

Context of Creativity: An Overview of Joyce's *Ulysses*

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〈Abstract〉

The Joyce scholarship is notorious not only for the flamboyancy of its energy but also for its wild divisiveness of interpretive opinions. We might well join, out of despair, the anti-interpretationist camp, sympathizing, for example, with Patrick Kavanaugh in his outburst of sarcasm that a host of the Ph. D. people murdered the writer in exchange for their degrees. Quite grievously, this essay cannot be otherwise than another instance of addition, however self-conscious, to the already-crowded sea of interpretations. Yet, what I attempt here is not an effort toward a construction of a meaning as a solid entity but one toward an understanding of the context that conditions the meaningfulness on what might be called the primary level of the text, the kind of verbal phenomena that come prior to interpretation. In trying to adumbrate the nature of creative consciousness working in *Ulysses*, I have used some prominent critical stances including those of Wyndham Lewis and Hugh Kenner, some circumstantial facts about Joyce, and on pain of being guilty of cant, a modicum of convenient concepts probably borrowed unawares from the structuralist or phenomenological line of critical thinking.

I begin by defining the consciousness as the primary condition of creativity, as a set of fundamental terms of vision according to which the words are set to negotiate the reality. The rule of detachment is essential for Joyce from this point of view. Detachment is seen as the artistic strategy as well as the writer's individual temper. The noncommittal aloofness is the cardinal rule and the text seems to endorse being before meaning. This does not mean, however, a pure state of objectivity nor a mere parody of objective pretensions. The mode in which the objective phenomenal world is engaged and appropriated betrays some fundamental aspects of the underlying consciousness as a state of affairs, as a certain creative temper.

So I have introduced the concept of subjectivity not for its idea content but for its use to map out the basic status of consciousness. Detachment means keeping distance from something and naturally stands for one mode of confrontation between subject and object. I notice perennial ascendancy of the congested phenomenal flux, which means not the triumph of matter but the despair of the mind confronting it. I have somewhat elaborated on this point via Lewis and Kenner. The surface of *Ulysses* is crowded with items of words and things and indeed many significant instances of the narrative are susceptible to cataloguing. So I have deliberated on the concept of the thing as the irrecoverable other resisting subjectivity and at the same time as the community index. Thus I notice the negative aspect in ascendancy over its intersubjective potential. Molly's monologue is cited as illustrating this point.

“창작의식의 문맥 : 조이스의 소설 율리시스”

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〈요 약〉

이 글은 조이스의 소설 율리시스에 관한 한가지 연구로서 소설을 이루는 갖가지 기교, 언어의 선택, 해석 가능한 의미 등의 현상들을 그들이 작가에 의해서 그렇게 선택하게 한 창작의식의 여건을 조이스의 중요한 비평가들인 케너, 무도버그, 루이스 등의 논지를 예로서 인용하고 조이스에 관한 필자의 생각을 뼈대 보라고 현상의 자르름 작품속의 자료로 소개하는 조이스 자신의 버릇을 실마리로 삼아 해석의 여건에 대한 한가지 이해로서 쓰여진 것이다.

창작의 제일의적인 조건으로서 의식의 한가지 상태를 상징할 때 바꾸어 말하여 언어가 현실을 수용하는 독특한 양식을 상징할 때 초연의 원칙은 조이스에 기본적인 자세라 할 수 있다. 이 초연의 원칙은 조이스 자신의 기교에도 관련되지만 더욱 중요한 것은 창작강의 전략이라는 점이다. 이런 원칙하에 형성된 작품은 의미하기 이전에 존재하는 절제된 자족의 외양을 가지는 듯하나 “율리시스”에서 조이스의 역설은 이것이 어떤 순수한 객관적 상태나 거꾸로 객관적 입장의 단순한 페르디난을 지향하지 않는다는 점이다. 객관적인 현상의 세계가 무섭도록 초연한 입장에서 작품단으로 형상화되어 들어 오지만 이것은 그 자체로서 한가지 창작상의 의식을 드러내는 것이다.

조이스에게 있어서 이 문체가 어떤 내막을 가지는가를 밝히는 과정에서 필자는 주체가 대상에서 초연한 자세를 취하려 하는 의지의 의미에 역점을 두었다. “율리시스”의 표현은 원담 루이스의 불평대로 무척 物 癖적이다. 대상에서 소외된 주체는 대상의 物性을 지엽하게 의식할 수 밖에 없다. 그러나 그런 의식의 주체 자체가 끊임없이 응시없이 대상화하여 작품의 물성을 증대시킨다. 스티븐과 블룸은 세계내에 허쳐되고 그 위에 물리의 각종한 목소리가 내리는 작품의 구성에 주의하면서 본 논문은 세계밖에 살면서 허계안을 건구한 조이스의 유별난 인성의 역설과 딜레마가 “율리시스”에서도 보이지 않는 그러나 근본적인 바탕이라 인식한다.

When *Ulysses* finally came out in 1922 as a memorable event in both his personal life and modern Western literature and was gathering a series of shock waves, James Joyce, the begetter of this opaque artifact, generally chose to remain aloof and indifferent as to the quality of its critical echoes. He did not overtly show, then as afterwards, an arbiter's instinct over the polarity and ruggedness of the commentaries. This was much in the fashion of the aesthetic godly figure depicted by Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as paring his fingernails over his work. Joyce certainly was very eager to see his book

recognized and was capable of manuevering the circumstances with calculation and purpose. But his wary sensitivity to his own public image seemed alert only in practical terms of self-promotion. The other half of the writer's public self, the desire to see his work understood truthfully, suppressed from ready observation.

There may not be anything singular about Joyce's or any writer's reluctance to explain his own work. So far as intelligence is deemed to be the public's share as well, that could be potentially redundant or even self-defeating and might drain off the kind of glamor some

books like *Ulysses* might autonomously engender. So we see Joyce asking for the pledge of confidence when later he was handing out in secretive self-defense his chart of correspondences or schema or was extending help to Herbert Gorman and Stuart Gilbert.⁽¹⁾ Indeed, the aloof posture was greatly an aspect of his real-life strategy for survival and control.

Yet, there is a sense that this aloof temper also bears on the central aspect of creativity for Joyce to whom art and life were much of each other's natural excuses. The fabric of his fictional world derives from that of his real-life situations with necessary shifts in material, tone, and temper. Seen as an interaction between creativity and material, a fiction-making imagination involves a pretext to encroach upon other people's lives in order to mobilize them to the aesthetic use. With Joyce, this "other" to be embraced by imagination was very much within himself. The writer had an obsession with his own sense of destiny and with the city which mothered his growth and education. But he has been in exile distanced in space and time from the object of his intimate knowledge and concern. The central point of creativity concerns the cold control of what is intimate. "As he and others see me," ruminates Stephen at the tower as he looks in Mulligan's shaving mirror.⁽²⁾ He is both narcissistic and detached.

It is mainly due to the aloof, noncommittal gestures that *Ulysses* becomes larger than the brooding Stephen or the wandering Bloom or their Dublin. Motifs of persons and events are presented as aspects and any single aspect is not allowed thematic dominance. Relativity is the tempo and the texture. The only thing we

can be certain of is the fact that things and persons are there in the fictional space very deliberately and insistently as if their presence were its own excuse. From this naked recognition we can adduce rather abstractly that this quasi-metaphysical situation of being before meaning must have a direct bearing on the overall status of the writer's creative consciousness, the terms of vision in which his words are set to negotiate the reality. We cannot name the content of that consciousness because it cannot be a thing. A thorough scepticism might as well recognize its status as nothing but one result of or hypothesis for interpretative reduction. However, we can understand something of its characteristic temper or the patterns of its dynamics, a text being always a readable text.

According to Wolfgang Iser's definition on the phenomenological reading theory, the work achieves "realization" through the process of coming together of the "artistic" text on one side and the "aesthetic" reading on the other side.⁽³⁾ What is realized must be the consciousness approximating the authentic configuration of the text. This formula, though highly abstract, may serve as a measure against which to test some distinctive features of Joyce. For, in *Ulysses*, there is an extraordinary unbalance in the way in which the subject-object poles are aligned. The "aesthetic" function of the reader ought to surrender itself to the "artistic" to an extraordinary degree because in *Ulysses* the text is very intent on its own function. This aspect must have been in her mind when Marilyn French wrote of the book: "...the reader is Ulysses; the novel is the journey."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Richard Ellmann, "Appendix" to his *Ulysses on the Liffey* (London, 1972), pp.187-188. Also see H.K. Croessmann, "Joyce, Gorman, and the Schema of *Ulysses*: An Exchange of Letters--Paul L. Leon, Herbert Gorman, Bennett Cerf" in *A James Joyce Miscellany*, 2nd ser., ed. Marvin Magalaner (Carbondale, 1957), p.9.

(2) James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York, 1961), p.6.

(3) Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore, 1978), p.274.

(4) Marilyn French, *The Book as World* (Cambridge, 1976), p.4.

Commenting on the fragmented syntax, she also observes: "The reader is receiving not the fruits, a full, considered, and polished thought, but is participating in the process of formation itself."⁽⁵⁾

The egocentricity or self-sufficiency of the text also appears to nullify the need for extraneous subjectivity by creating its own subject-object poles: Stephen is set against Mulligan, Bloom, the world; Bloom against Boylan, Molly, the world (as he sees it); and reversing the pattern, Molly is set at the end of the book against all of the world which is not her present self. There are minds, voices, things confronting other minds, voices, things. Yet, once again, we are here facing a willful unbalance between subject and object. All the instances of subjectivity in the book including that of Stephen's which is allowed a limited yet relatively superior focus have gone to the side of the objective by virtue of being observable particles in the total scheme of the book's world. If this great void created by the apparant phasing out of the subjectivity could be regarded, as it ought to, as the occasion in which the objective pretension starts, we do not have an absence of subjectivity but a negative will to it.

The auctorial detachment is the result of deliberation. It conceals despair and engenders the comic in that the world mind negotiates so strenuously, the familiar immediate world that exposes itself microscopically (and repeatedly), does not reveal the mind in revealing itself. "I do not like that other world," writes Martha in her morning letter as if to portend a prospective sympathy for Bloom's ordeal of

the day.⁽⁶⁾ The awareness of otherness of this world seems central to Joyce's creativity. On the one hand, we have a psychology of betrayal theme which haunted the writer. On the other hand, there is the artistic necessity for an exile with obsessed memories to see himself and its familiar ambience as other across time and space. Tom Kernan's embarrassed snobbism, "retrospective arrangement", or Stephen's "composition of place" by way of Loyola, alludes to the Joycean method of composition.⁽⁷⁾ To the Dublin he has left in life the writer returns in book like an obsession. Stephen says: "I am other I now,"⁽⁸⁾ but also, by way of Maeterlinck, "If Socrates leave his house today he will find the sage seated on his doorstep. If Judas go forth tonight it is to Judas his steps will tend."⁽⁹⁾ The mind's move is egoistic or "centripetal" to use an *Ithaca* word. Yet it does not achieve rapport with the immediacy of self or world; it keeps its distance, whether ironic or aesthetic.

At the nodal point of the "curve of an emotion" the *Portrait* represents,⁽¹⁰⁾ we read various symptoms of Stephen's deepening estrangement from society. At the critical moment we saw him declare "silence, exile, and cunning."⁽¹¹⁾ Aloofness also becomes for Joyce a criterion to judge character and work, indirectly reflecting his need to vindicate himself. His well-known admiration of Ibsen's "lofty impersonal power" in art and Parnell's capacity of cold self-control as a man of action points to his sense of artistic ideal and internal integrity for an exiling mind. The absorbent, exhilarating mind of Joyce is counter-balanced by the stoic ability to detach

(5) *ibid.*, p. 62.

(6) *Ulysses*, p. 77.

(7) Cf. Susan Dick, "Tom Kernan and the Retrospective Arrangement," *JJQ*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Winter, 1981), pp. 147-159.

(8) *Ulysses*, p. 189.

(9) *ibid.*, p. 213.

(10) James Joyce, "A Portrait of the Artist" in *The Workshop of Daedalus*, ed. Robert Scholes and Richard Kain (Evanston, 1965), p. 66.

(11) James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Chester G. Anderson (New York, 1968), p. 247.

himself and see. The fruit of detachment in temper fluctuates from Stephen's rigidity to the comic world of Bloom's embarrassments and other Dubliners' antics, from his antler-flashing disdain of the "rabblement" to psychic irregularities at the critical moments, which are rendered in *Ulysses* dubiously humorous with the disengaged self standing aloof. Both as artist and as citizen of the modern world, Joyce cultivated the rule of control through detachment as the working principle of a supreme order.

Joyce in *Ulysses* is perpetually concealing in that the reader finds it hard, amid the cityful of words and things, to locate the vantage point, so to speak, of central consciousness in which to posit his willing suspension of disbelief. Yet the book also simulates revealing at the same time. It arouses the illusion of exhaustive presentation. Besides, presumably all the dictional modes of presentation are employed to maneuver into order all the elements of fictional material. To put it in another way, revealing and concealing seem to be each other's simultaneous function in *Ulysses*. This is a riddling situation. Actually the book is full of minor riddles such as the notorious "Who is M'Intosh?", some of whose sources are frustratingly extraneous to the novel's inbound universe as Robert Adams demonstrates in his *Surface and Symbol*.⁽¹²⁾

A riddler's art consists in concealing the depth and revealing the surface. The depth here is equatable to the answer, and in a riddle there is no question of the existence of the answer, the only right answer. *Ulysses* in its totality arouses curiosity like a riddle, asking different questions according to different approaches, but what must constitute the vital part, the answer, deepens it rather than resolves much like Stephen's mysterious

riddle in "Nestor". We have a concrete story line, and adultery is a weighty theme which conditions every move of Bloom's during his day's journey. But just as the crucial incident of assignation occurs unseen behind the scene, Bloom's real worry, unexpressed, is outbalanced by the bump and bustle in the streets, pubs, etc., where he busies himself all day except a brief retreat to the strand. However persistent the adultery motif may be, it is only one aspect, among many, of the book. Thematic occasions open on other motifs such as Stephen's interiority, Bloom's exposure to the streets of Dublin, citizens' behavioral cliches, the aloof sexuality of Molly, etc. On another level, told content wars with telling voices over dominance, and different voices, because of their limited role as narrator, confuse and diffuse the total syntactic coherence of the novel. The apparent lack of the committing and authentic consciousness paradoxically unsettles to a certain degree even the mimetic dimension of the novel by hampering the reader's fictional illusion.

That the economy and autonomy of fiction is rendered insecure must be either the symptom or the result of intervention, however concealed, of the function of an ulterior consciousness. A true realist would dissolve this function in the fictional world. In the case of Joyce, however, the nail-paring indifference does not mark a disappearance but a presence of such consciousness if only outside his handiwork. This ulterior axis of the novel's semantic potential may be the saving feature of *Ulysses* as a riddle apparently lacking the core.

Now we have to turn to the novel's more obvious facade. In *Time and Western Man*, Wyndham Lewis attacked Joyce as addicted to the contemporary Bergsonian time cult. The writer was "the poet of the shabby-genteel,

(12) Robert M. Adams, *Surface and Symbol: The Consistency of James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (New York, 1967).

impoverished intellectualism of Dublin"⁽¹³⁾: his book was full of clichés and dead matter, his mind hopelessly middle-class in vision. Joyce, who was disturbed, is known as having made two responses: one acknowledging its merits with a grudge; the other rejecting its claim with disdainful reserve. To Harriet Shaw Weaver he wrote that it was by far the best hostile criticism that had appeared by that time. To Frank Budgen he is reported to have said, "Allowing that the whole of what Lewis says about my book is true, is it more than ten percent of the truth?"⁽¹⁴⁾ Putting aside such irrelevancies as innuendoes of hostile personality attack, what did Joyce think, or are we to think, the ninety percent of Lewis' untruth consists in?

Half a century later, Hugh Kenner brought out *Dublin's Joyce* where he elaborated Lewis' theme with depth and overturned his adverse argument on its own ground. The mechanical world of lifeless stuffs and clichés indeed constitutes the essential basics of the book. Yet Lewis' "brilliant misreading" did not go further than recognizing them as they are and mistakenly equated the "daemon" of this flux to the author's mind. In fact, "it is behind *that* [mind-as-machine], rather than behind the obvious facade of the work, that the author stands *indifferent, paring his fingernails.*"⁽¹⁵⁾ Later in another book he characterized this auctorial stance as coming from the "comedian of the inventory".⁽¹⁶⁾ What Kenner was doing was basically reading Joyce as a thorough ironist and in that line of thought his point is superbly convincing. His recent book, *Joyce's Voices*, which debates with fine selectivity how in Joyce the rules of objectivity gets ridiculed in their own terms, may be

regarded as a refined parallel extension, done from the narrative point of view, of his previous thematic position.⁽¹⁷⁾

Another approach to save *Ulysses* from the horror of a radical reading of Lewisian kind would be simply to ignore or bypass or deny the merits--which Joyce himself recognized however guardedly--of this subversive thinking. (I am risking the charge of anachronism for the need to defend *Ulysses* has ceased to exist for almost half a century, but my point evidently lies elsewhere.) S. L. Goldberg's moralist-evaluative approach in his *The Classical Temper* might be considered such an example of an authentic kind.⁽¹⁸⁾ While Kenner confronts Joyce's paradox frontally to save his novelistic meaning, Goldberg, seen in the context of our present argument, does the same thing by interpreting him according to the novel-reading tradition of a more orthodox kind. However, to the extent that either Joyce's modernist revolt against the Victorian heritage or his uniqueness as an individual writer is not given its due focus of attention, such a humanist approach could be potentially evasive.

There can still be another evasive mode of approach to counter the dead end of the phenomenal flux, now rather outdated but once in the mainstream following the lead of Stuart Gilbert.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is to drain off the mundane meaning and reconstruct symbolic content of a higher order by superimposing a network of mythopoeic correspondences. Apart from the particular historical circumstances of the early scholarship encouraged by Joyce's dependence on neat tabular scholasticism as his work method plus his general writerly inspiration by way of Homer, symbolism seems to have its own excuse to thrive: It allows for a range

(13) Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (London, 1927), p. 77.

(14) Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York, 1959), p. 608.

(15) Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* (Boston, 1962), p. 167.

(16) Hugh Kenner, *Stoic Comedians: Flaubert, Joyce, and Beckett* (Berkeley, 1962), Chapter 2.

(17) Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley, 1978).

(18) S. L. Goldberg, *The Classical Temper: A Study of James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (New York, 1961).

(19) Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study* (London, 1952).

of interpretive freedom. The symbolic axis of the book provides a generous ground in which moral themes can be anchored. It is true that Joyce depended a great deal on the symbolic and the allusive to enrich the texture. Yet one can legitimately doubt as to its order in the total function of the work: Do such instances occupy any prominent position to give meaning to the quotidian reality? The answer must be yes, for they are often part of the organizing principle. But is that the credible meaning? Probably not. Symbolic meanings, being deliberately given, do not transcend the book's relative universe. No more so than any other instances of semantic possibilities—actions, thoughts, voices, and whatever else might be included in what Kenner called the "technological space."⁽²⁰⁾

A critical discourse is basically the result of imposition, not of derivation. Gerard Genette defined it as "a discourse upon a discourse" to emphasize its independent semiotic status distinct from the literary discourse.⁽²¹⁾ As such, the limit of any particular critical approach is the limit of its own logicity vis-à-vis the text not the capacity of carrying truth, for the truth of a work is, to push it to the extreme, an abyss beyond a temper or a consensus. The point of the foregoing paragraphs, then, is not the relative relevance of each different approach as a critical stance, not the truth value it carries, but the specific limit it bears against the specific interpretive condition: the surfaceness of the text's surface. This condition is deemed to be a state of affairs prior to interpretation, yet posterior to auctorial consciousness.

The distance between the book's immediate

state of affairs and the mode of consciousness ratifying it as such constitutes the critical despair of "the technological space" where minds, things, and words drift and collide into one another precariously. The aloof immediacy of creative temper is without a defined form or direction—formlessness was one of the principal terms of early adverse commentaries—and yet becomes the elementary condition of the empirical surface of the novel, which is given a formal direction without certainty of its fulfillment. A certain principle of complementary negativity seems to be in force, adumbrating "signatures of all things" in the book.⁽²²⁾ What looks like a lack in novelistic surface (i.e., committing mind) is symptomatic of a presence of auctorial consciousness (will to stand aloof); likewise, a presence in one level (immediacy of the phenomenal flux), of a lack in another (awareness of its otherness). This double play of negativity also works in more local situations. For instance, the concreteness of "Wandering Rocks" streets is countered by the remoteness of the narrator's bird's-eye view; Bloom's horror for the critical moment in "Sirens", denied even the chance of modest phonation, goes under unnoticed in the midst of merrymaking by both the symphonic narrator and the frivolous flirts and the singing party; and so on. These aspects of Joyce's "double writing" engender not only a sense of novelistic irony⁽²³⁾; more significantly, it also reflects the weight of existential dilemma in the center of creative consciousness that confronts the world with intensity only to epiphanize the thing-in-itself. Mind ascends over matter in negativity. Beyond the surface triumph of the ironic, the

(20) *Stoic Comedians*, p. 35.

(21) Quoted secondhand from Joseph Kestner, "Virtual Text/Virtual Reader: The Structural Signature Within, Behind, Beyond, Above," *JJQ*, Structuralist / Reader Response Issue, Vol. 16, Nos. 1/2 (Fall 1978–Winter 1979), p. 23.

(22) *Ulysses*, p. 37.

(23) See Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce*, pp. 189–181.

depth marks a danger level of seriousness, just as the comic world represented between covers hides, perhaps through exorcistic over-exposure, what is the truly horrible in the book, Bloom's cockoldry.

The mimetic content of the book, with all its show of strict objectivity, does not return neutrally to the external as a truly realist work would. Rather, it is there by virtue of concealed tension between mind and thing, as a world not so much of representation as of named phenomena where the namer has stoically withdrawn from the scene warily guarding from observation the self-knowledge of his own withdrawal. Because of the willful distance it keeps from reality, this alienated state of the creating mind tends to endorse the materiality and its opaque autonomy of the external. In *Ulysses*, the connection from one moment to another is typically associative, and association is the function of the mind that confronts the external reality without recognizing its intrinsic order. In the history of psychology, associationism understood the function of mind as an extension of the sensory faculty, which idealists or romantics like Coleridge considered as mechanical and sterile. And, indeed, dead matter was Lewis' central term of sweeping accusation. Yet, to the extent that the surface is the manipulated product, the significance of associative motifs consists in their ulterior context of creativity. As a prelemonic aspect of consciousness, the associative bias of the book represents a state of mind that perceives simultaneously the otherness of the world and the immediacy of its presence. It is symptomatic of a schism rather than a union.

All knowledge is made possible by the distance the knowing subject creates from its object.

Stephen's theory of epiphany in *Stephen Hero* and related aesthetic theory in the *Portrait* are the result of a conscious experiment of that distance.⁽²⁴⁾ Yet, the distance itself is normally out of question in the more traditional writing, where the condition of knowledge is taken for granted through simple make-believe formats of illusion. A realist would stick to the external principle in order to annul the question of creativity. A psychological novelist would do the same thing by coopting the state of subjectivity as that of reality. The separateness of these two terms of knowledge may intrude as in many modern novels. But in that case it usually becomes thematized inside the novelistic plane of organization as, for example, in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*. Only in satire, this distance between subject and object appears to be consistently exploited, for there what the language overtly conveys is meant to be the transparent decoy of the author's other intent. It is significant that parts of *Ulysses* sometimes read like a satire, which it is not as a whole. The satirical distance, however, is rather flimsy because it crumbles to nil by a simple negative principle: the original intent is restored by the reversal of the surface. It indeed seems necessary to do away with signs of knowledge's self-awareness to attain or presume authentic autonomy of fiction. Even with Laurence Sterne, one of Joyce's artistic ancestors who was guilty of what Gerard Genette calls "narrative metalepsis,"⁽²⁵⁾ mixing extraneous elements and levels without excuse, there is a point in which the naked distance becomes a matter of fact within the comic space of fiction.

Ulysses contains all of these modes of representation and a degree of similar illusion of fictional reality. Yet there is an impulse

(24) James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon (New York, 1963), pp.211-213; and *A Portrait*, Chapter 5.

(25) Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, tr. & ed. James Sturges (New York, 1977), pp.234-235.

"within or behind or beyond or above" the textual surface that would not care about creating the illusion but would go back to basic terms of fictional knowledge and sensory function: telling, listening, seeing, hearing. And these terms are usually endowed with specified, sometimes even personified, roles. There is a certain strategy of reserve on the part of the total author function, a reserve deeper than reluctance to be morally committed. It is not very hard to envision the invisible hand staying aloof to hear what is told by himself without aligning to any particular voice. This is how it is not easy "to say anything about Joyce's complex oeuvre which is entirely untrue."⁽²⁶⁾

The only level of the text unambiguously immune to the atmosphere of uncertainty is the sheer materiality of the book's material--that bustling multitude of shown things and telling voices. This aspect is no small part and no chance factor. Molly's monologue that ends the book significantly aligns itself with this aspect in its impenetrable mood of self-sufficiency. The intensity of things as things reflects the mind's intense knowledge of its own alienation from them.

In its rudimentary concept, the thing designates that which is other than ourselves.⁽²⁷⁾ Its otherness is manifested through unresponsiveness to our will. Ever remaining external to us, things resist any form of appropriation by the subject. It is not impossible that we effect a certain degree of affective rapport with things and they sometimes appear even to carry their own suggestive allure, but we can never be assured of objective validity of that affectivity. Things are, in this respect, unintelligible and incomprehensible. They are, so to speak, blind and ubiquitous presences

that confront, demarcate and isolate the subject as the center of consciousness. This is certainly one textual condition of *Ulysses*.

On the other hand, things also form the context in which our lives are set. We surround ourselves with as well as talk about them. As objectively identifiable entities, they become the most solid facts of reality indispensable for minimum objectivity needed in communication. Things also endure. We can not only identify them; we can return to reidentify them. This durability or reidentifiability being the equal and open share to everybody in the community, things become, in this respect, something discretely extraneous yet always subject to human encounter: an ultimate pretext for intersubjectivity. Such an aspect of human potential in things constitutes a profound textual feature in *Ulysses*.

So we can humanize the phenomenal world of the book as a condition of consciousness. First, we have here an overwhelming extent of physical--also verbal and even spiritual--items of Dublin and its denizens. Such minute and many presences of physical motifs mark in toto the quantitative ascendancy of matter over mind. We see Mulligan-Boylan axis dominate over Stephen-Bloom. Bloom's chronic curiosity consists in asking what-is-that types of questions and ends in names, shapes, some associations, some "science", etc. But the real significance of this quantitative aspect could not be the triumph of the matter; it must lie in the general state of consciousness which recognizes its ascendancy. Things as mere things could be absurd, humorous, comic, or merely descriptive. As an index to the ulterior purpose or the creative unconscious, they would stand more fittingly for a mode of despair of the mind in isolation.

(26) A. M. L. Knuth, *The Wink of the Word* (Amsterdam, 1976), p.29.

(27) The argument of this and following paragraphs borrows a great deal from J.R. Lucas, *A Treatise on Time and Space* (London, 1973), eps., Chapter II, Sections 19,20,21.

As to the human potential of things, we can distinguish two possible directions of the mind engaging them: things as an excuse of communication and things as a substitute for it. In *Ulysses* the latter motif is evidently dominant. Things engage minds without being the occasion of rapport among them. Hence an abundance of motifs of fetishism. However, it is fundamental to recognize that community and communication precede isolation.

Joyce himself is reported as saying that if Dublin were to be destroyed the evidence his book contains would readily help to reconstruct the original.⁽²⁸⁾ One might expand the claim and add that it would also help restore the people and their outwardly recognizable forms and habits: such community items as names, addresses, occupations, costume, idioms, etc. *Ulysses* items are both resistant and resilient as mere things and familiar and inviting as community properties. Thus, the hard facts of the fictional material is not merely elements of stark exteriority resisting subjective consciousness; they also implicate a community potential as the mediating tertiary term for intersubjectivity. Bloom may be regarded as the comic victim caught in this dubious rhythm of the matter.

The items of reality enter the fictional space not fictitiously but in the status of the already known--in substance (persons and things), or in manner (epithets, idioms and narrating voices), or in occasion (all story content). Kenner has pointed out that the events of the book are, like those of Homer, public property and that the cardinal point is "the texture of today's retelling."⁽²⁹⁾ Yet the despair of the matter lies in that even this central voice of the novel's story-making hegemony is an abstraction via a multiplicity of concrete yet limited real voices.

The logical reduction of the phenomenal world would be space and time. The first half of the novel where objectivity apparently holds the reign ends with the space-time system of "Wandering Rocks" reducing the citizens of Dublin to the drifting corpuscles in its vein. The character-killing voices that overrides scene after scene from "Sirens" on to the end of the book apparently derive from traceable sources as concrete and many as streets of Dublin and as such become the impenetrable, unengaging barrier of communicability rather than carrier of information.

Just as the corporal dimension of humanity renders itself to the space-time order of matter, the spiritual dimension seems of have gone exclusively to the linguistic function. It is so because the human component of the book manifests itself by being seen or heard like Stephen's experiment with space in the strand and seldom by contact. This deliberation on perceptual modes, which must be related to Joyce's aesthetic principle of impersonality and psychology of exile, results in a curious state of language in *Ulysses*: Language is not immediate and immanent to the mind's function as it normally is in the tradition of fiction, not quite; language becomes part of external and observable reality in addition to its function as pure mediation. As observable entity language shares characteristic attributes of other such perceptual entities: change according to temporality and permanence according to reidentifiability.⁽³⁰⁾ As Bloom's soap changes position but remains the same soap throughout the day, so certain phrases like "retrospective arrangement" pass from mouth to mouth increasing the degree of their reity by repetition, and so the narrating voices shift from moment to moment yet each retaining its own unailing identity at the fixed moment.

(28) Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and Making of "Ulysses"*, Rev. ed., (Bloomington, 1960), pp.67-68.

(29) *Joyce's Voices*, p.67.

(30) Lucas, p.100 and pp.106-110.

Language at every level tends to approach the self-sufficient material condition of externality at the expense of its more authentic function as pure mediation between mind and world. Like clothes, it is often tailored to suit the particular moment and not others, and yet unlike them, what is emphasized is not the language's suitability to the moment but its own forbidding materiality. Molly's monologue is supremely such example.

If Molly of "Penelope" represents the earth, it is not that as the poetic soul-soothing spirituality of Mother Earth. The Gea-Tellus, with its remoteness of a heavenly body and with its immediacy of this world, rotates on its own axis and peoples its surface with indifference and indiscrimination. Bloom returns to Molly with "abnegation"⁽³¹⁾, the only term with which the mind could penetrate the otherness of the state of things, and the authentic voice of the goddess, which does not recognize the need of any bondage to anything other than its own self-sufficiency, stands aloof being above correcting or even reflecting on the hurt soul.

If mind stands aloof from reality compensating for the alienated self only by voyeuristic licence, the logical counterpart of that mind in things or thing-like reality is given exorcistic expression in the fleshy voice of Molly. Kenner's reading of Molly's final yes as an extreme case of irony is indeed fitting.⁽³²⁾ For this "yes" is, more than anything else, the confirming echo of, for instance, Stephen's dilemma of subjectivity: "endlessness" of "the world without me". If we are to align the main characters according to the subject-object poles of consciousness, Molly Bloom certainly stands for the other, a spirituality of the world as "not-me" set against Stephen's subjectivity, while Bloom represents the embar-

assment of the middle ground.

Molly's monologue is structurally important. Coming at the end of the book like an extended coda, it represents the turning loose of a new energy hitherto unknown and unexpected. By the end of "Ithaca", Bloom, as the representative figure of Dublin's host, comes to a full stop and disappears, having wandered, sought, and returned. Molly's voice, which Kenner calls "the Muse...without Homer,"⁽³³⁾ is more than a force that fills in the vacuum created by the general retreat of the stage. The day was very long and people have whimpered a lot. A revelation ought to come like the final thunderclap in Eliot's *Waste Land*. But this is not the kind of revelation that prods one to awake. The voice, coming only after all has gone to sleep, does not tolerate intervention, does not swerve in its course, and is very intent on its own function. The voice seems to be the reincarnation of the negative condition of consciousness as a shaping principle for the book's world. In "Cyclops", the parodying interpolation sets in at the cue of an associative moment and in "Circe" comparable moments give rise to phantom figures. To a great extent, "Penelope" as a body is likewise the result of a comparable evocation, occasioned in this case by the total function of the book. Then, the forbidding self-sufficiency of Molly may be regarded as the obverse face of the book's despair of subjectivity exemplified by Stephen.

Now we may put the argument in summary. At the beginning of this essay, we have defined the consciousness as the primary condition of creativity, as a set of fundamental terms of vision, according to which the words are set to negotiate the reality. The rule of detachment was the starting point of our discussion. Detachment was seen as the artistic

(31) *Ulysses*, p. 732.

(32) *Dublin's Joyce*, p.

(33) *Joyce's Voices*, p. 98.

strategy as well as the writer's individual temper. The noncommittal aloofness is the cardinal rule and the text seems to endorse being before meaning. This does not mean, however, a pure state of objectivity nor a mere parody of objective pretensions. The mode in which the objective phenomenal world is engaged and appropriated betrays some fundamental aspects of the underlying consciousness as a state of affairs, as a certain creative temper.

So we have introduced the concept of subjectivity not for its idea content but for its use to map out the basic status of consciousness. Detachment means keeping distance from something and naturally stands for one mode of confrontation between subject and object. We notice perennial ascendancy of the congested phenomenal flux, which means not the triumph of matter but the despair of the mind confronting it. We have somewhat elaborated on this point via Lewis and Kenner. The surface of *Ulysses* is crowded with items of words and things and indeed many significant instances of the narrative are susceptible to cataloguing. So we have deliberated on the concept of the thing as the irrecoverable other resisting subjectivity and at the same time as the community index.

Thus we have noticed the negative aspect in ascendancy over its intersubjective potential. Molly's monologue, cited as illustrating this point, may be regarded as an ironic apocalypse of existential dilemma, an ultimate structural lever with which what Kenner calls the Muse allows us, in spite of herself, to read beyond her immediate voice—to pry open the forbidding and formidable facade of the book, letting in enough light to guess the intensity of Joyce's creative despair vis-a-vis the world. The mind never ceases to negotiate the world, which remains inexorably autonomous as the other. The result of this tension is a great comedy. It is so only because the stoic Joyce

sticking to his aloof principle has never nodded.

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