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Joyce's Lipspeech: Syntax and
the Subject in "Sirens"

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The English language allows very little independence to the organs of the body: most verbs of conscious behavior require a grammatical subject implying an undivided, masterful, efficient self of which the organ is mere slave or satellite. In *James wears a ring* or *He turns the page* it is only from the verb and its object that we deduce the role of finger or hand, since they make no appearance in the sentence; and if it becomes necessary to stipulate the organs involved, we do so by suggesting that they are places where, or accessories by means of which, the controlling individual performs the activities in question: *James wears a ring through his nose*; *He turns the page with his toes*. We seldom stop to question that easy transition from subject to verb, to consider what a totalizing and naturalizing gesture it is to constitute in language a complete, homogeneous, individual subject ("James," "he"), a single, coherent, separable activity ("wears," "turns"), and a relation between them of pure transitivity. If, however, the verb is given a subject that is only a part of the whole individual, the sentence immediately registers as anomalous: *James's finger wears a ring*; *His hand turns the page*. It is not just the feeling of tautology that produces the oddness here; we are even more unsettled by sentences in which the subject is *not* implied by the rest of the sentence—*James's nose wears a ring* or *Joyce's toes turn the page*. What is worrying is that the grammatical subject is no longer a human subject: syntax and our sense of the world have ceased to coincide. Even when the activity is fully localizable in the conscious mind, we prefer to specify the individual as a mental and physical unity: *She thought hard*, not *Her mind thought hard*. The totalizing pronoun "she" satisfies us by providing a fully constituted human subject, answerable to the rules and norms of the society which confers identity upon all subjects; "her mind" disturbs us as an isolated and ungovernable potency.¹

Ulysses, however, fails to conform to these syntactic expectations. Take for example, the following statement: "His hand accepted the moist tender gland and slid it into a side pocket" (60). Such a sentence, in which the transaction between Bloom and Dlugacz becomes a transaction between two organs, hand and kidney, challenges momentarily our untroubled belief in the human subject as unitary, unconstrained, and capable of originating action from a single center of consciousness; the sharp focus

which is the goal of traditional realistic narrative has been narrowed to a point at which it threatens the subjective unity it usually serves to sustain. Only when the unity of mind and body is actually broken does it seem legitimate—though still troubling—for the organ to command its own intentional verb, as in young Dignam's memory of his father's death: "I couldn't hear the other things he said but I saw his tongue and his teeth trying to say it better" (251). Even the body acting as a whole must be behaving abnormally if it is to be permitted the privilege of functioning as the subject of a verb of this kind: "once, sleeping, his body had risen, crouched and crawled in the direction of a heatless fire and, having attained its destination, there, curled, unheated, in night attire had lain, sleeping" (692).² The verbs we are accustomed to finding with organs of the body as subjects usually involve completely involuntary and localized muscular behavior (or behavior which is perceived in this way by a particular character or narrational point of view): thus in "Aeolus," "His mouth continued to twitch unspaking in nervous curls of disdain" (138)—and even here "disdain" seems to reintroduce the intentionality expelled by "twitch."

Not surprisingly, among the organs whose independent initiative is stringently circumscribed by these linguistic norms is the voice itself: we guard the right of the "speaking subject" to be master of the speech apparatus, to speak through it, not to let *it* speak. However, ten lines into the main body of "Sirens," the chapter most closely concerned with voices, we come across this: "—In the second carriage, Miss Douce's wet lips said, laughing in the sun" (257). Here is a sentence which refuses the usual automatic move from vocal activity to a free, originating subject; we stop at the lips, which have somehow managed to displace Miss Douce as the author of the statement. An indication of the barmaid's mindlessness as she produces mechanical chatter—or, rather, lets her speech organs produce it for her? Perhaps, but the device occurs too often in the "Sirens" chapter, and in relation to too many characters, to be seen only as the reflex of a particular state of mind. Lips act again and again beyond the reach of a mastering self:

Her wet lips tittered:

—He's killed looking back. (257)

Lenehan's lips over the counter lisped a low whistle of decoy. (264)

Lenehan still drank and grinned at his tilted ale and at Miss Douce's lips that all but hummed, not shut, the oceansong her lips had trilled. (265)

Down she sat. All ousted looked. Lips laughing. (275)

Sour pipe removed he held a shield of hand beside his lips that cooed a moonlight nightcall, clear from anear, a call from afar, replying. (279)

See. Play on her. Lip blow. (285)

Miss Mina Kennedy brought near her lips to ear of tankard one.

—Mr Dollard, they murmured low. (287)

Yes, her lips said more loudly, Mr Dollard. (288)

Here are six pairs of lips all engaged in activities we normally regard as the proper province of the whole individual acting under the command of a central will: they say, titter, lisp, hum, trill, laugh, coo, blow, murmur, and say loudly. We might add to this list of independent speech organs the "boot-snout" that sniffs a rude reply to Miss Douce (258), Bob Cowley's Adam's apple that "hoarsed softly" (271), and Richie Goulding's breath and teeth that "fluted with plaintive woe" (272), as well as the reversal in "Speech paused on Richie's lips" (272). Although examples cluster most thickly in the "Sirens" chapter, they occur in many other places too, with no shortage in the earlier, stylistically more "normal," episodes—we might note that Mulligan's voice speaks in the opening pages (4, 5—where it is a "wellfed voice," 10), that the milkwoman "bows her old head to a voice that speaks to her loudly" (14), that Mr. Deasy's voice speaks to Stephen (33), and that Bloom hears his own voice say something (56).³ (In "Circe" the attribution of intentions and speech to organs and subjects is of course concretely dramatized.) There is clearly too much vocal and emotional energy of different kinds being expended here to allow "mechanical behavior" to stand as a satisfactory explanation.

Another way of attempting to account for the independence of these speech organs would be to appeal to the figure of *synecdoche*. We find a familiar textbook example, somewhat fragmented, among Bloom's meditations in this chapter: "Beerpull. Her hand that rocks the cradle rules the. Ben Howth. That rules the world" (288), and in "Circe" Stephen recites the customary description of this trope in connection with another example: "Doctor Swift says one man in armour will beat ten men in their shirts. Shirt is synecdoche. Part for the whole" (588). This definition in terms of a straightforward substitution implies a reassuringly reversible movement which allows the momentarily challenged unity to be retrieved, so that we are not shaken in our assurance that it is mothers who rock cradles (and rule the world), not hands. It would also be possible, however, to regard the naming of the whole individual when only a part of the body is active as itself a figure of speech, albeit one which we use all the time and therefore take for granted; in fact, the substitution of whole for part is included in the classical definition of synecdoche. The variously busy lips of "Sirens" can therefore be seen as a more *literal* rendering of human vocal activity than is normally permitted by linguistic conventions. Joyce's transgression of the selectional restrictions of English syntax can be regarded as a stratagem which liberates the body from a dictatorial and englobing will, and allows its organs their own energies and proclivities.

A further effect of this organic liberation is erotic power: sexuality thrives on the separation of the body into independent parts, while a sexually repressive morality insists on the wholeness and singleness of body and mind (or soul). One of the most striking whole-for-part synecdoches is the substitution of the entire individual for the genital organs in euphemistic references to sexual activity: "You can . . . play with yourself while I just go through her a few times," says Boylan to Bloom in "Circe" (566).¹ The business that all these lips are about in "Sirens" is in one way or another sexual: Lenehan's flirting, Molly's first appearance to Bloom, Simon Dedalus's memory of moonlight barcaroles, Bloom's fantasies of oral sex, and of course the titillating ministrations of the Sirens themselves. Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy, like their Homeric counterparts, know the power of a sexuality radiated from a single organ: the Sirens heard by Odysseus sing both of and in a "honey-sweet voice that issues from our lips" (*The Odyssey of Homer* 12:187-88),⁴ and the Ormond Hotel barmaids offer not only erotically independent lips and voices, but a rising and falling bosom, a smackable thigh, and a masturbatory finger and thumb.⁷

The "Sirens" chapter teems, in fact, with the names of organs (as so often, Joyce's schema, which singles out the ear, gives a misleading emphasis); and once the parts of the body are separated in this manner, the possibility arises of replacing one by another. When lips are said to hum, coo, and murmur, they are doing duty for other parts of the vocal apparatus. In this chapter, a bust hums (266), eyes ask (279), lips and eyes listen (262). Bloom even tries, in a fantasy of remote-controlled seduction, to commandeer another organ to serve in place of both voice and lips: "Ventriloquise. My lips closed. Think in my stom" (285). (His most notable utterance in the chapter does indeed proceed from the lower rather than the higher organs.) We hardly need Freud to persuade us that sexual development and variety depend on this substitutability of organs. Lips may be a synecdochic substitute for the whole individual of which they are a part, but they may also be a metaphoric substitute for another organ which they resemble.⁵ Miss Douce's lips are twice given the adjective "wet," and she complains after her laughing spree, with undecidable reference, "I feel all wet" (260). (Compare this with Molly's "I'm drenched," which Bloom remembers her screaming as she laughed in the wake of Dollard's tight-trouser departure [270].)

¹This traffic between vocal and sexual organs occurs throughout the chapter, the word "organ" itself providing one of the bridges:

—Sure, you'd burst the tympanum of her ear, man, Mr Dedalus said through smoke aroma, with an organ like yours.

In bearded abundant laughter Dollard shook upon the keyboard. He would.

—Not to mention another membrane, Father Cowley added. (270)

(In the background here is the displacement from vagina to ear in one account of the Virgin's conception in Christian mythology; it becomes more explicit in "Circe" when Virag produces the anti-Christian alternative: "Panther, the Roman centurion, polluted her with his genitories . . . Messiah! He burst her tympanum" [521].) Words occur which suit both voice and genitals,⁷ whether male: "Tenderness it welled: slow, swelling. Full it throbbled" (274), or female: "Gap in their voices too. Fill me, I'm warm, dark, open" (282). In Bloom's musings on Ben Dollard, voice and testicles are associated through the obvious physiological connection: "With all his belongings on show. . . . Well, of course, that's what gives him the base barreltone. For instance eunuchs" (270); or "Good voice he has still. No eunuch yet with all his belongings" (283). And in Tom Kernan's highly condensed anecdote, the context of adulterous sex encourages a double reading of the word "throat": "Authentic fact. How Walter Bapty lost his voice. Well, sir, the husband took him by the throat. *Scoundrel*, said he. *You'll sing no more lovesongs*" (281).

Molly, also, is to be seen with her "belongings on show" (284), and the parallel with Dollard extends to the association, thanks to the double applicability of the word "full," between them and the voice: "Full voice of perfume of what perfume does your lilactrees. Bosom I saw, both full, throat warbling" (275). The vocal and the vaginal became indistinguishable; Simon Dedalus, agreeing that Molly has a fine voice, adds, "The lower register, for choice" (289). (Once again, "Circe" is outrageously explicit: Bella's "sowcunt barks" [554].) And returning to the wetness with which we began, we can trace a pattern whereby the flow of the singing voice flows into the flow of genital arousal, a language of flow that, like the language of flowers, is the language of Henry Flower's synecdochic love:

Flower to console me and a pin cuts lo. Means something, language of flow. Was it a daisy? Innocence that is. (263)

Tenors get women by the score. Increase their flow. Throw flower at his feet when will we meet? (274)

Flood of warm jimjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow, invading. Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup. Pores to dilate dilating. Tup. The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o'er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow joygush, tupthrop. Now! Language of love. (274)

One could almost conceive of the chapter as a version of Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets*: a conclave of talkative (not to say musical) genitalia.

⁷Nor is it the vocal organs alone that prove sexually substitutable: ears, hair, skin, hands, fingers, nose, and eyes all function as genital surrogates during the course of the chapter.⁶ Bloom's allusion to the synecdochic hand

that rocks the cradle also involves sexual substitution, the barmaid's hand on the beerpull recalling the stimulating activity of Molly's hand on Ben Howth (which in another passage is displaced onto a harpist's touch on the strings of her instrument: "The harp that once or twice. Cool hands. Ben Howth, the rhododendrons. We are their harps" [271]). It is not, after all, maternal but sexual instincts that rule the world, and they exercise their power through specific organs. (We might recall that during the "Sirens" episode Boylan and Molly are brought together for their adulterous act by a duet in which genital union is euphemized as a union of hands: Mozart and Da Ponte's *Là ci darem la mano*.) And the sexual innuendos by means of which the two barmaids urge one another into orgasmic laughter (259–60) are all achieved by displacement: "And your other eye!", "With his bit of beard!", "Married to the greasy nose!" (Lenehan uses the same technique in his advances to Miss Kennedy: "Will you put your bill down inn my troath and pull upp ah bone?" [262].)

In all these processes of displacement, decentering, and exchange can be seen one aspect of the interpenetration of the categories of "form" and "content" that characterizes *Ulysses*, going well beyond (and indeed undermining) any notion of mimesis or iconicity. The liberation of the part from the whole, and the possibility of condensation and substitution, come about only because the meaning of an organ is not exhausted by its place and function in the economy of the unified individual, as determined by the cultural and ideological context; it has its own physical properties and patterns of behavior which displace and subvert the central, commanding, conscious will, and open up the possibility of continual reinterpretation. In just the same way, every item of speech or writing has its own sound and shape, independent of its authorized function in the language system, and this material specificity and independence prohibit transparency, fixity, and singleness of meaning; words, even letters, have lives of their own in *Ulysses* (and even more so, of course, in *Finnegans Wake*). In "Sirens," these two processes come together: bodily displacements and substitutions are enacted in the displacements and substitutions of language. It is the regular patterning of syntax that makes it possible for one item in the chain to be paradigmatically replaced by another in defiance of semantic restrictions ("her lips" for "she"), and it is the arbitrariness of the material signifier that makes it possible for one word to point in several directions ("swelling," "throbbled," "warm," "flow/er"). (Bloom himself reflects on this potential in language—and achieves another vocal/genital transfer—in bringing to mind Molly's urination: "Chamber music. Could make a kind of a pun on that" [282].) The "Sirens" episode insists that neither language (in its materiality) nor the body (in its physicality) can be seen as merely secondary and subservient to a nonmaterial, transcendent, controlling principle,

whether that principle is called "meaning" or "the self"; more importantly, it demonstrates some of the pleasures, sexual and textual, that we owe to this fact.

Notes

1. We do, however, say "My head hurts" where French, for example, has *J'ai mal à la tête*: an even more stringent insistence on a dominating central subjectivity. In other languages, the fusion of individual and action extends to a verbal system that can do without personal pronouns (*cogito*—"I think").
2. Roy K. Gottfried comments briefly on the occurrence of such sentences in the novel, finding in them a "drift into apparently mere patterning and mechanics" which leaves Bloom "almost a passive object" (70); he views them, that is, as having a traditional expressive function, representing human behavior as mechanical.
3. The attribution of volition to the voice in these examples should be distinguished from the use in narration of phrases like "A voice spoke" to signify a point of view from which no other information is available. This is done by Joyce—with slightly parodic scrupulousness—in introducing Haines: "A tall figure rose . . .—Have you the key? a voice asked" (11).
4. Tr. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).
5. In his survey of studies concerned with the equivalence between the mouth and the vagina, Ivan Fónagy notes that in several languages the word for "lips" metaphorically designates both the vocal cords and the lips of the vulva as well (85).
6. The term "fetishization" offers itself here, but because it implies a long-term transference of libido I would resist it. What is at stake is a matter more of erotic (and verbal) play than neurotic fixation.

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To Sing or to Sign

Maud Ellmann

"Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax," muses Bloom in "Lestrygonians." "Sirens" parallels "Proteus," and provides it with a kind of parallaxative. Like "Proteus," "Sirens" sets the audible against the visible, time against space, voice against writing; but Bloom's fart escapes both of the modalities which these two chapters pose as ineluctable.

As magicians of the voice, the Sirens stand for the enchantments of the audible. To resist them, Bloom must discover a new lure, and open an alternative modality. While the ear surrenders to the blandishments of voice, the roving Odyssean eye pursues the letter, and it is through writing that Bloom begins to make his getaway.¹ What the ear hears, the eye reads; and in particular, the eye reads names and signatures. "Signatures of all things I am here to read" (*U* 37), thinks Stephen, while in "Sirens," "Bloowhose dark eye read Aaron Figatner's name" (259). As well as reading signatures, Bloom's task in "Sirens" is to write his name to Martha Clifford. Here he must summon all his polytropic cunning. For while he signs the letter, he must still preserve the incognito he imposes on himself, the law that Nosey Flynn nosed out in "Lestrygonians":

O, Bloom has his good points. But there's one thing he'll never do.
His hand scrawled a dry pen signature beside his grog.
—I know, Davy Byrne said.
—Nothing in black and white, Nosey Flynn said. (178)

So Bloom must find a pseudo-signature: and more than that, a countersign (for Molly's countersign, see R. Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* 162). This mark enables him to face the music without unstopped ears, but it also gives him the guts to shun its charms. Because it sneaks *between* modalities, this autograph will open forth a heresy. The Greek root of "heresy" implies a middle voice, a middle way. "Heresy" resembles "odyssey," for both pursue a middle course of action or of thought, between antitheses or rocks and whirlpools. By eluding binarism, both condemn themselves to endless errancy.

"Proteus" and "Sirens" meditate the heresies couched in "contransmagnificandjewbangstantiality." In "Sirens," song and signature compete for the annunciation of the Virgin. Ben Dollard would take her with his voice: "Sure, you'd burst the tympanum of her ear, man, Mr Dedalus said through smoke aroma, with an organ like yours" (270). Bloom foregoes

the penetrations of the voice, but he would ravish with his writing. "Blank face," he thinks. "Virgin should say: or fingered only. Write something on it: page" (285). This image harks back to "Proteus," where Stephen envisions Eve's unnailed flesh as a "buckler of taut vellum," an unwritten page (38). The writing that blemishes this vellum is the navel, which undersigns the strandentwining cable of maternity. Because he would deny maternity, and beget a father for his name, Stephen must erase the navel from the page. But his own logic means that he can never write. If writing is the scar upon the belly where the mother's namelessness engraves itself upon the flesh in mockery of Stephen's name and patrimony, to write is to unname and to unman. This is why Bloom can only write his name in womantalk, the language of flowers, the language "they" like because "no-one can hear" (78). He foregoes his father's name to write "an anenome's letter," and to disseminate maternal countersigns (*FW* 563).

How is Bloom to write umbiliform? An answer may be found in Plutarch's essay "On the E at Delphi," for the letter *E* was carved into the navel of the world, the stone of the Delphic oracle (*Plutarch's Morals* 173–96). When he countersigns his pseudo-signature with two "Greek ees," Bloom commemorates this ancient graffito, and hollows out an omphalos within his name. The difference between a Greek *E* and a Roman *E* cannot be enunciated; nor can it pierce the tympan of the ear. Only the eye can see the *E*.¹ Through this navel strategy, our latter-day Odysseus eludes the Sirens and the perilous pleasures of the voice, as Homer's *Noman* once escaped the eyeless Cyclops.¹

So far, so good. Bloom supplants the phallus with the omphalos. He escapes the myth of vocal penetration by writing Greek *E*'s on the virgin page. The voice does not deflower Henry Flower, for his silent *E* subverts its whole modality. If, as Bloom says, "time makes the tune" (*U* 278), it would seem that space and writing had outdone the Siren time, the Siren music. But the etymology of heresy involves the notion of a middle course, and Odysseus is one who steers *between* antitheses. Besides, Stephen indicates that the father governs *both* modalities. "[The man with my voice and my eyes,]" he says (38), the man who orders all the audible and visible. Bloom, the new womanly man, must uncover a new language which eludes both voice and eyes, both music and writing: a language which evades antithesis itself, as Penelope will add a dangerous supplement to the binary order of paternity.

The Greek *E* belongs to this new discourse, for it does not confine itself to one modality. Indeed, it crosses both and double-crosses their duality. Bloom's "kakography" is such a consummate escape that it escapes the text itself, and we only read the *E* in its transliterated form: "ee" (*U* 279; also see *FW* 180). Besides, Bloom listens for the *E* as well as reading it and writing it. "There's music everywhere," he thinks. "Ruttledge's door: ee

creaking" (*U* 282). He hears ees creaking, he sees ees Greeking: and while the *E* enjoys the charms of both modalities, it also opens a defect in both, an unvoiced, unseen residue. Is it possible that we have missed a *third* modality? Bloom seems to think so when he muses, "Words? Music? No, it's what's behind" (274). What's behind is Bloom's behind, and it is Bloom's behind that enunciates the missing ee. "Pwee! A wee little wind piped eeee. In Bloom's little wee" (288). This is an *E* that Bloom neither sings nor signs. He farts it. This ee outdoes Odysseus himself, the very principle of slippage and escape, for the fart escapes its own escaper. A new voice, its eeee belongs to music, but it also seeps into the written word, to vex the opposite modality. The fart explodes in the very letters of the word "written" which constitutes Bloom's epitaph: "My eppripftaph. Be pfrwritt" (257). As writing, the fart cajoles the eye: as voice, it saturates the ear.⁷ But there is a third organ which can detect the fart when it is neither audible nor visible.

This organ may be found at the end of "Sirens" and of "Proteus," for these two endings mirror one another. In "Sirens," Bloom makes sure there is "No-one behind" (291), before he lets his behind utter its last word. Stephen mimes this gesture in "Proteus," turning his eyes "over a shoulder, rere regardant" (51), before he dares to pick his nose. Later, Bloom appropriates his words in "Circe," when he stammers "rerererepugnant," guiltily (538). If this is a coincidence, Bloom twice indicates in "Sirens" that coincidence is the order of the day (263, 275). How do Bloom's and Stephen's stealthy gestures coincide? Is there some link between the nose and rear, between the nose and what's behind?

If Bloom's fart escapes the father's ear, the father's eye, it leaves its "eppripftaph" for the nose alone. It is in the nose that heresy has found its middle course, for the art of the fart could find no greater connoisseur. Similarly, when Stephen deposits his dry snot in "Proteus," he countersigns his carefully constructed patriarchal universe. Snot has become a patriarchal signifier, since the "grey sweet mother" is the "snot-green sea." For Bloom, the nose outdoes the phallus, and in the end defeats the suitors in "Penelope." While Molly broods of Boylan and "that tremendous big red brute of a thing," she wonders that "his nose is not so big" (742). "Married to the greasy nose" (260), she, too, has left the ear and eye behind in a voyage towards a new olfactory modality.

Why should the nose be greasy? It would be far-fetched to turn to Freud, and to the famous fetish of the shine on the nose that marked and masked the loss of the maternal phallus ("Fetishism," *Complete Works* 147-57). (Freud also argued that civilization with all its discontents came into being when the eye took over from the nose [*Civilization* 99n, 106n].) It is perhaps more pertinent that "grease" is slang for "unction," or that it eases entries and odyssean exits. Moreover, the Greek *E* whispers in greasy (Greece-ee),

so that Bloom's nose may glisten with his secret signature. In "Sirens," nose becomes "knows" (*U* 260), and since the word "knows" derives from "gnosis," it is as if knowledge itself were rooted in the wayward odysseys of heresy. By writing Greek "ees" where Roman "ees" should be, Bloom supplants the Roman Church with a nosey gnostic jewgreek heresy. What the ear hears, and the eye sees, give way to what the nose knows.

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Echo or Narcissus?

Daniel Ferrer

What song the syrens sang may not be *beyond all conjecture*, but perhaps there are more important problems to be solved now: I am not satisfied with a purely musical analysis of the "Sirens." The general analogy between the technique of this chapter and a *fuga per canonem* seems particularly unilluminating for a real understanding of the nature of Joyce's stylistic achievement. Of course, with some distortion of both terms of the comparison, one can demonstrate a certain similarity between this chapter and a fugue (although it is obviously much closer to a *bel canto* opera). Of course, the *fuga per canonem* theory is authenticated by Stuart Gilbert's *authorized* commentary. But this is precisely the point. It is high time it was said that the denominations of the various techniques in the Joyce/S. Gilbert chart are so vague, so impressionistic, that they mean very little and hide, rather than reveal, the individuality of the different chapters.⁷ This can be demonstrated indirectly, but I think convincingly, if we show that any one, or at least several, of the techniques assigned by Joyce/S. Gilbert to the other episodes could be used to describe the "Sirens" as well as, if not better than, the original.

The chapter "Lestrygonians," being centered around food, is supposed to have a *peristaltic* technique. Couldn't we perhaps use this term more appropriately for the "Sirens"? At the beginning of the episode, a mass of material ("the overture") is fed into the text like data into a computer, or like highly concentrated nutriment into a digestive system. Then, through a long and thorough process of transformation, this inert matter is assimilated, transmuted into the living substance of the fiction. At the other end of the *tract*, expulsion takes place: the chapter actually finishes with an anal evacuation, Bloom's fart. Moreover, a general identification between music and excretion is suggested (from Molly's chamber pot [U 283] to the echoes reverberating along the bowels of the earth [U 283]) which will be taken up, reworked, and amply developed in *Finnegans Wake*. (See the whole passage about "shamebred music" in *FW* 164.15-165.7, with a suggestion that even the "Bronze by Gold" motif may have an excremental connotation.)

The numerous mirror effects, the importance of the process of identification with gratifying images (Bloom seeing himself as Henry-Lionel, Miss Kennedy fancying herself as the perfect lady), could suggest that we call this technique *narcissism* (originally assigned to the "Lotus-Eaters"), for

the identifications are not only imagined by the characters, they are wrought into the texture of the chapter through free indirect style, or what Hugh Kenner has called the "Uncle Charles principle" ("Ladylike in exquisite contrast" [U 258]; "haughty Henry Lionel Leopold dear Henry Flower earnestly Mr Leopold Bloom envisaged candlestick . . ." [U 290]). But we shall come back in a moment to the problem of narcissism, which is central in this text and closely related to all the themes of our discussion.

The stylistic features that we have just mentioned could also be interpreted as a ghostly intrusion of the character's voice upon the narrator's discourse. In some cases this results in a gross violation of its integrity, engendering grammatical monsters, such as "That must have been highly diverting, said he. I see. / He *šee*" (U 263), which is very free indirect style, indeed. There are also passages in which the "Uncle Charles principle," so useful to explain the early Joyce and a good part of *Ulysses*, proves to be totally inadequate to account for what is happening. The two barmaids are not thinking about Bloom; they probably do not even know him and yet, by a curious process of contamination, they find themselves "married to Bloom, to greaseabloom" (U 260). (It is significant that a literalist like H. Blamires is completely taken by surprise here and misreads this passage.) In the same way, Bloom is unaware of the existence of "Greasy eyes," but he is nevertheless haunted by his presence, so that nightmarish hybrids are born of their unnatural copulation: "greaseabloom," "Greaseabloom." This uncanny process, very characteristic of the "Sirens," perfectly deserves the name of *incubism* (normally reserved for the technique of "Hades").

Let us add that these stylistic encroachments usually produce a comical effect, but they still assume this ghostly character because they are connected with a general, if unobstrusive, encroachment of death upon life. Music being the center of this episode, we discover death hidden at the core of music: "upholding the lid he (who?) gazed in the coffin (coffin?) at the oblique triple (piano!) wires" (U 263); "Numbers it is. All music when you come to think . . . symmetry under a cemetery wall" (U 278); "Sings too: *Down among the dead men*" (U 272). From this core death radiates through the text in all directions. Its presence is particularly conspicuous in the closing words of the chapter, which are precisely supposed to be the *last words* of Robert Emmet. These last words are automatically compared by Bloom to Christ's last words, which were, if we believe St. John, "Everything is finished" (according to St. Luke, these were only the penultimate words), although they actually announce anything but an ending, a quiet resting in the grave. In the case of Robert Emmet, things are still more intricate. His very last words are: "I have done," but this is not a simple descriptive statement. It is subordinated to an imperative: "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." Since the past

perfect is suspended by a hypothetical condition, it is prospective rather than accomplished. The actual *writing* of the epitaph, although its grammatical form is the first person singular, is postponed beyond the death of the subject. These "last words" are the ultimate spoken words, but they will not be the last written in the name of this "I." Long after speech is consummated, writing is to begin. The enunciation is torn apart by death. Language is confronted with its unutterable limit.

Since these words coincide with the last words of the chapter, the whole text is affected by their ambiguous status. The highly unstable nature of this ending is made even more precarious by the fact that, in the "overture," this epitome of the episode, *done* is not the last, but the penultimate word (cf. Christ), and it is followed by *Begin!*, the only word of the overture that is missing in its place in the chapter. Thus, after the end, after the last words, after death, a suppressed beginning lies in wait.

The shadow of death does not spare the addressee of the text anymore than it does the subject of the enunciation. When Bloom is writing his letter to Martha (the girl who wanted so much to know about the "other world"), he is forced to split his personality between his respectable self and his secret *persona*, Henry Flower: "Bloom mur: best references. But Henry wrote: it will excite me." When the time comes for writing the address, Bloom:

murmured: Messrs Callan, Coleman and Co, limited. Henry wrote:
Miss Martha Clifford
c/o P.O.
Dolphin's barn lane
Dublin. (U 280)

The "innocuous" names that come to Bloom's lips as a decoy are taken directly from the obituary page of the newspaper which he has just been reading (U 279). Through a kind of symmetry ("symmetry under a cemetery wall"), the epitaph that cannot be written at the end of the chapter reappears here, in the form of this obituary, replacing the addressee of the letter by a pair of freshly buried corpses. The official words that are supposed to lay the dead to rest, to insure the insertion of the Unnameable in the Symbolic Order, are indeed out of joint in the "Sirens." And let us not forget that we, the readers, are the ultimate addressee of this letter and of this mortifying chapter.

It would be possible to try other techniques assigned to other chapters, and see if they work here. One could show that other chapters work like a *fuga per canonem*, and "Wandering Rocks" seems to be a promising subject for experiment along those lines; any episode would do since polyphony is the most striking characteristic of *Ulysses* as a whole. But the point has already been made clearly enough. What we have been doing seems to

prove the inadequacy of Joyce's stylistic denominations. If they are not simply hoaxes (we never can be sure), they betray a rather naive ideology of the correspondence between form and content. They probably were important to Joyce, but so was the fact that *Ulysses* was published on his birthday and that Bloomsday coincided with the day on which he first went out with Nora Barnacle. We should take these things into account, but not let them obstruct our way. These denominations are metaphors, and we should not refuse them as such. But it is well to remember that other metaphors may be quite as valid and fruitful.⁷

The little experiment which we have attempted perhaps has the merit of pointing to some new correspondences between the episodes. It may also suggest the importance of some neglected elements in the make-up of the "Sirens": the digestive and excretive process, death and its encroachment upon life, narcissism.

I would like now to consider this last aspect: narcissism and the imaginary register in general. The musical analysis of the "Sirens" is often disappointing because it usually remains purely formal. It is based on a conception of music which is very close to that of Bloom: "Numbers it is. All music when you come to think. Two multiplied by two divided by half is twice one. Vibrations: chords those are. One plus two plus six is seven. . . . 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 278). Obviously, the formal element is capital in this chapter, the work on the signifier is extraordinarily intense. But upon this symbolic framework, a huge imaginary construction rises ("Pour qu'il y ait du fantasme, il faut du prêt à le porter" [Jacques Lacan]), and we must not fail to take this into account. The prevalence of this imaginary element is what distinguishes the "Sirens" from "Circe," in which the theatrical technique ultimately by-passes the imaginary, so that the symbolical and the real come into direct contact and create hallucination.

We have already mentioned the importance of the mirror reflections (only writing has no mirror image in this chapter because it is cancelled by superposition: when he writes his secret letter, Bloom makes sure to "blot over the other so he can't read") and of the narcissistic identifications throughout the "Sirens." Everywhere, the imaginary is at work, trying to heal wounded egos (while simultaneously, under the surface, the polyphonic nature of the enunciation destroys the illusion of the unity of the subject). Surprisingly in a chapter which is supposed to be devoted to the world of sounds, but quite logically (Lacan speaks of the "visual pregnancy that this Imaginary shape [the ego] retains from its origins [i.e. the mirror stage]"), we find that the visual element plays a very important part. It would take several pages to make a list of all the occurrences of *look* ("peep,

peer . . .”), *see* and *eye*, and this list would be comparable in length to an enumeration of all the forms of *listen*, *hear*, and *ear*. The words connected with vision are made all the more conspicuous by the fact that they are often found in duplicate forms, indicating variations of the typical imaginary situation (“He’s looking. Mind till I see” [U 257]; “See, not be seen” [U 265]; “Molly great dab at seeing anyone looking” [U 284]; “See real beauty of the eye” [U 286]; etc.), or even in multiplied forms (“Look: look, look, look, look: you look at us” [U 282]; “she knows his eyes, my eyes, her eyes” [U 286]). It might be possible to consider that, between the singers and their audience, a kind of auditive voyeurism-exhibitionism takes place—but the situation remains fundamentally incomplete without the relay of vision. A can see B seeing him, but A can’t hear B hearing him, and in this respect, the ear is ultimately subordinated to the eye.

However, the infinite multiplication of this specular process proves that it is powerless to heal the narcissistic wounds. The image remains incomplete (because the restoration of the ego is perpetually undermined by the flight—*fugue*—of the signifier) and a whole economy of substitution is at work to try to compensate for what is missing. This is another difference between this chapter and music conceived as purely formal play of sounds: in music, a note stands for nothing other than itself, while here everything *represents* something else. What represents what, and for whom? Basically, the events in the Ormond and what is sung there represent for Bloom what is happening simultaneously at home between Molly and Boylan, and this in turn is a re-presentation of the primal scene. But the limits that are normally constitutive of representation (the limit between the stage and the audience; the limit between the theater and the “real” outside world; and the limit between the stage and the invisible space at the back of the stage where the scenographer stands) are constantly transgressed. Beyond the reciprocal voyeuristic relationship (A sees B seeing A), a transitive relation is always present in the “Sirens” (A sees B seeing C seeing D). Bloom, in the dining room, sees the barmaids behind their counter, who see the clients in the bar, who see the singers in the saloon. Let us not forget, moreover, that Bloom can hear the singers directly, and that all these relationships are reversed at one point or another (the singers eventually hear Bloom going out). It soon becomes impossible to situate the first limit, and even to say which is the stage and which is the audience.

The second limit is also extremely unstable. An outdoor spectacle (the viceregal cavalcade) passes outside the theater (the Ormond): from within, the barmaids watch the show, but they become themselves a spectacle for a member of the viceregal party. As could be expected, the inside world constantly reflects events happening outside, but we see also that events in the outside world are affected by what happens inside. For instance, Boylan’s desire is certainly aroused by Miss Douce’s *sonnez la cloche* trick, and

who knows if he will not take Molly as a mere substitute. As for the third limit, it is quite as unsettled as the others. Bloom, the arch-spectator, is at the same time the scenographer of what is happening at 7 Eccles Street. He does not exactly arrange the event, but he could stop it at any moment by simply coming home. Moreover, it is absolutely impossible for us to decide that one passage is Bloom’s fantasy of the scene (“Jing. Stop. Knock. Last look at mirror always before she answers door. The hall. There? How do you? I do well. There? What? Or? Phila of cachous, kissing comfits, in her satchel. Yes? Hands felt for the opulent” [U 274]), and that another is the author’s description of what is actually happening (“One rapped on a door, one tapped with a knock, did he knock Paul de Kock, with a loud proud knocker, with a cock carracarracarra cock. Cockcock” [U 282]). There is nothing to tell us that the second passage should have more authority. Our overhearing of the mysterious conductor, ordering the representation to *Begin!* at the end of the overture, is another transgression of this limit. More generally, we could say that for the first time in *Ulysses* the scenographer/narrator comes to the front of the stage to perform his antics and becomes openly part of the show. Representation, then, is everywhere, but it is also nowhere; it is impossible to situate it within its usual bounds.

The perversion of representation rather than the apotheosis of music, the importance of vision rather than the supremacy of audition, narcissism rather than object relation, orality and anality rather than genitality, death rather than sex—it is this constellation of related themes which should now be explored for a renewal of our perspective on this most elusive chapter.

"Sirens": The Emblematic Vibration

André Topia

Particularly striking in the "Sirens" chapter is the process of dislocation and fragmentation of the figures, and more precisely the dissemination of the bodies into isolated, autonomous parts. Partial fragments and specific attributes attached to particular characters take on so much importance that they substitute themselves for the whole and stand for it. Hence the abundance of metonymic and synecdochic devices. The characters never appear as homogeneous units but as fragmented parts which have been dissociated from the wholes to which they belonged. We have the feeling that all the intensity of meaning has concentrated on a part which stands for the whole, so that whenever the character appears, it is enough to call up the part which represents him. Hence also the emblematic dimension of the chapter.

A good example of this synecdochic dislocation is the recurrence of references to lips throughout the chapter. When a character speaks or laughs or sings, the lips are often the grammatical subject of the sentence, so that we have the impression that the activity of speaking or laughing or singing does not originate in the person as a whole, but is limited, in a nearly fetishistic way, to the precise part of the body from which the sounds are seen to issue. And the lips seem to become the only source of these sounds: "Miss Douce's wet lips said" (U 257); "Her wet lips tittered" (257); "Lenehan's lips over the counter lisped a low whistle of decoy" (264); "Lips laughing" (275); "he held a shield of hand beside his lips that cooed" (279); "Yes, her lips said more loudly" (288). The characters seem to be emblematically reduced to that part of themselves which utters the sounds. The body seems to take over the whole activity and to have a speech of its own.

The lips are not only the subject of sentences but also often the complement of a verb, so that the action is directed not at a person but at his or her lips specifically. Thus Miss Douce with Boylan: "dealing from her jar thick syrupy liquor for his lips" (265). Or Lenehan smiling to Miss Douce: "grinned at his tilted ale and at Miss Douce's lips that all but hummed" (265). Or Simon Dedalus and Miss Douce: "He smiled at bronze's tea-bathed lips, at listening lips and eyes" (262).

By creating this intimate link between the voice and the physical organ from which it is issued Joyce makes the voice indissociable from a physical pantomime, so that its poetic, rhythmical, auditory aspect is constantly counterbalanced and, as it were, deflated by the physical *compositio loci* which accompanies its utterance. Indeed, it is quite significant that in a

chapter which is under the sign of the voice, the lips should be so omnipresent. They have a double value: they are the place of both sound utterance and erotic flirtatiousness. They are at the same time the privileged place of romantic, ethereal, idealized figures such as they appear in love songs or heroic ballads—and a part of the body associated with erotic caresses, drinking, eating, sensuality in general. Through the presence of the lips, the body is never forgotten even in the most idealized moments. They are a basically ambivalent orifice, disembodied *spiritus* and carnal lure.⁷

We would find the same kind of subtle metonymic displacement with the transfer of the activity of singing towards a part of the body which is associated with it, but which is not its origin. Thus with Father Cowley singing: "Hoarsely the apple of his throat hoarsed softly" (271). His Adam's apple seems to become the very center and origin of the emission of the song, and the song becomes physical, nearly muscular. In the same way, Bloom will remember Molly singing, "throat warbling" (275).

This simultaneous process of pulverization and reorganization into new units can be paralleled with the relationship between the phonic network and the syntactic framework of the sentence. Indeed, in a first phase, the syntactic framework (the internal order and hierarchy within the sentence) is systematically broken by Joyce, who substitutes a mere horizontal juxtaposition of isolated units to the vertical hierarchic integration which characterizes a syntactic pattern. As a result, the reader is confronted with a succession of punctual, mobile, fluid, interchangeable units which can move in all directions along the chain of the sentence. But in a second phase, once the internal limits are broken and replaced by this fluid exchange, Joyce reorganizes his material by coagulating it into new units, this time according to phonic patterns (variation/permutation/echo/symmetry) which, as it were, interfere with, subvert, and often replace the syntactic framework of the sentence.

Take for example the following paragraph: "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" (258). We can first notice the aleatory dimension of the passage, which is made of permutations and variations. We have the impression that this limited linguistic material could be rearranged indefinitely. The linear progress of the sentence is arrested by phonic structures based on recurrence, echo, symmetries, permutations. Four words ("sauntered," "sadly," "twining," and "hair") appear in all three sentences and seem to be likely to be recombined again and again. We have the feeling that there is no stable syntactic framework able to maintain the words in specific positions. The sentence becomes a kind of dance, or is like a pattern in a tapestry. It ceases to unfold in time but becomes, as it were, projected into space. From linear it becomes tabular.

One of the consequences of this is the immobilization of all movement,

the transformation of all the dynamic pulse of the sentence into a static, emblematic tableau. Particularly significant is the use of the present participle, here the change from "sauntered" to "sauntering." A subtle counterpoint seems to take place between the main action and the accompanying action, which become interchangeable and whose hierarchy is neutralized. First we find "sauntered . . . twining," then "sauntering . . . she . . . twined," then "she twined in sauntering." The finite form becomes present participle and the present participle becomes finite form. The chronological relationship supposedly linking the two actions is disrupted and becomes totally ambiguous. What was originally a punctual action suddenly freezes, seems to be unable to come to an end, and lingers indefinitely.

We find further evidence of this blurring process with the various places of the word "sadly," first in fourth position, then in second position, then in first position. The linguistic chain becomes totally fluid. The words are used like counters whose spatial position indicates subtle shifts of meaning. The same kind of undecidable ambiguity is to be found with "twisted twined," which should be read not as succession but as juxtaposition. The two actions must be coagulated into one global entity, a kind of imagistic tableau including successive actions in its simultaneous stasis.

We must also notice, at the end of each of the three sentences, the presence of successively "ear," then "hair," then again "ear." Because of the phonic proximity of these two words a kind of hesitation occurs: the two phonic patterns seem to overlap somehow, which corresponds to a kind of blurring of the differences between the various parts of the bodies. The fluidity of the sentence connotes the same fluidity in the bodies. All the parts of the characters' bodies keep vibrating and migrating. The physical proximity of ear and hair becomes in the sentence much more than mere spatial contiguity: the two elements of the body seem to become part of an intricate game, of a kind of dance in which their places can vary though their relation remains the same. A kind of inner tension, of paradoxically static movement, seems to animate the bodies.

A consequence of this proximity is that the specific functions of the bodies are often blurred and neutralized and some parts of the bodies usurp each other's function. We have the feeling of a continual fluid circulation. Words which normally apply to certain specific zones migrate towards other zones, introducing in the text a kind of general vibration. (This blurring and dissolving function of the music can already be found in the *Portrait*, when Stephen listens to a group of young men singing: "The music passed in an instant, as the first bars of sudden music always did, over the fantastic fabrics of his mind, dissolving them painlessly and noiselessly as a sudden wave dissolves the sandbuilt turrets of children" [*P* 160]).

Thus lips and eyes listen: "He smiled at bronze's teabathed lips, at listening lips and eyes" (262). Or: "A liquid of womb of woman eyeball

gazed under a fence of lashes, calmly, hearing" (286). The fluid circulation of the musical substance seems to break all barriers and to include all senses in the activity of listening. The auditory function takes on such importance that it penetrates the bodies through all their openings.

Eyes eat: Lenehan eyes Miss Douce's breasts greedily, "small eyes ahunger" (266). Eyes can also talk: "—Answering an ad? keen Richie's eyes asked Bloom" (279). Functions are transferred not only from one organ to another but also to bodily parts, to partial zones. Nostrils shout: Miss Douce's nostrils "quivered imperthnthn like a shout in quest" (259). The nose sings: "Simon trumping compassion from foghorn nose" (287). Breasts sing too: Miss Douce appears to Lenehan "bust ahumming" (266). In the same way as, from a linguistic point of view, the phonic patterns emancipate themselves within the sentence structure and give birth to autonomous processes, here the bodily parts become, as it were, micro-systems which are more active than the groups to which they belong.

In the case of the deaf waiter, Bald Pat, the mouth becomes an equivalent for the ear: Simon Dedalus's voice "also sang to Pat open mouth ear waiting to wait" (275). The mouth seems here to receive the song just as legitimately as the ear. All the orifices are open to the musical penetration.

Sometimes these migrations and permutations result in the junction of bodily parts which belong to highly differentiated symbolic poles: thus in Bloom's reverie triggered off by the sight of Miss Douce listening in the shell. Through a series of gradual metaphorical shifts we come to an identification of ear, mouth, and sex (281).

Other symbolic conjunctions of the same type occur in the chapter. Thus the membrane of the eardrum becomes for Father Cowley the hymen (285). And when Bloom's belly begins to rumble Joyce uses the word "ventriloquise" (285), thus preparing the final telescoping of mouth and anus with Bloom's fart, which is his final answer to the emphatic rhetoric of the singers.

One of the barmaids' eyes appear as "A liquid of womb of woman eyeball" (286), thus telescoping eye and sex. The word "liquid" is here important: it is the omnipresent fluidifying power of the music which dissolves the symbolic limits and barriers within the bodies. Just as it is a musical analogy (blowing into an instrument) which will connect and unify the various orifices in a woman's body in Bloom's monologue at the end of the chapter: "Blow gentle. Loud. Three holes all women" (285).

Another recurrent stylistic trait of the "Sirens" chapter is the absence of an article where an article would be expected. For instance in the passage already quoted: "from bright light," "she twined in sauntering gold hair." This absence creates the impression that we have to do not so much with specific objects in a specific place and time as with a vague, all-pervasive, fluid, little differentiated substance which can vary infinitely in aspect and

form: hence, the slightly hazy and hesitant outline of figures and objects—their emblematic, a-temporal quality. In Joyce the words and the real never fold over each other exactly. There is always an interstice where the vibration can be felt.

Joyce's very characteristic use of the present participles further contributes to this vibration: "Again Kennygiggles, stooping her fair pinnacles of hair, stooping, her tortoise napecomb showed, spluttered out of her mouth her tea, choking in tea and laughter, coughing with choking, crying:" (260). What is striking in the internal organization of this sentence is that the only two finite verbs are islanded at the center of the sentence, but totally immobilized and paralyzed by the participial clauses which seem to encroach upon them. Between the subject ("Kennygiggles") and the first finite verb ("showed") the two participial clauses seem to stretch the sentence infinitely and to prevent the action from even beginning, so that this action finds itself arrested. In the second part of the sentence the second finite verb ("spluttered") is accompanied by four present participles as by appendices, by a series of echoes, so that the sentence seems to vibrate infinitely without really coming to an end. The paradoxical result of this proliferation of present participles is that the action in this sentence first cannot begin and then cannot end. It acquires an eternal, permanent, emblematic quality. It is arrested in mid-air between tableau and narrative, neither of which manages to take control of the text.

The same unresolved tension between tableau and narrative can be found in another sentence: "The boots to them, them in the bar, them barmaids came" (258). Because of the repetition of "them" with each time a more specific determination, the sentence advances in a succession of touches which have to be read as simultaneous. The combination of growing precision in the details and of indecision in the structure gives the impression that the scene is constantly being at the same time built and dissolved in front of our eyes.

Sometimes the tension between differentiated syntactic functions and fluid, undifferentiated phonic patterns gives birth to such ambiguities that they prevent any visualization of a "scene" in progress and contribute to the dream-like aspect of the whole action. "—Imperthnthn thnthnthn, bootsnout sniffed rudely, as he retreated as she threatened as he had come" (258). The three repetitions of "as" have each a different grammatical function (simultaneity, causality, comparison), but these differentiated functions are blurred and subverted by the repetition which produces analogy and equivalence instead of difference.

Another example of this deliberate dissolution of the usual syntactic sentence patterns and their replacement by subtle rhythmical variations is the sentence "Douce gave full vent to a splendid yell, a full yell of full woman, delight, joy, indignation" (260). We can feel there two distinct

movements: First, a kind of infinite stretching of the first half of the sentence due to the expansion of "yell" by a juxtaposed clause and to the repetition of the word "full" which gradually passes from abstract meaning to concrete image; it is the very body of Miss Douce which seems to be yelling. Thus the phonic repetitive patterns reorganize the text gradually and imperceptibly. Then, in the second part of the sentence, we find a sudden, rapid juxtaposition of the three words "delight, joy, indignation." Consequently, we find initially a minimum of information stretched and expanded (and giving the impression that it could be still more expanded), then a maximum of information condensed in as little space as possible. In the first part of the sentence the words seem to proliferate by repetitive analogy, then, on the contrary, the substantives are given without determinants, in a bare, nearly programmatic abstraction. This alternation of repetitive expansion and programmatic condensation is one of the recurrent traits of the chapter. In their tension, in this static movement, neither tableau nor narrative, lies the emblematic vibration.

The Silence of the Sirens

Jean-Michel Rabaté

That's joyful I can feel. Never have written it. Why? My joy is other joy. But both are joys. Yes, joy it must be. Mere fact of music shows you are. (U 282)

I have shared with some friends a growing dissatisfaction with the classical and current types of analysis of the "Sirens" chapter in *Ulysses*: it is generally taken to represent one of Joyce's most daring experiments with the musicalization of language. More than this thesis, which can be elaborated and qualified, since no one will agree on the term "musicalization," it is the demonstration which appears to be debatable. The musical terms, those used by Stuart Gilbert for instance, are all metaphorical and arbitrary. A combination of simple rhetorical tropes such as those used for the analysis of "Eolus" seems apter for describing the technique of this "musical" episode. This wish to tidy up our critical vocabulary does not by any means imply that one could evolve an entirely non-metaphorical language. On the contrary, I shall not attempt to resist the drift of metaphors, but shall underline their possibly neutralized coloration, their silent working. Any critical language may gain by becoming aware of its own metaphorical nature, and start by describing an explicit tropology as part of its interpretive strategies, thereby opening the possibility of a more adequate approach to the text taken as point of departure.

I shall take one simple example of "musical trope" as supposedly exhibited by Joyce's text, the famous "hollow fifth" which Stuart Gilbert—no doubt helped by Joyce—identifies in "Are you off? Yrfrmstbyes. Blmstup. O'er ryehigh blue. Bloom stood up" (U 286). Here is the commentary: "Examples of the 'hollow fifth' (*quinto vuoco*) are such words as 'Blmstup,' where the 'thirds,' the letters *oo* and *ood* (Bloom stood up) are omitted . . ." (Gilbert 223). To take the third letter or group of letters as the equivalent of a chord, or "third," is more a way of expanding the punning process already at work in the text. The term indeed belongs to the text, since it gives a musical key to Stephen's theory of paternity in "Circe" (Stephen plays a series of "empty fifths" before explaining his view on the "fundamental" and the "dominant" [504]). In this sense, the commentary, especially if it may appear "authorized," is part of the text, and I would not disagree. But it may beg important questions of procedures, and presuppose that we know what a "musical metaphor" is before we go on talking about "musicalization."

My contention is that classical rhetorics can describe all these musical

figures as well, if not better than, the vocabulary of musicology. Thus, the "hollow fifth" is just a kind of syncope (loss of sounds in the interior of a word) and could introduce us to a list of suppressions shown by the text. I give just a few examples:

apheresis (loss of a syllable or letter at the beginning of a word): "Idolores, a queen, Dolores" (269);

apocope (same device at the end of a word): "language of flow" (263); "How will you pun" (280); "Bloom ate liv" (271); "Best value in Dub" (271);

ellipsis: "Bloo smi qui go. Ternoon." (264); "That is to say she" (265);

telescoping of words: "Siopold" (Simon + Leopold [276]); "Maas was the boy. Massboy" (272).

From the suppressions, one can shift to the additions, among which I will rapidly list:

anadiplosis (repetition of words in echo): "Heartbeats her breath: breath that is life" (286);

prosthesis (addition of sound or syllable to a word): "endlessnessness" (276) and all the drawing out effects;

epenthesis (intercalation of a consonant in a word): "I care not foror the morrow" (270);

diacresis: "waaaaaalk" (286);

tnesis: "Miss voice of Kennedy answered . . ." (262); "a flush struggling in his pale, told Mr Bloom, face of the night . . ." (277);

gemination: "Big Benaben . . . , Big Benben. Big Benben" (287);

augmentation in echo: "Luring. Ah, alluring" (275); "inexquisite contrast, contrast inexquisite non exquisite" (268);

anaphoric extension: "The boots to them, them in the bar, them barmaids came" (258);

interpolation: "he (who?) gazed in the coffin (coffin?) . . ." (263).

This easy selection of available rhetorical terms must be related to broader syntactical devices and expanded to include larger rhythmical units. I shall again give selected examples:

chiasmus: "Like lady, ladylike" (264);

apposition: ". . . Bloom, I feel so lonely Bloom" (287);

asyndeton: "Will? You? I. Want. You. To." (285); ". . . said he. I see. He see. He drank." (263)

coluthon: with increasing or decreasing rhythm: "Tank one believed: Miss Kenn when she: that doll he was: she doll: the tank" (287);

axymoron: "Aimless he chose with agitated aim" (266).

The sound effects and the rhythms are of course dominant throughout all these examples, but this does not absolutely require a musical vocabulary to be accounted for. One can use terms such as:

onomatopoeia: "Jiggedy jingle jaunty jaunty" (271);

assonance: "muffled hammerfall in action" (263);

imitative harmony: "lovesoft oftloved word" (274);

mimology or *contamination*: "Essex bridge. Yes . . . Yessex" (261-62);

echolalia: "Impertnthn thnthnthn" (258);

simple echo: "Bloom mashed mashed potatoes" (270).

The widest category of all is then that of the pun, or *paronomasia* (for instance the numerous puns on "rose": "rose of Castille . . . she rose . . . rose of Castille" [264]; "her rose that sank and rose" [266]). It is no accident that one is able to witness the shift of apocope to punning in the question "How will you pun?" (280). Other terms would have to be combined so as to describe all the complicated rhythms, with their varied admixture of puns. In "*Cloche. Sonnez la Cloche. Sonnez la*" (276), the displacement of the punctuation cuts the sentence in a different way, enhancing the repetitive and circular nature of the echo, and of male desire, while adding a French pun on "donner la la," "to give the A."

All this leads one to describe the style of this episode as a highly *mataplastic* idiom, exploiting the flexibility of signifiers for their evocative power. Echolalia and mimology are dominant, coupled with the structural use of leitmotives which dynamically structure the text. Music appears then both as a *pretext* for the radicalization of such a process—which will not be forgotten in "Circe"—which implies that the only purely musical passage is the overture, precisely because it is devoid of syntactical articulation, and a *theme*: not the organization of the signifiers in their interplay, but the signified of such an interplay.

Thus the puns tend to become literal adaptations of stocks of musical phrases, such as "transposed . . . low" (258), "conduct himself" (258), "chimed in" (259) for laughter; "ringing in changes" (260), "a great tonic in the air" (261) for mountains, "he yet made overtures" (262) for Lenehan's insistent banter. There are so many musical proverbs and terms concealed throughout the episode, that such a lexical saturation should not invade our language, and we face a process which is very similar to that of "Lestrygonians" for food. Nevertheless, the puns and tropes all tend to assert the imitative quality of language—but not in the sense that they attempt to imitate formal music; indeed, while playing on music as a theme, the different voices—not so easily identifiable with characters—constantly

imitate each other: "Luring. Ah, alluring" (275). [The language of this episode opens up a system of echoes, which is the direct introduction to the "echoland" of *Finnegans Wake*.] One paragraph provides the best summary of such a process:

A low incipient note sweet banshee murmured all. A thursh. A throstle. His breath, birdsweet, . . . fluted with plaintive woe. Is lost. Rich sound. Two notes in one there. Blackbird I heard in the hawthorn valley. Taking my motives he twined and turned them. All most too new call is lost in all. Echo. (272)

Richie Goulding explains the beauty of the song Simon Dedalus is going to sing in the other room. He tries to impress Bloom by the fact he has heard Maas sing it, and Bloom is convinced it is a lie, or self-deception. But such a "rich sound" becomes a reminiscence of the songs of birds, then of one bird, he had heard before. It shows the "call" as containing the "all" in a system of natural echoes. The bird was stealing Bloom's motives, and "twining," and "turning" them. This is close to the old sense of *trope*—to turn—since tropes proliferate, redouble, and invert a motive which does not belong to Bloom any more, while not having an origin in the bird. Such a twining is also a "binding," similar to Bloom's apotropaic gesture of twining the elastic band when hearing the songs ("Bloom . . . wound it round his troubled double, fourfold, in octave, gyved them fast . . ." [274]).

This strange song deprived of an origin may throw some light on the nature of the Sirens' song. Indeed, the Sirens rarely sing in the episode, while they constantly insist on having other people hear. They conform to their literal function of *binders* and of *birds*.

Victor Bérard explains that *sir-ben* is a compound of two semitic roots (*sir*, "song," *ben*, "grace") which can be paralleled with "H.n.n.," a semitic root meaning "to bind, to attach" (akin to fascia/fascination). They sing a "song of grace" which binds, enthralls, just as Ulysses obeys this pattern by asking to be bound to the mast. But according to the most ancient Greek tradition of etymology, the Sirens are primarily winged beings, like sea-birds, and they belong to the long series of bird-like women met and loved by Ulysses: Circe, a hawk-owl; Calypso, a nocturnal bird of prey; Penelope, a teal, daughter of Ikarios, the partridge; and the Sirens, possibly cormorants. The link between the Sirens and Molly-Penelope is stressed by the text, when it puts their remarks about laughing and sexuality in parallel ("I feel all wet" [260]; "O saints above, I'm drenched!" [270]). All these birds bind and inhabit an "echoland" in which mirrors are the visual equivalent of whatever enchantment they achieve. [The mirror-effect of the Sirens can be shown by a simple consideration of their activities at the beginning of the chapter. After the overture, which somehow exhausts in advance all the elements functioning as leitmotives, the Sirens tend to anticipate Bloom's strategies when he has to escape from their charms. This

was apparent with Simon Dedalus as well, since he enters the bar and conforms to the logic of the echoes: "And what did the doctor order today? . . . Whatever you say yourself" (261).¹ The Sirens literally "twine" and "turn" Bloom's motives, for Miss Kennedy plugs "both two ears with little fingers" (259); in a gesture reminiscent of the Homeric sailors, she unplugs them to hear and speak.¹ She then concentrates on her paper, which she reads absorbedly in order to ward off Lenehan's importunate "overtures," just as Bloom writes to Martha in order to avoid the lure of the air from Martha which is sung, and hides his letter-writing under the pretence of answering an ad for the newspaper.

The Sirens possess one major emblem, that of the huge mirror behind the bar. This mirror revealingly enough bears gilded letters, and reflects the scene in the central room: "to see her skin askance in the barmirror gildedlettered where hock and claret glasses shimmered and in their midst a shell" (259; see also 261, 275, 284), and "He spellbound eyes went after her gliding head as it went down the bar by mirrors, gilded arch for ginger ale, hock and claret glasses shimmering, a spikey shell, where it concerted, mirrored, bronze with sunnier bronze" (267). This shell in the mirror is later relayed by a real shell which metaphorizes the enchantment exerted by the Sirens on Lidwell. Bloom watches one of them working her spell: "Bloom through the bardoor *saw* a shell held at their ears. He *heard* more faintly that that they heard, each for herself alone, then each for other, hearing the plash of waves, loudly, a silent roar" (281; italics mine).¹ The ear becomes a shell which conjures up an imaginary sound, a sound which exists without actual presence. Seeing turns into hearing just because of that imaginary nature. It is there that the function of the echo-chamber is revealed. This proves that the real song of the Sirens is a song of silence.⁷ The healing "grace," and the tempting enthrallment are bound together not as by the complicity of the Virgin and the prostitute, but by the oxymoron of "silent roar." All this is part of a general spatial mechanism which can only be sketched here, and which presupposes the disjunction of the three main actions of singing, hearing, and seeing, a disjunction central to the ruse of the Homeric hero who hears but whose voice remains without effect on his men:

<i>saloon</i>	<i>bar</i>	<i>dining-room</i>
Simon, Ben, Cowley . . .	Sirens + Customers	Bloom, Richie, and Pat
SONG	TALK	LOOK
mouth: production		eye: production of images
eye: passive function	EAR	mouth: ingestion

The role of the echo is to redouble both song and look. The space of the shell is necessary for the reciprocal transformation of song into image (an imaginary song) and of vision into music (a hallucination). Such a trope,

which looks very much like a chiasmus—optical or auditory—corresponds to the movement of the text, in which music and language fight against each other, striving for total mastery,² but in fact destroying each other. ✓

Boylan seems almost fascinated at one point by the "Sonnez la cloche" of the Sirens in a sentence which enhances the repetition at work: "Boylan, eyed, eyed" (267). The two striking commas emphasize the element of duplication. Bloom, on the other hand, cannot flee back to another bird, to Molly. He endures because he thinks he can see without being caught, hear without being seen, see without being noticed (Simon and his friends only realize he was there after he has left).¹ He thinks "See, not be seen" (265) as he chooses to have lunch in the dining-room, thus offering his version of the Homeric myth: the main thing is not to hear without risking destruction, but to see from a chosen vantage-point (this is why he asks Pat to leave the door of the bar ajar, although he will not see the singers, but only the barmaids who hear the same song).⁷ ✓

It is as if he had to see their ear in order to hear the song: "Still hear it better here than in the bar though farther" (275). A key to this audio and visual disposition is given by Bloom when he is about to decide to write to Martha: "Wish I could see his face, though. Explain better. Why the barber in Drago's always looked my face when I spoke his face in the glass" (275). The barber looks at his customer's lips while the customer only sees his reflection in a mirror; otherwise he would turn and present his face to the razor. This structural difference or inequality of status is to be found in the scene of the "Sirens," with a mirror-shell which reflects only emptiness, and emptiness which nevertheless allows for the exchange of imaginary products. The scene differentiates between "voice production" and a "retrospective kind of arrangement," to use the two "critical" concepts yielded by the dialogues of the passage:

organistic phallic tenors	bosom	incestuous fathers
	Virgin/prostitute	
singers	Sirens	Bloom/Goulding
"voice production"	echoes	"retrospective arrangement"

What Bloom can "see" is not simply a "phantasmal sea-surge" (Pound) roaring in a paradoxical silence. It is the very function of alterity in the binding, blending mixture of opposites, an alterity which is disclosed to him, and to him only,¹ as soon as he understands that the song of the Sirens is both a natural noise, be it inhuman or purely material, and utter silence.⁷ ✓ He thus meets Kafka's remarkable insight, that the power of the song of the Sirens lies in its silence: "But the Sirens have a more terrible weapon than their song: it is their silence" ("The Silence of the Sirens," *Hochzeit-vorbereitungen auf dem Lande* [58–59]). Bloom merely reflects: "It's in the silence you feel you hear. Vibrations. Now silent air" (277). The air is not

simply the invisible modality of the audible, but the *bar* of music which bars itself, constituting the silent song of songs which allows all other songs to reverberate, diffract, disseminate themselves. The pure modality of looking would afford no solution: "She listens. . . . Time to be shoving. Looked enough" (285). The solution can only be reached with a non-musical resolution of the antagonism: a fart.

The fart is not a compromise, but a parodic dissolution of the violent antagonism opposing words spoken to words printed, history as learned by heart and history as recorded in documents, patriotism as the main theme of Irish songs and the raceless and nationless language of the body. As emanation of air and food, it participates in the combined logics of "Eolus" and "Lestrygonians." Bloom is not "giving the A" to the text; he opposes the "naturalness" of the Croppy Boy who was so easily deceived by the disguised Captain, as well as the angelism of the blind tuner. (They are united by the curious leitmotiv of "God's curse on bitch's bastard" [263], first thought by Simon Dedalus [?], then in the mouth of the yeoman Captain, with the following "Tap" belonging to the tuner [285].) Being at the same time *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, Bloom reaches the truth of his own position; he "views" the text of the last words of Robert Emmet, is seen by no one, heard by no one except the reader. Facing which, we can only say, like the Sirens: "Ask no questions and you'll hear no lies" (264).

Or to quote from Blanchot's post-Kafkaian meditation on the other navigation of the narrative which is opened by the Song of the Sirens:

The whole ambiguity comes from the time which is here implied, which enables one to say and feel that the fascinating image of experience is, at a given moment, present, while this presence itself belongs to no present, and even destroys the present into which it introduces itself. True enough, Ulysses was really sailing and one day, at a certain date, he met the enigmatic song. He then can say: now, this happens now. But what happened now? The presence of a song only still to come. And what did he touch in the present? Not the event of a presence becoming present, but the opening of this infinite movement which is the meeting itself, and which is always at a distance from the place and time where it is affirmed, for it is this very distance, *this imaginary distance through which absence is actualized and at the end of which the event only starts happening*: a point in which the truth of the meeting is accomplished, and from which, in any case, the speech which utters it wishes to be generated. (16-17)

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The Language of Flow

Robert Young

—Grandest number in the whole opera, Goulding said.

—It is, Bloom said.

Numbers it is. All music when you come to think. Two multiplied by two divided by half is twice one. Vibrations: chords those are. One plus two plus six is seven. Do anything you like with figures juggling. Always find out this equal to that, symmetry under a cemetery wall. . . . 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. It's on account of the sounds it is. (*U* 278)

If anything could evade the Sirens it would be the reduction of music to Bloom's erroneous mathematics. But even in math, numbers flow: technically, to flow means to increase or diminish continuously by infinitesimal quantities. And the numbers that swirl so thickly past the Sirens do not evade their allure:

—Two pence, sir, the shopgirl dared to say.

—Aha . . . I was forgetting . . . Excuse . . .

And four.

At four she. (264)

Everything is absorbed by the Sirens and turned into the capturing sounds of their insistent song.

"When love absorbs my ardent soul": love, its old sweet song, its old sweet sin, devours and secretes; it lures and accretes, glances and sweats. Bloo Bloom is so lonely blooming, transmigrating into the flowers, the tropes, the deceits and wiles that allure him with their decoys of desire, their round o's, enticing embellishments of love and war. His transmigrations are always paralyzing—into Pat's brother, Pat's deafness, the stripping's blindness, the old Fogey's goggle eye, "croppy bootsboy Bloom." Blue Bloom is absorbed in the Sirens like the blotting paper which sips the last wetness of his letter to Martha; he is constantly written over again like the address which he blots over the traces of his letter in order to conceal its vestigial remains. Bloowho is covered and uncovered by the secrets which he conceals about his person; he gets written by them: "Up the quay went Lionelleopole, naughty Henry with letter for Mady, with sweets of sin with frillies for Raoul with met him pike hoses went Poldy on" (288).

Like sex, writing in the "Sirens" is a furtive act of veiled secretions.

Letters, of words, of music, become the flow of letch-water. Bloom, sea-bloom, greasebloom, secretes his letter to Martha not only behind the covers of the *Freeman*, but also beneath the folds of his repeated "Bloom mur" or bloomers. And like the "not yet" of desire, writing is an activity that merely fingers the hymen, delays and defers: "Nothing doing I expect." Bloom remarks of the advertisement to which he pretends to reply, and also, ironically, of the fetishized letters of his romance with Martha. Nothing will come of it. Like Robert Emmet in his last words, Bloom puts off writing: "Please write me a long letter and tell me more," Martha had written. "Remember if you do not I will punish you. So now you know what I will do to you, you naughty boy, if you do not write." Bloom in replying is so seduced by the Siren music, so captured by and in its letters, that he finds it impossible to write that day: "It is utterl imposs. Underline *imposs*." Transbloomed by the music, his letter becomes nothing more than a mere note, interspersed with notes, "notes chirruping answer," and the long letter dwindles to the "sad tail" of its P.S.'s: "P. P. S. La la la ree. I feel so sad today. La ree. So lonely. Dee" (280). Bloom obeys Martha's injunction with his long p.s.'s, his long letters, la la la ree, but at the same time disobeys her demand for a long letter and relishes her threatened punishments. Excitedly, he blots the secreted ink.

Music and writing, far from being set in antithesis, join in "the thrill they itch for," the secretions of pen and ink and of the bodily organs. "Soap feeling rather sticky behind. Must have sweated: music." When the two belles peal with laughter at the idea of being married to the old Fogey at Boyd's—goggle eyes, greasy eyes, greasy nose, Greasy I knows—Miss Douce's "other eye," her "eye hole," her "cave of the dark middle earth," becomes "all wet," just as Molly is "all drenched" when she sees Ben Dollard in his tight dress suit "with all his belongings on show." Music and eyes, like writing, produce surreptitious secretions to be savored. By Boylan, for instance, as he drinks the sweets of Miss Douce's sinful smack: "Boylan, eyed, eyed. Tossed so fat lips his chalice, drankoff his tiny chalice, sucking the last fat violet syrupy drops" (267). Bloom, who relishes the tinkling drops of Molly's "chamber music," and even the idea of the "foghorn" nose-blow ("That's music too. Not as bad as it sounds"), similarly laps up the sticky traces oozing from Martha's song:

Words? Music? No: it's what's behind. . . .

Bloom. Flood of warm jimjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow, invading. (274)

The "language of flow" is not restricted to the gushes that throb through the sluices of the mouth, the sexual organs, and their "wet lips." It flows too through Pat Bloom's "blind eye" or arse. Before his grand finale, his epifart, Bloom contents himself with a "blind—fart"—defined in the dic-

tionary as a "noiseless but particularly noisome breaking of wind." Just as Simon Dedalus had "puffed a pungent plummy [?bloomy] blast," so "Bloom sang dumb," "then all of a soft sudden wee little wee little pippy wind. Pwee! A wee little wind piped eeee." Bloom observes profoundly, "It's in the silence you fed you hear. Vibrations. Now silent sir."

Sex, excreting, farting, and writing are the concealed, illicit activities, the "seen unseen," like Bloom's idea for an advertisement for Hely's stationery: "I suggested to him about a transparent show cart with two smart girls sitting inside writing letters, copybooks, envelopes, blotting paper. I bet that would have caught on. Smart girls writing something catch the eye at once. Everyone dying to know what she's writing" (154). As Bloom's trick here suggests, sex and writing are also the acts of duplicity, a duplicity projected in Bloom's fantasy of painting the back of bald Pat's head so that he becomes a Janus: "Paint face behind on him," thinks Bloom, "then he'd be two." The specific deception of the Sirens involves, of course, Molly's rendezvous with Boylan; while Boylan advances on his journey towards Molly the intervals of music attempt to arrest his flow, to arrest emission by omission: "He stopped. . . . stopped. . . . stopped again." But the flow can't be stopped: "Jingle jaunty. Too late. She longed to go. That's why. Woman. As easy stop the sea. Yes: all is lost" (273). It can't be stopped because the insistent refrain of the silence in the music, the stop, only exacerbates the very condition that it is meant to forestall. For at the same time as topping arrests, it also stops up, like Bloom fingering the three holes of Lydia Douce's body, "a flute alive," or Molly's "They can't manage men's intervals. Gap in their voices too. Fill me. I'm warm, dark, open." And as well as stopping up, the stop stops, or punctuates, like the refrain of the blind boy's "tap tap tap," or Miss Kennedy minding her stops, or, crucially, Boylan: "Jing. Stop. Knock."

Stopping succumbs to the "lett and flow" of music and loses its "crooked ess" to become topping, just as when Bloom crosses the Essex Bridge it acquires a y, to become the Yessex—or "Yes Sex"—Bridge. To succumb to the jingle of music, the repetition of the same or similar sounds, is to be led to music's lickerish secretions and its secret betrayals, its toppings and tuppings: "in desire, dark to lick flow, invading. Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup. Pores to dilate dilating. Tup. The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o'er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthrop. Now! Language of love" (274). While Bloom stops at the fetishized veil and contents himself with "tambourining" gently with his fingers on Pat's pad, with writing on the blank page of Miss Douce's hymen, "fingered only," Boylan's rap, tap, knock of Paul de Cock returns insistently with the tapping of the blind boy, the cry of "tiptop," Molly's "last tip to titivate," as well as in the letters of "lickitup" and "Blmstup." As Boylan knocks with a loud proud knocker, with a cock, to

tup Molly, "Full tup. Full throb," Bloom at the same moment compulsively tips tipped Pat tuppence. And when Molly is at last topped, so is Bloom, appearing in the sandwichbell as a topped sardine:

—Very, Mr Dedalus said, staring hard at a headless sardine.

Under the sandwichbell lay on a bier of bread one last, one lonely, last sardine of summer. Bloom alone. (289)

While Molly and Boylan play at tops and tails, Bloom, headless and castrated, topped and tailed, returns to his voyage, his journey, on a Germanic pun. From his one remaining organ, he delivers his own unwritten epitaph, one last, one lonely, last raspberry of summer.

3. *Aspects of Finnegans Wake*