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The Desire of Writing and the Writing of Desire in *Ulysses*

In *Conversations with James Joyce*, Arthur Power recalls the conversation in which a final alienation in his friendship with Joyce took place:

> Then I suppose in an effort to be friendly again Joyce said in a low, intimate voice:
> — I have just received very important news.
> — What is it? I asked, thinking it must be something of literary importance.
> — A son has been born to Giorgio and Helen [Joyce's son and daughter-in-law] in Paris.
> . . .— Is that all? I replied.
> — It is the most important thing there is, said Joyce firmly, his voice charged with meaning.
>
> A sudden suspicion crossed my mind; 'the most important thing there is' meant that another Joyce had been born into the world. Even to this day I am still in doubt, for Joyce's estimation of his merit would on occasion suddenly flare up to a point of madness.[1]

Setting aside the question of Power's personality, of his unsympathetic response and the possible cause of deterioration of the friendship, what is striking about this exchange is the nature of Joyce's concerns, the "effort" of intimacy with which he communicated them, and the constructions or misconstructions to which they were subject. Power at first anticipates that the most "intimate" and "important" topic to Joyce is literature. To Power's impersonal response to the concern with family, Joyce replies "firmly, his voice charged with meaning," only to be permanently suspected of an egotism that can consume both literary and family concerns in an arrogance that borders on "madness."

This extra-textual, biographical information is of interest to readers of *Ulysses*, for the light that it can throw on the relation between the novel and its genesis. I argue that this kind of information is particularly pertinent to a reading of *Ulysses*, in that Joyce emphasises in the novel the problem of desire and its expression in action and in language. The principal male characters, Bloom and Stephen, are united

in their desire to create, the one to procreate, to have a son, the other to create literature, to write. Each experiences an acute problem in the expression of their desire. Since the crib death of his son, Rudy, when only eleven days old, Bloom's sexual relationship with his wife, Molly, has broken down, so that his desire for a son, caught up as it is with his sense of identity as lover, father, provider, and (as Jew) patriarch, is contradicted and thwarted. Stephen, called back from his aspiring artist's life in Paris to attend at his mother's deathbed, is tormented by the conflicting demands of reverence for mother, mother country and Mother Church and his desire for total dedication, for marriage, to art.

This interior contradiction and conflict in Bloom and Stephen results in a high degree of self-involvement and self-concern, introducing into the problematic of their desire the question of solipsism, narcissism and egotism, in short, the Romantic problem of self-consciousness.[2] That Joyce had a great deal of his own desire invested in the question of procreation emerges from the conversation with Power. Although his book clearly reveals gratitude to Joyce for the friendship, Power claims to have remained in doubt, even to the time of writing as to whether Joyce was being a convinced family man or an egomaniac artist, every expression of whom, creative or procreative, was necessarily significant.

What this evidence of Joyce's concerns witnesses externally to the novel, I will argue in this paper, is of primary internal concern in *Ulysses* itself, demonstrating the genetic roots of Joyce's writing, and its all-important written transformation. Further to my purpose, however, is to demonstrate the principle by which self-consciousness and identity, as the problematic of both creative and procreative expression, operates not only in the thematic content of *Ulysses*, but in its form, style and language as well. *Ulysses* is an essentially reflexive novel which attends to itself, its status as written desire, as a concrete instance of the problematic of desire and expression treated within the novel. *Ulysses* attempts not only to disclose a problem, but effects a strategy, a *praxis*, to act on and transform the problem it addresses. I suggest that Joyce in *Ulysses* reveals his kinship to the modern, post-Romantic, materialist gnosiology that begins most conspicuously with Marx and develops in Nietzsche and Freud, the most important contributor in our own time being Jacques Derrida.[3]

The argument will proceed by way of explication of the Stephen/Bloom relationship in the "Circe" episode, then by treating these characters separately (concentrating on "Scylla and Charybdis" and "Nausicaa"), and finally in their conscious relation and communion in "Ithaca". In conclusion, the patterns discovered will be explored as they appear in the character of Molly in the concluding "Penelope"

episode, where the dualities of content and form, theme and style, desire and language converge and emerge in Molly's desiring language.

At the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen escapes his material origins, biological (familial), social and religious, to the necessary freedom and solitude of artistic exile in Paris.[4] In *Ulysses*, Stephen has been called back to Dublin at the death of his mother, and is haunted and thwarted in his literary aspirations by the conflict between his mother as representative of dead tradition and his mother as imaginative symbol of his origins. Bloom, on the other hand, is thwarted in his aspiration for sexual and social identity as father of a male heir, a son to continue the Bloom name.

The peregrinations about Dublin of this "duumvirate", described in "Ithaca" as centripetal (Bloom) and centrifugal (Stephen),[5] converge cathartically with respect to their frustrated desires in the subliminal hallucinations of the "Circe" episode. Taking place, appropriately, in Bella Cohen's bordello in Nighttown, it is an illicit fantasmic orgasm, releasing their pent-up, "socially deviant" imaginal desires. It is significant that it is here, on the level of repressed fear and frustration, that Bloom and Stephen first become directly involved with each other. It is also significant that the culminating instant of this contact should be their gazing together into a mirror, for it is the psychic mirror of their own fantasy life that gains dramatic expression in the episode. Bloom, who, as a largely sensuous and passive dreamer, is first to lose control of his imagination, is assailed by the two corollary representations of his attitude to women, an amazon and a nymph. Stephen's own more deliberately repressed and controlled fantasies do not break out until after the mirror encounter with Bloom, but when they do so, he runs "amok," and Bloom's services as practical elder are required.

Bloom has just, in hallucination, voyeuristically participated in his wife's orgasmic intercourse with Boylan, an event which Bloom knows to have in all likelihood taken place in reality earlier in the day:

> Lynch: (*Points*) The mirror up to nature. (*He laughs*) Hu hu hu hu hu hu. (*Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.*)
> Shakespeare: (*In dignified ventriloquy*) 'Tis the loud laugh bespeaks the vacant mind. (*To Bloom*) Thou thoughtest as how thou wastest invisible. Gaze. (*He crows with a black capon's laugh*) Iagogo! How my Oldfellow chokit his Thursdaymomun. Iagogogo! (671)

This "mirror up to nature" reflects Stephen's and Bloom's common condition, the psychic image, as it were, that they share, for it is clear

that the beardless Shakespeare is seen by both Stephen and Bloom as their common image. Shakespeare's beardlessness and paralysis reflects the castration and arrested development of both Stephen and Bloom's creative desires. The horns of the hatrack, signifying cuckoldry, are not part of the hallucination, but reflected from the hall of the brothel, which seems to indicate that, while Shakespeare himself is in the order of a psychic projection the condition which he represents, in which Stephen and Bloom share, is an actual part of their relation to the external world. It is easy to understand Stephen's seeing himself, or Bloom seeing Stephen, as Shakespeare, given his preoccupation with his *Hamlet* theory as representative of the condition of artistic production in the Library episode. The cuckold's horns signify how art has betrayed Stephen's devotion in appearing to favor the likes of Mulligan, Haines and the Moore/AE circle. Although it is readily explicable how Stephen could see Bloom as a Shakespeare-figure in the outward circumstances of his life as cuckold, exile, grieving father and commercial traveller, it is not so clear as to why Bloom should see himself as such.[6]

Shakespeare's message bears on this perplexity. (The ventriloquy seems to indicate that it is Bloom's *and* Stephen's unconscious which speaks, neither from one nor the other singly, and also that the voice is a definite projection.) Voyeurism, adultery and orgasm are no laughing matter, neither is the reflection of nature with respect to art, a message which bears directly on the lack in Bloom's and Stephen's conditions, who cannot accomplish the embodiment of their desire, foetally or verbally. But the image reminds Bloom specifically that art and the condition of the artist is not only analogous to his own, but a kind of revelation and public airing of what he considers his personal predicament. This is demonstrated by designating Bloom as an absurdly prolonged Iago. As a black capon (edible castrated cock), Shakespeare is the voice of Bloom's (and Stephen's) unconscious Iago-like feeling of castration and violation,[7] which seduces the unconscious desire (Oldfellow-Othello is a black and therefore symbolic of pre-rational sexual desire to the Elizabethans) to work itself out indirectly through vicarious vengeance on the female. In the hallucinated Shakespeare, Bloom and Stephen see themselves subconsciously as castrated roosters who laugh hysterically as the Oldfellow, their farmer or keeper (Father, God) chokes the hens that they are unable to inseminate, little considering that they are next in line for dinner. Stephen and Bloom are subconsciously mastered by their thwarted creative urges, which they try to repress by psychically choking the image of woman ("Thursdaymomun"), that confronts them

with their impotence. Their Circean revelry is "vacant" and, at once, both absurd and ominous.

The mirrored Shakespeare is the mocking, inverse image of Stephen and Bloom's desires. As cuckold, Shakespeare is the inverse of Stephen's desired marriage to art. As artist, Shakespeare is the inverse of Bloom's desired form of self-expression. But the mirror-image is appropriate as a medium and representation of Stephen and Bloom's desires in that the mirror-image, although inverted, effaces itself as medium of representation. It is the least mediated form of self-objectification in that it gives back an image of the object in every way identical except that it is inverted (i.e. what is on the right appears in the mirror as being on the left).[8] It is precisely in the mediation of their desire that Bloom and Stephen are thwarted. It is Bloom's wife and Stephen's mother that bar their path to fulfillment, contradicting their self-conscious and self-involved aspirations by confronting them, not with immediate self-fulfillment, but with the necessity of the mediation of desire by otherness.

In the opening episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen refers to "a symbol of Irish art. The cracked looking-glass of a servant" (6). This is the same mirror which, along with a razor and bowl of lather, served as prop for Buck Mulligan's parody of the Mass in the opening lines of the novel. The mirror and razor mockingly invert the communion of priest and Trinity in the eucharistic elements, since they are tools of the effacement and symbolic castration of masculinity as a means to self-identity. Shaving effaces the facial difference between male and female so that the mirror-image can permit the communion of man with himself without reminder of the necessary dialectical mediation of woman as other. Likewise a priest's celibacy, a symbolic castration, frees him for immediate union with a sexually identical Father-God.

As "cracked looking-glass of a servant," the mirror becomes a "symbol" of Irish art in its larger sense of overall cultural potency. It reflects a divided, servile, self-involved culture, a culture whose dual principles of mind and body, creation and procreation, are represented by Stephen and Bloom. That these halves should first merge phantasmagorically, in "Circe," in a prostitute's mirror, as an impotent, cuckolded and manniquinised Shakespeare is significant of the degree of slavish debasement of Irish cultural identity.

An extension of the notion of symbol is made by Stephen later in the opening "Telemachus" episode:

> Symbol of the apostles in the mass for pope Marcellus... and behind...the church militant disarmed and menaced her heresiarchs...: Photius and the brood of mockers of whom Mulligan was one, and Arius, warring his life long upon the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and Valentine, spurning Christ's terrene body, and the subtle African heresiarch Sabellius who held that the Father was Himself His own Son (24/5).

"Symbol" here, of course, refers to the Nicene Creed, in which the Church first clarified her theology of the Trinity, the relation of three divine Persons (two males, one neuter) to the single divine nature or substance, relations of "begetting" of the Son by the Father and of the "proceeding" of the Spirit from the Father through the Son. The notion of credal "symbol", then, extends the mirror-principle of masculine self-identity into language, conflating the problems of religion and art in language, and suggesting the debasement of language in religion and art as a problem of reflection, imitation, or *mimesis*, by association with the mirror symbolism.

The "symbols" of Irish art and of the trinitarian creed merge in the Library episode ("Scylla and Charybdis"), where Stephen expounds his Shakespeare-Hamlet theory. Stephen's theory is basically genetic (i.e. concerned with the genesis or creation of *Hamlet*) in that it argues in the vein (but with different emphasis) of then current theories that *Hamlet* is an autobiographical play, that it represented Shakespeare compensating for the death of his son. Early in the episode, one of the participants, AE, argues that questions about *Hamlet's* origin are "purely academic", and compares them to "Clergymen's discussions about the historicity of Jesus" (236). The problem of the origin of secular and of sacred literature, then, is related at the outset.

Stephen's theory contends that Shakespeare is not mourning his son's death in *Hamlet*, so much as that of his recently deceased father. It is his newly-inherited sense of himself as father, as creator, that Shakespeare is struggling with in *Hamlet*: "When Shakespeare ... wrote *Hamlet* he was not the father of his own son merely, but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of his race..." (267). Stephen's theory is itself a "cracked" (self-divided) and inverted mirror-image of his own condition as mourning the death of his mother. As a theory and not a work of art, it reflects in a debased form the idea of creation he attempts to uncover in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But it is also a debased "symbol of the apostles" (a mocking inversion of which occurs in the episode [253]), a satiric inversion of the orthodox teachings of the Shakespeare *magisterium*, to whose literary priests Stephen serves as inverted Sabellian heresiarch (267), inverted because he does not even believe his own theoretical creed (274).

Sacred and secular creation are further conflated in the episode: "After God Shakespeare created most" (273). Or, as Stephen puts it:

> The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly..., the lord of things... is doubtless all in all in all of us... in the economy of heaven, foretold by Hamlet, there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgynous angel, being a wife to himself (274).

Whereas God becomes "the playwright who wrote the folio of this world," Shakespeare becomes, in Mallarmé's phrase, "the artist reading the book of himself" (239). The masculine principle of genesis or creation, then, divine or human, assumes a man to be an "androgynous angel, a wife to himself," that is, a disembodied spirit that narcissistically fulfils in itself its own "identity".

In *Hamlet* Stephen sees Shakespeare asserting his own masculine creative identity, his fatherhood, the "legal fiction" (266) on which Western patriarchal culture is founded. But, Stephen asks, what is fatherhood but "an instant of blind rut?" (267): "Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?" (266):

> Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna... the church is founded and founded irremoveably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood (266).

This principle of self-sufficient, unmediated paternity Stephen sees as narcissistic, homosexual, incestuous (266), vampirelike (60; 168) and cannibalistic. God is: "Ghoul! Chewer of corpses!" (11) and "*dio boia*, hangman god" (274).

Stephen attributes the viciousness of unmediated paternity to a refusal to face its fear of the other, preferring to found itself on mystery and incertitude. In Shakespeare's case, he is afraid to face the memory of his wife, Ann Hathaway, who seduced him when a young man and drew him into marriage with her, an older woman. It results in his using art as a "creation ... piled up to hide from himself": "That is why the speech (his lean unlovely English) is always turned elsewhere, backward" (252). Like the Trinity, Shakespeare sees himself as the undifferentiated masculine creative principle that begets a son on himself as *verbum* or *imago*, becoming son and father to himself. The mocker Mulligan is quick to parody Stephen's theory:

> — Himself his own father, Sonmulligan told himself. Wait. I am big with child .... A play! ... Let me parturiate! (267)

Mulligan conceives the stillborn "immorality" play *Everyman His Own Wife* or *A Honeymoon in the Hand*, a lewd parody of art as self-marriage and masturbation.

On the other hand, mother-love, "*amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life," says Stephen (266). Stephen is the "mournful mummer" (277) whose attachment to his dead mother has placed him in a state of subjective and objective dividedness that is characteristic of "Irish art" in the widest sense, and, as observed already, serves as an inverted mirror-image of his characterisation of Shakespeare. This inverse relation is divided, "cracked", in that Stephen is in danger of bondage to the Father-principle he rejects precisely through that reverence for woman as mother. "On that mystery [paternity] and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is...founded irremovably..." (266). The Church, which with England dominates Irish culture, subjects woman by cunningly associating her with divine paternity, but carefully subordinating her as merely human, as "handmaid of the Lord". Stephen's mother is identified with the paternal principle as devout Catholic and Stephen is divided in his love for her over the necessity to submit to religious observance, literally to kneel and pray, at her deathbed. But she also haunts him as ghost reminiscent of King Hamlet's ghost and thus of Shakespeare: "Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to *shake* and bend my soul" (10, my italics). Stephen's dividedness is acute. He is Hamlet who must avenge the death of his mother at the hands of "*dio boia*, hangman god" (274), but he is also a Claudius, who conspires with art to kill the mother who rules his creative desire, and who, as ghost, haunts the part of Stephen still loyal to her.

Stephen cannot accept symbolic artistic identity when he sees its onanistic implications. His notion of artistic will and act, of production ("Do. But do" [259].) as symbolically reflected in his (*Will*iam) Shakespeare theory, divides him from his friend Mulligan, the Dublin literary establishment, and a cultural patriarchy in which the artist is indistingishable from a fundamentally violent God. He confronts Mulligan, now become his "enemy" (252):

> My will: his will that fronts me. Seas between.
> A man passed out between them, bowing, greeting.
> — Good day again, Buck Mulligan said.
> The portico (279).

Leopold Bloom sails on the maternal sea, "our great sweet mother" (3), between Buck and Stephen. Bloom will at day's end, reflect Stephen's day back to him more satisfactorily than Buck has just done for

Bloom, and will pour in the "porticoes" of his ear other than a usurper's poisonous mockery.[9]

Bloom's desire for procreation is as thwarted as Stephen's for artistic creation. Bloom's Molly, who had given him a son and heir in Rudy, is no longer sexually responsive since his death. His daughter, Milly, his "looking glass from night to morning" (75), does not satisfy his desire for a male heir. Molly is not a Mrs. Dedalus who will submit to husband and Church and the demands of child-bearing, but has an artistic and sexual life of her own, within which Bloom's role is servile and emasculated. Bloom's phallus, potential "father of thousands," has become in his own mind "limp..., a languid floating flower" (107). His phallus as limp flower (he is "Henry Flower" in his *poste restante* seduction of Martha) is the ineffectual instrument of authorship of his name and identity in the form of a son. The contradiction for Bloom in realising his phallic identity is Molly's refusal to efface herself as woman and to present him mirror-like with a son in his own image. Molly refuses the role of virginal mother, pure handmaid (provider of masturbatory intercourse) and blank page on which Bloom can authorise his name.

Bloom's inability to face his dependence on woman as other and its refusal of his desires is graphically presented at the end of "Sirens":

> A frowsy whore with black straw sailor hat askew came glazily in the day along the quay towards Mr. Bloom. When first he saw that form endearing. Yes, it is. I feel so lonely. Wet night in the lane....Knew Molly....Too dear too near to home sweet home. Sees me, does she? Looks a fright in the day....Look in here.
>
> In Lionel Marks's antique shop window haughty Henry Lionel Leopold dear Henry Flower earnestly Mr. Leopold Bloom envisaged candlestick melodeon oozing maggoty blowbags. Bargain: six bob. Might learn to play. Cheap. Let her pass....Chap sold me the Swedish razor he shaved me with....She's passing now (374/5).

Bloom is unable to face during daylight the consequences of his sexual estrangement from Molly. He turns to Lionel Marks's shop window and sees there his own indistinct image blended with a small organ, a kind of accordion. Bloom's "haughty" and hazy self-image, with its fluctuating names and identities, is blended with an antique, "maggoty", phallic "organ", and a razor as instrument of effacement of male difference and emasculation comes into his mind. Bloom, like Mulligan in the opening lines, is presented here (with mirroring window and razor) in a parodic act of self-communion with a castrated, antique masculinity which is unable to confront its dependence on and debase-

ment of woman. The fact that the prostitute, in addition to presenting him with a troublesome memory, reminds him of Molly is central, as is the phallus as "candlestick," a motif central to his encounter with Gerty MacDowell in "Nausicaa."

In the "Nausicaa" episode, we see Bloom acting out the consequences for sexual behaviour of his emasculated paternity. Bloom, dallying by the sea at Howth, masturbates as Gerty MacDowell, leaning back and gazing at fireworks, reveals the upper regions of her bloomered thighs. All this takes place to the solemn tones of the Litany of Our Lady and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament wafting from a nearby church, where a men's temperance retreat is being conducted by the Jesuit, Fr. Hughes. Gerty, her mind dazed with sentimental fiction, sees Bloom as the tall, dark Byronic lover and father-figure that will satisfy her narcissistic and incestuous (or perhaps merely repressed) desires:

> [S]he knew how to cry before the mirror. You are lovely, Gerty, it said (456).
>
> No prince charming is her beau ideal to lay a rare and wondrous love at her feet but rather a manly man with a strong quiet face who had not found his ideal, perhaps his hair slightly flecked with grey, and who would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with a long kiss. It would be heaven (457).

The depth of her self-involvement is indicated by her managing to see in Bloom such a figure: "the face that met her gaze there in the twilight...seemed to her the saddest she had ever seen" (463). Gerty undertakes to edify Bloom with a hint of the secrets of her bottom drawer and Bloom, with hand in pocket, ejaculates at the bursting of a Roman candle overhead:

> She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow the cry of a young girl's love, a strangled cry...(477).

Gerty is the snowy virginal woman who resists her emerging sexuality because of its threat to the Father. She "chokes" and strangles her desire by trying to remain the pre-pubescent girl sheltered by the paternal authority, reflecting unmediated the image of self-complete phallic potency. As she swings her leg to the *Tantum ergo* drifting from the church, Bloom is "literally worshipping at her shrine" (470/1). This occurs during the second verse of this hymn, when the Sacred Host, throned in its monstrance, is being adored by priest and people by kneelings, genuflections and prostrations.[10] Thus the Body of Christ,

the only-begotten and perfect image of the Father, is worshipped by the celibate Jesuit (special servant of the Pope, *il Papa*, the Father) and sober fathers of Dublin while Bloom adores his emasculated power over the virgin Gerty by exploding his *Roman* candle.

The reflected and inverted resonances of onanistic paternity are only hinted at in this brief discussion, but the analysis is clear: the seamless web of masculine narcissism requires a clear surface in which to gaze at itself undisturbed. The onset of Gerty's menstrual period produces "that irritation against her stays" (470), an indication of the literal physical restraint which is exercised on the female body to imprison its difference and make it a monstrance (a vessel of display) of male control of the image or figure. Instead of a physical body which, by its flow of menstrual blood, declares its unfertilised state, patriarchy requires an image, figure or symbol which mirrors its mastery and self-sufficiency. Any flaw in the figure of the woman betrays her physicality and thus her difference and sexual otherness. Gerty, as Bloom discovers, is lame, and his sense of satisfaction at his pocket-ejaculation turns into pity and contempt: "A defect is ten times worse in a woman" (479). He doesn't see its unflattering commentary on his masculinity because he is not desiring Gerty, but rather his fantasy of the female body: "She must have been thinking of someone else all the time. What harm?" (483). Bloom and Gerty's encounter is a cracked mirror, a self-divided, impotent and sentimentally repressed mirroring of sexual creativity, which is proportionate with that "mystery founded on the void," the unmediated begetting of Son by Father, and embodiment of the Father's perfect image in a virginal mother, which is the creed and symbol of the Church.

Bloom considers writing Gerty a message in the sand with a stick:

> What?
> I.
> ...Useless. Washed away. Tide comes here a pool near her foot. Bend, see my face there, dark mirror, breath on it, stirs.
> ...AM. A.
> No room. Let it go.
> Mr. Bloom effaced the letters with his slow boot. Hopeless thing sand (498).

Bloom's identity cannot be authorised, will not "flower" in the sand of the beach. His exchange with Gerty is too prophylactic to give birth to a text. The tide, which will come to her lame foot at the rock where she had stood will wash even his "I" away. Like the lame Gerty, the tidal pool is a "dark mirror," which, when breathed on, i.e. when verbal (or written) expression is attempted, will "stir" and render Bloom's self-communion indistinct.

As Paul H. Smith puts it: 'The phallic "I" has been exhausted at the very moment of its writing: it becomes useless: "Useless. Washed away' by the motive force of the sea."[11] The "I" of identity is followed by a female "A," which is the opening into the conceiving and authorising power of the alphabet which, for Bloom, is not possible. The "AM", with its dual capitalisation, brings *M*olly to mind as Bloom's "A." Her lack of cooperation suspends Bloom in his paternal authorial desires, rendering him sexually and expressively inarticulate.

The "Nausicaa" episode takes place at the foot of Howth Hill, where, in its botanical gardens, Molly originally induced (or seduced) Bloom's marriage proposal. It is also on the seashore: the sea is repeatedly associated in the novel with the pre-Christian notion of mother as divine, which in its fluidity, continually brings to birth and draws to death: "seaspawn and seawrack," where Stephen has earlier read the "signatures of all things" (45). Poised on the edge of a language as fluid as the sea, Bloom "flung his wooden pen away. The stick fell in silted sand, stuck" (498). Bloom's marriage to Molly has come a full barren circle, his pen/phallus stuck in the sand at the foot of the edenic, botanic origin of his union with Molly, unable to flower in the shifting sands of language. His uncircumcised foreskin also sticks painfully in his own barren bodily effluxes after his encounter with Gerty (487). Divided from his origins in the Judeo-Christian patriarchal tradition, Bloom has become a "languid, floating flower," a creature of "chance" (498). At day's end Bloom will come to rest at 7 Eccles Street, the "childman weary" (870), at Molly's feet.

Passing through the catharsis and purgation of their converged and mirrored fears in the "Circe" episode (Stephen faces and routs the ghost of his mother with his phallus/ashplant; Bloom retrieves the ashplant and rescues Stephen from the police, the paternal "legal fiction"), Bloom brings Stephen at last to his kitchen and they share a substantial (not tran-, con- or sub-substantial [511]) eucharist of "Epp's massproduct, the creature cocoa" (791). Bloom has relinquished

> ...his symposiarchal right to the moustache cup of imitation Crown Derby presented to him by his only daughter, Millicent (Milly), he substituted a cup identical with that of his guest and served extraordinarily to his guest and, in reduced measure, to himself the viscous cream ordinarily reserved for the breakfast of his wife Marion (Molly) (790/1).

Bloom, with Stephen symposiarch, relinquishes that vessel of his role as imitation patriarch, drinks from an otherwise identical vessel a "collation" (monastic breakfast) of cocoa extraordinarily mixed with

Molly's sticky cream. It takes the almost sperm-like milk of Molly (she had "enough for two" [893]) to revitalize their cloistered masculinity.

Discovering the analogy and complementarity of their temperaments as scientist/artist and as "accumulation of past" and "destination of future" (807/8), Bloom and Stephen "substantially" affirm their own natures, Stephen as "rational animal" able to mediate inductively "between a micro- and macro-cosm ineluctably constructed *upon* the incertitude of the void", Bloom as "competant keyless citizen" able to proceed *through* the incertitude of the void" (808, my italics). As artist/scientist, hearer/seer (807/8), future/past and thinker/doer, Stephen/Bloom process deacon/priest into the garden like the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Bloom carries a lighted candle, Stephen his "Latin Quarter" hat on his ashplant. This indicates phallic light and life for Bloom (recall the Roman candle and candlestick melodeon) and greater intellectual and artistic potency for Stephen.

Under Molly's lighted window, they behold each other:

> Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces (824).

The cracked mirror of Irish art is made "reciprocal flesh" here, under Molly's lighted window, "the mystery of an invisible person,...donated by a visible sign, a lamp" (824). Molly, as woman likened to the moon (823/4), able among other things to illumine by reflection, is able to enlighten "both mirrors...of theirhisnothis fellowfaces." The narcissism of previous mirror imagery is inverted here. It is substantial and reciprocal, joint and yet distinct, each the image of the other as well as of himself, because mediated by the mysterious Molly, the uncertain void, who as woman has "splendour, when visible:...attraction, when invisible" (824). The parallel of this scene with the "Nausicaa" episode is unmistakeable. Rather than a virgin mother supplicated by and supplicating for sinners an embodied God, reflecting in inverted division a lecherous cuckold inflamed by a maimed child, we have an anything but virginal embodied but invisible mystery (Molly) illuminating the respectful and mutual recognition of individuals (Stephen and Bloom). It is a less prurient and futile relation, in which Bloom and Stephen must let go their narcissistic creative drives and acknowledge their lack of self-completeness and paternal plenitude.

Molly/moon has caused their tides to rise within, and Stephen and Bloom micturate, their gazes elevated to Molly's "luminous and semiluminous shadow" (825). It is significant also that the "Ithaca" episode is in a catechetical style, since it is an exploration of the credal and symbolic implications of the Bloom-Stephen-Molly substantial trinity. Its scientific syntax is a condition of its substantial, as opposed to

trans- and con-substantial, concerns. It is enfleshed, not angelic, creaturehood which is treated and the problems of terrestrial, rather than celestial, productivity, artistic and (applied) scientific are addressed. Molly as earth mother/wife/lover attains pre-Christian and pre-patriarchal celestial proportions as moon, that seductive absent presence which mediates theirhisnothis induction and deduction, remasculating, making "potential", Bloom and Stephen's productivity. As Molly says toward the end of her monologue and the book: "as for them saying theres no God I wouldn't give a snap of my fingers for all their learning why don't they go and create something" (931). Molly, divine mother, creator of Milly, knows whereof she speaks.

Illuminated by Molly's visible/invisible presence/absence, Bloom and Stephen silently contemplate each other "in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces." Molly is the substantiating principle, the carnation, of Bloom and Stephen's self-dividedness. She is the embodied mystery which mediates Bloom's and Stephen's creative and procreative desires, allowing each to see in the other, not merely the image or symbol of their respective desires, i.e. themselves objectified, but they see themselves subjectified also, as the concrete substantiation and embodiment of the other's desire. Their immediate desire is both illumined and refused in this mediation. For Bloom, Stephen becomes a son who is neither physical reflection nor imitation. For Stephen, Bloom becomes a paternal creative principle that does not subject him to its own demands of authorisation. Bloom sees, through Stephen, a paternity in himself which does not require procreation, and Stephen sees, through Bloom, a physical difference between himself and paternity, a male creative potential founded upon the difference, rather than identity, of creator and created.

The halting, divided and tortuous language of the seventeen chapters devoted to Stephen and Bloom gives way in the final chapter to the unpunctuated, undifferentiated flow of Molly's inner monologue. The "uncertain void" which has mediated the substantiation and differentiation of creativity in Bloom and Stephen is neither holy spirit nor virgin mother, but sexual woman. She is physically embodied language, the *mater*ial earthen mother of substantial creation.

Joyce himself said of "Penelope" that it was the "*clou*" of *Ulysses*:

> It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breats, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because, bottom ..., woman, yes.*[12]

The axis, as well as the origin and goal, of Molly's monologue is the "female word *yes*", representing Molly's essential femininity, her sex, the entrance to and exit from her enwombing womanhood. The monologue turns around the onset of her menstrual period, aggravated by her adulterous romp with Boylan that afternoon: 'O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea anyhow he didn't make me pregnant as big as he is" (914). Boylan, the representative of vain phallic potency, is not Molly's desired mate but her way to be "damn well fucked" (929) in the absence of Bloom's attentions. Molly becomes the embodiment of the "great sweet mother" (3) the sea, as she squats on the chamber-pot, and reversal of the Judeo-Christian creation myth. In "Genesis," God's second day of creation is devoted to dividing "the waters above from the waters below" (1:6-7). Molly, as terrestial woman reunites them with a watery blood that has proven its spiritual fertility. As Bloom himself had written to her once:

> My Precious one everything connected with your glorious Body everything underlined that comes from it is a thing of beauty and of joy for ever (916).

From Molly's "Precious Body" comes her precious blood, nature's way of washing out the unfertilised egg, the sin of the natural world. (Boylan, too, is seen from this to be barrenly egoistic in his stud-like masculinity, as he fails to impregnate Molly.) Bloom's worship of Molly's effluvia takes on, in the absence of intercourse, the inversions (if not perversions) associated with the fear of castration. His penchant for anal kisses, breast-sucking and cunnilingus is a desire to commune, as if eucharistically, with the substantial bread and wine, body and blood of Molly. But, like traditional patriarchal religion, it has strong elements of fear and narcissism. She thinks of his self-absorbed cunnilingus: "he does it all wrong too thinking of his own pleasure" (919).

In the midst of Molly's menstruation, she thinks:

> and they always want to see a stain on the bed to know your a virgin for them...you could be a widow or divorced 40 times over a daub of red ink would do or blackberry juice no thats too purply O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh sweets of sin whoever suggested that business for women what between clothes and cooking and children (914)

I suggest that this passage is the essential uncracked mirror of Molly's unservile art, and credal symbol of her rejection of narcissistic paternity. But further it is the substantiation, the oceanic re-engulfing of that void which the narrator himself ("Jamesy") had opened up between himself and his text. Molly as the indeterminate flux of language, reasserts herself and her independence from the authorisa-

tion, divinisation and hypostasisation of authorial mastery of language and of woman. The narrator's offering of Molly's monologue as the plenitude of his text is an attempt to fix language as pure virginal (non-intercoursing) mirror of himself as father/author/procreator creator. The illusion of the monologue as spoken is refused by Molly as written, by her turning on her master and revealing the faked, sentimental ("too purply") implications of his self-portrayal ("reading the book of himself") as earth goddess Molly. Meredith's dictum, used by Stephen in "Scylla and Charybdis," "The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done" (255), finds its full reference here to patriarchal creative narcissism.

Molly rejects "that business for women" and the servile drudgery of "clothes and cooking and children," the physical restraint and merely *re*productive "labour" in which the patriarchal tradition sees itself reflected and symbolised. Molly's menstruation is her rejection as sexual woman of the inseminating pen/phallus of "Jamesy" as narrative persona, and the authorial identity he tries to father upon her. Molly deconstructs herself as plenitudinous voice and reveals herself as writing, a chain of signifiers with no transcendent signified, at the same moment unmasking Jamesy's attempt at self-authorship, "the creation he has piled up to hide from himself."[13]

Of course, Molly and Jamesy are Joyce's self-deconstruction, his refusing the divine narratorial persona, which hides behind its creation viewing it like a transcendent god. He restores to his text its dignity as material, substantial language, which cannot be canonised by his own intended, subjective meaning, joining as it will the sea of polysemity which is other, woman, the different or non-identical, the "incertitude of the void" (as Molly says: "what's the idea of making us like that with a big hole in the middle of us" [877]). It is this dignity which Joyce substantiates in Molly's language, her affirmation, that vaginal "yes" on which her text opens and closes, the orifice through which writer and reader (man *and* woman) have passed and must continue to pass in the insemination and parturition of seme-ing.

I have endeavored to demonstrate the centrality of the problem of desire and its expression in *Ulysses*. For Joyce, language, and particularly written language, is a condition of thwarted desire, of a refusal of the material world to submit to the subject's control. The internal division of desire, issuing in self-consciousness, is a necessary differentiation of subject and object which, however, is fraught with the dangers of narcissism, which were epitomised for Joyce by Romantic

consciousness. He confronted his youthful Romanticism in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* The deflation of Stephen in *Ulysses* is the product of Joyce's written mediation of Romantic desire. In the closing diaristic passage of *A Portrait,* the barren narcissism of Romantic self-consciousness achieves its full flight. Between *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* appeared an intermediation of the problematic of language and desire in the short work, *Giacomo Joyce* (unpublished during his lifetime). Rather than the free-flying writing of self-fulfilling desire, as at the end of *A Portrait*, the first-person narrator checks himself in *Giacomo*, through his writing, in the midst of a Romantic exaltation now perceived as dangerous or false (he is enamoured of a young Triestine woman, his pupil): "Easy now, Jamesy!" At the end of the work, in the ashes of unrequited desire, he writes:

> Youth has an end: the end is here. It will never be. You know that well. What then? Write it, damn you, write it! What else are you good for?[14]

In *Ulysses*, Joyce writes a differentiation of desire in the form of Bloom and Stephen, and writes, in Molly, a differentiation of the writing of desire itself, which returns, through the materiality of language, to what for us is always already out there, the other which (we fear) we desire. It is the lack, the differentiation on which desire is founded, that Joyce affirms in writing *Ulysses.*

NOTES

1. Arthur Power, *Conversations with James Joyce* (London: Millington, 1974), p. 110.
2. See. G. Hartmann, "Romanticism and Antiself-consciousness," in *Romanticism: Points of View* (2nd ed.) ed. R. Gleckner and G. Enscoe (Detroit: Wayne State U.P., 1975), pp. 287-97. For an interesting exploration of the legacy of antiself-consciousness, see William A. Reid, "Pater's Dionysius and Wordsworth's Anti-self-consciousness," unpublished M. A. thesis, Concordia University, 1981.
3. Examples of Derrida's earlier, more accessible works are *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1976) and *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1978).
4. "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning." *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 247.
5. *Ulysses* (London: Bodley Head, 1960), p. 826. All references are to this edition and are hereafter indicated in the text by page numbers only.
6. William M. Schutte, in his chapter, "Mr. Bloom and Shakespeare" in *Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of Ulysses"* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1957; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1971), 1971), pp. 121-35, fails to discuss this passage and its implications for Bloom's self-understanding.
7. Iago:
   I hate the Moor;
   And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets

H'as done my office. I know not if't be true:
But I for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety (I.iii.380-4).

8. See James W. Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," *Semiotica 30* (1980): 27-39, and Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," in *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp. 1-7.
9. Hamlet's father's Ghost describes his murder at the hands of Claudius:
   Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
   With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,
   And in the porches of my ears did pour
   The leperous distilment...(I.v.61-4).
10. "[O]ne of the candles was going to set fire to the flowers and Father Conroy got up and settled it all right and she could see the gentleman...and she swung her leg more in and out in time" (470). Bloom's "flower" (107) is just about to become as enflamed as the "Roman candle."
11. Paul H. Smith, "Joyce's One Bedazzled Eye," in *Pound Revised* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 101. I would also like to acknowledge a general indebtedness throughout to Colin MacCabe's *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1978).
12. Letter to Frank Budgen, Aug. 16, 1921. Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1959), pp. 516/7.
13. For a fascinating discussion of the philosophical implications of "woman" and its impact on style, see Derrida's treatment of Nietzsche's characterisation of truth as woman in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Marlow (Chicago and London: U. of Chicago P., 1978).
14. *Giacomo Joyce* (New York: Viking, 1968), pp. 6, 16.