

NARRATIVE DESIRE AND NARRATIVE RELUCTANCE
IN JAMES JOYCE'S ULYSSES
EXAMPLES FROM "SIRENS" AND "ITHACA"

by

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ABSTRACT

In Ulysses, Joyce creates ^{2,} a narrative technique which ^{one?} liberates the text from the potential for reification inherent in conventional narrative form. In this thesis, I explore his techniques in "Sirens" and "Ithaca," analyzing the opposing ^{dialectomy} impulses in the narrative, including especially the apparent tension arising from a desire both to create, and to resist ^{Resistance is creation} creating a story-line. In Ulysses, ^{involuntary?} conventional narrative form is revealed as suspect. With its power to convince, and its tendency towards closure, it is portrayed as the means by which the characters delude ^{themselves} themselves with, and are ultimately paralyzed by, simple explanations for the problems in their society. At the same time, these potentially paralyzing aspects of narrative form are counteracted by Joyce's narrative technique. ^{assumed? not really formed}

In Chapter One I examine the narrative technique [?] of "Sirens." In this chapter, the struggle between narrative desire and narrative reluctance manifests itself in a tension between content and form. This tension results in a

^{as if the 2 can be separated}

self-conscious narrative which draws a lot of attention to the individual signifiers by which it is constituted. *language*
 Within the story, the characters are easily convinced by the various cultural fictions which surround them, consuming them with little thought to their nature as linguistic constructs. These fictions tend to have a reifying effect on the characters, paralyzing them and alienating them from each other. Yet through Joyce's narrative technique, any attempt to convince the reader ^{is} is subverted by the narrative's tendency to dismantle and examine the individual linguistic elements of which fictions are constructed.

In Chapter Two I point out that Joyce's narrative technique draws attention to the way in which dominant cultural fictions are easily disseminated. Narrative reluctance gives rise to long chains of paradigmatic word associations. As well, the narrative tends to pick up and imitate phrases and styles from the surrounding context. These two techniques mirror the involuntary ^{? never} nature of language choices. Since cultural fictions are coded into reified bits of language, they are easily recirculated. Within the story-line, many such fictions are shown to perpetuate paralysis, yet within the narrative, they are disempowered through parodic repetition.

In Chapter Three I examine the narrative technique of "Ithaca." "Ithaca" seems like a final desperate attempt

2. Parody
RS

to fulfill narrative desire, and yet in this chapter, narrative desire and narrative reluctance become almost indistinguishable in places. The conflict manifests itself in three main areas: in diction, in the use of metonymical movement, and in the treatment of the hermeneutic codes of the story.

In conclusion, Ulysses investigates the various ways in which fictions are coded into reified language, assimilated, circulated, and recirculated. The narrative technique of the novel disempowers reified fictions through attention to the signifier, and through parodic repetition. But Ulysses does not simply displace these past texts in order to replace them with the master text of itself. As a novel, Ulysses resists reification by presenting itself as a process rather than a product. In this way, it raises some interesting questions about the status of the writer in society. By portraying writing as an ongoing process, which involves interaction with others, the novel works to dereify the role of the writer, and makes possible a reintegration of his or her role within the community.

? which one do you refer to?

Examiners:



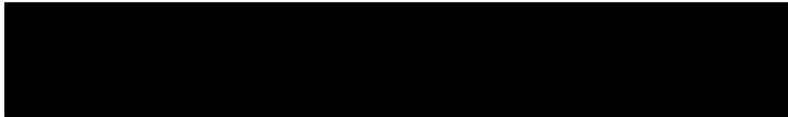
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INTRODUCTION

In Ulysses, Joyce succeeds in creating a narrative technique which liberates the text from the potential [?]tyranny of narrative form. Joyce creates a narrative technique which is not simply a means of telling a story, but which tells its own story: the writing of Ulysses. The stylistic shifts throughout the novel reveal the many conflicting impulses which seem to have fuelled the making of the text. Peter Brooks, and other critics, have written about the phenomenon of "narrative desire" in literature: "the need to tell as a primary human drive that seeks to seduce and to subjugate the listener" (Brooks 61). In Ulysses, the text often seems to be guided by narrative reluctance rather than desire. Any desire to convince, or to "subject" the reader to the story-line, seems to waver frequently, especially in the later parts of the novel. When this wavering occurs, the text displays various ways of avoiding or undermining the story. Gérard Genette defines story (histoire) as "the signified or narrative content," and defines narrative (récit) as "the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself" (ND 27), and I will be using these terms with this distinction in mind. Narrative desire is concerned with telling the story, but in Ulysses this desire meets with a lot of interference. I refer to

- it is the need to be subjugated of the teller,

this interference as "reluctance" because it is not external -- it seems to emanate from the narrative itself. In fact, paradoxically, desire and reluctance are sometimes indistinguishable from each other.

Of the many different impulses which shape the text of Ulysses, most may be identified either with narrative desire or narrative reluctance. Impulses fuelled by narrative desire are those which move the story forward in a chronological or linear fashion, or which add information necessary to the logic of the story, for example, flashbacks which give psychological depth to the characters, and explain motivation. Impulses associated with reluctance are those which subvert these attempts, and lead the text away from the story-line. One obvious form of reluctance is to include information which just doesn't "fit" into the logic of the story. The text includes so many lengthy digressions that at times, as one critic puts it, "plot and digression are almost synonymous" (Lawrence 191). This thesis, however, will focus more specifically on those forms of reluctance which serve to foreground the nature of language, those passages where narrative desire is thwarted by a tendency to draw attention to the signifier -- the formal qualities of language itself -- at the expense of the signified -- the characters and events of the story which the narrative is apparently trying to tell. Passages motivated by reluctance resist the desire to state

why/how

this is not new

information, to "pin down" facts which pertain to the story, they tend to be lyrical or descriptive, rather than expository. They generally resist linearity, and resist closure, both in terms of the story-line and in terms of diction and syntax choices. I will examine these forms of desire and reluctance as they occur within "Sirens" and "Ithaca," defining each in more detail as I discuss it. These forms do not occur in any particular order, but tend to intertwine throughout the text. Because Ulysses is, after all, a novel, it is tempting to view narrative desire as the "correct" or at least the expected mode, and reluctance as the rebellious mode, yet neither seems, ultimately, to dominate the text. The direction of the narrative continually shifts focus throughout the novel without resolution. - successive resolutions

In order to discuss these forms in detail, I will occasionally have recourse to vocabulary introduced by Roland Barthes in his critical study S/Z. In S/Z, Barthes performs a detailed analysis of Honore de Balzac's "Sarrasine," identifying and tracing five different "codes" which weave throughout the story and "endow the text with a plural quality" (Barthes 30). Barthes identifies each code according to its function in the narrative and the set of concepts to which it refers. For example, the "cultural code" consists of those aspects of the narrative which are references to a particular body of knowledge, such as facts

which are "known" in popular belief: cultural stereotypes, aphorisms, etc. Barthes' system of codes is very useful for distinguishing the particular function of individual passages or even very short phrases in a narrative, and I will be using some of his terms in my analysis of the narrative impulses in "Sirens" and "Ithaca."

The two opposing impulses are observable in many episodes of the novel, but the chapters "Sirens" and "Ithaca" make particularly good examples. Each of these chapters seems to have been assigned a particular method which is dominated by one impulse over the other. "Sirens" seems dominated by narrative reluctance, and "Ithaca" by narrative desire. "Sirens" tends to play with language, drawing attention to the signifier, while "Ithaca" displays an overriding concern with the signified. "Sirens" is based on an exploration of the affinities of literature with music, and the language becomes very self-involved and very opaque; the desire to tell can barely struggle through the interference. In contrast, the method of "Ithaca" is strictly rigid about sticking to the story -- or at least it tries to be. It seems that each chapter has a prescribed "program," and each contains considerable resistance to its own program.

While it is interesting to note the specific instances of narrative reluctance, and to analyse closely those passages which display conflicting impulses, the main

purpose of this task is to note the significant result of these conflicts: that the narrative draws attention to the ways in which language choices are made. As opposing impulses struggle for control of the text, the narrative begins to examine itself, dismantling the language it is using, and exposing various aspects of its nature. The early twentieth century saw an increase in the tendency of all artists to concentrate on the particular formal elements of their media, producing paintings about paint, sculptures about stone, etc. The self-conscious narrative struggle in Ulysses foregrounds the particular problems experienced by the artist who chooses language, particularly narrative form, as a medium, and this has important implications for the role of language in other segments of society as well.

The conflicting impulses which surface in the narrative of Ulysses are not simply idiosyncracies of this one text. Rather, they reflect conflicting forces which were at work in the Modernist period when the novel was emerging from the realism of the nineteenth century and heading towards the exaggerated metafictional qualities of postmodernism.

Ulysses marks this transition. Modernist fiction is not confident using the conventions of realism, yet it is not completely comfortable as metafiction either. It has in no way abandoned the attempt to portray a realistic world. It is full of conflict because it encompasses both a desire to create a convincing representation and, at the same time, an

extreme reluctance to do so. The nineteenth-century novel, on the whole, still conformed to the demands of formal realism which shaped the early growth of the novel. Ian Watt describes the premise out of which formal realism arose:

the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its readers with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms. (35)

The modern novelist, however, was not willing to limit him or herself to meeting this obligation. As well, rapid changes in society, and thus in the individual's world view, were eroding the belief that a "full and authentic report" was possible. Patricia Waugh writes:

in the case of nineteenth-century realism, the forms of fiction derived from a firm belief in a commonly experienced, objectively existing world of history. Modernist fiction, written in the earlier part of [the twentieth] century, responded to the initial loss of belief in such a world. Novels like Virginia Woolf's To the

Lighthouse (1927) or James Joyce's Ulysses (1922) signalled the first widespread, overt emergence in the novel of a sense of fictitiousness. (6)

The nature of the modern world is relative, its stability thrown into question, and a convincing representation of it is no longer feasible. To employ the conventions of realism is to assume an audience which will recognize and believe in the world which the author portrays. Modern writers could no longer rely on the existence of such an audience.

But perhaps more importantly, for Joyce, to embrace realism is to accept things the way they are and to want to keep them that way. The linear nature of realism has an implicit logic, insidious in its way of reinforcing established literary, and even social, values. Its lack of self-questioning implies the existence of absolutes -- the inherent validity of those values, for instance. The concept of absolute values was not acceptable to the modern mind, certainly not to Joyce, who viewed the institutions of modern Western culture with extreme suspicion:

When we are living a normal life, we are living a conventional one, following a pattern which has been laid out by other people in another generation, an objective pattern imposed on us by church and state. But a writer must maintain a continuous struggle against the objective:

that is his function. (Conversations 65)

Joyce saw himself as a breaker of conventions -- not simply for the sake of creating something new, but because those conventions were destructive.

Among the multitude of themes running throughout Ulysses is the major theme of liberation from the past. Joyce claimed that Dubliners was intended to expose the paralysis of that city, and Ulysses continues to carry out this purpose. Almost all of the characters suffer from some past personal grief which interferes with their present life. Stephen is haunted by the image of his dying mother; and the Blooms' marriage suffers from their memory of their infant's death eleven years before. The citizens of Dublin are continually repeating old stories about each other, or re-living their own past careers and romances. As well, the "two masters" (U 17) which rule Ireland (the Roman Catholic Church and the British Empire), rely for most of their tremendous power on the strength of tradition. Dublin is overshadowed by a long history of aborted rebellions. The story of Parnell circulates endlessly around the city, a constant reminder of Ireland's failure to liberate herself from either of her masters. The past grief of the individual citizens, the power of tradition, the long history of failure for Ireland, all are part of the "nightmare" of history to which Stephen alludes (U 28). While the narrative tells this story of a people struggling

to free themselves from the past, it engages in its own struggle with the conventions of literary history. And, in a sense, it struggles against the very act of telling, for the past is preserved most rigidly, it seems, in narrative form.

Narrative reluctance stems from a sense of the tyranny of narrative, its potential to reify thought and paralyze human beings. Fredric Jameson has written about the play of reification and dereification in Ulysses with regard to the characters and objects in the story. In "Ithaca," for example, the "irrelevant" answer to "Did it flow?" (U 548) serves to dereify the "whole dead grid" of Dublin by way of a re-unification of the water system with an awareness of the collective human labour which produced it (Jameson 188). Jameson interprets the paralysis of Joyce's Dublin in terms of the alienation and fragmentation which characterize human relations under modern capitalism (177-78). I will be looking at this process in terms of its relationship to narrative. In Ulysses, the act of telling -- the invention and circulation of stories -- is associated with reification and paralysis. The characters are full of little stories, and I will refer to these as "fictions" so as to distinguish them from the story of Ulysses. Joyce portrays a society which will not face the ^{spiritual} material causes of its failures, and so must invent many fictions to explain them away. These fictions are maintained in narrative form, and entrenched

within society through an automatic process of dissemination and reception among the citizens of Dublin.

Early in the novel, Mr Deasy presents a fiction which is strongly associated with paralysis. In "Nestor," history is presented as a long series of violent and futile confrontations, from the corpsestrewn plain at Asculum (20), to the hanging corpses at the Battle of the Diamond (26). But this nightmare does not trouble Mr Deasy, he has an explanation. If history appears bloody and chaotic, this is only because the human mind cannot discern the underlying order of things: "The ways of the Creator are not our ways All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God" (28). Deasy's view of history is a form of narrative desire, the belief in a (hidden) sane progression which ultimately will culminate in some meaningful goal. For Deasy, history makes sense because (so far) its machinations have served to guarantee success for him and his kind. The degeneracy of this progressive view can be seen in Deasy's hatred of Jews and women -- his position of privilege can be maintained only at the expense of others. His notion of a final, underlying order serves to justify the status quo and remove responsibility for history from human hands (including, certainly, his own). Thus it is a fiction which works to preserve tradition, to keep things the way they are, and to keep people fixed in their traditional places.

Paralyzing fictions in Ulysses are maintained through frequent reference to the "cultural codes" of Joyce's Dublin. Traditional fictions of the culture gain power through the way in which they are condensed into simple, memorable forms (this is the goal of narrative desire which seeks to convince), and through the automatic way in which people use language, without any attention to its material nature. Certain concepts become reified because the language in which they are couched becomes reified, divorced from any notion of the processes which produce it. Some fictions are so condensed that the code need merely be named for the fiction to be set into place. For instance, Simon Dedalus fixes Molly as "My Irish Molly, O" (221), and Lenehan pegs Stephen as the "youthful bard" (216). The cultural code contains many such ready-made roles from mythology, history and popular culture. It also contains various bits of "wisdom," usually preserved in reified forms of language, such as repeated quotations, pat, easily memorized phrases, or terms which are culturally loaded, those "big words" which, Stephen notes correctly, "make us so unhappy" (26). Deasy, for example, has a little "saying" to teach Stephen the value of money. Deasy believes that money can be acquired through diligence, and accumulated through thrift, and this is obviously a fiction very close to his heart (25). The "proudest words you will ever hear from an Englishman's mouth," he tells Stephen, are "I paid

my way" (25). The pat phrasing gives his platitudes the ring of truth. Ironically, of course, England used the resources of Ireland to help finance her standard of living. This fact has no place in Deasy's "history."

These cultural codes are interspersed throughout the text with such oppressive frequency that it sometimes seems as if there is no such thing as an authentic consciousness. All that exists is a great collage of stories which have already been told, everything is already fixed into place. Although narrative desire seeks to tell its own story, it is enmeshed in a tangle of powerful, often invisible fictions which seem to form an impermeable web around it. Much has been written about the intertextual nature of Ulysses. In this thesis, I will look at these intersecting "texts," or cultural codes, in terms of the role they play in the interaction of narrative desire and narrative reluctance. Necessarily caught within this web of fictions, it seems, the narrative must either re-circulate the dominant forms of the culture, or fall silent. The problem is, as Stephen Heath puts it, "How is the writing to develop without fixing itself within the whole paralysis?" (35). In Ulysses, this dilemma is dealt with by including these forms, but playing with their structure. "Repetition with a difference" is one definition of parody (Hutcheon 32), which stresses its double nature: parody both preserves and subverts the forms

of the past. One purpose of this operation is to re-work past forms which have become "tyrannical" (Hutcheon 72), and this seems to be the purpose to which the narrative of Ulysses breaks apart fictional structures and disempowers them.

The modern writer inherits a tradition in which literature is viewed as a product for appropriation; a narrative form designed to convince; a vocabulary made up of reified little phrases; and a readership which has been trained to consume and assimilate any new narrative into the existing web of culture. In Ulysses, the narrative struggles with all of these impediments and, through various methods, tries to overcome them. The conflict engendered by opposing impulses causes the narrative to turn back on itself, and examine closely those processes which produce fictions. While the story of Ulysses portrays the reification of language, the narrative performs a constant process of dereification, focusing attention on the individual linguistic structures which constitute the paralyzing fictions of Dublin, and, although the narrative cannot proceed without repeating these fictions, it does so with a distinct difference. At the same time, the self-examination of the narrative prevents it from becoming reified itself. It refuses to give in to the desire to convince and to subject the reader to yet another neatly closed fiction, another commodity for easy consumption.

PART ONE: Self-Conscious Narrative:

Examples from "Sirens"

the nature of narrative

The "Sirens" chapter is one of the first major breaks with convention in Ulysses. In this episode, the narrative becomes more self-referential and less inclined than ever to tell the story "straight." The struggle between narrative desire and narrative reluctance manifests itself in a tension between concern over content and concern over form. This tension results in a self-conscious narrative which draws a lot of attention to the individual signifiers of which it consists. Through this process, the narrative resists the kind of reification which is portrayed within the story. I will look first at the narrative technique in "Sirens," and then discuss its implications with regard to events in the story at this point in the novel.

The art of this chapter is music, and the technique is Fuga par canonem, according to the information Joyce gave to Stuart Gilbert (Gilbert 236). The various themes of the novel are embedded in a "fugue," and woven together like the notes of a musical chord (Gilbert 248). The chapter contains 158 references to forty-seven different musical pieces (Bowen 492). The style is "musical," employing a plethora of poetic devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. Joyce also tries to reproduce several specific musical techniques in written language. These complex

analogies have been counted and noted by critics, but with little attention to the resulting constructions as narrative. By translating these constructions from one art form to another, Joyce alters their nature. As music, the various techniques are simply patterns; as language, they cannot avoid having meaning as well. As Anthony Burgess says of the "jingling" leitmotif of "Sirens," the translated techniques make "all too much sense" (Joysprick 86). At least one critic has identified the style of "Sirens" as a parodic allusion to the notion of Walter Pater that all art aspires to the condition of music (Kiremidjian 136). As such, it is reminiscent of the "narrative reluctance" of artists in the aesthetic movement: their tendency to emphasize form as a means of escaping the Victorian emphasis on the moral value of content. As a non-representational art form, music is able to avoid story-telling. But as the struggles within the narrative of "Sirens" make clear, non-representational musical patterns cannot be translated "innocently" into language. Language always produces meaning, even despite a program designed to subvert it.

"Sirens" begins with a two-page list of brief phrases (210-211), which appear, in altered forms, throughout the chapter. Most of these phrases are musical in that they relate to the sounds of the chapter -- trilling, chirruping, jingling, etc., or they are fragments of imagery which are later associated with particular characters. As the latter,

they constitute a pool of "semes," connotative phrases which make up the apparent substance of a character or object in the story (Barthes S/Z). They belong to the semic code of the narrative, but as yet they are not "owned" by anybody in the story. They are all free motifs; none of them is essential to the linear, logical sequence of the story.

Critics have offered various interpretations of this section, most agreeing that it parallels a musical overture. As written language, this "overture" seems to represent pages of notes for the chapter. Joyce's method of composition apparently followed a similar pattern. In a study of Joyce's draft sheets and manuscripts, A. Walton Litz notes that "almost every element in the final version [of Ulysses] can be traced to some 'seed' in the original draft. Joyce followed a conventional process of association in expanding these 'seeds'" (29). In "Sirens," the "seeds," or images in the overture, serve to reveal the organizing principle of the episode: the story-line is subordinate to the individual descriptive and lyrical motifs, and the characters and events are revealed as mere vehicles through which these motifs may be expressed. In retrospect, the reader can see where the central concern of the chapter lies -- and it is not with the telling of the story.

In fact, a certain impatience with the whole story-line is perceptible in the text. One of the self-reflexive traits of "Sirens" is the habit of calling attention to its own

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repetitions. The first of these comments does not seem too strange: "Leopold cut liverslices. As said before he ate with relish the inner organs" (221). This statement merely recalls one of Bloom's traits mentioned in "Calypso" (45), and shows consistency of character. But then "said before" jumps around and pops up in a few unexpected places, just as other phrases do (223, twice on 227), as if in echo of an impatient listener. The many abbreviations for elements of the story also suggest boredom or impatience. The information that Bloom stood up is rendered as "Blmstup" (235). This construction imitates the musical form "hollow fifths" in which the thirds of common chords -- by analogy, letters in the words -- are suppressed (see Gilbert 250, and Burgess 23). But as words on a page in a novel, the construction suggests abbreviation. Several parts of the text are written in a form of shorthand, as if to get them over with as soon as possible: "Bloo smi qui go. Ternoon" (217). Miss Kennedy becomes "Miss Kenn" (219) as if to suggest that her full name has become redundant. The tone implies a bit of weariness with the task of providing information: it's all been said before.

Occasionally, it seems, the narrative must be prodded to get on with the story. The conflict between desire and reluctance shows up in places where the story-lines intersect each other. This technique seems to arise out of the method of "Wandering Rocks" in which several story-lines

are carried at once. "Sirens" begins with a scene in the Ormond Hotel, but also follows Bloom as he makes his way there. As in "Wandering Rocks," one scene will sometimes intersect the other so briefly that it seems merely a temporary interruption of the story being told. For example, it seems that the topic of Bloom tries to enter the narrative, but cannot quite get in:

-- Imperthnthn thnthnthn, bootssnout sniffed rudely, as he retreated as she threatened as he had come.

Bloom.

On her flower frowning miss Douce said:

-- Most aggravating that young brat is. (212)

A later interruption seems like a reminder to the narrative to get back to the main character:

-- No, don't, she cried

-- I won't listen, she cried.

But Bloom?

Miss Douce grunted (213)

The intersection of story-lines is, of course, one of the chief conventions of the novel, and was parodied by Laurence Sterne in Tristram Shandy. Joyce also parodies this convention, taking it to extremes in "Wandering Rocks," but it is only within "Sirens" that there is any direct comment on the device. The narrative of "Sirens" resists narrative desire by advertising its own flexibility. The narrative is

not carved in stone, but is subject to interference. In fact, even the characters seem to have the power to interrupt it:

After an interval Mr Dedalus raised his grog and
 -- That must have been highly diverting, said he. (216)

Mr Dedalus struck, whizzed, lit, puffed savoury puff after
 -- Irish? I don't know, faith. Is she Simon? (221)

The story at hand is not always the main concern.

→ but it is your concern

The narrative of "Sirens" is somewhat self-conscious about its failure to stick to the story-line. It contains the self-referential question, "Who said four?" (218), which refers directly to the process of reading this novel, and the way in which the plot was constructed. As many readers have noted, it becomes apparent during the course of the novel that Molly told Bloom that Boylan was coming to see her at four o'clock. Yet nowhere in the text is this particular conversation related. Critics have drawn some interesting conclusions from this omission (cf McBride "At Four She Said" and Kenner "The Rhetoric of Silence"). It is only recently, however, that the line "Who said four?" has been printed in texts of Ulysses. Prior to 1986, this line read "All said four" (Penguin, 1960 264). The

corrected version points to a self-referential feature of the text which is very revealing considering the amount of interest readers have shown in trying to explain how Bloom knows when Boylan is coming, and why this information is omitted from the text. The narrative self-consciously echoes the responses of its readers, seemingly aware of the effect that its peculiar plot construction will have.

Frank Budgen recalls that Joyce once reported he had worked hard all day and produced only two sentences. Budgen quotes Joyce's explanation: "I have the words already. What I am seeking is the perfect order of words in the sentence. There is an order in every way appropriate" (20). The repetition, in Ulysses, of sentences in slightly different forms seems to imitate such a process of composition. The frequent comment, "yes," for example, while it pertains minimally to the story, seems mainly to pertain to the process of composition, as if in agreement with what is being written, or, sometimes, as if in admiration of how it is being written: "Mr Bloom reached Essex bridge. Yes, Mr Bloom crossed bridge of Yessex" (215). Various syntactical forms will be used, as if being tried out. Passages containing the semic motifs of the chapter are particularly likely to be rendered in several different forms. The description of Boylan is repeated often: "Jingle jaunted down the quays. Blazes sprawled on bounding tyres" (221). A later description reads: "jogjaunty jingled Blazes Boylan

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mono

... on bounding tyres: sprawled, warmseated" (222). The appearance of two (and more) methods of writing a sentence is one way to avoid fixing it in any final form. In another passage, the bartenders and atmosphere of the bar are described: "inexquisite contrast, contrast inexquisite nonexquisite, slow cool dim seagreen sliding depth of shadow" (220). In this example, the excessive use of adjectives (a common technique in Joyce's work) suggests a possibly infinite suspension of the appearance of the noun. Such long strings of adjectives evoke abstract sensations for the reader, and delay the image of a concrete object.

Early in the chapter, one of the "sirens" of the Ormond Hotel is described:

Miss Kennedy sauntered sadly from bright light, twining a loose hair behind an ear. Sauntering sadly, gold no more, she twisted twined a hair. Sadly she twined in sauntering gold hair behind a curving ear. (212)

This short paragraph contains several elements common to the method of this chapter. For one thing, form follows content (or is it the other way around?) in that the sentences themselves twist and twine like Miss Kennedy's hair. The passage consists of three sentences which all appear to mean the same thing -- yet the diction and syntax are altered somewhat in each. Here again the text has the appearance of a draft sheet, on which an author is trying to decide how to

word the sentences, which adjectives and verbs to use, and where to place them. All of the possibilities remain present on the page, so that the reader can see the process behind the choices.

*interpretation
of course
here*

The Miss Kennedy passage is also self-reflexive in that it displays, in microcosm, an example of the technique of this novel, particularly up to and including this chapter. The first sentence is grammatical, logical and coherent, although quite poetical in effect. The second is grammatical, though slightly less "normal," containing two initial prepositional phrases which delay the appearance of the subject of the sentence and focus attention on the adjectives -- the descriptive aspect -- rather than the verbs -- the action itself. In this way, the sentence mirrors the text's reluctance to make statements which convey information. The third and last sentence of this passage rearranges the phrases once again, and appears to echo French grammar, rather than English. The sentence makes perfect sense, however, to anybody who has read this far in the novel. The first two sentences tell us what we need to know in order to picture Miss Kennedy and her actions. The third sentence is unnecessary for information about the story. It is concerned only with conjuring up images, and repeating the sounds of phrases as though the narrative could not bear to let them go without twisting and twining them one more time. Sound and sense are

inextricable in this last sentence, and this state of affairs is, perhaps, the goal of the passage. The logic of the sentence is subordinate to the formal elements of the language. Narrative desire is sublimated, the story is merely the means: the poetic word-play is the end.

In another instance where an event is related three times, the third time seems like an exasperated attempt at absolute clarity. Narrative desire seems to push through the surface interference with comic determination:

Richie, admiring, descanted on that man's glorious voice. He remembered one night long ago. Never forget that night. Si sang ''Twas rank and fame: in Ned Lambert's 'twas. Good God he never heard in all his life a note like that he never did then false one we had better part so clear so God he never heard since love lives not a clinking voice lives not ask Lambert he can tell you too.

Goulding, a flush struggling in his pale, told Mr Bloom, face of the night, Si in Ned Lambert's Dedalus house, sang ''Twas rank and fame.

He, Mr Bloom, listened while he, Richie Goulding, told him, Mr Bloom, of the night he, Richie, heard him, Si Dedalus, sing ''Twas rank and fame in his, Ned Lambert's house. (227)

Ned Lambert's house. (227)

At this point, the pull between the opposing impulses seems to have emerged into an outright battle. One can sense the desire to tell which orders these sentences -- a desire which is constantly subverted by a tendency to pick up phrases, from the song or from Richie's thoughts, and carry the narrative off track. (This tendency, common throughout the novel, will be explored in the following chapter.) In one sense, these three sentences follow the opposite order from the three sentences about Miss Kennedy: they move away from distortion, and towards orderly syntax. Or at least they try to -- the final sentence is so far from the natural use of language that it is ludicrous. The result is a parody of strictly logical prose which is solely interested in transmitting information. The technique of "Ithaca" engages in a similar type of parody.

Yet despite all of this conflict, the story does manage to get told. Interestingly, the story itself is full of stories, or little fictions as I will call them, and the ways that these fictions are presented suggest some possible reasons for the narrative reluctance. "Sirens" consists not only of many musical forms, but also of many musical lyrics. These lyrics re-create a series of conventional situations which mingle closely with the material existence of the characters. The songs tell of alluring beauty ("O My Delores"), romantic love ("Goodbye, Sweetheart, Goodbye"), unfaithful women ("All is Lost"), and youthful heroism (The

Croppy Boy").¹ The fact that these fictions are linguistic constructs, and that the characters' lives are ostensibly lived, seems to have little bearing on the way that the two realities blend and mingle with each other. The cultural codes of Dublin are easily assimilated into their lives, portraying the power of narrative desire to convince, and the powerful desire of the characters to be convinced. These conventional, time-worn fictions, however, are associated with paralysis and alienation. They serve to make a kind of sense out of the social and political situation. Thus, they have a paralyzing effect, for they prohibit the characters from inventing any creative, or action-oriented solutions. These fictions also tend to encourage private escapes into fantasy, and so alienate the characters from one another.

Language in this part of the story is very suspect. Language is reified, cut off from any active role in the relations among people, and is used more as a means to keep a distance between people than to bring them closer together. As in much of Ulysses, nothing really happens but conversation, and yet very little gets said. Most of the conversations consist of clichés or rehashed tales. Richie Goulding and Tom Kernan are particularly noted for their use

¹ Thornton Weldon lists the titles and many of the lyrics of Joyce's musical allusions in Allusions in Ulysses.

of habitual phrases. Richie Goulding was "Rollicking Richie once" but "Jokes old stale now" (224), and Tom Kernan is known to be "dead nuts" on certain fixed phrases (75). The flirtation which takes place between the patrons and the bartenders is accomplished through the mechanical repetition of old lines. These stale bits of language are a symptom of the social paralysis of Dublin, yet they must be recognized as a part of the cause as well. These Dubliners have ceased to say anything to each other, despite their continual socializing; their conversations lead nowhere and alter nothing. Reified into solidified bits, their language has lost the power to effect change. Richie Goulding's comments on Simon Dedalus's singing (quoted above) are merely a collection of his favourite phrases, loosely strung together. In this particular passage, the narrative technique breaks up his solidified phrases and puts an end to this meaningless production of meaning. But within the story itself, very little occurs to break through the facade of communication.

Miss Douce is a fascinating minor character. The process of reification is evident in the way that she interacts with her fellow citizens. Steeped in the fiction of privilege, in which "ladies" and "gentlemen" enjoy certain amenities not afforded to lesser creatures, Miss Douce keeps a strict, if sometimes inaccurate, measure of the social positions of those around her. Miss Douce slots

people according to their social positions and treats them accordingly. The young boy who serves the bartenders their tea is unworthy of Miss Douce's notice, for she counts herself a lady, despite appearances to the contrary. The boy is reduced to the barest symbol of his function, and he becomes, within the narrative, merely "the boots."

Miss Douce has several fictions which help her to deal with her situation. One of these is the fiction that, as a woman, she has power over men. One of her first comments refers to the man in the procession who looks back at her as he passes. She laughs: "O wept! Aren't men frightful idiots? / With sadness" (212). Miss Douce would like to perpetuate the notion that men are silly creatures and easy to control. The "sadness" comes from the underlying recognition that she is controlled by men. A certain reification of the sexes is seen to operate throughout the novel, and is apparent in the way that Bloom often generalizes to himself about women, always referring to women in his thoughts as "they": "They like sad tail at end" (230), "What do they think when they hear music?" (233). In a similar manner, Miss Kennedy responds to Miss Douce with the comment, "It's them has the fine times" (212), and here the narrative plays with this pronoun, and seems to emphasize its reductive effect. The condensed forms "they" and "them" reinforce the us-and-them mentality which prohibits understanding between the sexes. Bloom's little

observations about women seem humourous until one begins to think about the nature of his relationships with the women in his life.

Miss Douce is also enmeshed in the fiction of romance, and seems to rank men according to their eligibility as marriage prospects. (Incidentally, few characters are called by their titles as often as miss Douce and miss Kennedy; their single status is emphasized in the narrative.) Obviously "the boots" does not qualify, and neither does the "old fogey in Boyd's" (213). In fact, the thought of marriage to this old fogey sets the misses Kennedy and Douce off on a hysterical giggling fit. The "fellow in the tall silk" in the viceregal procession is apparently beyond Miss Douce's reach. However, she seems to have hopes for Boylan.

Despite the close attention which Miss Douce pays to the social hierarchy of Dublin life, her perception of her own position is somewhat coloured by her appropriation of other fictions in the cultural code. In this chapter, clichés seem to have the power to transform the characters. The comment that the Ormond serves dinners "fit for a prince" (218) seems to transform Bloom and Richie into princes when they eat there (223, 232). Similarly, the "oceansong" that Miss Douce sings, "O Idolores, queen of the eastern seas!" (215), seems to transform her into the queen: "fair one of Egypt teased and sorted in the till and hummed

and handed coins in change" (218). This transformation seems partly of Miss Douce's own making, and the song lyrics help her to weave another fantasy element into her version of herself. She sees herself as "Idolores," a sort of combination of Delores, waiting under the shade of the palm, and a possible romantic partner for Boylan, each role just about as likely as the other. When Miss Kennedy smiles at Boylan, Miss Douce "outsmile[s] her, preening for him her richer hair, a bosom and a rose" (218). Miss Douce watches Boylan carefully: "(Flower in his coat: who gave him?)." When Lenehan urges her to snap her garter, it is Boylan she looks to: "Sparkling bronze azure eyed Blazure's skyblue bow and eyes" (219). The snapping of the garter is a significant act. Bells are often a signal of epiphany in Ulysses, and the snap of the garter "sounds the bell" in the sense that the time is up for Miss Douce's fantasy. Her version of herself as a queen, or even a lady, is exposed as a very private fiction. She has, in public, the status of a trained animal. Ironically, her act is accompanied by Simon Dedalus singing "Goodbye, Sweetheart, Goodbye," and Boylan prepares to leave. The "smitten" Miss Douce is left to wonder: "why did he go so quick when I?" (220). Her role in the world of the male customers is very small, she provides a bit of beer, a brief voyeuristic pleasure.

Miss Douce's vacation is important to this scene; she has recently returned from a taste of life outside of her

restrictive position as a "barmaid." She has fictionalized this vacation according to romantic clichés: "No she was not so lonely archly miss Douce's head let Mr Lidwell know. Walks in the moonlight by the sea. No, not alone. With whom? She nobly answered: with a gentleman friend" (231). These fictions promise a final escape from drudgery, and so serve to keep her in her place, satisfied with life back at "the old dingdong again" (222). The narrative form of conventional romantic fiction is one that moves towards closure. Romance solves all material problems, with marriage as a sort of final solution. The various songs which weave their way through "Sirens" only reinforce this conventional wisdom. Ben Dollard sings: "When love absorbs my ardent soul ... I care not for the morrow" (222). Love and romance, so the fiction goes, supersede all other concerns, and if Miss Douce is preoccupied with romantic fantasies, nothing else matters.

Bloom, too, is affected by the romantic lyrics, and he is only partly aware of this fact. In Colin MacCabe's interpretation of this scene, Bloom escapes the lure of the siren songs by being a writer, and therefore paying attention to the material nature of language. Yet the only thing Bloom writes in this scene is a letter to "Martha," blatant symbol of romantic and sexual fantasy. In a sense, Bloom is not even writing to a person, but to himself, as he never meets Martha, nor even learns her real name. Her

existence is purely linguistic, consisting solely of the letters he has had from her. MacCabe does have a point, however. Bloom is somewhat aware of the linguistic aspect of the song lyrics and at one point thinks: "Hate. Love. Those are names" (234). He may be more aware than the other characters in this scene, but still he is prone to letting phrases run through his mind unquestioned and unchecked, thus assimilating them into his thoughts. He is particularly vulnerable, on this day at least, to phrases which touch on the theme of adultery:

When will we meet? My head it simply. Jingle
all delighted.... Your head it simply swirls.
Perfumed for him. What perfume does your wife?
I want to know. Jing. Stop. Knock.... Hands
felt for the opulent (225).

Bloom's mind simply repeats phrases from Martha's letter, the novel The Sweets of Sin, and the song "Those Lovely Seaside Girls," sometimes with variations, often verbatim. Joyce's use of stream of consciousness technique is highly effective here. In the face of such a mental collage, the concept of an authentic consciousness seems somewhat ludicrous.

The fictions found in the novels and songs which make up the cultural code all follow a basically similar narrative form. They all relate some situation to which there is an ending. The romantic fictions offer the promise

of happily-ever-after (which will rescue Miss Douce from "the old dingdong" of reality). Other fictions, such as Mr Deasy's version of history, offer a logical conclusion in which everything is neatly wrapped up in a semblance of reason. When Bloom is under the spell of the siren songs, his thinking takes on this narrative form. He recalls the aria "All is Lost Now" from the opera La Sonnambula:

Yes, I remember. Lovely air. In sleep she went to him. Innocence in the moon. Brave. Don't know their danger. Still hold her back. Call name. Touch water. Jingle jaunty. Too late. She longed to go. That's why. Woman. As easy stop the sea. Yes: all is lost. (224)

Bloom mingles bits of the libretto lyrics with bits of folklore about sleepwalking, adultery and women, and seems to reach a conclusion about his own wife based on this hodge-podge of phrases. "La Sonnambula," the sleep walker, is perhaps the most pertinent musical piece played in this chapter, as all the characters in the Ormond are apparently ambulatory, but in many ways they are not quite awake. They are in the habit of thinking with other people's words, and these "other people" are nowhere really identifiable. The cultural codes are so entrenched and so pervasive that they seem as much a part of the atmosphere as the smoke from Simon's pipe and are breathed in just as involuntarily. Condensed in the phrase "all is lost" lies the narrative

form which imposes endings on all stories. According to the cultural code, a romance must end happily or tragically, there is no room for compromise, imperfection or open-endedness of any kind. Eventually, Bloom does seem to overcome the imposition of this invisible edict, though in Ulysses, untrue to traditional form, nothing is quite certain.

Like Miss Douce, Bloom has a tendency to fuse characters from the cultural code with the people in his life. The fictions embedded in the cultural code provide many ready-made roles, roles whose ends have already been determined. The imposition of these roles onto living individuals has a reifying effect. Raoul, from the Sweets of Sin, is the lover to whom the heroine is madly attracted, and for whom she squanders her husband's money (200). Bloom easily transposes this role onto Boylan, and his fantasy of Molly answering the door for Boylan is informed by The Sweets of Sin right down to the exact language: "Hands felt for the opulent" etc. (200, 225). Lenehan also has Boylan pegged according to a stereotype, and greets him with "See the conquering hero comes" (217). While the characters of Ulysses confuse themselves and each other with fictional characters, the narrative performs a similar fusion. Song lyrics frequently intertwine with the narrative, and occasionally they seem to mix up the characters as well: "How first he saw that form endearing, how sorrow seemed to

part, how look, form, word charmed him Gould Lidwell, won Pat Bloom's heart" (226). This technique parodies the manner in which the characters fictionalize their lives with roles from the cultural code. As long as the characters identify themselves with roles which have been already written, there is no possibility for a creative re-writing which might change the nature of their relationships, or alter the direction of their lives.

The reification of language has a paralyzing effect on social life, and it takes its toll politically as well. Reified language is powerful language because of the weight carried by "tradition." For example, on the language of the Church, Bloom comments, "Latin again. That holds them like birdlime" (233). Bloom is referring to the Latin in the song "The Croppy Boy," a song so traditional in Dublin that Tom Kernan calls it "our native Doric" (232). And indeed it is a sort of national anthem for Ireland, on the theme of betrayal and failure. The song is introduced into the narrative in a rather sinister way. "Bob Cowley's outstretched talons griped the black deepsounding chords" (232), which seems to suggest that the music has some kind of sinister hold on its listeners. Ben Dollard's voice is described as deep and dark. "Chords dark. Lugugubrious. Low. In a cave of the dark middle earth. Embedded ore. Lumpmusic" (232). This gives the song connotations of darkness, a stifling atmosphere, a "lump" of music which

drags people down -- a weighty song, our native Doric. "The Croppy Boy" tells the story of a young Irish rebel who is fatally trapped by a yeoman captain disguised as a priest. As the customers in the Ormond listen to this song, they appear to go through the motions of empathetic response, but the song is powerless to produce anything more than a mechanical, sentimental reaction. The lyrics have become reified, they require no engagement on the part of listener or singer, but exist in a sort of vacuum of meaning. As Bloom notes, "They know it all by heart" (234) -- not only the words, but the traditional response as well.

The croppy boy is identified in the narrative with the blind piano tuner who elicits pity from Miss Douce. The tuner's curses and his "tap tap" motif are interspersed with the song lyrics. Miss Douce seems somehow attracted to this figure, and tries to weave some web of fiction about him, but nobody is interested in listening to her:

-- The tuner was in today, Miss Douce replied, tuning it for the smoking concert and I never heard such an exquisite player.

-- Is that a fact?

-- Didn't he miss Kennedy? The real classical, you know. And blind too, poor fellow. Not twenty I'm sure he was.

-- Is that a fact? Mr Dedalus said.

He drank and strayed away.

-- So sad to look at his face, miss Douce
condoled. (216)

Miss Douce, it seems, finds something romantic about physical disabilities, just as many people find something romantic about the deaths of so many Irish rebels. The identification of the croppy boy with the tuner seems to have more to do with this attitude than with any particular trait inherent in the tuner. Again, the narrative draws attention to the slotting of individual people into ready-made roles.

The "Croppy Boy" song perpetuates the notion of the Irish martyr as a solitary, romantic figure, removed from others both in time and in kind, and it reinforces the idea that rebellion is doomed to failure. The last lines of the song are "Good people who live in peace and joy, / Breathe a prayer and a tear for the Croppy Boy" (qt. in Thornton 503). A prayer and a tear, of course, will not do the slightest good for the boy's cause, and the implications are clear: his life and his death have nothing to do with you. But the sentiment evoked has everything to do with the listeners. The song produces a false sense of identification with the croppy boy, while actually working as a way to alienate the listeners from the rebel, or from any person who might fit into that role in the cultural code. The listeners are "All lost in pity for croppy" (235), but it is really self-absorption they are lost in.

Like Miss Douce, who gazes into a mirror while listening to the song (233), they are all involved in their own feelings of pity. After Ben's performance, they are "deepmoved all" and Simon is "trumping compassion from foghorn nose," but he is very soon laughing with the rest of the boys (236). A brief bout of sentimentality purges the emotions, and gives them all a "thrill."

At the end of the song, "The chords consented. Very sad thing. But had to be" (233). Again, the closure inherent in conventional narrative form is shown as a constraint to thought. The fiction of the croppy boy fits neatly within the narrative form of Christianity, and the rebel is slotted into the role of necessary, sacrificial hero. His death just "had to be." Observing the listeners, Bloom thinks, "Thrill now. Pity they feel. To wipe away a tear for martyrs who want to, dying to, die. For all things dying, for all things born. Poor Mrs Purefoy. Hope she's over. Because their wombs" (234). Bloom picks up on the implied stereotype of the Irish rebel as a martyr who, through some personal mission of his own, wants to die. He can then naturalize the death of the rebel, "wiping away" the thought of his death with the thought of all death -- thus the automatic association with birth, and a quick end to that particular chain of thought.

It is interesting to note here that narrative fusions do not occur only between "fictional" and "real" characters,

but also among the characters of Ulysses themselves. The names of the customers are welded together; at one point, Simon and Bloom become "Siopold!" followed by the comment "Consumed" (227). Colin MacCabe stresses the nature of language as material difference throughout his interpretation of "Sirens," and he links this fusion with the "effacement of the signifier" which occurs when the customers listen to the songs. This fusion of characters is an illusion, according to MacCabe, as "everybody in the bar forgets difference to become a fictional unity" (86). However, I would interpret the fusion of names from a rather different angle. While all of the characters listen to the same music and appear to be socializing with each other, their habit of identifying with the cultural code, rather than with each other, has served to reify each one's identity in the eyes of the others, and this fragments them as a society and alienates them from each other. Their private little fictions only serve to take them farther into themselves, making themselves the star players of each story, and relegating most of the others to bit parts. Miss Douce has brought a seashell back from her seaside holiday, and it sits on the bar, making a convenient symbol for fantasy-life in general. By holding it to her ear, Miss Douce can listen to the sound of the sea. She hands it to George Lidwell so that he can hear too, for only one person can hear at a time. Bloom watches them, thinking "The sea

they think they hear. Singing. A roar. The blood it is. Souse in the ear sometimes. Well it's a sea. Corpuscle islands" (231). The sound of the sea in the shell is analogous to the glamour and romance in Miss Douce's life: it is an illusion, in reality it is only a reflection of her own "blood" or desire. The lure of the siren songs is the lure of self-absorption; like the letters Bloom writes to "Martha," they reflect back only the self. The fusion of names in the narrative is certainly "fictional," but it has its purpose. Not as characters' fantasies, but as narrative, it serves to emphasize the linguistic structure of Ulysses. The individual characters are inventions; as Bloom says, "Those are names." And as names, they can be rearranged in any manner. The comment, "Consumed," refers to the way in which the characters read books and listen to music: as if art were food to be eaten or air to be inhaled. But by playing with the signifiers which constitute the entities of Simon and Leopold, the narrative makes easy consumption of this text impossible.

Stuart Gilbert believes that the technique of "Sirens" achieves "complete 'atonement' between subject and form" (251), but others have not agreed. Many critics feel that the emphasis on word-play occurs at the expense of the story. Marilyn French uses this very point to argue her theory that the narrator views all of his characters with derision: the style, "by playing with language ...

diminishes the importance of what is described, it mocks it" (131). Karen Lawrence remarks that "the play of language almost seems to interrupt the telling of the story" (94), and of course it does. As the text becomes absorbed in exploring the nature of the signifiers, the direction of individual sentences often seems to have nothing to do with the signified. Lawrence concludes that these interruptions are a sign of the narrator's realization of the powerlessness of language.

The rhetorical play in part derives from the 'gap' between reality and language: if language is basically defective as an instrument for transcribing the sounds and experiences of life, it still makes an exceptional tinker toy.

(Lawrence 99)

Lawrence interprets the word play as a "linguistic diversion" (99). I would argue that the impulse to play with language rivals the impulse to tell the story, not merely for temporary relief, but seriously, sometimes almost desperately, and in ways which are consistent with other aspects of the narrative technique throughout the novel. Writing is problematic -- not because there is a pre-existing story to be told, and language is a defective tool for the job -- but because, by moving forward in language, the writing will create a story. Attention to the signifier is a means of avoiding the story-line. Far from

being a result of the shortcomings of language, it is motivated partially by a realization of the incredible power of language to convince, and a reluctance to use that power to its full potential.

Narrative desire is constantly subverted by a tendency to stop and examine the signifiers which are creating the story of Ulysses. The narrative also stops to examine the individual signifiers which make up the cultural codes within the story. Phrases which are associated with reifying fictions are picked up and repeated. For example, Miss Kennedy's peculiar grammar attracts the attention of the narrative and distracts it from its "task" of telling the story. After her comment, "It's them has the fine times," her "them" seems to increase and multiply. "The boots to them, them in the bar, them barmaids came. For them unheeding him he banged ..." (212). Occasionally, the narrative pauses over a word, and dismantles it to see how it works. For example, the word ladylike is broken down into its separate components: "Like lady, ladylike" (217). And the fact that a waiter is someone who actually waits seems to demand considerable attention, as though it were a tremendous coincidence: "Pat, waiter, waited" (219). A waiter is also waited for, and this seems an occasion for great glee:

Pat is a waiter who waits while you wait. Hee
hee hee hee. He waits while you wait. Hee hee.

A waiter is he. Hee hee hee hee. He waits
while you wait. While you wait if you wait he
will wait while you wait. Hee hee hee hee.

Hoh. Wait while you wait. (230)

The narrative seems to get stuck, like a broken record, on particularly fascinating aspects of the individual elements of language. Or it pauses momentarily -- "Luring. Ah, alluring" (226) -- as if in sudden recognition of the nature of the word: allure is a form of lure! This sort of "double take" is the essence of Victor Shklovsky's concept of ostraneniye, usually translated as "making strange" or "defamiliarization," which Shklovsky believed to be the main purpose of art.

After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it -- hence we cannot say anything significant about it. Art removes objects from the automatism of perception.

(13)

This is what Joyce does with language, defamiliarizing the words that we take for granted.

The Formalist concept of defamiliarization is the basis of Bertolt Brecht's Verfremdungseffekt or "alienation effect" in theatre (Mitchell 76). Colin MacCabe has linked the play of signifiers in Ulysses to Brecht's theory of the

"radical separation of the elements" in theatre. The separation is accomplished by focusing attention on the individual elements. In an "integrated" work of art, each element is subordinated to the whole, and thus the meaning becomes the sole focus of the work. The individual elements become invisible and, in Brecht's view, this is detrimental to the impact of the work. To describe the effect of such a fusion of the elements, Brecht uses the terms "hypnosis," "intoxication," and "fog" (Brecht 37-38). MacCabe draws an analogy between the separate elements of theatre and the material quality of language:

Brecht's objection to the 'integrated work of art' can best be understood as an objection to a naturalisation of the relationship between the signifier (the material image) and the signified (the meaning). (69)

To see the relationship between sign and signified as natural is to postulate the existence of an autonomous world of the signified (MacCabe 70). In this view, language is simply a tool -- a set of signs which represent reality. Thus, language becomes "invisible" and we fail to note that the nature of the signifier affects that "reality." This state of limited perception can be seen as a form of Shklovsky's "automatism," or Brecht's "hypnosis." It is a state of unawareness. Language used without attention to its material nature creates a kind of illusion. The

sentimental music sung at the Ormond Hotel is portrayed as such an illusion, casting a dangerous spell on its sleep-walking listeners in the same manner as the sirens' songs in the Odyssey. When the individual elements of the music are fused together, they cast a spell, but "when you come to think of it" (U 228), it is all made up of individual elements:

Musemathematics. And you think you're listening to the ethereal. But suppose you said it like: Martha, seven times nine minus x is thirtyfive thousand. Fall quite flat. (U 228)

Joyce remarked, after writing this chapter, that he could no longer enjoy music once he knew all the "tricks" (Ellmann 473). His attention to individual words in this chapter is a way of exposing the "tricks" of his own trade. It breaks the illusion, and it subverts the desire to convince and subject the reader to the story.

This process serves to increase our awareness of the materiality of language and, as MacCabe points out, of the arbitrary nature of the sign. It also increases our awareness of the specific material nature of language, not merely that it produces meaning, but how it works to produce meaning.

PART TWO: Reification and Cultural Fictions

Stephen Heath has described the activity of Ulysses as one in which writing becomes reading. It is an "activity of assemblage," rather than an individual expression (39). Unwilling to go on with the story of Ulysses, the narrative begins to examine all of the other stories of which it is made, and in doing so it exposes the various methods by which narrative desire works its way into almost every aspect of individual and cultural activity.

Narrative desire moves the text forward in a linear and implicitly logical manner. It relies on the grammatical structure of sentences in order to move forward and create a story. A common method of resistance in Ulysses is to break out of this linear movement by moving "vertically" instead of "horizontally." In a linguistic study of different types of aphasia, Roman Jakobson has identified the "bipolar" character of language:

The development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The METAPHORIC way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the METONYMIC way for the second, since they find their most

for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonymy respectively. (90)

Metonymic, or horizontal, movement relies on semantic contiguity and is, as Jakobson points out, the prominent style of late nineteenth-century realism (94). In Ulysses, uneasiness with the power of this method to create meaning gives rise to narrative reluctance, which takes two different forms: extreme self-consciousness about metonymic movement, which I will discuss in the following chapter, and "escape" into metaphorical movement.

As Robert Scholes has noted, Joyce "will stop and climb up the paradigmatic chain on all sorts of occasions, such as the various lists in 'Cyclops'" (Scholes 168). This tendency is one more way in which the narrative avoids telling the story. Whether the paradigmatic movement is guided by semantic or by formal similarity, it impedes the linear progress of the story, hampering the convincing effect created by words which are contiguous in experience. In "Ithaca," when metonymic movement begins to tyrannize the narrative, reluctance reveals itself by engaging in excessive, almost compulsive listings of synonyms or rhyme words in response to the relentless questions. When the narrative gets "hooked" on a signifier, it sometimes takes off on a chain of similar signifiers, with little regard for the signified. For example the variations on the name of

Sinbad the Sailor continue at length, it seems, for the sheer pleasure of the rhyming itself:

Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and
 Jinbad the Jailer and Whinbad the Whaler and
 Ninbad the Nailor and Finbad the Failer and
 Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and
 Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and
 Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and
 Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and
 Xinbad the Phthailer. (607)

The sequence of the Sinbad rhymes is interesting in that the passage starts out as if guided by both sound and sense. The rhymes are formed by using ordinary occupations such as tailor and whaler, so the chain is ordered at least partially by semantic similarity. But the sequence becomes progressively more nonsensical, until it becomes apparent that sound alone is the guiding principle behind the word choices.

Behind each instance of language lies a constantly shifting background of associations. Reluctant to cut itself off from these possible variations, the narrative allows them to appear on the page, keeping this background available. Every word used displaces a myriad of possibilities. This is part of the "nightmare" of history which the narrative seeks to escape. In "Nestor," Stephen ponders the relentless movement of time. Historical events

are "not to be thought away." He thinks of them as "branded" and "fettered" by time, "lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted." Then he wonders: "But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass?" (21). From this point of view, the movement of time is a process by which the possible is continually becoming the impossible. Every action completed is a form of death, destroying in its completion an infinite variety of alternatives. This is one of the many fears which paralyze Stephen, and make him afraid to act. Ulysses resists narrative desire for similar reasons. As the text explores its own multitude of linguistic possibilities, it avoids making a definitive statement.

Narrative reluctance, by allowing the text to veer off like this, lays bare the principles which guide language choices and emphasizes the seemingly automatic way in which these choices are made. Each word can be seen as standing at the hub of many intersecting chains of association. The narrative shows how these associations may be set off either by contiguity or by similarity, by formal or by semantic connections. Another important way in which word choices may be governed is by echoing or imitating phrases which are "floating around." Occasionally, the narrative style seems to become contaminated by elements in the story itself. Hugh Kenner has drawn attention to the way in which the

narrative picks up the idiom of the characters. He calls this the "Uncle Charles principle" after a passage in Portrait which illustrates this tendency (Kenner JV 18). Shari and Bernard Benstock have noted that this tendency extends to objects and situations in the story as well as to characters (Benstock 18). In "Sirens," the narrative continually picks up and repeats phrases spoken by the characters present or uses phrases which seem typical of the way the characters would speak. The comment "ladylike" for instance, seems to describe the bartenders from their own point of view. Through this technique, the narrative mirrors the way in which messages from the cultural code are constantly intersecting with chains of association in individual consciousness, and throwing one's "train of thought" off onto another track. Linguistic reification gives these messages tremendous power over human consciousness, and the narrative technique of Ulysses suggests some of the habits of thought which make this possible.

In describing the movement of the narrative from word to word I have used some rather mechanical terms, noting that the narrative "rattles off" or "gets stuck on" certain words. There is something rather mechanical about the method of language production on occasion, particularly in the seemingly compulsive, almost involuntary listing of associated signifiers, or in those places where the

narrative seems to "jump the track" from one chain of associations to another. For example, the phrase "The harp that once did starve us all" (U 137), from Tommy Moore's song, becomes "The harp that once or twice" (U 223). It seems as if the narrative hits a word (in this case "once"), and veers off in another direction, as if making a wrong turn at an intersection. In this case, the narrative makes a "wrong turn" partly because it is dealing with two "reified" phrases. "Once or twice" (admittedly an innocent enough phrase) has become so fixed in the language as to be virtually a single word.

Sigmund Freud took advantage of the automatic nature of language selection to help him determine particular associations of which his patients were not fully conscious. His method, though called "free association," has little to do with freedom. Rather, the chain of words called up by a patient delineates, for the doctor, the boundaries of his patient's thought. According to Freud, word associations are "strictly determined by important inner attitudes of mind, which are unknown to us at the moment when they operate" (General Intro. 96). These inner "attitudes" may include words which are frequently associated with each other in the culture (33). Joyce was well aware of Freud's theories of word association (at least by 1914; Ellmann 368), although he downplayed any influence Freud might have had on his work (Ellmann 450). Whether Joyce was

influenced by these theories or not, however, they are illustrated amply in Ulysses. The principles which govern the direction of association, both in the narrative and in the characters' stream of consciousness, are investigated within the narrative again and again.

Freud also notes that the tunes which "suddenly come into a man's head" are guided by similar principles, and "can be shown to be conditioned by some train of thought to which they belong, and which for some reason is occupying his mind without his knowing anything about it" (General Intro. 97). This explains the many songs on the theme of adultery which occupy Bloom's mind, although we don't really need Freud to tell us that, but Freud makes an interesting exception here: "I do not maintain that this is the case of really musical people ... in them the musical value of the tune may account for its suddenly emerging into consciousness" (97). Perhaps this "musical value" could be aligned with an attention to the signifier. That is to say if one pays attention to form, one will be aware of the art work, but if one merely consumes content, the process of reception will be automatic. In any case, the point remains, an investigation into word associations may expose underlying constraints to thought, both within the individual and within the culture.

What emerges from the narrative of Ulysses is a sense of language as a system which can work on "automatic," and

which frequently does. Watching the foreman work the presses at the newspaper, Bloom thinks:

Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew
how to stop them they'd clank on and on the
same, print it over and over and up and back.
Monkey-doodle the whole thing. (U 98)

Yet when Bloom is "paralysed," his mind works in a similar fashion:

Too poetical that about the sad. Music did
that. Music hath charms. Shakespeare
said. Quotation every day in the year. To be
or not to be. Wisdom while you wait. (230)

Monkeydoodle indeed. This passage shows how thoughts are ordered by automatic associations. Bloom reflects on his P.S. to his letter to Martha ("I feel so sad today"). He attributes this "poetical" note to the influence of the sentimental music in the pub. This leads him to think of the line from the play (which he automatically, erroneously, attributes to Shakespeare), and in turn to reflect on the pervasive influence of Shakespeare. Popular song lyrics and Shakespearean quotations are part of the web of culture (language) in which Bloom lives and within which his thoughts are inextricably meshed. The fact that he is mistaken about the source of the quotation only emphasizes the point that the phrase has become reified; it no longer has a source.

When Bloom thinks, "Music did that," the word music intersects with the phrase "music hath charms," which is "floating around" in Bloom's consciousness and alters the train of his thoughts. He briefly notes that there seems to be a "quotation every day of the year," and this phrase, which names the whole problem, is itself likely an echo, perhaps from a calendar (Thornton 249). But Bloom does not pursue his original thought, which was about the way in which the music influenced his letter writing. Ironically, while he contemplates the phenomenon of influence, he is influenced further. In a parallel movement, "Sirens" is intersected right at this point by a series of phrases from "Scylla and Charybdis," the "Shakespeare chapter" of Ulysses. Passages from the earlier chapter (U 166) reappear here, in altered form, at a point where they have no apparent connection to the story. The text, like Bloom, interrupts itself with phrases which "come to mind" as it goes along.

Bloom's peculiar thought processes have been interpreted as a process of dereification. André Topia reads Bloom as if he were "groping ... exploring different networks and, rather than actualizing and developing only one, were content with juxtaposing variations" ("The Matrix and the Echo" 110). Bloom, he notes, "debunks" reified codes as he moves erratically through them. It is true that Bloom can perform this function, especially in "Lotus

Eaters," a chapter Topia focuses on, where Bloom plays with the language of Catholicism with dereifying effects. But in "Sirens," there is something so passive, so automatic, in Bloom's jumps from cliché to cliché that the movement of his thoughts seems merely a catalogue of the whole paralysis. He cannot seem to concentrate on anything long enough to examine it thoroughly. As a character within the story, Bloom has little power to liberate himself from the fictions encoded in his language, but as a vehicle for the narrative, he works to expose various aspects of language for narrative exploration.

Bloom's comment "Wisdom while you wait" suggests that "truth" can be packaged into neat little phrases which are easily assimilated, and indeed this is what appears to happen. The "smoother" the language, the more easily it is "swallowed." In "Ithaca," Bloom imagines the ideal ad:

... one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wonder, a poster novelty, with all extraneous accretions excluded, reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms not exceeding the span of casual vision and congruous with the velocity of modern life.

(592)

This seems to be, as Jameson terms it, the "ultimate visual reification" (183). It is also an extreme example of what MacCabe calls the "effacement of the signifier" -- a very

deliberate effacement in this instance. The purpose of the ad is to convince; ideally therefore it must be "efficient" and not exceed "the span of casual vision" (my emphasis). Unlike the text of Ulysses, the perfect advertisement must be easily consumed.

When language is reified, it comes to be viewed in fixed units: as blocks of meaning divorced from their original process of production and from the potential activity involved in their reception. Such a divorce is politically dangerous, preventing, as it does, any critical analysis of the source behind the language or of its practical effects. Reified language, cut off from its origins, takes on a power of its own, insidious in its presence, anonymous and natural as the landscape. Linguistic reification, coupled with the seemingly subconscious nature of language choices, has important implications for the way in which dominant cultural fictions are disseminated. The automatic nature of word associations facilitates the passive consumption of reified phrases and ensures that dominant cultural fictions will be easily perpetuated.

In Ulysses, there is no "meta-language" (MacCabe 30) or "master code" which will guide the reader by making judgements from an objective position. The narrative itself is caught in the same web of fictions as the characters -- only more of them. Stephen Heath's reading of the

intertextual play in Ulysses aligns it with narrative reluctance:

 this passage across fictions was a strategy for the disengagement from sense, for a process of hesitation the self-reflexive effect of which was not the fixing of any sense in the commitment to a single fiction, but an attention to the logic of fictions and to the position of the construction of the subject within that logic. (38)

In its struggle against telling, the narrative begins to examine the constructions of the already told, especially those "highly institutionalized codes" (Topia 108), or reified bits of language which the subject so easily internalizes. Individual "identity" consists of language. The construction of the subject depends, therefore, upon the nature of the languages available. Joyce brought to his text years of research into the multitude of languages which make up modern culture. The narrative is therefore able to move among a vast range of possibilities and has, as I shall discuss, a certain amount of control over them. But for most people, the range of languages in which they move is very limited.

 These limitations are portrayed through Joyce's characters. Various reified bits of language, from various sections of the cultural code, pervade the consciousness of

all the characters, and these sections, it seems, are sharply divided along class lines. Bloom's thoughts are interspersed with advertising slogans all day long. Gerty MacDowell's mind is permeated with the language of romantic fiction, and Stephen's particular nightmare consists of the texts of the Church, the philosophy, and the literature of western culture. In "Cyclops," the narrative voice seems to veer off from its story towards the medium of print as if drawn away by a magnet, creating the impression that the individual voice is continually interrupted by newspapers: the most pervasive and anonymous sources of fiction in the country in 1904. And of course, as illustrated in "Sirens," popular songs have a wide influence. All of these reified bits of language contain fictions in condensed form. Their effect is to explain to each character his or her position in society and relationship to others. While there might seem to be some merit to this effect (after all, we cannot function without some such explanation), it ultimately has a paralyzing effect. Characters such as Miss Douce have no alternative sources of fiction available and are thus necessarily "constructed" from the dominant ones. The dominant fictions are so powerfully convincing that they explain everything, leaving little apparent need for any creative effort towards change. Ulysses cannot, of course, suggest a method of escape from these dominant fictions, but it does suggest a way to become aware of how they are

maintained -- a first step towards critical, and political, analysis. In a culture determined by language, in which only a privileged few have any control of that language, dominant fictions are easily maintained. And the most important question becomes, perhaps, not by whom, or even why, but how this is accomplished. The narrative technique of Ulysses performs an analysis of the process.

Ulysses also suggests a way to dereify and thus disempower dominant fictions through parody. As Linda Hutcheon has noted, modern art forms may deal with the spectre of dominant past forms by repeating them "with a difference." The novel as a whole is a re-telling of the Odyssey, suggesting in itself a process of liberation from the past. Joyce uses this technique throughout Ulysses, parodying newspaper headlines, legal contracts, the Apostle's Creed, etc. In "Oxen of the Sun," he performs a sort of exorcism by parody of the major literary styles of Britain. These reified forms have the power to dominate because they have a traditional monopoly: various forms of censorship and limited educational opportunities combine to preserve that monopoly. But within the narrative, Joyce uses his disdain for censorship and his surplus of education to make some changes in the fictions which he must necessarily use to construct his novel.

Joyce disempowers dominant fictions by playing with the language in which they are encoded. Irish nationalism, for

example (like almost any movement), relies heavily on slogans and quotations. In an essay on "Joyce and Nationalism," Seamus Deane argues that Joyce

discovered the fictive nature of politics.

His work is, in consequence, an examination of the nature of the fictive -- how it is created, how words operate (181) ²

Aware of the way in which dominant fictions are circulated, the narrative is reluctant to continue to circulate them. Instead, it uses this knowledge to dismantle them. In Ulysses, the language of nationalism is frequently exposed as old and worn-out, reified and meaningless. Joyce viewed Irish nationalism with a suspicion which is perhaps

² I should note here that Deane takes a rather more positive view of Joyce's attitude towards nationalism than I do. Although I agree with him about Joyce's recognition of the fictive, or linguistic, nature of politics, I cannot share the enthusiastic tone with which he writes of the failure of nationalism to achieve social change:

In revealing the essentially fictive nature of political imagining, Joyce did not repudiate Irish nationalism. Instead he understood it as a potent example of a rhetoric which imagined as true structures that did not and were never to exist outside language. Thus, as a model, it served him as it had served Yeats and others. It enabled them to apprehend the nature of fiction, the process whereby the imagination is brought to bear upon the reality which it creates. (183)

This is a rather romantic view of narrative desire which I feel the text repudiates.

justified considering that, historically, nationalism has been used as an excuse for anything from sloppy sentimentality to futile violence. The rhetoric of nationalism is often empty; it serves to glorify individual sacrifice, rather than to encourage collective action for social change. This has a paralyzing effect which is parodied in "Cyclops": "there sleep the mighty dead as in life they slept" (U 241).

In "Cyclops," the Citizen makes a handy vehicle for the introduction of nationalist slogans, though he himself repeats few of them. "The memory of the dead" (251) is perhaps his most telling comment. The narrative picks up on the implications of this toast and takes off on a long parodic account of the execution of an Irish rebel (251-255). In this way, the narrative takes the nationalist fiction of a noble death and re-writes it, stressing all the gory details which the traditional fiction leaves out. Joyce, of course, leaves them in, working against the glorification of death and betrayal which the fiction promotes. The parody ends with the hero's fiancée easily forgetting her lover in favour of a wealthy, Oxford-educated suitor. The flowery style and symbolic clichés employed to relate this "most romantic incident" (254) parody the Sinn Féin's campaign against immorality, which Joyce once characterized as "lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love forever: blatant lying in the

face of truth" (Letters to Stanislaus, 13 Nov. 1906).

Joyce's parody re-works the fictions of martyrdom and romance which perpetuate stereotypes and lead to alienation.

In "Sirens," the song lyrics, quotations from novels, and even the speech of the characters are dismantled by the narrative and parodied. "Sirens" is, in large part, made up of the language of others. When we reach the end of the chapter, we discover that the "Done" of the overture belongs to Robert Emmet or rather it once belonged to him, his words having since taken on the status of a monument to betrayed Irish heroism. His speech is now a part of the web of culture in which Bloom lives and out of which Joyce must write. The concluding phrase of the overture ("Done. Begin.") suggests that part of the task of the chapter is to re-work this speech, and Joyce certainly does.

At the end of "Sirens," when Bloom passes Lionel Marks's shop, he views in the window a picture of Robert Emmet with his famous last words. Emmet is another of Ireland's heroic failures, and his dramatic last words have become meaningless sentimental symbols, often repeated, but never questioned. In Ulysses, they become fittingly ironic symbols of this type of reification. An epitaph, in a sense, is the ultimate form of reification: the last word, as it were. Yet this is exactly what Emmet meant to forbid. His original words were:

I have one request to ask at my departure from

this world -- it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dares now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them rest in obscurity and peace; my memory be left in oblivion and my tomb remain uninscribed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I have done. (qt in O Broin 164)

Ironically, this very injunction against an epitaph has become an epitaph and, although Emmet's tombstone may remain unfound, his words have been appropriated for various uses, including, presumably, for sale in Lionel Marks's window. These words serve to perpetuate the fetishisation of failure as well as the romantic fiction of the Irish revolutionary as a solitary (though glorified) figure. Emmet's cause may be dead in a paralysed nation, but his words live on as part of the environment of Dublin. Only the narrative of Ulysses is able to disempower this ideological reification of Emmet's words, breaking up the solidity of the block of text by interspersing the individual words with the irreverent sounds of Bloom's fart and a passing tram car, certainly repetition with a difference!

PART THREE: Desire and Reluctance Intertwined:
Examples from "Ithaca"

Joyce referred to the method of "Ithaca" as a "mathematical catechism" (Budgen 257), and it certainly is highly rigid in both diction and structure. It is often referred to as "inhuman," yet what trait is more uniquely human than this: the desire to divide experience into knowable facts arranged in an apparently logical sequence. The method of "Ithaca" represents the relentless, exhaustive attempt to get to the known, which is frustrated always by "the presupposed intangibility of the thing in itself" (U 604). But like the musical aspirations of "Sirens," the empirical ambition of "Ithaca" is parodic and paradoxical. For the harder the text tries to pin down meaning, the more elusive "meaning" seems to become. The narrative moves forward by a highly systematized method of generating information: a series of questions, commands, and responses fuelled, apparently, by intense narrative desire. Like the overture of "Sirens," the method of "Ithaca" appears to expose the plan for the chapter: only in this case, the main intent is to get the story told. The method, it seems, is a final attempt to overcome that reluctance once and for all.

The "task" of "Ithaca" is to relay information in an ongoing, chronological order. The questions represent a sort of shopping list of details needed -- blanks which must

be filled in. This system makes narration seem like a monotonous chore, as the text orders itself to "Condense Stephen's commentary" (567), "Catalogue [Bloom's] books" (582), and "Compile the budget" for the day (584). Yet while the program calls for a progressive accumulation of rigidly detailed facts, the impulse to "escape" the story proves irrepressible. Resistance is usually located in the answers of the chapter, although the questions sometimes provide resistance as well by requesting irrelevant information which provides the opportunity for digression; "Ithaca" specializes in long passages of seemingly trivial information, stalling techniques which disrupt the linear nature of narrative. An interesting aspect of "Ithaca" is the way in which narrative desire and narrative reluctance seem to become indistinguishable. Narrative reluctance sometimes performs its functions by actually exaggerating the tendencies of narrative desire. The conflict manifests itself in three main areas in this chapter: in diction, in the use of metonymical movement, and in the treatment of the hermeneutic codes of the story.

In "Ithaca," Bloom and Stephen are said to represent, respectively, the scientific and the artistic temperaments (558). These labels are applicable to the opposing impulses which surface in the diction of this chapter. The text of "Ithaca" occasionally rebels against its prescribed scientific style. In places, the fatuous language of the

scientific mode is mocked. One question reads: "What proofs did Bloom adduce to prove that his tendency was towards applied, rather than towards pure, science?" (559). Shortly thereafter, an answer parodies this type of scientific diction and manages to get in a few rhymes as well:

Which example did he adduce to induce Stephen to deduce that originality, though producing its own reward, does not invariably conduce to success? (560)

In "Sirens," word choice sometimes seems governed by a desire to play with the formal qualities of the signifier. In "Ithaca," word choice seems governed by an attempt to tell the story with absolute clarity -- an attempt at absolute correspondence of signifier with signified -- which always backfires. Narrative reluctance subverts this attempt simply by exaggerating it. The more technical and "exact" the language becomes, the more opaque it is. Evening strolls become "nocturnal perambulations" (545), and boiling water a manifestation of the "phenomenon of ebullition" (550). The obfuscating technical terms parody any attempt to tell a story with absolute precision, for the unusual signifiers draw so much attention to themselves that the signified fades into the background.

Complex diction and convoluted syntax obscure, rather than reveal, the signified. A description of one of Bloom's "reflections" mirrors this technique:

the natural grammatical transition by inversion involving no alteration of sense of an aorist preterite proposition (parsed as masculine subject, monosyllabic onomatopoeic transitive verb with direct feminine object) from the active voice into its correlative aorist preterite proposition (parsed as feminine subject, auxiliary verb and quasimonosyllabic onomatopoeic past participle with complementary masculine agent) in the passive voice. (604)

Exactitude of diction is revealed as an impossible goal. It is a joke, a trick of narrative reluctance which is, here, identified with Bloom's reluctance to "face the fact" of his wife's adultery.

Another form of resistance to the scientific diction is to break out of it completely. There are rare instances of poetic imagery and lyrical language in "Ithaca." One of the first such instances is the description of what Bloom admires in water. Although most of the answer is given in strictly scientific terminology, the passage has a lyrical rhythm, and the scientific tone is broken by the final image of "stagnant pools in the waning moon" (550). Another unexpected poetic moment occurs when Stephen and Bloom step outside and are confronted with "The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit" (573). After so many passages of impeccably dry prose, this language comes as a

delightful shock. Such outbreaks of lyricism seem like acts of rebellion against the utilitarian treatment of language in the rest of the chapter.

Yet the poetic impulse is never allowed to take over and "win." The "artistic," as well as the "scientific," is soundly mocked:

Was he more convinced of the esthetic value of
the spectacle?

Indubitably in consequence of the reiterated
examples of poets in the delirium of the frenzy
of attachment or in the ^{humiliation} abasement of rejection
invoking ardent sympathetic constellations or
the frigidity of the satellite of their planet.
(576)

The moon, like the other natural phenomena which elicit lyricism in the text, is stripped of all metaphysical connotations. It is "de-coded" and exposed as a worn-out poetic convention. Stock poetic phrases appear to express a nebulous ^{vague} sublimity and create "meaning" where none exists. Like the songs of "Sirens," their appeal is based only on sentimentality, the intoxication of self-absorption. The point is made that our concept of reality is composed of language, poetic language no less than other forms:

Did he then accept as an article of belief the
theory of astrological influences upon sublunary

disasters?

It seemed to him as possible of proof as of confutation and the nomenclature employed in its selenographical charts as attributable to verifiable intuition as to fallacious analogy: the lake of dreams, the sea of rains, the gulf of dews, the ocean of fecundity. (576)

The conventional use of metaphorical language naturalizes the link between the human and the lunar spheres. It seems quite likely to Bloom that "verifiable intuition" might lie behind the anthropomorphic nomenclature. Rarely do people stop to analyze the idiomatic phrases of our culture. The implications go unnoticed unless they are "defamiliarized" by an artist like Joyce.

Neither "exact" scientific language, nor vague poetic language triumphs in this chapter. Poetic language seems to promise an escape from the rigidity of linear narrative. But all it does is conjure up images which are themselves outworn and, ultimately, no more innocent of closure than the scientific.

Another attempt at exactitude is revealed in the metonymic movement of the narrative through the middle sections of "Ithaca." To move metonymically, from one subject to a contiguous subject, is to create meaning. Patricia Waugh refers to this aspect of fiction as the

"creation/description paradox" (100-101). Post-modern metafictionists exploit this paradox in their work, referring directly to the fact that they are creating characters, objects, and situations as they describe them. Ulysses contains no explicit references to this fact. Yet long strings of metonymical association are sometimes exaggerated to the point where they seem very suspicious. In "Ithaca," the most obvious example of this tactic is the long description of Bloom's dream cottage and gardens (585-588). As each element is described, the text asks more related questions and provides more related details, down to the price of the wallpaper (10/ per dozen), and the precise type of windows (opaque, single-paned, oblong). The purely linguistic nature of the whole construct is exaggerated by the detailed, luxurious, class-specific diction. As Lawrence comments, this passage seems motivated partly by "Joyce's own desire to use the quaint, faintly archaic vocabulary associated with the English country house" (193 n.16). The passage advertises its status as a list. The inescapable conclusion is that this method can construct an endless supply of fictional cottages and, perhaps, endless fictional worlds, simply by generating the names for all the parts.

The ability of language to generate meaning is implied also in the various ways in which written texts are introduced into the text of Ulysses. The scene where Bloom

is alone, after Stephen's departure, is perhaps the perfect (conventional) setting for a "true" revelation of character. Much of this revelation is achieved by a look through the contents of Bloom's dresser drawers. Almost all of the evidence found there is textual: letters, newspaper clippings, ads, as well as envelopes, sealing wax, and pen nibs (592-94). Bloom is represented by his birth certificate, his material worth by stock certificates and passbooks. Among the signs of his father are a notice of change of name and the envelope from (apparently) his suicide note (594-95). Particular attention is paid to the textuality of all of these items. A childhood letter from Milly is described in detail:

dated, small em monday, reading: capital pee
 Papli comma capital aitch How are you note of
 interrogation capital eye I am very well full
 stop new paragraph signature with flourishes
 capital em Milly no stop (592).

This emphasis on the physical form of the letter draws attention to the fact that these are the very elements of which Bloom's present relationship with Milly -- sentimental memories and all -- is made: letters and words. Similarly, the narrative orders itself to "Quote the textual terms" of the change of name notice (594). And the "reading" of the suicide note is extremely interesting:

[the drawer contained] an envelope addressed: To

My Dear Son Leopold.

What fractions of phrases did the lecture of those five whole words evoke?

Tomorrow will be a week that I received it is no use Leopold to be with your dear mother ... that is not more to stand ... to her ... all for me is out ... be kind to Athos, Leopold my dear son ... always ... of me ... das Herz ... Gott ... dein ... (594-95, elipses in original).

Here, the gaps in the story of Ulysses are represented by actual textual gaps: the missing phrases of the letter are never revealed, and neither are the mysteries implied here. A week since what? Since nothing. As the event alluded to is not described, it does not exist. Narrative desire proceeds by providing "proof" of the story in the form of these artifacts, yet this attempt is undermined by the way in which the narrative dwells with such detail on the purely linguistic nature of the evidence.

Narrative desire is concerned with telling or, in terms of Barthes' codes, with the completion of sequences in the proairetic and hermeneutic codes. Proairetic codes are concerned with sequences of action in narrative: each code consists of all phrases which combine to describe a discrete

process such as, in "Ithaca," making cocoa. In "Ithaca," the narrative often seems to get "stuck" while relating an action and goes on to complete the proairetic code in ludicrously minute detail. The hermeneutic code is composed of "the various (formal) terms by which an enigma can be distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense, and finally disclosed" (Barthes 19). In many ways, "Ithaca" seems to promise that it will provide disclosure and, thus, the completion of the hermeneutic codes of Ulysses. The format of the chapter, its position within the text, and the events at this point in the story, all combine to suggest that something "important" is going to be revealed. All of Barthes' other codes exist "outside the constraint of time." Only the proairetic and the hermeneutic codes "impose their terms according to an irreversible order" (Barthes 30). They are, therefore, allied with the linear, expository nature of the narrative desire which tries to dominate "Ithaca."

"Ithaca," however, also reveals a reluctance to provide answers to all of the questions which have been raised in the story. As many critics have noted, Joyce plays with readers' expectations in this scene. Here at last Bloom and Stephen are alone together, yet nothing of significance, in any conventional sense, seems to occur. This method mocks narrative desire by undermining the importance of the scene in the kitchen and by suggesting that the meeting of Bloom

and Stephen is an event as insignificant as it would be in life. It is the nature of traditional narrative to draw nicely to a close by completing the hermeneutic codes already set into place, but in Ulysses, the enigmatic penultimate chapter seems to mock this expectation.

In many novels, the reader faces the task of reconstructing the story from the text. In the post-modern novel, this may be an impossibility. But in most novels, to varying degrees, it is understood that the full story exists somewhere (at least in the author's mind), and that a careful reading will take the reader from narrative to story. Novels differ in the amount of effort that this task requires. Some may be esoteric, full of complicated symbolism which must be unravelled. In others, the story may explicate itself at the end. In the traditional mystery story, for example, the detective reviews all the clues and pieces everything together for any reader who hasn't "got it" yet. Ulysses, however, fails to fill in all the gaps. For example, Bloom's question "Who was M'Intosh?" (600) is never answered. Yet there seems to be nothing to "get." Bloom doesn't know who M'Intosh is, neither do we, and it is questionable whether the author even knows. "Ithaca" also includes a reference to "Gertrude (Gerty), surname unknown" (605), although her surname is known to us, if not to Bloom. In a more conventional novel, the narrator knows all and doles out the story bit by bit. Parts of "Nausicaa" parody

the coyness of this type of approach -- "But who was Gerty?" (285) -- and in fact it is within "Nausicaa" that Gerty's surname is known (it is MacDowell 285). In "Ithaca," it is apparently quite forgotten, or perhaps nonexistent. Even more mystifying is the reference to "a blank period of time including a cardrive, a visit to a house of mourning, a leavetaking (wilderness)" (599). To whom is this period "blank"? Bloom's visit to the Dignam house is another notorious "gap" in the text, and this comment suggests that the "missing" scene exists nowhere -- not even in the author's imagination. Joyce plays with the varying levels of knowledge which make up a novel. And, unlike the conventional novelist, he doesn't bother to "even out" these levels at the end of the book, but leaves the reader in the "wilderness." Consequently, the "real" story is never pinned down. The text can never be complete. Despite the amazing multitude of facts in Ulysses, it is always open to interpretation. It leaves itself open.

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

Ulysses investigates the various ways in which fictions are coded into reified language, assimilated, circulated and recirculated. Language within the story of Ulysses is frequently seen as a reified entity, and reified texts from the past run through the novel with oppressive frequency, one more aspect of the "nightmare of history" from which Stephen cannot awake. The movement of the narrative serves to counter the paralyzing effects of these embedded texts. Yet the narrative of Ulysses does not simply displace these past texts in order to provide us with yet another reified text.

Both "Sirens" and "Ithaca" display the ways in which narrative reluctance gives rise to self-consciousness in the text. Narrative reluctance cannot stop the production of meaning: the novel exists. But in the act of resisting the (suspect) demands of narrative desire, the narrative turns back upon itself, and begins to examine the means of its own production. The ensuing twists and turns reveal an "unfinished" text; its diction and syntax choices are not finalized; it is subject to interruption, and it has gaps in its plot. In short, it is an ongoing process. The narrative examines also the means of its own reception. At more than one point in the novel the narrative function

seems to split in two, communicating with itself, asking and answering questions, "Ithaca," of course, takes this method to extremes. The gaps in the plot also focus attention on the reading process, fostering an awareness of the activity of reading, and how narrative desire is imposed from without as well as engendered from within the text. By failing to satisfy narrative desire, the text ensures a continuation of its interaction with readers.

By mimicking the reading and writing process, the text presents itself as an experience, rather than as a finished product. This technique points to a concept of the novel as a process, rather than as a commodity, and raises questions about the role of the writer within society. Fredric Jameson argues that textualisation in Ulysses "may be seen as a form or subset of reification itself" (184) ³. Textualisation within the story, with its focus on the finite nature of the printed word, is a form of reification: Emmet's exact words, for instance, or the fixed type on the

³ Jameson makes an exception of those instances which institute "a peculiarly fluid relationship between the visually reified and the historically eventful" (136), but he gives only one such example: the matching of spatial form to historical movement in the use of an advertisement (as map) to trace the escape pattern of the Phoenix Park killers (U 112). This is a process, however, of taking the text back to its origins in terms of the events it represents (the signified). This is not dereification of language in the sense I am using the term: taking the text back to its origins in terms of the processes of its production and reception (the writing and reading of signifiers).

printing press. Yet my description of narrative technique in "Sirens" and "Ithaca" has pointed in a rather opposite direction. Textualisation within the narrative itself -- when it focuses on the processes of production and reception -- works as a form of dereification. The text as process cannot be divorced from its relationship with human beings. The novel is part of the ongoing human activity of writing and reading. Thus it resists becoming a reified object for consumption.

Georg Lukàcs claims that the reification which happens to the worker who uses intellectual and imaginative faculties to earn a living can be devastating because it is these very faculties which become fragmented, separated from the self. For the worker under capitalism, "his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world" (100). If these qualities and abilities are thoughts and feelings, then "thoughts and feelings become reified," for they are nothing more than commodities (172). In terms of literature, then, the treatment of the novel as a product has a reifying effect on the writer's role.

The movement of the narrative in Ulysses constantly focuses on the nature of this role. The pull between narrative desire and narrative reluctance lays bare the problems inherent in using language. The tension between

the formal and the rhetorical properties of language was one of Stephen Dedalus's concerns in A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man. This tension continues in Ulysses, although it is embedded in the narrative technique, rather than in the consciousness of one particular character. Attention to the signifiers in Ulysses seems partially motivated by an attraction to the formal elements "for their own sake," similar to the sensuous appreciation of language which Stephen experienced as a little boy. This attraction reminds us of the child-like nature of artistic endeavours; art is play, discovery, experimentation. In Ulysses, this play performs an important social and political function as well. The exploration of language has a liberating effect, working against the (usually) invisible influence of fictions which keep individuals, and whole cultures, tied to the past. The role of the writer involves the potential for a constant re-examination of our relationship with language and our relationships within language. But when the novel is viewed as nothing more than a product for easy consumption, then the writer becomes nothing more than a tool in the production of narrative forms which, with their ability to convince, and their tendency towards closure, serve the public as soporifics, rather than challenging experiences. As such, the role of the writer does not engage the rest of the community; the exploration of

language is viewed as a specialized task; and the act of writing is objectified, cut off from its role in the relations between human beings. This objectification serves to alienate the writer from his or her society. In Ulysses, Stephen is presented in just such an unsatisfactory position; as "the youthful bard," he is an outsider, unappreciated and unrewarded, much as Joyce was for most of his life. But Ulysses invites the reader to join the writer in the exploration of language. In this way, the narrative dereifies literature, restoring wholeness by placing the role of the artist within the community and making possible a reintegration of the artistic faculties within the individual.

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Author



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