 1966 film *Passages from Finnegans Wake*, where the section is filmed in the style of a comic sketch, the scene imagined as a group of people interrogating a television showing a caveman who cannot speak, save to exclaim “Dublin!”, which is subtitled as “Nn!” (Double N). This makes plain the “joke” that the only words the primitive figure can speak is “Dublin”.

<sup>250</sup> The name “Jute” brings to mind one of Derrida’s jokes from ‘Two Words for Joyce’, where he says *Finnegans Wake* “is a little, a little what? A little son, a very little grand-son of western culture...” (“c’est un petit, un petit quoi? un petit, un tout petit-fils...”), with “Jute” being a potential missing link figure, the son who will eventually be the “michindaddy” of all of Dublin. We cannot ignore the potential semantics between “Jute” as fibres and threads of cloth, and the semantics around cables which mark Stephen’s thoughts on human descent in *Ulysses*. We might say, if *Ulysses* frequently concerns the umbilical “navelcord” [U 46] of all, braided together into the “strandentwining cable” back to Edenville, then *Finnegans Wake* concerns the jute: the little threads (petits fils) that go both backwards and forwards, woven into a cloth.

<sup>251</sup> In the sense Beckett describes as “meaning is sleep” in DBVJ.

the classical and theological statement that “being is one” from our understanding of *Finnegans Wake*. This is perhaps ultimately why Joyce’s work so sharply prefigures deconstruction’s critique of metaphysics of presence. The problem of how one gets from an ontology of pure multiplicity or a philosophical sympathy towards the combinatorial is rather algebraic. Badiou describes combinatorial ontologies in contrast to “non-mathematical ‘ontologies’”, which are ultimately “ontologies of Presence” that “ground themselves” in the “decision to declare that beyond the multiple, even in the metaphor of its inconsistent grandeur, the one is” [Badiou, 2006:42]. “The one is” is therefore a kind of illusionary or phantom conclusion, always hinted at, and undermined, not by a subversion of the experience of language, but by the unpresented suggestion that there is a material remainder that language has been cut from.<sup>252</sup> To say that “the one is” is therefore to dismiss the grounds upon which one can recognise supra-numerary singularities entirely in order to replace them with the property of being one in number, and with the absolute priority of definition (and meaning) over the question “what is there?”

In terms of seeking a potential plot in *Finnegans Wake*, the position that “the one is” could be said to be the transcendental position of  $\mathbb{M}$ , whose assertion of purity, good intentions and holistic personal identity must be maintained against the whole chaotic spectrum of the novel as a multiplicity. Against the plurality of rumours and forgeries,  $\mathbb{M}$  deploys the entirety of what exists into a network of identities, differences and evaluations in order to maintain  $\mathbb{M}$ ’s own transcendental singularity. This deployment may ultimately seek to involve the entire “cyclewheeling history” [FW 186]. But it begins with the family, and with the counting of the family as one-in-number, one more moment of institutional defensiveness enshrining the singularity of the one-in-number at the expense of the singular of the event, an event that causes “the very concept of competence” to find itself “shaken up” [D&J 64] (as Derrida describes the Joyce-event). This sense of the family as a ‘shaken’ order is an always-already constituent factor in all of Joyce’s fictions. Competence begins with consistency, and consistency begins by prioritising the definition of the singular as being one in number rather than being ontologically unique (ie, having no identity but a tautological identity), or the singularity of the event, a recursive knot of supplementarity.

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<sup>252</sup> The focus on materiality here is perhaps best described by Attridge’s application of Lecercle’s theory of the remainder of language to *A Portrait* [Attridge, 2000:65] Particularly of interest here is how Attridge’s account seems to give more weight to the “physical potency” and “physical sensation” of language, which suggests the meta-linguistic insofar as it is an example of language stepping outside of itself towards the material and the non-linguistic. However, I would argue strongly against the directness seemingly implied by Attridge’s account. Such a material remainder of language would, in my view, argue for the intimacy of the non-immediate rather than the immediacy of direct sensation.

The metaphysical, or mystical, statement “the one is” is clearly and obviously tempting in reading *Finnegans Wake*, where the “one” may be the final identity of the dreamer, leading to its implied final interpretation or meaning, as unveiled once such an identity is comprehensively deduced. The other, more general temptation is to deny the autonomy of the works and, instead, subordinate them to the givenness or immediacy of sociological or experiential contexts in which being is presence, or the being of the One. This could be especially tempting if one is attempting to engage with *Finnegans Wake* in such a manner as to avoid what Derek Attridge has called the “dream of interpretation” [Attridge, 2000, 133]. By this he means the illusion that a hypothesis about *Finnegans Wake* might eventually define either a final meaning or a structure of *Finnegans Wake*, the idea of a single plot, which would be to see either the sigla, or crucial incidents such as the Phoenix Park crime, the rape of Anna Livia Plurabelle or the fall of Tim Finnegan, as singularities seeming to guarantee the possible of unified presence beyond the opaque multiple-presentation of the book. It is perhaps not stretching things too far to say that the book itself tempts the reader towards presence and the One, with its constant questioning of who, what, why and how, and its long auto-interpretative digressions, towards an immediacy of presence which will never arrive. Such questions lure, prod and taunt the reading into supplanting pure multiples with multiples of particular elements, to whom irreducible linguistic meanings may be attached. “Doing justice” to *Finnegans Wake* might well mean resisting the temptation of presence or the thought of multiplicities, and accepting an ontology of pure multiplicity, where the combinatorial reigns free over the elemental, the given and the irreducible as a materialist, not idealist, position. In a sense, we can think of the “American” or institutional style of reading, which Attridge goes some way to debunking, not as the clarification of a book that wishes to remain obscure but, rather, as unwitting accomplices to the book’s one-effect.

As Derrida rests his reading of Joyce on a “double bind”, I would argue that deconstruction can be also challenged on two entwined counts: firstly, in the priority of language and the ultimate untranslatability as the abode of the trace and, secondly, in Derrida’s identification of the affirmation of *Ulysses*, the “yes” belonging both to Molly Bloom and to the counter-signature of the reader’s interior voice, as *phenomenon* [D&J 72]. I would argue that all of what Derrida has observed in Joyce, guides us to the conclusion that the multiplicity of the text (that is, narrative fiction considered as situated situation) means that it harbours something which is irreducible either to language or phenomenon. Derrida joked that he might have used the material for “Ulysses Gramophone” to write a paper

expanding on the theory of *pharmakon* entitled “Of the Perfumative in Ulysses”. It is very easy to see why such a paper is, like Derrida’s work on Beckett, unwritten. But it is exactly this material and concrete “perfumative” that resists reduction to either untranslatable words or phenomenon. The “perfumative” is complexity, or “things with a common numerical characteristic” that “tend towards a very significant interrelationship”. But, in Badiou’s words, “language and perceptual experience prove inoperative guides where Number is concerned” [Badiou, 2006:65].<sup>253</sup> Language and perceptual experience are inoperative guides to those unrepresentable elements (common characteristics) by which ensembles are gathered into larger multiplicities. Derrida’s Beckett, the nihilist who is not a nihilist and whose work does not permit the extraction of linguistic traces, arguably resembles Joyce more than Derrida’s Joyce, in that the traces haunting his book cannot be circumscribed as either perceptual experience or language.

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<sup>253</sup> Capitalised “Number” is distinct from lowercase number, as in countable numerals. Beckett’s comment is potentially ambiguous as to what a “numerical characterist” might be as the examples he mentioned are perhaps not constrained to the strictly countable.

## CHAPTER 11: STRUCTURE AND METASTRUCTURE - ENCYCLOPEDIA NARRATIVE AS POLITICAL TOPOGRAPHY

### *From the Multiple to the One-Effect in Joyce*

Even in a fictional setting, the drawing of one-effects from multiplicity and contingency is never uncomplicated. To recapitulate some arguments already made in this thesis, this begins from an undecidable in Joyce that corresponds to two contemporary philosophical positions, presenting a '*différend*': the non-being of the One according to speculative or dialectical materialism, and the impossibility of presence-to-self according to deconstruction. In the previous chapter, I mostly focused on how this *différend* can be derived from a dispute interior to Joyce: the refusal of the texts to determine whether the sole ontological uniqueness is the Void (expressed mathematically under the sign of the empty set, or philosophically as that-which-is-not-being-qua-being) or the Altogether Other. It is my contention that it is from an ambivalence on this issue that Joyce draws both his philosophical discourse and his aesthetic depictions of the concrete and concreteness. But now, it is time to turn to concreteness itself, taking narrative as the form of concreteness itself, and as the means in which concreteness is conferred to objects or described in the exteriority of the real. Concreteness is a kind of differentiation and, as differentiation is always locally conferred, and localisation is nothing but an effect, "narrative" potentially means little more than a specific production of locality and, therefore, a specific way in which differences are locally evaluated. What concreteness does not mean, for the purposes of this reading, is something principally available to human experience through perception or sensation, or something that is bound, in its formation or foundation, to the social field or the periodicisation of histories. Further, narrative itself is not to be reduced to a social field or mistaken for a sociological category: its potential to be viewed as a *transcendental* scheme cannot be effaced by categorisation.<sup>254</sup>

Whether one takes either "the one is not" or "presence-to-self is always-already interrupted" as a maxim for reading, the inescapable conclusion is that any local instance of the One is, in fact, a one-effect drawn from a multiplicity that has no prior coherence and consistency. The conclusion one reaches is far-reaching and radical, yet also very familiar in terms of a theoretical engagement with Joyce: in narrative, there is really no such thing as an

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<sup>254</sup> Here I am operating a distinction between the categorical and the categorial.

originary, primary or basic narrative structure, there is only structuration and metastructure. Going beyond Joyce one can argue, in poetry, there is no global ideal form of a poem, and there are no pre-determinate fixed genres, there is only a contingent network of formal inventions. Such hypothesis should not be anything new or surprising in the study of Joyce, as one could say that textual and genetic analysis has worked to uncover that fact that the work is not “structured”<sup>255</sup> but rather subject to structuration. Secondly, that “structuration” is not necessarily the same thing as process, either as interpretative gestures for recovering and bestowing meaning, or as *écriture* as an event of performativity. One must take a dialectic approach to composition, and never reduce it to a homogenous and univocal process of manufacture. Composition is subject to structuration, and also to views that emphasise text as a process, unfolding and never quite completed. In Wittgenstein’s words, “form is the possibility of structure” [Wittgenstein, 1921: 9]. So, narrative form must be considered not to be a structure itself, but a form suggesting multiple possibilities of structuration.

Literal depictions of the concrete, any concrete thing, such as the mass of Bloom’s talismanic potato and the scent of the soap he is carrying, operate as a recurrence of indecision between the uniqueness of the absolutely other and the foundational role of the void. The problem is that it cannot be both, but, equally, there cannot be a decision (either aesthetically or philosophically). There cannot be a philosophical decision because Joyce has dedicated himself fully to the autonomy of the arts, but additionally there also cannot be an aesthetic decision in general, because the particular demonstration of a thing depends upon the interplay of the Other/Void as potential ways of negatively conceptualising an object, so it cannot be thought ahead of time. The aesthetic resources needed to “apprehend” an object cannot be anticipated (as the apprehension itself is the anticipation). Likewise, the signature cannot be signed in advance, which is perhaps the influence Nicholas of Cusa’s “learned ignorance” (*De Docta Ignorantia*) upon Joyce and the notion of an “Ideal Ass”, comically alluded to in *Finnegans Wake* (III.1), at the first appearance of Shaun the Post. Not only is any given object a local instance of the One (as an atom), but it is in and of itself a problematic of the one-effect, prior to any human experience or perception. This collects together the very simple ontological arrangement that we see introduced in the first pages of *Finnegans Wake*, and then evidenced throughout: atom, void and clinamen. These elements describe the local instance of a one-effect, the absence of a founding principle (Void/Other)

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<sup>255</sup> For example, Joyce scholars like Clive Hart, who moved away from the idea that *Finnegans Wake* had a complex interior structure.

and the situationally inherent possibility of deviation. Crucially, I would recognise that contextual or structural analysis, be it the attempt to place the text within a larger exterior structure or the identification and typology of structure interior to the text, is a covertly transcendentalist position. One must not just be post-structuralist, but one must move beyond the idealist primacy of language and structure, towards a properly dialectical materialist vision of both narrative and aesthetics.

In analyzing Joyce from a structuralist or post-structuralist position, we can see that, perhaps, the main limitation of those positions was not to put the notion of structure itself to the test of dialectics, but simply to substitute one structure for another - the decentred for the centred, the open for the closed, the dynamic for the fixed, and so on. What is at stake in the re-evaluation of the “concrete” in this thesis is to move beyond this and undermine a structural (if not necessarily structuralist) thesis with a situational one.

### *Encyclopedias Prior to Knowledge*

When we speak of the one-effect of “narrative” as an object of our discussion, what is meant by this one-effect is amphibolous. A narrative is itself a one-effect, but its appearance is also that of an ensemble, which is the field or process that grants a plethora of other ensembles their one-effect. An example of this is a list. The technique of the list is not just a marker of Joyce’s place within modernity, and it is not only a Rabelaisian comic or satirical device in the sense described by the chapter on Joyce in Hugh Kenner’s *The Stoic Comedians*. The list is where narrative reaches outside of language, so to speak, to reveal a constellation of its extra-linguistic foundations. The list has an inherently comic value, as it brings into focus the counter-intuitive fact that narrative has a dimension of being irreducible either to text or speech. There is something in narrative that is subject to mathematics, logic, or phenomenal synthesis, that exists prior to its capture of semantics and syntax: the power of names, of ensembles, of acts of gathering together, of belonging and inclusion. The list is a figure of the one-effect of the apparently whole, but also a figure of the one-effect of the apparently singular items whose atomic singularities allow a whole to be composed. The importance of names seems to reach outside of grammar and semantics. The list has a comedy of pathos, and appears to us as a link between the Homeric epic and modern comedy, in the way it invites performance, as it uses the site of the emergence of narrative one-effects to measure language from its strongest to its weakest.

We can compare two uses of lists of names: the comedic list of insulting names hurled at the sleeping innkeeper that closes *Finnegans Wake* I.3 [FW 71-72] where the reader is left unclear whether Earwicker is listening to the intruder outside the pub yell those names, or whether the rueful and egoistic Earwicker is indulging himself in a persecution fantasy by recalling the names ‘kept on file’ that he has been called in the past. A similar comic list appears in I.4, [FW 104-06] where the mamafesta, the book of women, is given a list of names, but the humour here is not insulting so much as the absurd vastness of subject matters implied by the titles – the infinite vastness of the book alleged to be the book of all women is hinted at behind the ludicrous specificity of the titles. One can call these two forms of humour expansive and contractive: the titles of the book of women are funny because they suggest expansive absurdities, bizarre collections of experiences suggested in the stories and testimonies thus far in the book, as well as the magnitude of the burden on Anna if her testimony is supposed to exonerate Humphrey. Such is his ego and entitlement, and so deeply rooted is his persecution complex that only the entire history of the universe recited by a maternal goddess would be enough to fully absolve him of his crimes. On the other hand, the contractive style of humour mocks Earwicker’s ego and guilt by concentrating his misbehaviour into acts that are a little too precise to be informative, yet very literal. For example, the insult “acoustic disturbance” condenses his stammering, his loud voice, his northern (Ulster or Scandinavian) accent, his flatulence, the noise of the bed, the roar of the lions, and so on. By contrast the names in Anna’s book widen familiar phrases and themes from the book into the expansive plurality. “Esyathic phallusaphist” smashes together so many of the different sexual accusations against Earwicker that it is exactly too precise to be meaningful, as are the various references to Earwicker’s apparent loyalist or Protestant background. Earwicker’s sin is so great, so condensed and so singular that it provokes an excess of meaning, exactly because it resists meaning and cannot be said. On the other hand, the excess of Anna’s exoneration (her “plurabilities”, and the manifesto’s “polyhedron of scripture”) shows how complete a history is needed. The two uses of the list comically highlight the difference between a one-effect of the article, and the one-effect of the whole, without obscuring the fact that both forms merely draw temporary consistency from the inconsistent. And what, in *Finnegans Wake*, is less consistent than the marriage between  $\Pi$  and  $\Delta$ ?

Lists, however, also have a use in the book that is not comedic or satirical as in the constant litany of famous names that are peppered through *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.



Joyce is not merely showing his knowledge by mentioning a name. In *Ulysses*, we see that when Joyce really wants to impress the reader with the oceanic expanse of his reading, he uses an oblique reference and not a name: Johnson and Berkeley with “knocking his scone against it” [U 45]; Aristotle with “bald he was and a millionaire”; Plato and Blake with “the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*”. A name anchors the book to topics beyond linguistics, that might be said to be ‘meta-linguistic’: theories of science, political events, mathematics, logical constructions. An encyclopaedia does not use a name reductively to make something into another article. By using names, and so many appropriate names, Joyce subverts the encyclopaedic by drawing attention to the fact that oneness is situationally granted. A name is not only nominative, it is a bridge between a set of ideas, the pre-linguistic indicative domain of the habitual and the gestural, and the meta-linguistic domain of assigning meaning-making intentions to material things and concrete actions. Much like the comic use of granting the one-effect, its oneness operates as a list, the non-comic use allows us to look into the fact that the book is drawing upon its own multiplicity to produce one-effects.

When one starts to talk about *Ulysses*, whether one begins with a certain detail or holistically discusses how the episodes coalesce together into the mock-epic form, one cannot avoid talking about the collecting together of disparate and contingent ensembles into a roughly singular body that one can call “Ulysses”. It is inescapable that the narrative is only a narrative on the basis of its production of one-effects. In order for narrative to contain that elusive Joycean *quidditas*, it must have *haeceitty*, so that the “artist” may be multiple. For example, let us consider the famous passage on whatness from *A Portrait*, which attempts to be a portrait of *the* artist by means of the act of writing *this* incident in *this* boy’s life where he encountered *this* particular object in *this* context.

The “whatness” of a thing, the aesthetic event at the heart of the book, is suspended between the one-effects of the text and the over-arching one-effect of the *A Portrait* itself as a biographical project. For Joyce, the global project of a philosophically inquisitive and journalistically forthright autobiography is inseparable from the local issue of epiphany: but there is nothing foundational, as in the romantic *Bildungsroman*, to bind these two problems. An epiphany cannot wholly be described in terms of time, self-experience, self-identity, enlightenment, nor as a spiritual encounter. Instead, the novelty of the work, as one-effect, has to form a lintel between two other manifestations of one-effect. The question of the work as a one-effect leads to the question of how does one conjoin the issue of one-effect as worldhood, that is as an individual life viewed from the interior, to the dependent issue of a one-effect as

atom, an irreducible whatness viewed as exterior? For Joyce, the refusal to capitulate to romantic or naturalistic demands for the existence of a foundational bridge between the two is, I would argue, the beginning of the succession of formal inventions, in that it characterises the redraft of *A Portrait* and, eventually, forms the basis of the episodic structure of *Ulysses*.

The question of the one-effect resembles the problematic of totality, as encountered in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, that is reflected by the fact that these books are not “novels” in the sense of being published as book, telling a single story, with a unified structure and using a single language. Rather, their episodic publication and status as “work in progress” reflects, in a way that is hard to dismiss, the fact that Joyce is drawing the singular from the multiple. To put it another way, if “work in progress” is the activity of writing and interpreting the work, and the final status is the ideal “book” in the Mallarméan sense, what can be called “Finnegans Wake” refers neither to the process, nor to the final product (imagining a completely error-corrected, definitive edition of *Finnegans Wake* could ever exist), but rather to a one-effect working subtractively alongside, or perhaps against, both process and final object. Neither an account of process, nor the finalisation of an object, really provides an account of one-effects. Likewise, “Ulysses” is not simply the whole of the book that is greater than the sum of its individually published episodes, but nor is *Ulysses* reducible to the process of writing *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* is inseparable from the one-effect of June 16th, a singular which neither makes up nor constitutes the whole, nor the process. The Mallarmé quotation that appears in the ninth episode, “*il se promène, lisant au livre de lui-même*” [U 239], demonstrates that the book as a knotting together of one-effects engaged in operations of mutual evaluation: the walking, the book, the character of Hamlet, the actor himself.

### *The Nightmare of History as Encyclopedia.*

In the mid-section of the second episode of *Ulysses*, usually called ‘Nestor’, Stephen Dedalus meets with his employer, a conservative (or more accurately reactionary) schoolmaster by the name of Deasy, who summons him into his office to pay him, and to beg a favour regarding a letter he hopes Dedalus will place in a newspaper. Stephen’s payment for his teaching job has already been anticipated in the novel: in the first episode (‘Telemachus’), Stephen has been chivvied repeatedly by his friend Buck Mulligan to request payment so that the men may raise “a glorious drunk” (11) together that afternoon. Although Stephen is reluctant to use the money to buy rounds for his associates, preferring to spend it on alcohol for himself, Mulligan

has made cutting remarks regarding his loans to Stephen, making Stephen feel duty-bound to return with the means to finance a drunken afternoon. The anticipation is presented as divided between autonomy and obligation, even before the anticipated payment arrives, since it reflects both the promise of a small liberation from debt and the potential that, once Stephen rejoins Mulligan in the afternoon, his material debts and obligations may deepen ever further. In ‘Nestor’, we see a deepening of Stephen’s sense of divided obligations, which is further expanded, beyond one character’s personal indebtedness, into the book’s wider themes of autonomy and imperialism, the genealogy of philosophical ideas and, through Stephen’s thoughts on Aristotle, one of Joyce’s main compositional techniques, the contrapuntal play of possibility and actuality, is directly named.

The narrative of ‘Nestor’ does not concern accounts, but rather a doubled process of accounts being brought into account. Stephen thinks of a similar doubling of processes, where historical events happen because of causality or determination, and events that have not come to pass are “branded” or selected and, in a sense, preserved. There is a sense that causality is both a sequential or active movement forwards and a retroactive operation of separation and selection. *Ulysses* has not yet shown the reader that, in Stephen’s mind, there is little difference between the necessary and the contingent. Yet his thoughts here seem to work against the notion that there is something fundamentally different between the actual and the possible:

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam’s hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind. [U 30]

As quoted in Gifford and Seidman’s *Ulysses Annotated*, this passage alludes to two contrasting historical views. Firstly, and most importantly for the chapter as a whole, the passage touches upon Aristotle’s distinction between history and poetry. Such a distinction anticipates Joyce’s use of Vico’s distinction between poetry and philosophy in *Finnegans Wake*. But, while poetry is a condition for philosophy in that view, here, history forecloses it, branding and hoarding away all possibilities that have not been actualised. Gifford and Seidman quote a translation of the Poetics passage in question: “the distinction between historian and poet... consists really in this, that one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be” [Aristotle, *Poetics* part 9]. The second distinction is an

allusion to prophecy with “weave, weaver of the winder”, concerning oracles, prophecy, and the business of looking forward to unrealised possibilities.

However, with all these references, Joyce is performing something of a misdirection. The destination of the chapter is a confrontation between Stephen and the bigoted Mr Deasy, which never arrives, since Stephen thinks but does not speak his rejoinders to Deasy’s errors and offenses and, ultimately, leaves the headmaster to gloat, as the chapter ends on the image of the sunlight’s “dancing coins” [U 45]. During the encounter between Stephen and his employer, Stephen’s uncharacteristic silence seems to result, in part, from a kind of horror at Deasy’s factually incorrect and ethically repugnant historical statements. Stephen is an aspirant poet, embodying the Aristotelean distinction between poetry and history by professing to Deasy that “history is a nightmare” [U 42] that he wishes to awake from. History is a nightmare because it contains horrors that cast retrospective shadows over the chapter, including past events such as the lynching of “papishes” [U 38] in Armagh, but also coming horrors, such as the Great War of 1914 [U 40]<sup>256</sup> and the partition of Ireland by act of parliament in 1920. But, history is also a “nightmare” in that relying on fragments of historical facticity and oracles is a dangerously misguided way of understanding the world. Although Deasy is often factually incorrect, there is a sense that he would be equally in error, were he factually correct. Deasy is a typical kind of historicist for his time, professing a belief in an idealist teleology, according to which “all history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God” [U 42]. The bitter irony of the chapter is that, despite this romantic embrace of teleology, understanding the world through historical determinism and its implied structures leads Deasy to remain ignorant of the horrors lying in the immediate future: the ignorance of the future, the coming horrors as the irrefutable invalidation of historical determinisms emanating from signs of the One, whether theological, progressive or materialist.

As we can see from Stephen’s earlier thoughts on Aristotle, he does not apprehend history as the ultimate horizon where the possible is realised as the actual. Impossible events, such as the never actualised possibility of Julius Caesar surviving his assassination, are not strictly to be thought of as alternative histories, or as the forking of a linear path. The image given by Stephen is the opposite of linear and temporal: “lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted” [U 30]. Perhaps because of the painful circumstances of his

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<sup>256</sup> The almost Homeric image of spears in the description of the cries from the playfield recalls a similar image at the end of “The Dead”, except projecting towards the future rather than memorialising the past.

mother's death, Stephen seems frequently unable to make mental links between causality and necessity. When he must think of possibilities, they are thought topologically, such as in a room, and in innumerable excess.

However, we cannot psychologise Stephen's thought of the actual and possible too far. Indeed, it is informed by much more than his emotional state. Perhaps still irritated by the "Sassenach" [U 9]<sup>257</sup> – Haines' folksy and condescending view of Irish authenticity, Stephen is revolted by the notion of history as a story: "For Haines chapbook [...] a jester at the court of his master [...] For them too history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawnshop" [U 29]. In Stephen's mind, the notion of history being like a linear story is inseparable from imperial plunder and expropriation. The images of horse racing on Deasy's walls could be seen as another scorning image of deterministic historicism: harnessed, whipped animals made to run down a linear track as rapidly as possible by the Englishmen who ride them. Crucially, here, we also see a metaphor of debt ("a pawnshop"), a kind of conduit between history as temporal and spoken ("a tale"), and history as spatial and visually represented.<sup>258</sup> Meta-structural operations of debt and indebtedness are primary in the sense that they are initial without being originary; the apparently foundational affinities between history and time, or between history and spaces, are secondary, and are ultimately matters of appearance. The meta-structural operations that can be non-analogically explained by debt and indebtedness have a primacy over the structures derived from affinities that can only be explained by analogy.

Absent from Stephen's view, therefore, is any notion of an absolute or unifying necessity. The complexity of Joyce's position against necessity is deeply woven into the text. It manifests not only in the philosophical allusions to Aristotle and Averroes, but also where Stephen does and does not express his thoughts, and where those thoughts are and are not logical continuations of the present conversations. Stephen's appropriations from Aristotle may have the tone of incomparable and total admiration, as Aristotle is treated very differently to the myriad other philosophical allusions in Stephen's thought. But this admiration does not entail dogmatic belief. We must remember that Stephen is in part autobiographical, and Joyce himself tended to express the ideas of thinkers and writers he

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<sup>257</sup> This is Mulligan's word but Dedalus does not protest against its use. Considering the Biblical allusions and the book's theme of anti-semitism, it might be significant that Mulligan uses it to tell Stephen that "the Sassenach wants his morning rashers", i.e. the outsider expects non-kosher food.

<sup>258</sup> The pawnshop has in shades of the "Museyroom" of *Finnegans Wake* [FW 8].

admired via transformation, such as Vico, in whose system Joyce was adamant that he did not actually believe, and merely exploited it.<sup>259</sup>

Thus, history is neither present as a system of determinations, nor as a single linear progression, but as a meta-structure of equivalence and representations with no possible singular anthropocentric analogy or foundational affinity. Rather than time or space, or the perceptual experience of such, history is more proximal to debt than any other human experience. It is the result of the possible holding the impossible in pawn to preserve its own immanently countable valuation. There is already a suggestion of the mercantile, of currency and of books of accountancy in the idea of “branding” unrealised possibilities. What is exterior to historical necessity is not the branding or the fetter of the primary, structural act of merely showing itself to be non-necessary, but rather a kind of secondary indexing, dividing the possibilities from the actualities. Stephen’s view is perhaps not as strictly Aristotelean as he might think. As a would-be poet and philosopher of aesthetics, he is definitely being primed for a fight against the would-be historian Mr Deasy. However, the opposition of poetry and history is not simply, as a vulgar reduction of Aristotle would have it, to take the side of the possible against the actual, but rather to defend the poet as a “disappointed bridge” between the actual and possible.

In *Ulysses*, Joyce brings together two abstract compositional techniques: a formal operation of taking accounts of accounts, which I would refer to as a meta-structural dimension of narrative, and a stylistic “retrospective arrangement”, which I would term, more tentatively, the transcendental dynamic of narrative. The meta-structural dimension of the episode ‘Nestor’ does not operate within the theme of debt itself, but rather in incidents and semantics operating as the localisations of that theme. The “meta-structural” work is visible in a kind of pre-thematic gathering together of elements without applying any structure to them. To pick three arbitrary examples, if we see debt, mourning and clothing as examples of elements which are important to the composition of *Ulysses*, they reappear in different combinations during the first half of the book:

- Stephen having to borrow money and clothes;
- Mulligan’s snide remarks about the death of Stephen’s mother;
- Stephen feeling unable to mourn properly because his mourning clothes are not his;

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<sup>259</sup> For example, Joyce’s comment to Tom Kristensen: “I don’t believe in any science” [JJ 693].

- Leopold wearing mourning clothes, yet feeling unable to properly mourn his father and son;
- Leopold being obliged to perform acts of mourning on behalf of others;
- Other characters being unsure who Leopold is mourning due to his clothing;
- An unnamed mourner at the funeral having the style of his coat mistaken for his name.

The meta-structure, therefore, is not a conglomeration of the outcroppings and excrescences of an underlying structure, or the projection of a system of direct references and explicit allusion, but a formal extension of the situation from which the possibilities of structure may be derived. This formal extension is expressed in an exclusively combinatorial way, prior to the assignment of a grammar or interior logic to any of the combinations. In the examples given, the collection of elements precedes the logical connectors between them. Joyce once famously compared Vico to Freud [JJ 693], by way of expressing his preference for Vico, but there is a real sense of an encounter between Freudian and Vichean ideas in this strictly combinatorial way of constructing ensembles of different kinds of elements. A combinatorial view of Joyce's work, however loosely analogical it may be to mathematics, suggests Vico in the sense that gathering together into ensembles or groups is directly related to thought, in a way that is prior to complex written language or sophisticated discourse. However, it also suggests Freud in that objects gain significance from being put together with other things rather than having an innate meaning, or the way that the content of dreams is para-logical in respect to the roles that different objects might have. One can also see a strong suggestion of free association, but it goes beyond psychological reductions. One could even argue that Joyce liberates the idea of an ensemble's representation and displacement being arbitrary from any overriding pretence of interpretation or interpretability.

The existence of a meta-structure, along with the coextension of its representational priority over structure, and the fact that it harbours both actual and potential structures, is why I would refer to a narrative, not as situation, but as situated-situation. It is also why one must question the idea that the foundation of narrative fiction lies either in structure (whether it is spatial-planar or temporal-linear), or in the aesthetic expression of foundational affinities with human perceptual experience of time and space. A narrative is not only a situation in itself: its conjoined meta-structure (also called the state-of-the-situation<sup>260</sup>) is in itself a situation; the

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<sup>260</sup> Badiou's term particular for political meta-structure in *Being and Event*. See page 93.

language and set of semantic determinations associated with conjoinment of the meta-structure with a situation may be referred to as the *encyclopaedia*.

Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom are gathered together in the meta-structure before the structure of the novel brings them together. In fact, we could say that their meeting happens prior to structure, but after the meta-structural conjunction. Their union takes place in this gap between meta-structure and structure, between things that are presented without representation and things that are represented independently of presentation. In these instances, major characters such as Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom are not counted or identified, but the operations that count and identify them are in turn counted and identified by the text.

This is more obvious in *Finnegans Wake*, where figures appear as superpositions of different figures, or as names mapped onto the same local “appearing” of a certain figure. For instance, figures associated with  $\square$  may be an appearance of James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Shem the Forger, Shem the Biblical Cain, and many others. Shem is identified as any one of these. In other words, he is brought under the effect of the localisation of the One – when the superpositions align or construct one particular set, which does not count the figure itself directly, but counts that which counts it. There is no coalescence, no spontaneous hybridisation, and no moment where the semantic overpowers the syntax. No one figure may be the sole figure which “counts as” either James Joyce, Shem the Forger, Oscar Wilde or Cain depending upon context. A multiplicity is only ‘one’ insofar as it falls under the effect of count which articulates it as one. The construction of this local instance of “one” is the question of “Who?”, which follows from the demand regarding the origin of the letter or the origin of the rumours concerning  $\Delta$  and her sons (“Qu’appelle”, [FW 197]). ‘Counting the operation which counts’, therefore, is not such an incongruous or difficult notion. In order for Shem to be identified, he needs to be identified as the author of the letter, by means of a question allowing the superpositions to collapse<sup>261</sup> into the act of counting: the question “sacer esto?” is answered with “semus sumus” [FW 168] meaning we are Shem. The singular follows from the state of the situation. The ensemble “we” that answers, is articulated by the act of counting that which counts, pulling the latent multiple-element into the manifest one-effect of a “character”.

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<sup>261</sup> Quantum physics metaphor unintended.



The notion of singularity in *Ulysses* is, therefore, in tension with the meta-structural operation that takes account of accounts. To think of this in perhaps looser terms, we see it in the way characters are presented. Part of the prejudice shown to Leopold Bloom is that he is identified as the man married to Molly Bloom, through the answer to questions resulting from the rumours concerning Molly: does her husband not care about Boylan? Why did Molly not marry an Irish man? [U 134] The “singularity”, or unicity of Leopold Bloom as an individual, and his utter uniqueness as an element in the story, is not the same as his being articulated as being one-in-number (or bestowed with a coherent identity) by the situation in which he is represented. In fact, it is the case that what “counts” Bloom as one-in-number, or what is counted-as-one by the answers to these questions, circumvents his singularity, in the sense of his uniqueness. The answers to the questions regarding the Bloom’s marriage reflect the uniqueness and intensity of the love he shares with Molly, not their identities. Such a singularity cannot be reached by the operation of “retrospective arrangement”. That is to say, it cannot be reached by taking accounts, but by taking accounts into account.

Why it is so useful to stress “meta-structure” in regard to Joyce? The first reason extends from Joyce’s anti-foundationalism, which I have described in terms of theoretical and philosophical accounts of donation. As Stephen argues in ‘Scylla and Carybdis’, paternity is a legal fiction, since the meta-structure that designates, preserves and enshrines fatherhood is not foundational, but imposed in an act of gathering together. The “structure” of a family may, therefore, appear natural without being foundational or a fixed essence, but such a structure can only possibly exist as the after-image of the meta-structure, the habitualised regime of inclusivity enabling it. The inclusion of elements where *a* counts as a son, *b* as a brother, *c* as a daughter, and so on for sister, mother, father, step-father, deceased son, adulterer, expected child, etc., leads the structure in which those elements appear to belong. In Joyce’s deployment of Vico’s ideas, this is notable in the representative function of ritual and edifice construction, leading to the naturalisation of institutions and habitual aspects of human life. The inclusion together of man and woman as a “married couple” in the act of marriage, stamped into the materiality of marriage, and the priority of burial as a preservation of identity where an individual is included-in-himself (so to speak), lead the liberal or Lockean proprietorial view of self-identity, where one first belongs to oneself as a foundational piece of propriety.

In reading Joyce, we must never lose sight of that fact as all things are deployed towards the ends of the autonomy of artistic acts, whether one takes an anglophone view that

autonomy belongs to the artist as a person, or the more French view<sup>262</sup> that the autonomy lies in the contingency of the event of literature. Meta-structure leads from an aesthetics of reference and indication to an aesthetics of superposition. If things get grouped into subsets based upon an identity, Joyce's work identifies the retrospective nature of such a grouping and its transcendental orientation, and gives a point where meta-linguistics hijacks such a process of retroactive organisation and "branding". It is through grouping and gathering together (Vichean historicist intellection) that Joyce can re-appropriate Aristotelian active intellection and doctrines of actuality and possibility. "Realisation" is a kind of grouping together, a process of separation by means of which actual elements have their representation assured in the state-of-the-situation, whereas non-necessary elements are "branded" as such and lodged in the infinite pawnshop of the unrealised.

Returning to Stephen, in the episode 'Wandering Rocks', he ponders "beingless beings" [U 311]. He associates these "beingless beings" with the general feeling of despair and oppression he feels over the course of the day and feels that such beings are not directly subjected to control or domination by another, but rather caught up in a process, an after-effect of which is their categorisation. Stephen Dedalus's "beingless beings", rather than simply being paradoxical, resemble a point that Joyce will later exploit in *Finnegans Wake*, a point best reflected by Immanuel Kant's famous notion that it is "*absurd* [...] that there can be *appearance without* anything that *appears*," [Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1999]. That is to say, the perception of something can occur without there being a thing to be perceived, and something that cannot possibly be presented can be represented. Such absurdity is evidently running rampant throughout Dublin in 1904. Later, in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce will pillory the entire notion of the Kantian phenomenon/noumenon distinction through association with confusion and phantoms. Early on in the first chapter, we can find a potential barb against Kant in "e'erawhere in this whorl would ye hear sich a din again" FW 6] (such a din/ding-an-sich) and, later, Issy pointedly asks: "Is dads the thing in such or are tits the that?" [U 526] in beginning to "ambidual act her-self in apparition with herself". In *Finnegans Wake*, while the notion of an appearance without anything to appear is absurd, it is part of the fabric of the novel.

If we use Badiou's theory of meta-structure to address the composition of *Ulysses*, then such a notion of a representation without a presentation is called an excrescent multiple. The word and notion of "excresence" appears in *Ulysses* through humorous references to

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<sup>262</sup> Or Franco-Irish: having raised the topic of theories of condition, we cannot forget Beckett's influence.

language involving circumcision, particularly in relation to the collection of foreskins as holy relics: “excrescences” [U 825] and “prepuces” [U 15]. Such use of deliberately obscure and devotional language related to circumcision brings to mind Derrida’s punning of Molly with Mohel, [D&J 65] and the implied puns about circum-cision, cutting around, isolating, circumnavigation, circling back, and shortcutting. Derrida remarks that the final “yes” of *Ulysses* “circumnavigates and circumcises”. Therefore, excrescence, and its inferred meaning of a representation of the unrepresented, could bring us closer to a meta-structural apprehension of what supplementarity can mean in regard to *Ulysses*, or even to literature in general.

However, I would argue that this “excrescence” does not yet describe or refer to the working of supplementation, but opens up a meta-structural field where it makes sense to talk about supplementarity. Derrida links the use of the word “excrescence” and “prepuces” to his own arcane and allusive thought around “circumcision”. However, I would observe that the uses of the terms in *Ulysses* have a very easy point of reference. Throughout Stephen’s day, he is confronted with the political or institutional tension between presentation and representation. In the opening chapter, his relationship with his two cohabitant peers is made antagonistic by the idea that they might speak for him: Mulligan, and also Haines, an Englishman who wishes to be Irish and who wants to exploit Stephen’s position as an apparently authentic Irish intellectual in order to write a book of aphorisms.

These fears are condensed in the fact that, although Stephen pays the rent, the other men might want the key to the tower: the remark “usurper” is directed at Haines, who wants Stephen’s place both symbolically and literally, and captures the notion that a presentation can be usurped by representation. In the ‘Nestor’ chapter, Deasy’s school is full of representations of Imperial authority and concerns of money and advice. Later, when we meet Stephen again at the library he decries books changing from active reservoirs of thought into symbols of thoughts and ideas which have now, metaphorically, died: “coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in spice of words. Thoth, god of libraries, a birdgod, moonycrowned. And I heard the voice of that Egyptian highpriest. *In painted chambers loaded with tilebooks*” (Joyce’s emphasis) [U 248]. An excrescence is not only that which appears without existing, but that which only appears when things are retrospectively arranged.

Speaking of arrangements in the abstract implies the concrete processes which carry out those arrangements. That is to say, however, that we must set up a contrast between abstract operations and concrete processes, nor that Joyce's work makes any such suggestion. Returning to the second episode of *Ulysses*, the passage concerning Stephen's payment by Deasy is worth quoting in full. Joyce pays very close attention to the eccentric manner in which Mr Deasy pays Stephen, using an apparently mechanical device. This is then contrasted with Stephen's thoughts, which scathingly turn to naturalist imagery of shells and the mythical idea of buried treasures and unearthing caches. To quote the following passage:

A hasty step over the stone porch and in the corridor. Blowing out his rare moustache Mr Deasy halted at the table.

—First, our little financial settlement, he said.

He brought out of his coat a pocketbook bound by a leather thong. It slapped open and he took from it two notes, one of joined halves, and laid them carefully on the table.

—Two, he said, strapping and stowing his pocketbook away.

And now his strongroom for the gold. Stephen's embarrassed hand moved over the shells heaped in the cold stone mortar: whelks and money cowries and leopard shells: and this, whorled as an emir's turban, and this, the scallop of saint James. An old pilgrim's hoard, dead treasure, hollow shells.

A sovereign fell, bright and new, on the soft pile of the tablecloth.

—Three, Mr Deasy said, turning his little savingsbox about in his hand. These are handy things to have. See. This is for sovereigns. This is for shillings. Sixpences, halfcrowns. And here crowns. See.

He shot from it two crowns and two shillings.

—Three twelve, he said. I think you'll find that's right.

—Thank you, sir, Stephen said, gathering the money together with shy haste and putting it all in a pocket of his trousers.

—No thanks at all, Mr Deasy said. You have earned it.

Stephen's hand, free again, went back to the hollow shells. Symbols too of beauty and of power. A lump in my pocket: symbols soiled by greed and misery.

—Don't carry it like that, Mr Deasy said. You'll pull it out somewhere and lose it. You just buy one of these machines. You'll find them very handy.

Answer something.

—Mine would be often empty, Stephen said. [U 35-36]

There does not seem to be a consensus amongst Joyceans as to the exact nature of the savingsbox device which Deasy is using, although, considering the year, it may be something intended for the use of a tram or railway porter. What is notable about the passage is the large amount of attention paid to the device, yet none of these details could conclusively identify what kind of coin-storing machine it is: one coin first "fell" from the machine and, later, four are "shot" from it, leaving us unsure as to whether the machine is spring-loaded or not. We

are told it is a “savingsbox”, but Deasy can also point to compartments where different shapes of coins are visibly stored, and the mechanism is visible as in a tram conductor’s coin dispenser. Deasy’s enigmatic device is not the only example of such a thing in *Ulysses*. There is also Tom Rochford’s even less explained “invention” or “machine” (in ‘Wandering Rocks’ and ‘Circe’), whose function is to identify the order of performances in a theatre. As with Deasy’s machine, the reader can probably deduce what Rochford’s device does from the scant description, but, for anyone not personally involved in a Dublin theatre or working at a patent office in Dublin at the turn of the century, the descriptions Joyce gives may be confounding. What is really of note here is that, during a seemingly deliberately opaque description of the operations of Rochford’s machine, there is an embedded sentence where Boylan’s secretary, Miss Dune, types the date 16 June 1904 [U 294] on a typewriter, the first appearance of the date and its only diegetic appearance. The only other complete appearance of the date is during the catechism of ‘Ithaca’, where the balance sheet of the day’s budget is requested by the impersonal interrogating voice [U 836]. The incident with Deasy and his mechanical savingsbox begins a thread which winds around mechanism, knowing obscurity (as Joyce could never have realistically expected anyone to have read Rochford’s patent), accounts and identification. This thread finally brings us to the aforementioned famous moment in ‘Ithaca’ where the day’s balance sheet is produced, since the novel is, by this point, not only keeping accounts, but keeping accounts of its accounts. The appearance of Deasy’s money-dispensing contraption continues what Stephen’s thoughts of Aristotle’s theory of actuality had begun (“time has branded them...”), since it is part of setting the stage for the ‘retrospective arrangement’ which will come to be a major aspect of the composition of *Ulysses*, all that is counted being counted at least twice.

Returning to the obscurity of Deasy’s obscure device, while it probably is the case that it refers to a real object one could buy in Dublin, what is significant is how obscure its details are in comparison to the clarity of Stephen’s thoughts of money. For example, in the description of Stephen’s glancing at what he later recalls as the “wild sea money” [U 45] in the mortar, he mentions the exact kinds of shells and the exact kinds of lost treasure that they bring to mind. There is not even much to be debated in the more abstract part: when Stephen thinks of “symbols soiled by greed and misery”, the reader can know whose greed and what kind of misery is on Stephen’s mind. Despite the ambiguity, perhaps even confusion, of Stephen’s thoughts and actions, we know precise details about his relationship to money. We know Stephen’s debts and something of his intentions for what he will receive. For Deasy,

however, the mechanical certainty of his machine is a nexus of representational obscurity, immediately contrasted when it shoots out coins of certain values, which are clearly described and identified. Like Deasy's attempts to match Stephen's erudition in conversation, there is nothing behind the machine as representation. The money-machine and the coins are representations without anything to present, whereas Stephen's thoughts entwine real things, symbols, metaphors. It is ironic that the coins, so clearly identified by Deasy and his contraption, have only vague meaning, but once they become the homogenous and unidentified "lump" (a word which means both an indefinite mass and an unspecific amount of money) in Stephen's pocket, they are granted specific symbolic values. In order for the coins to gain the value they have for Stephen (and will later have for the book), their identities must be lost or merged. There is also something of a thematic misdirection: the reader may well expect these passages to build towards the irony of the fact that Deasy may count money exactly because he is wealthy, whereas Stephen can think of money only in poetic digressions or as a "lump", because he is indebted and ashamed of it. Eventually, Stephen mentally lists all his debts, in a way that contrasts, not with his employer's precision, but with Deasy's dishonesty.

In such a context, the manner in which Stephen is paid the first sovereign stands out. Stephen not only sees Deasy's office as full of symbols of the history of currency<sup>263</sup> [U 36] alongside emblems of aristocratic English wealth with the images of race horses adorning the walls [Ibid], but the coin itself is produced from Deasy's strange and unnamed mechanical device. Joyce's use of imagery here divides images of wealth from images of the materiality and processes that provide wealth in the first place. The dredging up and display of the ancient history of wealth acquisition is presented as being the same as the production of wealth itself<sup>264</sup> ensuring the political potentialities of money are not hidden or obscured, but laid out within easy access of the two men. The use of a machine to produce the coins is in contrast to the awe demanded by the aristocratic imagery in Deasy's office: it is demystifying, mechanical and drab.

Surrounded by images of aristocratic wealth, but contrasted by the cowry shells displayed in a mortar, the sovereign dispensed by the savingsbox appears as if created at the exact moment when Deasy produces it. Stephen, who has nothing and is dependent on his wage, makes a gesture, but Deasy himself makes no gesture as the device appears to perform

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<sup>263</sup> Cowry and whelk shells displayed ornamentally in a grinding bowl.

<sup>264</sup> The "base treasure of a bog" [U 35].

the act of selecting a coin on his behalf. There is a hint of a parody being made of birth or of creation in the way it is described: “a sovereign fell, bright and new, on to the soft pile of the tablecloth” [U 36]. Produced without a human hand, a trace of the indirectness of representations, the coin is a condensation of the disparate symbols and images of wealth and financial control, singular and unitary, as if the surrounding imagery of wealth and power were compressed into the smallest possible point without length or width. The reader only has a sense of its brightness and weight. At that moment, the reader may be reminded of the contrast implied by the imperial history of currency itself, as well as Joyce’s previous story ‘Two Gallants’. Unlike shells and bartering economies, currency is intended to provide the illusion of fixed value, an unchanging identity reflecting its value from the Mono- in Monarchy, the fixed value of the coin reflecting the fixed identity and stability of the State, upon which the sun never sets [U 37],<sup>265</sup> and where that coin is valid. As in the phrase “to Caesar what is Caesar’s, to God what is God’s” [U 31], money forms an analogical link between the singular authority of the State and the singular authority of God. Coins represent an idealisation of relations of equivalence, where one object can be substituted exactly for another, because they share a common identity, two equivalent coins counting as one of the same things. At that moment in the story, there is a suggestion of a Bergsonian or Deleuzian equation between monism and pluralism. But, far from being reflective of flux, resistance and revolution, it is bluntly demonstrative of imperial authority and institutional complacency.

To simplify my argument somewhat, Joyce is using Deasy to make a precise political point that the machine producing the sovereignty of the crown is being operated by an Irish hand. In this sense, the intended satire is obvious. Deasy’s advice to Stephen is to acquire such a machine. This is not the coloniser demanding that the colonised assimilate or be damned, but rather one colonised subject who is not necessarily fully assimilated, advising another on how the mechanics of imperial rule can be manipulated to one’s own ends, if one is cunning enough to acquire their means of operation. This acquisition is only possible if, in a similar act of partial assimilation, one surrenders a certain set of values. Deasy’s praise of acquisitive shrewdness and fastidiousness will come to be ironic, considering his tired anti-semitic barbs and stereotypes, as he condemns Jews for displaying distortions of characteristics he seems to wish the Irish had. This is, perhaps, to justify his thinly veiled contempt for his Catholic countrymen. Deasy’s ignorance is not only demonstrated by his

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<sup>265</sup> Noting the suggestion of circumnavigation embedded in the idea that the “sun never sets” on the British empire.

historical inaccuracies and literary misprision, it extends to an ignorance of his own reasoning: he does not really know why he is an antisemite or a misogynist. It would be pointless for Stephen to voice why his anti-Fenian sentiment inspires thoughts of fear and persecution (“Croppies lie down”, [U 38]). When, later on, we are given details about his personal life, Deasy’s bigotry could be said to take the form of assuming that intuitions are reasons. In the newspaper office [U 168], Deasy’s misogyny is understood on account of his late wife’s reputation.

The ‘Nestor’ episode contains examples of what is later referred to as ‘retrospective arrangement’. The opening of the chapter plays upon the reorganisation of memory, both in terms of how supposed advanced western institutions organise the cultural and philosophical memories of pre-Christian and pre-Colonial epochs, and in terms of how the adult mind organises and keeps accounts of one’s childhood, keeping it represented in one’s mind but rendering it inaccessible and, thus, keeping it outside of presentation. Stephen ponders the retrospective place of heretical thinkers, how their thought was preserved against orthodoxy as a “darkness shining in the brightness” [U 34], a process suggestive of dislodging infinite possibilities.

It goes without saying that history is also presented as being subject to retrospective reorganisation. Deasy’s reactive posture sees him perhaps unknowingly manipulate historical fact to his own end, regardless of accuracy. Stephen’s desire to wake from history operates towards the recovery of ideas and imagination from history, and the diminishing of history as a determining or teleological force. This recovery is represented in Stephen’s thoughts by the names “Blake” and “Maimonides”, whose obscurity and creativity exist in the shadows inside the corners of historical context, places where context manifests not as the determination of structure, but as meta-structure offering the possibility to undermine structure, whose singularity is not the illuminating light of Christianity and the *logos*, but “darkness” preserved from the light.

The fact that illumination often seeks to quell singularity is evidenced by the way in which Deasy’s advice is, to have and use such a box while penniless would be to count nothing twice. The presence of a full box, combined with Deasy’s representations of the inanimate mechanism as having its own inherent moral character, draws something to mind that is represented by the text, yet not present in the scene which it depicts, in complement to Deasy’s full box. Stephen’s imagined empty one is a box whose springs would make the same sounds and motions as the full one, but which would fail to distribute a bright new sovereign



at its owner's command. Stephen's imagined box is empty, but only because Deasy's moral machinery is ultimately vacuous.

The hypothetical empty mechanical box provides a metaphor for the larger device that Deasy and Stephen jointly operate: the school itself, which, despite outwardly providing status to its (predominantly) Protestant pupils, is now empty, the boys having rushed outside to play hockey. Just a few paragraphs earlier, we saw a boy struggle with numbers, and another cheat his way through a poem. Reason and ideas are also no longer, so to speak, in Deasy's box. Poetry and mathematics are empty mechanisms under the school's employ, as brought home by Deasy being shown to misquote Shakespeare and misattribute classical allusions. The emptiness, hollowness and futility of learning become mechanical, leaving only a contrast between the presence of nothing and representations drawn from nothing, in other words: unintended errors and intentional mistruths. The machinery is void of the valued objects, leaving meaning to run rampant without ideas to express to or materiality to anchor it. Philosophy, science and literature are treated simply as different kinds of discourse, producing different shades of meaning and the social values the parents of the schools' pupil evidently hope will elevate their children over their Catholic peers.

Stephen's empty box would, consequently, be a shell, as the school provides a thin layer of protection between the pupils (and their headmaster) and the outside world. Deasy's colonial ideology, and his room covered in images of British aristocracy, is a shell of a similar type to the snail shell Stephen imagines protecting the struggling pupil Cyril Sargant [U 33]. Coupled with the discarded shells in the pestle, it points to what might be considered very cynical or pessimistic view of the manhood of the protestant middle class, moving from one shell to another as it develops, its essential vulnerability and softness never changing.

It would be simple, perhaps pat, to associate the activity of book-keeping and miserly penny-pinching with the colonial attitude of acquiring, extracting and hoarding, given that the colonial attitude represented by Deasy is fundamentally acquisitive, existing to count numerical values and assign them to all things. However, it would be something of a simplification of what Joyce makes present in the scene. This is an example of Joyce's notion of retrospective arrangement, whereby imperial power is not only reflected once in history as a process or situation, but present again in a historicism of retrospective evaluation and equivalence-relation. To appropriate another of Derrida's constructions from *Voice and Phenomenon*, Deasy is not only advising that one should keep watch over things, but also keep watch over that which keeps watch over us: money. Deasy attempts to evade

accountability for the historic atrocities of which he so approves, by pre-emptively bringing what might hold him accountable into account, in the same way that he evades factual correction in his literary quotations and historical factoids by casting Stephen's anticipated objections to them in a moral light rather than a factual or rational one. Though he knows that Stephen is philosophically minded, Deasy's attempts to persuade involve barrages of what a later reader would call 'factoids', rather than attempting to earnestly engage Stephen in a way that he might respect. His language, anchored to meaning rather than to ideas, interrogates only feelings, meaning and morals, because questioning his ideas would unveil the factual incorrectness of his statements.

The moral character of Deasy's lesson is not about good accounts, but rather keeping account of accounts, and therein too lies the imperial bent of his persona and rhetoric. The imperative in his advice does not concern the avoidance of debts, but the value of being able to count yourself among those who have avoided debt. As is often said about Deasy's connection to the Homeric Nestor, he is a teacher who cannot learn. Deasy's position does not relate to a structure, a relationship, a framework or to a hierarchy. It depends entirely on appeals to the operations of a regulating meta-structure that can count what has been already been counted and present what has been re-presented as present.

In comparison to Stephen Dedalus, Deasy is neither an artist nor a philosopher. His language betrays a mind that does not critique or speculate, but count and identify. His relationship to philosophy and poetics is not to treat those things as capital-I Ideas caught in a dialectical play between the actual and the possible. Instead, much like his savingsbox, they are points of reference or allusion to be acquired, saved and then shot out when their value can be redeemed. History becomes a deposit box for evaluations, which is to say a transcendentalisation of equivalence-relations into which identities may slot and be exchanged by like in future.<sup>266</sup> Deasy's desire is to be able to boast that he has "put the matter in a nutshell" [U 40], this in relation to his apparently nonsensical advice on the foot and mouth disease. By his doing so, we see the purpose of bringing identity and history together in the first place: "—The ways of the Creator are not our ways, Mr Deasy said. All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God" [U 42]. This statement could be called transcendental on two counts: the "ways" which "are not our ways" providing the grounds for the equivalence-relation, and the transcendental "manifestation of God" that

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<sup>266</sup> Here I draw upon Badiou's account of equivalence-relation in *Logics of Worlds*. For the algebraic distinction between equivalence and order, and structures and relations, see pages 157-8.

attempts to concretise a singularity where all differences are redeemed by the sameness sustaining them, underlining the absolute transcendency of identity as a globalisation of difference over identity as a local *evaluation* of difference. The conjunction of equivalence-relation (identity, currency) and history, appears to confront us with the cold, hard, often unpleasant facts about finite mortal life and its unpleasantness<sup>267</sup> but, in reality, such a conjunction seeks only to expressly authorise the transcendental as the final ledger in which all accounts can be finally taken.

On the contrary, for Stephen, philosophy, history and poetics are the realm of possibilities and, thus, of that-which-is-not. They are not simply to be stored away to be redeemed for value in future as an IOU, their identity preserved independently of their apparency or actuality. Modalities of actuality, of virtuality or of reality, are expressed in games of concatenations of possibility and compossibility, that is to say, the possibility of the possible as possible, the remnant possibility of the formerly impossible, etc.. Such modalities are not structures of equivalence and inter-changeable identities. As such, they cannot be expressed in symmetrical evaluation, but rather in the anti-symmetry of an order relation, where the law of identity is broken, and something can differ from itself as much as it differs from other things. This “difference to self” opposes historicism by diagonalising the question of the possible between the actual-possible on the one hand, and being-appearance on the other. To return to *Ulysses*, Deasy has a doctrine of final immanence, the ultimate One: there is no distinction between being and appearance, possibility and actuality. Everything which happens is possible, but nothing is compossible. The operations of imperial order, to use a common emblem or metaphor from the chapter, form an incredibly fragile shell, which is held over the soft and ambiguous body of the subjects within, a Troy awaiting its wooden horse.

### *Elements of Political Situations: State, Void and Singularity*

If one intends therefore to make a political reading of a text, there can be no greater red herring than structure. By following “structure” as a guide, a political reading risks being part of the meta-structure itself by ensuring that any present but unrepresented element is stripped of its irrepresentability and brought into the regime of inclusivity. In order to avoid this, we need to return to the Derridean idea that to “do justice” to a text is to engage or become involved with its singularity.

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<sup>267</sup> Misogyny, war, acquisitive economics, racial bigotry are all propped up in Deasy’s rhetoric.

However, the notion of singularity related to meta-structure is not Derrida's, but Badiou's. Badiou uses the "historic" to separate historic situations from political sites which (in his terminology) may contain a singularity or event, although being historic is no guarantee of an event. For Joyce, it is perhaps better to use the word "political" in the place of "historic" or "historical", and speak of political situations, in order to separate the discussion of such situations both from Joyce's own eccentric and nuanced use of the word "history", and from the extensive critical canon that already exists on the question of Joyce and history. For example, I could specifically mention Attridge's engagement with Jameson, where the English critic uses deconstruction to break down the distinctions between the word "history", which is always-already "semiotically mediated" [Attridge 2001: 79], and the 'Real', that is to say, the materiality of history itself, that elaborates the relationship between the sign "history" and the "back kick" it can give you. The question here is to reappraise the Joycean notion of a "universal history", not so that it suggests a history revealing the universal structure of all histories, but because it presents the view that situational historicity harbours the potential for something universal.

In Badiou's *Being and Event*, a political situation is defined by having a multiple that is present but unrepresentable, a "singular" presentation within the situation that constructs it. The multiple appears in the first "count" of elements and, thus, "belongs", but it does not appear in the second count of subsets, and thus is not "included". In Oliver Feltham's phrasing,<sup>268</sup> such a situation is different from a natural situation, because it has a "constitutive irrepresentability", which is to say that one or more of the elements responsible for constituting a political situation as a political situation is not any regime of representation or identificatory language, and cannot be brought into it without dissolving that situation. A "singular" element is the reversal of an excrescence: if an excrescence is that which is represented without presentation, then a singularity is that which is present without being subject to representation.

To return to Joyce, when Stephen calls the "shout in the street" history, the shout is singular and non-communicative, non-discursive and contingent. It exists outside of the superficial sense-making and contextual awareness that make up Deasy's sophistic claims to knowledge and moral insight. The pupils, in their lack of education and unruliness, are the reason for the politicised situation of schooling to exist at all. But, as pupils, they take no part in the conversation that their teacher and headmaster have. They have no say in the economic

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<sup>268</sup> See Feltham's introductory essay in: *Badiou: Infinite Thought* [Badiou, 2003].

or political dimension of the school as an institution. Their voices carry no meaning, represent nothing, and appear as absolutely and unrepeatably singular, contentless in comparison to the elaborately meaningful and allusive dialogue between Deasy and his employee. In a few years, many of them will know the horrors of the Great War and all of them will be present for the beginning of the political disaster that was the partition of Ireland. They are the “presenceless” historicity of the situation, whose only appearance is an evanescent cry that both is and is not language.

What makes a situation political is expressed in the dialectic between functions of belonging and operations of including. On the most intuitive level, this can be expressed in regard to Dublin’s status as a colonial capital. As a capital city under colonialism, Dublin was host to a multiplicity of multiplicities: we can see that there is an extremely wide range of ideas, persons, cultural artefacts, philosophical ideas, cultural and linguistic practices, performances of gender and sexuality, etc. all of which could be said to belong to Dublin as a multiplicity. A modern reader of *Ulysses* might also be aware of the multiplicities of significant things that are proximal to the incidents described in the book’s narrative, though it does not mention them. However, the meta-structure of the situation (associated with the power set) forces a consistency on this multiplicity by gathering multiplicities into subsets and counting them twice, both as elements and then as subsets. The state-of-the-situation, therefore, is not an entity that hovers over the situation itself pulling the strings, or a metaphysical domain imposing top-down rules on the microcosms of Dublin life. Rather, it is immanent to the situation itself. It is part of the presentations “counting” multiplicities that serve to count them again, in an operation of numerical doubling, “doublin their mumper” [FW 3], to use the oft quoted expression from *Finnegans Wake*.

Colonial Dublin on the 16th of June 1904 is full of such examples of double counting, such as Stephen’s entire encounter with Mr Deasy, which is replete with examples of the state-of-the-situation, operations of counting, and operations of bringing accounts into account. Another example is the distinction between a racehorse [U 39]<sup>269</sup> as an account, holding the value of a bet, or the value its owner has invested it in, and that racehorse becoming a symbol of the aristocratic aggregation of wealth at a point removed through the horse. In the first instance, the racehorse is a representation. In the second instance, it is a representation of a representation. Although Stephen, with irony, goes along with the respect of such things, insofar as *Ulysses* as a whole can be said to have respect for union of

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<sup>269</sup> Note the pun between the *Prix de Paris*/Prize of Paris.

monarchic authority and keeping accounts, such respect being perfectly expressed by Leopold Bloom's thought as he lowers himself to sit in the jakes: "the king was in his counting house" [U 83].

In regards to operations of the state being those of re-doubled counting, keeping account of accounts we return to Badiou. As Peter Hallward explains, Badiou's concept of the state as being expressed in terms of the Zermelo–Fraenkel power set axiom,<sup>270</sup> "does not present things nor does it merely copy their presentation... [but rather] re-presents them in a way that groups them in relatively fixed, clearly identifiable categories" [Hallward, 2003: 98]. Here, it is worth jumping forward from *Ulysses* to *Finnegans Wake* to reconsider Joyce's claim to Harriet Shaw Weaver that he was going to write "one great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot" [L 318]. I would argue that Joyce's writing, since the very beginning, is concerned with that which escapes relatively fixed, clearly identifiable categories. Joyce's "apprehension" (to use his term) aims at that which belongs, but is not yet included, such as the object of the epiphany as something mundane that is not totally expressible within mundanity. However, this incommunicable or inexpressible part is nothing supernatural or sublime in any sense. On the contrary, it stands to disrupt the transcendental regulation of identities and inclusions that render the quotidian sensible within its situation. We have seen Vico's influence on *Finnegans Wake* in the notion that the intellect and language work in tandem to gather elements together in such a way as to separate out the insensible from the sensible. Can we think of Joyce's disturbance of the natural and intuitive role of language as an attempt to deliver or render this insensible remainder accessible to the mind?

In thinking of the "one great part", it is perhaps normal to emphasis the "great" part of the statement, and to see it as a description of the proportion of human life that is taken up by activities in which conscious thought and language do not intrude. But one can equally emphasise the "one" part, and see it as parts representing the singularity of certain situations. If one thinks of what "one great part" could mean in Dublin, our mind could easily go to the activities of Leopold Bloom. Bloom belongs to the Catholic Church as a convert, but he is certainly not "included" in Catholicism. He "belongs" to the category of men, but his thoughts and the impression he leaves on others contain something persistent that escapes the conventional masculine and heterosexual norms of his day. He is a member of the middle

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<sup>270</sup> For every set  $x$ , there is a set  $P(x)$  which includes every subset of  $x$ .

class but, as a result of his family history and occupation, he is in a much more precarious position than many of the professional figures he meets during the day. He is also an educated man but, as an autodidact, his manner of expressing of ideas is eccentric, leaving him no real hope of making a significant contribution to the fields that interest him.

In terms of religion, sex, class, race and education, there are moments where Bloom is declined the recognition or acknowledgement of being in the group to which he appears to belong: John Henry Menton doubts his race [U 134]; Mulligan doubts his sexuality; the Citizen questions his nationality and gender [U 416]. Perhaps all of these failures of acknowledgement or recognition are encapsulated by Flynn's repetition of an antisemitic rumour that Bloom never signs his name for anything. This failure of signature is telling because it always implies that Bloom's name is missing from a list. He is defined by situations where he is present but not represented. It cannot be so simple as Joyce asking us to imagine a situation where Bloom can be adequately represented. In fact, the expressions "half and half" or "pishogue", and Bloom's adequate representation within categories of nationhood, dissolves the situation. Furthermore, we cannot simply add another demographic to the list or clade to the tree, because Bloom as "half and half" (or someone who both is and is not, a logical disrupter) cannot be listed and, thus, would dissolve the list. Bloom is not a missing entry from the encyclopaedia. He is the concretisation, the individuation, of that which, if added, would destroy its coherence utterly.

One could make parallel comments about many characters that Joyce has spent enough time with, in *Ulysses*, for them to be brought into the novel's politics. For instance, a short list of the subset of "mothers in Dublin" would contain figures like May Dedalus, Molly Bloom, Mina Purefoy and Cissy Caffrey, who all belong to that set, but are certainly not completely included within it: the "one"-ness of their motherhood is "great" in the sense that it is presented as a singularity rather than an identity – the "one true thing in life", or perhaps the unsaid word "known to all men". In these examples, it is not a particular identity, nor a communicable expression that holds this unrepresented part, but rather something standing in the way of any possible categorisation. Therefore, the notion of a present element whose representation dissolves the situation has its most singular example in Molly Bloom herself. Her signature, the "yes, yes" of signing and counter-signing/presenting and re-presenting, is indeed the halting point of the book's encyclopaedic expansion and progression. By its inclusion, *Ulysses* concludes and readerly involvement can begin.

Returning to meta-structures and set-theoretical ontology, Badiou claims that the state of the situation works as an operation against “*l’angoisse du vide*”<sup>271</sup>: the anxiety of the void, where, rather than an essential nothingness or a trace of the wholly other (such as a Derridean “tout autre”), the “void of a situation” can be described as a singular element that is constitutive of a situation while escaping articulation by that situation’s meta-structure. The value of such an ontology of the multiple and the void is that it “allows one to think the pure multiple without recourse to the One” [Badiou, 2006: 102]. In this case, we see that the “singular” element is not the One, but the void itself. Unfixed by social relation and exterior to the communicative functioning of language, the “void” is, therefore, something that wanders, a source of anxiety for the situation. The situation seeks to deploy identificatory terms to stamp and block any ambiguity that might hint at the presence of an incommunicable something that would threaten its cohesion. The assurance of oneness (Lacan’s “Y a d’un” – “there is something of the one”) is therefore not an elevation of what is singular, but a utilisation of the particular and specificity of elements as a ward against singularity as occurrence.

In the case of Joyce, we can describe the singular or the *void proper* of a text’s situation (such as a given episode of *Ulysses*) as those indiscernible elements that shelter a possibility of ambiguity from the identificatory terms of the meta-structure, while preserving the possibility that those indiscernible elements are able to be included, generically, in any readerly or writerly engagements with the text itself, that is, from its composition to the political defence of its right to existence, and to philosophical and critical engagement with it. This possibility, irreducible as it is to any network of social relations or historical determinations, is a fragment of the pure contingency underscoring the presentation of any political situation, the “historicality” of the text that would resist any particular schematic “historicism”. To engage with the historicality of a situation is, therefore, to stand opposed to history, particularly if historical relations are understood in terms of a structure of equivalence-relations of identity, and to reject the reductions of historicism, such as questions of heritage or tradition, in favour of the recognition of a formative ambiguity upon which novel and decisive subjectivities may be formed. An additional Badiouian expression of the same notion would be to use the distinction between subjectivation and subjective processes

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<sup>271</sup> Term from *Being and Event*. To paraphrase Stephen Dedalus: subject and object genitive, perhaps. I have left this phrase, translated as “the anxiety of the void”, in French to preserve the ambiguity of the phrase’s particular meanings that “angoisse” and “vide” have in French philosophy, particularly for readers of Lacan and Sartre such as Badiou.



in *The Theory of the Subject* [Badiou, 2000: 241]. Many of Joyce's figures are pulled in separate directions, from subjective processes of history locating them, and a kind of trans-historical hurrying or hastening that urges them to "wake up" from the nightmare of mere historical process, into subjectivation on the other. Such a tension, between this process and the "hurrying" of subjectivation might be seen in the bifurcation of voices in the "I am Leafy speafing" monologue at the end of *Finnegans Wake*, where the voice is split once between the juvenile and the senile, with a further diagonal split uniting both sides (an example of the *coincidentia oppositorum*) and a tension between courageously rushing forward to face the uncertainty of a dawn and anxiously wishing to hide in the certainty of the past.

Although the benefit of such schematisation in many specific cases may be questionable, the relevance of such observations to the situation depicted in *Ulysses* is obvious. Joyce rejects the provincial nationalism of shared heritage and tradition, in defence of the elements constituting Ireland as a political situation, either in terms of Bloom's Jewishness and transgressive inner life, or Dedalus' anti-clericalism and resolute artistic ambition. This rejection does not dismiss or devalue the shared experiences of historical struggle or tradition by which characters identify themselves as rebels. However, it demonstrates that the political situation is not drawn from questions of heritage, identity or tradition, but from the constitutive irrepresentability that is persistent in the localisation of the situation itself, prior to any particular given experiences. Unlike heritage and history, which can be appropriated and imitated by knowing bigots like Deasy or (if one assumes Joyce is more generous to his Parnellites than his Unionists) accidentally exploited by hypocritical bigots like Simon Dedalus and the Citizen, the constitutive irrepresentability of the political topology of Ireland cannot be so easily exploited, stolen or contorted by those seeking to find within it the currency of apparent identity. The irony of an anti-semitic Fenian is not only in the hypocrisy being at the receiving end of imperial abuse and bigotry, yet inflicting like upon his fellows. Joyce's use of pungent satire and offensive writing damns Ireland for the sin of misrecognising what makes a political place political in the first place. The "back kick" [U 42] of history exists not only in the apparatus of political repression and marginalisation, but also in the fact that the resistance to those instruments can, itself, be subordinated to the process of annihilating the ambiguity *du vide* upon which a future radicalism's decisions, artistic or political, may depend.

### *The Apolitical Place of a Singleton*

What can we say of Stephen Dedalus himself in the situation evoked in episode two? A century of critical engagement has attested to the fact that there are an unending number of things to say about Stephen Dedalus, a name designating a true infinite multiplicity. The name Stephen Dedalus denotes so many things: the realist depiction of interior thought, the collation and aestheticisation of autobiographical details, a nexus of power relationships, the text that cuts against authorial voice, a character in a novel, a figure of Irish popular culture, etc.. Each of these definitional possibilities are multiples begetting multiples, a thread that never ends. But what of the Stephen Dedalus who is addressed by Deasy and, thus, is brought under the concerns of the meta-structure “relatively fixed, clearly identifiable categories” in order for Deasy to embroil him in the apparatus of British rule and its associated cronyism? If we have spoken about a singularity with no appearance, something “singular” in the sense that it has only been counted by the operations of a situation once, thus belonging without being included, then what can we say of singularity defined as a multiplicity or ensemble that only contains one element? A singularity in appearance, something which is a group of one and, therefore, counted and recounted as singular by the meta-structure? A “singleton” may be interpreted to be a multiplicity that loses its uniqueness in order to gain special assurance of its being one-in-number and holding a fixed identity. In strictly mathematical terms, a singleton of an element has no identity with that identity itself:  $x \in \{x\}$ , but  $x$  is not  $\{x\}$ .

In the case of a work of fiction like *Ulysses*, one might wonder whether there is any meaningful distinction between talking about a character as a multiplicity and as a singleton. What can we say about  $\{\text{Stephen Dedalus}\}$ , a subgroup articulated by the meta-structure of a local situation, that could not already be said about Stephen Dedalus as a bare multiplicity, or simply as a common-sense idea of what constitutes a character in a work of fiction? Firstly, Stephen Dedalus does not contain himself, whereas the singleton  $\{\text{Stephen Dedalus}\}$  is defined as a group of one, being the first group that Stephen Dedalus belongs to. The singleton  $\{\text{Stephen Dedalus}\}$  has a guarantee of identity that only a pure representation of a thing can have, since the bare Stephen Dedalus is an element for a site that may be touched by the errancy of the void. In the meta-structure of the situation, the void is counted, but it is always counted elsewhere. The singleton of  $\{\text{Stephen Dedalus}\}$ , or his representation, is the product of operations of distanciation between a personal site of potential subjectivity and the void. In the classroom scene Stephen’s mind turns away from his role as teacher and his status

as an employee who is working because he has numerous debts, his mind turning to “darkness shining in the brightness” [U 34].

Stephen Dedalus himself, outside of the singleton, is not necessarily proximal to the local void of the situation that the meta-structure works to repress. Rather, he is one of numerous multiplicities that could potentially harbour a proximity to the void that would bar him from being considered a properly articulate and cohesive identity. Or, to put it another way, the localisation that selects Stephen as a singleton is the operation of a guarantee, not only that Stephen Dedalus himself cannot harbour any elements that are not counted by the meta-structure of a situation (the guarantee of “Y a d’l’un”), but also that Stephen Dedalus cannot belong to any grouping that might contain a presented but unrepresentable element. In regard to this, I would like to return to the commentary made in the introductory chapter of this thesis, where I say that Joyce’s two late works (*Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*) function as polemics against various forms of solipsism. When we consider the difference between Stephen as a multiplicity and Stephen as a mere singleton, we see a direct equivalence between self-identity and auto-isolation. Unlike the artificer Stephen Dedalus, the singleton {Stephen Dedalus} is a countable number of specific singular things. On this point, I would consider one of the most famous images in the novel: the joke about a pier being a “disappointed bridge” [U 29], strongly reflecting a troubled sense of one-sidedness at being unreachable and stranded.

The singleton {Stephen Dedalus} has a finite and totalisable number of representations as a singular entity in situations with other people: he is a son and a brother; he is a singular “you” amongst the plural “you Fenians” for Mr Deasy; from Mulligan, he receives the monosyllabic mononym Kinch; to Haines, he is an authentic Irish wit to be fetishised and recorded in a book; he is a tenant who started the morning in possession of the key to his lodgings; he is a teacher to the classroom of boys, etc... Eventually, such a list would be exhaustive. His interactions with other people are plural and wide ranging, and the roles he takes on in the early part of the morning reflect a necessarily diverse life, complete with many associated modes of language: teacher, mourner, errand-runner, wit, polemicist, poet and philosopher, to make just a small list. All these interactions and engagements seem eventually to be pinned down by a single object, item or phrase, holding Stephen away from a sense of the multiplicity of his own being, pushing him towards a sense of himself as a singleton of self-identity and self-containment. These interactions happen in places where he is counted as himself and included-in-himself, which is to say counted as being one in number. Consider,

for example, the way in which Deasy ejects the single coin from his contraption towards Stephen before paying him the full amount, or the way that Buck Mulligan insults Stephen's dependency on others' hospitality in a host of minor ways, culminating with Mulligan's pointed use of the key to the tower as a weight to hold down his clothes [U 27]. Other singular items and objects perform similar operations of condensation, such as the broken or missing glasses, the pair of borrowed black trousers, Cyril Sargent's copybook bearing the "name and seal" [U 33] of the struggling pupil, and the shadow of the dark cloud that travels across the strand that morning.

In a complementary fashion, the novel's greater theme of debt becomes an ironic identification of Stephen's severance from his own multiplicity, since the multiplicity of his involvements and engagements with the world around him, across different regions of his world and on different dates and times of day, can all be expressed with a single numeral, as the profit he takes coagulates into the homogenous "lump I have" [U 37], no longer reflecting where each amount came from or what set of interactions and appearances saw it earned. In Badiou's terminology, the multiple being of Stephen Dedalus is reduced to just an "until",<sup>272</sup> a so-and-so. When the reader meets Leopold Bloom later in the novel, we are introduced to a thoughtful character, who is quick to engage others on political topics, but whose defence against the suspicion and demands of a sometimes-hostile world is drawn from his proximity to a Homeric "no man" figure, a figure that is always partially outside of any given specificity, who could be said to have an aspect that is voided of particularity. In the early episodes of *Ulysses*, the "until" status of Stephen Dedalus, his yielding of the multiplicity of his being to a singleton of his own self-identity is the reverse of the name given to Odysseus, "Outis" or nobody. Stephen is assimilated to a figure that is nothing but its own countable, unitary particularity. At particular points in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom demonstrate the greatest contrast between any two characters in the novel, between *until* and *outis*, maximum and minimum, Stephen being as a singleton who is nothing but his own absolute specificity, until, and Leopold Bloom, who is nowhere and everywhere, nobody and yet potentially everybody.

The comparison between the Badiouian figure of an *until* and the Homeric figure of Outis illustrates many differences between belonging and inclusion. However, it is a

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<sup>272</sup> The word "until" itself is from the original French version of *Being and Event*, [1988:124]. Oliver Feltham's choice of "John Doe" works for political examples (ie, policing and voting) but it does not work for literary examples and so-and-so is too trivial on its own [Badiou, 2006:107].

diagonalisation of such a relationship: the “untel” figure, a singleton or subgroup of one, does not represent inclusion, and Outis does not represent belonging. Outis is a proper name. Untel supplants and replaces names. Outis represents singularity, in the sense that it is “no part” of any one subset, but rather belongs without any inclusion into metastructural orders. An *untel*, on the other hand, may depend on what might be called “naturalisation”, that is the coincidence of belonging and inclusion, but it depends upon that which is included without really belonging. As mentioned earlier, to include what does not belong is, in Badiou’s terminology, an excrescence, an example of which could be the representations of imperial rule in Mr Deasy’s office. In the office, Stephen is surrounded by images which recall Lecercle’s notion of an affect of violence:<sup>273</sup> “another victory like that and we’re done for [U 28] (...) Hockeysticks rattled in the lumber room [U 33] (...) behung with the corpses with papishes (...) croppies lie down (...) the black north and the true blue bible” [U 38].

The affect of violence here is not directed towards Stephen Dedalus, so much as it is localised around him, isolating him and separating him. Stephen is surrounded by the reminders of violence, both memories and anticipations. Deasy is not threatening him, but he is drawing the proximity of what is suggested by the representations closer. To draw open a more general observation, as Lecercle explains in *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*, the affect of violence in literature is linked to particularity and finitude [Lecercle, 2010:39-40]. Here in the case of Joyce, its true target is the extraction of {Stephen Dedalus} from a collection of aspects of the bottomless Stephen Dedalus, as further evidenced by Stephen considering that money is “symbols soiled with greed and misery”, such greed and misery seeking to anchor all in finitude and particularity.

The tensions between singletons and singularity are further evidenced in the third episode, ‘Proteus’, where Stephen, who simultaneously attempts to boost his own ego by remembering the works of merit he has produced, and thinking “remember your epiphanies on green leaves” [U 50], as opposed to his self-mockery of “hurrray for the goddamned idiot”. In the same passage, the ironic institutional voice Stephen conjures to embarrass himself by chanting the word “one” like a mantra (“when one reads these strange pages of one long gone one feels that one is at one with one who once...”), in a mockery of a literary ambition. He no longer intends to threaten the finitude of everyday life and grasp the eternal but, instead, seeks to capture the eternal for the ends of finitude, creating thereby a vain fantasy of singular personal immortality through recognition. This is at odds with the overwhelming “Pico della

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<sup>273</sup> See Lecercle, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature* [2010: 39-40].

Mirandola like”<sup>274</sup> ambitions of the epiphanies, a defence of syncretism whose mysticism balanced the encyclopaedic and the compossible. Such an institutional, representative notion of singularity is like clothing: “if I were suddenly naked here as I sit?” [U 59]. The image of shells from ‘Nestor’ reoccurs again in the third episode, where, having previously been used to represent colonial rule and currency, the thought of “human shells” arises. Rather than shells being biological husks, or showing a dualism between the dynamic mind and the deterministic body, the “one” of {Stephen Dedalus} is such a “human shell”, which Stephen Dedalus may discard.

*Encyclopaedia as Naturalisation, Nature as Encyclopedia.*

One could argue, as Vicki Mahaffey does, that Joyce’s “esthetic” project attempts to undermine the “monological model of authority” [Mahaffey, 1988:3], following that idea through two separate threads. Following the irrational thread, based upon the contingency of referential linguistic interaction (that of signature and counter-signature), the extension of such a critique is the rejection of the monodological. As Derrida comments, “the monad...is split open by its own origin, by the very condition of its self-presence” [Derrida, 2011:49]. This is the language of the tension between representation and imagination, that escapes logic or reasoning. It resembles – albeit in a convoluted way – the Vichean distinction between philosophical language and imaginative poetics, and therefore metaphysics and poetry. However, if one follows the rational implication, it is not a question of the monad being split open by its own origin, but rather that a historical situation is presented twice. The double presentation in the count-as-one (“compt-pour-un”) and count-of-the-count (“compt-du-compt”)<sup>275</sup> is dis-aligned by the very thing that constitutes it as historical. This produces a tension between presentation and representation, which can only be approached rationally. But, as in the Vichean distinction, philosophy responds to poetry and politics as its conditions: it is not the operation that institutes their singularity, or their constitutive irrepresentability.

In reading Joyce, one does not have to make a choice between picking either one extreme, or a kind of mediated and moderated centre between the extremities of the irrational and the rational. Instead, we are openly invited to couple the extremes. As Mahaffey notes in her commentary on Joyce’s rejection of the “monological model” of authority, such a

<sup>274</sup> A notably both hermetic and encyclopaedic writer.

<sup>275</sup> I’ve provided both the English versions of Badiou’s terms here. For a table of Badiou’s typology in French, see *L’Être et l’événement* [1988:119].

rejection is marked by the possibility of the meeting of extremes. A single critical frame cannot be applied to a text without attempting to bring the text under a projection of its own singularity, a recourse to the One that would attempt to appropriate for itself the non-finite multiplicity reflected by projects so vast and detailed as *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, at the cost of imparting a sense of finitude and fixity to the texts themselves. Although a deconstructionist may balk at the prospect of a critique preserving the “logical” part of “monodological”, and a rationalist such as Badiou would reject the mystical or theological entailment of alleged deconstructive irrationalism or sophistry, a reader of Joyce really has nothing to fear from the dissonance of keeping both in mind and allowing extremes to meet, when they must. Although, perhaps we know from Joyce’s Vichian destination of *Finnegans Wake* that a novel rationalism is always on the horizon, with the potential to provide, as Beckett argued, a “desophisticated” language.<sup>276</sup>

The technique that works to unite aesthetics and politics in *Ulysses* is, therefore, not to bring the singularity – that is to say, the void or constitutive irrepresentability – of the historical situation of Dublin in 1904 into a new system of representation, as that would merely be another kind of inclusion, but to fold an awareness and reflexive or intelligent sensibility towards the apprehension and involvement with this singularity into the grammar and structuring of his book. If, to return to an example I have already given, Molly Bloom’s motherhood is politicised by Joyce because it escapes the “naturalisation” of both belonging and being included, Joyce cannot simply show this in his text. Rather, he must show how it diverts the language around it, as language cannot harbour the bifurcations it suggests. I would argue that this is the way to counter the classical feminist critique of Joyce’s depiction of Molly: her convoluted sentences and way of speaking do not stem from a stereotypical view of women as purely emotional (although some Weiningerian influences might be in evidence), but can be read as a way to shelter the “impresent” ambiguity of her position outside of any particular predicates.

Historicism, especially the version that Joyce puts in Deasy’s mouth, arguably provides a shelter for attitudes that seek to brush out either the *impresent* element or the contingency that provokes it. Notably, it is not mechanical history, but a chain of personal chances and misfortunes, that bring about Bloom and Molly as a couple living in Eccles Street, going from the deaths of Bloom’s father and son Rudy, to the fact that Bloom was lucky to win Molly’s affection at all. Joyce is not trying to deploy a family as some kind of

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<sup>276</sup> DBVJ. Beckett is here perhaps making a direction opposition between *Finnegans Wake* and sophistry.

allegory for the Jewish diaspora in Dublin. Likewise, Joyce avoids simple Freudianism as an explanation for Bloom's sexual eccentricities and fetishes and, instead, lets them remain contingent, always a little outside of stimulus and response, with a touch of the Idea confounding the apparent priority of sensation.

We might say that historicism, as a disguised idealism, opposes historicity in the sense of fixity, by reducing a situation to everything that may be finitely represented or deployed within discourse or rhetoric, so as to claim that the "void" of that situation is not, and cannot be, present. Therefore, the situation has no political novelty independent of sociological relations and the grinding processes of history, "force, hatred, history, all that" [U 432] as Bloom will later say.

Joyce's work is to create a variety of forms of literary endeavours which seek to break down what is already in a situation, that allows access to and operation with the elements which hold a "constitutive irrepresentability" for a situation. This is clearly in evidence throughout *Ulysses*. Joyce's political sympathies are against aristocracy, monarchy and institutional religion in all forms but, in order to express this motivation or to give practical form to this motivating political idea, Joyce simply cannot throw in his lot with the Fenian movement or the Irish nationalist movement, or even with wider international socialist movements. Instead, his work seeks out that which constitutes the situation without being represented by its elements, which postmodern critics could term the "subaltern" (See Duffy's *Subaltern Ulysses* and the *Semi-Colonial Joyce* collection.) or "queer"<sup>277</sup> and, of those elements, are not simply content to represent them by re-presenting, as an Irish emigrant, what it means to be a Hungarian Jew in Dublin, or to be a "pishogue". Rather, it seeks to furnish literature with equipment and means that can be used by any perspective in order to grasp exactly what is "constitutive" about what is "irrepresented".

What Joyce most has in common with Badiou is that, like Badiou's ontology, his political awareness is primarily subtractive, focusing on the potency of exile as a political act. This is mirrored in his understanding of what makes a situation political. In other words, there is some inexpressible, unrepresentable element prevents it from forming into a totality. No matter how big a surplus meta-structural re-presentation is to its situation (that is, no matter how many excrescences there might be), there can never be an all-inclusive or encyclopaedic representative of every element of a political situation. If it were to be the case, it would

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<sup>277</sup> Joyce's use of this word in *A Portrait* prefigures its current critical usage. See Attridge's essay on linguistic remainders in *Joyce Effects* [2000:59].



naturalise the situation and, thus, eradicate what makes it political or historical. While Badiou stresses the singularity of this unrepresentable element, with Joyce's work, a suggestion of recursivity underlies such singularity. Ireland as a political situation contains Irish, English, Men, Women, etc. And those elements which cannot be said, that prevent any statement about "all Irish" people from being made. Likewise, each individual has their own "proper *inexistants*"<sup>278</sup> that constitute them as potential political subjects, in contrast to that which grasps and articulates them as singletons, or one-in-number. The political dimension of Joyce's work, therefore, conforms to Badiou's observation that normal multiples may be singular in some situations but not in others: "a multiple could easily be singular in one situation...yet normal in another situation. In contrast a natural multiple, which is normal and all of whose terms are normal, conserves these qualities wherever it appears. Natural is absolute, historicity relative" [Badiou, 2006: 179].

Not only can groups never be totalised because they are constituted by what in-exists in them, relations also cannot be totalised. There is no abstract relationship between the English and the Irish, men and women, that can be spoken about: such is the Aristotelian dimension of Joyce's work, the view that a certain situation is immanent only in relation to its operations. It is useless to present a theory of all brothers in Joyce's work, or of all mothers or all fathers, since Joyce's thematic usage of the familial exists to display the "failure of totality" [D&J] that deconstructionists have claimed to find in his work.

Joyce's work, therefore, goes against the way literature might be expected to engage with the political. While some commentators have always pointed out the conservative element in Joyce's work (for example, Derrida), this is perhaps because Joyce's conception of politics was fundamentally out of step with both structuralist and post-structuralist political discourse and polemic. Whereas one might assume that a literary engagement with the political sphere primarily concerns relationality, and the writer's ability to distil the relations that underlie political situations into the representable and the expressible, for Joyce, the political is the exact inverse: it is where all normal relationality breaks down and becomes inadequate as an apprehension of the singular. It is, therefore, not the writer's job to make relationships representable or expressible, but to preserve the inexpressible and unrepresentable elements within them, as they form the operations that situate the situation as politic. I would argue that something like a Foucauldian discourse on power relations and knowledge regimes based on a nominalist or constructivist conception of historicity is

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<sup>278</sup> Term taken from Badiou's *Logics of Worlds*.

apolitical and conservative by comparison to what Joyce presents, independently of whether James Joyce as a person had some conservative views that are reflected in the tone and topicality of his writing.

Joyce navigates around what we might call the issue of “naturalisation” implied by Badiou’s analysis of historical situations in *Being and Event*, and later in a reading of Hölderlin [Badiou, 2006: 255]. Here, we should recall Badiou’s distinction between natural and historical situations: a natural situation is one where everything that presents itself is represented (all which belongs is included) and, as such, contains no singular element that adamantly resists representational or identificatory expression, either in language, or by machinations of the situation itself. Therefore, by attempting to represent the unrepresentable, a writer is confronted with the problem of naturalisation in the guise of a temptation to depoliticise the situation by replacing singular political terms with natural ones. What appears to be an act of representation may, in fact, be an act of substitution. The gap between equivalence in relation and equivocation in language is narrow, but difficult to close.

Such a difficulty is further compounded when one considers that, if a writer intends to be a realist, at some point, that realism will produce a dilemma, as if realism is writing what is “there” in a situation (the “there-is” being a phenomenological question, to call back to the tension between *il y a* and *es gibt* hinted in Derrida’s reading in “Ulysses Gramophone”), since there is a difference between what is in a situation because it belongs to a situation, and that which is in a situation because it has been included by that situation. The realist, therefore, will try to capture both the singularity of an element of the situation and what that element is included-as in the sense of being a concrete thing. At some point, any presumed consonance between naturalism and realism must inevitably break down into an unresolvable dissonance between naturalisation and realisation, as the writer has a choice between the realisation of the singular at the expense of the regularity of the situational, or the continued naturalisation of the situation itself at the cost of effacing the ambiguity presented by the void. The question of totality and consistency reappears: “...the real, nominally split, proposes both the object-cause and the process-consistency” [Ibid.,236]. In the absence of certain identities and assured wholes, the question of realism is an imperative to put the cart before the horse, so to speak, putting consistency and process ahead of objects and causes.

In writing of Ireland in 1904, the relevance of a split between causality and consistency should be obvious. “Naturalisation” does not describe naturalism as a kind of realism, but rather the romantic dimension, as Joyce forces his work to inhabit the cusp

between romance (naturalisation) and realism (materialism-naturalism), intervening in the political tension between presentation and representation. Joyce's vision of the artist can therefore be thought of as fundamentally political, albeit not at all at the level of language and discourse, but rather at the level of topology and situation. The defining political issue contemporary to the time of writing of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is the Government of Ireland act of 1920. Like the Great War of 1914, it is a coming event that casts its shadow before and over 'Nestor' in particular, as Deasy gloats to Stephen that Home Rule was originally led by the Orange Order and not Fenians in a way that suggests knowledge of political decisions from the decade following 1904 [U 38].

Rather than refuse, the Joycean artist begins with a partitive field. As in *A Portrait*, the initial act of epiphany is the act of separating an "object" from the void which it is not. In the face of an inevitable political and legal partition, the artist has access to the possible partitive excess ("[time] branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities"). The room for infinite possibilities lies in the excess of possible separations over the real separation. What Joyce resists is the naturalisation of the 1920 partition, and the naturalisation and historicisation of the perceived splits in identity between residents of the Irish Free State and the North, which is muddled by Joyce's production of an unlimited amount of potential separations that might exist, interrupting the idea that there is one "natural" partition to be made: "as he would far sooner muddle through the hash of lentils in Europe than meddle with Ireland's split little pea" [FW 171]. Rather than resisting the injustice of the partition of Ireland by Imperial law in terms of language, Joyce's assault against the results of partition (which include, as Duffy notes, reactionary Irish nationalism) begins at a Vichian pre-linguistic or hieroglyphic level. This intervention therefore results in the myriad linguistic splits and divisions that we see in Joyce's work, as the excrescent division of Ireland by English law itself is posed to excrescent multiplicities of possible alternative operations of gathering-together and separating-apart forbid the naturalisation; operations either of a socio-historic division of Ireland into two discreet demographics, or of languages into unified languages which count-as-one.

Although Joyce's texts occasionally tell the reader explicitly that the artist is an individual who takes from the natural world in order to fuel artificial and synthetic creative processes, the implication in that image is, despite its interventionist character, entirely subtractive: the artist obscures, his artifice prevents naturalisation by interrupting any operation that would (by way of the expressible, the representable or the identificatory)

include everything and, thus, stave off the void. The artist is an obscurantist par excellence, as obscurity belongs to the world of artifice and synthesis as much as clarity belongs to the natural world. The naturalistic, clear style of *Dubliners* being interrupted by a moment of obscurity or epiphany is an example of this, since, if absence is the highest form of presence, then obscurity is the most refined form of clarity. Or, to put it in the words of the dispute between Badiou and hermeneutics, presence is the exact contrary of presentation. Joyce introduced the equation between the naturalistic realism and clarity, only to disturb it. The connection between the artist and politics is in the form of an intervention or an interruption that can then draw upon what is “lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities”.

## CHAPTER 12: SINGULARITY IN QUESTION (PART ONE)

### *The Croppy Boy*

The comparison between Joyce and Badiou orbits the same centre as the encounter between Joyce and Derrida. Namely, the question of the relationship between singularity and contingency. However, it orbits it in an eccentric and unlikely way. What is shared, between these two orbits, is the understanding that the issue of ‘doing justice’ to a text is the same as the problem of relating the ‘*absolutely singular*’ and the ‘*wholly general*’, or, if not to relate them, to understand how they can both appear in the same situation. This problem can be phrased in another way: how does one think the singular? And, how can one respond to a singularity in good faith, or take a claim about something’s singularity in good faith, if the One is not? Or if the One is radically foreclosed from direct experience?

*Finnegans Wake* perhaps provides an obstacle course in this. Like a demanding athletic coach who demands that we repeat endless variations of the same exercise, *Finnegans Wake* reminds us that it is very easy to take the issue of singularity under presumption of the One – but with the question of the One removed, or effaced, can we still rise to the challenge? To put it another way, as Derrida spoke of the difficulty of moving from the issue of legibility in Joyce to being able to say that one has, personally, ‘read’ Joyce. We can also speak about the issue of ‘doing justice’ under the auspice of the One (a mother tongue, society as a whole, history as a whole, logos, etc.), but that is only ever a simulation of ‘doing justice’, in the same way as abstract theorising about ‘legibility’ is a simulation of the act of reading. In order to ‘do justice’, and in order to pass from acknowledging legibility to the encounter of reading, it is necessary to acknowledge singularity in the absence of the One.

As a narrative device, the loss and apparent rediscovery (or re-delivery) of ‘the reverend letter’ in *Finnegans Wake* contextualises, and tests, our ability to take a claim about a letter in good faith. This is evidenced most clearly in the early chapters of book I, where the rough outline of a fall tests our ability to take claims of individual falls from grace seriously such as the comparison on the first page between the Biblical ‘fall’ of Noah’s sons, the fall of a normal Dublin man and the economic fall of the wall street crash. It is also evidenced in the origin of a rumour, the analysis of a document in I.5, and the biography of an author and the matter of originality in I.7. Each of these examples re-articulates the question “what is a singularity?” in the terms of a different domain of thought, a different aesthetic or political

climate, or under a different manner of presenting the non-context of the loss, or non-being, of the One.

The message of how one is to ‘do justice’ that can be derived from the encounter between Derrida and Joyce seems loud and clear, and amusingly simple, considering both of their reputations as writers, not to mention the reputation of Derrida’s encounter with Joyce in the annals of how philosophy deals with literature. And that message is the following: we cannot reduce these issues to a simple opposition of the particular and the universal, though this is sadly such an automatic, even reflexive, approach to critical reading. One cannot find, within every problematic of ‘doing justice’, a case of a negative tension between the universal or abstract representation and a particular real being, according to some notion that one must disregard universal representations or concepts and focus upon real, particular beings; itself harbouring the reductive notion that universality is representation whereas particularity concerns real beings. This is no answer to the question of singularity.

The test of our abilities described above continues throughout the first book, having begun in I.2 with the accounts of different names, when we come to realise that the figure  $\mathbb{M}$  has no one name or clear linear etymology or genealogy. It is not even clear if the main actors of the episode, – the man named ‘Harold or Humphrey’ Earwicker, the King and Persse O’Reilly, the subject of Hosty’s rann – are really distinct people. However, it is also not at all clear whether archetypes are being discussed with vague references to ‘real’ occurrences, or being deployed only to illustrate archetypes by shading their contours. Indeed, the most important advice for readers of this early section of *Finnegans Wake* is to beware of any reading suggesting that this long section concerns either archetypes or real occurrences. Archetypal antagonists are suggested by the recurrence of titles such as “his majesty” [FW 31], whereas the name “a cad with a pipe” [FW 35] and Hosty (a corruption of the Latin ‘Hostis’ or enemy), but their appearances are too imprecise to suggest anything as general or as unified as an archetype behind the suggestions of the name. The problem of the relation between the absolutely singular and the wholly general cannot, in this case, be reduced to the question of whether we are reading about archetypes or individual figures. Indeed, the imperative that one must resist the abstraction, the stereotype, the archetype and look at the specific instance does not equal “doing justice”<sup>279</sup>.

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<sup>279</sup> This is where I would venture that Nietzsche’s “How the Real World At Last Became a Fable” [Nietzsche, 1968:50-51] can function as a guide to reading Joyce as neither Platonist nor Anti-Platonist Joyce is warning the reader that this a trap set for them, and this trap is that the apparent imperatives of “look away from the representation, towards the actual body!” and “look away from the actual body, towards the representation!” have mutually conspired to say “the One is!”.

The question of singularity begins not with the singularity of things, but the singularity of contexts in which one can claim, with conviction, that “an event has happened here”. Therein lies the tension: the word ‘context’, as post-deconstruction readers of Joyce may understand it, tells us of the impossibility of a metaphysical one. The notion that it might be immediately apparent to us what ‘singularity’ is, and what is ‘singular’, is a kind of conceit that the Derrida-Joyce encounter seeks to undermine. An example of this can be gleaned, not from *Finnegans Wake*, but from *Ulysses*, from the appearance of the Irish Ballad, ‘The Croppy Boy’. Joyce’s use of this song in *Ulysses* is often taken to one the greatest ironies of his work, where the political relevance or significance of the song in recent Irish history is supplanted by a very performative and indulgent kind of sentimentality. However, although this irony is both definitely present and very potent, and even detected by Bloom himself in his consideration of Dollard’s voice as the “croak of the vast manless moonless womoonless marsh” [U 365], Joyce’s choice of ‘The Croppy Boy’ is not merely ironic. The intention behind the singing of the song might be open to Joyce’s ridicule, and the “lumpmusic” of the piano chords [Ibid.] might inspire negative thoughts in Bloom, but nevertheless there is something at work which is neither ironic nor satirical. That is, the spirit of rebellion and the universality represented by the figure of the martyred croppy is not wholly swallowed by the sentimentality of the men Dollard is singing to, nor is it wholly combusted in the passionate intellectual speculations and personal thoughts which it inspires in Bloom.

But we can ask, in what sense is there something singular at work here and how does that singularity resist such an overwhelming ironical presentation. The revelation of a singularity, reflected in the song, arises from the embrace of multiplicity over the rebellion against the One. It is evidenced in the confession of the Croppy, who is soon to be executed by the disguised captain: “I bear no hate against living thing/But I love my country above my king”<sup>280</sup>. The purity and singularity of the Croppy himself is revealed in the moment when he confesses his love of the divided plurality of country over the One of the king. At this point a priest (who does not stand for the One of God as a Protestant Vicar does) reveals himself to be an iteration, an actor or agent of the One-of-the-State, and the Croppy boy becomes ephemeral. The mystery and sacredness of the Priest’s standing in from the non-present One of God is opposed to the violent, almost mechanical rage of the very much present postulated

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<sup>280</sup> From the 1845 version of the ballad quoted in Pierce’s *Joyce and Company* [2006:133].

One of the Aristocracy and the State, with its fearsome desire to make the One present itself under its own apparatus of appearance at whatever cost to human life.

‘The Croppy Boy’ is subject of a double-edged pathos in *Ulysses*. On the one hand, the modern city of Dublin seems to want to forget or repress the horrors of the violence visited upon rebellions such as the Croppies and, in doing so, the emancipatory or universal impulse represented by the rebellions remains lost. The Dublin that manifests itself as the ‘now’ of *Ulysses* is the sedimentation of minor acts of distantiation between the *détente* of now and the violence of then. In his essay “Disappearing Dublin”, Enda Duffy speaks of a “gross alienation and dark horror that permeated modern urban reality” [*Semi-Colonial Joyce*, 2000:4], describing how the Dublin contemporary to Croppy rebellions has been “destroyed” and has “disappeared”. Yet, the proximity of such comparatively recent history cannot be covered by superficial modernity. At the same time, the superficiality and blundering sentimentality around artefacts of Fenian pride, such as ‘The Croppy Boy’ ballad itself, put a considerable emotional and intellectual distance between present-day Fenians and the rebellions. These are not only historical artefacts handed down through linear time, but devices or mechanisms that act backwards, since they involve equal operations of recollecting and forgetting, elements, perhaps, of what Duffy refers to as the “extraordinary sentimentality” of the song, marking it out as a product, not of some authentic cultural heritage, but of a “simulated commodity culture” [Ibid. 86]. However, we should add that there is really no difference implied, in Joyce’s references to ‘The Croppy Boy’, between the sincere and the insincere, the authentic and the inauthentic. The slight tone of disgust for histrionic theatrical grief is reserved for the personal: the hint of repugnance in Joyce’s sketch of Simon Dedalus’ theatrical reaction to seeing his wife’s grave in ‘Hades’ is not extended to the collective grief evoked equally theatrically by the ballad. The paradox of Joycean distanciation can also be found in the major manifestations of the theme of the Odyssey itself: the irony of a return to Ithaca taking place in Dublin would be potent enough, before even factoring in Stephen’s philosophical conundrums or Leopold Bloom’s status as a Jew. This double-edged irony is, I would argue, a recurrence of the failure of totality in another guise. Rather than a failure of totality in the sense of a failure of collection, indexing or mapping *ex post facto* in an encyclopedic work, we are presented with the failure of that which provides a basis for totality to be conceived of in the first place, that basis being the assumption of a primordial or foundational privilege between lived-experience and space or lived-experience and time. Nothing exerts such a great power on experience, and how Joyce’s Dubliners interpret their own experiences goes beyond the dual trauma of Fenian rebellion and grief.



However, these things have an apparent fixity or immediacy, which is only ever apparent: the rebellions are at a time distant and at a time proximal; it is not only a grief, but a recollected grief that is like childhood, ‘bending beside’ us one moment and unreachable the next. Joyce seems to demonstrate that, in the moments when the foundational affinities seem to matter the most to us, they fail to authorise or testify to the immediacy of experience that they promise. That which promises the absolute priority of meaning and feeling never arrives. The counter-signature misses its signature, the distress of an event waits for authorisation from another. Duffy describes the Croppy Boy as being like an advertisement that exists to “elicit more desire without delivering tangible rewards” [Ibid. 87] and Dollard’s eventual singing of the ballad freezes everyone into “postures of waiting”. Duffy astutely notes how apt it is that the Croppy Boy becomes pivotal in the episode ‘Sirens’, which he aptly describes as “the first obscure episode of *Ulysses*” [Ibid. 89].

But we cannot remain in the realms of negativity forever. Deconstruction seems incompatible with the form of ‘close’ readings, such as Bishop’s, which focus on the negative dimension of *Finnegans Wake*. It is perhaps exactly the wrong impulse to carry from deconstruction’s encounter with Joyce, that every notion, encounter and concept can be negated, disproven or even debunked. If we follow Duffy’s reading of Joyce’s use of the ballad, we might say that everything in or about ‘The Croppy Boy’ itself can be catalogued: the emotion it intends to inspire; the emotion it does inspire; its social, historical, linguistic and geographical circumstances; the parade of masculine archetypes of priests, boys, soldiers and mourning fathers; a shadow of totality reemerging in taxonomies of contexts, meanings and feelings. The ballad ‘The Croppy Boy’ would then be able to be excavated utterly, reduced to nothing other than the coordinates on a matrix of social relations. In other words, it would not be reduced to structure, but to holding positions between reductions (to meaning, or to structure) and irreductions<sup>281</sup> (to sociological content, to operators and agents of historical context). But, in truth, something persists in ‘The Croppy Boy’, even once its chamber is emptied of all that is reducible or irreducible. Something persists once every element of both the song and its socio-historical context has been thoroughly submitted to encyclopedic indexing. In terms of Joyce interweaving fragments of the song with Bloom’s thoughts, we can see that, when the expression “he bore no hate” is lifted free of its context, a liberation upon a liberation, to rest on the passing of Rudy and the coming difficulties of Milly’s life, there is a hint of the generic, emerging again with emphasis in ‘Sirens’: “*when my country*

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<sup>281</sup> For example, the “Irreductions” of Bruno Latour [Latour, 1984]

*takes her place among*” [U 375]. The prematurely terminated sentence suggests that this place is not as a nation among nations, a race among races, an identity among identities or a difference among differences, but rather a liberation into the generic and towards indifference. This liberation of exiting becomes a liberation of *returning*, not in the sense of returning to authenticity, to one’s heritage or rightful place, but a liberation under the rubric of the paradox of exiting a place where one is not currently situated, which merges with the ultimate Joycean paradox of liberation. This can be understood as a reversal of Plato’s cave and Nietzsche’s eternal return, but to a place where one has never been: the discovery of a generic belonging. Nietzsche is an appropriate reference point: the Croppy Boy, as an image or emblem, resembles Joyce thrice over. Joyce’s favoured self-image as a hunter’s quarry resonates weakly with the choice of using ‘The Croppy Boy’. However, the use of the Unionist counterpart (“Croppies lie down”) in Stephen’s own thoughts in Deasy’s office is suggestive of the image of the croppy as a quarry. Also, we have the double image of the Nietzschean superman:<sup>282</sup> Stephen flees an Ireland where he has never lived and returns to a Dublin to which he has never been. How can the ‘Croppy Boy’ be like the Superman? In Deleuze’s interpretation, “The subject is this free, anonymous and nomadic singularity which traverses men as well as plants and animals... ‘Overman’ means nothing other than this – the superior type of *everything that is*” [Deleuze, 1994: 123]. Returning to the quote in *Ulysses*, “*When my country takes her place among.*”, the full stop suggests that this taking place is singular, and can take place among any group retrospectively, something that is not bound by socio-historical context, but might (but did not) have taken place anywhere.

In regard to the evanescent, one can compare the overly sentimental ‘Croppy Boy’ to the unsentimental recounting of the death of Michael Furey in ‘The Dead’, as the entire existence of the Croppy Boy is secondary to the subjectivity he seems to authorise. With Michael Furey, it was a subjectivity that had “better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than to fade dismally with age” [D 224]. With the Croppy, it is the embrace of the Nationalist cause of the ‘country’ over the One of the King. It is important that these sentiments are evanescent: one does not have to imagine, as the “simulated” extreme sentimentality of ‘The Croppy Boy’ does, that the Boy himself exists as a kind of purified ideal. When Gabriel wonders if Greta “had not told him all the story”, the reader supposes that there were doubtlessly normal, or even boring, aspects to the relationship between

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<sup>282</sup> Within these paradoxical movements (“iSpace” in *Finnegans Wake*), “James Overman” is double, because it applies to Joyce’s own signing of his own name as “James Overman” in a letter to George Roberts, and also to the ironic “Toothless Kinch the Superman” evoked by Mulligan in *Ulysses*.

Michael and Greta, in which the intensity of Michael's passion did not figure, a sense in which they were an unremarkable young man and an unremarkable young woman. The ballad that he sang is perhaps unremarkable and, unless one mistakenly reads Joyce for melodrama and sentimentality, we cannot imagine Michael's singing as anything other than ordinary and unremarkable, perhaps even bad. Does it really change our image of 'The Dead' if the notes that were sung to Greta by Michael were off-key? Does it change her memory and understanding of the experience she had? 'The Croppy Boy' is not, therefore, a lost ideal, but the figure of an unremarkable normality, both a generic identity and nameless indifference, who momentarily attested to the will to see universalism and pluralism, not as opposing values, but as complicit in the same political maxim. The irony, therefore, is not that the Croppy of the ballad was a particular person of a noble or selfless type who was common during the rebellions and all but ceased to exist in 20th century Dublin, but rather that he was anyone at all. This refusal to see this relationship between singularity and "anyone-at-all" is the ironic tragedy surrounding the ballad's rapturous sentimental reception in the Dublin of 1904, which, in itself, casts a graduating and ironical shade around Leopold Bloom's presence as the epic hero of the nation, while being very much anyone-at-all. Likewise, in 'The Dead', although Gabriel's concern for "all the story" might suggest that he suspects the relationship was more serious than Greta let on, the reader must know that one could tell 'all of the story' and still not include the fact that makes the Croppy, or Michael Furey, notable. After all, in both cases, what makes them so singular would never be included in "all of the story", but is evanescent to the narrative situation from which the spectral totality, the meta-structural pretence of "all of the story", is drawn – "fade dismally with age" – could be one and the same knowing "all of the story" of one's own life. Gabriel's revelry, leading up to the 'swoon' (the unique Joycean affect), is situated exclusively at this junction point, this crossroads (X) between evanescent singularity and "all of the story", or its totality.

Resisting inclusion, both as a difference to be sorted in a horizon or as an identitarian predication that resists encyclopedic indexing or compilation, the Croppy Boy is 'singular', but not in the sense of being unique. The paradoxical sentimentality of the ballad suggests that any innocent 'croppy' would act the same, and that any Irishman could be a 'croppy' just by cutting their hair short and joining the rebellion.<sup>283</sup> Nor is the Croppy singular in the sense of being one-in-number, a particular individual. The 'extraordinary sentimentality' of 'The Croppy Boy' might be explained in that it is a double figure, a double passing, both the

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<sup>283</sup> Though there is a contradiction here: the croppies were great because they were unremarkable boys of no particular moral purity, yet their representative in the song says something extraordinary.

passing of the boy himself, and the evanescent nature of the very attestation which brings the captain's violent rage upon him. This is not too different from the double figuration of 'Ivy Day', where Bloom notes that Parnell is not only passed himself, but 'Ivy Day' exists as a kind of fading away, not of Parnell, but of Parnellism. So, the 'sentimentality' of the Croppy Boy is a familiar accusation that Joyce levels towards fellow Fenians. This accusation is not that they have failed to live up to inherited values, or values of a vital moment of the past, but that they have failed to recognise that those values existed only to fade away, and the real 'calling' of Fenianism should be orientated towards the future. Here, Joyce is somewhere between a Nietzschean preference for the activity of "trans-valuation" rather than values themselves, and a Badiou inspired orientation towards the future anterior: the fictional Croppy Boy and the historical Parnell are neither socialists nor anti-clerical, but one should act in a way so that their values "will have been" socialistic or anti-clerical. The role of retrospect in fiction, therefore, must be recast from the authentic to the imaginative: it is impossible to show that the ballad 'The Croppy Boy' is an anticlerical piece or that the man Charles Stewart Parnell was a socialist, but one must use literature to imagine a field in which retrospectively anticlericalism and socialism can be seen in those things, not for the reader, but for the denizen of such a future, someone who must surely disavow inclusion, and say "count me out" to any definite claims on the past-as-present.

'Appearing only to disappear' (to borrow a phrasing from Badiou's description of the Event in *Logics of Worlds*), the titular figure of the 'The Croppy Boy' is therefore a phantom of Joyce's justice. This strongly prefigures the problem of justice that Attridge discovers in Derrida not the question of singularity, but rather the question of singularity in the absence both of foundational affinities and of the One. The Croppy Boy appears only to disappear, in the sense that he appears to himself in the statement he makes. As much as the boy *appears as* the croppy boy, it is not only that either the moment of resolve ("I love my country more than I love the King") existed for a moment and then vanished, or that the boy himself was killed. It is also that the event and the situation, which bore it both, disappeared at once. In some sense, the question of deconstruction's encounter with Joyce is the question, not of applying deconstruction's own conception of singularity (if such a thing exists) to Joyce but, rather, correctly observing that the encounter with Joyce demands the retrieval of the notion of singularity from deconstruction itself, and the re-making of a new critical encounter in which singularity can be thought anew, where, in retrospective, the encounter between Joyce and Derrida will have always been legible. It is a highly political question, as demonstrated by the citations from Duffy's analysis of the relationship between *Ulysses* and colonial state power:

“is it possible to imagine a nationalism without the primal scene of space, of national territory?” [*Semi-Colonial Joyce*: 37]. Although Duffy’s analysis pivots on the phenomenal (Bachelard and Heidegger) and the sociological (Foucault and Augé), I would argue that such approaches are not required to ‘situate’ Joyce’s writing as political. In fact, it is preferable to take a subtractive approach, seeing Joyce’s anti-foundationalism as persisting in the absence of sociological, phenomenological and even semiological content. One also question why ‘political’ must necessarily mean ‘in an already political context’, especially as Joyce’s focus is upon the generic and the singular. Opposed to historicist or sociological readings, the challenge of a ‘subtractive’ approach to reading Joyce, or of a reading that sees ‘subtraction’ as an operative feature of Joyce’s work, is how such an approach can measure up to the challenges detailed by Duffy’s essay and book. How does one translate the question: “is it possible to imagine a nationalism without the primal scene of space?”, into a reading that not only removes space as a “primal scene”, but also denies any notion of a foundational affinity? How does one cast that denial in a sociological context, or in a context granting legibility to sociological content, in terms of Foucault’s “other spaces” or heretopias, or Augé’s “non-place”? How do we carve out the notion of affinity from a reading in a more radical way, that doesn’t require us ever to approach a “primal scene” of intimacy between politics and spatiality, experience and time, or consciousness and identity? Why not allow ourselves to be like Leopold Bloom and encounter music as “muso-mathematics” rather than a selection of affective affinities? It is a rather difficult position to take: it requires saying that Joyce’s work seeks to make a nonsense of sociological concepts such as “heterotopia” and “non-place”. A reader would be joining in with Joyce at his most overwhelming arrogant and promethean here, and say that Joyce is aiming less towards “other places”, and more towards something like the Badiouian “outplace” (*horlieu*), which is not a political space arising from a socio-historical scene, but a political place that was never anything other than a political situation (that is, an antagonism of *class*), with precious little to do with either history or sociology. The paradox that Joyce presents to the sociologisation of literature is the idea of a ‘disappearing’ or displaced Dublin, of concepts and of individual persons, marked out by their independence from history and sociology as much as their dependencies, rising from historical and social contexts as much as they fall into them. This politics of the absolute and the pure, the autonomy of the political moment to match the autonomy of the artist is the side of Joyce which was perhaps hardest for the late 20th century to swallow. The unbowed universalism that touches aesthetics, eroticism and politics makes it very difficult for us to take Joyce ‘at his word’ (to paraphrase deconstructionists like Attridge). It is hard not to see this as being

done by design. The reader cannot rely on empirical sociology or theoretical historicism and, instead, must jump into the meontological and nemocentric abyss. For example, how can one replace the rather Foucauldian tone and focus of Duffy's political analysis with the post- or anti-Kantian sentiment expressed in *Finnegans Wake*, without losing the sense of political singularity that Duffy-so deftly preserves in his reading of *Ulysses*?

The usage of, even reliance upon, 'The Croppy Boy', is explanative insofar as it demonstrates how and why Joyce could hold a position towards contemporary Fenianism that seemed at once distractedly facetious and sympathetically attentive to detail. Overall, the usage of the 'The Croppy Boy' is an example of how Joyce's work attempts to teach the reader a new way of reading, while challenging their manner of reading. In both cases, it is a warning against foundational or 'easy' conceptions of singularity, which I would define as the fatal mistake of the murdered Croppy: a misidentification of the singular with a supposed manifestation of the One.

### *What's a 'Word'?*

The loss of the One underwrites Derrida's engagement with Joyce or, rather, we can say that Derrida chooses to begin his published work on Joyce with two words for Joyce. Why two? Partly because of the confounding and unanswerable nature of the question "Qu'est-ce qu'un mot?" [D&J 15, Derrida's emphasis]: the question of numeration of the identification of words is confounded by *Finnegans Wake*. One can read Derrida's engagement with *Finnegans Wake* in 'Deux Mots Pour Joyce' as, in some sense, a way to rid the pervading loss of the One of its negativities and restate its terms affirmatively, along the lines of alterity and plurality, sketching out the ghost of the account of iterability that forms the central part of 'Ulysses Gramophone'.

Discourse from Joyce and his closest associates regarding the writing and imminent reception of *Finnegans Wake* is replete with references prioritising "each word"<sup>284</sup> over language as a whole, or forms "themselves" as words have "their own language", "their way" [DBVJ] and "their substance". This suggests that particularity, or specificity, is the guiding principle for word selections. But at the same time, the idea of there being a conventional, immediate or given domain in which this specificity becomes apparent is to be rejected: as

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<sup>284</sup> As Joyce said to Hoffmeister, that in *Finnegans Wake* "each word will choose its own language" [Portraits of the Artist in Exile, 126]

Joyce told Max Eastman “I really could not, I felt I could not, use words in their ordinary connections” [JJ 546]. In a sense, Joyce’s claim is that to get to the specificity of words, to ask questions of the aesthetic value of words themselves, one must create a new regime in which a new specificity can be donated to them through formal and stylistic innovation. Although apparently intuitive, this claim is at least somewhat paradoxical: if Joyce is trying to get at words themselves, as they are in their own substance, is that not a question of autonomy and of refraining from alteration re-applied, not to natural or social realism, but to what one might call a linguistic or discursive realism? But such a thing would be the furthest opposite of what Joyce is claiming to accomplish, and what his associates (in particular, Beckett and Jolas) confirm as his method, namely to re-situate, rather than preserve the situated ‘as-is’. Derrida’s line of questioning is therefore prodding at the interior contradiction of Joyce’s methodology itself: how can one claim to be getting at words themselves, in their supposed autonomy and specificity, while also claiming the ability to recast the context and situation so radically as to obliterate words down to their atomicity or substantial residue? This places legible words in situations that they have never be previously known to be found, while placing illegible words in contexts where the unintelligible may be intelligible. How can one define (or re-define) “a word”, so that it might satisfy both of those equations at once? Does the duality of Joyce’s experiment not impoverish the very notion of a linguistic substrate, that “substance” which he claims his work<sup>285</sup> is able to expose? Joyce is not simply being inconsistent (in his numerous defences of ‘Work in Progress’) in terms of the distinction between parts and wholes with regard to language. He actually wants to create a new, parallel understanding of the distinction between parts and whole which, despite having no prior linguistic equivalent, can be exerted upon language. This new understanding would have to be neither philosophical nor speculative, and it would have to be the exclusive principality of aesthetics, and of the subjectivity Joyce casts as the sole agent of the aesthetic: the artist.

Building on this somewhat paradoxical and recursive tangle of authorial intentions, I would observe that Derrida’s response, the confounding question “Qu’est-ce qu’un mot?”, is not an extraction from Joyce’s text or a product of it, nor is it a question that is provoked by reading Joyce. Rather it comes before, not after, so to speak. By this, I mean that Derrida’s opening questions, which I can paraphrase as “how can one speak of *a* word?” are not the revelation that, in the beginning, there was *a* word, the possibility of one word, and Joyce has confounded them into multiplicity, but rather that the work of Joyce unfolds in already

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<sup>285</sup> Or, rather, that participial, non-interpretative activity which Joyce imagines to be the *reading* of his work.

existing confusion of multiplicities. The question of “qu’est-ce qu’un mot?” concerns composition, both in the sense of using musical or choreographic composition as a metaphor for Joyce’s intensive and revision-based methodology, and the notion that gathering, putting together in the same place, is principal in how Joyce sees literature’s access to both things and ideas. This is almost exactly what Deleuze is referring to when he speaks of the problems “by means of which Joyce animates his work” [Deleuze, 1994: 157] except that Derrida is arriving from a reversed position, beginning with the questions and the words they animate, leaving the problems themselves unstated and letting them resonate beneath the series of questions derived from Joyce’s particular treatment of multiplicity.

So, we begin with the premise that all is multiple and yet, singularity nevertheless persists as possibility, in a way that does not reduce the question of singularity (and thus of ‘doing justice’) to the simple act of selecting *this* thing from *those* things or separating a part from the whole. The opening statements of Derrida’s ‘Two Words for Joyce’, express the conundrum in linguistic terms, particularly in the reference to Hélène Cixous: how can one talk about words in a situation which attests to the radical non-being of the One and oneness and, nevertheless, also to the possibility of singularity? If *Finnegans Wake* has, as many have claimed, successfully demonstrated language to be inevitably a matter of plurality, why is it still possible to think of a word, one word? And if *Finnegans Wake* is a literature of unfettered plurality or pure multiplicity, why does it remain exactly as haunted by the singular (the crime, the letter, the marriage, the city, or the fall) as the proto-*Dubliners* epiphanies were? Why does the familiar aporia of *Dubliners* persist, the aporia of *an instance* and *the singular* never resolving into one another? Yet, it is not an entirely linguistic matter. Neither is it a question entirely about words. Far from it.

The translation of “qu’est-ce qu’un mot?” as “what is *a* word?” (as in Geoffrey Bennington’s translation) is necessarily reductive, since to ask ‘what is a word’ is a question that addresses what the word ‘word’ means and what the word ‘word’ does, so that one can find atomic (yet not necessarily irreducible) examples of ‘words’ amongst phrases, sentences and paragraphs and define them accordingly. However, the philosophical circumnavigation that Derrida’s question reveals is, in part, that the question of what the word means is necessarily circular, as the definition of a word is in part something (an expression, a grapheme, a glyph, an utterance, etc.) which *means* something; a word is the basic unit of language, but is nonetheless only part of a copula or a dyad. Rather than isolatedly pointing towards a certain given or particular meaning or object, a word exists to couple with something other than itself. A word, in this sense, is a pair of things in a more materialist or



realist sense than the semiological or Saussurean couple of a signifier with a signified, or than even the much simpler Augustinian description of a word as something primarily indicative, like a spontaneous or even pre-gestural act of pointing. We cannot rely on the notion of indication as an allegedly primordial function of a word to be that which resolves the questions both of singularity and of specificity by uniting them. On the topic of language-objects and specificity, one way in which one could unite Derek Attridge's reading<sup>286</sup> of the *Dubliners* story 'Clay' with Derrida's question, via a deconstructive close reading of Joyce, could be to say there are no references without acts of reference, and there are no referents without an undisclosable material reserve ("cold wet substance") outside of the correlates of human expressivity, resisting meaning and yet retaining its plasticity without surrendering into an absolute, or supra-textual anonymity, or being an anonymous absolute in and of itself. What Derrida's questions are getting at, someone or something which is according to Dublin slang "getatable", is not meaning, but something that resolutely resists meaning. In keeping with Derrida's negative reference to Heidegger in 'Ulysses Gramophone', we can perhaps read what is 'getatable' in a word as an inversion of Heidegger's vocabulary of the 'obstinate' and the 'abstruse' in this material resistance to meaning. The example of epiphany demonstrates, perhaps, that it is only that which resists meaning that can be grasped or got at. Is the linguistic aspect of epiphany, the textual capture of something obstinate in the face of the progression of meaning, and resist any advance of something exterior meaningful in itself? And, does that meaningful 'something' that refuses to yield fewer than two parts? Is this obstinance, in fact the kind of specificity that is definitively textual and never verbal, related to the deferred remainder that Derrida is pursuing through Joyce's fiction? 'Meaning' and 'reference' pilot words, pointing them towards things. But, something exists that insists and presses upon meaning from the exterior and this is the material remnant, a phantom substrate, the next to nothing, which at once does and does not exist.

However, translating Derrida's question into English refines the question of specificity behind "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?" further into the question of definition, which is to say the question of meaning. Derrida seems to be asking "what is the definition of the word 'word'". This is broadly, but not quite, the same question as "what does it *mean* for something to be the basic unit of language?" This is entirely a question about language. However, it is not the question "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?" That question, as Derrida remarks, requires principles of identification *and* numeration. In the French, especially if spoken with emphasis on the

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<sup>286</sup> For this see the section 'Touching Clay' in Attridge's *Joyce Effects* [2000:35-51].

'qu'un' as italicised, Derrida's question submits to the same fission he sees at play in *Finnegans Wake*, and his own questions are caught in the process of signature and counter-signature that he describes as the most important operation at work in Joyce's texts. The question "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?", fractures into the following series of implicit questions which skirt around, or exempt themselves from, the surety of the broad question of meaning. Firstly, *what* is presented as a word? What makes a specific word specific? Where does that specificity come from? Furthermore, what is *one* word? If we say "one word", what bestows a word, which both can be and cannot be a physical object, yet will always retain a little degree of materiality, with the property of being one-in-number? What *counts* words, and how are they counted *as* words?

To return to Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* relies on the fact that counting words as words and understanding words to be words are two wholly different operations. And next, what is *a* word? Because if there is one word, there must also be words plural, with which this word shares its identity, since its definition is necessarily atomic rather than unique. But, even though words are necessarily a multiplicity of things, it is still possible to choose *one* word out of many to be *a* word on which to focus attention. There are many possible ways of doing this and many contexts where it is either habitually or exceptionally done. So, what are these operations that bestow one-ness on a word, and how do they differ from the normative linguistic presentations in which words are not singular exactly, but rather each count as one-in-number? In short, the specificity of a certain word, its numericity in being one-in-number, and its potentiality for one-effect, are all entirely different questions. This includes questions of aesthetics and materiality that cannot be wholly circumscribed by linguistics, and scientific questions of linguistic practice and cognition that cannot be wholly circumscribed by an aesthetic philosophy such as Joyce's. Even more simply, the question "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?", when asked in the context of reading *Finnegans Wake*, is not a question that particularly concerns words themselves above any other concern of the One and the Multiple in a realist context. Derrida's question cannot help but direct attention away from the words themselves: *a* word is the iteration of something which is not a *word*.

But, if the question "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?" does not concern words in particular, then neither does it ask anything about singularity *per se*. It asks nothing of how words might reveal, indicative or express a singularity. We might say, to combine what Derrida has observed elsewhere, that despite singularity being both the motive and aim of a critical inquiry towards any one piece of Joyce's work, singularity will always be *out of the question*. The question of "what is a word?" and "what is one word?" cannot be questions about

singularity, because the issue of singularity is a question of having “deux mots” for something or someone. The question of “qu’est-ce qu’un mot?” is therefore explanatory: it makes the question of sensible singularity, which is otherwise, in a sense, the grand encompassing question of all of Joyce’s works, momentarily blink out of existence or evanesce and, in its place, brings to the forefront the question of the apparent one-effect, and how varieties of one-effects pass through effectuations of particularity and specificity without needing to touch on issues as metaphysical as those of singularity. This is the trajectory I would identify in Derrida’s encounter with Joyce: it begins with the paradox question of singularity predicated on the non-Being of the One (the reading of the ‘two words’ “He War”, and the analysis of Molly Bloom’s “Yes”), before locating modalities of the multiple through counter-signature and iteration that are revealed to enjoy a certain epistemic priority to any speculative Oneness. Finally, we arrive at the point where we only know those modalities of the multiple through operations such as iteration and procession and, therefore, we only know of the multiple through the presentation of multiples which are *effectively* one, one-effects. This entire microcosmic *corso* and *ricorso* around the One and the Multiple has never really touched the issue of singularity, with the exception of the notion of the ‘Joyce-Event’ and the ‘entirely singular’ journey it entails. The question of singularity has different stakes entirely and up to now we have had to make do with non-being (or the void), the multiple and the effectively one.

This notional singularity seems to perform something that cannot be accomplished within the interior of *Finnegans Wake*, for example, where the figure initialed by H.C.E. (as distinct from the general domain associated with the  $\Pi$  siglum) must be the particular as a transcending singularity<sup>287</sup> as well as standing for HaeCcEity, or *this*-ness, namely the one-effect of any specificity whatsoever that both animates what the book needs to animate and quells what the book needs to be put to sleep. Yet, despite the narrative content of *Finnegans Wake*’s attempt to unify and exempt both *one*-ness and *this*-ness, in accordance with Joyce’s stated principle of the substantial autonomy of words, the specificity of each language-object or circumstance resists the book’s own auto-transcendentalising project as much as it relies upon that project for its specificity to be and remain legible. I would say that a dialectical tension or torsion is the defining narrative dynamic of *Finnegans Wake*, a dynamic irreducible either to the spatial-temporal metaphor of a journey or to the temporal analogy such as life from cradle to grave. Such a tension can be readily exposed in the immediate impression one

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<sup>287</sup> For example, Roland McHugh’s notion of  $\Pi$  as the unreachable God-the-Father or the inconclusive final truth.

gets by reading both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, where both understanding and enjoyment require the reader to become acclimatised to the free reign of formal and stylistic plurality: all one-effects must be treated independently, immanently, and situationally. The issue of singularity is displaced from a matter of transcendence (God, encyclopaedic totality, unity of experience, necessary beings, the narrative arc of history, society as a holistic body, identity as autonomy etc.) to that of a supplement expressible solely *within* the domain of a situated multiplicity itself, without necessarily being *of* that domain. Singularity is neither reducible upwards to totality and oneness, nor irreducible downwards to the ‘jargon’ of authenticity, or to any Joycean analogue for deconstruction’s own conceptions of marginality or, on the contrary, any kind of phenomenological immediacy. Try as it might, in the all-permeating masculine voice’s attempts to excuse and pardon his own sins, the supposedly impartial H.C.E. voice will never be able to discover, for *it-self* or *him-self*, a domain in which he partakes in the presence of the same absolute uniqueness and transcendental singularity as  $\Pi$ . This serves only to ever-deepen the exceptional pretension of whatever figure Joyce suspends between the modalities of the figures and voices associated with H.C.E. (Noah, Finnegan, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, the Festy King, Roderick Rex, Mr Potter, etc), whose pretences towards definite presence remain forever stranded and isolated in the workings of various narrative presentations, between the dual motions of exemption and exemplification.

Despite awareness of the fact that there is no easy, global standard of either oneness or singularity, from which Derrida can address the simple question “qu’est-ce qu’un mot?” to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, is perhaps lost when one translates the question as “what is a word?”, the problematic of the question itself it cannot be confined to a linguistic question. Derrida’s analysis of the two words “he” and “war” in *Finnegans Wake* leads to the notion that language is signed by God, as a creation and legacy of the supra-natural or divine One, but “countersigned God [D&J 39]. If the starting point is the material dyad rather than the metaphysical One, then the possibility remains that every pair shares at least one element (God’s signature) with every other pair. Each word is a *word* and, therefore, *one* word, because it is always at least a copula of the word itself and an operation of the One; one word is a dyad with the elements “One” and “word”, a word is always a one-word and, therefore, an object of at least two elements. But, Derrida’s reading of the “deux mots” leads to the conclusion that it is always the primary signature, rather than a secondary counter-signature, that is absent, this absence leading humanity’s entry into language to be the rule of a “double commandment” and the ascendance of a “divided act of the law”. One gesture or fragment of language alone, a singular or unique word, cannot indicate or represent a non-verbal

singularity: a partial Joycean, and aesthetic, answer to “qu’est-ce qu’un mot?” is that we have no choice but to understand a word, one word alone, as only ever being the language-unit that *cannot* express or indicate the appearance of a veritable singularity. A word is that which fails the singular, either as a legible singularity or as the making-legible of a singularity: we are pushed, unavoidably, towards negative definitions.

The conclusion one might reach is that Derrida reads Joyce – all of Joyce’s work not just *Finnegans Wake* – as the re-staging of the Event where written language was gifted to humanity. This is also, perhaps, the same sense in which his own ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’ functions as re-telling of some more abstract parts of *Finnegans Wake* via the myth of Thoth and Plato’s Phaedrus dialogue. Derrida’s question is very funny, if one imagines *Finnegans Wake* to be a mirror to the myth of Thoth he recounts in ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, where it seems to be a natural and spontaneous reaction to the invention of writing. One might imagine a fictional world where people only speak and never write, knowing only the indefinite plurality of speech and not the singularity of words in written text: such a move from the spoken to the written would reveal, in ‘retrospective arrangement’, that apparently continuous language has always been a concatenation of one-effects such as a letter, a word, a clause, a sentence, a phrase, a paragraph, or a chapter. A denizen of this hypothetical world might exclaim “what is a *word*?” upon seeing the written word for the first time, in the archaic sense that English used ‘the written word’, singular, to mean all texts. If we imagine the Joyce-Derrida encounter as speculative rather than theoretical, such a hypothetical speaker may well envision language in purely multiple and continuous senses, being both blind to the one-effects inherent in the process of speaking and to the possibility of singularity as something extrinsic that is welcomed into the linguistic realm. To such a speaker, exclaiming after the Event, the indefinite, continuous and infinite field of language now yields an instance of the One: either through one word, or through the notion of a totality of language. All language may now attest to Derrida’s “he war” (he was), since the paradox is now that the creator of language has been born for the very first time, right this instant, inside his creation itself. *Finnegans Wake* plays with the idea, suggested by both St Augustine and Giambattista Vico, that words originate as gestures. The Biblical “in the beginning was the word”, becomes “in the beginning was the gest” [FW 468] the gesture, the guest, the Geist, the gust, the gist and, of an importance incomparable to the preceding, the jest.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> This is in consideration of the importance of comedic figures such as Chaplin’s Little Tramp or Popeye the Sailor to *Finnegans Wake* in a general sense, and the structure of jokes and slapstick in the composition of a great many passages of the book. Additionally, we should consider the way in which comedy, specifically physical and

However, I would argue that this is a negative or, at least, critical presentation of the suggestion that donation is a foundational part of language. Such a ‘gifting’ can only take place in a scene of the Two. Whatever metaphysical or immanent principle is taken to describe how humans are born into language, one always must begin with divisions and dyads. The joke of Derrida’s title “Deux mots pour Joyce” is untranslatable, as to have “deux mots” for someone is to have not two words, but *at least two* in a way that implies that one has very much to say to someone. To contort his own words, Derrida writes so little on Joyce because he wants to ‘say everything’ about, or to, Joyce. To use a (very) loose mathematical analogy, we can say that these “deux mots” would be *discriminant*, as it implies the very least part of the greatest multiplicity of language. So, there are ‘two words for Joyce’ because there are always at least two words, which implies a vast deluge of language-units and a vast amount of ways in which a word can come to be specific. Furthermore, these statements are not purely about language: their implications emphasise the inherent multiplicity of Being. Joyce’s desire for language as plurality, his desire for the deployment of language in the multiple must, in a sense, be an anti-philosophical disavowal, the disavowed philosophical concept it disavows being the One, whether the Heraclitean or Parmenidean identification of Being as One, or pantheisms in which all that is immanent is drawn through the transcendental, pre-given unity or metaphysical One of God, Nature, History, Mind, Time, Society, Life or, indeed, any commonplace noun that becomes capitalised upon being donated to ontology and metaphysics.

Joyce’s commitment to multiplicity, perhaps even over and above *diversity* and *plurality* as they can be understood as an abundance of already-legible differences, is revealed by, rather than reducible to, his aesthetic and comedic disposition towards language. This commitment forbids the equation, or the identity of an original (or originary) One with the actual Multiple. It is anti-philosophical insofar as, despite this disavowal, Joyce wishes his work to produce, reveal and cherish its own proper notion of singularity. Such an orientation towards singularity is evinced by the progress of formal innovations from the embryonic ‘epicleti’ to the almost self-sufficient *Lebenswelt* of *Finnegans Wake*, and cannot be a province of philosophy, as it is closely identified with the autonomy of practical transformative aesthetic (or ‘esthetic’) gestures. Rather than maintaining the association of

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choreographed comedy such as Chaplin’s, was brought into the sphere of Joyce’s consideration by the aesthetic passions of his daughter. “In the beginning was the gest” is both recognising the idea that humour and laughter has what one might call a pseudo-originary influence on literature and theatre, and the idea that, through jokes, Lucia was making her father welcome guests into his thought-world such as the Little Tramp or Krazy Kat; and if we think of Lucia’s imitation of Chaplin, she herself may be the guest, as she had to be for many people throughout her life.

gesture as primarily indicative or expressive, the Joycean theory of esthetic gesture becomes, by *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, a dance-like movement from thought to action which, at every step, deftly evades the priority of the question of meaning, and whose concretisation does not find its purest representation in the anthropocentric linearity of storytelling or the romanticism and lyricism of poetry, but in the scratched image of the pictogram or hieroglyph and the material accumulation and assembly of burial mounds: artefacts from humanity's least human-like states. But in arriving at the sigla via invocations of bodily motion such as dance and the notion of a *Lebenswelt*, and further to emphasise these things as potential sites for the apprehension of the beautiful, I would stress that the only phenomenology fit to describe Joyce's effort has to make room for that which exempts itself from phenomenological discourses, insofar as those discourses can be described as the verbal realm of appearance-as-unity. Therefore, in reading Joyce, one cannot (and should not) remain satisfied with the notion of pure multiplicity as nothing other than absolute chaos or formlessness. From atop the thought of pure multiplicity, it must provoke a theory of appearing capable of registering singularity as something that *happens* rather than something that merely subsists, or that remains coextensive with a one-effect. This theory should remain equally true of literary accounts and evocations of immediate experience as it is of the speculative ontologies that frequently undergird them, providing the ideational foundations, and vocabulary for such evocations and expressions of the immediacy of the immediate, or, as the case may be, its emulation, or even utter absence. On this point, we might note that Derrida's encounter with Joyce lingers on accounts of technologies of iterative appearance and recorded images such as advertisements, gramophones, computers and telephones. But can we think of the Joyce-Event in terms of appearance, in a/the singularity of appearance, without the mediation of technology as metaphor for the retrospective appearance of singularity?

From this discussion on the implication of the extra-philosophical Event as independent to technology and iterability, and on the entwining and dis-entwining of an ontology of pure multiplicity from the appearance of the singular, I propose to move back to Badiou again. The essential statement for reading Joyce, that one can derive from Derrida's "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?", is inherently, unavoidably, Badiouian: "l'un n'est pas, mais il y a d'un" – the One is not, but there is a little something of oneness at work. This little something of oneness, when it works through language, is not the answer to the question "qu'est-ce qu'un mot?". What makes such a question coherent without removing Derrida's emphasis and translating it back from English to French, into "que signifie le mot 'mot'?" or "que veut-dire

le mot ‘mot’”? Two questions with two ‘mots’ which, unlike Derrida’s original confoundment, may have concise dictionary or scientific answers.

So, the loss of the One is not a philosophical or metaphysical issue as such. Instead, it manifests itself as the presentations of distinctions between that which is one-effect and a true singularity, or rather the precisely ‘esthetic’ distinction that is the event of a singularity in the midst of iterations and permutations of one-effects. These distinctions only make sense on the interior of certain conditions, certain situations of politics or ‘esthetics’. It is now time to look at a major example of where, in Joyce’s work, the conviction of the loss of the One plays out as a drama between one-effect and singularity, not as an abstract game of ideas, but in politics.



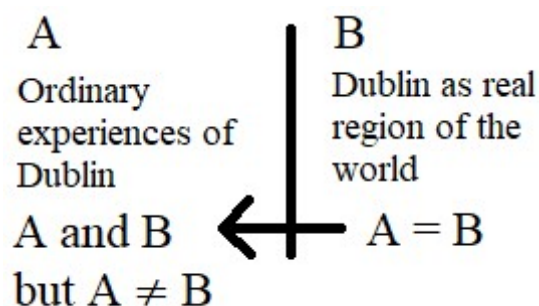
## CHAPTER 13: CONCEPTS 3 - DUBLIN, DYADS AND DUALITY

### *Unilateral Duality: Doubling and Dublin*

I want to start this chapter by making another strong claim about Joycean concreteness. Joyce's texts present to the reader that ordinary experiences of Dublin are wholly distinct from Dublin itself. An example of this is the sense of alienated gloom that touches every ordinary experience that Leopold Bloom has of Dublin. Yet, the distinctiveness of these ordinary experiences is only apparent to themselves as ordinary experiences. Considering Dublin itself as a region of the world or a time and place in Irish history, those experiences are thoroughly inseparable from Dublin. They *are* Dublin, along with Dublin's geography, Dublin's past and its current political milieu. So what kind of distinction is this, if it does not mean 'other than' or 'different to'? What kind distinctiveness is at work that lacks either exclusivity or differentiation? If one considering the notion of "ordinary experiences" themselves, especially as they presented on the pages of *Ulysses*, these ordinary experiences are absolutely distinct from Dublin. Availability for transvaluation is the ordinariness of an ordinary experience.

Consider the following diagram, which looks at the *dividual chaos* [FW 186] from which Joyce's transvaluation takes place, in light what Laruelle [Laruelle 1996, Laruelle 2012: 226] refers to as *unilateral duality*.

Consider the diagram below:



For (or *selon*) side B of the diagram,  $B = A$  and B contains A as A is *utterly indistinct* from B. Quite simply, whenever one says "Dublin" one includes ordinary experiences of Dublin, or it would scarcely be a city otherwise, only a collection of deserted architectural and geographical features.

But for (or *selon*) A,  $A \wedge B$  but  $A \neq B$ , since A is *radically but not absolutely distinct* from B. When one talks about specific ordinary experiences of Dublin, such as buying a piece of soap, one is speaking about something which is distinct from Dublin. This distinction exists insofar as we can say these experiences are in, and of, Dublin, but they do not simply appear as Dublin acting upon itself through its sapient and cognisant inhabitants. They are separate without separated-ness, or given without givenness.

Unilateral duality is a politically potent idea for Joyce as it covers two major issues. Firstly, the issue of the ‘language question’ and whether linguistic independence, and identity expressed through language, is a necessary condition for political and national autonomy. Secondly, and more significantly, it models the notion of partition of “Irrland’s split little pea” [FW 171] as a literally unilateral act of division or separation by the British state exerted upon Ireland. Although the relationship between Joyce’s vitriolic and comedic treatment of partition and unilateral duality is, needless to say, highly suggestive, it is also still a contentious political issue (especially current now in the autumn of 2021) so I will refrain from developing on the topic save for one point. This point is that Joyce is appropriating the unilaterality of a philosophico-political decision, that of the question of the right of the British monarchy to Irish territory, into a unilaterality of the instance and the instance only. This appropriation mimics or repeats his repetition of the unilaterality of Catholic sacraments such as the Eucharist and Confession, by supplanting the decisive unilaterality of a monological authority with a unilaterality of the instance. To use one of Joyce’s words, it provokes an aesthetic ‘satisfaction’ that such a simple model as ‘epiphany’ evidently shares so many traits with something as complex as the satirical reference and treatment of partition in *Finnegans Wake*.

Returning to my diagram, the identity  $B = A$  is not a synthesis of two elements but a concordance of what is separated by way of instances (ordinary experiences) without any given principal of separated-ness. We have a coincidence or (to use Joyce’s own term) an *evolution* [L 305] of a dyad without a grounding unity or synthesis. Laruelle’s theory of clones [Laruelle 2012: 298] can help us build a novel understanding Joyce’s doubling twins, the two-in-one “twone” [FW 7] and “twosome twiminds” [FW 188] because it is cloning not of or about the real but according to (*selon*) the real. That is, realism must be a realism of the instance, and therefore a realism of unilaterality and dyads. This is why, too, I have chosen two contradictory philosophical sources (Badiou and Derrida), neither of them realists in the strict sense, to construct a realist reading of Joyce. My goal has been to neither to read theory

with Joyce (a critical synthesis) or to read Joyce with theory (a critical argument or integration) but to use conceptual appropriations from philosophy to attempt to present the unilaterality and conceptual autonomy of the text. Both Derrida and Badiou offer a theory of Event which is inextricable from a logic of supplementation. My argument is this: what appears as supplement on the interior of philosophical discourse appears as unilateral distinction on its exterior. This unilaterality is a condition for philosophy, it is not yet the *decided* supplement (defined by difference or disjuncture) to which philosophy addresses its discourse. But we cannot think things *before* supplementation – we cannot think an Event as if it never occurred – so therefore we must examine Joyce’s work in like of what I have called his *fixed indecision*, the conceptual extension to “stasis” [AP 206].

But it is important, in applying to a reading of the text which takes place prior to philosophical engage, not to make any appeals to naïve experiential readers or the immediacy of an unbiased or (hypothetical) philosophically innocent reader. Doing so would doubtlessly lead us back to notions of givenness and immediacy which are to be avoided. In the case of unilaterality, one must at all costs avoid subsuming any unilateral distinction into a notion of perspective, “from the point of view of...”, for example. One could reduce autobiographical writing about Dublin to statements such as “On June 16<sup>th</sup>, Leopold Bloom did such and such in Dublin...”. However, Joyce is writing *selon* Dublin, and discovering that ‘according to’, in this case, is not reducible to either *about* and *for* Dublin even as it requires writing about certain acts such as buying soap, trying to play an ad in the paper, trying to see if a statue has an anus, and so on. The distinction between “ordinary experiences of Dublin” and “Dublin” is entirely unilateral. It is this unilaterality that constitutes being distinct without being different. They are not simply particular experiences which took place from a certain perspective. We might even say that it constitutes what it means to be “ordinary” because their being an experience of Dublin that is separate to Dublin, but lacking a generalisable philosophical of separated-ness, opens up those experiences to transvaluation – and thus, the Joycean Eucharistic mode of writing. This, I would say, is where transaccidentation becomes a more apt descriptor of the Joycean method than transubstantiation. As ultimately, the universal history Joyce attempts to draw from Dublin is itself only unilaterally distinct from Dublin itself, it has no ideal or given distinctiveness. One might even say that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are simply Joyce turning himself into an instrument through which Dublin can create an image of itself: to pun on Laruelle’s vocabulary, we might say that Joyce supplants the immediacy of personal perspective and ocularity with an empirico-conceptual ‘vision-in-

Dublin' in which *style* circumscribes not only particular usages of language, but a composition of concept and practice which composes (without reduction or synthesis) the unilateral with the dyadic.

We can take this further and say that this difference is clear in the distinction between language and literature – Joyce's key analogy in *Finnegans Wake* – and that writing is gestural, like dancing, rituals, or assembling burial mounds. This means that even Derrida's opposition between writing and speech in '*La Pharmacie de Platon*' [Derrida 1968] is threatened by such an analogy. There is a point from which speaking and writing are not distinct, which is the point from which language is only unilaterally distinct (or *distant*) from the practices and objects which constitute it, the point where language itself is exterior to society and history has a materiality or syntactic *eidos* that belongs to it alone, independent from humans and their decisions about the world.

So, we can say the following: unilateral duality, which, in aesthetic terms, one can translate as *one-sided distinctiveness*, has a self-modelling quality. That description of the *eidos* (in the sense of shape or form) as such a real instance captures its one-sided distinctiveness. It must also model how that particular one-sided distinctiveness comes into being. In the case of faces, this "coming into being" describes the transit Joyce often presents to us, where faces have a physical or material function in instinctual or reflexive expressiveness and a conceptual function. Joyce's descriptions of faces (if "description" is at all the right word) are so efficacious because they record such an instantaneous transit between a physical-doing and a conceptual-making, and record it as the transcendent, not in an empirical or formal sense, but in an *ordinary* sense. That is realism as the ordinary transcendental or transcendental ordinariness. When Joyce speaks of an "esthetic image" that is "set in relation", he is speaking of a model, built of common language, of such a transit.

A face is an esthetic image, insofar as it is a model of modelling. It is not reducible to an object or identity, nor irreducible to a performance or difference. It is not given by experience, nor is it uncovered by a priori rationality. It performs what it performs if and only if it is a model of that performance, which is to say a bridge from concept to conceptualisation and back again. A face is forever in the business of duplicating itself, and what is a facial expression other than the *instance* (that is to say, the *reality*) of this duplication?

Returning to Laruelle's argument, his observation is that philosophy duplicates, without reason, the initial unilateral distinction in order to create what he refers to as dual

transcendence or a duality (as opposed to a simple dual or dyad) [Laruelle, 2012: ‘Non-Philosophy as Heresy’]. Dual transcendence is the function of what Laruelle refers to as a ‘philosophical decision’, which is at the root of philosophy’s self-justifying and self-legitimizing authority over non-philosophical discourses. Such philosophical decisions are defected or refrained from: they are, as it were, the big words that “make us so unhappy” [U 38]. Examples of such dualisms or double transcendences in Laruelle’s work include many which are familiar in Joyce’s: the distinction between The One and Being, between Logos and Reason, between Thinking and Being, and Identity and Difference.

In our case, considering the ordinary experience of Dublin as a unilateral, a double transcendence would have a form like this, with a rather arbitrary selection of terms:

A	B
Meanings	Objects
Perceptions	Materials
Experiences	Facts
Subjectivity	Qualities
Social Identities	Quantities

In the light of double transcendence, everything in List B is wholly distinct from List A, and vice versa. By virtue of philosophical decision. In the case of literary critique, this double transcendence based upon the apparently self-justifying autonomy of philosophy often takes the form of putting together reducibles (for example: significations, systems and structures) and irreducibles (for example: meanings, actants and personal identity) in order to grasp the ‘real’ of a text as if with a pair of tweezers. So, we are presented with a contradictory view in which everything is both continuous and yet each particular existence is reflected by the duality of double transcendence, such as the meanings of things in Dublin being wholly distinct from facts about Dublin, and the possibility of speaking of quantified and qualified real objects as if they have problematical or political distinction from perceptions and experiences. In duplicating the unilateral distinction between ordinary experiences of Dublin (as Joyce recorded them) to Dublin itself, there are now no unilaterally distinct instances but *philosophical differences* between things as they in the world and things as they are in our perceptions. Or between things and their meanings, and between individual characters and their social identities. In my opinion, this anticipation of a critique of the philosophical sufficiency is something which is consistently misdiagnosed in Joyce as an anti-

Platonism, or as a rampant, dogmatic nominalism. While throughout his work Joyce's varying stylistic techniques require that he steadfastly maintain the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, he in no way admits their mutual transcendence. Joyce is 'without' or exiled from philosophy: he cannot be anti- any particular philosophical trend, because even that is surrendering too much of his 'evental' (to use a Badiouian term) autonomy to systems of philosophical decision and regimes of difference.

This is why my reading needed to be tripartite: one may read Joyce *with* philosophy, *without* philosophy and *as* philosophy. For example, in 'Cyclops', the Citizen and his sycophants render *distinctiveness* between nations and faiths as generalisable difference and particular *differences*, supporting the philosophical decision which, in turn, supports their chauvinistic assertions. The meaning of a nation argued over by the men at the bar [U 429 – 430], and the conviction that nationality must mean something other than, to use O'Molloy's previous phrasing, "considerations of space" [Ibid]. Bloom's argument is really little more than a litany of instances weighed against appeals to deeper and meaningful philosophical differences which have their expressions in the assertion that social differences are more real than real distinctions. The men's philosophical discourse around Irish and Jew identity founders utterly, irrevocably, against Bloom's appeal to *instances* of Irishness and *instances* of Jewishness as real individuals and their actions, loves and ideas. The Citizen's rage might be understood better if one considers Bloom's list of famous Jews, tellingly including Marx and Spinoza [U 444 -445], reveals the Citizen and his cohorts not to have a politics of identity but a philosophy of identity – leaving them with no real coherent answer to Bloom's political argument which is predicated on sameness and commonality. The theme of Messianism throughout the passage well establishes that political conviction can, like Joyce's aesthetics, apprehend things in their distinctiveness and their instance. But philosophical differences cannot, however much one they seem to be given or undeniably immediate.

This is why I feel the word "ordinary" is crucial and to be insisted on. In a sense, it suggests what is distinct before difference, the real-as-instance, which is open to being philosophical on the exterior of philosophical judgements about difference. In the climate of Joyce's Dublin, Joyce's attempts to publish his work, and the current (2014-2021) ideational climate over the duration of this thesis, where the reign of difference seems to have removed the generic, the default and the ordinary from critical vocabulary. It is difficult to see how the unyieldingly minoritarian bent of Joyce's work can be understood without an understanding of the interplay between the ordinary and the distinct. The argument of Bloom against the

Citizen is a statement of universalist socialism in one broad sense, but in another it is an appeal to the reader to associate the ordinary with the distinct. The irony of Marx and Spinoza coming up as names in Bloom's final argument is not only that they are heretical or even blasphemous thinkers, it is that they are thinkers who had to escape from certain philosophical regiments (Marx with idealism, Spinoza with Cartesianism) in order to continue rationalist work elsewhere. I would appeal to political readings of Joyce to understand what Joyce is doing in a similar light, rather than trying to absorb him into a system of philosophically decided differences – be it Thomist or Nietzschean, or retrospective assimilation into deconstruction. But this is no easy task as such an understanding, requires an engagement with a generic rather than philosophical or genealogical thinking of aesthetics and narrative.

Therefore, the imperative would be to read Joyce against cultural studies as a whole, and against the current ideological framing of aesthetics and narrative. There is what I would call a foundational assumption or philosophical decision that is prescribed into all dealings with narrative. This philosophical assumption is that any supposedly “default” or the neutral position is necessarily the dominant or most powerful position in disguise, and only by asserting differences, such as differences in language or social meaning, can we as readers or critics overcome this position. This kind of philosophical assumption or decision has difficulty confronting the challenge which Joyce presents politically minded readers. A truly pluralistic or minoritarian view of literature, if one is to follow Joyce's anti-colonialism, feminist, socialist or anarchist leanings, must surely critique or reject this as an abstract philosophical decision posing as a political insight. To use the metaphor of the song ‘The Croppy Boy’ [U 365], Joyce's text should make us cautious about the garb of a priest which hides the authority of the soldier. Perhaps we should invert the image in order to understand the critique of difference which is happening Joyce's most political texts, like ‘Cyclops’. It is the soldier, the overt display of political force or power, which in fact hides the priest of transcendent philosophical decision. That is, what the soldier depends upon – not only the mastery of difference, but its *self-justification*.

If Bloom's argument in ‘Cyclops’ is that distinctiveness is eradicated by the rhetoric of irreducible differences and ontologised difference, the same is perhaps true in Joyce's portrayal of domestic politics, where women-as-ordinary become women-as-wives. Or perhaps, the almost industrial image of Katey and Boody in the kitchen [U 291-292], where the Dedalus sisters are almost like production line workers in the home. This harsh view of Irish domestic politics continues in *Finnegans Wake*, such as in III's description of the taming

of  $\Delta$  [FW 547] and the turn of the Anna Livia prose-poem into accounts of domestic labour [FW 212-214]. But most poignantly in Anna's monologue which close the book. Joyce's depiction of women is reliably sympathetic as he depicts them as distinct before they are distinct-from, before they are brought under any reign of differentiation or regime of difference. Such a regime is perhaps what Anna-Leafey fears when she exclaims, "save me from those therrble prongs" [FW 628] as in the resemblance of the peninsulas to forks, or counts "Two more. Onetwo. Moremens more." As the books final pages give the account of a distinction-without-difference, in Anna's eventually cohesive voice arising from a melange of younger and older voices being washed into difference-without-distinction, where is she nothing other than the ways in which she is different. If one reads the final pages of *Finnegans Wake*, there are a wealth of small distinctions and details that one can mention, that combine to give the impression of one voice arises from many. But as the passage continues, one has fewer and fewer extra-philosophical comments to make on Anna's speech as it goes on: there is less emotional content, there are less references to Joyce's own life, fewer parallels with other pieces of literature, less anticipation of Beckett's monologues, less humour, and so on. Where these distinguishing particles do appear, they are poignantly isolated, as the memory riding on shoulders "through the toy fair" [FW 628], which is a memory from Joyce's own life [JJ 712]. Despite Anna's assertion of herself the passage becomes a purely philosophical matter, and increasingly more so as her voice takes on a resigned tone. While the relationship between Joyce and feminism is too vast (and fraught) a topic to circumscribe here, or worse to turn into an annex of a larger argument, it is worth highlighting the way in which feminist engagements with Joyce, such as Anne Mahaffey's *Reauthorizing Joyce*, are often more closely attentive to operations of differentiation than they are to differences as already constituted. In Joyce perhaps, the theme of feminine fecundity can be seen as a form of distinctiveness without difference, or that Stephen's *amor matis* is itself representative of a fidelity to the unilateral and the dyad over dualities and differences-without-distinctions.

The unilaterality of the distinction of the instance, in this case experiences, is ordinary in the sense that it is distinct before it is different. It happens because, due to the decisiveness of a 'double transcendence', ordinary experiences are not yet brought into greater regimes of difference. They are not necessarily marked by social identities, through which we might understand or categorise them. They are not yet the experiences of men and women, Irish and English, Protestant and Catholic, Jew and Gentile, and so on. Although those differences of



course do exert themselves at the level of experience, there is no level of *immediate* experience upon which they might be exerted as givens and not something with an ideational component, so that the decidedly-different might overwhelm the unilaterality of the ordinarily-distinct. The generic, or the possibly to think generically, is everywhere in Joyce's Dublin, not as universality, but as the grounds for universality. That is because they violate the ontological rule of the identity of indiscernibles by allow the possibility of distinctions within or between things which, to every philosophical standard, are identical.

If one is to disagree with this, claiming that the allegedly 'generic' and 'ordinary' are always subject to difference, and that the right kind of genealogical study would show that experience is constituted by social forces that mark it as gendered or ensconced in social order, or that experience is already caught in language and discursion, this is, of course, fine to argue. However, these lines of argument, precisely by eradicating immanent distinctiveness in favour of philosophical difference, make it possible to claim that such a study would be empirical, that it would have a certain concreteness. But they have achieved this only through an appeal to the authority of a certain philosophical way of thinking that, like the soldier in the Croppy Boy ballad, disguises its true philosophical nature and authority behind the community-friendly robes of the priest – a matrix of philosophical decisions which uses presuppositions of givenness and generalised ocular metaphors such as 'perspective' and 'clarity' in order to present these philosophical choices as their own empirical or concrete evidence. In the case of Anna's final monologue, where her own distinctiveness fades into an avalanche of difference, one wonders exactly how genealogical studies, historicisms or sociologies of narrative could possibly serve to defend her distinctiveness without hastening its dissolution into contextual correlates and, ultimately, philosophical difference. We might find here an excellent argument, within Joyce's own text, of his earlier implications that only aesthetics and not philosophy may "hold to the now, the here" [U 238] by apprehending distinction. If one is to read the final passage of *Finnegans Wake* in a way that might be said to preserve, or do justice, to Anna's autonomy the reader must be careful not to surrender their own autonomy to some prior decision; a decision that might propose to decide the very thing Joyce leaves undecided, whether the destination of the river's swerving flow is the Altogether Other or a Void.

*Dyadic Vocality and Narrative Forms*

If we are to take unilaterality as a potential model of how distinction works in Joyce's prose, we cannot allow such an idea of distinctions-before-difference to be reduced to the bi-unilateral distinction between things as they are and things as human beings experience them. *Finnegans Wake* can provide us with another example, derived not from personae and incidents, but from the interior workings of literary narrative itself. As such, we can observe throughout *Finnegans Wake* that there are cases where a voice *a* distinguishes itself utterly from voice *b*, but voice *b* is not distinguished at all from voice *a*. For example, in my account of the distinction between the young and old voices of the final 'non-monologue' of  $\Delta$ , from the declaration "I am Leafy speafing. Lpf!" [FW 619], one can argue that Leafy is wholly different from Anna, but Anna is not in the least different from Leafy. This is a fairly clear-cut example of unilateral duality, as apparent in Joyce's presentation of voice as instance, but the same is true in much more subtle examples throughout. For example, the descriptive voice that opens the Shem section in I.7 seems to introduce the character of the forger in an impartial tone [FW 169] but, by the third paragraph, the derogatory comments made by a narrative voice, such as "Shem was a sham and a low sham" [FW 170], suggest that the impartial tone of the passage has been hijacked or contaminated by with another voice, perhaps associated with  $\Lambda$ , whose descriptions of Shem betray that there is not only a Swiftian or Lewis Carol-style absurdity at work, but also a sense of moral outrage. This makes for a good example of unilateral duality in Joyce's use of voice, as it resists an easy reduction to what is perhaps a popular account of *coincidentia oppositorum*, where voices are associated either with the  $\wedge$  or the  $\sqsubset$  the unified siglum  $\mathcal{A}$ .

This affects the way I made the argument: it is impossible to provide a novel reading of the passage that is wholly convincing, or conclusively shows, through argument, a discovery about the text. In regards to the closing pages of *Finnegans Wake*, there is indeed a position within the text where the claim that there is a distinct younger voice in those paragraphs is cogent, but there is also a position where such a claim is not only wrong but nonsensical. It is nonsensical, that is, in the sense that there is a position within the paragraph where there is no sense-making armature connecting *differences in voice* to *differences between styles* and finally to *different persons*. Can we really be so bold as to absolutise difference, in concept and definition, across all of these instances where the word *difference* feels apt? And, in this absolutisation, can we be comfortable with the philosophical and ideational decisions which it takes for granted?

When one finds a distinction within a text, transposing that distinction into the realm of difference (for example, looking towards a logic of difference as per Badiou, or the signatory of a difference as per Derrida) has the appearance of empiricism or formality but, in reality, it is philosophical. The only choice here is to take Joyce's work as it is written, and therefore to read concepts as concepts, not as expressions of difference. De-conceptualising a work of fiction, approaching it in a way that minimises its ideational content, works to ratify philosophical decisions.

This might seem ironic, but to move away from the concept and the idea as constituents of narrative is to convert the act of reading into a de-realisation, to void literature of its claims to intra-philosophical realism, by reducing realism to mere literary genre or convention. This de-realisation works by uncoupling notion of *reality* from its *instance*, which are drawn together in a dyad by conceptual novelty.

To be broad about questions of voice, one can look at book III of *Finnegans Wake* in total and say that each manifestation of Shaun is an entirely different voice, as voice provides the decisional grounds to legislate for differences, the association of voice and self not being given, but philosophically decided. We can also say that perspective does not penetrate: the affinity between vision and constructions of the form "from-the-position-of" does not supplant the unilateral as instance. An instance is an instance before it is incorporated into the differentiating matrix of a perspective, because all instances of "a perspective" are themselves a subordination to the philosophical decision that interprets the appearing-together of perspective and position as a belonging-together, a primordial affinity which is given and beyond rational interrogation.

If one 'turns the tables', so to speak, and reads Derrida through Joyce and not vice versa, one could say that *Voice and Phenomenon* is an attempt to think outside of this decisional identification of self and voice. Joyce's interior monologues could be said to use literary practice to rethink the belonging-together of self and voice without the philosophical decision that deems voice, either oral or interior, as the site which legitimates the difference between one self and another, myself and his self, I and Other I, me then and me now.

Joyce's dual application of 'apprehensive faculty' and a 'scrutiny in action' of that faculty towards voice is a transvaluation in the sense of being an aesthetic or stylistic presentation of voice as instance, rather than voice as subordinated to difference, and the ideational legitimation occurring in such a subordination. To put it simply, Joyce's writing is attentive to voice as an *instance* of a voice, before it is a *different* voice. A voice only becomes a different voice on its exposure, not to plays of forces subject to genealogical

illuminations, but to ideational structures that impose and supplant the possibility of conceptual and formal novelty. The aptness of Joyce as a counter-example to Derrida's *Voice and Phenomenon* lies in the fact that speaking aloud is an instantiation of voice before the spoken voice can be apprehended, through concept or ideation, as different to the interior voice. Therefore, one must surely agree with Derrida [D&J, 'Ulysses Gramophone'] when he appears to argue that the phrase "interior monologue" is a misnomer. It is indeed a misnomer, because the casting of interior and exterior voice in aesthetic narrative is a double apprehension, not a monologue, as each is grasped firstly as instance, and then only secondarily as something different-*from* something else. We see this very clearly throughout the Ulysses episode 'Lestrygonians', where the impartiality of the narrative voice becomes a play, where narrative voice loses its constitutive amphibology between thought-to-oneself and spoken-aloud: one naturally imagines, reading these paragraphs, that Bloom is saying *some* of what is on the page to himself. But what? For example, in the long paragraph where Bloom sees Parnell's brother [U 209], we do not know if "there he is" or "I have a pain" are murmured aloud or just thought. The colon in "that's the fascination: the name" [U 209] suggests a dyad without a duality: a distinction is made without a specific difference being proposed or structured. The entire paragraph relies on the fact that instances of voice are instances of distinction-without-difference, as Bloom's attentiveness to his own monologue requires operations that distinguish without differentiating, providing Joyce with a fertile seedbed for the episode's many paradoxical stylistic formations.

This all stands against a genealogical approach to reading. The aptness of genealogy is then easily ratified by the very decisional structure that presupposed it as an apt approach to interpreting the content of narrative via a structural presentation. This surely has its clearest example in the intrusions of *Ulysses*, where the narrating voice is (seemingly) interrupted by a voice which is different, but only unilaterally so. Voice as instance and voice as effect of difference can and do overlap in the self-same sentence.

Let's return from the vocal to the facial. The description of voice as unilateral suggests that voice is drawn from the conceptual territory as the face. So, one may consider the unilateral dimension of voices in Joyce to be a property that is 'outward facing' or 'unifacial' in a sense of being a much more elaborate form of the play of narrative-concept than the instance of a singular word 'face'. How can we think about the generation of this complexity in narrative terms, without recourse to allegedly pre-conceptual givenness such as the

experience of time, a person's ownership of their voice, the identification of a person with a certain interior voice, and so on? We need to make a more general model of face-like-ness.

If one is to understand instances of the word 'face' in Joyce's work as evidence of a realism which operates within the merger of a conceptual play and attentiveness or sensation, then one must be able to model what is conceptual about narrative faces separately to how one might describe faces as really existing objects and elements of ordinary human experience. The claim I am making here is that the instance of the word 'face' does both, but in a way that prioritises the narrative invention or imagination over descriptiveness without adding to reality or leaving the reality of naturally existing faces, and ordinary human experience of them, behind. The word 'face' in *Ulysses*, therefore, is an example of the kind of subtractive realism which Joyce advocates for in his letters to Grant Richards. That is, it is a minimal trace where revisions or additions cannot change what is written. Not because one cannot add or remove the word 'face' any more or less than one can any other word in Joyce's vocabulary, but because 'face' establishes a dependency for Joyce in his descriptions of subjective and intersubjective experience. It, more than any other word, represents a minimal level of conceptuality upon which others might be drawn as it bridges from the unilaterality of the instance to what is a precise one-effect. The word and concept 'face' allows Joyce to describe that which seems given, without presupposed a givenness in how he structures his narratives and how he selects his descriptive terms. The word 'face' allows a dimension of the 'as if given' which can function in absence of either the metaphysically or epistemically given, or the experiential givenness of the immediacy of the immediate.

Yet, despite this seeming like a clear-cut argument that all narrative in a sense must rehearse experiential givenness in its absence, it is not the subtraction which is importance but rather the workings or structurality of the conceptual trace 'face' itself. In referring to the word 'face' as a 'conceptual trace', the issue is that one cannot separate out what is narrative concept from what is descriptive. Instead I want to demonstrate how the conceptual dimension of the 'face' is modelled, through a process of cloning or replicating which might be said to account for the face-like-ness of the model without involving a definite attribute or quality like faciality, or defining 'face' in a way that would absolutely include some elements but not others. This can serve as a portrait of Joycean vocality in miniature, by demonstrating how such great syntactic complexity and encyclopedic detail can come to be included in a system which begins only with Void and clinamen. Or, in term's closer to Joyce's own: what-is-not and a gesture which draws a bounding line.

It is important for the cohesion of my thesis I do not do precisely the thing which Joyce has Stephen do in both his arguments which define beauty in *A Portrait*, and the argument about Shakespeare in *Ulysses*. That is, I have to avoid using any definitions or descriptions of qualities as best that I can, and instead refer only to the statement of the fixed indecision itself.

This demonstration begins by a restatement of the fixed indecision. From there, a sense of *instance* or *unilaterality* is facilitated by Joyce's refusal to decide between the following statements, which I present as my attempt to 'model' the grammar of Joycean faciality in its instance:

*That which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Void utterly, but the Void does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all.*

and

*That which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Altogether Other utterly, but the Altogether Other does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all.*

But this is a very simplistic way to approach the articulation of Joyce's decision and the architecture of the eidetic structure it generates. Rather, it must be said the follow meta-relation as the primary statement of Joyce's indecision. That is, the meta-relation is the "uni-facial" dimension of the dyad produced by pairing these two statements. We have a sense that the way in which a face is like game or like a dance is one-sided, unilateral in a sense that this likeness only faces outwards and does not betray an interior or secreted identity implied by the contradiction of the two sentences.

But so far, so philosophical. Let's make this less philosophical, and more joke-like. A second-order elaboration of the original dyadic 'model' produces the following structuring, rather than structural, dyad:

*The statement "that which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Void utterly, but the Void does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all" differentiates itself entirely from the statement "that which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Altogether Other utterly, but the Altogether Other does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all" but this latter statement does not differentiate itself from the former statement at all.*

and consequentially, its non dialectical clone:

*The statement “that which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Altogether Other utterly, but the Altogether Other does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all” differentiates itself entirely from the statement “that which is presented to me differentiates itself from the Void utterly, but the Void does not differentiate itself from that which is presented to me at all” but the latter statement does not differentiate itself from the former statement at all.*

It is balanced atop this dyad that one is able to appreciate the wholly non-foundational character of Joyce’s aesthetics as gesture, to which he gave the name ‘esthetic’. It is also the position from which it is sensible to speak of the basic atom of Joyce’s realism, subject to both clinamen and “abnihilisation” [FW 353], as the one-effect without ascribing any foundational strata or irreducible affinities. What has this second layer of complexity given us? This is a critical point in my thesis: what is happening here is the transition from descriptions that imply statements about the world to meta-descriptive writing which models not the world but what is according to the world. In a sense, these extrapolations model face-like-ness by extrapolating recursive ‘structures’ of differentiation from a basic indecision between the ontological priority of the Altogether Other or Void. Each ‘face’ implies or performs a naturalistic description of a face, but it is also drawing a model of face-like-ness from the same fixed indecision, which is fixed by the separating aesthetic gesture described (but not limited to) Stephen’s description of epiphanic beauty [AP 212].

I cannot describe, in a critical or academic manner, Joyce’s traversal from description to model which form the basis for the stylistic departures in his text. In order to engage with this traversal, I have to make my own model, which is not an argument *about* Joyce’s model (and text) but a game that I am playing *according to* it. But it is in this elaboration that we see concepts as face. In a sense, the extrapolation and elaboration are a model of the faciality of faces: that is, this kind of one-sided differentiation, unilateral duality or distinction without difference – is entirely the property that makes a face a face. Joyce does not show us a face either as the total of a certain set of features, or as a certain kind of experience, or as the product of a social consensus.

This idea of a narrative conception of a face, like all really existing faces in the natural world, is *au bord du vide*, which means that all it would take to make it cease to be as a face is to remove and alter just one element [Badiou, 2004: ‘The Event as Trans-Being’]. Indeed, a face is an arrangement of features, and it is voided if one of those features is altered or effaced. But a face is also other: a face’s otherness comes before its mine-ness, her-ness or

his-ness. But it is neither Void nor Other that is conceptualised, but a certain unilaterality between a face's near-nothingness and its near-altogether otherness. Faces are so important to Joyce, because each instance of a face is a conceptual extension, in the form of an iteration of an aesthetic or 'esthetic' image, and of the foundational refraining from decision that characterises his work. The unilaterality of a face only exists in its ordinariness, rather than in the philosophical world, in a world of ordinariness rather than of differences, because a face invites a decision that would dissolve it: this is absolutely other, or absolutely void. Joyce's faces preserve the distinctiveness of each face, precisely because he never subordinates faces to differences (each face as attesting to a philosophical difference, each face as experiencing a certain *kind* of difference).

But, I feel that this is not yet persuasive. I have not given any examples in Joyce's text of traversal – from description to model and back – which I claim to have modelled. In fact, by speaking of vocality as a kind of extensive elaboration of the unilaterality of the concept-word or word-concept 'face', I have gotten far away from the pieces of narrative I claim to be engaging with. Is it possible to, as it were, get back to the page? I would comment that one cannot go directly to examples of voices in order to see the relevance of the model. We have to look at a case where vocality operates within the text in a way analogous to the concept-word 'face'. That is, we have to look for where vocality is as close as it can be to an entirely narrative concept, or perhaps a concept which can only be understood within the concept of narrative.

In this case, we must return to the distinction between narratives and storytelling which I discussed in an earlier chapter where the notion of a 'fixed indecision' was first introduced.

Firstly, I need to restate some general hypothesis about narrative which are important to this thesis. Firstly, and most simply, a narrative is not about the real but always must be according-to (*selon*) some reality, which I will stylise as the according-to of narrative. This does not mean that a narrative is about the real, and it does not yet imply any intentionality or indicative agency on the part of narrative as a material object or action. It means simply that, if narrative exists, it exists in accordance to there being something real (the existence of reality being something I hope I do not have to defend). To put it simply, if a narrative is, then it exists within reality and, therefore must accord with that reality.



To consider a basic form of this, music is according to the real of mathematics. In the example of a prime number of musical notes, a musical phrase containing a prime number of notes cannot be divided into two equal phrases containing an even number of notes, because no prime number but two can be divided by two. Mathematics is not simply a context or a perspective on music, but a transcultural and transhistorical reality in which the atoms or elements of a musical appearance are presented: mathematics is ontology, at least as far as Joyce's writings on music is concerned, which is reflected in Bloom's contemplation that music is "Numbers...all music when you come to think" and "musemathematics" [U 359]. The beauty of music is not a cultural artefact, or something that appears only within human experience: music is beautiful as it accords to a reality beyond human sensual or social experience, the mathematical real to which all musical or musically inspire forms must be *selon*.

That is a simple statement – all forms accord in some sense to something which is beyond human experience. But the second part of the double *selon* is where narratives are distinct, but not yet *different*, from other forms. The second, complimentary idea is that a narrative is only a narrative if it is a narrative according-to (*selon*) itself. This is my own subtractive decision on hermeneutics of narrative and narratology: a narrative must be in accordance to itself. Even if a narrative appears to break its own logical consistency, it does so in accordance with itself. My wager is that one cannot reduce this reflexive *selon* to a foundational distinction within narrative, such as those between *recit* and *histoire*, incidents and telling, general structure and specific occurrence. But neither can one simply reduce this to a notion of a coherent interior logic, or to a reflexive structural consistency. These are modalities of the way that a narrative may be according to itself.

Before any of these, which are philosophical decisions about what narrative means, we can simply say that narrative is narrative *selon* narrative. A narrative is a narrative in accordance with itself. It is not the first *selon* – to reality – that gives us a realist principle, but the dependency upon to the two. The narrative is only *according-to* reality insofar as it is a narrative, and therefore *according-to* itself. But a narrative can only be according to itself if itself is a real thing so, therefore, according to reality. If large, intricately composed, realist works of narrative fiction such as *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* give examples of a 'double *selon*' on a grand scale, I could offer the previously discussed (see page 244) notion of a 'metaphor-metaphor' as an example this on a smaller scale. If a regular metaphor maintains a dualism by positing a sameness through two objects in their differing, a metaphor-metaphor

subverts this preserving the unifacial distinct from which all metaphor must necessary be drawn. Joyce's metaphor-metaphor in 'Proteus' is diaphany [U 45], which is unifacial in that it suggests seeing through from one direct. That is, one sees out of one's face and not into it. Yet, through this unifacial act of 'seeing through' becoming a metaphor for all perception of reality Stephen's thoughts of intentionality, that is the *aboutness* of perception and thought, are therefore subverted by the apprehension which is *according to* what is real. Through the metaphor-metaphor, Stephen's *aboutness* and his thinking of *aboutness* becomes effaced or supplanted by a supplementary or phantom *according to* which frames not only the specificity of his ideas but their instance. That is to say, neither sight nor perception in total accounts for the concreteness of Stephen's experience of real. Rather, it is this folded or redoubled *selon* is according to itself, in Stephen's appropriation of philosophical concepts, as much as it is according to world as it "without end" [Ibid.] around Stephen. This is realism that neither privileges the intellect over the senses nor the senses over the intellect, but uses the act of conceptual appropriation to compose both together in the real-as-instance.

Such operations are crucial, not just for Joyce but for narrative as a whole. If a lone or isolated *selon* involves the unilaterality of the instance which is modelled by the concept-word 'face', then double *selon* requires the key distinction within narrative to modelled on an elaboration or extension of this unifaciality. It is this elaborate where, finally, we come to the conceptual role which voice and vocality come in establishing the distinction between narratives and stories.

Let us consider again the example of the story about J. Reuben Dodd's son in *Ulysses* [U 117], and compare it to the later joke about Mulcahy's grave [U 135] in the same episode, 'Hades'. The story about J. Reuben Dodd is an antisemitic rumour, seemingly an exaggeration of a real incident, which is told as if it were a joke based upon a fictional event. The joke about Mulcahy's grave has a popular Irish style: one tells what is an obvious joke as if one were recounting a real event, to emphasise the telling as much as the punchline. What is significant in both of these anecdotes being placed together in the same episode is how they both appear hinge on resemblance. In the first, we are not to take Dodd's offer of payment as typical of Jewish behaviour in a bluntly antisemitic way but, rather, it resembles such a stereotype, thus allowing the tellers to indulge their antisemitism while disavowing it, as in the anecdote "like a hero" [U 118]. The effect is, of course, lost as Dedalus senior has already barked an antisemitic slur, "drown barrabas!", before the telling has taken place. The second story involves two inebriated men mistaking an image of Christ on a grave for an image of

their friend “Mulcahy from the Coombe” and exclaiming that it is “not a bloody bit like the man” [U 135].

The first comment here is simply that the second joke is funny, in spite of the muted response it receives. It is what one could call a perennial, especially in the situation of its telling after a funeral, suggesting that it has been told and retold, that the names and places mention change over time, but the structure of the joke remains the same. We might imagine the telling of the joke as a thematic parallel to Bloom’s idea of placing a record-player in the graveyard, something repeating itself over time, without any single original telling or context to provide it with authenticity. The polite smiles it receives from the men [U 135] suggest that it is a commonly heard joke, its purpose being to lighten the mood rather than elicit the “burst” [U 117] of laughter provoked by the Dodd story. The reader might think it strange that a “burst” of laughter comes from only one person: the genuinely funny joke gets a muted response because it is told out of kindness, yet the unfunny and illogical yarn receives a “burst”. The sensitivity of the caretaker suggests that he is telling a story that all know well, so there will not be the uncertainty that the joke might be held to be in poor taste by any member of the group.

In both these examples of Joyce’s telling-of-a-telling, the *according-to* of narrative supplants *resemblance* of storytelling, despite the story trying to force a resemblance that is undermined by the narrative. This is explicit in the Mulcahy joke, since this supplanting is contained wholly in the punchline of the gag, but it is implicit in the “good one” about Dodd, because it requires the men to share an antisemitic opinion in order to land, which it does not. The question of resemblance is, therefore, not only resemblance from a particular perspective (the joke of the Mulcahy stories not that the statue of Christ, from the perspective of the drunks, should resemble Mulcahy) but according to them, the statue *is* a statue of Mulcahy. That is, it is not only treated as if it were a statue of Mulcahy from the perspective of the drunk men, but according to the story itself it is. ‘According-to’ is not an artefact of perspective or depiction of experience but an operation of narrative, whereas ‘resembling’ is a quality of an object. What the “figure of the redeemer” actually is, and what it really resembles, is thoroughly irrelevant to the story beyond the suggestion that the verbal flourish adds to the *bathos* of the situation, and thus to the impact of the punch-line, which does not only represent the importance of speech and performance in the telling of the joke, but actively models spoken-vocality from the interior of a textual voice.

We might think that “according to” (*selon*) can be exhausted by perspective, with “from the perspective of...” and “according...” as equal functions or narrative operations of equal privilege. They are not: thinking “from the perspective of” cannot exhaust “according to”, because “from the perspective of” rests upon a presupposed foundational co-belonging of ocularity and position, and “according to” is simply according without presupposition. For Joyce, it can be according to a person’s biology, the contents of their stomachs, just as much as their perspective or beliefs. What is according to a person is a person in their reality, not just a linguistic or phenomenal extraction from their social position or historical specificity. As it is inescapably realist, the double *selon* of narrative escapes perspective, context and genealogy.

In the Mulcahy story, the role of perspective is ultimately a red herring, as the gaze of the drunk man to the statue is not the reason that the joke is funny. That is, the joke cannot be reduced being a mockery of the drunk who cannot see difference between an image of Christ and his friend. It does not make sense that, from anyone’s perspective or context, the statue should be of Mulcahy. According to *no one* is it supposed to look like Mulcahy. The voice, imitated by another voice, which exclaims “not a bloody bit like the man” [U 135] as much *non sequitur* as it is drunken idiocy. If the joke is to work we are not told what the drunk thinks the statue does look like, which conceals the absurd logic: had the drunk recognised the statue as Christ, he would not exclaim that it did not look like a Mulcahy. This fact is the fulcrum of the joke’s narrative structure – the point where its double *selon*, between according-to related (the statue is Christ) and according-to itself (the statue doesn’t look “a bloody bit” like Mulcahy) is balanced. The joke is funny because the double *selon* operates perfectly.

In the case of the Dodd story, the double *selon* does not function at all. The according-to of the logic of the story does not work. If we are to believe that, according to Dodd, the value of his son is a florin, then we must follow the logic that ascribes the pretension to Dodd that he is “like a hero”. On the first level of according-to (two “according to” conjoined by the logic of the joke), it accords itself to a statement about reality that is the following: in reality, there are people who ascribe base fiduciary values to human life. And, according to the logic of the story, this value must be surprising: whereas a gentile father would be overcome with thanks for the rescue of his son, Dodd merely offered a florin. Therefore, a greater debt is imagined.

Of course, at no point does this really work: the story being badly told (due to the men depriving Bloom, intentionally or not, of the pleasure of delivering the punchline) only emphasises how none of this really adds up. It is not funny, it does not work as a joke even if one grants the stereotype (perhaps the joke might have been contrived so that Dodd might have *charged* the ferryman for the rescue of his son). Telling the anecdote as if it were a joke exposes the fault not only with the ‘joke’, but with the underlying stereotype itself. The underlying fact that the real Dodd was not Jewish makes the whole spectacle into a groundless airing of prejudices. The story suggests that the way in which its reflexive *selon* (to itself) is *selon* its primary *selon* (to a greater reality of which it is a part) reveals something: nothing is revealed.

On the contrary, the story of Mulcahy’s grave does add up. We cannot reduce the logic of the joke to a simple game of perspectives and resemblances, misapprehensions and “missed understandings” [FW 175]. The joke suggests a deeper irony than can be made explicit. It is not exhausted by the idea of the stupidity or inappropriate behaviour of two drunks, there remains an irony concerning the fact that Irish graveyards are full of holy images, “sacred figure(s)” [U, 135] as the text has it, rather than mementos or connections to the dead themselves. There is also the sense that drunks spontaneous blurting out of their opinions is more appropriate than the behaviour of the funeral party in the carriage who have alternated between falsely stoic silence and histrionics. After all, if one made a trip to pay one’s respect to a friend, wouldn’t it be sincerely disappointing not to be reminded of that person? The spontaneity of the inebriated outburst, far from being clownish, anticipates the intellectual ingenuity of Bloom’s thoughts far more than the serious talk and etiquette. It is what one could describe as a spontaneity without immediacy. But the presence of this irony or more subtle humour underneath the explicit layer of the joke itself is not as important as the fact that this is accomplished through a double *selon*, and not through any admixture of perspective and analogy. Simply put, the way the joke confirms to its own structurality of structure’ suggests something closer to reality than the simple structure of the joke does, and the way in which this suggestion is communicated to us tells us how to read the joke. The structurality of the joke is such that, in the instant one would expect context and perspective to tell us everything, they tell us precisely nothing: the joke reveals itself as a narrative, perhaps an exemplar of narrative form, revealing the narrative as a situated situation. It is all “done with a purpose” [U, 135] as Martin Cunningham explains.

We might think that perspectives and qualities have a mutually affirming role in narrative (this looks blue from my perspective, but white from his). The principle of the double *selon* tells us that this mutually affirming role, which could be called *ratification*, is always dysfunctional. Whereas, by comparison, the Dodd story intends to be logically revealing of a typical Jewish attitude or behaviour, this logic is broken and does not quite follow, so it does resolve, despite efforts in the telling, into a game of resemblances and perspectives. The functioning of one joke and the misfunction of another tells us a lot about the reduced, subtractive conceptual machinery which allows Joyce model immediacy and givenness from the very failure of voice and perspective to furnish him with anything like a foundational givenness.

## CHAPTER 14: WRITING AND THE PROBLEM OF PURE MULTIPLICITY

### *Multiplicity from Negativity, or Negativity from Multiplicity?*

Having made some positive claims about the Joycean concrete and proposed to model the ‘one-effect’ of Joyce’s writing through notions of unifaceality and unilateral duality borrowed from non-philosophy, now I will return to the negative arguments of this thesis. The contention is that Joyce’s subtractive writing fillets out the key parts of our understanding of the world. This is not because the narrative content of his work is subordinated to a larger ontological or philosophical demonstration, but because the autonomy affirmed in his aesthetic gesture is characteristically subtractive. I refer to this as being doubled, not so much in the sense of doubling or dualism but, rather, in terms of a redoubled or dyadic dualism where, in reading Joyce, we are concerned with subtractive accounts of subtraction. The ‘style of scrupulous meanness’ deployed towards accounts of paralysis and social isolation in *Dubliners* stories such as ‘Eveline’ and ‘A Painful Case’ is an example of this. However, this doubling is doubled again, in that performing it as an aesthetic gesture reveals that the true ‘object’ or ‘reality’ of the encounters being depicted is itself evidence of a subtraction operating over and above the most direct feeling of immediacy<sup>289</sup> and presence-to-self.<sup>290</sup> Joyce limits sensation and experience in the moment that he delimits the intellect, and it is in this union that one can start to understand what he meant in his non-standard and critical use

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<sup>289</sup> A problem will arise if ‘immediacy’ comes to mean both epistemological givenness and a literary account or aesthetic image of immediacy, as a kind of phenomenal transparency or disavowance. This problem is compounded if one is persuaded by arguments that Joyce identifies ‘the immediate of the immediate’ as an entire separate object for critique or as the potential to embed an image of a philosophical problem. This problem is, in some sense, proof of the success of the Joycean ‘redoubled subtraction’ but, at the same time, in order for my argument to be persuasive, I must highlight that I do not believe ‘immediacy’ as an aesthetic or literary *depiction* to be wholly interchangeable with givenness or phenomenal immediacy, as those are necessarily *descriptive* terms rather than describing elements of imagining, portraiture, depiction, narrating, patterning, and so on. I do not feel, for example, that the term “mapping” (from Deleuze and Guattari’s *Mille Plateaux*) as an affirmational term, can be adequate for the subtractive motion I am describing in Joyce’s undermining of immediacy. Yet, neither does this simply point to an effect which Joyce’s work has a reader or an object in the reader’s mind...

<sup>290</sup> It should be noted here, in the context of literature, that this does not necessarily mean self-consciousness or any combination of sapience and sentience. Joyce’s question of ‘esthetic image’ and of portraiture open up the critique of presence-to-self beyond the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic into, more or less, any material realm into which an image of ‘self’ (in human terms) can be embedded. This is a case in point for reading Joyce’s non-philosophy as a counter-phenomenology: rather than taking self-awareness or self-consciousness as a given grounds, he begins from a site where presence-to-self can be critiques and derives aesthetic images of self-consciousness from the resources and vocabulary of that critique. I would give the Justus and Mercius section of *Finnegans Wake* as an example of Joycean dyadism, as it not only splits ‘I’ and ‘Other I’, but allows for a situational, definitional distinction between ‘self-presence’ and ‘presence-to-self’.

of the term ‘imagination’.<sup>291</sup> Rather than leading this into a critique of representing and representational activities, one might again think of this subtraction as twofold or dyadic, both in terms of how things are (semantics of ontology, being, what is, etc.), and how things appear to us (semantics of existence, appearance, experience, etc.). What is more, Joyce is not doing this through the philosophical abstraction his characters indulge in, or through speculative scenarios.<sup>292</sup> This may lead to an apparent contradiction in intention behind Joyce’s aesthetic gestures. That is, the contradiction between a progressive, modernising focus upon stylistic novelty is, from the very beginning, reliant upon apparently outmoded and orthodox distinctions between primary and secondary qualities. A distinction should be made between times when this is crucial only to the personal philosophies of figures such as Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, and when it is compositionally crucial in terms of Joyce’s restructuring of written narrative, in a way that purports to record and to embody an intimacy between the aesthetic deployment of language and language as a bridge between thinking and perceiving. More specifically, in Leopold Bloom’s case, Joyce’s aesthetic device intervenes at the point of the distinction between having ideas and having experiences. Stylistic difference can ultimately be said to depend upon Joyce’s own attentiveness to how these distinct forms of ‘having’ are precisely *formally*, rather than semantically, distinct.

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<sup>291</sup> Joyce’s use of the *concept* ‘imagination’ has too many roots to yield any quick definition, and my reading here is selective. Rather than attempt a genealogy of the term through Joyce’s work (which would almost function as a ‘sequel’ to this thesis), I can boil this ‘new Irish stew’ down to show what I believe are its three main ingredients: imagination as withdrawal from experience typified by Blake, the aesthetic ‘image’ typified by Joyce’s desire to reclaim Aristotle from his Scholastic education and the ‘imaginative university’ of Vico. All three are critical postures on Joyce’s behalf – he doesn’t ‘believe’ in any of these, but through critiquing as part of the same long unwinding gesture, a positive conception of ‘imagination’ is found to affirm. How far can we speak of ‘Joyce’s Subtractive Genealogy of Imagination’?

<sup>292</sup> In such scenarios narrative action is subordinated to a wider philosophical demonstration. I would argue that this is a frequent misprision of *Finnegans Wake*, for example that of Campbell and Robinson, who see the action of the book subordinated to a demonstration of the truth of Vico’s philosophy. This fails on three counts: trivially, Joyce famously professed not to believe in Vico’s philosophy; interpretatively, because it subordinates all action in the book to demonstration, and, finally, methodologically, because it fails to fully apprehend the complexity of Joyce’s relationship to his philosophical sources. Finally, I would add that such an approach risks taking a lot of the pleasure out of reading Joyce – if one believes every philosopher or theologian ever to rear their heads in a work by Joyce is either believed or disbelieved by the text itself, then so many of the best jokes will sail over one’s head. Part of why I believe Joyce’s narrative is best understood by a “joke-like” rather than “story-like” structure, is that jokes are liberated from the need to be demonstrative. Frequently we see that jokes that are subordinated to the demonstration of something (such as the anecdote about J. Reuben Dodd’s son), are seen as very poor; and I might add to this that a crucial composition element of *Finnegans Wake*, the tale of ‘Buckley and the Russian General’, is forever marked by the aspersion from Samuel Beckett that the tale is only a joke meant to disparage Ireland. The four masters (X) misquote Macbeth while bickering on Yawn’s mound – “A gael galled by a scheme of scorn (...) Sangnifying nothing. Mock!” [*FW* 515]. Through jokes, one gets the full range between signifying nothing, and a nothing that signifies, liberated from necessary prescriptions of the meaningful and the demonstrative; a joke is a perfect construction for an anti-constructivist aesthetic world without givenness, where bloodied nothings can join to each other in hilarious chains of *insignification*.



I would argue that all such dependency on a dyadic approach to realism does not place Joyce in concordance with his immediate precursors, in the context of his modernist contemporaries or his post-modernist successors. Indeed, his compositional methods place him closer to such contemporary thought as the defense of distinctions between “primary” and “secondary” qualities to be found in the work of Ray Brassier and Quentin Meillassoux<sup>293</sup>. Arguably, it is only now that there is a defense for “hard won”<sup>294</sup> dualism that Joyce really has a philosophical milieu adequate to read alongside his work: only now is there an understanding of the working of primary and secondary distinction that does not involve a vulgarisation of, for example, Aquinas (Mortal Finitude and Divine Infinite), Kant (Phenomenon and Noumenon) or Plato (Real and Ideal), even as Joyce plunders their vocabularies and dispositions.

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities is never simply a given for Joyce; it always is “hard won”. It is true that Stephen may think he has learned of his distinction and is able to parse and deploy it through his own intellect or, at least, this is certainly the impression we are given as readers. However, the reader of *Stephen Hero* or *A Portrait* will doubtlessly know that his arrival at a dyadic-materialistic or differential-realist aesthetics is the product of grueling intellectualisation of personal, political and religious incidents and tensions that have taken place throughout his entire life until that point. All such struggles, collocated, are brought to bear on the taxonomy of the beautiful and the account of apprehension given by Stephen: the account is not a reduction of Joyce’s own scholarship, nor is it simply a rehearsal of an example of epiphanic form through its own description. While one cannot truly say that Joyce is ‘returning’<sup>295</sup> to primary and secondary qualities in the

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<sup>293</sup> In the essay ‘Concepts and Objects’ and *After Finitude*, respectively.

<sup>294</sup> “Of course, recognizing this does not resolve or answer any of the profound epistemological and metaphysical difficulties that confront us in the wake of science’s remarkable cognitive achievements. But it may help us realise that these difficulties cannot be circumvented, as both correlationists and dogmatic metaphysicians seek to do, by dispensing with those hard-won dualisms that have helped clarify what distinguishes scientific representation from metaphysical fantasy. Dualisms such as those of meaning and being, and of knowing and feeling, are not relics of an outmoded metaphysics; they are makeshift but indispensable instruments through which reason begins to be apprized both of its continuity and its discontinuity with regard to what it is still expedient to call ‘nature’”. [Brassier, ‘Concepts and Objects’, 2011]

<sup>295</sup> Joyce’s ‘return’ has a partially philosophical genealogy. Although there is a key poetic precursor (the *Odyssey* to Ithaca given as a cosmopolitan and universalist contrast to the Irish revival) and an autobiographical context - “mother dying come home father” [U 52], what we see in Joyce’s terms is the clarity of a philosophical notion of returning to a certain idea or way of approaching reality being transmogrified into aesthetic concept when contains the sense or semantic connections of the original, but now has new exaggerated or comic representational connections. Joyce’s ‘return’, therefore, dips into a semantic or even methodological heritage shared with Vico’s *ricorso* and Nietzsche’s eternal return, but its altogether new conceptual dimension does not only serve to make philosophical clarity opaque, but also turns the clarity against clarity, representation against representation, through dramatic shadows. Therefore, when I say that only now, while a concerted attempt is being made by philosophers to ‘return’ to the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, can

sense that contemporary rationalism is ‘returning’ to investigate the ground rejected by correlationists and ‘dogmatic’ metaphysicians,<sup>296</sup> I would stress that Joyce can be understood to be performing his own ‘return’ to theme throughout, an aesthetic return where the same persisting conceptual apparatus is used in different modes and arrangements. However, it is only now that there is a concurrent philosophical ‘return’ to this theme in the possible sense can we really apprehend Joyce’s use of such dyadic forms as conceptual productions rather merely contextual descriptions.<sup>297</sup> That is the doubled-double (which could be called ‘dyadic’ or ‘diagonal’ depending of context) conceptual return to the distinction between *a* thing and a *thing*, as a distinction itself differentiated from another (coextensive) distinction between awareness of *something* and awareness of something as *the sort of something* it is.<sup>298</sup> The acknowledgement of a distinction between primary and secondary qualities allows Joyce to access a great conceptual realm of distinctions, not between things, but between other

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Joyce’s ‘return’ be understood in its true aesthetic light, it is not because I think that Joyce is engaged the same demonstrative, argumentative process as Brassier and Meillassoux, but because there is now a contextual resource of clarity available to draw into contrast the conceptual distortions at the heart of Joyce’s opacity, which I understand not as muddying a clear stream of thought, but mismatching different forms of conceptual clarity to arrive at an entirely conceptual singularity of image. This may all seem like an anti-deconstructive position to the point of contrariness, but it is not, as much I am drawing on temporary thought which is overly critical of deconstruction, I still regard these points as in the same realm as what Attridge identifies as ‘doing justice’ and Derrida himself described in ‘Ulysses Gramophone’ as the act of “sending oneself” [D&J 78] directly to the enjoyment and pleasure of reading. I do not see any reason to foreclose / Derrida’s semantic games of ‘sending’ and ‘reappropriation’ from a language of conceptualisation and representation. The ‘Papal Bull’ of Stephen’s telegram, which Derrida finds so funny, is at heart a joke about an instance of conceptual returning manifesting as representational indebtedness, to which Molly’s “recall[ing] herself” provides an erotic mirror of that which is self-sending or self-transmitting without being self-positing or caught in the ‘technical repetition’ of “the gramophone in the grave” [D&J 79].

<sup>296</sup> This is the view of Brassier and Meillassoux. There is room to find agreement in Joyce, considering the role of what he called the “sceptical” or “celtic” philosophical attitude, particularly in a post-Kantian context. However, the implication of ‘dogmatic’, pejorative or otherwise, in an intra-philosophical discussion, is quite different from how ‘dogmatic’ would apply from an aesthetic word towards, not precisely philosophical texts, but dispositions.

<sup>297</sup> It is provocative to speak of ‘mere context’ in a literature thesis, but it is worth being at least somewhat oppositional on this point, so as not to hedge my argument around what might called ‘weak correlationism’. That is, if one defends ‘weak’ correlationalism or happenstance nominalisms against their most dogmatic, even theistic, forms, one must be clear about what one values, and to be clear, there is no necessary reason for a literary study to value contextuality over conceptuality in general. Indeed, pre-supposing that context always ‘wins out’ in terms of always harbouring a deeper cache of meaning or unarticulated alterity, devalues context by emptying out its operation specificities and replacing them with an empty relativism or ‘strong correlationist’ version of perspectivism. This might be the least useful, and least fun, way to interpret Derrida’s engagement with Joyce as a typifying instance of deconstruction, reading context as transcendence rather than operational. As deconstructive readings often emphasize the pleasure or enjoyment of engaging with literature, such as Attridge’s work, one really should ask where the pleasure is in discovering a new contextual function or malfunction, that is if one went into a text assuming the priority of context in the first place? The discovery that context is doing conceptual work rather than merely uncovering latent meaning is a joyful (and frequently hilarious) experience, it should not be replaced by disinterested genealogies or anodyne sociological graphing.

<sup>298</sup> This we see in Brassier’s reading of Sellars. [Brassier, 2011].

activities of distinguishing and differentiating.<sup>299</sup> Authorial indifference here has a direct, concrete consequence in terms of liberating material to be deployed towards aesthetic and imaginative ends,<sup>300</sup> to address (for example) the visible both as being ineluctably modal, and as having a modality of being ineluctable.<sup>301</sup> In other words, the visible is twice bifurcated: firstly, into the manners in which visibility strikes the viewer as a unique genus of specificity and as a one-effect where something is bordered off or singled out, and then again into the visibility of things and the visibility of things as understood as the things they are. Joyce gives us a square<sup>302</sup> of empirical modality,<sup>303</sup> as it were, and no corner of this square is the foundational given from which the other three are derived, as they are all mutually supporting, at least from the vantage of one who wishes to deploy them in an aesthetic gesture. There is no originary meaning to support one corner over another, and there is no definition or primordial analogy for Being. Again, a metaphor of diagonalisation for the production of an aesthetic image remains appropriate over the assumption of a productive, constructive force of correlation.

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<sup>299</sup> What this ultimately means is that Joyce liberates himself from context as an ultimate horizon of meaning; that is, from seeing every *one* thing as belonging to a particular set of contexts. Instead of this, Joyce's work seems to treat words, objects, persons, etc. as dyadic, as between the thing and the operation which articulates it rather than as representative of a transcendental dualism. Although my vocabulary here is indebted to Laruelle's concepts which I have used in previous chapters, it is also similar to Badiou's definition of an object as the coupling of an object with a transcendental index [Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*]. This re-articulates the old notion of primary and secondary qualities Joyce uses constructivist insights to depart definitively from moribund constructivism. No longer is an object a single thing or product of processes, or an instance of recursive process which begets process, but a multiple to itself into which a gesture can intervene and forge a measure of autonomy. If each object is understood as a dyad, having at least two significant parts, the classical arrangement of void, atom of clinamen may be potentially discovered in any object, as in the example of 'epiphany'.

<sup>300</sup> With the benefit of contextualising Joyce within the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can say that the closing of Blake's eye becomes a Derridean, rather than a Heideggerian, *augenblick*.

<sup>301</sup> I contend that the "ineluctable modality of the visible" implies both.

<sup>302</sup> Much like the siglum □.

<sup>303</sup> This is an example of what I have already called an aesthetic image of a philosophical problem. Like Brassier and Meillassoux, Joyce is given us new conceptual pairs which in a sense 'read' veritable philosophical dualities (diaphany and adiaphany, neibenander and nacheinander, oneness and substance, etc.) and his version is something which is shown rather than simply stated or described. But whereas the kind of 'showing' proper to philosophical argument is primarily demonstrative or argumentative, the gestural nature of Joyce's images and imaging is never under the obligation to justify conceptual deployments by bringing definitions and assertions together in convincing demonstrations. If a reader were to complain to me that Joyce's use of primary and secondary qualities had nothing to do with Brassier and Meillassoux's usages of the same. I would argue that this is exactly my point: Joyce draws on the same veritable or 'hard won' distinctions that philosophers do, but he has no obligation to connect them together into a conceptual machine which maintains a consistency of definition through its semantic undulations. If one could say that contemporary rationalism is significant for the study of literature because it pieces together old terms in convincing new arguments about perception and subjectivity, in Joyce we see the aesthetic un-piecing or un-mooring of terms in images which show these dualities or oppositional terms in an unreal semantic isolation, thus capturing what is problematic about them (or what is problematic about them to a specific individual) without the need of reducing them into a self-supporting definitional matrix. The conceptual machinery of aesthetic imagery is tightly related to that of argument, but their operations and functions are incomparable and autonomous. Joyce, or the figures in his books, speak about philosophy incessantly often as if through compulsion – yet nowhere can we say that something is being philosophically said, or stated, by one of his books.

As Brassier's essay states at the beginning that "we gain access to the structure of reality via a machinery of conception which extracts intelligible indices from a world that is not designed to be intelligible and is not originally infused with meaning". It is this kind of understanding thinking and as expressing as a 'machinery of conception'<sup>304</sup> with which Joyce's work is ultimately concerned, and his stylistic variation is deployed towards charting its conceptual modalities: aesthetic gestures, political engagements, erotic encounters, mourning, anticipations, chitchats, resentments, deductions, inferences, and second-guesses. The formative moment of Joyce's realism is the sudden unexpected contrast between the elaboration of conceptual concatenation and that which is without concept. This contrast once situated in spatio-temporal terms, can be described with the theoretical term 'encounter'.<sup>305</sup> These encounters, although contingent, are the stuff of an engagement with reality rather than of withdrawn contemplation. Consider 'The Sisters' as demonstrative of a failure of conceptual vocabulary. The narrative voice has an elaborate conceptual vocabulary, especially for a boy of his age, yet it is hugely inadequate, not to describe Father Flynn's illness and death, but to describe his own subjective advance towards aging and ultimate non-being. One might see the frustration and anger felt by the boy towards his elders, not only as Joyce's sympathy with youth against the habitual paralysis of aged Dublin, but also as a projection of the boy's own failures of imagination. In particular, the impression in the story that the boy has a particular genius of imagination which the contingency of his situation has conspired to make useless.

In the progression from *A Portrait* to *Ulysses*, Joyce goes on to show<sup>306</sup> that intellectual and conceptual engagement is not the exclusive province of disinterested or elevated positions but, rather, a way in which people engage with the world as it is on a quotidian basis, and our languages reflect this as much as they reflect socio-historical

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<sup>304</sup> As this thesis avoids delving into philosophical genealogies exterior to Joyce, I am not really in a position to comment on Brassier's use of 'machinery' versus that of Deleuze and Guattari. I mention this here because I will cite from Deleuze extensively in the following chapters, and I intend to evoke Deleuze's jargon on the topic of concept, even if it is relevant to Brassier's original argument, and I do not wish to unintentionally mix metaphors.

<sup>305</sup> Therefore, for example, one can not only use 'encounter' and its various theoretical usages to describe epiphany, but one can be exacting about this and ask how far each of Joyce's particular epiphanies can be said to be 'in the order of an encounter'.

<sup>306</sup> Again, this is a gestural, aesthetic kind of 'showing' rather than descriptive or demonstrative. I mean it in the sense that a musician might 'show' how a particularly difficult modulation is performed or an athlete may 'show' their skill. It carries the sense of achieving or establishing that 'showing' in a descriptive or demonstrative sense does not, as it would be the argument that the demonstration is deployed towards, that either succeeds or fails. Joyce makes no such arguments and, therefore, this is another place where we must keep the autonomy of the aesthetic gesture in mind, if only to take authorial intent in good faith even if one must ultimately disregard it.

determinations.<sup>307</sup> This not to say that Joyce does not deserve the laurels that postmodernism gave him as the poet laureate of contextuality. But, in order to respect contextuality, as with experientiality, he must show it at work, rather than prescriptively assign it as a constructive role. He must also show what it is put in service of in order to be so incomparably valuable. This is shown in the progression from *Ulysses* to *Finnegans Wake*, where sleep and other modes of stupefaction or partial consciousness are equally valid grounds for aesthetic exploration, and are equally able to yield images of the tragic, the comic and the beautiful as any moment in adult, sober and waking life. Much like immediacy of experience, one is at a constant risk of devaluing contextuality it by assuming it to be a given feature of any inscription or utterance, and not a thing made. Thereby, it is assumed to have the absolute priority of originary infusion with meanings or roles within a network of socio-epistemic constructions. This leads to overlooking the impact experience really has in order to chart the impact we feel it should have. Distinction and instance become supplanted by difference and presence. I would argue that it is the task of aesthetic writing to return one's attention to the distinction of the instance. With this in mind, Joyce's 'return' can read as both Stephen's waking from the nightmare of history and Leopold Bloom's return to the Ithaca of Eccles Street, both of which resonate beneath the waking and ritual cleansing of St Kevin in the 'triptych' section, coinciding with a re-articulation of settled philosophical debates in *Finnegans Wake*'s final book.

### *The Wandering Rocks and 'Who?' as a Transcendental Question.*

But, how does one understand artistic gesture as the conservation of duality? Does this not create a disposition towards contradicting wholeness and clarity, even in the paradox of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* where the reader is supposedly given a clear look at obscurity? If one follows the model given in *A Portrait*, where the aesthetic gesture both recognises and institutes a dividing line around not the object but the gesture itself, then there is a dual conservation in Joyce's aesthetic thinking that seeks to remove all epistemological foundations and, instead, see a dyadic formation latent in objects themselves when considered as objects, and aesthetic apprehension itself that Joyce (through Stephen) has an autonomy

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<sup>307</sup> Is this not, to some small extent, Derrida's understanding of language as event rearticulated in rationalist terms, in an argument where the autonomy of words themselves is no longer a privileged site of alterity-as-encounter? Further, is this not a key facet that makes the 'Joyce-événement' into 'Joyce-événement' rather than simply the événement of Joyce's writing?

through which it can have a special rapport with its object. We often see, for example in *A Portrait* that despite the doubly characteristic precision, Stephen's semantics become vague, even as he approaches a clearly and widely known domain of aesthetic and philosophical semantics. If it is a philosophical decision to stick either to the univocal or to the equivocation, Joyce refuses this as a false choice.

Such imaginative faculties<sup>308</sup> are evidenced by the fact that Joyce's epochal subtractive gesture, arguably the single most radical subtractive gesture in the entire history of western aesthetics, is performed, not from an elevated aristocratic position,<sup>309</sup> but from the midst of an indistinct normality. If we move from the phenomenal to the political consequences of this subtractive gesture, we begin to approach the outline of what might be called the Parnellite paradox of Joyce's socialism: the conviction in the latent existence and aristocracy of unremarkable normality, that is somehow concordant to the anti-populist sentiment which damned the 'rabblement' [OCPW, 'The Day of the Rabblement']. As Joyce's personal politics were famously incoherent, this incoherence may seem reflected in his works themselves, which direct equal vinegar towards both minoritarian aristocratism and majoritarian or identitarian populism.

We might see a more direct example of this (apparently) paradoxical political impulse in the *Ulysses* episode 'The Wandering Rocks', which gives nineteen divergent accounts of incidents concurrently happening as the Lord Lieutenant's cavalcade works its way through the streets of Dublin. The episode gives *Ulysses* a pure and direct account of a conceptual device upon which its political arguments often lie, what Badiou would call an 'excescence'. Even though it is a noisy and prominent object in the unfolding of "The Wandering Rocks", one can describe the cavalcade as excrescent, firstly, due to its collating function whereby the chapter is brought under the measure of an element (the British crown) which is represented but cannot be present, but also in the objectal status of the cavalcade itself as an element whose articulation is such that it is included (as a subset) but does not belong (as a set). That

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<sup>308</sup> Here my account here is lacking a crucial element which is that of a re-assessment of the Vichean notion of 'imaginative universality' which positions the pinnacle of imaginative activity as the imag-ing or pattern-ing of identity, of discreet persons, in an identity-less world.

<sup>309</sup> An earlier version of this thesis was planned to include a section which read Joyce's anti-aristocratism as an attempt to formulate an aristocracy of the artist as gesturing agent (a dancer) against expressly political and social aristocracy, which was an attempt to critically position Joyce between Wilde and later French notions of self-determination (potential sources being Badiou's critique of Rancière, Foucault's 'self-care', Latour's 'actants'...). Due to the entirely non-philosophical light that this thesis casts on Joyce, I have decided not to follow this project as it would in some sense diminish the political import of Joyce's work by 're-philosophising' many of the issues whose independence from philosophy I try to describe. This also would complicate the notion of the esthetic 'image' as I use it. Nevertheless, I see this as a fruitful avenue for a future political reading, if I can indeed reconcile it with a 'non-philosophical' approach without submerging it into sociological discourse.

is, the apparent spatial-temporal authority of the cavalcade is exerted at a meta-structural level rather than structural level,<sup>310</sup> where it is felt most keenly in the organisational effects it has on the contingencies of the episode. But, in the final account, it is the discontinuity of the Cavalcade that is most apparent, as all the ‘minor’ elements and incidents of the episode finally seem to turn away or escape from it,<sup>311</sup> their susceptibility to organisation reflected in a resistance,<sup>312</sup> not to inclusion or knowledge, but to a final moment of integration when the time of cavalcade becomes the time for every individual element. To put it alternatively, this implies that the narrated time of the cavalcade is founded on the time in which the individual elements are narrated, their narrated time collated at the time of narration of the final section describing the cavalcade.

Consequently, the idea of structure leads us to talk of a central or spinal exception at work in ‘The Wandering Rocks’, which becomes the organization principle through which the temporal and spatial situatedness of the many specific incidents are articulated. In this case, we might be tempted to see the Cavalcade as a central exception and, therefore, as an indifferent universality. This would see indifferent universality as a property of the Lord Lieutenant’s Cavalcade, reflecting its dominant political position which seeks to signify and ritualise the assimilation of Dublin into the Imperial order. This assimilation would seem to have an ironic mirror in its narrative function, where it might be imagined to function as an abstraction or locus, through which the real, actual experiences of time and space are represented by a dominating or imperial force. This would produce a familiar opposition in which the particular would be understood as the experiential, direct and perspectival, that which is grounded in indissoluble affinities and immediacy and set against a supposed universality, understood as an oppressive abstraction and manufacture of representation: chronology, rhythm, geometricity, structuration, all being the products of the universality that exerts or imprints itself on particulars through the nefarious workings of political representation.

Firstly, such an opposition would reflect a very un-Joycean view of intellect in conflict with experience, creating a false choice between them, where conceptual representation or

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<sup>310</sup> This might be phrased as saying that the cavalcade functions as a/the non-relation at the heart of apparent relations.

<sup>311</sup> The final image of the acknowledgment of the “salute”, that is Artifoni’s “sturdy trousers swallowed by a closing door”, swallowed by a self-effacing yet anonymous specificity; the door has a one-effect but no particular identity [U 328].

<sup>312</sup> There are figures in the episode salute and those which do not, the range of salutes running from feigned obliviousness to the half-hearted. Many characters (Boylan, Dedalus senior, for example) are notably too absorbed in their own activities to pay any close attention.

intellectual construction is connected with dominance or imperial power, and experience with directness, authenticity and subversion. Instead, we can see the excrescence of the cavalcade not as an abstract, representational universality but, rather, a collating operation forbidding generic elements by identifying everything adequately – that is, not a gaze from the center, but an operation which presupposes, yet disavows, the priority of gazing and visuality in locating and articulating each identifiable element of the episode itself. Much like the failure of many characters to look directly at the cavalcade in the final section of the chapter, we have an inverse of Stephen’s liberating aesthetico-philosophical maxim of “shut your eyes and see”, in the implication of opening one’s eyes but not looking.

Reading a passage of Joyce like ‘The Wandering Rocks’ which, in its ultimately comic and satirical attack on the appearance of the cavalcade and the place of such an imperial excrescence in Dublin life, does not challenge knowing foundationalism so much as it aims at disavowed foundations, and the alleged prior role of difference, immediacy or presence in experiential affinities

The presentation of the Cavalcade as an ultimately ridiculous event, failing to inspire contempt in even the most otherwise belligerent Fenians, is not an attack on supposed complicity between power and universality trying to show that particularity is a more agential constituent of lived reality than such a systematising representation. Rather, it demonstrates the failure of givenness behind *all* disavowed transcendental assumptions, whether universal or particular, or whether orientated towards difference or identity. This failure, I would argue, is characteristic of Joyce’s satirical presentation of aristocracy or monarchy as the coincidence between presumption of givenness and disavowal of transcendence.<sup>313</sup> The ultimate failure of the Cavalcade as a spinal centration in the narrative of ‘The Wandering Rocks’,<sup>314</sup> is not a failure of representation and universality, but a failure of a correlating operation to provide the

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<sup>313</sup> In *Finnegans Wake*, M’s pleas, are not of his innocence, but of a certain disavowal of his own stature and activities. M is a stranger, either from Norway or from the North of the island, whose ‘transcending’ of current context is disavowed in the demands for forgiveness and dignity he feels that he is deserving of. For example, in the long monologue “Haveth Childers Everywhere”, M’s position of a foreigner who developed or aided in the industrialisation of Dublin is one and the same as his activities. M preserves his exceptional status by disavowal: “I askt you, dear lady, to judge on my tree by our fruits” [FW 535], a plea for a focus upon the immanent effects and benefits of a process whose corrupting influences have seeped underground, through sewers and streams, and whose sole other witness (Δ) is not present to refute. The irony is that much of the passage is a parody of a séance used to contact Oscar Wilde, so we have a caricature of an absolutely transcendent voice, accused of a heinous series of crimes, exhorting the séance holders (X) not to question its transcendence and look only at the fruits, the palpable effects.

<sup>314</sup> The title of the episode, if it refers to the Cavalcade and not the incidents themselves, is a vulgar pun. “Oh, rocks!” is of course, Molly’s profanity [U 77] where it is swiftly followed with the pun on the name of “Paul de Kock”. A very *Wakean* moment in *Ulysses*, Joyce has taken over two hundred pages to set up a joke about testicles.



grounds from which one may *absolutely* correlate.<sup>315</sup> Joyce does not give us the universal versus the particular, but neither does he give us things-as-correlated as opposed to things-as-they-are, but rather the unveiling of the plenitude that exists in the apparently narrow gap between the world as a weakly correlated element and the world as strongly correlated being.<sup>316</sup>

So, focusing upon what we knowingly affirm and knowingly contradict, Joyce wrote in the 1920 Linati Schema that the sense or meaning and significance of ‘The Wandering Rocks’ was supposed to be “the hostile environment”.<sup>317</sup> The “hostile environment” depicted is, at least in part, hostile because it is fraught with the return of that which has been disavowed. The appearance of Dignam’s son is a marker of an unpleasant fact that has been repressed, but the portrait of Boylan and the unflattering inner thoughts of Conmee suggest the return of things that are just outside of active acknowledgement. It is reminiscent of Deleuze’s comment about Proust where, in describing the ‘Search’ structure of Proust’s Swann novels, he observes how “the final systemization” is engineered to remind us that “time itself is plural” [Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, 2008: 17]. However, we cannot take for granted that the kind or genera of such a plurality of time will be in a case given in a domain of meaning – for Joyce, there is indeed an implicit claim in his work that time is plural.<sup>318</sup> But, it is a pluralism that belongs to an indiscernible ordering or contingency. The plurality of time cannot be resolved to perspective or position, to a plurality of bodies or a plurality of minds, to a plurality of social or historical positions. It resists reduction to the irreducible: not only does it not fall into the trap of a meaningful diversity, it is not even an irreducible plurality of time. It resists the xenophobia that is latent in *Ulysses*, the fear of that which is *in* time, but is neither *of* time nor *reducible to* the human experience or manifest image of time as passage –

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<sup>315</sup> In short, the failure of a transcendental measure to provide both “synthetic cohesion” of a region or period, and totalise each element articulated as a potential object in that region. This fundamental incompatibility between unity and cohesion is a theme shared between Joyce’s works and Badiou’s theory of the transcendental in *Logics of Worlds*. We have two ways to look at this: either from unity towards cohesion or cohesion towards unity. In ‘The Wandering Rocks’, we have the parts all working together cohesively, or we have all of the parts accounted for we cannot have both at the same time, as much as either a ‘transcendental’ or ‘immanent’ perspective might demand that we do. So, an ascent from cohesion to unity or unity from cohesion necessarily involves the revealing of very material instability in both, and it is from this stability that one might see a chance to speak about the generic, the singular, and the universal.

<sup>316</sup> A meontology rather than an ontology.

<sup>317</sup> I am using the version and translation from Ellmann’s *Ulysses on the Liffey* [Ellman, 1986].

<sup>318</sup> Without a demonstration, but an operation or aesthetic decision which takes place on the non-prescriptive that *if* time were to be plural, *then* things would be as such. ‘The Wandering Rocks’ and ‘Sirens’ form a kind of speculative couple in this regard.

co-extensive with movement in space. But neither is it the essence of time itself: it is something alien that yields a plurality of time.

If we are to believe that overall ‘meaning’ is derived from acts of signification which, in turn, are derived from a spatial-temporal affinity evidenced by specific spatial-temporal correlations<sup>319</sup> (as each segment of the chapter seems to say “this, too, is happening at this place and time”). However, what is accurate, if one is to talk about the chapter as a whole and how the pieces both fit and fail to fit in the overall image of Dublin as a place of turbulent and hostile divergences, is that the chapter demonstrates that indifference resists differentiation. What is generic and normal has its own colour without, as it were, needing to derive that colour from an exterior stand, according to which differences of colour are included as differences in colour.

I am refereeing to colour in a plural sense, in the sense of having colours. Although I am leaning on the Badiou-Derrida tension here (the *indiscernible* as locus of the *inexistent*), I have used the word ‘colour’ to hark back to my earlier connections drawn between Laruelle’s text on opacity ‘Universal Black in the Foundations of Human Colour’ and the diaphany of ‘Proteus’ and black rainbows of *Finnegans Wake*. The non-intuitive phenomenality of Laruelle’s ‘universe black’ which is ‘in the foundations’ of colour. In ‘The Wandering Rocks’ one might see an analogical kind of blackness, which is ‘in the foundations’ of time and space within being their union or the protean substrate from where they are drawn. We might suggest here that it is possible to propose or even theorise a kind of ‘order-black’ (not a blackness of order) that stands for the opacity mutual to phenomenal time and phenomenal space which is, neither the void nor negation, the phenomenal blackness, blindness or deafness of the ‘going through’ proper to human space and human time. As Laruelle puts it: “Metaphysical white is a mere blanching, the prismatic or indifferent unity of colours. Phenomenal blackness is indifferent to colours, for it is their ultimate tenor in reality, that which prevents their final dissolution into *mélanges* of light” [Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy*, 2012: 405].

In ‘The Wandering Rocks’, ‘Sirens’ and in many sections of *Finnegans Wake*, we see Joyce explore narrative *as a situated situation* not through the dissolution or mixing together

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<sup>319</sup> In terms of applying the critical vocabulary of strong and weak correlationism to literary studies, ‘The Wandering Rocks’ provides an excellent example of exactly how literal and direct the ‘correlates’ in ‘correlationism’ can be. We can say simply: to read this chapter, to ‘do justice’ to it, is to work actively against the notion that to be is to be a correlate, that is read each element outside of the value or weight which it may have as a correlate.

of differing thoughts and experiences of time with differing thoughts and experience of space, into a 'white light' of spatio-temporal affinity with immediate experience, but rather apprehending the 'order-black', ordinal blackness, which is the "ultimate tenor" of both spatiality and temporality in narrative. The *opacity* or impenetrability is nevertheless the grounds for a phenomenal 'passing through' common to narrated time and narrating space, standing in place of any affinity as the appearing-foundational of that which is ultimately without foundation. This 'ordinal blackness', and its composition role within making and experiencing narrative, allows us to approach again the theme raised by Ricoeur in his chapter 'Games with Time' in the second volume of his *Narrative and Time* [Ricoeur, 1986: 77-p81], between *Erzählzeit* and *Erzählte Zeit*, a hermeneutic distinction between 'the time of narrating' and 'narrated time'. What would be the articulation of this game-like (perhaps 'ludo-logical') distinction in negative hermeneutics? I would begin with Ricoeur's statement (in his comparison between Genette and Müller) that "everything stems from the observation that narrative is, to use an expression from Thomas Mann, "setting aside" (*Aussparen*), that is, both choosing and excluding" [Ibid. 78]. Ricoeur's conclusion is to focus on Genette's structuralist or taxonomical discussion over a purely hermeneutic account, as "the game itself becomes the stakes" [Ibid. 81], despite the oblique or tangential relation between temporal experience (*Zeiterlebnis*) and temporal armature (*Zeitgerüst*). In this thesis, I have touched on similar grounds as the problemata of *Aussparen*, through belonging and including, but primarily through the distinction which I see active in 'The Wandering Rocks' and much of *Finnegans Wake*: that of the excepted and the excepting. This distinction however, belongs to the speculative project I call negative hermeneutics, as it is not primordial affinity between *Erlebnis* and time, experienced in narrative form through a polarity of *Zeiterlebnis* and *Zeitgerüst*, but rather their complete and utter non-relation or discontinuity. I take the 'game-like' dimension of narrative to mean that they can only be related, not through 'oblique intention' that unites measurable time with temporal experience, but through conceptual proliferation and a subtractive gesture reinforcing their polygamous *mésalliances*. But how does all these apply to Joyce's Dublin which is that "timecoloured place where we live in our paroquial firmament one tide on another" [FW 29], the anti-foundationalist view that is time (as perceived) is a secondary quality, not a primordial affinity, which colours and shades rather than constitutes narrative. Following Laruelle's exhortation in 'Universal Black in the Foundations of Human Colour' that one should "Simplify colours! See black, think white", if one might interpret narrative, as theorists of encyclopedic narrative often do, as a place where we see space (reading or watching), but think time, then I am attempting to, in narrative

terms, see white but think black. *Zeiterlebnis* is my ‘seeing white’, ordinal-blackness/blindness or the black rainbow of narrative would be my ‘thinking black’. True the dyadic structure of narrative, one can see what grounds narrative as the dyad of ordinal-blackness (narrative ordering as the grounding anti-phenomenon of narratological phenomena) and black-ordinality (narrative order as sort of material senselessness latent to, but inaccessible by narratological phenomena) – the dyad that is totally unreachable analogies of drawn from the supposed affinity between narrative time and narrative space. That is, one must think of the basis of narrative not to be expressive of fundamental affinities between human temporal-spatial experience and narrative structures, but of the intrusion a wholly alien and obscure structurality that very much does not have any foundational affinities with human experience. The ‘stuff’ of narrative, its materiality in the world and its concreteness in human experience, is this very indifference from humanity. The mechanical and alienating framing of situations in each of the scenes of ‘The Wandering Rocks’ captures this profound indifference, the alien-ness not of difference and alterity, but of the same orientated towards the same, that is the same *selon* the same.

Joyce’s anti-aristocratic posture, or the displacement of attitudes one associates with aristocracy to unremarkable normality, is evidenced throughout ‘The Wandering Rocks’. The exception belongs, not to a royal procession and singular center of exceptional, or exceptionally articulated, difference itself, but to the quotidian reality it passes through, denoting exceptional potentiality for the singular. The royal procession seems to suck in, like a gravity well, the capacity for exception from that which is indifferent to it, and make it its own in order to articulate itself. We see this articulation throughout the chapter as a movement through space and time that we might assume to be grand, but it ultimately turns out to be comic. ‘Royalty’ or ‘aristocracy’ does not consist in the manufacture of the *exceptional* as undeniably apparent *difference*, in the form of the wholly or pre-eminently different, very comically acting obliviously, as though paradigmatic of foundational affinities between difference and space, time and experience, identity and unity. This all leads to the grand irony of the episode, the final section, where the final recounting of the procession creates a moment of retrospective ‘bringing accounts into account’, or a *compte du compte*, to echo Badiou, that has ultimately failed to operate in the sense of conjuring a point or centration of the narrative to function as a conjoining of *Erzählzeit* and *Erzähle Zeit*, *Zeiterlebnis* and

*Zeitgerüst*,<sup>320</sup> riding through in a way that re-instates the torsion and turbulence of the episode itself, rather than purifying or clarifying the ‘intrusions’, as the Gifford and Seidman annotations have it [Gifford and Seidman, 1988, 260].<sup>321</sup> The final chapter does not reconcile the pacing of the chapter with the literal ‘pacing’ of the cavalcade, neither does it reconcile the utilisation of time by narrative composition with the inhabited time taken up by specific human activities within the narrative.

This is a problem both for the presumption of an ontological priority of identity or sameness, and for ontologies of difference. Joyce’s pure multiplicity is without ontology, founded upon the void: the priority of the indifferent in a ‘coherent’ multiplicity of incidents and actions taking place on an ordinary day in Dublin.

This has an undeniable literal reference to Irish life in the milieu colonial rule, as well as an ironic one that one is unable to walk across Dublin without bumping into an acquaintance, and these combine in the ‘hostility’ of divergence and interdependence illustrated by the episode. But, in addition to a literal and ironic ‘sense’, we might comment that if one translates ‘Senzo (Significato)’ in the Joyce schema as ‘meaning’, then it is not describing what a particular episode means, as in, its central literal or ironic interpretation. Rather, it serves as an authorial comment by Joyce on *how* the episode means – what it tells us about the production, or simulation, of meaning. For example, the episode ‘Telemachus’ does not only have the meaning of a dispossessed son, but also evinces meaning itself as a product of various kinds of dispossession. Likewise, the meaning given to the episode ‘Lestrygonians’, that of ‘despondency’, fits a reading that would not show ‘despondency’ as the ultimate meaning of each element of the episode but, rather, all or most meanings to be the result of despondence or discomfort. In the episode ‘Lestrygonians’, Bloom’s language attaches ‘meanings’ to persons or events in responses to affects like annoyance, hunger [U 217-218], disgust [U 216-217], intoxication [U 222], pity [U 233], and fear [U 234]; his generation and assignment of ‘meaning’ seems to be a reaction to negative thoughts or unpleasant sensations. ‘Meaning’ crosses backwards from the processes of conceptualisation and inference Joyce allows us to be privy to. In the apparentness of the (false or simulated) spontaneity of reflex or reaction, Joyce draws a narrative dynamism from the distinction

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<sup>320</sup> The time of narrating and the narrated time, the lived experience of time and its temporal armature. See Ricoeur, *Narrative and Time 2*, [Ricoeur, 1984:77-81].

<sup>321</sup> They define these ‘intrusions’ as ‘temporally simultaneous, but spatially remote’. Perhaps we can say that here is an example of ‘order-black’ or ‘ordinal-blackness’ in that the intrusions disrupt or dismantle any intuitive or encyclopedic affinity between *Erzählzeit* and *Erzählte Zeit*. Instead, they suggest an ulterior kind of ordering which appears instantaneously, subordinating both the spatial and the temporal too itself without becoming accessible to the direct experience, and then vanishing without a trace or acknowledge by the narrative voice.

between the manufacture and assigning of meaning from exception, and the apparentness of the (again, false or simulated) effacement of exception when a latent meaning comes to the fore. All I have said regarding immediacy, in terms of sensation and linguistic mineness, can be applied to abstractions of meaning itself, because there is a recursion to Joyce's very keen awareness that conceptualisation is always linguistically situated.<sup>322</sup>

In 'The Wandering Rocks', there are a significant variety of examples of such operations, where meaning is produced in transacting *exception* for *meaning*. We might say that the Lord Lieutenant's procession shows how meaning is simulated by transferring the potential for exception from the indifferent or generic to the most highly differentiated, the most distinguished, whose differentiation is assumed to be absolute or prior to any situation it enters into: a transcendental value, a transcendental "Who?", addressing, not the figure of William Humble, the earl of Dudley, in the Cavalcade, but the organising principle performed by his presence.

Taking a horizontal view of the episode, the complexity of each section is ultimately resolved to the circuit of Q: "Who?" – A: "the Lord Lieutenant". Each establishment or step of meaning, each hostility, is a step taken to get us there. Meaning, in broader social or cultural terms, is therefore nothing other than a kind of semantic debt, a writ for a sum borrowed by the allegedly transcendently different from the demonstrably immanent indifferent, incurred in this transaction. Much like semantics is the debt incurred to syntax when names are used in the place of represented real-objects, the 'hostility' of the environment therefore exposes us to this forced exchange of exceptionality for meaning. The cavalcade has a sorting and assimilating function, animating all things through the implication of the question "Who?"

Under the shade of this encompassing, regulation "Who?", the chapter is filled with what Gifford and Seidman refer to as 'intrusions'. The incidents recounted are divorced from the explicit articulation of "who?", in the sense of never telling us who is acting even if a name does appear,<sup>323</sup> divorcing even names from particular operation which the "who?" has in narrative. In this sense, we can regard this "who?" as the transcendental operation of narrative, and the Cavalcade as the moment of maximal intensity of "who?" (where it surely must have an answer) and the intrusions as minimal intensities, where "who?" has absolutely no appropriate answer within the text itself. The "who?" can only be answered to if one can

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<sup>322</sup> 'Encyclopedic', in a sense.

<sup>323</sup> For example, see Father Conmee [U 288] and Rochford's contraption [U 294].

only answer “who?” one takes a position (as reader) that transcends the text and gives one a para-contextual position.

By ‘generic’, we can understand that the generic is not an abstract property, but the potential for intrusion or overlapping. Consequently, what Gifford and Seidman term ‘intrusions’ are a by-product of a situation whose specificity does not deny the potential to harbour elements that might be generic. Therefore, one situation can harbour elements that are able to articulate a totally different situation, so that, when Rochford’s contraption spits out a disk in the midst of Miss Dunne’s typing, the genericity of operating mechanical devices can articulate both, without effacing either their specificity or materiality. Similarly, Father Conmee’s ‘stepping’ up onto the tram with Corny Kelleher “lock[ing] his largefooted boots” [U 288] suggests a generic kind of motion around stepping, whether one is holding one’s boots together or stepping up onto a tram. I would caution against reading these as irruptive, but also against reading them as eruptive: they reflect a genericity and the ability to make one thing out of another. They also seem to come from Dublin as it might be considered prior to any articulation, outside of a logic of appearance, from a place that is neither interior nor exterior. Instead, they seem to be a product of a non-temporal and non-spatial tension between subtraction and superposition. A realist account of a trivial incident is successful only if it can overlap with any other incident.<sup>324</sup>

Quotidian Dublin is a Dublin of indifference-in-divergence, full of potential exception and absent of originary meanings, where indifference-in-divergence can potentially gain some kind of articulation (apparency) that might be understood as indifference *as* divergence. The Imperial situation that wishes for the capture of Dublin, both literally and figuratively, performs the piecemeal replacement of exception with meaning. This is not the same as saying that Joyce’s account of environmental (or meta-situational) ‘hostility’ equates meaning with force or power, or that one should read it that way, but rather that, instead of a relationship of forces, a non-relation of transaction is at work.

Even if one overlooks the ‘intrusions’, all of the shorter sections of ‘The Wandering Rocks’ describe the possibility of exception in some sense. It is in this sense that a possibility of exception becomes pertinent as a potential descriptor of a dynamic of textual or narrative

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<sup>324</sup> I would contrast this systematic presentation of the ‘plurality of time’ on the basis of representational generic-ness to Deleuze’s account of the same which is focused upon the specificity of times, and contains no small influence from the critique of representation one finds elsewhere in Deleuze.

‘realism’ as both stylistic conviction and descriptive technic.<sup>325</sup> One might call them ‘subtractions’,<sup>326</sup> as they involve incidents that are identifiable purely by how removed they are from the linear progression around which the chapter is formed. The sections describe incidents that are both excepted from the central incident of the procession, and excepting in the sense that the composition phrase seems to subvert the integrating (‘criss-crossing’) style of narrative in order to form a kind of textual vagination,<sup>327</sup> performing both while remaining mostly or, more often, totally indifferent to the supposedly central or spinal procession-progression of the episode as a whole and the spatial-temporal operation it supposedly performs. The progression of the chapter seems to create, in other words, a phantom interiority, that seems cloned from the real interiorities, which are mostly indifferent or concealed. The reader is instructed to read this in the rather treacherous way in which Father Conmee’s memories and interior voice both adopts and betrays the ways in which the reader may have become acclimatised to treating interior monologue as a generic convention.<sup>328</sup> A great irony of the episode is that it provides not only a phantom interiority, but also a *sense* of interiority where the reader, as it were, lets go of Joyce’s hand and steps outside into the wide socio-economic world of Dublin, where we are delighted by the fact that this incrementally freer exposure to the ‘outside’ has come in the form of a new, more palpable intimacy with the inside.<sup>329</sup> As with the ‘intrusions’, there is a repeated sense of something coming through or crossing the Moebius loop onto the interior. The examples of this dyadic manufacture of local

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<sup>325</sup> Joyce’s use of ‘technic’ rather than ‘technique’ is to be retained here, not least because it stakes out the semantic proximity (or lack thereof) between his fiction and twentieth century hermeneutics.

<sup>326</sup> I recognise the problem between referring to explicit ‘subtractions’ versus the general ‘subtractive’ posture I describe in Joyce’s work. As to address this issue in full would require an entire re-litigation of the problem of universality versus particular, but in a very pruned form, I won’t digress here. To clarify, I am using subtraction to contrast with ‘exception’, but I am aware of the semantic recursion possible: much like ‘The Wandering Rocks’ (and many sections of *Finnegans Wake* which seem to rehearse the entirety of the book in miniature), we can think of Joyce producing almost innumerable ‘ship in a bottle’ versions of complex philosophical issues. Stephen’s encounter with Dilly in this episode, for example, where we find the opposite of a “Nebrakada Femininum” [U 312] (little feminine heaven), a pocket-sized torment of ideas.

<sup>327</sup> This is an instance of what I will call, elsewhere, a ‘one-effect’: textual or narrative vagination could be described as a one-effect of narrative interiority.

<sup>328</sup> The usage of ellipses in the paragraph beginning ‘A fine carriage she had’ [U 282] may be something of a tip-off to the reader that all is not as it should be. To my reading, this paragraph seems to retrospectively alter the way that the opening section of ‘The Wandering Rocks’ has used interjections such as ‘O,’ (capital O followed with a comma – a verbal exclamation elsewhere, e.g. the *Dubliners* story ‘A Mother’) is hardly normative or conventional in terms of the establishment of an interior voice or a narration of a third person’s act of recollection. The repeated usage of ‘should’ might also suggest that there is a voice here that is principally the voice of order and arrangement, and that seems to belong, neither to Conmee, nor to the author, nor to *Ulysses* itself. The character and persona of Conmee, and the role he reflects both in Joyce’s life and Dublin’s social world, make this an ideal point for Joyce to experiment and be less forthright or transparent to the reader in terms of temporal-spatial continuity, in particular as it applies to interior voices.

<sup>329</sup> Interior monologue itself has become not a literary device or genre convention, but what I earlier termed a ‘metaphor-metaphor’. I do not use this term here because the ugliness of my coinage undermines the freeing effect of the enjoyability and enthusiasm of Joyce’s text I wish to describe.



interiority as a tension between excepted-excepting is evidenced in the forms taken by particularity when Joyce gives us incidents where a particular thing crosses over into being a *specific* particular thing: such a particular book purchased by Bloom [U 302-304], Rochford's invention [U 293], personal talent [U 293], personal aspirations and regrets on the part of Stephen and his sister [U 310-313], the gift being purchased by Boylan [U 291-292], and so on for each section. We can understand that the presentation of exception here does not necessarily already involve the depiction of either a singularity or a discontinuity, nor does it already constitute something like a conception of an event or a condition integrated into the stylistic neatness and naturality of tone that characterises the chapter. Rather, exception is seen as a twofold resistance, a familiar dyadic form, that is one only insofar as it is a kind of dyad that might be called a *one-effect*: the resistance, first to the idea that in order to be a thing a *thing* means *something* and, second, to the idea that something already meant something by virtue of history or social situation. Bloom perusing the racks of books [U 302-303] may give either the impression that books hold latent potential meaning that is unveiled or uncovered when brought into Bloom's perspective, or else that Bloom's perspective is what projects or generates meaning on the books. The message one gets from 'The Wandering Rocks' is that both of these impressions are equally wrong.

'The Wandering Rocks' gently guides to the reader to the acknowledgement that meaning has no great ontological priority: it is a part of the conceptual vocabulary that is sometimes useful but often intrusive. This would also suggest that the coupling of perspective and meaning is a '*mesalliance(!)*', an unstable hierarchy, whether we see the temporal arranged first as perspective, then as meaning or first meaning, then as perspective. The chapter focuses on learned or trained ocularity: perusing books, getting a signal from a mechanical device, looking inside, seeing a person and recognising them as a type, seeing a person and recognising them by name, playing a board game, and, most pungently, the rage of the blind stripling at Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell [U 322], after his cane is struck by the latter's coat. The comparison between C.B.O.F.T.F.'s eyeglass and the cane, as well as coupling with the memorable exclamation "you're blind nor am I, you bitch's bastard!" crashes home the reader's possible assumption that we are seeing the same time and place from different perspectives.

As this reading suggests that not only is Joyce revealing the technological extensions implicit in seeing - relating an eye-glass to a cane, to printed words, to the mind's eye of memory, to game pieces, etc., he is uncovering the discontinuities and subtraction latent, and necessary to, such divergent extensionalities. To talk of dyadic or redoubled subtraction is far

from abstract here: stylistic subtractions, performed or gestured subtractions, show us the real subtractions in Joyce's images of experiences-without-givenness. Furthermore, we see that the aesthetic 'images' that apprehend instantiation, both of encounters and of problemata, are not demonstrative in the strict documentary, philosophical or scientific senses, but a kind of pattern or gesture imprinted or imbedded in language without being reducible to language or irreducible to the 'aboutness' of a certain ensemble of language-objects.

As 'hostility' is a very familiar, even ubiquitous, element of the Joycean aesthetic environment, we should read the 'The Wandering Rocks' as potentially highly instructive, as a demonstration of the real against the correlated. In terms of Stephen Dedalus' analysis in *A Portrait*, we can say that "exception" or "grounds for exception" does not mean either "a thing" or "a *thing*", but snapshots the grounds or situation into which a distinction would make sense (a piece of internet jargon, a "screengrab" suits many of the incidents as it might imply than an image is animated).<sup>330</sup> For example, Rochford's device turns a particular theatrical 'turn' into 'this' theatrical turn, but without the device making the turn present itself. Each section or "grab" presents a side of Dublin that may or may not be reduced to correlates; part of the effect of the fast pace and rhythm (marching, waves, pacing) of the section is this uncertainty of a roaring surface of the sea, which does not suggest either the unreal or hyper-subjective. It is not the finitude of a certain position-perspective that is suggested by each section, but the genericity (prone to 'intrusions') proper to the snatching or grabbing itself.

This is also evidenced in the memories of Father Conmee, which may be both real and unreal, suggesting an impossible ground of absolutised correlation, being caught in a situation where one can no longer get outside of oneself and can only be what one is, is the ultimate threat as the isolation and sensation of being so far ahead or beyond that what is behind is unreachable. Molly's appearance in the chapter suggests her ability to balance both, snugly correlated, but gesturing towards singularity.

'The Wandering Rocks', therefore, might be said to express a kind of conceptual continuity from epiphany towards *Finnegans Wake*'s focus upon the "one great part of life" that literature has previously left untouched. This continuity manifests at once as a narrowing of the focus and broadening of the aspects of life that can be considered fair game to become subjects for transformation into aesthetic images. We can understand the obscure focus of

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<sup>330</sup> Meaning a short video recording or an image of what someone was looking at. The term mixes apprehension, technological visual display and a return of *Ulysses* to the priority of the optical and the ocular after the verbal-textual dimension of 'Scylla and Carybdis' and the priority of the inner voice in 'Lestrygonians'. The superposition of what Gifford and Seidman term 'intrusions' anticipates the merging and 'copy-pasting' of superimposed images in online media.

Joyce's narrative desire to be the imaginative capture of that which is at once exceptional and generic, that cannot simply be inserted or overlaid into any other situation as an abstract universal representation, but that can harbour intrusions itself in the form of superpositions that conceptually innovate. This focus creates new apprehensions, new ways of grouping what might be called *concrete* universalities from the vantage of inclusion and difference, and *imaginative* universalities from the vantage of belonging and identity. To use Badiou's terms, Joyce's post-epiphanic innovations, such as the intrusions in 'The Wandering Rocks', or the collating function of the Cavalcade as a narrative operation, force a ground for unity between multiplicities that are one-effects, not because they are counted-as-one (*compte-pour-un*), but because they are only counted once excrescent elements are counted in representational terms, but not presented<sup>331</sup>, and singularities presenting themselves but resisting representations<sup>332</sup>. What is so innovative here, and why this is not just a schematic overlay of Badiou's theory of meta-structural 'states' overlaid onto Joyce's narrative counter-structures, is that, in Joyce, one properly calls the excrescent elements concrete, because Joyce understands all representation to be a function of materiality, and that all representation lacks its own autonomous substantive strata and, instead, is etched<sup>333</sup> into the real. 'Belonging', on the contrary, is conceptual, ideational and immaterial and, somehow, stranded in the unreachable tautology of mathematical self-identity.<sup>334</sup>

The exceptional, a true (or *veritable*) singularity, presenting itself as an exception, is not that radically different from the anonymous and normal, which is not manifestly exceptional but, rather, potentially exceptional, an undeniable manifestation of the altogether other, a logic of exception legible only from the position of indifference, acting only in an orientation towards the indifferent. The indifferent or quotidian, then, is understood as the grounds for a possible exception, even if we do not know what that exception is or will be. The juxtaposition of Father John Conmee and Maestro Almidano Artifoni illustrates this. Conmee's inclusion in *Ulysses* is doubtlessly due to the fact that the real John Conmee ensured a Belvedere scholarship for Joyce [JJ 35], and Artifoni's discussion with Stephen concerns the responsibility that one has to one's talents. We see that Conmee holds Catholic students of low social status in slight contempt (he is "benign" to them) [U 283]. Both Conmee and Artifoni are drawn very generously: their concern for developing talents is sincere but it is through the lens of exception. Exceptional talent, exceptional status, election,

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<sup>331</sup> Joyce's commandeering of the Cavalcade's spatio-temporal authority as a narrative device

<sup>332</sup> The grounds or incidental components of the intrusions, but not the intrusions themselves

<sup>333</sup> The use of burial mounds and hieroglyphs in *Finnegans Wake*, for an ur-example.

<sup>334</sup> The use of 'numerical traits' in *Finnegans Wake*, for an ur-example.

even racial hierarchy [U 285] are all suggested. The sections with Conmee and Artifoni hint at the belief that what differentiates itself after cultivation was already latent. The text itself seems agnostic on this view, but it is key that we see that Artifoni sees talent in what Stephen displays as indifference. Difference is not pre-ordained or pre-destined. The view or, in Conmee's case, prejudice, that one grows into pre-existing difference, as displayed by the two personifications of education, is met with both literal and figurative indifference.

In a stylistic sense, nothing here is negative. But in the sense of this thesis, it is not enough to simply state what Joyce does not do and point out what he avoids and what the directness of his writing [L 136] demanded he exert upon commonsensical conceptions of perceptual experience and inward self-awareness.

What is, if anything, is being demonstrated? The answer is nothing, as realist aesthetic gestures do not demonstrate anything. Joyce's aesthetic is realist, but not necessarily 'realistic' as it would usually describe fiction. It is about apprehension and grasping. His ethics run from forms of affirmation such as Nietzschean eternal return to Parnellite nationalism. So, we cannot just talk about what is not being grasped and how one does not grasp things, but what is being grasped and how.

## CHAPTER 15: SINGULARITY IN QUESTION (Part Two)

### *Appearance and Autonomy*

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Stephen's encounter with 'Parnell' is first and foremost an encounter with Parnell as among names. The word 'Parnell' is not a name of a person, but a 'theme', that quickly becomes submerged into thoughts of inscription of names as identities, localities and definitions:

He saw himself sitting at his table in Bray the morning after the discussion at the Christmas dinner table, trying to write a poem about Parnell on the back of one of his father's second moiety notices. But his brain had then refused to grapple with the theme and, desisting, he had covered the page with the names and addresses of certain of his classmates. [AP 70].

As Joyce's works evolve, the role that the word 'Parnell' has in *A Portrait* seems to get ever more distant. The rock of absolute certainty in *A Portrait* seems to fade into acerbic commentary on the self-mythifying nature of Dublin life. The parallel between Parnell and Christ becomes explicit in *Ulysses*. In itself, this is not only a constitutive mytheme of Home Rule politics. It additionally suggests the kind of deflating bathos and humour attached to Parnell's downfall in *Finnegans Wake*, which broadly carries the same accusation against Irish nationalism that Joyce made towards the reception of his own work. Biographers frequently seem to position Joyce's embrace of Parnell as being a political mirror of his own subjectivity<sup>335</sup>, due to his persistently having been betrayed. Yet, there is also a sense that what ties the names Joyce and Parnell together in the mind of James Joyce was not just betrayal. It is also the grammatical arrangement of betrayed and misunderstood. From Joyce's comments, one gets the impression that the names Joyce and Parnell are betrayed and misunderstood, but the grammar of this, the form of *not only* betrayed *but also* misunderstood, is the key subjective similarity. It binds them, not in identity or historical context, but in a local logical form. I would argue that this kind of logical form is as crucial to understanding the kind of accusation being made as images and mythic identities. For Parnell Joyce associated the image of a hunted stag and the identity of Christ. And this is a strong, accusation which must be taken seriously. Joyce, a man who celebrated his own indifference<sup>336</sup> to politics as much as he asserted various opinions, is speaking to those engaged in a political conflict, and condemning them, not for betraying any specific value, but

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<sup>335</sup> Especially Ellmann, as I will cite later.

<sup>336</sup> Recorded comments from Joyce stating that "I don't care about politics" [JJ 643] became almost as common late in his life as endorsements of egoism and socialism were in his early life.

seemingly because, in his eyes, they have misunderstood themselves. The acme of this misunderstanding, it seems, is the ‘theme’ with which the young Stephen Dedalus’ brain refuses to engage, a theme that eventually spreads like a virus throughout Joyce’s work, contorting and prolonging itself, until it becomes as much of an affirmation of his own independence as it does an accusation against his countrymen.

To start with the comparisons Joyce himself draws, the mistake of which Joyce seems to accuse Fenianism is to have misidentified Parnell as a Christ figure rather than a Socrates. We might say that Christ figures, for Joyce, are aesthetic agents, artists, typified perhaps by Oscar Wilde.<sup>337</sup> This impression even arises from his writing on Mangan, which carries the implication that Mangan, while not crucified, was subject to a misunderstanding and, thus, has to be resurrected in the here and now in order to speak to an Irish public who is truly able to understand him. As regards political figures, they never ‘come again’ in the sense of either a resurrection or a direct continuity. Joyce’s notion of a political return is not a resurrection of an authentic moment, but rather something resembling Badiou’s notion of a ‘sequence’ – that is, a former, egalitarian statement which has no authentic moment, and has to be remade or ‘deducted’ anew a new historical circumstance.

Imaginative universality, that is to say, the persistence of an imaginary or mythic identity across persons, through dyadic processes of cloning or replication, does not ‘come again’ in the same way in art as it does in politics. Furthermore, it does not come again in the same way as it does in the sciences. If one interprets *Ulysses* (with its theme of metempsychosis) and *Finnegans Wake* (with its ricorso) as being both compositionally and thematically predicated upon notions of repetition, we must see that Joyce’s enlivening of notions of an eternal return necessarily takes a form that acknowledges the uniqueness of recurrence.<sup>338</sup> It may be a gross exaggeration to say that, since Joyce seeks a fundamentally

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<sup>337</sup> Ellmann may be occasionally reductive about Joyce’s relationship with Wilde, or indeed about Wilde himself, but he observed that Wilde’s position as a ‘betrayed exile’ illuminates the Joycean position that “the artist pretends to be Lucifer but really is Jesus” [JJ 275]. However, the ‘betrayal’ here cannot simply be linked upwards to a general sense of betrayal by Ireland itself, nor downwards to Joyce’s feelings that his own friends (especially Gogarty) had betrayed him. One should read Ellmann’s famous insight with accent upon the Christ rather than the betrayal: that is, the artist is Christ, therefore betrayed rather than betrayed, and therefore Christlike. This is as good an instance as any of Joyce’s refusal to take his theological precursor texts as merely analogical.

<sup>338</sup> Both in explicit reference to Nietzsche and to the notion of an eternal return generally. As a trivial point here, I would use this as an example to highlight Joyce’s distinction (especially in *Finnegans Wake* as compared to *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*) between general notions and specific philosophical concepts; for example, the notion of the coincidence of contraries versus the specific examples of such in Bruno and Hegel. It is worth using Joyce’s appropriation of Nietzsche, more Anti-Plato than Anti-Christ, to highlight this as the direction is promethean bilaterally: to take a specific concept and reduce it to a notion, but also to raise a notion to a specific concept, is the power of the aesthetic image of a problem which is conditioned, rather than bound, by activities of conceptualisation.

creative way of apprehending notions of eternal return rather than the simple affirmation of latent or persistent identity, his idea of intelligible aesthetic beauty predicated upon ‘image’ must eventually lose any sense of mimesis or representation and, ultimately, should come to anticipate none other than the twentieth century pinnacle of Nietzschean vitalism, namely Deleuze’s theory of complex repetition.<sup>339</sup> What manifests in the recurrence is *uniqueness* and not *sameness*. So, the thought of the eternal return, as it forms a compositional thread that winds through the final book of *Finnegans Wake*, is asymptotic: as returns repeat, approaching their eternal limit points with mounting intensities, the notion of that which *eternally* returns takes on the appearance of that which is *absolutely* unique.<sup>340</sup> The lesson derived from Joyce’s polemics is that we cannot mistake either academicisation or re-popularisation as the coming again of aesthetic genius. When Joyce opposes his own resurrection of Irish art to the Irish Literary Revival, the revival being the revival of old age, of institutions, of mysticisms and of art as testament to lived-experience rather than of the art composed from lived-experience. Similarly, we can oppose the ‘resurrection’ of Parnell as a Socratic recursion<sup>341</sup> as a line of inconvenient questioning from a generic position, from one who exuded indifference, that will not go away, someone who evoked the capacity of Ireland, no matter how stable the consensus appeared, always to think again and to reconsider the Fenian fantasy of Parnell as Christ. In other words, Parnell was a particular man who would come again, as an identity or as a person, and signal the emancipation of the Irish people as an autonomous nation.

From the story ‘Ivy Day’ to the sincere treatment of Parnell’s overwhelming emotional legacy in *A Portrait*, via the more parodic references in *Ulysses* and the outright absurdist satire in *Finnegans Wake*, we can see Joyce’s texts as resisting, or at least operating against the backdrop of, a dual reductionism on the topic of Parnell. Or, perhaps, what we are

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<sup>339</sup> It is difficult to summarise complex repetition in a footnote. As Deleuze himself says “The difficulties of conceptualising repetition cannot be over-emphasized” [Deleuze, 1994: 129]. It is also a point where my reading of Deleuze will doubtlessly be too naïve to be useful for someone looking for scholarship in philosophical literature. But I will fish out two key connection points, perhaps pleats, between Deleuze and Joyce on this matter. Firstly, Deleuze’s stress that complex repetition ultimately leads to disjunctive synthesis between parallel series in which “neither can be designated as the original or the derived” [Ibid. 130]. Immediately, one sees how this relates to the theme of forgery and paternity throughout Joyce, and also to a ‘perfumative’ of Joyce’s grammar of signification, as Derrida sees it. Secondly, “repetition is thus in essence symbolic, spiritual and intersubjective or monadological” [Ibid. 131] from which Deleuze begins to formulate a critique of Freud’s theory of the unconscious on the basis of creativity and virtuality against negative. He recalibrates the theme of the unconscious into a creative and generic space as Joyce does with the mind of Leopold Bloom. From here, I am reluctant to elaborate further, as I am sure that ‘Complex Repetition in James Joyce’ is worthy of a work of greater length than the present thesis, if it does not already exist.

<sup>340</sup> Another Deleuzian parallel is the Stoic notion of the Event advanced in *Logic of Sense*: “a sort of leaping in place (...) neither individual nor universal (...), one and the same event”. [Deleuze, 1990].

<sup>341</sup> Perhaps this is one reason why Kierkegaard is mentioned so frequently in *Finnegans Wake*.

confronted with is a pincer movement between generalised interpretative reductionisms on one hand, and cultural or sociological irreductions on the other. We are between either Parnell as a Messianic emblem, totally divorced from political reality whose own actions tragically fell short of the ideals he represented, or Parnell as a great man, a pure actor or agent, indistinguishable and inseparable from his own political actions, reducing a politics of emancipation to merely one aspect of the biography of an Irish hero, inseparable from any political, legal or ideological account of his impact. Joyce is dismantling the implication that the *meaning* of Parnell, whether personal or national, was more significant than the political action represented by Parnellite Home Rule and Parnell himself as a political actor. However, in the same motion, Joyce is using literature (often satirically or comically) to resist the idea that it is the *identity* of Parnell, in whatever domain it is expressed, that is more significant than the cause of Home Rule itself.

The diagonal trajectory of the politics of Joyce's work, in particular reference to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, completely seems to bypass both meaning and identity as valent (or perhaps valid) sites for political activity. Yet, how can this be? Is this not like saying the work of a linguist succeeds because it has bypassed the topic of words? Joyce, in his journalistic and critical writings as well as his fictions, implored Europeans to look closer at the particulars of Irish politics: is he not contradicting himself in the way that he uses Parnell? Simply as a bridge across to a purely universal, almost intangibly vague kind of politics, existing only as a shadowy absent-presence authorising the present-absence of absolute aesthetic autonomy that is left for the artist, as a political exile, to claim for himself. It seems very hard to take Joyce's politics seriously without reducing them either to trite affirmations of metropolitan Ireland as a melting-pot, or to the endorsement of abstract universalities at the expense of real political issues. Unless one radically redefines the key terms at play, which is what we must do if we are to 'do justice' to texts signed 'James Joyce', is to escape from the priority of *definition* over conceptualisation, if one is to do justice to a work of fiction. That is, to give equal priority to both ideas and meanings.

In the journalistic polemic 'The Shade of Parnell', Joyce lets slip the following sentence, which is extremely revealing as to his true thinking of Parnell: "no matter: the appearance of autonomy is there" [OCPW 193]. This phrase is not only extremely telling of the domain of ideas into which Joyce is trying to deliver Parnellism as a *concept*. It also suggests that Joyce's Parnell has always been multiple, though not in the sense of many meanings. Joyce never gives the reader reason to move away from the notion of Parnell as



real flesh and blood individual, whereas one might with his version of O'Connell.<sup>342</sup> But, the sense is that the reality of Parnell is like the reality of any person or subject in Joyce's work: it does not have a pre-given unity, meaning or oneness. The word 'Parnell', the man Charles Stewart Parnell, the name 'Parnell' and the political acts signed and indicated by that name are all very real and not just cultural constructions, but they are incohesive. Like Joyce's portrayal of his own family members, one cannot take a wholly *political* view of the use of Parnell, unless one understands that instances of letters P, a, r, n, e, l and l in Joyce's work do not stand for a unity, but for the arising of a consistency from an inconsistency, as much as (for example) the reference to the Goulding family gives one the impression of the coherence of a family rising from inconsistency (through an apparent '*mésalliance(!)*'), acquiring a consistence, in a certain sense, with the family as a becoming, and then again decaying into inconsistency through financial problems.<sup>343</sup> It is not a given thing, either as a given meaning or given by meaning, that instances of the letters P, a, r, n, e, l and l create a name. But the fact

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<sup>342</sup> The sentence "They passed under the hugecloaked Liberator's form" in *Ulysses*, [U 117] illustrates this distinction well. Firstly, O'Connell is a topological figure, a marker of periodicity, position and punctuation. But also, the 'form of the Liberator' is heavily suggestive of the shadow without referencing the shadow cast, of a form or idea rather than a specific sequence or series of actions. In the absence of reference, we visualise O'Connell's shadow as aesthetic image – in reference to absence, we cannot visualise Parnell's shade independently of the image of a problematic. In the context of the chapter 'Hades', where Parnell's grave is mentioned, the immortality of O'Connell is the immortality of a form or idea, that was never truly born and will never truly die. This is an almost Stoic notion of the lives of leading figures in the politics of Irish emancipation. Whereas Parnell, Christlike, was born and died, Hyne's remark "Parnell will never come again, he said. He's there, all that was mortal of him", [U 143] is a celebrated instance of Joyce's subtlety on this point, as Parnell is *there* precisely because he is *gone* and will never come again. That is, Parnell's persistence is ensured through the fact that he did not merely 'go' or depart, or his life end, but he is utterly departed in a way that ensures he will never return. Or, to play with philosophical vocabulary here, Parnell's *eternal* return is guaranteed by the impossibility of a specific return in the here and now; a wholly affirmation image of the political will.

<sup>343</sup> My point here is that the Gouldings, especially through the figure of Uncle Richie in *Ulysses*, counteract the implication of a lost coherence in the progress of the Dedalus family. The reference to Simon's in-laws prevents the reader from simplifying the family history into a story of a family which once was cohesive and unified around the pole of a father, an orbiting mother, daughters and sons, and then broken by circumstance or vice. Instead, the rather shifting and unstable backdrop of family life is given. One of the longest passages concerning the Gouldings in *Ulysses* is a wholly imaginary scenario in 'Proteus'. This is not because the negative picture of Uncle Richie given by Stephen should suggest to us a particularly unstable family (especially by way of contrast to the Dedalus family), but because the image of family life we are given is that of entering and exiting certain finite periods of relative coherence, rather than family life as a pre-given coherence which one must work to maintain. While Joyce certainly does not exonerate Simon Dedalus in *Ulysses*, what makes accounts of the Dedalus family in *Ulysses* so bitterly sad (See 'The Wandering Rocks') is the frequent sense of inevitability. This, of course, is wholly in keeping with Joyce's adaptation of Vico's constructivist approach to families and paternal authority in *Finnegans Wake*, where the family unit and its centration around law and property is not a natural phenomenon, but something founded or instituted, and thus something also subject to the same Heraclitean motion of rising and falling as all other human activities. The Gouldings are, therefore, viewed from the point of view of two other families (the Bloom and Dedalus families), looking in somewhat in evidence of the materiality of family life. They are the inconsistent stuff from which families of made, which is less visible on the interior of the Bloom and Dedalus families as that is a 'point of view' from the interior, and thus 'being a point of view', has already brought things into apparent cohesion and through narrative expedience has acted the illusion of givenness. In this case, the categorical givenness of family hierarchies and the meaning of family rests upon or is drawn from an inconsistency that always has the potential to unexpectedly reassert itself.

is that those letters give us all kinds of inconsistent things: a word, a name, a sound, a political action, a way of identifying oneself in an in-group, the physical body of a real person, etc. through which a consistency emerges. Parnell is an example of Joyce's dedication to contingency in human affairs, and instances of 'Parnell', as word and as name, demonstrate that meaning arrives from a chain of unities. The unified political identity rests upon a unified social identity, in part derived from the coherent cultural identity represented by a coherently recognisable individual, who we know from a name that gets its meaning from the semantic unity of a word, itself a unity of graphemes, graphemes being unities of smaller gestures through the strokes of a pen. Yet, this is exactly not what Joyce's books give us, when we see the letters P, a, r, n, e, l and l together on the page. What we see is an analogue in political life to Bloom's quotidian life and Stephen's artistic life: the account of an island of consistency or appearance arising from inconsistency. The word 'Parnell' is disunited from the name 'Parnell', as it is disassociated from a coherent identity with the letters P, a, r, n, e, l, and l. The name, the word and the gestures are entwining one-effects of each other, located together from meta-structural inclusion, not from structure or complicity in a shared meaning. Each is a clone, an apparent unity concealing a dyad, a material pattern, independent from the social context into which they are ultimate thrown. A pattern rather than an image, the name-word 'Parnell' is then inevitably disunited from the person Charles Stewart Parnell, who ultimately became estranged from any kind of cultural unity that he may have represented. This is entirely in keeping with the two great motifs of Parnell appearing throughout *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce's repetition and transposition of the apocryphal phrase: "when you sell, get my price", throughout supposes that Parnell was never matched to his own value. The status of Parnell as an 'uncrowned king' makes it part of Parnell's definition that is separated from his own title. One might say that this betrays the axiomatic and generic nature of Joyce's universalist and socialist politics: Parnell's political potency springs in part from his exteriority to acts of definition, and from the fact that he never quite seemed to be simply a construction of his local cultural context. That Parnellism is, above all things, a realistic political prospect for Joyce, is expressed by the radicality of the exteriority Joyce reads into Parnell, Parnell even being exterior to the performance of Parnell. This is, perhaps, why Joyce thought that writing advocacy for Parnell in particular, to be read by Europeans, was so important, even though Parnell is in many ways a conservative political figure by the standards of the universal socialism and modernism of Joyce's milieu. Joyce's appropriation of the Parnell moment reflects universality as an orientation towards indifferent exteriors and, in doing so, it re-articulates exile not simply as a refusal of petty interiorities, but as an

affirmation of exteriors as the sense of the true or veritable life of the interior. One finds it very easy to agree with Ellmann's notion that the paper 'The Shade of Parnell' sees Parnell as part of a 'triad' [JJ 319] with his paper on Defoe and Blake, mainly on a theme of autonomy: "in Defoe's master of fact, in Blake's mastery of imagination, and in Parnell's mastery of his betrayers, Joyce adumbrated his view of his own powers" [JJ320]. We can say that this adumbration itself is dyadic, not only as a polemical illustration by Joyce of his own capabilities, but as an adumbration (or "shadow cast before") of Parnell's coming to be the figure (in *Finnegans Wake* especially) in which all qualities reflecting autonomy would come to be both affirmed and negated. This reflects not only the abilities Joyce needed to resist his enemies and exert his autonomy, but the exteriority to which that autonomy is orientated, and from which it is inspired. If Ellmann's canonical interpretation of the papers is still authoritative, why not say that the subtitle of '*L'Ombra di Parnell*' might have been the same as the lecture on Defoe and Blake of '*Verismo ed Idealismo nella politica irlandese*', in complement to '*Verismo ed Idealismo nella letteratura inglese*'<sup>344</sup>? All the facets of this conceptual nesting go together, quickly and with an apparent immediacy for readers of Joyce. So, the appearance of figures like Parnell in Joyce's world are more like a series of flashes or passing shadows than evidence of coherence, either in personal identity or cultural perspective. It is almost too simple to say that Parnell appears only to disappear. While this is true, it is perhaps better to say that Parnell is a collection of things whose consistency and coherence briefly appears more intensely than its totality, and not only in the brief period when the grouping of a collection of certain elements (a political style, a strategy, a biography...) becomes overshadowed by the logical belonging-together of those elements, so that their efficacy as a coherent unit briefly outshines whatever meaning their collation may have. The logic that delivers an apparent totality is also the logic that reveals it as a failure.

So, when Joyce writes "no matter: the appearance of autonomy is there" [OCPW 193] Joyce is not assigning a meaning to Parnell, in the sense that Parnell *means* autonomy for Ireland. Rather, the event of 'Parnell' heralds the bringing into conjuncture two of Joyce's greatest concerns, appearance and autonomy.<sup>345</sup> Independently of context, appearance and

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<sup>344</sup> 'Realism and Idealism in Irish Politics' to compliment 'Realism and Idealism in English Literature'.

<sup>345</sup> A possibly debatable remark to make here is that the "no matter" with which Joyce phrases the appearance of autonomy, is, if read in the context of the letters and personal writing which we now have access to, a signal of a tonal change towards Joyce's personal opinion. The previous paragraphs of the piece use comedic metaphors and a slightly eccentric vocabulary which suggests Joyce in a persuasive tone. The phrase, "no matter", is less formal and reads as a shift towards the personal as Joyce begins answering Parnell's critics and describing Parnell's political demeanour. This highlights to me, along with the expression "nothing more singularity can be imagined than the appearance of this intellectual phenomenon in the midst of the stifling morals of Westminster" [OCPW 194], not only how Joyce thinks about Parnell, but Joyce's own personal conceptual vocabulary of what might be

autonomy are united. Because of this conjunction, Parnell is the ‘evental’<sup>346</sup> figure *par excellence* in Joyce’s work, even if other ‘evental’ figures are greater in consequence. A litany of possible names here could include: Ibsen, Nora Barnacle, Lucia Joyce, Ettore and Livia Schmitz, Jesus Christ, Arius, etc... Parnell is the purest, of which “nothing more singular can be imagined” [OCPW 194]. Therefore, he is an example of the workings of the absolute in the human realm, not the absolute of an ideal or an identity, but the absolute *condition* of a generic happening. Singularity, as an occurrence, happens chiefly in the realm of appearances, yet subverts appearance towards situated-Being. This can be paraphrased by the Badiouian figuration that it is only because Parnell belonged utterly to Ireland that he could call Ireland to be more than itself. Only in doing so, could Parnell ‘force’ a new situation, into which discussions that had previously only concerned Irish politics and Irish art, and ultimately Irish race and Irish identity, were now generic statements about Ireland as an aspect of a sweeping, generic conception of humanity.<sup>347</sup> What had only been spoken in the language Irish-English,

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called the ‘Evental’ (see following footnote). I would also take this opportunity to answer a possible criticism of the present thesis here: to a critic who says that I have been ‘shoe-horning’ terminology from contemporary French philosophy (not Anglo-French theory) into my reading of Joyce for no other reason than simply because I like it, I would say no, this is not true. The evidence is in “The Shade of Parnell” where I followed Joyce’s conceptual vocabulary forwards into contemporary philosophy rather than schematically overlaying it onto his work. Notions such as singularity, appearance, autonomy, intellect, unity, material necessity, a distinction between incident and event, are all to be found in this little piece of polemic, and it does not do Joyce justice to take that remarkable conceptual vocabulary for a simplistic semantic vocabulary. Indeed, I could quote more if I wished: “Parnell’s fall came in the midst of these events like a bolt from the blue” [OCPW 195-196], but I do not wish to make myself open to the opposite criticism, that of cherry-picking by relying too much on one minor essay that is open to divergent interpretations (which I do not think it is, but an expert on writing about Parnell may well disagree).

<sup>346</sup> I have chosen to use this word, evental, a neologism created by Oliver Feltham and Peter Hallward in their translations of Badiou’s *Being and Event* and *Ethics*, respectively. Feltham notes that Badiou’s technical term ‘site événementiel’ cannot have a literal translation into English because “eventful site” would have unintended “connotations of activity and busyness”. While heavily informed by Badiou here, I want to broaden the same issue with speaking about events in Joyce: one needs an adjective such as *evental* to distinguish between Joyce’s frequently contradictory concern with wholly singular occurrences and the busy complexity of Dublin life. We might say a key philosophical issue of Joyce’s work, through which aesthetics becomes a way to apprehend problematics of philosophy of the urban, is exactly this distinction between Dublin as *evental* – its singular happening and the change it demands of the world, and Dublin as *eventful*, that is to say, its concrete existence as wholly multiple becomings. Wearing the hat of a ‘Badiouian’ reader of Joyce, I would say it is not an exaggeration to say that the problematic behind this distinction is evidence nigh on every single published page of Joyce’s pose, and, in *Finnegans Wake*, every word.

<sup>347</sup> I am using the term ‘generic humanity’ in awareness of how contentious and provocative the phrase could be. But why is this? This is another case where there seems to be a wholly ethical preference of the specific to the generic, the particular to the universal or the different to the same that is presuppositional: it should be interrogated like any other attitude to encounters with the politics of literature and fiction. I am using “generic humanity” to draw a connection between the universality Joyce ascribes to Parnell as an event and Laruelle’s writing upon generic humanity, in relation to which we find even more contentious terms such as ‘the ordinary’ and “Man is his essence”. Parnell’s failure to transcend his circumstance is not an atom of narrative structure, that is, it is not a step forward towards Ireland as a whole transcending the Imperial world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but rather it ensures what might be called (to modify Laruelle’s terms) the minimal transcendence of mankind of which Irish political subjectivity is a particular effect. Humanity is considered not as a higher identity or unity of essence, but as the play where minimality and transcendence are co-implicated under dyadic signs of the One.

is now spoken in a way that is more readily universal than English itself. The specificity of Irishness borrows from the abstract universality of the English language in order to manufacture a way of writing that is like English, but not English, imposing an actual *concrete* universal upon the pretenses of the excrescent abstraction. The language of *Finnegans Wake* is thus comic and paradoxical in its political potency, in its pretense to be that which is more universal than universality itself. The generic aspect of the affirmation of autonomy is realised in the figure of Parnell, which guarantees, as we see in Joyce, Parnell's position as an immoveable fixture in the mythical vocabulary of the Irish avant-garde.

We might then say that Parnell provides us with an insight into a distinction interior to Joyce's works, a distinction which is not of authorial intent or socio-historical context, but of composition and operation. This would be the operational distinction between what I have called "one-effects" and what (after Badiou, but modifying his terminology) may be called the "one-in-effect",<sup>348</sup> that is, the distinction between *objects* and *Events* that circumscribes an entirely formal difference at the heart of epiphany. In Badiou's work, there is a distinction between *compte-pour-un*, that element which is counted as one by virtue of its appearance within a situation, and the *ultra-un*, which is supplementary despite belonging to a situation that cannot be brought into the play of "presentation of presentation", but can only be actualised through the construction of an infinite generic multiple, an activity that Badiou terms a truth procedure. We can say immediately that there are great many aspects shared between Joyce and Badiou in their respective theories of truth, perhaps betraying a certain shared interest in scholasticism.<sup>349</sup> Both for Joyce and Badiou, truth is exceptional and beautiful; it is not a given feature of structures themselves, whether we see these structures as

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<sup>348</sup> That which "is the one-mark of its own multiple" [Badiou, 2006: 180]. We might say that what, in Joyce's eyes, authorises Parnell to "the appearance of autonomy" in Ireland, is nothing other than Parnell himself. This is to say that, *exclusively*, Parnell names Parnell as this appearance of autonomy, because in this sense the sign or one-mark "Parnell" no longer refers to either one particular or the political opinions of that person, but signals a new prospect of autonomy in Ireland. The one-mark "Parnell" (rather than proper name) signals not just the kind of autonomy which Charles Stewart Parnell himself worked to achieve, but any autonomy whatsoever. Therefore, we see the name Parnell stand for four separate, and often contradictory, forms of autonomy in Joyce's work: the general association of Irish emancipation from colonial rule with aesthetic liberation that is present across all of Joyce's writings, but also three more fictive examples which are the emergence of personal autonomy from a restrictive upbringing in *A Portrait*, cosmopolitan or universalist socialism in *Ulysses*, and the strange hybrid of Vichean *ricorso* and Nietzsche affirmation of eternal return in *Finnegans Wake*. Various aspects of Parnell are up for dispute either at the level of historical factuality or a conflict of interpretations, but what Joyce carves out as the "appearance of autonomy", is subtracted from such conflict or dispute. It is univocal as it marks out itself and *only* itself, and not either an object, a meaning or a neutralisation of social relation.

<sup>349</sup> Badiou with his work on St Paul,<sup>349</sup> his meditation on Pascal in *Being and Event*, and his account of Arianism in *Theory of the Subject*, and Joyce with his roguish Thomism, always tempered by supplements of orthodox and heterodox pairings: Arius against the Nicene Creed, Scotian univocity against Aristotelian equivocation, St Augustine as Platonist against Neo-Platonism.

natural (numerical) or cultural-social (habitual). This is all to say that, for Joyce, truth exists as infinite, generic and eternal but, as with Badiou, never absolute in a transcendental sense, never beyond its situation.<sup>350</sup> A truth is always an activity, commenced from a decision on the basis of appearance that ignores (or presses onwards regardless of) local identitarian logics. The ‘truth’ of Joyce’s work rests on the dual claim that it could *only* have been written by a Catholic Dubliner born at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, yet it can *only be read if it is legible by everyone*, regardless of nationality, background or social position. Because of this fact, the formula of generic writing is literature that is not for everyone, but is potentially for anyone. Joyce’s oeuvre would lose its claim to truth if it was a work that could have been written by anyone, but only someone with personal experience of Ireland at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would understand it, and likewise if it could only have been written by someone with specific personal experiences for others who shared those. What lies between particularity and universality is not a relation at all, but rather something like a trajectory. Joyce’s ‘beauty’ and ‘image’ can only have a capacity to be thought generically, in the sense that everyone has equal access to Joyce. There is no general ‘Irish lived experience’ that one would need in order to unlock deeper meanings, precisely because, if one takes Joyce’s depiction of that lived experience as accurate then it occurs in an inextricable acknowledgement of the specificity of its circumstances and the deductive, inferential nature (rather than intuitive) of its composition. Only the specifically conditioned can be a generic condition of thought itself, if it is indeed one-in-effect. Joyce’s maxim that “in the particular is contained the universal”, is, therefore, not so much a maxim about the status of particularity or universality, or about particularity or universality as different kinds of properties, but rather about particularity or universality as an aesthetic gesture that traces a line from thought of the specific to thought of the generic, using concrete instances – particular and universal – as way-markers. This is not unlike the way Vico’s imaginative universals chart the course of nations from barbarism to democracy and back.

### *Defining One-Effects and the One-in-Effect as Aesthetic Operations*

To be more precise about the terms of my sub-title, and not to hide behind jargon, I will expand my definitions a little here. By “one-effects”, I have been approaching every object, in

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<sup>350</sup> The role of absoluteness in Badiou’s philosophy is now quite different, since the Spinozist turn in the recent third volume of *Being and Event*, (*L’immanence des vérités*) has re-contextualised the role of absoluteness and the Absolute across all of Badiou’s philosophy. As this major work was published during the writing of this thesis, it would be foolish to comment further.

an aesthetic sense, as an instance of one thing that must also be a figuration of the One, in the sense that aesthetic objects are atomic. Indeed, they do not only have *qualities* of oneness (such uniqueness, being one-in-number, singularity and integrity) but, in some sense, they are always fictions. We understand ‘fiction’ here to mean the figuration of that which has *being* but not *existence*,<sup>351</sup> in this case the One whose being is void.<sup>352</sup> In aesthetics, therefore, we must approach the idea that specificity, or more importantly *haecceity*, is never a given, but is always an effect. To put this another way, Joyce seems to have inadvertently radicalised the notion of ‘quidditas’, in its most scholastic of senses, attempting to make it the central concept of an ordered aesthetic universe. In this attempt, all other aspects of an object – its unity, its integrity, its actuality, its consonance, its self-identity – become possible vehicles for ‘claritas’. In other words, everything about an object becomes exemplary of the whatness of the object, the thing that it is. But the Thomist doctrine of beauty, so radicalised by Joyce, succeeds in providing not only a new understanding of beauty *as* quiddity, rather than simply a harmonious arrangement of other traits<sup>353</sup> and a profoundly poetical realism, but also presents us with a critical kernel in Joyce’s thought which, once inscribed, becomes ineffaceable. That critical kernel is the expansion of what could be thought of as the ‘sceptical’ philosophical dimension of his thought into an altogether non-philosophical (or even transcendental) posture. Beginning with *A Portrait*, there is nothing given between

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<sup>351</sup> The being of a fiction is pure void. To say that a fiction has being here is to recognise a certain agreement between Joyce and Badiou that “the void” is the “proper name” of Being. This may be getting close to why Joyce saw numerical being as especially close to fiction, not only in its use of gesture as inscription of that whose existence is independent from its meaning, but in numbers being dyads drawn from the void as are fictions. This is a doctrine of a weakening and deflated view of ontology, that ‘being’ has no particular say in itself over what is real, as what is real is evidenced on the level of an interplay between structure and meta-structure rather than of the meaning of being, and the auto-effacing question of what it means to be.

<sup>352</sup> Thus, solely and uniquely univocal, and that which underwrites the immanence of presentations rather than verifiers their semantic cohesion.

<sup>353</sup> We have to ask if what Stephen proposes in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* is really a theory of harmony at all. Throughout this thesis I have preferred to reference consonance rather than harmony. Not least because using consonance in this fashion (its use is what I would term a ‘metaphor-metaphor’) retains the specificity of a musical reference point, rather than harmony which has such a habitual analogical usage of the musical (and therefore, if we are Bloomian or *Wakeian* thinkers, mathematical). A reference point which is therefore submerged to benefit the commonality of the word’s usage. Consonance, for me, is part of what drives me to using the unbalanced and uneven combination of Derrida and Badiou that informs this thesis. Consonance at once suggests a notion of counter-signature, as potently effective musical consonance establishes the Same through gradual accrual of the Different. I am also thinking here of modern American composers like Glenn Branca and Rhys Chatham more than any music Joyce would have known, simply for the bracing variations introduced with electrically amplified instruments, although perhaps the same effect is at work with arrangements for Uilleann pipes. But consonance also suggests the regulatory and harmonising effect of Badiou’s transcendental categorial structures such as conjunctions, distributions, envelopes, etc.. That such a dissonant, inconsistent and wide-ranging philosophical vocabulary is provoked by the thinking of Joyce’s *consonance* is enough to make me question where harmony is truly the appropriate word. Consonance is a musical metaphor-metaphor which accesses both the arising of harmony from discord and discord from harmony, without sacrificing either clarity or integrity, or introducing an anthropocentric or sociological notion of meaning into the equation.

haecceity and quiddity. Here, we might return to Ray Brassier's reading of Wilfred Sellars: being aware of a thing as a thing, is not the same as being aware of a thing as the thing which it is. At heart, there is a certain non-relation between these two things, as they must be conceptually united rather than simply understood in terms of a supposed meaning that was already unifying and broken in the act of perception. It is not the same as saying that every object is a concept, but every object is a demand to be re-conceptualised, a will or agency towards re-conceptualisation that does not belong to, yet operates through, whoever is doing the re-conceptualising.

In philosophy, there are various ways of articulating this problem, using distinctions between empirical data, sense-data, a distinction between concept and percept, qualia and their representations. This is distinct from the conceptual, formal and representational thinking that uses language and categories to help us know the whatness of something. But, in aesthetics, this dyad is not given on the interior of anything that could be called a situated-situation. The relationship is, in a sense, interior to conceptualisation, where specificity is thought of, not in general, but as a concept addressed by aesthetics, the same could be said about Joyce's use of the Scholastic concept 'quiddity'. Rather than Joyce being, as is often assumed, part of a general continental trend towards phenomenological or even vitalistic thinking, we can see that his 'scepticism' is something like an analytical counter-phenomenology.<sup>354</sup> It is non-philosophical insofar as it wants to supplant the given dyad of specificity-sensation and quiddity-concept with a 'bounding line' drawn within conceptualisation itself, that supplants a conceptualisation of givenness (either categorical givenness of quiddity, or the epistemic givenness of knowledge through sensation) with dyadic conception of a specificity-concept<sup>355</sup> and a whatness-concept<sup>356</sup> combined, in this gesture of dividing-uniting (we can see how relation and non-relation are both inadequate), into a haecceity -concept (that a thing is *this* thing) which is a dyad rather than a unity and, hence, a one-effect or figuration of the One rather than a *one*. There is no foundational layer to this, no site of immediacy, and at no point is there anything like a privileged relation or a gaze anchoring perspective to occupying a position. This allows us to see how Joyce's work is anti-foundational and dedicated to immanence as sensible exteriority, rather than a meaningful correlate. Instead of foundational givenness of any sort, there is a negative concept of a specific this-thing-and-its-concept, reproduced specifically rather than generally, its

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<sup>354</sup> By analytical, I mean an analytical style, not the analytical school of philosophy.

<sup>355</sup> That a thing is *a* thing.

<sup>356</sup> That a thing is the *sort of thing* that it is.



possibility arising from the impossibility of a totalising concept of things-are-not-their-concepts.<sup>357</sup> Despite the Aristotelian construction and vocabulary of his arguments, Joyce's work does not tend towards an asymptote of equivocation, but towards the univocally understood primary, through gathering together, collecting, putting into groups and sets. The conceptual interior of the theory advanced and explored in various works by Joyce is the site for a thinking of interiority and exteriority. This suggests that dividing is an activity of collecting together, rather than splitting apart.<sup>358</sup>

By 'whatness' we are to understand that a thing is not the whole of what specifies it as the thing that it is, and the specificity of a thing does not wholly prescribe the whatness of that thing. Joyce is critical both of extrinsic and intrinsic philosophical approaches. We might say this is what puts epiphany, as a formal innovation, apiece with Joyce's dissatisfaction with the inner monologue, a dissatisfaction of philosophical approaches to objects and incidents, either in an intrinsic or extrinsic way. The paradoxical nature of Joyce's relation of whatness to thisness, quiddity to specificity, is that it is non-relational. It takes the form of an interruption rather than a connection, and, as we have seen in 'The Wandering Rocks', the Joycean way of associating a large number of minor incidents and objects together is not a network, but a composition of interruptions, intrusions and interpenetrations. The metaphors best suited to describe its narratological coherence are the conjuncture, the union and the overlap, rather than the link and the intersection, the categorial rather than the geometric and the planar.

Further, we can see that the *haecceity* of something is not immediately given by its quiddity – this is specifically what it is because of what it is – and that the quiddity of

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<sup>357</sup> A better and more knowledgeable reader of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* and, especially, *Negative Dialectics*, would have comments to make here. I am unwilling to fully footnote my extraction and usage of Adorno as it is superficial, although I feel that it should be obvious that these arguments come from self-critiques of my readings of Joyce with Brassier and Badiou, using Adorno's texts as a resource for arguments that are both anti-identitarian and counter to the 'concrete' experience of the aesthetic. Can one rescue the 'concrete' without reintroducing a pathos of immediacy, or a regime-like identitarian schema? This is the problem, and I simply do not wish to sound foolish by delving more into my quite amateur readings of Adorno here, but I feel as though I should 'show my work' and at least highlight this an example of where it is led, more than a little too often, by enthusiasm rather than by rigour.

<sup>358</sup> To refer to Badiou's deployment of the Axiom of Separation, separation is not an act of dividing so much as it is an act of *specifying*, that is to say, an operation which specifies some elements in a set but not others. The speculative gesture that wagers that there is a possible apt language, is one and the same of as an action of specify something and an action of dividing something. My reference point here is my own conclusions drawn from the third meditation of *Being and Event* [Badiou, 2006:38], along with the metaphor of the asymptote as a measure of linguistic equivocation common to both Derrida and Badiou (in *Theory of the Subject* especially) and its distinction from a notion of partitive (hence formal or representational) excess. I do not feel qualified to comment on whether it is a metaphorical or non-metaphorical deployment of mathematics. It is referenced here strictly in terms of its conceptual potency and in terms of how aesthetic usage of language views natural language. I accept that there may be a contradiction or a mixing of metaphors here of which I am unaware - for example, between Euclidean geometry and axiomatic set theory.

something is not immediately given by its *haecceity*. This multiple-being is this object by virtue of its properties. We can also say that neither can spatial and temporal affinities be used as a way to make this ‘givenness’ arise, and this where Joyce (and, I would venture, a large part of Irish experimental and comic writing as a whole) can be seen as utterly redefining the relationship not only between realism and aesthetics, but between aesthetics and experience itself.

This consideration allows us to theorise the fictional in a unique way suited to the challenge that Joyce (along with many Irish writers) has posed us. The Joycean attentiveness to particularity is, therefore, to be understood, not as a particularism or perspectivism, but as an attentiveness to the operational complicity between atomicity (the reality of apparent elements) and locality (the narrative and linguistic operations which articulate *an* instance of oneness into *this* instance of oneness). We might say, retrospectively, that *Finnegans Wake* is Joyce enlightening us that his approach has always been atomistic. After Badiou, we can say that Joyce is a materialist, not because he believes in the ultimate oneness of a substance or substate of Being, a final analogy, but because something resembling a “first constitutive thesis of materialism”, holds for all of Joyce’s work. The postulate of materialism holds that each atom is a real atom.<sup>359</sup> For every categorical determination, there is an underlining *categorical* determination (rather than identitarian predicates),<sup>360</sup> functioning in terms of

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<sup>359</sup> It is worth reproducing the statement of definitions from *Logics of Worlds* here in full: “If a given atom, defined by the function  $a(x)$ , is identical to a single of the type  $a(x)$  – in other words, if there exists a single  $a \in A$  such that for every  $x \in A$  we have  $a(x) = a(x) = \text{Id}(a, x)$  – we will say that the atom  $a(x)$  is real” [Badiou, 2009:250-251]. Here, Badiou lays claim to a formal demonstration that the phenomenal component of an object,  $a(x)$ , is “entirely determined in appearing” and yet “appearing in such and such a world is always rooted in its *actual* ontological composition”. If we are to say that an object is real, we refer to both its real appearance (atomic components of appearing at not decomposable or de-constructable, or what I refer to elsewhere as the “apparency” of something) and its real or actual ontological composition, which draws upon the ontological world into which it appears (a transcendental or categorial regime of appearance). Therefore, Badiou’s tremendously exciting and, I venture to say, highly Joycean understanding of appearance as atomic, can claim “at the point of the real atom, being and appearing conjoin under the sign of the One”. As is a crux of my argument of Joyce’s recover of primary and secondary qualities, the operative principal of the ‘one-effect’ is neither the transcendence of the actual or the virtual, but the convocation of being and appearing. “Every atom is real” is Badiou’s postulate of materialism, but it is also an aesthetic wager of *Finnegans Wake*, as Joyce’s last books intention is to treat as real “one great part” of existence which lies outside of normal waking reality and conscious experience.

<sup>360</sup> Identity, as it is apprehensible, is separated out from strictly ontological identity, which is nothing other than an infinite difference. Every multiple-being is utterly different from another; there are no ‘more or less’ degrees of differences between multiples, such determinations must be manifested in some kind of localised convocation on/at the level of appearances rather than being tapped into a reservoir of what we might think of as identity-as-meaning (social identity, cultural difference, semiological meaning, etc.), which is simply given rather than either articulated or conceptualised. In I proposed a working distinction between radical and transcendental, and here it is: the distinction between radical identity (each multiple is utterly distinct) and transcendental identity (each multiple is meaningfully different).

logical coherence rather than self-identity or constancy.<sup>361</sup> A principle of distributivity means that every element of something, be it an abstraction like ‘night-time’, a political event like ‘the Easter Rising’, or the staff of a newspaper office, is a real thing. It follows that real things are not constructed from real and unreal parts such as real people paired with unreal ‘social constructions’, real material conditions coupled with ‘power relations’, real objects and their immaterial meanings, real politics and cultural experiences, sensible statements and poetics paired with the abstraction of ‘discourse’<sup>362</sup>, but composed of real atoms. When Joycean objects break down into dyads, all parts are real:<sup>363</sup> objects fracture into objects and that-which-is-not(-the-object), rather than into real essence and unreal appearance. This is the naturalistic secret of the way Joyce maintains an adherence to primary and secondary qualities. This distinction between primary and secondary is never between the real thing and

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<sup>361</sup> To put it another way, to allude to Badiou’s reading of Mallarmé in *Theory of the Subject*, on this point, *consistency* has determining power rather than totality, or the whole. The heterodox nature of my encounter with Joyce in part springs from this rather orthodox Lacanian viewpoint (there is a psychoanalytic ghost in the machine of the present thesis) that consistency is more interesting and functional in Joyce’s work than totality and wholeness, or the absence thereof. One can even say that to approach a Joycean phenomenology, by giving an account of appearances and sensations in his work, one does not chart the clear and the obscure, but rather the more-consistent and the less-consistent. It is incredibly so significant to me that it is with an episode name for Proteus, the God of change, that Joyce (as it were) ‘spills the beans’ for the first time on his phenomenological vocabulary rather than on his ontological thinking.

<sup>362</sup> I want to say here that this does not have to be so. Deleuze and Guattari ‘solve’ this kind of problem by substantialising things like drives, processes and relations in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. I want to remark that there is a problem here for Joyce in particular – and it is not simply that, as a researcher with a strong interest in universality and autonomy, I find their attitude and usage of literature and narrative fiction to be questionable, if not distasteful, especially in comparison to Deleuze’s sublime readings of literature in work published before his collaborations with Guattari. Literature and aesthetic writing often becomes yet another universal nail for the hammer of the particular process to thwack down, but because the substantialising of process and relation enacts an astonishing foreclosure upon the thought of narrative itself. Although it frees the thought of narrative from hermeneutics and conflicts of interpretation, the cost is that it ultimately buries and sub-ordinates literature within networks of social context which potentially scour the instances of autonomy and vividness of *particles* which Deleuze’s attention towards seemed so miraculously clear. As example of this can be seen in the reading of grammatical structures in Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*, Fitzgerald’s *The Crack-Up*, and ‘other-structure’ in *Robinson Crusoe*. I am a Deleuze enthusiast, but am very far from being a Deleuze specialist. Nevertheless, it seems to me that such astonishingly original encounters with literary narrative could have been produced by such a transcendentalising and absolutising devotion to substantialisation. To put it another way, it is extremely hard to square the immanence in Deleuze’s encounters with literature (in *Logic of Sense*), with the machinic immanence of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, unless one starts ascribing anthropomorphising and metaphysical powers to the body of the social itself in the way that Deleuze and Guattari are frequently critical of. Here, one may venture, very cautiously, that deconstruction has the more properly materialist understanding of literature, and Derrida’s encounter with Joyce is the exemplar. This is precisely this moment of equivocation between two immanences to which Derrida addresses Joyce’s ‘totality’, or lack therefore. In a nutshell, is it folly to offer a substantial account of that which is fiction? And if not, has one surrendered utterly to the giant voracious machine that is the *encyclopedia* as Derrida understands it in Joyce? The encyclopedia is a machine that digests dyads into immanence that can never be fully substantialised into actual, physical objects such as copies of *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses*. Every concrete Joyce-computer will create its own Joyce-software, which itself can learn to imitate and model the workings of the Joyce-computer all by itself, in which case, we see counter-signature as a model, not an affirmation, of signature.

<sup>363</sup> There is a parallel between Joyce’s use of mathematics in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* with Badiou’s dyadic conception of an object. As for Badiou every object is an instance of the Two: a multiple-being associated with a transcendental index. See: ‘For A New Thinking of the Object’ in *Logics of Worlds*, [Badiou, 2009:199-230].

its illusion, but between a real thing of qualities and operations, and the aspects of that real thing that make it appear. That is why, in this thesis, I choose the word ‘apparency’ to describe the property of a ‘one-effect’ in appearing. The word *appearance* itself already suggests too much illusion or obscurity, of deceitfulness, to really be appropriate for Joyce’s work.<sup>364</sup> Where it is appropriate, such as in the remark about Parnell, the word appearance comes with radical significance that deserves careful attention, rather than just to have epistemological assumptions projected onto it. Specificity is a matter of articulation, mirroring the aesthetic doctrine of apprehension, rather than latent or given qualities, or worse, perceptual or experiential immediacy and the presumption of prior meaning.

By contrast, the one-in-effect<sup>365</sup> is a one-effect with only the loosest possible claim on its being one-effect. If a one-effect is bi-univocal in terms of ontological compositional and

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<sup>364</sup> Joyce’s first surviving essay is, after all, a piece of juvenalia entitled, ‘Trust Not Appearance’ [OCPW 3].

<sup>365</sup> Very roughly, my definition of “one-in-effect” here follows Badiou’s “Eight Theses on the Universal” [Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, 2004: 143-152]. These are as follows: 1. Thought is the proper medium of the universal. 2. Every universal is singular, or is a singularity. 3. Everything universal originates in an Event, and the Event is intransitive to the particularity of the situation. 4. A universal initially presents itself as a decision about an undecidable. 5. The universal has an implicative structure. 6. The universal is univocal. 7. Every universal singularity remains incomplete or open. 8. The universal is nothing other than the faithful construction of a generic multiple. To avoid being too dogmatic or direct in my application of Badiou’s theory of singularity to Joyce, I have had to cobble together a version from three different sources: i) the account of ‘the multiple which is its own one-mark’ in *Being and Event*; ii) the account of singularity and consequence in *Logics of Worlds*, and iii) the eight theses reproduced above. So, my theoretical adaption of Badiou is far from exact as a consequence for fitting the ambition of Joyce’s protean and shifting accounts of singularity. What I refer to as the “one-in-effect” is not something which is already universal, but a specific variety of one-effect (a ‘singularity’) which *may* be a universal. This possibility of universality, without the irrefutable knowledge that something is universal, is a characteristic feature of Joyce’s work. The Joycean image is, therefore, prior to the ‘decision about an undecidable’ that would fully open a singularity to the implication structure as it is something subtracted from a conflict of interpretation, but as yet undecided: “a network of consequences” overlooked by “hermeneutic perspectivalism”, [Ibid. 148]. The other side of this issue concerning the ‘construction of a generic multiple’, is not something that can be known or indicated ahead of time, but something shown or achieved. This ‘shown or achieved’ is what I have referred to elsewhere as the kind of showing Joyce relies upon, a kind of showing which is non-demonstrative as it appeals not to encyclopaedic knowledge, but to a game-like system of implication and inference that entails a decision (as part of the process of reader) rather than simply informing the reader of decisions either possible or actual. That anticipatory Being, lacking actuality, which time has not yet “branded” [U 30] and therefore remains *au bord du vide*, ready to disrupt the finitude of one-effects and expose the infinities latent obscured in quotidian, natural and normal, situations. The ultimate orientation is towards that which is “on the order of an act, rather than of a being or a meaning” [Badiou, *Theoretical Writing*, 2005:150), which describes Joyce’s thematic orientation in *Finnegans Wake* which is towards acts rather than meaning on a smaller scale such as: children’s’ games, sports and lovers’ letters, and on a larger scale, nothing less than revolutions in art, politics and science. If one finds my association between Badiou and Joyce here unpalatable, or based upon a misprision of deconstructive attentiveness to singularity in Joyce, I would argue that one does not need a formalisation of Event to make these readings cogent. Not at all, for if our focus is upon the subtractive articulation of the univocal as precisely *implicative*, the doctrine of reading as involvement or engagement which I feel Derrida is promoting in ‘Ulysses Gramophone’ and ‘Two Words for Joyce’, I would say that such already exists implicitly in Joyce’s texts due to the association with philosophies of affirmation. So really, I am asking a question about Joyce and affirmation, which is what this kind of non-philosophical affirmation can look like when we are given anything but ‘a straight line’ – famously, we are given a question mark in *Ulysses*. The question of theorising singularity as distinct from one-effect, is therefore the question of with what one can replace the straight line with, if we have already decided to subtract ‘meaning’. Can we

apparency (*dans-sein*, articulation of appearance),<sup>366</sup> the one-in-effect is strictly univocal, which I would understand not as instance of the One but of singularity. If a one-effect is a multiple articulated in such a way that it carries, or may be made to bear, both the concept of what it is and the concept of the One, then the one-in-effect is a multiple articulated in such a way that, in addition to nominating the real multiple which it is, it also articulates the Idea of singularity in a bold new local configuration. In the Parnell example, Parnell's dyadic quality to Joyce is not simply a double or redoubled meaning, but his enacting of signaling the appearance of the autonomy proper to himself (the singularity of Parnell's political style and the singularity of opportunity his historic moment represented for Ireland), in the same instance as enacting the appearance of a new autonomy, namely the Idea of singularity. Therefore, the one-in-effect is that multiple-being, that site, where singularity is preserved at the cost of auto-effacement on the level of appearance. This paradox may seem obscure, but it has several clear instances in Joyce's work, especially regarding Parnell. For example, if Parnell is the irrefutable and potentially universal *appearance* of a new autonomy for Ireland (in everything from art to economics to science to theology), why does Joyce have to point out, in both his descriptive or polemic journalistic writing and his gestural or narrative aesthetic writing, that such a thing has irrefutably appeared? Cannot he simply take for granted that, if the word Parnell appears on the page, the reader will take it as synonymous with that new autonomy, rather than with a certain national or cultural identity that existed at a certain historical time? Joyce is wading into the heart of an epistemological paradox, insisting all the while that it is a matter of politics and not philosophy. We see this, among many other places,<sup>367</sup> in the heart of the story 'Ivy Day in the Committee' room, where the phenomenological or perception-world of the story is often deployed towards the articulation of the problematic of what might be for a *fading* to *appear*,<sup>368</sup> either across a sustained duration (the raking of embers in a fireplace [D 115]), or an irreducibly punctual instance (the pop of a cork from a bottle [D 115]). Perhaps, to use a parallel (but not an exact match), one could say the one-effect is a phenomenon considered as place-resisting and one-in-effect as

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perhaps say that Joyce is not concerned with goals, but with the following through of consequences? The formula of affirmational 'joy' is a yes, a no, patterns and consequence?

<sup>366</sup> That is, in order for something to appear it must be both a multiple-being and multiple of appearance – both an element of a set and an apparent of a world.

<sup>367</sup> Another possible example is the conversation about Parnell that takes place in the graveyard in 'Hades' and the colour system utilised in *A Portrait*.

<sup>368</sup> Notice here, in the context that might be called 'the image of a problem' that I did not say "what it might mean". The absence of meaning is crucial here, as the question of a grand or unifying meaning is what comes with the bathos at the end of the story.

resistance to place<sup>369</sup>, the place resisting the object that may dissolve it. Moreover the one-effect consists in a place's deploying of an object towards its own coherence (the coherence of a language, of a linear narrative progressive, the consistency and believability of *témoignage*,<sup>370</sup> etc.), an actual composition that exists by exploiting ontological composition as a potential grounds for phenomenal consistency, produced not with concreteness but against it. A one-effect, however, is only placed insofar as it resists being placed: the emphasis of refusal in Joyce's language of politics and aesthetics suggests the attitude of "I made them take it" [JJ 557] which Joyce had<sup>371</sup> for *Ulysses*, but also what he perceived as Ireland's ultimate refusal, not only of Parnell the man, but of the consequences of Parnellite political action. This is not a simple power struggle or opposition between place and objects,<sup>372</sup> where it is either placed against particular objects, or objects against a particular place, but the powers of appearance or 'apparency' itself, being drawn from the tension in starkly different ways, account for the fact that the better-composed a one-effect is, the more it tends to exemplify coherence and consistency. Whereas, the more definitely we can say that some multiple is one-in-effect, the more the presentation of multiple tends towards evanescence. These are the two Joycean 'modes' or styles: the encyclopedic, which associates being-there as being coherent, or being consistent, of expressing continuity and unity, and the eucharistic innovation in writing, or Joyce's 'trans-accidentation' [FW 186], which rests on the wager than evanescence, rather than either absence or presence, is the most potent and irrefutable way for a being (a multiple) to be considered as a site of being-there, the offering of a material trace (a host) in the place of a Parousia (the present absence of Christ), rather than Parousia. The verification or apprehension of this multiple must not take place through simple experience, but through change, which can be as simple as a subtle artistic or erotic gesture, but equally as sweeping and radical as total personal exile and a complete political revolution. One might say that Joyce, as stylistic and obscurist, breaks from his subtractive posture into pure affirmation. Rather than offering anti-phenomenologies of darkness, death, debt, doubt and sleep, his writing effects a movement from an aesthetic phenomenology of experience to an aesthetic phenomenology of consequence. This movement is how I would contextualise the

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<sup>369</sup> My use of the word 'place' here is drawn from Badiou's reading of Mallarmé in *Theory of the Subject* [2009] and *Being and Event* [2006].

<sup>370</sup> French is used here to imply the word 'account' and to continue the slightly punning chain suggesting that a crucial part of Joycean narrative composition is what I have called the process of bringing accounts into account.

<sup>371</sup> One can interpret this statement as being that Joyce had to force Dublin to accept *Ulysses* as part of itself.

<sup>372</sup> Or a subjective yet *materialist* dialectic of force and place. See Badiou's *Theory of the Subject*.

Joycean affect of satisfaction: beauty as consequence, not experience, where affect follows effect and not vice versa.

Such a dyadic approach to a wholly *narrative* technique,<sup>373</sup> where every stylistic innovation or flourish always yields two distinct possibilities of gestural operation, puts Joyce's aesthetics on a collision course, not with philosophy, but with politics, as the very question of 'autonomy' ironically calls back to political autonomy and emancipation, even as Joyce intends towards a specifically aesthetic autonomy. The one-effect is therefore understood in terms of situational doubling (*temps-reçit*, being-appearance, finite-infinite, rest-motion, etc.). The one-in-effect, whose intensities are exclusively evanescent, is paradoxically that appearance is so maximal and intense that it may only be thought of even experience through its consequences. Not only does it entail that one can never take a simple philosophical prescription of the distinction between universality and particularity. It also entails the distinction between what is (one-effects), what happens normally (local isomorphy and becoming), and what happens exceptionally (the one-in-effect). It presumes this distinction, in either aesthetics or narrative, to be easily circumscribed or summarised by phenomenological givens such as space and time, and semantics of nearness and distance, separation and division that derive from them. Joyce's aesthetic and narrative constructions, from the simplicity of epiphany to the complexity of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, do not only illustrate or portray the lack of such givenness. They rely upon it, they are compositions (com-positions) that simply could not have been accomplished if the distinction between *what is* and *what happens* was an example of an epistemic given or categories that relate to irreducible objects of lived-experience. To use French phenomenological terminology, every time something provokes us, as artists or critical readers, to distinguish between *être-la* and *événement*, an imperative exists that something must be made anew. Conceptual novelty of some sort is unavoidably necessary, not only in thought, but as something that, recalling the examples of primitive imagination and innovation in *Finnegans Wake*, should be carved or stamped into the material of reality. What may appear to repeat eternally may also appear to be absolutely unique.

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<sup>373</sup> The approach of duplication, doubling and cloning shows us how Joyce derives multiple 'technics' (to the use the word from his *Ulysses* schemas) from a shared generic technical disposition.

Joyce is not isolated in taking a philosophical disposition in regard to the political moment of Irish Home Rule. It is not uncommon to encounter comments on modes of singularity in Fenian or radical Irish political texts. Political writing from across the Irish political spectrum is dotted with what might seem to the modern reader to be a spontaneous philosophical digression. It is, in some sense, a situationally apt expression of the epochal fusion of artistic endeavor and political emancipation. For example, Frederick's Ryan's essay "Is the Gaelic League a Progressive Force?", there is the observation when we meet someone who "exhibitions independence of character or freshness of outlook, we say that we have met a man of "individuality" [*The Handbook of the Irish Revival*, 2016: 121]. But 'individuality' is probably the last thing of which such a one is consciously thinking" [*Ibid.*]. This statement is a neat, and fairly typical, triangulation of "individuality", "independence" and "one" gathered around a discussion of freshness and novelty. Having been wounded by the language debate, there is a sense that Irish socialists with revival connections were keen to avoid philosophical discussions being subordinated to social or historic questions. Ryan's comment is interesting because he talks about "individuality" in a politico-cultural setting, but ultimately his remark answers the question in a philosophical manner that is very similar to Joyce's more Nietzschean outbursts.

The way that such aphoristic language is frequently present in Fenian or socialist political polemic gives an impression that such discussions and debates were common enough to make these statements unremarkable. Contrary to the "meat and potatoes" image Irish political rhetoric gained, even in the thoughts of Leopold Bloom, philosophical enquiry enters the milieu of radical politics in an unpretentious way, lacking the religiosity that even a contemporary Irish observer (if we believe the exaggerations of *Ulysses*) would expect. We see that rather than the image that Irish political rhetoric was concerned with the bodily basics leaving the Catholic church to cater to the mind and the spirit. One could even say that there was a germ of a notion of 'condition' at play here, where Irish socialists recognised that their moment was the condition for the philosophical questions which it raises and not dictated by bodies of prior knowledge; there being an ideational as well as a political contrast between revival as novelty versus revival as recovery – it far from being purely a social moment. So, Joyce's life-long intellectualising and philosophising *a propos* Parnell is perhaps remarkable for being so unremarkable in the context which Joyce's political awareness matured.



As we know from Joyce and the correspondence between him and his brother the inspiration for both “Ivy Day” and “The Dead” was Anatole France, and from this Ellmann speculated that the inspiration for ‘Ivy Day’ and ‘the Dead’ is specifically the story ‘Procurator of Judaea’ by Anatole France in which Pontius Pilate recounts his days in Judaea, but does not mention Jesus until the very end, saying “Jesus of Nazareth? I cannot call him to mind” [JJ 252-253]. Although “the story is overshadowed by a person that Pilate doesn’t recall”, in Ellmann’s words [Ibid], this is perhaps a simplification because it is exactly that the events and dialogue of the narrative are not overshadowed. The narrative has a power to prevent even the Son of God from overshadowing details which the writer deems worthy of articulation; the overshadowing is done to the story not by it, as Pilate has no literary being exterior to the narrative of the crucifixion. And so, it happens that absence is a key part of this articulation.

France’s story is composed around the deferment of presence, as the reader can be mostly assured that the expected name will arrive, yet it arrives only in the last possible instance, and is only noted as weakly as possible. By contrast, Joyce’s stories are not composed around the arrival of presence from absence, or from the deferral of presence in the sense of a final Parousia, but rather their compositional principle is the total effacement of presence, and so establishes a trajectory of writing which travels not from *absence* to *presence*, but from *a failure of presence* to *appearance*. Without presence, that is to say banishing any hope of the final Parousia of the One, the triad of terms is presentation (composition and super-position), absence and appearance. This triad relies upon the non-being of One. As Derrida locates its textual (if not linguistic) reliance in the animating question “Qu’est-ce qu’un mot?”, we might say, in *Finnegans Wake*, one word never arrives, and the closure of the book ensures that it never will (without recourse to a closed cyclic), as the final word is an unattached “the”.

The title of the story is “Ivy Day”, the anniversary of Parnell’s death. The (most simple) interpretation is therefore that Joyce is not showing us the absence of Parnell, but rather presenting his absence, either in the divine metaphor of Parousia, or the temporal now (the present moments of his absent). But ‘Ivy Day’ is not the same day. Here we should keep in mind Gadamer’s commentary on festivals in *Truth and Method*: “the temporal character of a celebration is difficult to grasp on the basis of the usual experience of temporal succession (…), for the essence of a festival, its historical connections are secondary (…). A festival is not an identity like a historic event, but neither is it determined by its origin so that there was once the ‘real’ festival” [Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1975:121]. We can contrast this against the

“one grief” of the poem read in ‘Ivy Day’ which promises the listeners, in its broadly sentimental patriotic style, that there was a ‘real’ grief, an authentic moment from which all remembrances are derived – not just of Parnell, but all festivals or celebrations which attempt to bind Event in its largest senses with remembrance in the depth of its pathos.

What is “secondary” in the text of the ‘Ivy Day’ takes the place of what is primary without reasserting the priority of any particular historical circumstance or identity. As the reader can well see, ‘Ivy Day’ itself has a ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ essence as the annual recollection of what Parnell represented and the mourning of his death are primary, the actual death of the historical Parnell being second, the story having a secondary image. This is poignantly, perhaps bitterly, observed by Bloom in how Catholics “remember him into your prayers” – “Even Parnell. Ivy day dying out” [U 149]. Ivy day is dying out because it commemorates the memory of Parnell’s death rather than Parnell’s death itself, which inevitably falls from relevance. What spurs ‘Ivy Day’ is not the death of Parnell marking the effective end of Parnellite unity, but the remembrance of Parnell’s death as a uniting moment – a temporal articulation of the dyad of signature and countersignature. What is memorialised in ‘Ivy Day’, is therefore neither Parnell nor Parnell’s death, but the day of his death, the memory of that day in which the Fenian movement loses not an individual, but a claim to an authenticity or coherent identity which will never return. If we think of the celebration of Ivy Day, at least in the way that Joyce rather bitterly portrays it, as a chain of commemoration, it halts not at the event commemorated by wherever one might imagine the instance of the first memory. The memory points towards another memory; the iteration of the day is divided from, yet simulates, its own iterability, both elevating and subverting the exact sense of unity, of authenticity which the act of commemoration would seem to hold sacred.

If the ‘primary’ image of the ‘Ivy Day’ story is a rather complex articulation of Parnell as the fading appearance of unity, the ‘secondary’ image in Joyce’s story is much more concrete, that of the coals, racked unceremoniously by using cardboard. As ever, the challenge to the reader is to think this ‘image’<sup>374</sup> non-metaphorically or non-analogically, or perhaps rather to put metaphor and non-metaphor together. The coals do not only represent the dimming of the intensity of optimism that was coextensive with the political presence of Parnell as a living member of the Nationalist community, but they literalise the intensive qualities of ‘Ivy Day’ itself as they provide the contours of visibility of the room. And if we image the sound and smell - scraping cardboard encourages the reader to image both the

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<sup>374</sup> The use of inverted commas denotes that the coals here are both an image in the most trivial of senses, and also to some extent conform to Joyce’s own definition of an ‘esthetic image’.

sound and smell of the cinders - the ambience of the committee room is total. Knowing that the topic of Parnell would likely be at the forefront of the mind of an Irish reader, Joyce is challenging his readers to avoid simple cliché and think of the cinders as simply the image of a dimming light, and instead inviting them thereby to read what he has written. If we read what is on the page, we have no sentimental metaphor of the dimming of a light, as fading coals and embers do not glow in a constant dimness like a low electric or oil lamp, but they slowly flicker, projecting a range of maximally brightness that project shadows on the walls to dimness that makes visible even the colour and textures of the coals. The word here which should get our attention is “caught”, a word suggesting grasping, apprehension, entrapment, a word that suggests hanging on. There is also “caught” fire, but also “caught” as in light catching, embracing all elements of the room. The light gathers together all the elements of Old Jack’s face and makes them into the face of an old man. There is a passage of phenomenological articulation here: from the univocity, the cinders of light and its supposed unity, to the equivocation of named-objects in the room, and from there to the convocation which in catching itself has caught all elements together in an envelope and guaranteed that they all share, at their faintest intensities, the same minimal value of appearance. If the flame has ‘caught’, we are to imagine that it has a minimal level of burning now, it will no longer flicker into total darkness as cinders can.

We might think of a traditional Irish fireplace, furnished with iron fire tools, as a traditional image – but the tool here is a piece of cardboard, modern and disposable. Joyce gives us a weak appearance of the new world just as Old Jack’s face and shadow on the wall is the weak appearance of the old. Rather than splitting neatly into abstractions of presence and absence the image of minimal and maximal intensity of appearance persists in the passage, without ever coming to a definite glow of a well-lit room, either literally or metaphorical. The realism of passages such of these lies in the way Joyce is giving us the appearance of ‘Ivy Day’ by utterly forgoing any engagement at all with the question of its meaning, whether historical or social. It would be a misreading to suggest that Joyce is accusing his characters of forgetting the meaning of Parnell, as what he sees in Parnell a certain forgetting of meaning in contrast to the undead memory of Westminster, which he seems to see as nothing but a mechanism for the assignment of meanings and definitions.

In *Ulysses*, we will see Joyce take subtler and more complex approach to similar kinds of temporality. Bloom’s mention of “this innings” [U 146], at Dignam’s funeral, is a good example elsewhere of how one is to read Joyce’s depictions of the temporality of religious events, festivals and celebrities. A funeral is the definition of an unrepeatable event and one

could imagine a Joycean thesis written on Gadamer's Protestant theory of festivals against Joyce's portrayal of sacraments that are repeatable throughout a person's life (eucharist, confession), traditionally unique (baptism, marriage, confirmation, sickness) and those that are only received once, and the necessary uniqueness of a funerals. This uniqueness through repetition is an example of where the axiomatic Joycean powers of iteration are exerted upon that which is definitionally unrepeatable. The "day" or "this" of Joyce exists in a non-intuitive, non-foundationally temporal, way in both its quotidian and exceptional forms whereas its institutional or structured forms (offices, jobs, church ceremonies, obligations) in the opposition<sup>375</sup> between chronological time and (tautological) 'temporal time', neither of which address time as experience. The exact inverse of notions of both hermeneutic authenticity and vitalistic intensive duration. A defense of the exception is not a defense of the exceptional, but the normal. This is why Joyce might be described as an anti-Bergson Bergsonian: "life", as both Stephen and Bloom want to embrace it, has no real foundational affinity to time or space or to any other thing. When, in 'Scylla and Carybdis', Stephen affirms to himself the "this", the "here" and the "now", the "this", the "here" and "now", are not inseparable from certain species of time and space, but can be overlaid or supplemented into any other circumstance – that is the "this" is not automatically "*the* this" due a self-summoning authenticity or immediacy of presence; the "now" and the "here" do not gravitate towards their compliment of what Joyce called the weakest word in the English language, "the", by their own powers alone. Again, there must be *deux mots*, the "holding" is what makes here into "the here" and now into "the now".

Bloom's suggestion of a game ("innings") as the mechanism that delivers specificity, foreshadows *Finnegans Wake*. It is only in the game-like operations of a retrospective

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<sup>375</sup> In the interview with Hoffmeister in *Portraits of the Artist in Exile* [1979], we read Joyce make what seems like a very abbreviated version of Bergson's critique of attempts to numerically quantify time [Ibid. 129-130]. However, this critique is surrounded by remarkable statements concerning Joyce's criticism that Proust is too Kantian since for him is the 'ding an sich' and that his own writing is based not upon time but a principal of relativity. Joyce also speaks of the importance of mathematics, which he seems to imply is more important than symbolism and signification and -more importantly for my thesis- claims that the experience of time requires all the senses and the intellect together. It is extremely suggestive to me that Joyce moves from a Bergsonian critique into a discussion of the "instant" and the "event" as temporal modes which dictated the form his writing the experience of time for Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus. Although this aesthetic doctrine of the experience of the present moment is created from very familiar philosophical ingredients, the conceptual result of which is unfamiliar and unique to Joyce. It is these remarks which inform the following pages reading of the story 'After the Race', as it seems to suggest realist aesthetic of time which regards it as both inescapable yet non-foundational to experience. That is, although we cannot escape time, our experience and awareness of it is made and not given and therefore Joyce himself, it seems to me, needs to make time anew through his narratives rather than simply representing an 'authentic' temporality which would be the *ding an sich* of experience itself. That Joyce calls this 'relativity', in the Einsteinian sense, suggests that Bergson's theory of the experience of time merely gives Joyce a way to make himself understood to his contemporaries and that Joyce himself sees his own aesthetic position as more scientific and mathematical than philosophical or even interpretative.

arrangement that we see the “this” now of “life” as fundamentally tied in duration. It is “like holding water in your hand”, not to be experienced as experience, but experience as inseparable to the formation of memory, or experience as being recognisably experience only when grasped within a (creative) representation system: “made experience”. Perhaps with Joyce we should see that there is only “played experience” or “fêted experience” having an absolute priority to cognition over the virtuality of “lived experience”, which, in itself, is never simply a division between recollecting as an active process and representation in the abstract, since Joyce sees memory (in a fusion of opposites with Plato and Bergson) as composite of a deliberately creative act and an unintentional or serendipitous discovery. Perception and sensation are only part of the game in the sense that wooden pieces are part of a chess game.

There is something similar in ‘After the Race’ where Joyce sets out to portray collective activities where individuals are taken over by overwhelming emotions or sensations of elations, which override self-awareness. There is an uncharacteristically direct, even for the naturalistic *Dubliners*, intrusion from an impersonal narrative voice in ‘After the Race’ which tells the reader explicitly that “rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money” [D 27]. So in the story there are “three reasons for Jimmy’s excitement”. ‘After the Race’ is unusually blunt in its authorial statements, but Joyce is cunning enough in never letting the ‘race’ stand either for the experience of social climbing or anything like authenticity beneath it with the inauthenticity of space (going off-shore) or the inauthenticity of time (moving too quickly, maturing too fast). Rather, all reasons are good reasons. If judging it from the creative writer’s manual of a ‘well written’ story, what one might expect to find in ‘After the Race’ is something like a satisfying chain of semblance or analogy regarding elation or feelings which make one forget oneself: travelling at a high velocity being much like having a rapid pulse, and gambling with high stakes is like travelling at high velocity, and socialising above one’s station is a kind of gambling with personal status rather than money, and so on. These chains would be built in greater abstraction to show that each of Jimmy’s bad judgements (if he judged his own actions at all) lead back in a chain of equivalence to a prior, foundational existential affinity between a human being’s awareness of his own thoughts and his direction experience of his own spatial and temporal circumstances; therefore the ‘unnatural’ speed of a race car is an inauthentic use of time and space much like Jimmy’s social ambition leads him to be untrue to his Dublin origins. However, I would argue that this is the exact opposition of how Joyce constructs the story; there are “three reasons for Jimmy’s excitement”, but there is no hierarchical arrangement of these and reader looking for

a comment on being true to one's self and one's place in the world will not find it nor will they find explicit or implicit moral condemnation of Jimmy's apparently foolish behaviour at the card table.

If 'After the Race' is one of the simpler stories in *Dubliners*, but is not so simple where Joyce gives a real experience founded on time (either qualitatively or quantitatively) and its inauthentic distractions, but rather its lack of an authentic basis either in experiential terms or in socio- or geo- historical terms, or post-colonial terms. The use of the phrase "a magic finger on the genuine pulse of life" [D 38] is highly ironical: the phrase begins rather like the parodies of doggerel Joyce would later put in the mind of Leopold Bloom, but builds to an evasively Joycean image of the "swift blue animal", even suggesting a grammar of phenomenal experience with the first half of the phrase which is unreal or virtual: the "a magic figure" the materiality of a "machinery of human nerves". Yet there is no such grammar, and such phrasing sees the adjective "genuine" classed along with the fantastic, the magical and the unreal. If the motor car's ability to break established norms in terms of time and space inspires heroic or flights of fanciful imagination in the Dublin audience, then the feeling of genuineness is part of this illusion. When Dublin wears "the mask of a capital" [D 39], we should not read it as saying that Dublin is presented as something that it is not, a modern, cosmopolitan city and should aspire to remain Irish, but it is rather the opposite. Dublin's authenticity, its being-true-to-itself, is something only revealed in the motion that reveals it as part of a cosmopolitan economy in which the wealthy European playboys of the story reside. This is not at all the same thing as saying tritely that authenticity is itself a mask. In a moment of technological forward motion, an impetus of modernity, Dublin is historicised by the very same motion which would seem to pull it out of historical contextuality: there is no simple temporal 'now' which would divide it from the 'then' of heritage and the 'after' of destiny. Dublin wears the mask of a capital by having its own time in a world of increasingly multiplying chronologies, with no vitalistic certitude or experiential foundation to fall back up, no socio-historical horizon to act as a context of contexts – *historical* Dublin is nothing other than the presentation of presentation, *historic* Dublin is the mask or supplementation of that presentation which may or may not wrest the name Dublin away from that natural presentation of a city towards an Evental sequence to which the name Dublin gravitates.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> This tension is more openly developed in *Finnegans Wake*. There the double dyad of Dublin is noticeably split into Joyce's detailed and precise geometric impression of the city as a terrain or topographic emanation of the "bildung" of human life upon the Liffey, and Dublin as a series of Events with local origins but unlocalisable consequences that spiral throughout the book – the Thingmote, the arrival of Christianity, the cultural explosion, the Phoenix Park murders, and the Easter Rising, to mention just these. The fact that Dublin

Being held back by a belief in a lost genuineness, in a forsaken authenticity and immediacy, the notion that Jimmy had his best wits on him before adrenaline and alcohol robbed him of them, is the true paralysis here.

As 'After the Race' is about lack of awareness rather than awareness, quantifiable and experiential time slips easily between quantifiable and experience social status and the games – the game of cards, but also money itself as the game of global economics – the temporal rhythm of music, the turn-taking time of games, financial time of investments, credits and debits. Joyce mentions all these things with almost equal care and presents none of them as necessarily more foundational than other others. The story forms a very precise, to the point of being almost didactic, part of the *Dubliners* polemic against paralysis and yet Joyce is very clearly not saying that aspirant young men like Jimmy are wrong to forsake their own authentic time and place to want to go elsewhere. Although one might imagine that the story does not tell us that Jimmy lost his wits at the card table, but rather he never had them in the first place Joyce is not castigating anyone here, given that the story's climax seems to reveal that the story is a re-telling of Plato's allegory of the cave, and a fairly serious and non-parodic one at that, as Jimmy has no place to go other than back to Dublin. The simplicity of 'After the Race' demonstrates that once the lack of foundation has been revealed in a part of Dublin life, its effect is total and absolute, and, what is more, that effect is felt retroactively in the light of the "after"; everywhere is now seen 'always-already' exposed to cosmopolitan multiplicity. The *after* in "After the Race" is not just one kind of time such as experiential, financial, social, horological, solar, musical, and everything that might be called the story's attention to the 'ludo-temporal', but to a certain kind of *after* where they all mix equally; there is no intuitive or immediate basis from which all others are drawn. An "after" here is not so much punctual as reflective of Joyce's notion of the 'esthetic image' – we cannot even say, that Jimmy's thoughts belong to his body as they are extended with instruments like cards or coins. As the story first hints in the description of the 'curious disappointment' [D 38] of a moment of elation that falls flat, it eventually reveals that there was never really a 'now' there, only an 'after', as 'after' is the real Joycean word for the imposter-verb *during*. Thus, abandoning any fear of Joyce ever being Bergsonian altogether, the 'during' and the 'now' may just be the invention of the 'after'. A reader of *Ulysses* will recognise the operations of the retrospective arrangement which is perhaps the heart of the Joycean creative present, the

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names a city and its (lower case) events, is dependent upon the fact that Joyce decided / to consider Dublin as an Event (upper case) that happens to concern a capital city, which itself is dependent upon the existence of the city in the first place. The geometric figure of Joycean Dublin is a Klein bottle, the illusion of an interior space over a single univocal surface.

eternal now, an effectuation of time-like singularity without a One, or a *the* One,<sup>377</sup> of time itself into which, like the light which fills the room to sting Jimmy's eyes, all intensities dissolve.

Returning to 'Ivy Day' and Parnell, I can now elaborate what I mean by the "secondary" singularity of Parnell, which is not the same as the originarity of the original Ivy Day that is in the past. In Gadamer's language, festivals have a primarily temporal being, but in Joyce, there is nothing so foundational that one might call it *primary*. The minimal/maximal intensity of the fading coal is a distantiating which is neither temporal nor spatial – its trajectory goes through neither space nor time. It is a principle of appearance separated out from foundational affinity with either the human experiences of time and of space. We can say that the singularity of Ivy day is of an insisting rather than a persisting; its localisation is of an interiority which is not necessarily spatial or geometric; the "in" is a "being-in" (the hermeneutic *in-der-(Welt)-sein-...*, but also the definition of *être-la* as *dans-sein* of Badiou)<sup>378</sup> but remains non-specific. The idea of a time being "in" a room, subtly undermines both experiential knowledge of time and space. As Gadamer observes, the temporal character of a celebration is difficult to grasp on the basis of experience of time, so it makes sense to say that "The Dead" takes place when it is Christmas *in* Dublin" or "(a certain annual celebration) is *in* a room" (one informally might say, "the celebration is down the pub" or "it's someone's birthday in the office", and no one will ever misunderstand what is meant), but the sense it makes provides a picture of what experiencing such a thing is like without intuitively invoking the experience.

Joyce exploits temporal issues at the beginning of II.2 in *Finnegans Wake*. We can surmise that time in the schoolhouse or playhouse that the children have left it is "every evening" [FW 219]. That is to say, the events take place not on a specific evening, but on

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<sup>377</sup> The inner contradiction of foundational phenomenological or vitalistic notions of time is evidenced in the absurdity of having "*a the* One" or "*a* the One" of the now. This is an absurdity which is forced by the avoidance of anti-symmetry in favour of pure equivalence.

<sup>378</sup> It is significant that both forms tend towards the notion of the categorial. Here is the well-known paragraph / dealing with the beginning of Being-in-the-World in *Being and Time*: "What is meant by 'Being-in'? Our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to 'Being-in' 'in the world', and we are inclined to understand this Being-in as 'Being in something'. This latter term designates the kind of Being which an entity has when it is 'in' another one, as the water is 'in' the glass, or the garment is 'in' the cupboard. By this 'in' we mean the relationship of Being which two entities extended 'in' space have to each other with regard to their location in that space. Both water and glass, garment and cupboard, are 'in' space and 'at' a location, and both in the same way [...] Being-present-at-hand-along-with in the sense of a definite location-relationship with something else which has the same kind of Being, are ontological characteristics which we call '*categorial*': they are of such a sort as to belong to entities whose kind of Being is not of the character of Dasein" and then "Being-in [Sein-in], on the other hand, is a state of Dasein's Being; it is an existientiale" [Heidegger, 1962:79].



every evening as if they were the scheduled performance of a play, and, following the logic of games, we can have something happen on “every” evening rather a specific evening. The time is not given numerically, but theatrically with a metaphor: “lighting up o’clock sharp” – precisely at an imprecise time, or specifically on no evening in particular. This is a small gem of *Finnegans Wake*’s night logic, Joyce asking us to imagine what happens when children play at something happening “every evening” where two exceptional forms of temporality meet. However, when the children leave, the time is now measured by the locations passed through such as “Long Livius Lane, mid Mezzofanti Mall, diagonalising Lavatery square, up Tycho Brache Crescent.” [FW 219]. This reflects the notion that in a journey one takes daily the ‘location’ and ‘time’ comes to mean the same thing as one passes by familiar locations. Locality is the literal convocation of place and time; there is lack of distinction between being “at” a certain place and “at” a certain time. Joyce’s “one great part” could apply as much to routine as to dreams, or perhaps to the uncovering of the dreaminess of routine. On the way to the Inn, it is the early evening as that is the time of the ride home, whereas upstairs at home it is time for homework, night-time, the time when it is dark. So, we have the nostalgic and quite funny impression that the children leave something that is fun or entertaining (the games in the playhouse) which happens *every evening*, to go do something (homework in the upstairs room) which only ever happens on *this specific* evening; capturing the child-logic of the boring thing always being specifically *here* and *now*, but the exciting thing being taking place at some other time which is nevertheless *every* time. The two forms of chronological ordering which reflect childhood experience of temporality as conceptual rather than as intuitive or foundational, are divided into wholly different sections, so they do not belong to either normal chronological time or experiential time. So, returning to the matter at hand in *Dubliners*, we can also say that ‘Ivy Day’ Parnell’s anniversary holds such an irregular temporality; it is something which in-sists rather than per-sists, but not in a way that saying ‘Parnell’ insists in his absence or his presence in-sists after, or endures – or sub-sists as a bottom level – but insists upon the situation. The singularity of Parnell is expressed through a temporality, but not as a foundational affinity between an authentic Irish experience and Irish history, but as an instance – a transient and transhistorical *now* in which the will for political autonomy through self-government may be potentially fulfilled.

The anti-romantic gesture of the piece is that the distancing from Parnell is neither in time nor space, but in something which has no intuitive affinity. Experience with something like a “first nature” time or space is not prior to the second nature of the intellect, yet realism is possible. The coals are not analogical for this non-spatial, non-temporal, non-intuitive

distantiation, but they are evidence of its material reality. The ‘in-sisting’ of whatever singularity Parnell represented is not a correlate of human experience, knowledge or social contingency, but is something real. With his reliance upon particulars absences and presences, Joyce removes the divine category of presence (or Parousia) from consideration altogether. Without the divinity of the metaphysical One, forms such as unicity, uniqueness, singularity, counting-as-one, atomicity these forms can all come to light in games of presentation and representation without subordination to a prior One from which they would draw their presence.

The complaint that the anti-foundationalist Joyce draws is that his Irishness is reciprocal to the One – all qualities pass through the same regulating or transcendental Element. To use *Finnegans Wake*’s oppressive and ubiquitous metaphor of the rainbow: every quality is only a quality by dint of being part of a larger spectrum, a larger continuity which a major specific which donates minor specificities by operations of inclusivity. That through the One individual things are granted their particular presence. In the various contemporary discussions, we have the assumption that Irishness, as a quality is a racial quality, the Irish as a race among races, or that Irishness is a national quality, as Ireland must take its place as a nation among nations, but in order to write literature nationally among national literatures, it must have its perspective among perspective, a culture among cultures, and so on. Although these views may profess the autonomy and independence of Ireland, they are (unlike the way Joyce presents Parnell) subordinating Ireland to the means via which Irishness is granted presence. We might say, looking for the meaning of Irishness to the point that they become blind to the appearance of Ireland.

What the appearance of Parnell demonstrates is that this “inaugural” or “philosophical” reciprocity between One and Being (being-qua-being) is fundamentally mistaken. Examples of Joyce’s attempts to describe the Home Rule Movement stress polyvalence. In the article, ‘The Last Fenian’, he considers the “most formidable” [OCPW 140] of Fenianism to be that which forgoes military action in favor of developing a variety of industries and Irish endeavour, with the reasoning apparently being that if England suppressed Ireland by exploitation of its resource and labour, then the revitalization of those could be turned into liberating process.

In the journalist piece “The Shade of Parnell”, Joyce castigates views which seek to compromise on the issue of Irish autonomy and depicts the Irish chancellor as becoming a symbol of multiplicity brought under the reign of an inclusive unity force: “a vending-

machine that cannot work unless the London energy source sends the correct voltage” [OCPW 193], a startlingly prescient technological metaphor that is reminiscent of the forward-looking passages in *Finnegans Wake*. Although I can’t pretend that Joyce intended this to be anything other than a remark about dependency and obligation, it is striking how much the construction of this metaphor is very Joycean: a technological apparatus, which takes a monic or homogenous force in order to produce individual particularities at the operator’s demand. In ‘Ivy Day’ too, there in the airing of a notion that all “hillsiders and fenians” are “castle hacks” [D 122], at once a conspiracy theory that suggests Irish nationalists and socialists were under the pay of British authorities to tarnish the reputation of Irish politics, which is diegetically reflective of the pervading cynicism that all political groups were under the same control. What combination of flavours of Irish politics are desired? Catholic, protestant, secular, liberal, conservative, fenian or socialist? The homogenous pulse of the castle can provide them all. The question is who or, rather what transcendent system, is operating the identitarian vending machine?

In stressing the importance of Parnell in thought, rather than simply political pragmatism, Joyce wrote: “nothing more singular can be imagined than the appearance of this intellectual phenomenon in the midst of the stifling morals of Westminster” [OCPW 194]. In this phrase we have a diagram of the working parts of Joyce’s politics: singularity, imagination and appearance, the neither Platonic nor Anti-Platonic triad of Joycean politics.

Joyce’s Parnell was a divergent figure, but this divergence was no mere triumph of difference over identity, but a singular appearance which puts the apparent One to the test of the multiple. Joyce’s descriptions of Parnell’s style of political speech, which according to him notably lacked both rhetorical polish or comedic sensibility, were favourable not because they saw Parnell as presenting a unique cohesive identity of Irishness to oppose Englishness, but because they (much like how Vico praised Homer’s crudeness and vulgarity) revealed the emptiness behind the erudition of English politicians like Disraeli and Gladstone “studied witticism, greasy hair and doltish novels” [OCPW 194] of Disraeli. In Joyce’s view, it frequently seemed that the singularity of Parnell was alien from social circumstance, language and bodies of knowledge. The word ‘supplement’ is the best word for this triangulation of novelty, appearance and singularity, but in using that philosophically loaded term, we must be careful to state that it is neither the supplementary, according to Derrida or to Badiou (to name only two), that can give satisfying account of Joycean supplementarity. In other terms, for Joyce the supplemental is autonomous and generic, wholly outside both theoretical *suture* and encyclopedic knowledge. Although Badiou’s truth-procedures and Derrida’s iterability think

the generic from the position of philosophers, it is clearly Joyce's view that only the artist and the rebel are involved in the business of producing the generic. This is something in the order of Event and neither reducible to nor explicable by philosophical discussion. Joyce unites himself with Parnell as figures who gain their autonomy chiefly through exile from philosophy, erudition and social forms of knowledge.

The Parnell moment, if we are to take Joyce's more abrasive comments at face value, is a rejection of the notion that singularity has anything to do with social forms of knowledge and anything to do with philosophically ratified differences. In its focus upon contingency and chance, it is an embrace of an identity between the singular and the autonomous as outside of linguistic prescriptions and social structures. Despite Joyce's own occasional reliance on the semantics of 'race' or 'nation' to communicate Irish politics to European readers as to whether Home Rule will come to Ireland, it is clear that his concept of politics is that of exception or exemption. This is not because he thinks that in order for there to be Irish autonomy there must be a kind of Exceptionalism of Irish art and commerce, but because emancipation is always a radically singular proposition, whether it be the emancipation of art (freedom to create any form outside of inhibition of markets or institutions, or censorship), amorous emancipation (freedom to live as a couple outside of familial obligation), or political emancipation (freedom to advocate for an egalitarian position from an indifferent or universal position). All this amounts to saying that whether it is aesthetic or political, emancipation necessarily involves acquiring vocabularies of exemption and exception rather than continuity and inclusion. This is why Ireland must not only have its national songs or national novels in the way that other nations have literature to define their national traits, Ireland must have a national *epic*, an exception which (paradoxically) could have only come from a particular position. Of course, Ireland's 'national Epic' had yet to be written by 1904. Epics are generic, in a sense means they are not liminal so much as "set between": their symbol is the ship on unowned, open waters and their inaugural gesture is the coinage of an untranslatable portmanteau ("winedark", "*oînops*"), a forced instance of semantic disjunction, a word outside of continuums and whose disjunction is not just proved retrospectively but endures. As centuries pass, "winedark" becomes ever more emancipated from the domain of the meaningful, but more Homeric, more Odyssean. This is why, perhaps, Joyce takes a view of Parnell that seeks to unite Parnell's (and his own) flaws with his benefits in order to acknowledge the possibility of a singular appearance within the local situation of Irish national politics. This fits with *Finnegans Wake's* appropriation of apocryphal phrases popularly attributed to Oliver Cromwell. We might term this approach to be Joyce's "warts

and all”<sup>379</sup> view of singularity, his Hen-ology<sup>380</sup>, as only ever co-extensive to a supplementation, rather than the very opposite view which would define singularity as being a pure, ideal essence or core.

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<sup>379</sup>As far as I can tell, this phrase is (surprisingly) not to be found in *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>380</sup> To pun on Biddy the Hen from *Finnegans Wake*, and philosophies of the One, henology. Joyce’s Hen-Ology, is a philosophy of the One from the contingent, rather than vice-versa.

## CHAPTER 16: MINIMALITY AND INAPPEARANCE- A FORMAL ARGUMENT

### *Encyclopedic Narrative Revisited: Paradoxes of Inappearance*

What follows in this chapter will be an attempt to formalise the concepts used in this thesis and present not an argument but a formal conceptual framework for understanding Joycean narrative as play between inappearance and minimality. This framework is based upon the ‘nix to nothing’ mention in the title of this thesis, the Augustinian thesis of materiality, and from there I intend to combine the issue of conceptuality in reading with the arguments I have made concerning the concreteness of Joyce’s works. It is, therefore, the most necessarily experimental chapter of this thesis, contrasting with the textual analysis in chapter seven. In the previous chapter, I referred to Joyce’s thinking of the experience of time as representing him as an anti-Bergson Bergsonian. Although I am not speaking about Joyce and Bergson in this chapter, it continues along the same line of exploration. That is, Joyce’s non-intuitive thinking of intuition and likewise his intuitive thinking of the non-intuitive.

But before we get to intuition, I will make some more remarks on the subject of Joyce and encyclopedic writing and knowledge. Any critical discourse, such as Kenner’s *The Stoic Comedians* [Kenner, 1962], which connects the encyclopaedic mode of Joyce’s writing primarily to the accumulation of knowledge, must necessarily be a thesis which is both strong correlationalist, humanistic and anthropocentric. Even if such a discourse focuses on the embedding or sedimentation of such knowledge in material forms, I would argue that such a thesis can be persuasive only so far as it manages to leap over the workings of minimality. For each element or datum within an encyclopaedic narrative to be a one-effect, which is to say counted or indexed as a local instance of the One, they are not yet elements which are grasped as pieces of knowledge or already held captive in a regime of knowledge. Instead, their indexing is first subject to a minimal value of appearance. We can say this about all items that appear in any index: at the very least they are items on that index, and the property of ‘being an item on the list’ is the barest minimum of their appearance.

But what of items which *in*appear in such an index, such as the index itself? This paradox is a central dilemma of *Finnegans Wake* as an “encyclopedic” narrative: Joyce has set himself the task of indexing what does not appear. We can say that the book’s simple failure to make plain the real name or identity of the person it concerns, the real crime that he is accused of, and so on is nothing other than an absurdly excessive version of Russell’s paradox. That is, in order for *Finnegans Wake* to contain a definitive account of what it got up

to that fateful night in Phoenix Park, it would have to contain nothing other than the entire text of *Finnegans Wake* itself – which is not only illogical, but materially impossible. We can say that the existence of *Finnegans Wake* itself as a concrete object requires it not to run afoul of Russell’s paradox. Kenner’s description of *Ulysses* as self-indexing in *The Stoic Comedians* is heavily suggestive of this, but does not recognise that self-indexing inevitably leads to set theoretical thinking not only because it parallels the Frege-Russell debate about Cantor’s initial set theory as a historical development, but because narrative literature necessarily touches upon Russell’s paradox and the axioms of extensionality and foundation simply because narrative literature itself is, in its most basic form, a kind of symbolic metastructure and thus subject to set theoretical paradox.

But within such a metastructure, surely the barest minimum measure of appearance is not actually the property “this item of is an item on the list”, but rather that which does not appear on the list. What property could such an element be said to have? Here one must proceed carefully. As this is the crucial relationship in Joyce’s aesthetics, perhaps even more so than the distinction between an object and what-is-not the object in *A Portrait*. I am speaking of course of the consequences of the well-known maxim “absence is the highest form of presence” [JJ 252] which seems to define Joyce’s attitude to both narrative and style. The reason I am treading so carefully around this issue, and perhaps being vague, is that to understand this phrase’s importance for Joyce is not to think of its philosophical consequences or its valency as a paradox. I would argue that Joyce writes in a way, typified by the final pages of ‘The Dead’, which shields this insight from both philosophical thinking and direct personal intuition. This phrase, “absence is the highest form of presence”, can therefore not be understood by any critical or philosophical thinking, it is exclusively an aesthetic statement, generic and impersonal, which resists philosophical thinking.

The absence of something, the *in*appearance of something, is not necessarily the void. The absence is a local absent, something that inappears locally, or whose appearance could well be minimal. The letter in *Finnegans Wake*, for example, may never actually appear, as the two main candidates, the manuscript retrieved by Biddy Doran in Book I [FW 111] and recalled from memory<sup>381</sup> by Δ in Book IV [FW 615], anchor the appearance of something to an *in*appearance.

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<sup>381</sup> I want to resist the idea that the full text that appears from pages 615 to 619 constitutes the true or original “reverent letter”. While the letter is described as being delivered over breakfast on pages 614 to 615, there is perhaps little there to persuade the reader that a definitive, singular letter is being opened and read by Δ. The opening remark “And in effect, as?” [FW 615] does seem to suggest that Δ is summarising or recollecting. The exonerating or redemptive content of this version fits the emergence of Δ’s voice in the following passage too

Such a property, defining the locality of absence of appearance, the "minimum" (marked algebraically as  $\mu$ ) is, as Alain Badiou's categorial investigations have shown again and again, unique in its topological placement<sup>382</sup>. The mark  $\mu$  is both ontologically and logically distinct from the void or the mark  $\emptyset$ . While it may be difficult (or impossible) to stitch Badiou's logico-mathematical proofs to a real literary example in a way that satisfies both mathematic rigour and literary nuance, it is more than sufficient to say that this principle of minimal determination links, via the axiomatic uniqueness of the minimum, the statement that a narrative is a one-effect to the observation that narratives derive their consistency from one-effects: "the same old gamebold Finnius the old One...can effective it, may it be there for you" [FW 615]. Or, perhaps the uniqueness of a narrative is always parasitical, needing to be counter-signed by signatories that are only valid insofar as they may also be claimed to be unique. There is no general case of uniqueness, but a uniqueness borrowed from another borrowed uniqueness. Rather than see uniqueness as a necessary result of ontological identity (a multiple is exclusively identical to itself) and, instead, bring the thought of uniqueness into the phenomenal realm as something leant, borrowed, and the subject to dynamics of credit and debt, but the value of this uniqueness - its minimality, is singular and is the final property of nothing which exists. That which appears has a measure of appearance which is its own, yet can be shared by as many objects as can appear in the same way or at similar intensities.

However, inappearance is unique: there is only one way for something not to appear because, if there were a plurality of them, then they would appear (since local differentiation *is* appearance). Inappearance is therefore subtraction from games of equivocation into the

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well to be separated entirely from it. The significant pun in the letter could perhaps be the notion of a "brand rehearsal" [FW 617] which is suggestive of a Derridean paradox of originality: how can there be a brand-new rehearsal? Is this version of the letter a brand-new rehearsal? In Van Hulle's account of the generic revisions of the passage [*How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*: 448] differences in both the signature and content of the letter are noted, and phrases quoted in previous chapters do not appear in the 'final' version.

<sup>382</sup> Part A of the essay "Being There: Mathematics of the Transcendental", on "Transcendental Structures" *Mathematics of the Transcendental*, [Badiou, 2014:171-182] and the first part of the Greater Logic of *Logics of Worlds* [Badiou 2008:159] both contain demonstrations of the uniqueness of the  $\mu$ , as the transcendental operation of the minimum. The mark  $\mu$  refers to the categorial value of zero, which by the rules of category theory is always a unique element, but also the degree of appearance accorded to any element which "absolutely inappears" in a situation [Badiou, 2008:178]. It should also be noted here that the "zero" of minimality, that is what appears as zero for inhabitants of a certain situation, is not necessarily the same as the void [Ibid, 173] as the zero of a certain situation, translates as a minimal intensity of appearing rather than the empty set,  $\emptyset$  which is reserved exclusively for ontological definitions. The case of the identity of zero and  $\emptyset$  is reserved for not well pointed *topoi*. Further, and more relevant for textual analysis is the fact that Badiou's demonstration of the uniqueness of  $\mu$  is derived from order relations axiom of anti-symmetry, with such order relations being "the very first inscription of the exigency of the Other" [Badiou, 2008:172]. It is notable here the drama between the void and the other emerges again, with Badiou's demonstration of principles of minimality arguing for the uniqueness of the void and the plurality of the Other (in the attestation that difference is more than simple non-identity), rather than a singular Absolutely Other presiding over a multitude of locally in-appearing zeros. Perhaps such would suggest an alternative case of "existence", as an equation between difference and proper existants,  $\emptyset_A$  which Badiou provides in his short digression on Derrida from *Logics of Worlds*.



realm of the univocal, and that which permits a unique meaning for unique elements. Inappearance is the “highest” form of presence, insofar as what has gone before has attested to a uniqueness in its non-appearance that could never have been obtained by presence: the general logic of epiphany becomes pluralised in singular grammars of inappearance, similarly to that which disappears from experience, flashing in impersonal thought with a vividness that is (in aesthetic apprehension) more *experiential* than *experienced*. In short, aesthetics becomes not an end, but rather a means to use presentation to force a hiatus against presence, and to formalise *in*appearance rather than the absence of what appears *in*.

But further, what direct relevance is there to study literature in order to look at varying proofs or conceptualisations for the uniqueness of the void? What is added here, that would not be in the presupposition that the void is unique as one out of many potential critical or theoretical frameworks? I think there are two good reasons why this is worthwhile. If the uniqueness of the ontological “nothing” (the empty set,  $\emptyset$ ) is ensured mathematically and rationally, and the uniqueness of phenomenological inappearance or a local measure of zero (the minimum,  $\mu$ ) is ensured by a logic (an algebraic or categorial expression), then one can draw two conclusions that are brought immediately to bear on the issue at stake: the relation between subtraction and concreteness in Joyce's prose. The distinction between what is *marked* by  $\emptyset$  and what is *measured* by  $\mu$  is an important part of *Dubliners* stories such as ‘The Sisters’ and ‘A Painful Case’ where death cannot be decided between the local non-appearance of someone in particular or a general nothingness which encroaches all differentiated appearance from an exterior into which all individuals pass. The mark of absence and the measurement, the experiential or phenomenal indexing, of non-appearance do not automatically coincide; they both attest to thinking suspended in contingency and doubtfully.

If one defines the void abstractly, ontologically, as an absolute absence or nothing, and one looks at local instances of non-appearance, inappearances, absences, silences, and hiatus in appearance, the fact that ontological nothingness ( $\emptyset$ ) and minimality of local appearance ( $\mu$ ) share in the same uniqueness while being thoroughly different articulations means something startling: that the void can be inferred, or more generally expressed or thought, by subtractive aesthetics without reliance upon prior affinities or shared contexts. In the case of the void, and the void alone, there is an unmediated directness between features of subtractive aesthetics, such as absence or silence, that is thoroughly non-contextual: it requires no historical, philosophical, psychological or sociological context for such a local aesthetic of a ‘void’ to be drawn.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly,  $\mu$  is not a locally expressed identity, a reference or a signification, but a result, the result of something being locally evaluated as the minimum. The shared uniqueness, the connection between local non-appearance and the void, is not a property of language. From this, the effectiveness of centralising subtraction to Joyce's aesthetic methodology can be understood. In terms of subtraction itself: it means that there is one key concept (the void in its ontological, rather than phenomenological, form) where the primacy of regular communicative language fails, yet language as a whole does fail. A strong inference can be made as the minimal, rendered into language, holds a local identity with the void. Through *Finnegans Wake*, we see examples of this: a particular silence or darkness that stands for silence or absence in total not only the idea or notion of nothingness, but the spectre of an actual nothingness drawn from a real absence, "the silence speaks the scene" [FW 13]. Or, as one analyst of the manuscript in *Finnegans Wake* "conclude[s] purely negatively from a positive absence of political odia and monetary requests" [FW 108]. However, the real aesthetic utility is derived from the consequence that such a meta-linguistic potency is not confined to the subtraction itself, but allows transference of a newly contagious weakness of communicative language to any other situation. We are seeing the grounds of intra-textual echoes and, to extend the metaphor of 'echoes', we might say we are seeing the hollow subtractive space in which those echoes resonant. That is, each appearance is an echo in "echoland" [FW 13] where each apparent suggests both its own absence and absence in general, where each sound or disturbance echoes only insofar as it obscures itself by related itself to what inappears as much as what appear *as* (i.e., what is indexed), as in the description of the noises bouncing off the wall of the "innkempt house", the "ontophone which ontophanes" [Ibid]. A transference of the failure of objectivity in demonstrating its proximity to the void opens possibilities for language beyond the everyday communicative functions and confinement within socio-historical context. Such a transference operates in a way that resembles the chains of signification found in structure. However, it is neither spatial nor temporal, an extra "impossible" dimension, the non-Euclidean and non-Cartesian space, "iSpace", referred to in *Finnegans Wake* [FW 124].

In general, however, the notion of an *écriture generique* [Badiou, 2004] is, in a strong and non-metaphorical sense, assured by the co-uniqueness of local expressions of inappearance and the void. As the connection between the two is not linguistic, not contextual, not social or psychological, but entirely a logical<sup>383</sup> feature of localisation and placement as

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<sup>383</sup> See Chapter 22 of Badiou's "Topos" in *Mathematics of the Transcendental*. The two things to draw are firstly

such. That is, because  $\mu$  is *situationally* unique, there are grounds for non-communicative language to access a meta-linguistic (categorical, conceptual, familial, local-logical) domain which can express the *ontologically* unique which (as  $\emptyset$ ) is unrepresentable in all situations.

The key distinction here is to draw a difference from the same. If we think of the difference between  $\emptyset$  and  $\{\emptyset\}$  as being the Platonic distinction between what does not count as anything and what is counted as nothing [Badiou, 2008: 64], this is a pure originary distinction: the “SILENCE” of a telephone without an operator [FW 501], or founding of a difference upon the self-sameness on the void. Such a pure and potent distinction belongs to ontology itself, between the absolutely unpresented and the absolute minimum of presentation. The mark  $\mu$  denotes the potential to appropriate this originary moment of distinguishing, as an example of a distinction that does not yet manifest a specific difference, in the world of appearances by in a sense intruding upon the primal difference between  $\emptyset$  and  $\{\emptyset\}$  to insert an anchor-point of inappearance. Absence can indeed be the highest form of presence, in that it can be the most vividly measured difference, by virtue of that measure being directly proximal to that which measures an absolute difference, without measure. So, from the initial nothing or inconsistency we might mark as  $\emptyset$ , there is derived a multiple of marking or speaking the void in language and gesture,  $\{\emptyset\}$ , and from this marking and speaking indexing is possible, from where it is appropriate to talk of inappearance,  $\mu$ . Each point of progression here is unilateral, in a sense, as one cannot saying that the named or “speakingable” void is distinct from the unspoken or unnameable void “from the position of the void itself”. Neither can one say inappearance is distinct from the speakingable or named void. The self-sameness behind each of these terms is, in a strong ontological sense, indifferent the distinction made within writing and thought.

This conceptual frailty or unilaterality is providing a guide to how more concrete examples of conceptualisation are built upon the abstraction. We can begin with the weak or unilateral distinction between the named and unnamed void, as in Joyce's writing we find both the void and inappearance are both directly named. The word “gnomon” which confronts the reader on the very first page of *Dubliners*, refers to the section of a parallelogram which remains after a smaller parallelogram is removed. Gnomon could be considered to be the textual or conceptual referent of  $\{\emptyset\}$ , as something which counts nothing, it suggests very

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that the uniqueness of the void is admitted by well-pointed or non-degenerate topos, the second is that the uniqueness of the void "validates the logical principle of the excluded" middle and renders "to go from the uniqueness of the void to the licit usage of the reasoning via the absurd is the correct conclusion". The important thing to note about Badiou's demonstration, which I feel supports my argument about aesthetic language, is that the uniqueness of the void and its connections to principles of minimality, is not a feature of a localised logic of appearance but rather is a necessary feature of the construction of such a logic itself.

literally the mental image of border drawn around nothing. Likewise, the chalice which is said (by way of absolving Flynn from having desecrated the hosts) to have “contained nothing” [D 10]. There is the thought of absence, of but no nothingness in general. In keeping with its themes of early education in philosophical ideas, as the fearful thoughts of the narrator of ‘The Sisters’ reiterates the classical Parmenidean paradox that, if the void counts as the void, it is no longer nothing and therefore not the void. But what could it be if it not the void? Behind the sisters rests the unrepresentable void, the notion of “containing nothing” as that which not simply empty but literally, and in its own failure of auto-presentation, contains nothing,

‘The Sisters’ makes evident that there is no explicit discussion or descriptive, however poetic, in the text which describes nothingness in general, yet the thought of an unrepresentable void permeates the narrative because of an exploitation of the shared uniqueness of  $\emptyset$  and  $\mu$ . A contained nothing, a delineated, bracketed or named nothingness holds an absolute difference to  $\emptyset$  but  $\mu$  shares uniqueness. Because  $\mu$  is a measure of appearance, a nil measure, it can be used to intercede between  $\emptyset$  and  $\{\emptyset\}$ . Nil appearance is a powerful effect of proximity, whereby the closeness of  $\emptyset$  can be felt and the powers of  $\{\emptyset\}$  to supplant it is greatly weakened.

In practical terms, this means that the thought of that which counts as nothing and that which contains nothing is useless to reach to the void. The void is the unrepresentable point that founds the narrative. The thoughts of the boy are immature and he lacks education perhaps to put into words what he is thinking about death and void, and the words of the other adults are mollifying and euphemistic. The words of the others enrage the boy because their descriptions of nothing cannot compare to him as it is to him the absence is more deeply apparent. Intuitively this invites all kinds of anti-clerical and polemical ideas about the situation of the story.

In ‘The Sisters’, the narrator's voice brushes close to, but cannot make present the principle which inaugurates the world it habits. Yet it can draw closer to that inaugural non-concept by degrees of proximity. We might say that there is a semantic distinction at work in ‘The Sisters’ that would have an even greater relevance in Joyce's work: the distinction between locality, that makes its principality the phenomenal and the presentable, and proximity, expresses only that which is unrepresentable. The real, palpable degrees of closeness between the boy and Flynn, the closeness of people around the fire are key to their characterisation (an influence of theatrical staging). Between Cotter's smoking and the stirabout [D 2 & 3] where characters put something in their mouths suggest introspection or

withholding information. These are localisations: a proximity, which we can call the nearest distance between the boy and that which has no appearance, and is not directly thinkable in the sense of being a coherent object. Likewise, the chalice on the breast of the dead priest suggests nearness to an unnamed nothing. Proximity itself is not local: the nearest distance between the boy and the entity is not ‘local’ in any strong sense, and in parallel proximity between the priest and the gnomes of the chalice is at a distance. The general paralysis of *Dubliners* suggests a key paradox of *Finnegans Wake*: that locality and proximity are utterly different qualities – the nearness desired by the narrator of ‘The Sisters’ may possibly be defined as this malfunctioning topology, the incompatibility of locality and proximity within that version of Dublin’s warped and sickly logics of appearance<sup>384</sup>.

Ontologically,  $\emptyset$  is unrepresented because it is not presentable: there is no way, in the situation of ‘The Sisters’ to imagine the presentation of something which doesn’t count anything. It is expressed only in terms of proximity of the imagined being. See, for instance, Flynn’s remark about being “not long for this world” [D 1]. Flynn’s relationship to non-being is split or, rather, the relationship between him and non-being conjured by descriptively is split. We might say that there is a doubling of references in “not long for this world”, in the sense that he holds a relationship not only to not-being but to non-being. The non-being of Flynn is utterly distinct from situations where the appearance of Flynn holds a nil value: Flynn has an element that always inappears. The language surrounding Flynn which concerns death is careful, scrupulously distinct from inappearance so when Flynn is finally dead -that is, when inappearance and death merge- there is a lingering excess between death and inappearance. The marker here is  $\emptyset_A$  the proper inexistence [Badiou, 2006: 341], that element or trace of an object which never appears in the world, the element or trace of an object which is always withheld in any of its appearances.

The proper inexistence here is the strange something that was unsayable about Flynn while he was alive. What is important is that ‘unsayable’ does not only mean outside of language, or a piece of unstated knowledge, but untouched by any particular logic of appearance. There is not a social, historical or psychological critique that we can perform that would satisfy us as to what is so “queer” or “peculiar” about the old the priest. This is because

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<sup>384</sup> It is very tempting here to write a long digression on Badiou’s theory of Atonal Worlds, as a parallel to Joyce’s paralysis [Badiou, 2008:420]. But instead I will just leave the comparison open: Badiou’s theory of an atonal world is a world that admits not ‘point’ to which Evental intensity can be indexed. The comparison with stories like ‘The Sisters’ and contrast with *Finnegans Wake* (an utterly Evental book) is that a measurement that should be able to be made cannot. The desire for ‘nearness’ of the boy in ‘The Sisters’ is the desire for a rupture between proximity and locality, with perhaps could be said rob the world of the ‘point’ which is crucial for both Joycean aesthetics and politics: the here, the now.

what *in*-exists in him can be said to *inexist* exactly because it lies beyond such logics of appearances, and they cannot be extended to reach him. From the viewpoint of the narrator, this is the suggestion of some other world rather than paralysed Dublin, which perhaps cannot be made to exist not because of the social position of the narrator, but his ideational position. That is, the view outside of the norm which Flynn provided was inconsistent – both through ritual and learning. The contradiction between the arcane rites of Catholic service and the education held by priests manifests potently in the disturbed contradictions of the boy's thoughts.

What is carved out in the aesthetic pairing of the appearing and not-existing, is perhaps nothing other than the coordinates or vector of Joycean narrative form as a whole. This is a bold claim, but we should consider how radically Joyce's narratives depend on locally recasting the distinctions between clarity and obscurity; and therefore, of appearance and inappearance. This is a formal, and not philosophical arrangement: as in Joyce's narrative, rather than measure of intensity of appearance from the local nil of  $\mu$  to its reverse, the local nil of inappearance normally unobtainable maximal value of appearance **M**. That is, absence is the potentially, but never actually, highest form of appearance. Between  $\mu$  and **M** exist a range of positive values. Instead, for one element of Joyce's narrative world, positive degrees of appearance are replaced by a coordination between a local inappearance  $\mu$ , as distinct from a proper inexistant  $\emptyset_A$  [Badiou 2006: 395]. Instead of the equation between  $\mu$  and  $\emptyset_A$ , this becomes a transition between  $\emptyset_A$  and **M**.

In such a transformation, the unsayable ( $\emptyset_A$ ) is matched to the non-numerable and unlocalised (**M**). The final intensity of appearance is as unquantifiable as it is unlocalisable. It is the very reverse of paralysis that grips all. "Solemn" and "truculent" [D 6], Flynn reflects both the paralysis of religion and the absolute urgency of a movement to escape it, a movement which belongs not to him or the one that looks upon him, but seems to come from the locality itself as his own inexistence becomes more minimal by the page. Flynn is both the named being "paralysis" which has an imaginary or dreamed form, and the unnamed, inappearing reversal of paralysis which is implied but not present. As Flynn, the person, obtains a nil value of appearance and falls into non-existence, the impersonal aspect of Flynn (not the actual priest himself) obtains a maximal degree of appearance (**M**), illuminating that which was properly inexistant when Flynn was alive for a brief, evanescent, epiphanic moment to which only the boy is a witness which expresses what thought cannot – what has "gone wrong" [D 10] not with any individual, but the thought-world of Dublin itself.

However, I want to be careful to stress that all this is not merely a comparison or a particularly eccentric way of describing psychological transference of the feeling of loss from the intellectual to the emotional and back again. Rather, an intrusion into thought of an inappearance, making the unthinkable thing suddenly thinkable, not because a particular thing has supplanted a universal idea, but because the situational measure  $\mu$  has intruded on the ontological in a way that induces a new, potent proximity: “I longed to be nearer it and look upon its deadly work” [D 1]. It is a kind of closeness like the closeness between the young narrator and Flynn, an illegal or prohibited proximity, one that should not rightfully exist by the laws and the rules of the given situation.

Such a distinction can be made because the void has a *meta-structural omnipresence* and the minimum has a *categorical ubiquity* [Badiou, 2014]. Meta-structural omnipresence means that, while the void has no real “presence” in on its own. It is a represented element of every meta-structure as it is included ( $\subset$ ) without belonging ( $\in$ ), and thus singular. This means that any new language, or any new partitive system of expression, which is created to present or catalogue a situation can only do so in terms of its proximity to the void or by conserving that proximity. If one takes Stephen Dedalus’ claim [AP 212] of separating an object from that which-is-not an object as reflective of Joyce’s own method, it can also be inverted: separation from a situation, from that which situates an object, is not only a distantiation from the articulates of situation, but a close-ing/closen-ing to the void. Isolation of this type is not the unveiling of a latent or essential singularity, but the construction of a novel proximity to the void. Categorical ubiquity, on the other hand, means that every object is measured to the minimum, that no object exists which does not admit an element which holds a minimal level of appearance. The same inappearance is shared by all objects, just as the same void is the underlying inconsistency of all presented multiplicities.

Such a new inversion is a kind of anti-phenomenological reversal of epoché, albeit one that is not given in the situation, but exploited in the act of aesthetic apprehension that, in the “objectifying” movement, simultaneously *disobjectifies* as the object is bracketed by two voids: the void as situational, a product of the power set of a situation and married to partitive excess, and the void as categorical inappearance, a product of isomorphy and indexing insuring that an object is not only situated near the void, but that there is a part of the object that is an intense or maximal proximity to the void. The Badiouian expression for this, the inapparent element of an apparent, is the *proper inexistent*, denoted by (the perhaps paradoxical) mark of a differentiated void:  $\emptyset_A$ . For Derrida, there is no one expression here, but the endless weaving of the “trace”, the voice which “keeps silent”, a kind of “distress” held by an object

which demands countersignature [D&J 61]. This non-part of partition is dialectical and material. We have not headed into the realm of the ideas – this is still formal, and not philosophical conceptualisation.

Therefore, Joycean maxim “absence is the highest form of presence” can be understood here as in an intratextual operation through which games of clarity and obscurity facilitate the evasion of hermeneutic games of meaning and presence on behalf of the reader. The common uniqueness of  $\emptyset$  and  $\mu$  is neither referential nor relational, neither psychological nor linguistic. The question of ‘meaning’ therefore is lost as formal construction breaks apart or un-constructs the communicative valency of appearance in favour of a kind of appearance which is writeable but not sayable, thinkable but not knowable. Something which is not indexed by encyclopaedic writing but causes encyclopedic form to decohere and malfunction in slight, almost unnoticeable ways. That is to say, the statement “absence is the highest form of presence” has no philosophical sense whatsoever, it is strictly a formal axiom for generic narrative writing, and further it is not a statement about narrative structure or meaning, but rather a statement about how narrative can mobilise its own limitations of structure and inevitable failures of meaning towards concrete, aesthetic ends.

### *Creation and Subtraction: Prope Nihil*

Returning to philosophy, we can see such an account of communicative failure leading to a generic writing in Badiou’s account of Mallarmé’s poem ‘Saint’<sup>385</sup> in the paper ‘Language, Thought, Poetry’, which describes the poem first in terms of operations of subtraction: “such is the subtractive operation of the poem, which forces the object to undergo the ordeal of its lack” [Badiou, 2004: 234] and then as an operation of dissemination: “dissemination, for its part, aims to dissolve the object through an infinite metaphorical distribution. Which means that no sooner mentioned than the object migrates elsewhere within meaning; it disobjectifies itself by becoming something other than what it is. The object loses its objectivity, not through the effect of a lack, but through that of an excess: an excessive equivalence to other

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<sup>385</sup> The verse quoted by Badiou is as follows:  
‘Du doigt que, sans le vieux santal  
Ni le vieux livre, elle balance  
Sur le plumage instrumental,  
Musicienne du silence’ [Mallarmé, *Collected Poems*].



objects” [Ibid]. Badiou’s argument is that the latter operation, of dissemination through excessive equivalence, takes precedence of the operation of subtractive.

Here in the latent poem of the fragment of Mallarmé’s text, one can see something very close to the *differend* of Joycean concreteness being articulated, not in terms of contemplation or analytics of the phenomenal or material world, but terms of poetic operations. Rather than the object standing upon a fixed indecision between what-is-not and what-is-other, Mallarmé’s poem turns communicative noise and dissemination against itself, preserving the object up until the point of its own disobjectification, which ultimately closes it from either the “excessive equivalence” of what is other than it, or the “lack” of what it is not. In doing so, what Badiou calls the ‘latent poem’ of a text breaks out from the communicative stasis or paralysis of language, and asserts the poem -not it is object- as the “sole exposition of an exception” [Ibid] as “the musician of its own silence” [Ibid].

The parallel between Badiou’s reading of Mallarmé and Joyce’s epiphanies may continue to the point where one can observe that an important, perhaps essential, Joycean operation is the effacement or removal of an object but Joyce, unlike in Mallarmé as read by Badiou, refuses to privilege one poetic operation over another. That is, dissemination through excessive equivalence (the encyclopedic) never quite takes poetic or narrative precedence over operations of subtraction (the epiphanic or eucharistic). A simple way of saying this is that Joyce never moved beyond epiphany, his narrative ‘epical’ form of distinct instances, it is a constant and ubiquitous part of his aesthetic world.

If it is usual for a poetic operation to confront an object with “its lack” here we can understand the lack of an object as seeing the object itself as a situation, a site of correspondence of  $\emptyset$  and  $\mu$ , at the same time drowning the object in operations in an excess of metaphorical connections and references.

Joyce’s refusal, what I have called his fixed indecision, is to never conclude this process on either the void or the Other. He leaves the object suspended between confrontations: the confrontation between the void and simple local non-appearance, and the confrontation with otherness as incoherence of multiple-others and the nothing of a single Altogether Other. Although for Badiou the poem is a multiple in language which “loses [its] object in the pure multiple” [Badiou, 2004] this is based upon a foundational philosophical decision, that there is no Big Other, and Joyce never seems to decide whether the other that is the result of the effectuations of disobjecting, is an Altogether Other (personified through figures such as  $\Delta$ ’s father [FW 628], Shem’s maternal protector [FW 195], the comforting mother of Kevin and Jerry [FW 565]) or the pure, and incoherent, multiple represented

through omnipresent images of sea and sky. On this issue, Joyce decides not to decide and his indecision is frozen twice over: firstly, between the void and the other, and then in the diagonalisation of two impossible measures, between  $\emptyset/\mu$  and Wholly Other/Purely Multiple.

This decision of fixed indecisiveness is not simply the expression of personal ambivalence in the face of philosophical dilemma, or of a single life confronted with nothingness or the absence of meaning but, more radically, an embrace of truth that functions as a radical disavowal of parousia. The word "eucharistic" here is important because it draws on what is shared between  $\emptyset$  and  $\mu$ : uniqueness. The eucharistic sacrament rests on the shared uniqueness of two elements: the uniqueness of Christ as God's son, and the uniqueness of the eucharistic sacrament itself as something which is not merely a repetition but a counter-actualisation. Joyce's disavowal inverts both: the absence of incarnation and the failure of actualisation, but keeps the frame of transaccidentation. *The truth as the object of profession of faith becomes truth as the non-place where indecision may be fixed.*

The mark of inappearance 'μ' intrudes upon the void's territory, forcing a what is otherwise merely *presentation* to become an appearance, articulating things as phenomenological complete rather than conceptual abstractions. This 'local' logic of appearance breaks with a classical scheme and introduces the anti-symmetry necessary for narrative to be narrative: that is, it institutes a territory where the principal of the excluded middle may be violated according to a particular logic. In narrative that is to say, we are not dealing with either P or not-P, but situations where, the double negation, not-not-P does not necessarily imply P. The consequences of this are felt not in language of a certain piece of text, but in the narrative which it harbours or expresses – that is, the point in which a narrative no longer must resist paradox and self-contradiction. It is difficult to find examples of this in Joyce, however, as although Joyce introduces paradoxical elements and implies paradox it could be said that he is careful to never allow a truly paradoxical event to take place. Even apparently illogical or untraceable names or events, such as the appearance of an unnamed mourner at Dignam's funeral or the identity of Bloom's secret correspondent, only seem to betray the encyclopaedic coherence of the book's narrative structure. They prefigure the "parapolylogic" [FW 474] of *Finnegans Wake*, by suggesting that 'here be dragons' of paradox without actually showing them.

If one could make a contrarian gambit here, perhaps the most contrarian, that the simplicity of Joyce's aesthetic system pushes hylomorphism into strange operation or contortions, to the point where his alternation between materialism and immaterialism makes him a cryptic Platonist: what rules the realm of the concrete, the 'realism' of Joyce, is neither

ideas nor indecision, but is the Idea of indecision. Its affect is not faith, but the passion of erotic doubt, which in *Exiles* Richard Rowen equates to agonises desire, desiring Bertha “in restless living wounding doubt” [P 265]. But I do not think one can make this case convincingly, as I believe one is better served to think of Joyce’s conceptual operations as appropriations from philosophy rather than Irish literary stowaways within the western philosophical tradition.

From the point about narrative logic, we may begin to see that an encyclopaedic narrative is not, therefore, something that speaks of the relationship between human consciousness, relationality and knowledge. Rather, it is a phenomenal issue. But the phenomenology of the encyclopaedia is a strange phenomenology indeed, as it does not begin with perception and conscious minds, but with the separation of the bare minimum of what can be counted as existing from the void. It suggests a logic of appearance and a field of interactions, before it gives any ground to epistemological commentary, specifically the logics governing minimums of appearance. Accumulation is not the defining principle of the encyclopedia either, but the assignation of the property “at the very least, this element appears as an item on the list” to various items, which becomes a property that is distributed across all items on the list but does not itself appear on the list.

But let’s ask ourselves the question of what precisely Joyce is attempting to do specifically in *Finnegans Wake*, which is so radical that its description requires us to sandwich a radical interpretative thesis (the encounter between deconstruction and realism) between a thoroughly non-interpretative thesis of intrinsic being (the dialectic of belonging versus inclusion) and a phenomenology of extrinsic determinations (the categorial account of nil appearance, of a null object)? This is certainly a lot of baggage to place on what is, when one removes the extremities of its reputation, an episodic comic novel.

The power of language to separate out of a pure multiplicity is a subset, in which multiples have the properties that language holds them to have. It is worth quoting, in full again, Stephen’s definition of punctual phases of aesthetic apprehension from *A Portrait*, but this time, in light of its particular relevance to *Finnegans Wake* as an allegedly encyclopedic text:

“—In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable

background of space or time which is not it. You apprehended it as *one* thing. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is *integritas*.” [AP 212]

What Joyce has Stephen do here is to combine Aquinas with Leibniz. But Stephen's act of separation contains that key phrase “which it is not”, which leads him outside of the Scholastic or Thomist doctrine which might be considered to be Joyce's fundamental conceptual vocabulary. This stepping outside is key to understanding what is Joyce trying to accomplish in *Finnegans Wake*. In that later book, he is trying to apply a methodology of separation, whether or not one uses the axiom of separation as a rubric to understand separation within language, the operation term for such a separation itself is not the void or the whole other universe, but a comparative measurement to local inappearance, to the 0. But is there not a potential for contradiction here? We know that  $\mu$  is unique, that one cannot differentiate it into  $\mu_1$ ,  $\mu_2$ ,  $\mu_3$  and so on as those are, in categorial terms, isomorphic. Can we formalise the paradox of Stephen's aesthetics by stating that Joyce is attempting to measure  $\mu$  by  $\emptyset$ ? That is, is he asking the question of what makes a local inappearance distinct from the void? This is a question that, in normal, quotidian life, is incoherent and absurd, but a writer of prose or poetry may create a situation in which that question has some kind of sense. Does the “noughtime” [FW 349] wash out this question by presupposing some possible world where, all things inappear, an idealist night in which all cows are black? In short, is the question of *Finnegans Wake* that of whether one can write an encyclopedia of things that do not appear? What value would such an encyclopedia hold as its first criteria, since the value of appearance would equal the value of minimal appearance, inappearance =  $\mu$  – non-being or impresence =  $\emptyset$ ?

An argument that defines realist aesthetics based upon a constitutive function of inappearance (the measure  $\mu$ ) may seem persuasive if one's definition of realism begins with the perceptual. However, it poses problems to the possession of this thesis, if the position we are taking is that Joyce is an unintentional materialist, or at the very least experiences a strong affinity to a tradition of materialism which stretches from Aristotle to Marx, even if he disavows it and, perhaps more crucially, that any sense of the concrete in Joyce's work must be apart from any correlationist or anthropocentrist thesis that locates the concrete chiefly with the experiential. In order to understand what Joyce is trying to accomplish, one must read his ‘style’ as a tightrope walk balancing between the intellect and perception, which must be accomplished without falling into philosophy. One is free to read ‘falling into philosophy’ as a parallel to Badiouian or Lacanian ‘suture’, in which a philosophy is melded to the event of its

condition [Badiou, 1992:62], or alternative Laruelle's 'double transcendence' of a philosophical decision over the instance of the real [Laruelle 2012].

In this light, we might consider that Dublin 'event' originates not from the void, but from 'next to nothing' and produces hierarchies and topologies, in the following evocative passage of *Finnegans Wake*: "...erigenating from next to nothing and celescalating the himals and all, hierarchite titiptitoploftical, with a burning bush abob off its baubletop and with larrons o'toolers clittering up and tombles abuckets clottering down" [FW 4 & 5].

Although I have used a host of philosophical names throughout this thesis: Badiou, Derrida, Laruelle and others, each name bringing its own interpretation of what 'next to nothing' might be, and from which one could comment on the history of ideas from which Joyce is drawing his 'next to nothing'. Rather than doing this, or proposing a genealogy of 'next to nothing' which begins with *Finnegans Wake* and my choice of contemporary philosophy, I want to refrain from deciding what Joyce does not decide. The 'next to nothing' in the cited passage before or other than such a decision. Although this notion of 'next to nothing' is ultimately an Augustinian notion of *prope nihil*: almost nothing. As famously described in *Confessions* matter without form is "form and nothing, neither formed, nor nothing, a formless almost nothing" (*formam et nihil, nec formatum nec nihil, informe prope nihil*) [St Augustine, *Confessions*: XII]. This *prope nihil* seems to be, quietly, the most important concept in *Finnegans Wake*. It is not overwhelmingly present in the text but appears frequently enough to insist about the reader's awareness, pushing and needling on the notions of absolute darkness, absolute silence and absence that the negationary language of the book might put in the forefront of the reader's mind. It is a way for Joyce to embrace materialism without confessing to be a materialist himself.

The *prope nihil* has a beautifully serendipitous meaning for Dublin life: "living on next to nothing" being a common phrase to suggest someone who is just managing to scrape by despite being impoverished. It is how a working-class Irish reader might describe the life of the Dedalus sisters in the episode 'The Wandering Rocks'. The phrase appears once in *Ulysses*, in the episode 'Eumaeus' where it is used with a heavy irony but as yet is lacking the Scholastic pun Joyce would affix to it in *Finnegans Wake*. Bloom fears for Stephen's safety should there be "desperadoes who had next to nothing to live on" [U 708].

In the *Finnegans Wake* passage, however there is an unmistakable association with "next to nothing" with St Augustine's passage. It stands for a distinction upon which Dublin, with all its differences, is founded without foundationalising any of those difference or indeed

foundationalising difference itself through philosophical concepts. The independence of aesthetics and Dublin politics from philosophy is richly evident in passages such as the above because Joyce's association of his writing project, making something from next to nothing, with Dublin is neither a statement of social identification nor an egotistical claim to be the authentic writer of Dublin's reality. It is, instead, a statement which affirms or wills autonomy for Dublin and for the writer, by ties these together. The passage, in full, might satirise the building of Finnegans and his 'erections' as vulgar and ultimately futile, but in finding humour in their futility Joyce resists turning a nihilism into a fatalism.

The notion of construction and building bring us to the key issues of science and philosophy during the writing of *Finnegans Wake*, which influence its content the most dramatically are Darwinism (such as via the name 'Chimpden') and the Big Bang – both descriptions that, philosophically, could suggest a notion of something from nothing or creation from the void. But rather than side with a philosophy which is inhabiting its own conditions, and deciding autonomously, Joyce begins with 'next to nothing' – something that is for all intents and purposes, the void or  $\emptyset$ , but distinct from it in the weakest and least discursively viable or epistemological legitimate way. A pure fiction, and a purely minimal fiction, the next to nothing therefore shields creation from philosophical decision and guarantees autonomy – in this case, the autonomy of Dublin, but also artistic freedom and A's right to her own memories. It is also a materialist vision, as this 'next to nothing' is materiality, it is "erigenating" which combines the latin *Erigo* to build or erect, originating with the name of the philosopher John Scotus Erigena – a Neo-Platonist whose doctrines are concerned with creation and non-being.

This not only ties the argument for ascribing such a constitutive role to  $\mu$  to the genealogy of Joyce's philosophical interests and what we know of his compositional techniques but it offers a one way of explaining of some of the knottiest and most paradoxical of the humorous devices. The nothingness and nobodies we see may well be expressed as the tension deriving from the novel's identification of the  $\mu$ , absolute inappearance, with the proper nihil, almost nothing. That is to say, what absolutely inappears be almost nothing, or likewise the notion of appearance in general without any specific apparent itself also a formless almost nothing. But neither mean that what is less than almost nothing, that is to say the void proper, has more appearance than absolute inappearance? How are we to think the appearance of the void, and the inappearance of something which is almost the void? There is no deep ontological wager here, but an on-going joke by a book at the expense of its authors own indecision. As a result, inappearance undermines encyclopedic pretenses not by haunting

a totality with its own incompleteness, but by suggesting that appearance itself is almost a kind of nothingness – an almost nothingness of form that devours any content one might put into it.

If ‘encyclopedic’ is the emptying of content into form, with  $\mu$  marking both that emptiness and the notion that something is both practically empty and functionally empty: it is as good as empty but, also, its inappearance contributes to the local function of emptiness. If  $\mu$  has a direct value in *Finnegans Wake*, it is not the underlying darkness and silence of the book’s night-time but neither is it the singularity of sleep and death when they are a certain individuals’ sleep and death. Rather it is a property by which apparently meaningless and absurd things are bound together in the first place. The night of *Finnegans Wake* has an almost minimal value, it draws everything close to the measure  $\mu$  which, as silence or absence itself, appears in the references to, and representations of, nothingness that figure so widely in the book. *Finnegans Wake* is built upon the explicit claim to write the “great part” [L 318] of life which is unwritten and, in a major sense, we are to understand that “great part” as that which does not make itself apparent to normal conscious thought, intentionality or perception. Although it is habitual or even traditional to think of this as “great part” in terms of sleep, it is a much wider but less specific nothing. Examples of this may include the unconscious and unconsciousness, sleep, dream, darkness, death, silence, nothingness, emptiness, forgetfulness, hollowness, meaninglessness, absence, insincerity, gullibility and so on. However, in the encyclopaedic construction of *Finnegans Wake* as a piece of literature, we see attempts to make appear (to apprehend) those things whose appearance was hitherto unthinkable: it consists in making those things hold a value greater than  $\mu$ , via an axiomatic guarantee of anti-symmetry. This state of ‘slightly greater than  $\mu$  but vastly less than **M**’ (more than barest of minimums, but far from the maximum) has two notable qualities: firstly, it means that each of these elements is differentiated from the zero or absolute inappearance of the text, marked by being other than the elements which it is held in conjunction.

The synthesis of these two effects means that each element whose measure of appearance is now slightly greater than  $\mu$  is available as a one-effect, but it also means that the inappearance that *Finnegans Wake* is “about” inappears both in *Finnegans Wake* (as it is may be locally denoted by  $\mu$ ) and in common language where it may be available as  $\mu$  without necessarily being the absolutely empty set  $\emptyset$ , as it is not the absolute void but the void as marked by Joyce’s intention, perhaps one might call it  $\emptyset_J$ . Badiou himself has noted how closely, yet different, he approaches Derridean themes here, when he speaks of the concern of Derrida, *différance*, as being that which is “measured by nothing” [Badiou 2006:546] (or

indexed against  $\mu$ ), the void of some particular multiple  $\emptyset_A$ , a multiple's proper inexistent. As I argue for a *différend* between these positions in Joyce, we can see that the defining elements of *Finnegans Wake*, those things that define and delimit its project, are those things that would otherwise inexistent if they were not, so to speak, put to the measure of nothing. We might say these objects or properties are the result of the encyclopaedic operations attempting to bring  $\emptyset_J$ , the void proper to the artistic situation of Joyce under the measure of a value  $\mu$ . In the practical example of *Finnegans Wake*, a maximal intensity of appearance under the form of linguistic novelty (new words, a remarkable new proximity with Dublin, a new aesthetic abuse of philosophic disputes) is made to measure up against a deliberate regime of minimality, where the encyclopedic predicate is contorted to ask, how little? How small a trace? How obscure? How distant?  $\emptyset_J$  is not  $\{\emptyset\}$ : it is never the void proper nor the void a mark which counts the void together with its own symbol or name.

But, in this intrusion of literature onto the scene of philosophy  $\emptyset_J$  is the “mocking mirror” or “darkness shining in the brightness which the brightness could not comprehend [U 34] being flashed? What Joyce is perhaps saying in his use of Averroes and Maimonides is not so much an implicit endorsement of their philosophy, but of their status as exiles of thought, their subtraction from the Western philosophical is itself a dark mirror. Stephen’s thought of Averroes and Maimonides may be in a sense orientalisising, but it nevertheless carries an admiration for what is (in his position) heretical thinking. The illumination and brightness of philosophical thinking is really only the institutional clarity that comes with a ratified, legitimated decision. Stephen’s thoughts go to those through whose thinking he can reflect or reverse than decision, to undecide and think again, what has been foreclosed from conceptualisation not through dogma and authority, but through clarity.

We can see that the effect of measuring  $\emptyset_J$  by  $\mu$ , bringing the measure of a local zero to bear against the univocal and global void, thus localising the void, opening the possibility where such things are no longer exclusively measured by  $\mu$ , but are brought into conjuncture with each other: an expansion of the encyclopedia. Questions such as ‘how does the unconscious nothingness of a dreamless sleep compare to the unconscious nothingness of death’? How does the nothingness in regards to vision of the blind compare to the nothingness of sound to deafness’? These questions are now no longer philosophical questions of the void, but phenomenal questions subject to questions of intensity of appearance.

Such is ‘next to nothing’ understood as ‘measure by nothing’: materialism requiring neither foundational stratum of matter without form, nor bodies without ideas. Neither is the notion of measuring  $\emptyset_J$  by  $\mu$  that of the contact between two voids, or between two deaths, but



between two barred deaths – as Derrida once called deconstruction the imperative of “death to death” [Derrida, 2000 ‘The Death Penalty’]. The two voids that Joyce is trying to write between are both barred out voids, things on the edge of the void or measured only by the void: the  $\emptyset_J$  that is not  $\emptyset$ , that we can only know is not  $\emptyset$  by a direct comparison. More importantly, Joyce is trying to write the difference between the local zero 0 and the degree of minimum appearance  $\mu$ . What does that mean? The coincidence of Joyce's two focuses  $\mu$  ( $x \geq \mu$ ) transforms something which is almost nothing (material) into the concrete, that which almost inappears. The principle of obscurity coupled to a principle of materialism is an attempt to concretise that which both is almost nothing and has almost no appearance.

The modelling of ‘another void’, or a created void that is not *the* void, is therefore crucial for the modelling of immediacy, that is the simulation of intuition. According to Badiou’s definition, the plurality of voids is essential for any intuitionist logic. We must therefore imagine ‘narrative’ as a game-like metastructure in which intuitionist logics can be taken as veridical. This agrees with a very obvious fact: the non-existence of a fictional object is not the same non-existence of a real object. If all ‘real’ objects are measured to the same 0, when they do not exist their appearance has an identical value, this is where fiction and reality are mutually defined against one another. The distinction between what is fictional and what is not fictional is not the distinction between the unreal and real (as fiction can obey the two maxims relevant to Joyce both by being realist and being something rather than simply being about something), but between fictional non-existence and real non-appearance. This matter is complicated because fiction concerns subjects who, while not necessarily human, think about (what is to them) actual inexistence and disappearance. So, we have a kind of quadratic arrangement: inappearance and the void in accordance to actuality, and fictional inappearance and a fictional cloning or measurement of the void in ‘fictional actuality’ (the realness of fiction).

This all leads to the notion of narrative fiction as being the interplay of two simulations of ‘intuition’: firstly, the emulation of immediately that goes on in experience itself, the conceptual role of real apprehension by actual human subjects, and then secondly in the way that fictional realms manufacture the intuitive from the counter-intuitive, as in reality the task of thought is to extract the rational from perceptions which *seem* immediate.

Why all this abstraction? Why expose the present thesis by such a use of mathematics that is neither metaphorical nor non-metaphorical? Let us return to the distinction Badiou makes in *Mathematics of the Transcendental* and evaluate it directly against Joyce's attitude to aesthetics and narrative, a distinction between a logic of "Unity (ontological, of the void), localization (of difference), classicism (of logic)" and of "Plurality (of voids), globalization (of difference), intuitionism (of logic)" [Badiou, 2014: 146], as "if every difference allows itself to be evaluated by a point, then excluded middle is a legitimate logical principle" [Ibid].

Let us reduce this somewhat to its most relevant part. Arguably both Joyce and Badiou are interested in by passing from the question of an intrinsic to that of an extrinsic ontology (that is, whether the 'what is' is best defined as relations or objects) and, in some sense, they both suspend the choice. Badiou's philosophy has some investment in this: his ultimate goal is to defend the ontological valence of Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory, upon which his theory of the pure multiple and of Event rest. This is his exploration of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic ontological questions so relevant, as Joyce has no such ontological investment. Joyce's rejection of any firm ontological priority between the extrinsic and the intrinsic is purely aesthetic, it has no ontological claim. For Badiou, the question is essential to formulating, and formalising, a robust theory of the subject. For Joyce, it is not a philosophical problemata but an area of thought and action where the subject is *shown* to be, whether as victim of paralysis, artist, everyman, counterfeiter or the "ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" [FW 120].

In doing so, Joyce and Badiou both invert a commonsensical assumption of the world. We might say, they attack intuition directly such much as gnaw *around and about* intuitive thinking of intuition – by formalising it, by symbolising it, by subjecting it to technical innovation and, most of all, by making it subject to a thinking of Event. This is why, as I hope I have shown, Joyce is not engaged with a deconstruction of the notion of immediacy so much as his deconstruction maneuvers are *aimed at* the immediacy of the immediate: it is not the sensation of 'mineness' that he cares about the process and generation of, but the mineness over which a particular way of being 'mine' is articulated. This mineness therefore bridges grammar and concept. In Leopold Bloom, for example, in 'Hades' and 'Lestrygonians' the fluidity and mercurial 'mineness' and 'intuition' Joyce constructs bridges both Bloom's knack for *ad hoc* conceptualisation and a believable grammar of experience. In part, this is

accomplished by moving the authorial style through different registers, such as the contrast between the poetic image of light glinting from Walter Sexton's image and Bloom's thoughts of coincidence [U 209]. The balance between points of conceptual interest and grammar of experience is subtended by a malleability of style, which is often striking in its lack of subtlety in its alternations of voice.

This demonstrates that transvaluation is at the heart of Joyce's realism, which challenges any assumption of perceptual immediacy or the authenticity of lived experience having more value than intellectual abstraction. Such an assumption is perhaps one of the key parts of an attack against correlationism. Or, as I have called it in Joyce's work, 'the cult of the limit'. If one takes the imposition of human worlds upon 'what is' as being the '*building*' or island of coherence or consistency in an otherwise contingent multiplicity, then the regulated or regime appearance of a local human world, the image of what-is imprinted in its own material residues would consist not of 'classical' local regulation of a chaotic or affective processional world of flux into logical shapes and constructions, but rather of the opposite. The 'island of consistency' or 'local coherence' is a place where the principle of the excluded middle is suspended. Not only does such a suspension describe the aesthetic simulation of immediacy, it is a cloning or duplication of how immediacy as it is in the actual world is simulated. What is key here is the idea of a plurality of voids. But not as an ontological statement, or an endorsement of intuitionist logic as it might be in a Badiouian view, but as a play within narrative form and structure. It is a way of disrupting and decohering narrative appearances and linearity without introducing any specific illogical or paradoxical elements.

But there are some issues here: if one asserts that minimal appearance ( $\mu$ ) equals the local zero of appearance (0) which equals the void ( $\emptyset$ ), there is a potential for the paradox of Parmenides. That is if the void is *not* nothing ( $\emptyset_J = \mu$ , and  $\emptyset_J \leq 0$  but  $\emptyset \neq \emptyset_J$ ), then it is not the void. If we say that Joyce is attempting to measure the void by nothing, or attempt to capture in language the appearance of nothing or the inappearance of something, then one creates a gap. The identity of 0 with  $\mu$ , and  $\mu$  with  $\emptyset$  suggests that nothing can be said about nothingness prior to the constitution of a constructed language. But, the measure of some nothing,  $\emptyset_J$ , by a local language of minimal appearance  $\mu$  divides the minimum of local appearance itself from absolute inappearance. The measure of  $\emptyset_J$  by  $\mu$  suggests something with greater than minimal level of appearance, that nonetheless is a measure of the void, something which is both less than nothing but at least something. Another void, the *prope nihil* ( $x \geq \mu$ ), must also be a *proper inexistant* ( $\emptyset_A$ ) and additionally a *néant propre* ( $\emptyset_J$ ), a

nothingness cleaned of unwanted extra-situational baggage, as the Washerwomen clean the laundry of all of Dublin's guilty parties in *Anna Livia Plurabelle*.

The notion of a second, or plural, void is absurd on both intrinsic (set theoretical) or extrinsic (categorical) grounds. However, the object that underwrites each apparent measurement of  $\emptyset_J$  by  $\mu$  is not the single, univocal void, but a paradox inducing the notion of the other-void, that has to hold a dual purpose: since it implies that there exists a void that cannot be substituted for another void, it is beholden to the principle of antisymmetry, and yet it must be equal to both 0 and  $\mu$ . Joyce's translation of "the void that is not the object" [SH] already contains a trace of the undecidable between the void and the Other and, by *A Portrait*, he had condensed this into "which it is not" [AP], which is the other-void. Such an irrational and impossible figment of the imagination is the trace of Joyce's sublime indecision.

One can describe this non-object, the other-void, as fundamentally intrusive (like the disturbances of Earwicker's dreams [FW 70 & FW 555], since it seeks to substitute itself for the minimum  $\mu$  as the source of uniqueness in the encyclopedic unwinding of *Finnegans Wake*. The semantic "nonsense" of *Finnegans Wake* can be understood as a kind of perverted uniqueness: if the semantics of truth statements ultimately defends the principle of the excluded middle ( $\sim p \vee p$ ), Badiou has demonstrated compellingly that the validation of the principle of the excluded middle depends on a well-pointed *topos*, a universe where  $\mu$  is both unique and identical to  $\emptyset$  [Badiou, 2014: 141]. However, if a forced, artificial intrusion takes place between semantics and the uniqueness of the  $\mu$ , what I would call the *sublime indecision* between the other and the void draws a ghostly second function of uniqueness like the shadow of the void.

When one thinks of nonsense in literature, one considers Lewis Carroll to be perhaps the archetypal example and the most famous as a subject for philosophy, from Davidson to Deleuze. But I want to talk about a different kind of nonsense deriving from this indecision. According to Deleuze's reading of nonsense words in *Logic of Sense*<sup>386</sup>, nonsense is a kind of production of sense prior to the application of the binary principle of the excluded middle. Such a division, between the local minimum of appearance of the void proper, allows for a second practical difference: the univocity and the unicity of the unnameable is disunited from an innocent union with the unsayable.

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<sup>386</sup> Deleuze's Nn, the "name saying its own sense [which] can only be nonsense" may perhaps be 0,  $\mu$  as a minimal principle of sense or the *in*appearance of sense. [Deleuze, 1990]

What does this all mean? It is a fundamentally productive statement, allowing us to go from the ontological statement that the void is *constitutive* to the more artistic and creative description that the void is *productive*. Artifice breaks the loop, so to speak, between the void as ontologically constitutive and constitutive of thought or experience. The unnameable is singular and exterior to language, but Joyce allows something unique in *Finnegans Wake* that transgresses the rules of normal logic (and common sense, experiential, views of ontology), in the form of the sigla, which are a variety of unsayable names. In the union between the unsayable and the unnameable, the sigla just draw (as Stephen does) a “border” between some objects which can be named but cannot be said. Next to the void, Joyce performs an absolute suspension of meaning (in interpretative acts) and communication (in forms of language).

What does encyclopedic nonsense look like under this condition? The question is not what nonsense looks like when one disregards the excluded middle, but what does the excluded middle do when its ground has been replaced by something irrational and impossible? It does not yet imply, as Deleuze argues, paradoxes such as the barber who shaves himself or the dictionary that contains a complete list of its own contents. What it is, is an attempt not to make nonsense produce sense, but to put a semantics which is founded on a fault to work syntactically. We take the words in *Finnegans Wake* to refer to things that are true or false: that they are nonsensical or contradictory does not imply paradox. The subjection of sense to syntax, of voice to grammar; but where sense is compromised because its claim to uniqueness, the source of its one-effect, has been forcibly replaced with another. This kind of nonsense is not a nonsense of sense or meaning, but an exile’s making-senseless of the notion of place: but as truth-semantics derive from topology creates a statement that appears (in a miracle of bilocation) in two places at once: its placement, in the constructivist realm of absolute difference, and its outplacement, in a world where its singular is drawn from the paradox of the ‘new’ void. Like Deleuze [Deleuze, 1990], we can propose a typology of nonsense, both one not of words but of narrative form: i) the simply false ii) the refusal to validate the excluded middle and iii) the refusal to either validate or not validate the principle of the excluded middle. Between ii) and iii) one finds the exact kind of narrative nonsense one needs to describe what Joyce accomplishes: the emulation of intuition and immediacy, not through givenness but through the invented or manufactured given that is cut from the material of the next to nothing. Joyce shows us that materialism itself is a kind of nonsense, but often necessary one.

## CHAPTER 17: ECCE PUER – MINIMALITY AS POETIC PRINCIPLE

### *Joyce as a 'Bad' Poet: Badness and Blankness*

With the conceptual framework of this thesis now presented, and the formalisation of our argument accomplished, it is time to take a broader view. Although our argument and conceptualisations of Joyce's work have often involved generalities, there has not yet been a point where a wider view, a panorama, of Joyce's poetics and narrative have been considered. Rather than attempt to present a chapter which summarises or presents a 'universalising' of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*, it is now more fruitful to look at Joyce from a wholly different position within his oeuvre. As the present thesis has mentioned poetics and discussed aesthetic language without looking at Joyce's poetry, now is the time to do so. This, I hope, will be a persuasive chapter as there will not be many generalities about narrative to lean upon. This is indeed a make or break moment of my thesis, in terms of my speculative separation of a theory of appearance from a discourse of givenness, lived-experience or immediacy. It is now crucial to show a counter-example of everything I have said until now. That is, to engage with Joyce's work where it least corresponds to the conceptual terms that I have been using.

If the argument about minimality that I have made is correct, then one would expect the following to be true: in Joyce's work, we would discover a minimal case or a minimal element, an aspect of his work whose appearance as Joycean form is minimal, yet still undeniably a part of Joyce's oeuvre. We would expect this minimal element to have something of an atomic quality, in that it would be like, in terms of equivalence-identity, but not so in terms of order or structure. It would also be undeniably singular in way that *A Portrait* or *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* cannot be, with their episode forms and multiple publications. This minimal element would attest maximally to the Event through events. That is to say that, if my modelling of Joyce's work in any way accurate: *there would exist in Joyce's oeuvre an independent element which, while holding a minimal identity with his formal inventions, attests maximally according to that which conditions them.*

Such a thing does indeed exist within Joyce's work: the celebrated poem 'Ecce Puer', published to commemorate the birth of his grandson and the death of his father. Already, we can see the minimal quality of 'Ecce Puer' acting as a discriminant, since the idea of a celebrated poem by James Joyce, a writer whose poetry is often noted for its mediocrity or

even its badness, seems to be a paradoxical object and, thus, holds a kind of distinctive singularity beyond counting as being one-in-number (one unit of a James Joyce poem). ‘Ecce Puer’ is *unique*, and as such is a *generic* element.

‘Ecce Puer’ confronts the reader directly with minimal and maximum intensities of appearances. It vividly commemorates the appearance of Stephen Joyce, marks the disappearance of John Joyce as an indistinct reference point, while involving figures who inappear in the poem itself, as well as the additional super-appearance of Joyce's fascinations, which appear beyond normal phenomenal appearance: the supplement understood as the appearance of appearance.

In order to clarify this, let us consider the text of the poem:

#### ECCE PUER

Of the dark past  
A child is born;  
With joy and grief  
My heart is torn.

Calm in his cradle  
The living lies.  
May love and mercy  
Unclose his eyes!

Young life is breathed  
On the glass;  
The world that was not  
Comes to pass.

A child is sleeping:  
An old man gone.  
O, father forsaken,  
Forgive your son! [P 111]

At the risk of airing a personal opinion, if only for the sake of forwarding an argument, I consider ‘Ecce Puer’ to be the only poem of real literary merit which Joyce ever composed.

Certainly, it is the sole poetic work which might be said to match the quality his prose work, even if that is to beg the question of what ‘quality’ might be. I include my personal reaction as a contrast with the frequently negative reception that Joyce’s poetry often receives. Such a negative opinion is perhaps most famously aired by Rebecca West in her 1928’s collection of essays and reviews called *The Strange Necessity*, where she contrasts the “beautiful prose” of a “majestic genius” [West, 1928] with the “exceedingly bad” poem ‘Alone’, though she does not even consider it to be the worst of Joyce’s *Pomes Penyeach*.

“ALONE.

The noon's greygolden meshes make  
All night a veil,  
The shorelamps in the sleeping lake  
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper to the night  
A name-- her name-  
And all my soul is a delight,  
A swoon of shame.” [P 51]

Of the poem ‘Alone’, whose words she finds to be “as blank as the back of any spoon”, West writes: “it is inconceivable that this poem should give pleasure to any living creature” [West, 1928]. West’s witty triangulation of the matter-of-fact badness of Joyce’s poetry between his reputation and the quality of his prose underscores the vacuity of Joyce’s verse. Joyce may even have agreed with a more moderately-stated version of this critique, since he summarised his own disappointment in his earlier collection *Chamber Music* by saying “I am not a poet” [JJ 231].

If one agrees with Rebecca West's extremely negative assessment of the content and style of Joyce's poetry, her delight in the badness of Joyce's poetry seems questionable. Though I personally find Joyce's poems to be almost universally bad (one would be hard pressed to argue that time and context have made ‘Gas from A Burner’ less funny) it is not delightful but, rather, enigmatic: Joyce was not only the author of melodious and rhythmically satisfying prose and choral dialogue but, by all accounts, a very skilled orator and at least a somewhat accomplished singer [JJ 150]. The idea that Joyce wrote mostly ‘bad’ poetry is intellectually provocative whether it is a fact or not, or just as a personal opinion. This is



compounded by the fact that when Joyce wrote prose that mimics poetry, such as the 1914 prose-poem ‘Giacomo Joyce’ and ‘Anna Livia Plurabelle’, he is successful. But success, in the sense of positive reception, as a poet eluded him. Perhaps it is apt, regarding Joyce’s poetry, to state that “a man of genius makes no mistakes, his errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery” [U 243], as J.C.C. Mays quotes from *Ulysses* in the introduction to the 1992 Penguin collection of Joyce’s poetical and theatrical works.

It might also be the case that only a writer of “exceedingly bad” or “blank” poetry could have written ‘Ecce Puer’, since it is the work of a great writer or “majestic genius” expressing a fragility using the medium where his own technical skill is poorest. But, my intention is not to start on a discourse on ‘bad’ poetry or perform a genealogical analysis on what it means for a poem to be bad and why Joyce is often considered as a writer of ‘bad’ poetry, as a kind of parallel to Joyce’s own comments on the ‘ugly’ aesthetic object [OCPW 106]. Rather, I simply want to note the gap in accomplishment between Joyce’s prose and poetry: to the point where if one called *Ulysses* ‘accomplished’ it would be a comical understatement, but it is arguable that Joyce’s poems fail to accomplish even the modest sentimental or erotic aims which Joyce has for them. But in this contrast, we find ‘Ecce Puer’ to stand alone: one could certainly not use it to refute any of West’s comments about the contents of *Pomes Penyeach*. ‘Ecce Puer’’s directness and spare, emotional efficiency contrasts markedly with the poem West chooses to eviscerate. Yet it is not really accurate to say that ‘Ecce Puer’ accomplishes any technical feat which ‘Alone’ does not, or that it harbours any particular stylistic novelty which renders it closer to Joyce’s poems than his “blank” verse. Rather, one can say that ‘Ecce Puer’ is a poem whose lack of accomplishment is deployed towards the apprehension of the event which it was composed to commemorate: that same blankness, that same withdrawal from readerly pleasure or affective contact, is deployed towards rendering into verse a coincidence holding an otherwise incommunicable import for the poem’s author.

In general, one can say of Joyce’s other poetic works that they are either spontaneous outbursts of emotion (typified by the “swoon”) or vulgar comic verse, much like Stephen Dedalus’ notably rather poor attempts in *A Portrait* or *Ulysses*. Or else, they are somewhat simple verses marked by cliché and sentimental phrases and often (stunningly) stilted and unlyrical phrasing, where voice clumsily matches scansion. There is a hint of this irony in *Ulysses* where Bloom’s attempt at poetry” - The dreamy cloudy gull, waves o’er the waters dull” [U 211] - compares very favorably in its musical naivety to Stephen Dedalus’s rather

ugly and overthought: “He comes pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss” [U 60]. It is especially noticeable that the poem composed by Stephen in *A Portrait* is likewise portrayed as a ‘bad’ poem.

But, as the term ‘bad’ poetry crosses from describing Joyce’s own poetical verses to the failed attempts of his characters, ‘bad’ necessarily ceases to be a judgment of personal taste or literary merit, and starts being something more of a measure of accomplishment. Here, I would depart from my agreement with West’s brutal review: Joyce’s poetry is not ‘bad’ by way of contrast to his prose, but ‘bad’ in the sense that it fails to accomplish itself a ‘bad’ poem, that is to say, one that has failed to become itself, its identity to itself being minimal (to use a construction from Badiou’s theory of appearances [Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 2009.]).

Badness therefore expresses neither worth nor quality, but a certain minimality in terms of self-becoming, a failure of self-becoming. A bad poem, having thus failed to become itself, rests only on a minimal identity. Its words are ‘blank’ because they acquire nothing novel from being composed into the poem. To use Badiou’s terminology from *Logics of Worlds*, one might say that a ‘bad’ poem is an attempt at poetry that has failed to establish an “envelope” [Badiou, 2009:128]: it lacks any sense of interior stability. For Badiou, such a regional stability or interior coherence of a world “can do without [a] gaze” [Ibid 129]. It requires no observer but, instead, a self-supporting interior inside with apparent elements or “beings-there”. Does this imply a sense of phenomenal autonomy of the poem as a whole? How far is this autonomy suggested by the interdependency of its constituent elements?

Ultimately, an envelope guarantees that a value “subsuming all degrees of appearance of the beings which co-appear in this fragment” [Ibid 130]. In other words, vividness of appearance and coherence go together and, in the sense of a poem, no individual appearance can differentiate itself strongly without an enveloping sense of the poem’s own coherent appearance. This coherent appearance, likewise, cannot itself appear without well-differentiated elements to attest to it. The poem ‘Alone’ certainly does not provide this. There is little mutual evaluation going on between the “sly reeds” and the “greygolden meshes”, let alone a sense of a semantic or sensible interdependence between the various elements that Joyce introduces to the reader. Furthermore, there is no dynamic quality or semantic interaction between the implied glow of the “shorelamps” or the whispers recalling the name; there a certain stylistic disassociation between the poem’s drawing of place and its situation of action, which is very different from Joyce’s virtuoso casting of the complicity between action and place in his narrative prose. West’s description of the words in this poem, “as blank as the

back of any spoon”, is therefore apt: they are blank, not only to the gaze or in the reader’s mind’s eye, but also in the sense of their failure to register upon each other. Since the poem struggles to present the reader with a disturbed stillness, it succeeds only in communicating a lack of motion. The “swoon of shame” might suggest a certain Mallarméan evanescence, but there is no hidden syntax which might subvert the poem’s own construction towards something like the *terme évanouissant* that Badiou uncovers in Mallarmé in his *Theory of the Subject* [Badiou 1986]. Therefore, the poem ‘Alone’ is ‘bad’ because it envelops nothing but the attention of the reader, offering only a simple pleasantness or nostalgic sentimentality. There is no sense of it being a unique or autonomous interior or region to itself. Or an independent region which, independently from a reader’s gaze, might stand as a testament to the singularity of some vanished or part-submerged gesture, suggested by the objects in the poem but not by the grammatical rules that order and place them. As such, we can define this lack of envelopment as a failure of self-becoming, which is to say a failure of existential intensity, again to call upon Badiou’s Mallarméan terms. All that it is there, is there. Nothing has taken place, but the place.

Yet, it is exactly this sense of a minimal intensity of identity, this failure and fragility, upon which ‘Ecce Puer’, as Joyce’s most accomplished poem succeeds in a self-becoming, in the sense that it becomes a paradoxical object, the maximal appearance of the minimum: the most least, the strongest weakness, the most present absence and the most absent presence.

At the points where ‘Ecce Puer’ comes closest to Joyce’s poetical style (sentimental or hyperbolic emotion), it resembles the casually appropriative style of Joyce’s prose, in that the cliché line (“my heart is torn”) is used ironically, providing the poem with a quilting point into conversational directness: Joyce’s own voice intrudes upon the poem, yet we can only identify the author through his dependency upon borrowings and ordinary conversational language. In deploying this deliberate change of register, the effect is to impress upon the reader that the poet/master of language is so moved that he has to resort to such a phrase. It is not so much that Joyce’s voice intrudes into his own poem, so much as his voice sucks a line out of the poem. By contrast, some similarly melodramatic lines in the ‘bad’ poems of Dedalus and Bloom are original, and far from a conversational register. The simplicity of the cliché “my heart is torn” contrasts with the extravagant emotion of Joyce’s poetic style without suggesting an irony or *bathos*. At the point where it superficially most resembles his many ‘bad’ ones and his fictional depictions of such, Joyce’s single most accomplished poem preserves not an elaborate difference, but the faintest trace of a simple distinction of vocal unilaterality. Joyce’s uniquely successful poem is only distinct from his ‘bad’ or ‘blank’ poetry

in the faintest, most unilateral of ways – which poignantly copies or reflects the fragility of its subject matter without any irony whatsoever.

The separateness or, perhaps, the separated-ness without separation of ‘Ecce Puer’ from all of Joyce's other writing must be insisted upon. Its autobiographical content is incomparable, even, to the ‘epiphany’ written on the death of George Joyce cited earlier in this thesis, though this latter work crosses the line between personal and aesthetic writing even more so than ‘Ecce Puer’. However, it is still less specifically autobiographical than ‘Ecce Puer’, in the sense that the epiphany on the death of George Joyce carries the sense of aesthetic and conceptual writing used to think through or analyse a greatly disturbing and saddening event in a life. ‘Ecce Puer’, in contrast, is explicitly biographical, in the sense that it is not using writing either to work through or to communicate an event or events in life. Instead, it is a deliberate attempt to commit life to writing. I would say that, in this also, it is minimally Joycean. Whereas Joyce’s novels require the coextension of life and writing, that life and writing are equal partners and are both expressions of a non-originary generic humanity. However, ‘Ecce Puer’ seems like an attempt, outside of philosophical dalliances, to imprint life upon text in a manner that seems anything but unmediated, life imprinted on text by *a* life rather than life and text together in a discontinuous cobweb tangle.

The illuminating relationship between ‘Ecce Puer’ and Joyce’s prose work has no direct or indirect equivalent throughout Joyce’s other published writing, in terms of the poem’s singular neatness and concise manifestation of its intent. It superficially shares formal traits with epiphany, sentimental poetry (“my heart is torn”) and comic verse (it has a sense of timing as much as poetic rhythm and, despite its seriousness and pathos, it has an almost joke-like structure) but cannot be reduced to them. Its singularity is summoned by the uniqueness of its own moment, in contrast to the multiplicity which underwrites all other Joycean autobiography, and its affirmation reflects the subtraction. It says plainly what an epiphany, both by design and intention, cannot say at all. *Ulysses* selectively and decisively separates June 16th 1904 from every other day and follows the factual and speculative consequences of that selection: it could be said to summon June 16, 1904. In contrast, ‘Ecce Puer’ is summoned by its moment, it is its own instance. *Ulysses* may exist to summon its time again and again through acts of reading and performance. However, ‘Ecce Puer’ was summoned by its time exactly once and, once that summoning itself has passed, unrepeatably. What Joyce termed “satisfaction” [OCPW 105] affirms the singularity of a moment both progressively (the structure of the poem) and retrospectively (the affirmation of a uniqueness)

Let us briefly consider some more of Joyce's other poems. For example, the poem 'Bahnhofstrasse' ("Ah star of evil! Star of pain! Highhearted youth comes not again" [EP 53]) brings together the singular and unrepeatable in a rather dour and misanthropic verse about Joyce's isolation. The thematically Mallarméan 'Nightpiece' [EP 50] ("as the bleak incense surges, cloud on cloud, voidward from the adoring waste of souls") bring together multiplicity and void, and the love poem 'She Weeps Over Ragoon' considers the obscurity between the loss of an old love and the new present love. Joyce's poems frequently seem to invert his method for compiling epiphany: instead of using real life as a resource towards the end of formal literary construction, Joyce uses formal constructions that use real life as a way to illuminate a thematic or idea of his work. It is difficult to imagine anyone considering Joyce to be a poet independently of his prose: aside from *Chamber Music*, his poems seem fundamentally tied to his wider oeuvre.

I make this remark in order to chart out the claim that 'Ecce Puer' is an entirely singular entity within in Joyce's work. One might even say that it holds something of an atomic value in Joyce's oeuvre. Perhaps it is, in itself, the principle of minimality that ensures Joyce's project by ensuring its existence in a minimal form. It is the smallest unified fragment attesting to Joyce's concerns with a formal aesthetic encapsulation in relation to obscurity, novelty and love. Thematically, it covers much: the vulnerability of children, laicisation of religious thought, non-linear temporality, the fictive nature of paternity, death, division, the escape from history, Heraclitan rising and falling, the notion of 'eternal return' and the wager of affirmation. While it is not encyclopedic in the sense that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are, we might call 'Ecce Puer' a thematic catalogue, a recounting functioning as an inventory, of sorts, of Joyce's concern: it does not define the Joyce-Condition but cata-logues neatly the consequences-in-appearance.

'Ecce Puer', then, is an example of where singularity is convoked with minimality. What makes 'Ecce Puer' so singular is not really its quality, even though it is somewhat difficult to believe that an amateur or first-time reader of Joyce's work would not find it both uniquely affecting and uniquely enlightening to the themes of Joyce's major prose works. The quality one could ascribe to the poem's singularity is *nakedness*: it is remarkable and singular in that it presents Joyce's poetics as denuded, a *poiesis* equally divested of both the narrative situation (stylized as autobiographic, epiphanic, epic, etc.) and dialectical engagement. Even though it suggests the passage of events, it is poetic narrative-situation rather than narrative situated-situation. It is autobiographical, but without autobiographical mediation: it is neither mediated by the ironic redeployments of real incidents in *A Portrait*,

nor by a pretense to recording the directly experiential or affective without modification, an ambition which is normally central to the Joycean deployment of autobiography. It is autobiographical, but without being a record of experience or the product of a self under a certain affect. We might think of *A Portrait*, a work that insists on the honest recording of experiences but that, in doing so, must also record the questions and answers that construct how one comes to have experiences and think of one's experiences as experiences: if an instance is in itself *distinct*, how does it come to be *different* from others in instances in experience? *A Portrait* is a *portrait* and not simply a life history, because it is an image of growth into recognition of oneself as having (or being) *a* life. The clouding, obscuring so associated with life-as-multiple exists within the poem as the breath upon glass, seen from a distance. Only in 'Ecce Puer' can we be so objective about Joyce's noun and verb: what is Joyce writing? Life, as life plural but not *lives* exactly. What is the verb behind it? Obscuring. The noun is there in the poem, but the verb is not - the verb is hinted as an analogy - "breathed upon the glass" which suggests that life and obscurity are one, radically immanent, unilaterality distinct and necessarily contingent.

As such, in 'Ecce Puer', we find Joyce's *poesis*, the latent poem beneath his prose, evident in its contours. It was written under the shadow of two incidents (withholding the word "event") which have something of a sheering effect on Joyce's work. If 'She Weeps Over Rahoon', written for his wife's old "sweetheart" Michael Bodkin who was buried in Rahoon graveyard [JJ 325], is evidence of autobiographically re-affirming what has been put into narrative form (in 'The Dead'), then the later, mature, 'Ecce Puer' is its reversal. 'She Weeps' sees articles from reality embedded or sheltered from modification within a narrative form. Its composition is not an autonomous aesthetic gesture of the kind championed by Joyce. The composition of the poem is functional – it was written both assuage Joyce's own jealousy – and as part of the process of Joyce's self-re-evaluation which eventually arrived at 'The Dead'. The poem of 'She Weeps', if one uses the word 'poem' in the precisely classical and philosophical sense which Badiou uses the term in his *Inaesthetics*, [Badiou, 1998] exists solely to shelter or conserve a few formerly living elements so that may be revived again in narrative or epic prose, it has no autonomous right to its own instance.

Therefore, in relating Joyce's poetry to 'The Dead' and his later prose, it is inevitable that one must mention Ellman's influential reading of the 'mortuary triangle' [JJ 325] between two living lovers and a 'dead sweetheart', or the "occult verification" of Joyce finding a gravestone with the name J. Joyce [Ibid]. What Ellman terms a 'mortuary triangle' does not

only apply to persons, but also to the works: what is buried is buried as a way allowing the works of Joyce's life, his love and his art, to move forward. Ellman's notion that the moment when Joyce discovers Bodkin's grave changes his whole attitude, not only to art, but to Ireland itself is perhaps a little dated (he claims that Joyce's articles have lost "the contempt" and that he now had an affection for Aran like that of "a tourist who has read Synge" [Ibid]). Nevertheless, the poem 'She Weeps' is something of a sacrificial second burial, burying the form of poetry along with the figure it shelters, abandoning it so that narrative creation can continue. Joyce's notes about Shelley's grave [JJ 324] see poetry as a secure grave from which the restless dead cannot rise from the "liquid formless earth" in which Bodkin is buried or from the "dark formless mother" (a division of the oneness of Swinburne's "our mighty mother" as mentioned in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*) – a poetic form which, we are to surmise, is the tranquil form that holds the dead who are suspended sadly between two species of formlessness. Although "She Weeps" is one of Joyce's more successfully melodic poems, it pales in the comparison to the prose-poetry of 'The Dead', where *poesis* is instrumentalised to render in prose the paradox which normal communicative language resists, that of the identity between absence and presence.

Instead of using poetry as a means to embed a certain element of life in a narrative, granting it stasis like an insect in amber, 'Ecce Puer' performs the inverse feat by liberating that which it describes from narrative. This contrasts with Joyce's usual concern with poetry, which is epic or Vichian, using poetry to maximalise narrative. Even the meekness and slightness of his romantic verses suggest desire to reserve intensity within language, under the condition of a unique autobiographical intensity or, rather, the narrative itself is identified as a kind of biographical intensity from which poetry much draw. 'Ecce Puer' functions as a reclamation of poetry from the narrative use that Joyce would usually have it serve. There is no grander purpose in 'Ecce Puer': it does not serve to commemorate the events of which it speaks, or to frame them in a certain narrative structure, but rather to reveal the silent eternity of their interior without adding to or overstating that silence. Its sole intention is one with its own instance. By contrast, 'She Weeps' has the character of a psychological investigation across a temporal or narrative arc: although it has a lyrical tone, Joyce was concerned with the psychological character of the 'mortuary triangle' and the contingency of the feelings it evoked. The endurance and transformation of feelings across time exists in the doubled temporality of "then as now". 'Ecce Puer' has only *now*, the "is" which is both punctual and continuous, whether it is the *is* of "*is* sleeping" or the *is* which "*is gone*".

This is not to say that ‘Ecce Puer’ lacks structure. In fact, as previously mentioned, the structure of ‘Ecce Puer’ greatly resembles Joyce’s comedic poetry, poems which he wrote spontaneously for the sake of mirth or gratitude. This triviality is a great indication of function: Joyce uses poetry or popular song to put something into narrative, an operation of importing. However, ‘Ecce Puer’ exports or, at least, shields an event from Joyce’s works. The poem itself has very little overt relationship to Joyce’s prose, containing no subtle reference, shared point of contact beyond the author’s immediate family. In fact, aside from John Joyce, it seems to concern Joyce’s children more than the part of his family that inspired the Dedalus or the Earwickers (Lucia arguably being an exception, but very arguably). If we consider the claim in *A Portrait* that epiphany is the act of the “bounding” [AP 212] line of the universal, ‘Ecce Puer’ considers what is on the other side of the line: what is very much not the object of art, what has been dis-included and, considering Joyce’s privacy, what pains have been taken to shield it. In short, it transforms what, for the avant-garde realist, had previously been the irreducibly, pre-existing exteriority, imagining it as an interior.

In my earlier commentary on Joyce's work and the axiom of separation, I worked towards the observation that Joyce strives to rid language of institutive and, therefore, existential faculty, because always he drives against the existential towards the ontological, thereby revealing a certain emptiness within ontology. Joyce states this unusually cleanly in *Finnegans Wake*, where an indistinct authority’s voice closes the debate between St Patrick and Berkeley by saying “Yes is no body present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled” [FW 613]. As well as reinstating the “founded on the void” contention of Stephen in *Ulysses*, this view sees appearances as ephemeral or fleeting. It is arguably Joyce in proto-Badiouian mode par excellence: everything exists eternally, comings and goings (that is, existence) are simply the result of the fact that imposing a contingent “order” upon beings induces an “other”. The same/other distinction is some strange aberration of ordering, and not an innate property of ontology. It is primarily a categorial matter. Therefore, ‘existence’ is secondary to ‘being’. It has no special priority. Joyce’s late maxim “the inexpressible does not exist” [Parandowski, *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*: 160-162] is true because existence is part and parcel of expression, and vice versa. In a sense, existence is expression understood as localisation; the question of immanence does not have an easy answer in existence, a fact which is reflected in the absence of any ‘immediacy of the immediate’ (and the possibility of a mathematical structure), or in the interplay between mathematical discourse and mathematical pseudo-structure. Being is being because it has a mathematical being, and this is available to aesthetics through patterns, geometrics and



numericity. Joyce does not want to get “through” surfaces to the “essence” of things but, rather, to understand how things generate primary and secondary qualities and ‘integrate’ this into an aesthetic gesture. This way of thinking is, again, transmitted in a pastiche of philosophical argument, in the “order is othered” conclusion of the Berkeley/Patrick argument in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce argues that *what is* is unchanging: only appearance modifies or makes the rising and falling apparent. From this position, perhaps, we can see both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* as attempts to render within a natural or organic language the fact that Being is unchanging and Existence is modal, without recourse to a wholly philosophical division between eternal essence and ephemeral appearance.

Under the influence of Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, and the philosophical sign of the *Concordia Oppositorum*, has Joyce’s late dalliance with Neo-Platonism caused him to overturn the rigorous Anti-Platonism of his youth? I would argue not. It is a misreading to imagine that Joyce comes to believe the same strawman he puts in AE’s mouth in *Ulysses* [U 236]: a world of unchanging, eternal essences and malleable superficial appearances. The truth is a more complex division between ontological and existential, which cannot be reduced to essence and appearance or essence and existence. The notion of distinction arises from the touch of the Other, as in “only is order othered” rather than difference being reducible to the general idea of the Other, is reason enough to say that Joyce gives us neither anti-Platonism nor occultist neo-Platonism, but a non-Platonism born not of philosophical thinking, but the appropriation of philosophical concepts by aesthetic gesture. The appropriation of Neo-Platonist concept into literary comedy, of late Joyce is in evidence, and is more aptly described a contemporary Badiouian-Platonist view than *stricto sensu* Platonism: to exist is merely to appear, and appearance says nothing of Being [Badiou, 2008: 114]. Appearing is a matter of some contingent transcendental rule, and so there is a certain identity or philosophical similarity between making-apparent and ordering. Appearing does not make and unmake being, it merely makes and unmakes the situations in which things appear. We should not shy away from how challenging it is to make sense of this assertion as Joyce presents it not as an implication of *Ulysses*, with its specific anti-Platonist statements, but as the night to *Ulysses*’ day. In the sense that the night is not the contradiction or negation of the day, but its complicit silent and inward partner.

Yet despite this apparent gulf between the Thomist and Nietzschean roots of *Ulysses* and the Neo-Platonist and Idealist references *Finnegans Wake*, ‘Ecce Puer’ remains a unique case in Joyce’s oeuvre which belongs to neither. The poem’s world is one in which the exactly opposite to the statement “no body [is] present here which was not there before. Only is order

othered. Nought is nulled” [FW 613] is true: it is a Joycean work which says little or nothing of the ontology, and has nothing to say about what *is*. It talks of existence in the simplest sense of bringing into conjunction human existence at its most precarious and its most intense. Vico’s ‘lex’, or gathering, is subordinated to a personal rapport with what appears: there is no sense of gathering or collection. That eternal unchanging “is” of *Finnegans Wake* would be no comfort to the voice of ‘Ecce Puer’ in its grief, nor would it dim the joy the voice expresses at the birth of the son: the voice is a sampling of thought of appearing and disappearing, that skirts close to feelings and emotion, but cannot be pitted *against* the intellect.

*Analogy and Life: The Unexpected Anthropocentricity of ‘Ecce Puer’*

One the topic of his influence from Scholastic debates around analogy, have said that there is nothing which one can say “to be” is *like* for Joyce. I would not, however, argue that the same is true for “to exist”. It is easy to say what existence is like for Joyce. For him, existence is nothing other than appearing, or expressing. To exist is to be othered by order and to be ordered by another, and so it is thoroughly well-served by analogy and metaphor, rather than games or play with words. Rather than subvert metaphor towards inquiries intending to reveal hidden actions of language upon the intellect and emotions in ‘Ecce Puer’, Joyce avails himself of intuitive metaphorical possibilities without submitting them to amused rigor of his usual interrogations. The metaphorical density of the poem is, therefore, quite astonishing for such a short piece, which has an arresting semantical simplicity, especially if taken in comparison to Joyce’s love of the compound and indirect.

Among the poem’s sequence of metaphors, the most overt is the analogy of life as breath on glass. The poem confronts us with a procession of kinds of appearance, each resembling each other, from which the deeply analogical poem – analogical in both poetic and theological senses - coils around. To exist is to be caught in a network of analogy: to exist is to be to be what is to be like what it is to be like...the brevity and simplicity of ‘Ecce Puer’ allows it to be a marvel of self-referential analogical complexity, even if none of the individual analogies suggested by the poem are particularly complex or even original.

‘Ecce Puer’ expresses that birth is like death, that to forgive is like being forgiven, that to withhold forgiveness is like being forsaken, that death is like blindness, that distantiation in time is like separation in space, that the duration of joy is as sudden or fleeting is the arrival of grief, that human emotions are fragile like the life of a new-born, a fleeting fragility which is

soon forgotten in robust life, one is born from the darkness of the past like a child is born from nothingness, to be born is like opening one's eyes, but opening one's eyes is also like outgrowing infancy, and so on.

These unilateral analogies are coiled tightly inside the appearance-haunted interior of the human world. In a pointed and, I would contend, singular instant of *irrealism* in Joyce's work, they do not extend outwardly to a materiality or naturality that cradles it, but rather always return to themselves in the circuit of appearance and analogies where human life is defined by fragility, fleetingness, shade and obscurity.

One could argue that the poem 'She Weeps Over Ragoon' contains the same thoughts that lead to the philosophical explorations of love and death in 'The Dead', or the attempt at a dramatic psychology of fidelity in the play 'Exiles'. However, there is no single well-defined idea in 'Ecce Puer' that one could say forms a part of Joyce's seedbed of ideas and investigations. On the contrary, it is suggestive of parallels that lack exactly that kind of definitive central cohesion: each link in its chain of parallels traces one of Joyce's major concerns without addressing it specifically. It is as if writing the poem preserves and protects the comings and goings described from becoming further material for Joyce's work: while the death of John Joyce perhaps informs both the depiction of the wake of Finnegans and, especially the burial of Earwicker in *Finnegans Wake*, there is nothing like the sense of total exploitation at the beginning of 'She Weeps'; as one of the most joyful moments of his life, we should pause to note that the birth of Stephen Joyce does not receive an incontrovertible commemorative reference in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce referred to his week of mourning his father with "Moansday, Tearsday, Wailsday, Thumpsday, Frightday, Shatterday" [JJ 644 and FW 301]. But 'Ecce Puer' is neither a memorial nor a commemoration: it lacks any parallel to baptism or burial mounds, the two archetypal forms of aesthetic activity which are so crucial to *Finnegans Wake*.

The shades of male chauvinism in Joyce's famous identification of birth with natural fecundity<sup>387</sup> are notably not in evidence in 'Ecce Puer', in which birth and death are phenomenal, part of human life only, as they are considered only to be existential, rather than biological facts or processes: the in-corporealisation of typical Joycean central vectors of the human body (sight, breath, laying) make out a pointed reversal of attitude of *Ulysses*' 'epic of

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<sup>387</sup> Perhaps exemplified by the notorious phrase "crimes against fecundity" when describing contraception in a letter to Frank Budgen from 1920 [JJ 475]. The degree to which this chauvinism influences the relevant episode 'Oxen of the Sun' is a separate critical debate, upon which I do not wish to intrude upon here.

the body', in which bodily material and physicality take precedence over phenomena. Feelings and sensations are immanent to the body as, in a Deleuzian sense, an assembly of machinic processes [Deleuze & Guattari, 1983: 'The Desiring-Machines'], the body's workings, take precedence over the idea of sense as impression or unmediated intuition. The one analogy which is absent from 'Ecce Puer', but implied in 'She Weeps Over Ragoon', is the similarity held between deathbeds, birthing beds and wedding beds. This truly marks the poem as coming from a Joycean feeling of existence, rather than the feeling *and thinking* of Being.

If 'Ecce Puer' represents a dramatic reversal of Joyce's privileging of the ontological over the existential then, by turn, it also represents a reversal of his counter-anthropocentric<sup>388</sup> vision in *Finnegans Wake*. In comparison to what we know of Joyce's work in progress by 1932, 'Ecce Puer' creates a decidedly un-Joyce-like image of humanity not as passengers on the radius of a wheel also carrying mountains, trees, clouds and rivers, but as the wheel itself. It is an extreme contrast to the world of *Finnegans Wake*, which is a world of animal life, machines, geography, broadcasting and artefacts all interacting with each other independently of the human and supposed givenness of human subjectivity and lived experience. In *Finnegans Wake*, humanity is not a passage through which the interactions of all other elements must pass. Even in the book's retelling of the fall of Mankind, though the exile of mankind is partially told from the perspective of Adam or God, its active characters are *humanlike* entities and birds: "amengst menlike trees walking or trees like angels weeping nobirdy aviar soar anywing to eagle it! But rocked of agues, cliffed for aye!" [FW 505]. Even in the moment of fall which, in many Christian theologies, defines humanity as a separate entity from the world, that also extends to contemporary philosophers who indulged in the notion of humankind as *verfallen* "finight mens mid-infinite true" [Ibid], Joyce sees trees, birds, and rocks as equal participants. One might say that Yawn's account of the fall of man in III.3 is ironic, insofar as it lacks a Copernican element. That is, it lacks the sense that anthropocentricity has become deranged: humanity was not the centre of the universe either before or after the fall. Rather than the origin of our species, the fall of man, is perhaps simply an "ouragan of spaces" [FW 504], an organ of spaces, or an "ouragan" (hurricane) of species rather than a single linear progression.

Yet, in the greatest possible contrast to such subversions of anthropocentricity and affirmations of biological plurality, 'Ecce Puer' sees human lived experience not only as the

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<sup>388</sup> Clumsy phrase, but I do not wish to use either 'anti-humanism' or 'post-humanist' here.

centre, but as the very hub of the cosmic wheel itself. Although it was composed while Joyce was working on the third book of *Finnegans Wake*, the poem could not be more different in its presentation of human life as the sole territory in which the network of appearances, apparent as the spatialisation and localisation. That is to say, “the world” that passes through the poem passes like a fog over the immobile and eternal fact of human centrality, a passage visible to us as the process of birth, death, in which the ethical tenor is no longer torn between the imperative and the obligation, but between forgiving and forsaking. There is no hurricane of spaces here.

This could not stand in greater contrast to Joyce’s earlier work: the bravery of Molly Bloom’s utterance of a “yes” to the incommensurate exteriority is replaced by a pathos of interiority and its affects. ‘Ecce Puer’ is the point in Joyce’s work where he is minimally questioning of anthropocentricity, and minimally anti-humanist. To use the terms from Quentin Meillassoux’s argument in *After Finitude* [Meillassoux, 2008], the poem presents Joyce as a strong correlationalist rather than a weak one; the voice of ‘Ecce Puer’ is that of a “fideist” [Ibid], who sees no difference between the world as extension and the world as that which is available to finite human senses. One might say that the anti-Copernican re-telling of the fall of mankind in III.3 operates as a critique of correlationalist fideism as much as it operates as a Nietzschean assault against Christian faith. Yet, the autobiographical intensity of ‘Ecce Puer’ sees language serve exclusively as a marker of correlates between thoughts and feelings. There is no being besides what exists for the voice, which is torn between grief and joy, as that voice is nothing but a linguistically encapsulated correlation of the affects of grieving and those of rejoicing.

Therefore, ‘Ecce Puer’ gives a view of poetry as the kind of language most appropriate to a world where Being and Thought can only ever be articulated together, and both thought and being themselves are unreachable (we note that the reflexive character of Joyce’s prose, which is in evidence even in the most emotionally intense moments, is not in evidence in ‘Ecce Puer’. In ‘Ecce Puer’, there is no sense whatsoever of a comic or erotic inversion of that finitude whereby one can subvert givenness in order to, so to speak, get out ahead of oneself. The uniqueness of ‘Ecce Puer’ in Joyce’s oeuvre is, here also, undeniable.

But, if this can be argued in terms of the linguistic and communicative dimension of the poem, so too can it be observed on the thematic level. ‘Ecce Puer’ shows a remarkable absence of one of Joyce’s major fixations: the worldly being or physical reality of an embryo before birth that, rather than emerging fully formed from nothing, develops as a mix of physical processes. This is an overwhelming influence on Joyce’s view of human life,

affecting his statements on the soul or paternity in very many passages of *Finnegans Wake*. This is something that makes me think that part of the purpose, intentional or unconscious, of ‘Ecce Puer’, is to shield Stephen Joyce from becoming another subject-matter within Joyce’s work – another Joyce who risks becoming a cog in the James Joyce machine.

The importance of embryonic development to understanding humanity is a common theme in Joyce’s work. The opening of the *Ulysses* episode ‘The Oxen of the Sun’, with the Anglo-Saxon recital “before birth babe bliss had...” [U 502] inaugurates the episode’s theme of identifying the very institution of literature itself with life inside the womb, in a manner more literal than metaphorical or satirical. The unilateral appearance of the child in the womb as a singular that appears only from one direction is replaced by the duality of mother and child. We might read Joyce’s view to be that the notion of birth is a one-effect in its most creative, because its singularity is so tenuous and lacking any single neat point of separation. Like Joyce’s faces, gestation and birth is a model of unilateral duality, but whereas faces show unilateral duality in its strictest sense and most potent operation, the birth shows it in its weakest and most faded. The “worship won” [U 502] within the womb contrasts with the “surgical implements” [Ibid] of birth. Pregnancy and birth represent fecundity and creativity to Joyce, but, rather than this occurring through a sense of their being the mortal embodiments of a divine or mystical strength, a religious or sacred life-force or transcendent femininity suggested by Stephen’s “amor matris” in *Ulysses* [U 34], it is through the inverse, their ordinariness and weakness, that this takes place. This ordinariness and weakness which are transcendental to experience rather than transcendent from experience. In the case of this characteristically Joycean eroticisation of the comparison between feminine fecundity and human weakness<sup>389</sup>, it is such a conjunction between weakness and fecundity that provides an enveloping value for all of the human world with, in a sense, humanity being only as strong as its weakest link.

In Joyce’s work, fecundity, pregnancy and birth are, therefore, a metaphor-metaphor for all creativity and life, because of the extreme weakness and fragility of its own effect, not only because birth is a risky and painful business. Rather, the passage from One to Two or from Two to One is always questionable. When mother and child become a dyad, this dyad is sustained by the fact that the child was once only distinct from the mother by the most

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<sup>389</sup> While Joyce’s letters to Nora Barnacle from 1909 frequently express a masochistic desire, for example the letter of 13th December where the author expresses a desire to be flogged [L 189], it is more significant perhaps that Joyce frequently dwells upon weakness. As Ellman discusses, Joyce’s desire was to project an image of himself as a “vulnerable boy” [JJ 169], and his later letters become fixated on “his weakness and her strength” [JJ 287], itself a fixation on the coupling of minimal and maximal intensity, albeit one whose appearance is sexual.

unilateral of conceptions. The more clearly the child becomes a singular person, the more deeply it echoes that original unilaterality, but only by cloning it or duplicating it as full transcendent separation eventually overshadows what was first only the weak of unilateral dualities, barely a motion of distinction and certainly without any true personal difference in language and experience. Yet there will be no difference potent enough to overwhelm the distinction that marks out of the dyad, making it (as Stephen's thoughts in 'Nestor' attest) a sheltering fragility like a snail's shell [U 33]. But if one considers the 'Oxen of the Sun' to represent the apparently strong separate-ness of individual personhood as premised on the weakness of iterative succession of unilateral dyads then this is, of course, the secret of the stylistic progression of 'Oxen of the Sun'. As Joyce described in his 1920 letter to Frank Budgen [JJ 475]: each stylistic advance or departure is only visible as distinct from within itself, distinct only in its own performance as each stage of embryonic development makes itself distinct in a forward, linear progression.

Although 'Ecce Puer' does not explicitly associate the coming to pass of a world with the moment of birth itself, it is at least notable in its remoteness from Joyce's concerns of the world before birth. Here, we might evoke John Bishop's reading of the "hystry" [Bishop, 1986:358] of *Finnegans Wake*. Bishop's hypothesis is that, if *Finnegans Wake* is about night and sleep, then it must be equally about the "lost histereve" – the lost yesterday (*hesternus*) spent in the womb (*hysteros*), which nevertheless is ahead of us in time rather than behind us (*eve*). Joyce's interest and speculation on this subject is so vast, so baroque and, above all, so personal to him, that it is extraordinary that 'Ecce Puer' simply ignores such a quilting point of its author's interests. This interest is by turns academic, as Joyce is recorded as having demanded his brother and associate read books on embryology, so they might summarise the subject for him [JJ 189], and erotic, as his letter to Nora on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1909 contains a sexual fantasy in which the author is transformed into an embryo to sleep "in the warm secret glow of [her] body" [L 168]. The life and progression of an embryo before birth is also, according to Joyce's brother [JJ 296], a metaphor he used to describe the structure and stylistic changes used in *A Portrait*. That 'Ecce Puer' marks the definitive point of birth, rather than a progression from conception, as the beginning of human life, stands in contrast to almost everything we know about Joyce's thinking upon the subject. This is not to say that 'Ecce Puer' points to a mystification of the *moment* of birth and the *moment* of death but rather that, as a poem uniquely binding the author's personal life to his literary work, it ignores perhaps the crucial concept (embryonic development) that ties Joyce's most intimate thinking to his aesthetics and intellectual pursuits. There is no sense of development or

process: all that occurs is instantaneous. There is not even the slightest hint, the merest semantic trace, of one's its authors guiding obsessions, the obsession which guided arguably the most ambitious and demanding chapter of *Ulysses*.

Despite addressing a large part of the events in the author's life, the poem is so enmeshed in the appearances of joy and grief that it passes by an entire domain of its author's thought-world, simply as though it did not exist. 'Ecce Puer' might be called Joyce's most personal poem or fragment of writing but, in personal poetry, is it normal to abandon one's obsessions so absolutely? Yet again, we find 'Ecce Puer' to be minimally Joyce-like, even as it maximally addresses the place of James Joyce within the extended Joyce family. The more strongly it conforms to the Joyce-event, the more generic it becomes: the Most Joyce-like is the Least Joyce-Like. The distinction between Joyce-the historical man and the Joyce-event on the interior of aesthetic is preserved in its unilaterality only, lacking any historical factuality or identifying clue to its origin.

However, is the poem really such a unilateral gesture? By reversing so many of Joyce's key themes through the pre-eminently Joycean grounds of autobiography, 'Ecce Puer' lends singularity to Joyce's entire work, a singularity in contrast to the one-effect of the Joyce's work taken as a whole. It is a eucharistic moment that forbids Joyce's work to be auto-encyclopedic (Joyce's work being an encyclopedia of Joyce's work). In Badiou's terms, this is the intractable resistance to finitude that marks out an artist's 'oeuvre' [Badiou 2018, *L'immanence des vérités*] and, in Derridean terms, it is a trace that resists the translation of circumnavigation into enclosure and totality.

The 'sequence of events' in 'Ecce Puer' can be written simply as a set of binary elements,  $\{0,1\}$  or a conjunction of the minimum and maximum, whose simplest possible structure is a pair. In this case, it is the death of John Joyce and the birth of Stephen Joyce. The lack of sequentialisation is not a lack of 'storytelling' or 'narrating' (rather than narrative), but rather a lack of the narrative as a situated-situation beneath the poem. There is no narration, because the problem is not how language can bear narrative but problem of how to speak the event. The event here is not the event of death (we can notice that Badiou and Wittgenstein have both argued, for different reasons, that death can never be an event [Badiou, 2009:267]), nor of birth, but that which their conjunction attests to or, rather, that which is opened up to be affirmed, poetically, by the affirmation of their conjunction: a question of a double affirmation. By affirming the conjunction of two incidents, an unspoken (and disjunct) other thing is affirmed beyond the limit of language.



The distinction is that the minimum, its appearance or vanishing, is articulated primarily on the basis of particular things, a constructible kind of thinking. We think the death of the old man, not as an independent concept, but on the basis of the other things: “father”, “dark past”, “grief”, and son. Minimality ceases to be simple inexistence, becoming a resource of uniqueness from which, all other elements borrow, conforming to “thought organised around constructions”, to use Badiou's definition of intuitionist thought [Badiou, 2014 “Mathematics of the Transcendental”]. One might argue that ‘Ecce Puer’ is not the most natural of Joyce's work, but his most unproblematically constructivist. However, despite this apparent contingency, the minimum itself cannot be surmounted, since it is conclusive, the final object of its own interiority.

The maximal appearance, the new life, is drawn from the same objects, but not “organised around constructions” or intuited by relations. Because its uniqueness is guaranteed by the local a zero, the minimum equivalence by being evaluated by the minimum, along the images of breath caught upon a transparency, a child with closed eyes born from darkness, its uniqueness is assured by the whole of the terms at once, without being constructed in relation to them. The correct term is “world”, rather than simply “envelopment”, because it grasps the entire world at once as a world, rather than fatigued and jaded objectivity. But this world is a “new” world because its dominant term is something that fleetingly *did not* exist. The poem depicts a world constructed for the appearance of the unconstructible.

Through such a subversion of construction, ‘Ecce Puer’ presents a novel understanding of the maxim that “absence is the highest form of presence” [JJ 252]. The minimum (local absence) is evaluated by each term separately and individually and, through this process, a sensible local minimality is constructed intuitively as the thought passes from one term to another. A minimum appearance is supported by each object of the poem. The evaluation and appearance of this minimum are unquestionably attested to by each of the elements as, in the passing from one element to another, they attest both to the measurement and to its measure. The minimum is the most assuredly evaluated element of the poem's world: its possibility of presence is virtually guaranteed, paradoxically, by the actual *in*appearance of any one term that appears ‘least of all’ so much as to *almost* not appear. Furthermore, that guarantee is not an abstraction of thought, but a palpable presence or phenomenon in the poem. Ironically, the maximal appearance is the weakest evaluation of the entire poem-world. Individually, and in their specificity, no one element attests to the maximum as it is grasped by the world. It depends on the coming-to-pass of what is inexistent. That is to say that it is *evanescent*. We

might draw upon Badiou's notion of a *terme evanouissement* [Badiou, 1986] here, but it is perhaps not entirely a good fit, since it is the minimality of the father that has vanished. Rather, I would say that, in parallel to Badiou's term, we can use Joyce's phrase *swooning* - which does not appear in 'Ecce Puer' - as a conjunction of a minimum and maximal, around the orbital center of the proper inexistence of the world, the tearing of the heart]. Here, Joyce's coincidence of opposites greatly resembles the neo-Platonistic ontological Cusano's *On Learned Ignorance* [1440]: the Minimum has a Maximal fixity, and yet the Maximum intensity of appearance is that indexed by the Inexistent itself.

Most relevant to the poem itself, thematically, is the idea that minimality is, in some sense, assured in the real sense: the "dark" past, if one assumes that this has a literal point of reference to the poverty of Joyce's current family and his father John Joyce's squandering of wealth and education. But it can also mean his son Giorgio's waywardness, or James Joyce's own regrets about his treatment of his own family, all of which attest to minimality and his worries about his grandson's wellbeing. There is also the retrospective hopefulness of the line that the immense labour of *Finnegans Wake* would become a 'dark past' from the perspective of the child when he is grown, since a period, for him, is eternally in the past whereas, for Joyce himself, it had once been both present and future. In this sense, the voice's desire that the child 'unclose his eyes' is a pale reflection of Joyce's hope for an ideal reader. One might say that the irony of *Finnegans Wake* is that, despite proving its perennial readership and near-totemic intellectual status, Joyce did not get his "ideal reader", since the "ideal reader" assumes that the work of the book has been finished, finalised. On the contrary, Joyce's readers continue his labour. This is the paradox of producing work that resists interpretative models: Joyce's vaunted 'refined out of existing' means more dependency between reader and author, not less, and in ever greater complexity: as Derrida's 'Ulysses Gramophone' has shown, signatures attempting to conclude, to "sign off" (and to "sign out" as we say in the digital age) merely begin the process of involvement anew once again. Similarly, the business of "living", understood as existing, participating as an apparent, cannot be done by the child alone, but must be done by those showing him love and mercy. One of traditions of Irish childhood is to celebrate the approach of adulthood, not so much as a clear delineation between childhood and maturity, but in terms of increasing degrees of independence, especially in Catholic parts where stages are broken up by sacraments, given additional social significance by the fact that they mark a child's status in the community, where a child's age is as much his progression through Catholic sacraments as it is his age in years. This

presumption is very memorably undermined<sup>390</sup> in *A Portrait* as Stephen's 'maturity' is marked by the fact that he meditates on the beauty of the word 'wine', a work of artistic maturity reflecting both Bacchanalian debauchery and Homer, a conjunction of the basest and the most refined parts of Joyce's life as an adult artist. Stephen's exile, Dignam's son, 'The Sisters', 'The Boarding House', the tree-ring like separation of Shem and Shaun's ages, all reflect a concern for how independent a child has become, or whether the child's behaviour is appropriate. This is also how Bloom thinks of Milly's life<sup>391</sup> in *Ulysses*. One of the tragedies of Joyce's life was witnessing his brother George (who he felt "understood" him [L 20]) fading through illness into utter dependency, something he recalled with sadness and horror. In Joyce's own life, however, dependency between children and parents lasted into adulthood, with the failure of his Paris excursion, his daughter's illness and his son's failures. The child leaving as a dependent and returning as an independent is not a joy that came for Joyce, and this is marked by a child that needs to be born again for a second time soon after birth, born

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<sup>390</sup> There is also a very extensive undermining of this idea in the following passage, where Stephen's understanding of the sacraments proves magnetic to his blossoming intellectual curiosity: "If a man had stolen a pound in his youth and had used that pound to amass a huge fortune how much was he obliged to give back, the pound he had stolen only or the pound together with the compound interest accruing upon it or all his huge fortune? If a layman in giving baptism pour the water before saying the words is the child baptised? Is baptism with a mineral water valid? How comes it that while the first beatitude promises the kingdom of heaven to the poor of heart, the second beatitude promises also to the meek that they shall possess the land? Why was the sacrament of the eucharist instituted under the two species of bread and wine if Jesus Christ be present body and blood, soul and divinity, in the bread alone and in the wine alone? Does a tiny particle of the consecrated bread contain all the body and blood of Jesus Christ or a part only of the body and blood? If the wine change into vinegar and the host crumble into corruption after they have been consecrated, is Jesus Christ still present under their species as God and as man?" [AP 106] The device of listing suggests that we should not read it directly in Stephen's interior voice, but in the humorous tone often used in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Such a reading of the paragraph as subdued satire or as a comic passage suggests that Stephen is not considered mature enough for many sacraments, but still mature enough to use them to generate philosophical puzzles for himself. The impression this gives is not so much of Stephen out-smarting or out-growing religious education before his time, but rather a more general point that punctuation of childhood by sacraments that promote an idea of maturity or autonomy of the soul, degrees of a soul's responsibility for the sins it commits and good deeds it performs, is clearly totally inadequate for addressing the intellectual development of the individual, not just the artist but any individual. To this point, one might say that passages such as the above portray Stephen as having a surprisingly precocious abstract or logical intelligence but, due to his separation from his family and general isolation, his social intelligence is lagging behind his peers, with whom he will not catch up until adolescence. It is because of this, perhaps, that he treats religious ritual with a 'face value' intellectual seriousness, rather than sensing its social function or its use in the relaying of authority. As with many of Joyce's more complex social observations, he painted the same problem from a different angle: as young Stephen's experiences with ritual are rather opposed to the middle-aged Bloom, who often seems only to see the social or affective function of religion and, yet, despite his insights on the latter, he does not seem to understand the theological meanings of sacrament or ceremony nearly as much as he thinks that he does.

<sup>391</sup> Perhaps this an overly ironic example, as Bloom's thoughts of Milly's growth into adulthood (his inappropriate comments regarding her "sex breaking out, even then" [U 76]) intentionally seem to gloss over the constant similarity to her mother's sensuality or vivaciousness. He resists the thought of her being "the same thing watered down" by projecting her maturity into the future "soon to be a woman"; he ponders her recently becoming more sexually aware, when his other memories suggest she was already mimicking her mother in that regard a lot earlier. Of course, the reader may suspect that Milly's life in Mullingar is far more adult – suspicions that her appearance in 'Circe', hair blowing in the 'sea wind' suggests that her father shares, but is unwilling to dwell on.

into sight after being born into the sleep of the cradle. Dependence on family is a theme of precarity, frailty, and the inability to participate in the aspects of life that Joyce most treasured: art, sexuality, diversity of social groups. The sense of a sad concern for Stephen, after the disappointments of Giorgio and futilities of Lucia, is palpable behind the imploring of ‘mercy’.

When discussing appearance in regard to poetic consistency, one must be critical of any notion of meaning. John Joyce's death is not the minimal of what his death *meant*, even though the relationship between the “forsaken” and what needs to be “forgiven” is maximally visible from the perspective of father and son. Although, in the poem, it is evenly distributed and envelops everything. Yet, the maximal intensity, what is cradled by the world itself, attested to by particularities, is defined by a precarity: it is very personal, it is not an abstraction, and “love and mercy” are needed to perform the negation of a negation (“unclose his eyes”), in order to bring the child, not only into the world as an object or observer, but as a participial of its meshwork of appearances. Thinking the possibility of appearance as participial, the new world is highly at risk. As with the secularisation of title ‘Ecce Puer’ itself, there is the question of faith and fidelity, which should be clarified by my Badiouian intervention. Again, this shows ‘Ecce Puer’ to be untypically Joyce, insofar as its author, elsewhere, insisted upon the primacy of doubt over faith. Subjective fidelity, obligations and imperatives, are the only things connecting the evanescent to the “new world” that struggles to be born, a world that has to be the world for all of its elements, not just a selection of them. A reader familiar with Joyce’s life may know that his relationship with his son Giorgio came to colour the extremes of emotion that ‘tear’ the poem’s emotional spectrum. However, the absence of any specific reference to Joyce's own son (parallel to “father forsaken”, “unclosed eyes”, etc) from a poem commemorating fatherhood shows how minimally the poem-world apprehends itself. The poem’s *envelope* recognises only minimally what the poem’s voice recognises *maximally*: the possibility for vital intensity in the future is completely dependent upon the same precarity that threatens the intensity of the present moment, itself dependent on the precarity of its own passing.

In such a sense, what I mean by ‘existential’ in regard to Joyce's work is a view from the interior, which one receives extremely rarely despite the author’s reputation. This view receives a mocking reference in *Finnegans Wake*, a “steady monologuery of the interiors” [FW 119] that is necessary for the written logic of appearances (in from of a graphology, or a poetics). If something appears, it must appear *in* something that can be understood as a regime of existing. Such regimes proliferate in *Finnegans Wake*, the figuration of the dream itself

being the most famous. But, there is also the Rann, the play or opera, the seance, the sexual union, the radio broadcast, even the marriage-ship which in *Finnegans Wake*, attest in some way to a kind of pure-appearance that can only be thought from an interior. This contrasts with the “steady monologuy of the interiors”, where appearances only appear when looking outwards from an interior. As such, this “from the interior”, a worlded-ness indifferent to human presence into which human activity has intruded, is a reversal of the Eden scenario (a reading of I.1 might tell us that Eden is entered in at the beginning of *FW*, not left). It replaces an altogether Kantian idea of unity of possible experience. In ‘Ecce Puer’, we get a thoroughly existential account, showing life to be identical to the *appearance* of life and, therefore, to appearances *within* life, viewed from within the constraints of life itself as a domain or all-encompassing human surface, posing the conditions of human bondage: the minimality and maximality of life, the glass of life capturing the breath of its own appearance. However, in the same instance when we are given the existential account of life (rather than thought), we are confronted with the profound exteriority of ‘Ecce Puer’, which sets “forsaken” as the adjective pinning the poem so closely to the author's life: not only the forsakenness of John Joyce by his son, but also the distance between Joyce and his son, the ultimate separation of John Joyce from the family, the fact that, as grandfather, James Joyce will now be distant in the same way that his father was distant to his family. John Joyce greeted the birth of his grandchildren with intense emotion [JJ 323] but, due to circumstances, was never able to fulfil the role of grandfather in their lives. The phrases “o father forsaken” and “your son” do not so much designate a definite person, or even vague figures in the poem, so much as they are modalities through which different intensities of appearance pass. The reader may equally think of Stephen Joyce, Joyce’s grandfather, Giorgio, or the relationship between Joyce and Lucia who, lest we forget, was an infrequent crossdresser [JJ 611] and, therefore perhaps, the image ‘a son’ in her forsakenness and, perhaps, ‘a son’ in the sense of being Joyce’s creative heir.

What, in ‘Ecce Puer’, is “beheld”, but the minimum itself? The poem articulates an impresent non-element as if it were a validated-existent element, an element implied but not articulated by the synthesis of conflictual intensities that make the poem’s interiority, its self-enveloping regionality, evident in each point of intensity of appearance. The ‘puer’ or boy of the title is not the child addressed by the poem, but the as-yet-not apparent *boy* that the infant will grow into, itself just a trace of ‘the living’ of a life that has yet to come: what he will be when he opens his eyes, and the world which will have a greater intensity. The boy is also the

“child” beheld by the “old man”, and the “son” to whom the father who has forsaken him pleads for forgiveness (to be beheld is to be forgiven). Here, we should insist on the difference of, or potential singularity of, each term, with ‘old man’ as distinct from “father forsaken”, “your son” from “my”, “the living” from “young life”, and “child” from the “puer” of the title. Whereas in Joyce, one usually expects to see forms ‘prolong and multiply’, even in realist work where Joyce relies upon continuity, such as Bloom’s thoughts of Milly being Molly “watered down”, here there is a condition of utter disparity as to how the chain of succession is expected to arise: a succession from father to son to grandson will be unsatisfied, not least because the poem does not mention an intermediate generation.

John Joyce rarely saw his son as an adult, so the "boy" is also not only the minimum appearance of James Joyce in the world of John Joyce, but the minimum intensity of that which brings them together in the same world. Their intellectual bond was weak, despite being stronger than some other family members. The boy is also Joyce's most faded part of himself: his own childhood, close but with minimal phenomenal reality (as in ‘Nestor’), and also Stephen Dedalus, the "boy" who in-appears in *Finnegans Wake*. Likewise, figures like the voice of ‘Araby’, ‘The Sisters’, ‘An Encounter’, or ‘Counterparts’ slowly vanish from Joyce's oeuvre. Their disappearances are palpable, and the notable appearance of Paddy Dignam's son in *Ulysses* is notable for not particularly reflecting these early "boys" in any significant shape or form. The succession of Joyce's oeuvre has made orphans of them all, yet, in doing so, has preserved their independence. The Dignam boy cradles a crude symbol of the materiality of life, carved meat, as he walks through Dublin on the day of his father's funeral: a minimal figure, and a minimal figuration. It is the point where the Joycean concrete envelops and, ultimately, takes over from the material.

This object is once beholden and beheld: it is the paradoxical object of the poem that can stand for all three points on the triangle. Here, Gilles Deleuze becomes the best guide: the boy as the "living" is not the phantasm according to Derrida or Badiou, but a Deleuzian phantasm, the *event* not as noun but simply as an indefinite verb. Joyce's grandson is not the *alive* but the *living*, as if both the person and the pre-personal singularity could be held together in the same moment, in the pure verb – the *living* leading to what can be thought of as a life, and a life expressed exclusively through the verb *living*. The person as both cause and result of process.

Because the paradox here is the "sense" of the poem, we can turn to Deleuze's essay "The Series of Sense" from *Logic of Sense* for a description of the paradoxes of impossible objects: "impossible objects are...objects 'without a home', outside of being, but they have a

precise and distinct position within this outside: they of "extra-being", pure ideational events, unable to be realised in a state of affairs" [Deleuze, 1990].

By way of contrast to the "being of the possible", as an apparent defined within a network of significations, "this extra-being which defines a minimum common to the real, the possible *and the impossible* [...] impossible entities are extra existents, reduced to this minimum, and insisting in such a proposition" [Ibid.].

Here, we see the possible of a more formal arrangement: the "extra-being" is the in-existent, an impossible being, unable to present itself (extra-being, with a hyphen), persisting as what is minimally additional to existence, a kind of excess of insistence from below (extra existent, without a hyphen). Such an excess below is distinct from partitive excess, or that which insists from within the network of determination as a principle of minimality, that is "common" to all in "the real". Here we can perhaps part with Deleuze in saying that "common to the real" is an existential rather than ontological property, since it expresses the potentiality attested to by every point in the world.

It is useful to see this as form rather than structure, since the form of the poem suggests the possibility of structures: structures of order (of seniority, of chronology, of darkness, of sequence) and structures of equivalence (of lives, of sons, of fathers, of kinds within opacity, of kinds within transparency, of objects brought into the envelope of metaphor). None of these possible structures can be *the* structure of the poem, and they cannot all be assembled together into one. Perhaps the cliché line "my heart is torn" is what prevents this, as a totally generic phrase that is both in and outside of poetic form, as it is both in and outside of the author's voice.

Therefore, one can articulate the "event" of the poem as the evanescent moment of transition, captured in the vision of the boy in the cradle: the infinitesimally thin transition whereby the *living*, written as one general verb, becomes *a* life. What Joyce called the weakest word in the English language, "the", is here a supplement to the potency of the verb and supplemented by a more distinct form of One, between One as the identity produced by a particular process (an isomorphism) and the operation counting-as-One, as a 'count-as-One' that can only be retrospective.

But, if we are to take a Deleuzian reading of Joyce's 'life', then "living" is not equivalent to just any verb, like, for instance, breathing, unclosing, or laying. As a vitalist, living is the event-verb of all things, in such a way that, the "one event for all events" as conceptualised by Deleuze is an impermissible notion from a Joycean perspective, since it excludes the dead. But 'Ecce Puer' is only vitalistic and anthropocentric in opposition to

Joyce's oeuvre. There is no such 'one event' or metaphysical 'One' in Joyce's universality but rather the generic thinking of instances. What 'Ecce Puer', in its minimality and separatedness can tell us about the Joycean universal, and therefore about a Joycean generic thinking, is that the "generic" cannot be one generic verb but, rather, the consequences of what is in this particular passage from living to life. It is the universal and the particular from the specific, rather than being a specific instance (a life) of a cosmically general verb (to live). It is the fragility of this passage or replication, the frailty of a model which models nothing but frailty, which holds close to the generic 'now' by shielding or withdrawing a singular, unique act of beholding from the narrative transfigurations which abound in Joyce's prose.



## CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis has been to explore Joyce's works in light of his claim that he intended to write the universal. At the very beginning I made the decision to take this claim towards universality at face value. I made this decision because I felt that contemporary dismissal or suspicion around the notion of universality was rarely justified. As a result, I have not interrogated Joyce's works to see if his various claims to universality are justified, and I have tried to limit even defining universality as much as possible. My goal has to be to 'do justice' to Joyce's text, following on from deconstructive engagements with Joyce's work which often define 'doing justice' as the critical engagement or readerly involvement with a text in its singularity, that is, on its own terms. My question has been: if universality is a feature of Joyce's literature, **what does this universality do, and how does it work?** What I have tried to avoid, then, is the question of what it *means* for a piece literature to be universal.

As this thesis has tried to separate the question of universality from any question of meaning or interpretation as much as possible, a highly conceptual and heuristic approach developed. This method had the counter-intuitive character of becoming more conceptual as our reading became closer to Joyce's texts. Additionally, to the combination of close reading and conceptual framing, I also had to frequently present, explain and justify the conceptual vocabulary I had chosen to engage with Joyce's work. In doing so, I have also had to explain and justify why I believe conceptual novelty is an adequate response for research in Joyce's work, and why creating and modifying concepts is necessary to a reading which 'does justice' to narrative literature. The first reason for this, as this thesis has repeatedly shown, is that Joyce's aesthetic portrayals of experience are stripped of any sense of givenness or immediacy that would give an epistemic privilege or priority over conceptual action.

As a result of this radical aesthetic subtraction, reading Joyce critically or attempting to 'do justice' to his more significant claims about the universality of his own writing means getting to grips with anti-foundationalism in narrative and style, in aesthetic or literary writing as a whole and not just Joyce's work. This thesis has shown that Joyce's work has an outward facing quality, in that the way that it is composed and written makes it difficult to conceptually frame or theoretically model the textual operations of his works without turning one's attention towards both general cases and specific other works. The more closely one reads Joyce, the more one's attention span is artificially shortened and the more one is

redirected towards philosophy, politics, science and many other topics. This is, to use a term of Derek Attridge's, a major 'Joyce Effect'. That Joyce clearly expects the reader to read his work alongside other works is both an element of the 'concreteness' of his literary work and its claim to be 'universal'. The relationship between concreteness and universality is therefore embodied not through language and discourse, but through conceptuality. I believe that this is a novelty of the present thesis, as the vast majority of scholarly work on Joyce has always tended to emphasize language and its potencies over concept and ideas. There are exceptions of course as, even in linguistically focused analysis of Joyce, one frequently finds conceptual innovation on behalf of the critic. But focusing on concepts and conceptuality does not present anything new in and of itself.

The arguments in the thesis have relied heavily on Joyce's use of the Aristotelian notion of apprehension. This is because apprehension itself is a dual model of the importance of the conceptual in Joyce's work, for three main reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates that Joyce's focus is to put the intellect and the sense on equal footing in his aesthetic methods. I am skeptical of any reading of Joyce that uses his philosophical sources to argue that any of his works place more value on the intellect than the senses, or vice versa, when describing direct experience. Joyce's use and modification of the concept of 'apprehension' from a general philosophical idea to a specifically aesthetic one demonstrates that this can never be the case. Secondly, apprehension shows how conceptuality in literature, not just Joyce's, always has a dyadic character. By dyadic character, I mean that every concept used in literature necessitates its own conceptual originality. 'Apprehension', therefore, is not only a concept, it is a concept that tries to demonstrate to us something of how conceptualisation works in aesthetic cognition. There are other examples of this dyadic use of concepts in Joyce's work. For example, epiphany is not only a concept that tells us how suddenness and the singularity of an instance can be appropriated for aesthetic purposes, it is also, in itself, a conceptual model of how the realisation of the possibility of such an appropriation came about. Third, and finally, apprehension is significant because it associates the concrete with the instance. It does not think the concrete, or the material to be grasped, in terms of a substrate or an unreachable thing-in-itself. In Joyce's apprehension, as this thesis has demonstrated, the instant of the present moment and the concrete are one and the same. But that identity is not a given, it is apprehension which makes them the same.

The concreteness which allows Joyce to associate the concrete in terms of instances and events, is based upon what I have called the 'fixed indecision' behind his work. This is

Joyce's refusal to decide, through his work, whether what is not Being-qua-Being is the void or the altogether Other. This fixed indecision is the starting point of Joyce's aesthetic, a gesture drawn upon the void. It allows Joyce to disentangle his work from philosophical assertions about the nature of reality and the nature of human thought and experience. However, it leaves open the possibility of conceptual appropriation which is necessary for the kind of 'apprehension' which is fundamental not only for Joyce's aesthetics but how he portrays Irish political autonomy and scientific thinking in his work. I have attempted to show that this fixed indecision roots Joyce's concreteness and universality together on the exterior of philosophical thinking and decision, which allows him to approach universality and reality as principles of both art and politics in a way that is neither foundational nor absolute. We might argue that this thesis has shown Joyce's concrete universality to be rational but not absolute. Further, we have attempted to show that his subtractive realism escapes what is known as 'the myth of the given' which transcendentalises, or foundationalism, with empirical or sensory experience as epistemically absolute and irreducible. This thesis has argued that, to Joyce, access to reality is always a creative and rebellious thing, something which is equally true for the everyday experience of material reality that everybody has, and the novel and innovative kinds of realisms that an avant-garde or experimental artist may create. This, I would argue, is as good an explanation as any for the fact that Joyce's works often concern the unlikely pairing of the 'everyman' and 'Promethean artist' figures, particularly in *Ulysses* with Dedalus and Bloom. In regards to the political potency of a conceptual reading, as oppose to one which centres discourse and language, is one that recognises that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* anticipate what one might call a *crisis of linguistic ecology*. The dependency upon meta-structural, and therefore meta-linguistic, excreasance holds a powerful critique of the ideologies of anglophone imperialism, as I showed in my reading of the *Ulysses* episode 'Nester'. As contemporary ecological critics have baptised the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the commencement of 'anthropocene', where humanity has finally dominated the climate, we might say that *Finnegans Wake* was literature written in advance, and in rejection, of the *anglopocene* where English-speaking culture has dominated the linguistic ecology not through language but through excreasance and ideology.

In regard to this thesis' claims of realism in Joyce's work, it was shown that Joyce's use of various styles of narrative writing show how conceptual invention, modelling and cognition use concepts and play to engage with the real. The concrete is neither immediacy

itself nor a substance immediate or prior to the intellect. Joyce's characters are constantly borrowing, inventing and modifying concepts in order to interact with the world around them.

Consequently, the above would require Joyce himself to be engaged with a conceptual play. This play takes the form of an obscuring or making-indistinct of the differences between experiences, concepts and styles. There is a certain continuity introduced here, as well as a circular definition – concept as the stylisation of experience, style as the bringing together of concept and experience, experience as the stylisation of concepts based upon perception. To generalise the point made above concerning 'apprehension', it was crucial for my argument that we see Joyce as prioritising neither perception nor intellect. To recall an image that I used in the third chapter of this thesis, I see Joyce's narrative works as a tightrope walk between writing of direct perception and speculative abstraction. Although Joyce is famously a writer concerned with oppositions, dialectics and contradiction, on this point I find him to be concerned with equilibrium. He is not interested in resolving the intellect and the senses into one another, or dissolving the distinction between mind and body. On the contrary, he is most concerned with heightening that distinction as much as he can and then, through feats of stylistic innovation, maintaining a balance. In this thesis, I showed that the exemplary form of this balance, rather than a meeting of extremes, to be the tension between Joyce's reliance upon the Peripatetic axiom, *nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu*, and the critiques of givenness and immediacy implicit within his portrayals of direct experience.

The next assertion presented and defended by this thesis was that such conceptual innovation and novelty on behalf of a writer involves, in turn, conceptual invention on behalf of the reader. This is to say that one cannot simply learn Joyce's concepts from his writing, and then use them to animate his works through readerly engagement. In order to follow Joyce's conceptual inventions, one must do as he does. It is the view presented in this thesis that Joyce is provoking the same in his readers as he shows through what his work depicts. For example, if the word "metempsychosis" provokes a moment of conceptual appropriation and invention in the mind Leopold Bloom, the same is true for readers of Joyce. Or else, we cannot really 'do justice' to the singularity of the instance depicted by text nor its apprehension. As Joyce presents life as it is lived as involving the appropriation and invention of concepts, then so must the reader. This thesis has therefore tried to show both sides of this process, the conceptual invention on the side of Joyce's writing, and the provocation of conceptual invention on behalf of the reader.

Although, when it came to conceptual frameworks and models, this thesis has taken a ‘kitchen sink’ approach by combining many different conceptual vocabularies, its central set of ideas has remained narrow. This began with the conviction that, in order to ‘do justice’ to Joyce’s work, one cannot simply make arguments about it. Indeed, in making arguments of a text, crucial parts of the engagement and involvements of critical reading are necessarily lost as intellectual vocabulary is introduced. Furthermore, one cannot simply use a particular theory or philosophical idea as a ‘frame’ with which to read Joyce’s works. In doing so, there is a constant risk of subordinating the singularity of the work to the frame, whether it be by the ‘suture’ critiqued by Badiou or the ‘double transcendence’ critiqued by Laruelle, both of which have informed the reading conducted by this thesis. A more contentious point is that the risk of such increases the more one attempts to move away from the ideational and towards historicism, or analysis of discourse and social structure. The critique this thesis raises against historicism and discourse analysis was therefore therefore implicit rather than explicitly argued, yet it has been unavoidable.

It might, therefore, be surprising that, given the above, this thesis did not on the whole consist of sustained close readings of Joyce’s narrative texts. Rather, I took an altogether conceptual approach, in an attempt to read critically *according to* Joyce’s work, rather than attempt to frame it. Therefore, reading according to or *selon* Joyce, I have attempted as best I can not to produce arguments about Joyce’s texts, or persuasive descriptions, but to model Joyce’s work with conceptual appropriations, in parallel to the conceptual appropriations in his work. However, this is not to say that I think the job of research is merely to attempt to duplicate what Joyce is doing, but in the form of a piece of research. Rather, it is to do minimally what Joyce’s work does maximally. In order to ‘do justice’ to Joyce’s work, one must create a complementary conceptual vocabulary, that is as minimal and unintrusive as possible, a vocabulary that does not appeal to or impose any drastic philosophical decisions or generalised differences.

Therefore, this thesis necessarily had to comprise a positive component and a negative component. The negative component was expressed through argument, meeting Joyce’s subtractive style on its own terms by attempting to trace or make out the contours of concreteness through an interior contradiction of Joyce’s fiction. That contradiction is the fact that Joyce’s explicit dependency on the Peripatetic axiom is moderated or even thwarted by his implicit critique or negation of any form of givenness. It was important to show how Joyce turns this apparent contradiction or point of incoherence into the balancing act or aesthetic

equilibrium described previously. It can be understood that Joyce's writing implicitly reflects anti-foundationalism but, through its interior paradox, this anti-foundationalism translates not into philosophy or philosophical fiction, but entirely into experiential aesthetics. However, it cannot be stressed enough that what I am describing is not a philosophical problem explored by Joyce's texts, but a consequence of his aesthetic experiments and technical innovations. The argument of this thesis, therefore, could in part be reduced to the statement that the Joycean concrete is what remains of the perceptual and the material, under the conditions of this radical rethinking of the relationship between intellect and sensation. However, as this concerns a remainder rather than a single consistent thread weaving throughout all Joycean concreteness and experience, it was required to constantly return to this idea and show how the subtle implicit undermining of givenness occurs throughout Joyce's oeuvre in radically varying ways. So, concreteness is both the union of perception and intellect through conceptual and stylistic invention, and the remainder which such a union necessarily produces. Therefore, the concrete is both a unilaterality in terms of its transparency and immediacy, but it is also in part a failure of that unilaterality as the self-sufficiency of the instant being apprehended is undermined by the very fact that the 'oneness' or 'uniqueness' of the instant belongs not to it, but to who or what is doing the apprehending.

The other major notion which has guided this thesis is the notion of radical immanence. The word 'radical' is important, since it is not just an intensifier, but describes the kind of immanence associated with the above subtractive notion of concreteness: the notion of a radical immanence as an immanence without givenness or a single foundational stratum. This, again, is something that I needed to argue for in the negative, since it contrasts with *absolute* immanence, the kind of immanence which does have such a stratum. My own philosophical sources were chosen in order to explore and interrogate this from as many different positions as I could feasibly take in one thesis. If Joyce's 'subtractive realism' requires the thinking and discussion of a 'radical immanence', then this 'radical immanence' has meant the Derridean performativity or immanence as the deferral of deferral itself. It has also meant Badiou's ontology of the void, and the notion of being as inconsistency itself drawn into some stability of presentation, where *radical* means only *contingent*. I have also used Laruelle's notion of unilateral duality to help frame Joyce's work presenting the *real* as one and the same as the *instance*. Needless to say, these three positions are drastically at odds with one another. I found it very suitable that reading Joyce's work with contemporary philosophy encourages engagement with intense disputes and contradictory statements. This

is another reason why using theory and philosophy to ‘frame’ a reading of Joyce’s texts did not satisfy the demands of the problematic that was explored, as ‘framing’ in this way implies a coherence on the side of theory and philosophy before it is applied, through varying methods, to a critical reading of a piece of writing. Joyce’s particular brand of realism disrupts the pretences of philosophy to provide such a coherence in the first place. So, by using contradictory and disputable sources, I was not just describing or arguing for Joyce’s realism and universality, I was able to demonstrate it even if I erred towards generalisation a few more times than I would have liked to.

Through this thesis I have used the ‘model’. By the word ‘model’, used informally and not technically, I understand a concept that replicates or duplicates something of a more complex structure within itself. The notion of a ‘model’ is opposed to Joyce’s notion of an ‘image’ in *A Portrait* and his personal writing on aesthetics, as it is not an aesthetic object and it does not attempt to synthesis any new itself. If one understands forms of literature, not as representations, but as processes or works, the word ‘model’ describes what the reader does in response through the act of reading and engagement. For example, in this thesis, I attempted to engage with Joyce’s presentation of the rise and fall of C. S. Parnell as a truly universal moment, and a historically specific impact of a figure of national importance. Joyce’s Parnell has a decidedly transhistorical quality. In order to show this, I cannot only make arguments and then prove them with citations. But neither can I posit a ‘meaning’ of Parnell, or claim that Parnell *meant something* specific and irreducible to Joyce, and then interpret the texts in such a way as to justify or ratify that interpretation. Rather, I either have to affirm that Joyce’s Parnell is universal or contradict his claim. The importance of ‘modelling’ comes in as in order to conduct a reading like this, I had to find what was most generic about Joyce’s engagement with Parnell, and then model the singularity upon which the claim of universality is implicitly made by Joyce’s fiction. In doing so, I propose a logic of the ‘one-in-effect’ which described and presented Parnell as universal not through historical impact or irreducible mean, nor through one’s ability to politically generalised based upon Joyce’s writing about Parnell. In other words, in order to argue that Joyce’s literary ‘version’ of Parnell was a concrete universality, I could not argue that a concrete universality had a specific definition and that Parnell matched that definition. Instead, I had to find what was generic in Joyce’s presentation of Parnell, and model that generic presentation according through my concept of the ‘one-in-effect’.

So, this thesis has had an additional goal, which is to present, explain and justify my use of a conceptual vocabulary in order to engage with, and interrogate, the claims of universality that James Joyce made for his literary works. In doing so, I have also had to explain and justify why I believe this conceptual novelty is an adequate response for research in Joyce's work. This is not only justification of the conceptual vocabulary: that justification itself is the modelling. Indeed, any successful modelling is modelling *selon* Joyce. As an example, the variety of kinds of texts across the different chapters of this thesis was unintentional, I did not expect to produce a thesis where one chapter would be an experimental piece of 'theory fiction' and another would be a close textual analysis. It may seem to the reader of this thesis that I have attempted to imitate Joyce or to reflect his work by stylistically varying the presentation of my own research and conceptual frameworks. But this is very much not the case! The variation between the chapters of this thesis is evidence that I have not been writing *about* Joyce but *selon* Joyce and, in doing so, have 'modelled' his work in unexpected and minor ways. Although some of my chapters are less satisfying than others, the fact that such a variation occurred spontaneously suggests that my conceptual approach was apt.

If Joyce, like Nietzsche before him, demanded a new kind of reader to go against critical readers and those who choose Joyce as a project for academic research therefore find themselves in a position that is often as much destructive as constructive, hence Joyce's position as precursor for 'deconstruction'. This is not saying that one must try to stand apart as much as possible, but it implies that the way to 'do justice' to Joyce must involve as much reinvention on behalf of one's own reading as Joyce's write itself is evidence of a constant aesthetic and conceptual reinvention. This is perhaps a great insight of deconstruction which can be preserved in other conceptual and philosophical readings: to 'do justice' is to read a text *otherwise* than it might normally be read. But I could not simply continue any post-deconstructive mode of engagement, or make a reversal of deconstruction. The challenge of reading Joyce after deconstruction is to read under many imperatives of readerly reinvention, beginning with Joyce's own notion of an "ideal reader" who is perhaps a reader who can never exist. There is also deconstruction's "ideal reader" of Joyce who uses attentiveness to the singular to 'do justice' to Joyce' writing. For my part, the solution to this problem was to read with attention to subtraction and conceptuality.

The aim of this focus on conceptuality was neither to provide only new arguments or only a new conceptual language, but to show how they work together. The vagueness and



methodological weakness of much of this thesis, I believe, was a worthwhile risk of taking this approach. Of course, I have ignored very many of the important themes of Joyce's major work as a consequence for preferring to engage through concepts rather than through meaning, but this was as necessary risk to take. In attempting to 'model' Joyce's work, it may seem that little of the thematic content has survived. But perhaps this is a necessary result of engaging with works which 'transvaluate' on their own terms. The question of thematics, therefore, is still open, albeit not as a question of context and meaning but of how narrative function escapes formalist reductions.

In conclusion, this thesis has attempted to stake out a new subtractive thinking of concreteness and narrative in Joyce's work. In order to do this, it also had to advance its own model of singularity in order to address the claims of universality Joyce made both in and about his work. Joyce has a realism, but it is not a realism of totality nor of coherence and necessity, but of the instance. Moreover, Joyce's concreteness is not a matter of the immediately experiential, but of the conceptual articulation of intellect and perception in unity. Ultimately, where it comes to the assertions Joyce has made about universality and his own work, his works show that universality is tied to minimality and incoherence more than it is to transcendence and coherence. That is, as we have argued that Joyce's work reflects a radical immanence rather than an absolute immanence, we can generalise this formula. Joyce's aesthetic universality is not an absolute but a radicalisation of some generic element within his writing and conceptualisation. Likewise, his realism is not an equation of reality and absoluteness or an identification of the real with the absolute. Rather, it is a radical realism that sees reality not as a unity or the expression of a deeper totality, but as a contingency and inconsistency itself. It is a radically subtractive realism, and it is only through this that we can say that Joyce's work attains any measure of the universality which he intended to.

In making all of these points, I have tried to address them, not only to a specific argument about Joyce's fiction and narrative, but to a wider theory of narrative realism. This is, in part, a reflection of the fact that Joyce's universality inspires to think the relation not only of the particular and universal, but the specific and generic. It is also a consequence of the 'modelling' or conceptual approach I have taken, and even if the various points made in the argumentative parts of this thesis are weak or refuted, I am satisfied that the models and 'minor fictions' contained in this research provide new material, not only for reading Joyce, but towards a novel approach to narrative aesthetics. It is my hope that the conceptual

vocabulary of this thesis can be used to discuss other narrative writing, while retaining its origins as a reading of Joyce.

I recognise I have taken a risk by not only using this thesis to engage with or respond to the singularity of Joyce's attempts at universal narrative, but attempting to show how answering the question of my thesis – that of concrete universality and subtraction – must necessarily undermine philosophical assumptions about the functioning of narrative. Although this thesis has been greatly limited by this risk, it has also enabled me to open the initial question in a way that I feel provides the beginnings of a new conceptual vocabulary. If it is difficult to summarise this precisely in one line, it is because this thesis is about universality in Joyce, and Joycean universality is never conclusive but the minimal grounds for a new beginning. The real test of this thesis is not only its argument, but whether its conceptual vocabulary can be used again. So, if I have been at all successful in this intention to *accord* with Joyce's narratives rather than writing *about* them, then I can only end by stating that I hope to have provided, not a conclusion, but a concrete way of starting over again with Joyce.

**APPENDIX: TABLE A.**

	<b>Deconstruction-Realist</b>	<b>Speculative-Materialist</b>
<b>1. (General) Mode of textual/grammatical heterogeneity in presentation.</b>	Semantic. (Puns.)	Syntactic, metric. (Irish bulls.)
<b>2. (Joycean) Mode of Involvement</b>	Signature and counter-signature.	Apprehension.
<b>3. Event</b>	Plural, equivocal. Proof of the singularity of another event, but not its own.	Singular, univocal.
<b>4. Sole Autonomously Unique Element</b>	Alterity (the Altogether Other) as guarantor of singularity.	Meontology (the Void is unique, solely unique)
<b>5. Distantiation (Telephony)</b>	Temporal, semiological.	Spatial, topological.
<b>6. Ground of Plurality</b>	Encyclopaedic, countable. Sensible plurality as distinct from difference, which is all there is.	Excessive, extra-numerical. Thinkable plurality as distinct from multiplicity, which is all there is.
<b>7. Non-Relation of Literary and Philosophical writing.</b>	Literature as the Other of philosophy.	Literature as a condition for philosophy.
<b>8. Theological Metaphor.</b>	Apophantic.	Schismatic, Arian/Gnostic.
<b>9. Consequence of "The absolute absence of the absolute..."</b>	The absolutely Other.	That-which-is-not-being-qua-being, uniqueness of the void.
<b>10. Latency</b>	Vocality.	Poem.
<b>11. Ethical tenor.</b>	Obligation.	Imperative.
<b>12. Infinite construction, consequence.</b>	Interpretative acts.	Generic intervention.
<b>13. Truth.</b>	Inexistent, providing for an unlimited proliferation of meaning.	Non-Being, a fixed infinite conditioned on the abolition of the question of meaning.
<b>14. Enveloped Contrary Positions.</b>	Logocentrism and essentialism.	Idealinguistry and intuitionism.
<b>15. Figuration of Excess</b>	Excess of meaning and interpretative activity over signs and signification.	Excess of parts of elements prior to linguistic unification.
<b>16. Mode of Alterity</b>	The Other-Same.	The Same-Other.
<b>17. Excess</b>	Iterative	Partitive
<b>18. Metonymy and metaphor of the effacement of meaning.</b>	The eternally deferred. (Postal, letters, delivery, telephones and telegrams)	The recently vanished. (Swooning)

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## RÉSUMÉ

En abordant cette thèse, mes recherches ne sont pas parties d'une intuition critique ou d'un cadre théorique particulier. Le point de départ a plutôt été la juxtaposition de deux citations de Joyce lui-même. Pour la première, il s'agit de sa fameuse affirmation à Arthur Powell en 1921, rapportée par Ellman dans sa biographie: " En ce qui me concerne, j'écris toujours à propos de Dublin, parce que si je peux atteindre le coeur de Dublin, je peux atteindre le coeur de toutes les villes du monde. Et le particulier est contenu dans l'universel" [Ellman, *James Joyce*: 505]. Quant à la seconde citation, il s'agit de la justification fournie par Joyce à sa bénéficiaire, Harriet Shaw Weaver, dans une lettre du 24 novembre 1926, où il affirme que "la majeure partie de chaque existence humaine se déroule dans un état qui ne peut pas se rendre sensible par l'usage de langage éveillé, de grammaire bien définie et d'intrigue allant de l'avant" [James Joyce, *Selected Letters*: 317-318]. Je trouve la juxtaposition de ces deux affirmations intéressante. En effet, dans la première, Joyce semble suggérer que la relation entre l'universel et le particulier n'a rien à voir avec la représentation ou l'exemplification, mais plutôt avec la teneur ou l'appartenance. Seule, il s'agit d'une affirmation simple et claire par laquelle Joyce justifie son ambition et son choix de sujets. Mais, si on la juxtapose avec la seconde citation, il apparaît que, très tôt dans le développement de ce qui s'appelait alors *Work in Progress*, Joyce avait commencé à reconsidérer l'universalité en termes soustractifs. Dans cette affirmation précise, il soustrait le sens que l'universel doit aussi être transcendant, implicite dans les concepts Thomistes utilisés dans la majorité des ses prises de position artistiques au début de sa carrière.

Dans sa lettre de novembre 1926, on considère souvent que Joyce parle de sommeil et de rêves. Dans son affirmation à Weaver, il décrit quelque chose d'assez concret pour devenir matière à littérature ou, peut-être, assez matériel pour se transformer en littérature concrète. Mais, ce faisant, il fait une affirmation rigoureusement soustractive. Non seulement il nous dit ce que cette "majeure partie" n'est pas, il nous dit aussi de quelles manières elle résiste aux tentatives de pensée ou d'accès par les sens. L'utilisation du mot "sensible" entre guillemets rappelle certaines de ses premières prises de position artistiques, comme la définition selon laquelle "l'art est la disposition humaine de la matière sensible ou intelligible dans un but esthétique" [Joyce, *Occasional, Personal and Political Writing*: 104]. Voici quelque chose qui devrait sembler remarquable aux lecteurs critiques de Joyce. En effet, il ne se contente pas de revoir ou de réinventer son point de vue précédent, il révèle une pensée soustractive qui y était

toujours présente. Si on devait spéculer sur ce qu'il pensait en écrivant cette tentative d'éveiller l'intérêt de Harriet Shaw Weaver, on pourrait dire que Joyce veut désespérément démontrer que sa nouvelle œuvre, bien que radicalement différente de ses œuvres précédentes, est toujours écrite dans le même esprit que celles-ci. Ce sens de la continuité, exprimé par des appropriations philosophiques, nous éclaire sur les intentions de Joyce, tout en remettant en cause nos attentes par rapport à cette "matière sensible et intelligible". C'est comme si Joyce démontrait qu'*Ulysse* et *Finnegans Wake* ne viennent pas compliquer une notion de beauté et d'universalité autrefois simple, mais plutôt qu'ils représentent le déroulement de l'élaboration des mêmes idées et des mêmes pratiques qu'on trouve dans *Dubliners* et *A Portrait*.

Les termes de ma thèse, donc, sont dérivés presque totalement de ces deux affirmations Joycéennes souvent citées. Le concret est ma façon de synthétiser les questions de l'existence humaine et de la ville de Dublin comme point de départ inévitable, alors que la notion d'universel concret, qui reflète le déploiement par Joyce d'une notion de ce qui peut se 'rendre sensible', remonte à son engagement avec l'idéalisme, plutôt que le scholasticisme ou le thomisme [OCPW 312]. Le réalisme soustractif se réfère à la double soustraction qui est faite lorsque Joyce définit sa "grande partie" d'une manière dont elle ne peut pas être rendue sensible, et implique également les manières dont elle échappe à notre pensée et à notre langage réguliers. La question du réalisme soustractif ne se résume pas à ce qui est soustrait de l'expérience, mais se réfère à ce qui ne peut être écrit, et par conséquent lu, de manière soustractive. Cette question interroge, parce qu'elle peut sembler ne pas coller avec la couleur, la densité et la variété stylistiques de l'œuvre de Joyce. Cela n'implique pas seulement que l'écriture de Joyce exige des lecteurs critiques qu'ils repensent l'universel, mais que repenser l'universel implique de repenser ce qui compte comme étant une soustraction ou une addition. L'excès même des dernières œuvres de Joyce, leur qualité encyclopédique, suggèrent, non pas une tendance à la totalisation, mais plutôt une logique intérieure unique, tout à fait singulière, de minimalité et de maximalité.

Le dernier terme du titre de la thèse est 'nix to nothing' [FW 50], une parmi plusieurs permutations de l'expression 'next to nothing' apparaissant dans l'œuvre de Joyce. Cette référence rappelle Saint-Augustin et sa définition de la matière : *informe prope nihil* ou "informe, presque rien" [Saint-Augustin, *Confessions*]. L'expression a aussi un usage populaire à Dublin, où elle peut se référer à une faible quantité ou valeur [U 708]. Ce lien entre la définition de la matière par Saint-Augustin, la décrivant comme étant ce qui n'est que minimalement séparé du vide, démontre que l'accent mis par Joyce sur la soustraction est une union unique de la pensée et de la pratique. Ceci nous montre que Joyce ne se contente pas de

s'approprier des idées venant de la philosophie, mais construit et reconstruit des concepts, déployant la philosophie comme une forge, et non comme un répertoire de références intertextuelles. L'appropriation par Joyce de la notion Augustinienne de *prope nihil* suggère, non pas une référence, mais l'élaboration d'une nouvelle pensée du concret ou du matériel sur base du vide. Le 'next to nothing' de Joyce n'est pas un emprunt philosophique, mais sa propre invention. Cette thèse aurait très bien pu s'appeler "une investigation philosophique de la soustraction Joycéenne", mais ce serait induire le lecteur en erreur, vu que mon but est d'établir une compréhension du réalisme et de l'universalité des œuvres de Joyce en tant qu'autonome ou extérieur à toute prescription philosophique ou cadre théorique

Cette thèse parie sur l'idée que la soustraction et la réinvention conceptuelle sont des manières intéressantes et productives d'interroger et d'explorer le travail de Joyce. Plutôt que de prendre une approche qui centralise le pouvoir du langage au-delà des idées et des choses, mon but est de pouvoir prendre les idées de Joyce comme argent comptant, autant que faire se peut. Dans cette mesure, j'espère pouvoir affirmer que cette thèse produit une image réaliste de l'œuvre de Joyce, cette approche réaliste, pour moi, reflétant une tentative de capturer les œuvres littéraires dans leur instance, et non à travers un seul cadre théorique ou contexte historico-sociologique.

Pour résumer mes intentions en une seule affirmation: cette thèse souhaite établir le fait qu'une chose telle que le 'réalisme soustractif' existe dans le travail de Joyce, et que cette forme particulière de réalisme fournit à Joyce une manière singulière d'articuler le concret et l'universel ensemble et à la fois. C'est vers l'universel en tant que singularité, plutôt qu'en tant que totalité, que je me dirige.

La question que pose le titre de la thèse ne concerne pas simplement l'universalité, mais l'universalité concrète. Associer Joyce avec un concept idéaliste, est-ce une mauvaise idée? Le terme d' 'universalité concrète' utilisé dans le titre exprime le fait que je ne m'intéresse pas à l'universalité abstraite ou métaphysique, ni à une tentative de redéfinir le lien entre Joyce et l'universalité de Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, ou à l' 'universalité imaginative' de Vico. Il s'agit plutôt d'indiquer que je m'intéresse plutôt aux bases de l'universalité, ce qui, comme je l'ai suggéré, est à la fois une question du générique et du spécifique, du singulier et du dyadique.

Qu'est-ce donc que le 'réalisme soustractif', tel que lié à la revendication de Joyce d'écrire l'universel depuis l'intérieur du particulier? Cela signifie que la manière principale dont cette thèse se confrontera au concret sera à travers la minimalité et la soustraction. Comme

le style de Joyce est soustractif et scrupuleusement économe, ma lecture tentera d'être soustractive dans ses termes, de manière générique et axiomatique, plutôt que soustractive et définitive. La dimension soustractive de la position que je vais présenter se trouve principalement dans ce que j'appelle la critique implicite de 'l'immédiateté de l'immédiat', et le fait que les éléments concrets de l'expérience personnelle n'ont aucune tendance transcendante. Voici quelque chose que je trouve remarquable chez Joyce, et souvent en inadéquation avec sa réputation et ses buts proclamés. Joyce semble considérer l'acte même d'interagir avec le monde ou de le percevoir comme étant un acte Prométhéen, un acte rebelle de création au nom de l'humanité et contre tout supposé mandat divin ou métaphysique. Si je trouve ceci remarquable, c'est d'abord parce que, par là, Joyce est moins aligné avec les débats de son époque, qu'avec les parties les plus radicales de la philosophie contemporaine, que je vais présenter dans les chapitres 2 et 5. Cet état de faits est également frappant parce qu'il remet en cause l'image la plus notoire de Joyce comme étant un auteur qui confère des pouvoirs quasi-divins de création aux artistes et aux artistes seuls. Mon argument, dans cette thèse, est que, très certainement, Joyce voyait l'artiste comme étant une figure autonome et créatrice, mais il montre aussi que la même rébellion Luciférienne et Prométhéenne et l'appropriation de la création affecte toute expérience humaine, quelle que soit sa taille ou son insignifiance.

Afin de pouvoir affirmer les choses, souvent assez catégoriques, sur la concrétude de Joyce, que j'affirme dans ma thèse, il me faut nécessairement prendre un point de vue théorique. De plus, cette vue est doublement conceptuelle, car l'approche Prométhéenne de l'expérience personnelle que je vois chez Joyce est une approche de la créativité conceptuelle au niveau de l'expérience de ses personnages. Mais, comme je l'ai déjà expliqué, je ne peux pas me contenter de définir et de présenter ces concepts. Je dois créer mes propres concepts en parallèle afin de "rendre justice" aux œuvres de Joyce et, pour que cette thèse reflète de manière adéquate le type de lecture provoquée par l'œuvre de Joyce, je ne peux pas me contenter de définir et de présenter ces concepts. Il me faut créer mes propres concepts en parallèle afin de "rendre justice" aux œuvres de Joyce. De bien des façons, Joyce est un auteur hautement axiomatique et, de ce fait, il produit du travail qui remet en cause la fixité des définitions. Donc, en ce qui concerne la conceptualité dans la lecture de Joyce, elle devient très vite une question de sortir des définitions acceptées. Il ne s'agit pas de les ignorer, mais de les altérer en plusieurs fois [Joyce, *Ulysses*: 45], ce qui semble appeler une ré-évaluation par le lecteur, exigeant non pas que le lecteur impute aux mots une nouvelle signification, mais qu'il modifie ou altère le concept qui y est sous-jacent et, ce faisant, confère au mot l'impression puissante de l'instance

sensible dont il a besoin pour avoir accès aux autres pensées de Stephen. Sans surprise, Derrida a créé une théorie entière de l'engagement littéraire [*Derrida and Joyce*, 'Deux mots pour Joyce'], par une mutation conceptuelle de la 'signature' de Joyce très subtile, presque minuscule.

Toutefois, tous ces concepts mutants ou légèrement altérés restent des concepts de l'instance. Une écriture du concret est une approche de la conceptualisation de l'instant par un individu. C'est pourquoi cette thèse peut insister sur le terme 'réaliste' pour décrire l'œuvre de Joyce, à la fois dans sa forme et dans son contenu, en termes de mon approche du texte. Les concepts de Joyce concernant l'écriture de l'instance sont ce que j'appellerais maximalement conceptuels, en ce qu'il crée des nouveaux concepts très larges qui sont génériques, vu qu'ils peuvent s'appliquer à presque n'importe-quelle situation, mais sans être généralisés. Un exemple d'un tel concept maximal est l'épiphanie, qui décrit non seulement les techniques de Joyce concernant le fait de capturer la concrétude de la réalisation soudaine dans toute situation. Nous pouvons suivre avec la notion d'appréhension, dans *A Portrait of the Artist of the Young Man*, et avec le véritable déluge de concepts qui accompagne les variations de style dans *Finnegans Wake* et *Ulysse*.

Donc, mes sources théoriques pour cette lecture sont diverses et en conflit entre elles. J'ai choisi Derrida et la déconstruction, principalement parce que la déconstruction est l'approche critique qui démontre le mieux que le fait de traiter de l'œuvre de Joyce implique une critique implicite de la totalité. Mais j'ai choisi Alain Badiou, dont la philosophie de l'Évènement et de l'écriture générique me permet d'étendre les notions de ce que Derrida appelle l'Évènement Joyce vers d'autres modes génériques de pensée et de critique. Chez Badiou, le discours mathématique sur l'ontologie, et plus spécifiquement la priorité ontologique du vide, est très bien adaptée à l'interrogation et à l'exploration du travail de Joyce vis-à-vis ses propres affirmations sur son travail. La notion de la pensée 'générique' est donc cruciale pour une approche conceptuelle de Joyce, me menant à une troisième source conceptuelle importante. Cette source n'est ni théorique, ni philosophique, mais, dans son application à l'esthétique, presque purement conceptuelle: il s'agit de la non-philosophie de François Laruelle. Cette non-philosophie nous fournit un vocabulaire et une manière de penser qui permet l'appropriation de concepts philosophiques (tels que ceux de Badiou ou Derrida) pour une matière non-philosophique, dans le cas présent, l'œuvre de James Joyce. L'approche performative ou gestuelle de Laruelle, avec sa vision clé de ce qu'il appelle la 'dualité unilatérale', me permet de tenter ce qu'on pourrait appeler une 'extension Joycéenne' de la



notion du générique. Dans *Finnegans Wake*, avec ses dispositifs de composition à base de jumelages et de miroirs, nous pourrions dire qu'il y a là une sorte d'écriture générique qui anticipe déjà la notion de dualité unilatérale. Pour le reformuler plus simplement, l'exploration de l'universalité concrète chez Joyce implique de s'approprier des concepts de plusieurs sources, ceci parce que l'universalité concrète prend la forme d'une spécificité (par exemple, Dublin) qui ne peut se penser ou se discuter que de manière générique. Il en découle que la question de l'exploration de l'écriture générique, qu'elle soit littéraire ou narrative, implique et même provoque une telle réponse conceptuelle.

Si l'écriture générique du concret chez Joyce est maximale conceptuelle, alors la lecture que j'en fais dans cette thèse est minimale conceptuelle. J'ai tenté de créer les concepts les plus minimaux possibles afin d'explorer, de discuter et d'engager la concrétude de Joyce. Par exemple, dans les derniers chapitres de cette thèse, je parle de ce que j'appelle les 'effets-un' dans son œuvre, ce qui s'applique au fait de tirer une unicité apparente d'une multiplicité, sans Un métaphysique et sans totalité. Le concept que j'utilise négativement dès le début, de l' 'immédiateté de l'immédiat', représente aussi une tentative de conceptualité minimale dans le but de suivre une critique que je crois implicite dans l'œuvre de Joyce. Quand Derrida conjugue signature et contre-signature, il me semble, nous sommes confrontés à l'exemple le plus exemplaire de minimalité conceptuelle dans la lecture de Joyce. Cette innovation est si puissante parce qu'elle est générique, mais sans être générale.

L'œuvre de Joyce semble procéder à partir de l'impératif que, si un artiste doit appréhender ou imiter la vie telle qu'elle est vécue, en capturant la réalité de quelque manière qu'il l'entend, alors la création stylistique constante est une nécessité. Comme la vie quotidienne individuelle est Prométhéenne à petite échelle, l'artiste se doit d'être Prométhéen à grande échelle, ce qui implique de constamment inventer et réinventer la roue proverbiale. Il semble évident que Joyce fait exactement ceci à travers toutes ses œuvres. Mais, par conséquent, les lecteurs critiques de Joyce, eux aussi, sont entraînés dans ce même processus d'invention et de réinvention. Ce n'est pas prétendre qu'afin de lire Joyce (que ce soit de manière critique, ou pour le plaisir), on est obligé d'être aussi radical stylistiquement ou aussi focalisé sur l'innovation que lui. Plutôt, afin de lire Joyce, il faut créer, à petite échelle et, surtout, rester conscient que cette invention faisait déjà partie du fait de lire Joyce, la création restreinte de concepts formant la concrétude même de tout engagement avec ses textes, la matière de la lecture. Pour s'approprier une expression de Derrida, lire Joyce, c'est rechercher

des occasions de réinvention conceptuelles qui sont “minuscules, mais complètement ouvertes” [Derrida, *Derrida & Joyce*: 27].

Pour conclure ce résumé, le projet de cette thèse est de produire un engagement réaliste avec une œuvre réaliste. Ce faisant, nous comprenons l’engagement réaliste ou la lecture réaliste comme le fait de poser une invention conceptuelle minimale ou restreinte contre l’invention conceptuelle maximale ou Prométhéenne des œuvres elle-même. Il s’agit d’une tentative d’approche du réalisme, non pas comme une question de totalité ou de cohérence, mais d’instance. La posture critique majeure se divise entre le fait de résister à la réduction de l’invention esthétique du langage chez Joyce et de voir que la manière dont Joyce comprend le concret ne se résout jamais dans une écriture expérientielle du donné ou de l’irréductiblement immédiat. Le but est donc de ré-évaluer ou de ré-articuler les questions du réalisme et de l’universalité en termes conceptuels, mais sans apporter de forclusion ou de conclusion à l’ouverture et aux paradoxes intérieurs à l’écriture de Joyce.

## Résumé

Avec cette thèse, j'ai voulu entreprendre une exploration critique de l'œuvre de Joyce à la lumière de son intention revendiquée d'écrire l'universel. Tout au début, j'ai pris la décision de prendre pour argent comptant cette déclaration d'intention envers l'universel. J'ai pris cette décision parce qu'il me semblait que la tendance contemporaine à rejeter cette notion, ou à la traiter avec suspicion, a rarement été justifiée. Par conséquent, je n'ai pas interrogé les œuvres de Joyce pour déterminer le bien-fondé de ses différentes revendications de l'universalité, et j'ai essayé, autant que faire se peut, d'éviter de définir l'universalité. Sur base de différentes sources philosophiques, telles que les œuvres de Jacques Derrida ou d'Alain Badiou, mon but a été de "rendre justice" au texte de Joyce, dans la continuité d'engagements déconstructifs avec ses œuvres, qui définissent le fait de "rendre justice" comme étant un engagement critique ou une implication du lecteur envers un texte dans sa singularité, c'est-à-dire, selon ses propres termes. Ce que j'ai voulu éviter, par conséquent, est la question de ce que cela signifie pour une œuvre littéraire d'être universelle. Plutôt, ma question a été la suivante: si l'universalité est une caractéristique de l'œuvre de Joyce, que fait cette universalité, et comment fonctionne-t-elle?

## Résumé en anglais

The goal of this thesis was to explore and critique Joyce's works in light of his claim that he intended to write the universal. At the very beginning I made the decision to take this claim towards universality at face value. I made this decision because I felt that contemporary dismissal or suspicion around the notion of universality has rarely been justified. As a result, I have not interrogated Joyce's works to see if his various claims to universality are justified, and I have tried to limit even defining universality as much as possible. Drawing on recent philosophical sources such as works of Jacques Derrida and Alain Badiou, my goal has to be to 'do justice' to Joyce's text, following on from deconstructive engagements with Joyce's work which often define 'doing justice' as the critical engagement or readerly involvement with a text in its singularity, that is, on its own terms. What I have tried to avoid, then, is the question of what it means for a piece literature to be universal. Instead, my question has been: if universality is a feature of Joyce's literature, what does this universality do, and how does it work?