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A Dissertation on the Works of the

Irish Writer

James Joyce (1882 - 19⁴¹)

entitled

JAMES JOYCE AND THE REVOLUTION OF THE WORD:
AN EXAMINATION OF JAMES JOYCE'S PRACTICE OF
WRITING AND THE THEORETICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS
PRACTICE FOR LITERARY CRITICISM

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Colin Myles Joseph MacCabe

II

"Freud, Joyce: Une autre ère pour l'humanité"

Philippe Sollers. "Joyce et cie" Tel Quel. 64

Hiver 1975. p.24.

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FOR Myles, Ruth and John

PREFACE

The title "James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word" suggests a thesis committed to vagueness and imprecision. It may seem to be yet another symptom of that inflation of language which penetrates the universities as rapidly as the advertising agencies; if one can read slogans advertising "Watneys and the Red Revolution", why not a thesis on "James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word"? The title aims, however, at precision rather than vagueness; it focuses a set of problems that confront the reader of Joyce. Each term of the title reflects on the other in a dialectical movement which provides the impetus for the trajectory of the thesis. For the argument of the dissertation is that we can make no attempt to arrive at a correct assessment of Joyce's work until we have some workable concept of a revolution of the word but such a concept can only be elaborated on the basis of a thorough investigation of the innovations of Joyce's texts.

The general reaction of English teachers and researchers to mention of academic work on Joyce is, in my experience, a sneer at the productions of the "Joyce factory", but the sneer is almost always ignorant. There can be no great writer whose work is so little read except by those who make his work their major preoccupation and this charge is doubly damning if one considers, as I do, that he is the major writer in English since Shakespeare. If everybody has read A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, few have read Ulysses with the necessary attention and fewer still have done more than open Finnegans

Wake. This general ignorance may explain why the magnificent achievement of Joyce scholars over the past two decades has not generally received the praise it is due outside a professional enclave. The work on the manuscripts accomplished by such as Thomas Connolly, David Hayman and Fred H. Higginson has not merely provided invaluable material for scholars but has also produced some of the most startling and valuable texts in the English language (Scribbledehobble is perhaps the finest unread text of modern English literature). In addition to the work on the manuscripts, there has been the production, through unremitting labour, of several indispensable aids to the serious study of Joyce's texts: Richard Ellmann's biography, James Atherton's The Books at the Wake, Clive Hart's Concordance to Finnegans Wake and Weldon Thornton's monumental Allusions in Ulysses are four of the most striking productions of this dedicated Joyce scholarship.

The sceptic may, however, fall back on a second line of attack. If it be admitted that the scholarship accomplished has been both serious and necessary, surely the mass of Joyce criticism which pours forth from the universities is almost uniformly worthless? In reply to this, my contention is that it is not some congenital inability that provokes this generally admitted failure (and my limited personal experience suggests that this failure is generally admitted amongst Joyce critics) but rather that literary criticism itself cannot cope with Joyce's texts because Joyce's texts refuse to reproduce the

relation between reader and text on which literary criticism is predicated. The literary critic labours under the same delusion as Professor Jones. He is unable to decipher the letter because he mistakes its very constitution; his error is not that he cannot find the right interpretation but that he tries to interpret at all.

Here then is the first problem which the title "James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word" attempts to focus. Eugene Jolas' original manifesto "The Revolution of the Word" published in transition and the notable review "James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word" published by F.R. Leavis in Scrutiny constitute the opposite poles of literary criticism's relation to Joyce. What I attempt to demonstrate is that these opposites share certain theoretical premisses and this demonstration is accomplished through an investigation of two of literary criticism's founding fathers: I.A. Richards and Percy Lubbock.

Central to my account of these disparate figures as well as some more recent critics of Joyce is the philosophical category of the subject. This category makes a strange appearance within a work of literary criticism but I would argue that the unexamined use of this category under different names is crucial to the very activity of literary criticism. Traditionally the function of the category was to provide a unity for the field of experience such that it was possible to

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judge between possibilities within that experience. The subject provided both the limit and the unity of experience. In constituting its own limits it gave itself a position of dominance from which to judge items within the field of experience. But in providing this unity and homogeneity to experience it also provided something else: it allowed for the possibility of a representational theory of language.

It is only given the essential homogeneity of experience and a position from which the elements within it can be judged that it is possible to talk of a representational theory of language. If experience is heterogenous then there can be no simple one to one relation between it and language and even if it is homogenous there can be no possibility of a theory of representation unless there is postulated a position from which word can be aligned against thing. Literary criticism depends on a theory of the subject in such a dominant position and some theory of representation in order to carry out its tasks of interpretation. Interpretation is the search for meaning and meaning can be given some full sense within this perspective in terms of representations. The aim of interpretation will be to explain particular mechanisms of representation and then to judge their success. What remains stable for literary criticism is the relation of subject to language because this must always remain the same in order for language to function at all.

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Joyce's texts, however, refuse the subject any dominant position from which language could be tallied with experience. Ulysses and Finnegans Wake are concerned not with representing experience through language but with experiencing language through a destruction of representation. Instead of constructing a meaning, Joyce's texts concern themselves with the position of the subject in language. If the literary critic is interested in meaning, Joyce's texts are concerned with the various positions from which meaning becomes possible. In order to grasp the activities of Joyce's texts it becomes necessary to understand the construction of the position of the subject and what is always buried in that construction. This, then, is the second and major part of the thesis, an investigation of the changed position offered to the reader in Joyce's texts from Dubliners to Ulysses. However, the considerations so far advanced prompt one to interrogate the accuracy of the phrase "the Revolution of the Word". The voluntaristic tones of Jolas' manifesto and the pronoun 'of' combine to suggest that this revolution is achieved through the conscious decision to expand the possibilities of expression. Insofar as it suggests a realm exterior to language from which language can be manipulated it falls back into traditional conceptions. If revolution there be, it is not a question of one imposed from outside as is suggested by the preposition 'of' but rather a revolution in the internal relations of language. Thus the second part of the investigation is entitled "James Joyce and the Revolution in the Word".

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The investigation of the revolution in the word is a consideration of the relation of the subject to the discourses that he speaks, to the place that is assigned to him by his discourses. Joyce's texts disrupt the normal position assigned to a reader in a text and thus alter the reader's relation to his own discourses. This disruption is not merely a formal matter but also determines Joyce's concerns at the level of content. This thesis attempts to investigate the way in which formal and substantial elements intertwine to produce a text.

Crucial to this investigation is the use of various psycho-analytic concepts and it is necessary to consider briefly why these concepts figure in this dissertation and certain objections that could be raised against their use. If we are concerned with the place of the subject in language then it is inevitable that we fall back on psycho-analysis as the only body of concepts which have been produced in response to this problem. This statement may seem ridiculous in England where the post-war vulgarisation of Freud is common cultural currency, but, thanks to the work of the French psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan, it is now a commonplace in France that Freudian theory is centrally interested in language. Lacan's work constitutes an unceasing effort to prevent psycho-analysis falling back into biologism (a theory of the empirically given body) or psychologism (a theory of the mind as authentically experienced) and to redirect attention to the primary material of the psycho-analytic situation - language.

Anna O. characterised the treatment that Breuer created with her and which Freud was to develop as the "talking cure" and, if we think of the techniques of analysis (the attention to slips, free associations, jokes, dreams) we can best understand them as an elaborate work on language. The silence of the analyst and his refusal to enter into normal intersubjective relations is what allows the patient in the analytic situation to re-orient himself in language - constantly he hears his own discourses come back to him across the silence of the analyst with a message different from that which he first entrusted to them. And it is this re-orientation that allows repressed desires to find expression. Further, within this perspective, it is possible to understand the unconscious not as some bestial nature that has suffered a necessary but inadequate censorship but as the inevitable result of the entry of the body into language. The primary processes of the unconscious can be understood as the processes of signifying. Repression can be understood as the fact that for language to operate that which gives sense to a word (the paradigmatic and syntagmatic chains into which it can enter) cannot be present with the word itself in consciousness, but these chains must both be in existence and are necessarily absent from consciousness. Through the operations of language itself this unconscious area can produce another meaning in what we say, and the techniques of analysis are designed to bring this meaning to our attention. The unconscious is the result of the fact that as we speak what we say must always escape us - that as I

say one thing, it says something else.

Generally the use of psycho-analysis within literary criticism has remained caught within literary criticism's model of the relation of the subject to language (indeed Freud's own excursions into literary criticism do not escape these strictures). The text is taken as the representation of certain psychic conflicts and various elements within the text are read off as representing features of the author's psyche. With the insights offered to us by Lacan it is possible to see that literature cannot function in this way. Psycho-analytic practice demonstrates that it is not a question of the patient's language representing the patient's experience but rather that what "I" can experience is dependent on what positions "I" can take up in language. Paranoia is the impossibility of saying that "I love x" and instead permutating that linguistic form until it reads "x hates me". Within the psycho-analytic perspective it becomes impossible to drive the wedge between language and experience on which literary criticism depends. Rather it becomes a question of investigating the position allowed to the subject in his discourses and a set of techniques to re-orientate these positions. It might thus seem that we can simply apply psycho-analysis to literature as the science of the positions of the speaking subject in his discourses with the proviso that with literature we are not interested in attempting to change those positions in a clinical "cure". We could attempt to categorise literary

texts in terms of the positions they offer.

Such an application of psycho-analysis, however, while avoiding the mistakes of traditional literary criticism lays itself open to two other traditional reproaches. Given that psycho-analysis has been developed within an analytic situation which depends on a certain linguistic order (that of analyst and analysand), how can one simply apply its concepts to the situation of reading. And, further, how is one going to avoid reducing the work of art to a symptom? How can one account for the specificity of Hamlet over and above an analysis which emphasises it as the production of an unresolved Oedipus complex?

In answer to the first objection, it must be said that Freud's insights into language go far beyond the analytic situation. Lacan has attempted to emphasise the radical nature of Freud's investigation of language through a re-formulation of the Cartesian cogito. The cogito provides the justification for the subject as the founding source of meanings. "I think therefore I am" postulates that the "I" in simple evidence to itself provides a moment of pure presence which can found the enterprise of judging the world. Lacan states that the Freudian cogito runs as follows: "I think where I am not and I am where I do not think". We can understand this formulation as indicating the fundamental misunderstanding that is involved in any successful use of language in which the processes of

articulation which create a position for the subject are ignored from that very position that they have created. The unconscious is that effect of language which escapes the conscious subject in the distance between the act of signification in which the subject passes from signifier to signified and what is signified (in which the subject finds himself in place as, for example, the pronoun "I"). Freud's theory thus enables us to understand the subject as fundamentally divided and this division is a feature of any use of language; the analytic situation is merely able to bring this division to the analysand's attention in a concentrated and focused way.

The second objection to the effect that any use of psycho-analytic categories on literature will be necessarily reductive, loses much of its force when we understand that these categories cannot be used on a single work of literature. A symptom occurs in relation to a set of social norms and expectations that make up a life but a work of literature is produced within a specific form. If a work of literature is regarded independently of its form then it will inevitably be treated as a symptom. But such a treatment will always involve, as Freud's own efforts prove, a fall back into literary criticism. For the work of art is not a symptom, and if it is treated as one then it can only be treated as a representation of a symptom. We thus very quickly reach that division between representation and thing represented which is characteristic of literary criticism. If, therefore, we wish

to use psycho-analytic categories it must be in relation to formal changes in literature and then we may use its insights to see how formal and substantial changes interact. It is for this reason that the second part of the thesis is so centrally concerned with the relation of Joyce's texts to the traditional novel form. In chapter 3 I attempt to demonstrate a different organisation at work in George Eliot's texts and in Dubliners and to point to certain consequences that these formal organisations produce at the level of content. In chapter 4 I investigate the problem of narrative within the classical novel of Balzac and how A Portrait alters the relation of narrative to the rest of the text - an alteration which involves the nature of the sexuality portrayed within the text. This chapter also demonstrates that Flaubert can be understood as the precursor of Joyce as long as that relation is understood in relation to problems of narration. Chapter 5 is devoted to examining in detail some of Joyce's practices in Ulysses and Chapter 6 attempts to demonstrate how such formal experiments interact with the subject-matter of the text. That Ulysses is concerned with the problems of paternity is a commonplace and that it is written in experimental fashion is hardly news but that the one and the other are part of the same structure has never been satisfactorily explained. Traditionally form in Ulysses has been understood to be expressive whereas I try to show that it is constitutive.

But if literature does have its own specificity then it is not surprising that in order to account for all the features of Joyce's texts it is necessary to develop and alter certain psycho-analytic concepts. For it is not a question of using Joyce to prove psycho-analysis as though a work of literature could prove anything about the concepts developed in the study of the unconscious. Nor is there any question of attempting to show that because both Freud and Joyce were interested in puns, dreams, paternity and the problem of women's desire that there is some mysterious affinity between them. Rather psycho-analytic theory is drawn on insofar as it can offer an account of Joyce's practices which does not reduce them to traditional notions of the eccentric artist using strange means to express himself. But insofar as psycho-analysis is firstly directed to the problems involved in the cure of neurotics, it is not surprising that literature may cause it to develop certain concepts particularly those related to changes within the symbolic order. Joyce's central preoccupation with the feminine takes his texts beyond the traditional concepts of psycho-analysis and it is in an attempt to give an account of this that I have elaborated the concept of perversion and suggested certain further specifications within the structure of the Oedipus.

If the second section of the thesis attempts to show in detail the revolution in the word that Joyce's texts operate, the very word revolution has connotations which provide the third area of inquiry. Part 3, entitled, "The Revolution in

the Word and the Revolution", attempts to confront the question of the political nature of Joyce's texts. I attempt in this section to suggest that Joyce's texts produce a change in the relation between reader and text which has profound revolutionary implications. However, the political situation in which Joyce found himself has the effect of rendering these implications largely ineffective.

So much for the title of the dissertation but the subtitle too has its significance. The emphasis on Joyce's writing as a practice is to drive home the extent to which Joyce's writing is concerned both with the material effects of language and also with the possibilities of transformation. The traditional Marxist definition of a practice is the transformation of material through work. In Joyce's texts we are constantly forced to work on our discourses, constantly transforming them and thus ourselves. The difficulty of reading Joyce's texts is a difficulty in our notion of reading. Reading for us is a passive consumption, with Joyce it becomes an active transformation, a constant displacement of ourselves in language. The consequences of this practice for literary criticism are momentous. As I have indicated above and as I attempt to demonstrate at length below, Joyce's texts present literary criticism with its own impossibility. Interpretation is no longer possible but in its place we can begin the study of the various positions offered to the subject within literature, the history and mutations of these positions and the relation

of these mutations to the political and economic history in which they take place. It should be emphasised that this has nothing to do with a sociology of literature in which literature is taken as a representation of society but rather involves the study of the changing relation of the body to language through time. Finnegans Wake will be the primer for this new discipline. In 1894, in a lecture in Cambridge, Mallarmé suggested that aesthetics and political economy were the only two subjects left to study. Joyce provides one of the central texts for that investigation of aesthetics which Mallarmé foresaw but which has been so long delayed.

Acknowledgements.

No portion of this dissertation is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

I should like to thank my supervisors, Dr Jonathon Culler, Professor Jean-Jacques Mayoux and Dr Pat Parrinder for their help and advice. In addition two friends Dr Stephen Heath and Dr Ben Lloyd have constantly helped me to avoid any stereotyped response to Joyce's work.

Quotations from Ulysses are from the Bodley Head edition London 1960 and are simply given in brackets in the text. Quotations from Finnegans Wake are from the Faber and Faber edition London 1964 and are given in brackets with both page and line reference. Other texts used are mentioned in the notes

and full bibliographical information is provided in the bibliography at the end of the dissertation. All the theoretical quotations from the French which occur in the main body of the text have been translated. Reasons of space have prevented me translating all the French material used. This dissertation does not exceed the regulation length, including footnotes, references and appendices but excluding the bibliography. It has not been submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at any other University.

6th January 1976.

Emmanuel College,
Cambridge.

This dissertation is the result
which is the outcome of work done



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6th January 1976.

Emmanuel College,
Cambridge.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

John MacLachlan 23/1/76.

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JAMES JOYCE AND THE REVOLUTION OF THE WORD

"L'erreur esthétique fondamentale - l'erreur
économico-politique - consiste à croire que
le langage est un simple instrument représentatif."

Philippe Sollers. Logiques. p.105.

CHAPTER I

IN THE REALM OF COMMUNICATION: I.A. RICHARDS' THEORY OF POETRY.

Although very many of the critical works on Joyce which have appeared over the last thirty years have been of great value to a reading of Joyce, it is, nonetheless, my contention that none of them is finally able to give an appropriate explanation of Joyce's texts. And this because they have remained caught within a theory of language and the subject which has prevented them giving an account of the Joycean text in its reality as a practice of writing and as consequent subversion of the reading subject.¹ I wish to concentrate at first on the negative reaction to Joyce not simply because it has been, in general, the Cambridge one but also because it facilitates an understanding of the theoretical problems involved

1. There are of course certain texts like Samuel Beckett's and William Carlos Williams' contributions to Our Examination Round his Factification for Incarnation of Work in Progress or Hugh McDiarmid's In memoriam James Joyce: from a vision of world language which are an exception to this rule. But the major orthodox studies provide almost no examples of an attention to theories of language. Even a book as brilliant as Hugh Kenner's The Stoic Comedians contains its insights within a most conventional view of the relation between subject and language: see infra pp.71-72. Several articles which have appeared on Joyce in France in recent years have begun to redress the balance but there is as yet no full length book. Hélène Cixous' article "La ruse de l'écriture." Poétique No.4, 1970, pp 419-432 contains a very interesting account of "The Sisters" but her earlier book L'exil de James Joyce ou l'art de remplacement remains caught within a traditional psychologism. For a consideration of texts that deal specifically with Joyce's language see Chapter 7, footnote 6.

in investigating the more general positive reaction. It is this positive reaction which has produced the plethora of critical works which confronts anyone who wishes to engage in a theoretical understanding of Joyce's practice. What I hope to show is that this positive reaction is simply a mirror image of the negative reaction, reduplicating exactly the misunderstanding of Joyce's texts.

In his little book on Joyce in the Modern Masters series, John Gross ignores any difficulty that Joyce might pose for the reader by lumping all those areas of Joyce which will not fit into a simple ideology of representation (the majority)² into the traditional refuge of the critic faced with a text that ruins his expectations - the author's personal quirks. Thus all the investigation of language in Joyce's texts is labelled "the calculated fireworks displays of a virtuoso"³ and Gross instead concentrates on the psychological realism; on Joyce's "fully rounded and realistic conception of Bloom."⁴ The critical strategy that Gross uses in his book is simply a debased version of that which can be found in a review written in 1933 by F.R. Leavis. This short review covers both all of Work in Progress then available and the theoretical justification of it

2. It is not simply Finnegans Wake but the major part of Ulysses which has to be abandoned if traditional notions of realism are used to read the books. See infra passim.

3. John Gross. Joyce p.63.

4. Ibid., p.60.

produced by Jolas and others in the transition circle. Having announced his rejection of Work in Progress, Leavis goes on to explain that it is not the invention of words that he objects to. He contrasts Joyce with Shakespeare in a passage of the utmost interest:

"Mr Joyce's liberties with English are essentially unlike Shakespeare's. Shakespeare's were not the product of a desire to "develop his medium to the fullest", but of a pressure of something to be conveyed. One insists, it can hardly be insisted too much, that a study of a Shakespeare play must start with the words; but it was not there that Shakespeare - the great Shakespeare - started: the words matter because they lead down to what they came from. He was in the early wanton period, it is true, an amateur of verbal fancies and ingenuities, but in the mature plays, and especially in the late plays stressed above, it is the burden to be delivered, the precise and urgent command from within, that determines expression - tyrannically. That is Shakespeare's greatness: the complete subjection - subjugation - of the medium to the uncompromising, complex and delicate need that uses it."⁵ (my emphases)

What we find here is a fear of words escaping their condition of "subjection", a fear which is linked in this passage with the threat of "wantonness" - that is a sexuality which is no longer tyrannically determined in its "expression".⁶ What must be preserved at all costs is a space between the writer and language, between the command and the expression, between the need and the medium. Joyce is rejected insofar as he tends to

5. F.R. Leavis. "James Joyce and the Revolution of the word." Scrutiny, Vol.2, No.2, September 1933, p.194.

6. That 'amateur' and 'wanton' are linked together in this way provides an emblematic configuration of the traditional Puritan virtues within Leavis' work.

collapse these two areas into each other. His use of language tends to obscure the undefined "what they came from" - the individual consciousness autonomously producing works which finish within the social medium of language, but which "start" somewhere else. It is the independent judging subject which must be preserved at all costs against the pressures of language. Language itself threatens to dissolve and deconstitute the subject into a set of positions which are always already there for individual bodies to take up. That this is the case is made clear when Leavis goes on in his article to talk of Ulysses:

"For in the earlier work, in Ulysses and before, the substance is clearly the author's personal history and the pressure immediate personal urgency; the historical particularity is explicit enough and it is hardly impertinent to say that Ulysses is clearly a catharsis."⁷

In this passage Ulysses is absolved from the wanton play with language as it finds its substance in an area outside language, namely the author's personal history. Leavis does, however, warn us that:

"A certain vicious bent manifested itself very disturbingly in Ulysses, in the inorganic elaborations and pedantries..."⁸ (my emphasis)

In other words Ulysses can be read insofar as it does not enter into verbal fancies and ingenuities; but those parts of the

7. F.R. Leavis. op.cit. p.196.

8. Ibid. p.197.

text that partake of 'inorganic elaborations' are condemned as vicious and must be left unread. John Gross' book lacks all the subtlety and seriousness of Leavis' analysis. It also lacks the strength of conviction to carry through what is entailed by its theoretical presuppositions and reject Joyce's work. However, in its emphasis on the split between judging subject and language, between author and text, and in its disregard of the investigations of language, which are simply seen as a gratuitous supplement to the novel, Gross' book rejoins Leavis' article in its refusal to read the text of Ulysses as other than the 'subjection' of the medium to a personal vision. Everything else is ignored:

"And no one is going to get the best out of the novel unless he is to some extent ready to accept such displays (the experimental techniques) for their own sake, for their wit and inventiveness, without worrying unduly about how far they can be accommodated to traditional fictional procedures."⁹

Any interest in the effects of language is ignored or else condemned by Leavis as "vicious" or by Gross as without "organic unity".¹⁰

What is in question here is the whole relationship between subject and language. The very category of 'author' has, built into it, certain notions of the relation of a writing subject to his discourses which may well have to be abandoned under the

9. John Gross op.cit. p.63.

10. Ibid. p.64.

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pressure of Joyce's texts. What is at work in Leavis' text, or in Gross', is the assumption of a radical split between language and experience in which language becomes a mere instrument with which the burden of experience is delivered. In order to see clearly what is theoretically involved in such a position it is necessary to turn that other great founding father of Cambridge English - I.A. Richards. The necessity of examining Richards is that the issues are considerably clearer in his work. For Leavis, although admiring certain advances of Richards, is not concerned to produce a theory of language nor a theory of literature. A theory of language can be left to those who are professionally equipped for it - Leavis is obsessed with setting up an area of professional inquiry into literature and is therefore very keen to demarcate his own from other professions. The job of a literary critic is not to produce a theory of literature but to bring a certain kind of "attention" and "discrimination", a certain "eye for significance" to particular texts.¹¹ It is obvious that there are definite assumptions about literature and language at work in his criticism even in the short passage from the Joyce review already quoted. It is, however, easier to place these views in perspective and understand their congruence with apparently opposed views, if we examine the more explicit work of Richards. Richards' crucial texts were produced in the aftermath of the

11. These last phrases are taken from the review "Criticism and Literary History", Scrutiny, Vol.4, no.1, June 1935, p.97.

1914-18 war and his concerns and prejudices are very much those of the period. The belief that if one could construct a medium of perfect communication (The League of Nations) then there would be no more disagreements between nations is reproduced in Richards' attitude that in language all that prevents perfect communication is inadequacies in our symbolisation:

"Words, whenever they cannot directly ally themselves with and support themselves upon gestures, are at present a very imperfect means of communication. Even for private thinking thought is often ready to advance, and only held back by the treachery of its natural symbolism; and for conversational purposes the latitude acquired constantly shows itself to all those who make any serious attempt to compare opinions."¹²

12. I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden. The Meaning of Meaning. p.21. It could be objected that the weight attributed to The Meaning of Meaning in the following pages is unwarranted in an analysis of Richards. Immediately one could reply that Richards himself refers back to The Meaning of Meaning throughout his work as the one place where he fully articulated the theory of meaning which he uses in other works, e.g. Interpretation in Teaching. 2nd edition, p.viii, or So Much Nearer, p.143. But this answer would not be the appropriate one. For my interest in Richards' theories is less in working out the exact positions that Richards held throughout his life but rather to use certain sections of his work to demonstrate the kind of pre-suppositions at work in many critics. In fact I think that the theory I outline here is the one that runs through the work Richards published in the 1920s but I would also hold (against the thesis of Jerome P. Schiller's I.A. Richard's Theory of Literature) that there is a change in Richard's position and that in, for example, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (written in 1934) the emphasis on the dominance of the subject has given way to an interest in language which is less orientated towards communication and more concerned with language as articulation. What militates against the later Richards ever finally breaking through to a view of language nearer to the one presented within this thesis is the security of the meta-discourse in which he writes. To examine the reasons for this security would involve a history of intellectuals in Britain in this century. Suffice for the moment to point out that while Richards can question a fixed human nature at the level of content e.g. Mencius on the Mind pp.80-81, the nature of his discourse is such that he soon gets drowned again in certainty. His discourse always leaves Mencius in a subordinate position no matter how much he struggles against it. It may well be that it was this that drove Richards to place more emphasis on the writing of poetry.

This quotation comes from the book that Richards wrote with C.K. Ogden The Meaning of Meaning and the book is explicitly devoted to practical ends - to reforming our use of language through scientific enquiry to ensure perfect communication:

"The practical importance of a Science of Symbolism even in its present undeveloped form needs little emphasis. All the more elaborate forms of social and intellectual life are affected by changes in our attitudes towards and use of words. How words work is commonly regarded as a purely theoretical matter, of little interest to practical persons. It is true that the investigation must at times touch upon somewhat abstruse questions, but its disregard by practical persons is nevertheless shortsighted. The view that language works well enough as it is, can only be held by those who use it merely in such affairs as could be conducted without it - the business of the paper boy or the butcher, for instance, where all that needs to be referred to can equally well be pointed at. Only those who shut their eyes to the hasty re-adaptation to totally new circumstances which the human race has during the last century been blindly endeavouring to achieve, can pretend there is no need to examine critically the most important of all the instruments of civilisation."¹³

The aim of providing a theory of communication, based on scientific advances and of practical use, is achieved by giving a causal account of meaning (and, by demonstrating a certain kind of continuity, to guarantee language against error for each individual language user) and by isolating a symbolic (representational) function of language from an emotive function. This account of language shows that while mistakes in communi-

13. Ibid. pp.xxviii-xxix.

cation are possible, these mistakes are due to emotion - wilful misuse of symbols for aims other than communication - or to mistaken (because inadequate) symbolisation. These categories can be seen to reproduce the categories used to explain the causes of the first World War. In the firm belief that the horrors of war were avoidable, men sought desperately to explain the war in a fashion which would allow simple preventative measures to be taken against its recurrence. Despite the pessimisms of left and right that further destruction was inevitable (either because of the contradictions of capitalism or because of the destructive elements within human nature), the optimistic consensus of liberal democratic opinion was that war could be prevented through the setting up of efficient channels of communication. The calls for an end to secret diplomacy and the setting up of the League of Nations were supported by the assumption that wars were caused either by wicked leaders who told lies about their peoples' real demands, or through misunderstanding. In both cases it was the means of communication that were to blame. If the leader's lies were believed it was because secret diplomacy kept the lies from his own people and, if there was no actual malice, it was simply secret diplomacy which led to false conclusions. The League of Nations was the political counterpart of a language of perfect communication.¹⁴

14. This connection between politics and literary theory becomes explicit in Richards' Science and Poetry, p.35.

Further reflection on the ideology of the League of Nations shows that there is another essential counterpart to this theory of communicability. For if communication can prevent war, it is because, in fact, nations do not have any real conflicting interests and it is only misrepresentations of those interests through faulty communication that leads one to think that there is such a conflict. Thus it is no surprise that, together with Richards' theory of perfect communicability, there is a psychological theory that conflicting claims and appetites can be efficiently organised. This is, of course, Richards' thesis - indeed, his whole justification for the value of art is that it is a communication of the most efficient organisation of appetites that is possible and the artist is defined precisely as that figure who is able to organize his life the most effectively and communicate that organization.

Richards' theory of psychology finds its clearest expression in chapter 7 of his book The Principles of Literary Criticism and in its curious and optimistic formulation we can find the other face of the coin of total communication. Starting from the position that advances in our knowledge of other people and other times have rendered obsolete a judgement based on contemporary social norms, Richards advances the proposition that anything that satisfies an impulse is valuable. Although it is impossible to satisfy all impulses at all times, it is, however, possible to organize conflicting impulses in such a way that a maximum of satisfaction is gained. To achieve

this maximum of satisfaction great complexity of organisation is required and it is this greater complexity (which permits greater satisfaction) that becomes the criterion of value. What is, however, the basis of this organisation of impulses? Richards, starting from the twin premisses that there are conflicting impulses and that we do succeed in satisfying these conflicts, concludes that the impulses are organized. But in order to organize one has need of an organizer and it is this organizer that Richards assumes throughout his discussion of a theory of psychology. Admittedly he repudiates any idea that this organizer is a conscious agent, when, at the end of the chapter, he remarks:

"To guard against a possible misunderstanding it may be added that the organisation and systematisation of which I have been speaking in this chapter are not primarily an affair of conscious planning or arrangement... We pass as a rule from a chaotic to a better organized state by ways which we know nothing about."¹⁵
(my emphasis)

The fact that this comment is an addition (a supplement) is of great significance because in general that which is added, is added not because it has been forgotten in the course of the

15. Principles of Literary Criticism. Reprint of the so-called "third edition" of 1928. Routledge paper backs. London 1960, p.57. My argument that the paragraph quoted constituted a "supplement" received independent justification when I failed to discover it in the first edition of the Principles. All other quotations are from the first edition.

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argument, but because it has been repressed. Freud in his writings on the techniques of analysis is continually at great pains to point out the importance of what the patient adds as an after-thought to his account of the dream. For this addition (this supplement) contains that element which the secondary revision could not include in a coherent account of the dream. The analyst can, therefore, use this supplement to subvert the coherence of the dream and reveal the gaps which the secondary revision has attempted to conceal. In the same way we can re-read Richards' argument with the aid of this addition so that the gaps covered over in the flow of the argument may re-appear.

For if we now turn back to examine the ways in which the impulses are organized we find that without an organiser, there can be no organisation. Richards introduces the impulses as simple notions without further need of explanation, but in talking of the ways in which a primitive new born animal may be gradually transformed into a bishop he writes:

"At every stage in the astonishing metamorphosis, the impulses, desires, and propensities of the individual take on a new form, or, it may be, a further degree of systematisation."¹⁶

and he continues with:

"... the conduct of life is throughout an attempt to organise impulses so that success is obtained

16. I.A. Richards. Principles of Literary Criticism, p.46.

for the greater number or mass of them, for the most important and weightiest set."¹⁷

What is interesting about these formulations is that these impulses are seen as a certain content for 'forms' or 'systematisations' or 'organisation' - the impulse is defined in terms of the range of actions which will satisfy it and these actions are co-ordinated by the subject. But the subject is formed by these very impulses. The difficulty is the difficulty of finding a moment where the process commences - where there is already a form for the content of the impulses. The Richards analysis rests on the assumption that there is always, already, a form for the impulses. The metaphor used throughout the discussion is the metaphor of the subject choosing between impulses. This might lead us to imagine that it is the subject which provides this prior form. But this solution cannot possibly work because, temporally, the judging subject comes after the impulses. The difficulty here is the difficulty of treating the individual subject outside the social form of language - for it is in language that the subject is constituted; in those positions that are allowable to the subject within a particular set of discourses. And it is within the perspective of the positions allowed to the subject in language that we can talk of a conflict between impulses. For the conflict is generated by those impulses that cannot find their way into language; and it is these impulses which cannot speak - that

17. Ibid.

have been deprived a voice - which Freud defined as the unconscious. Indeed this perspective (of positions assigned to the subject in language as constitutive of the subject) is essential if we are to understand the notion of conflict. Within the terms of Richards' analysis there is no reason why conflict should occur unless there is a form (a subject) within which the impulses make their appearance. For there seems no reason why the impulses should not simply arrive at temporally separate intervals and thereby avoid conflict and the need for organisation. Within the Freudian schema, however, the subject is already in conflict through the institution of difference implied in the speaking of a language. In a language, words find their meaning through a series of differential oppositions. The fact that these oppositions cannot be held in the conscious mind at the moment of speaking ensures the existence of the unconscious. And it is this fact, also, that ensures conflict between a judging subject constantly placed in position as the 'I' of the statement and the subject of the speech act constantly displacing itself along the signifying chain. It is this signifying chain which constantly threatens another possible set of significations.¹⁸ Indeed the

18. The distinction being made here is an elaboration of a distinction proposed by Emile Benveniste in two articles in Problèmes de linguistique générale, "Les relations de temps dans le verbe français" pp.237-250 and "De la subjectivité dans le langage" pp.258-266. Benveniste suggests that, in order to arrive at a logical understanding of tenses and to understand fully the importance of language for subjectivity, it is necessary to distinguish between the speaker as the producer of the discursive chain "le sujet de l'énonciation" and the speaker as the grammatical subject of the statement he is producing, "le sujet de l'énoncé". It is in the distance between these two subjects that we can find a formal linguistic account of the distance between the philosophical subject, le sujet de l'énoncé, the 'I', judging the correspondence of the world and language and the psycho-analytic subject, le sujet de l'énonciation, the 'it', unable to distinguish between word and world and constantly threatening and unmasking the stability of the 'I'.

entry into language can be conceived of as the knot of the Oedipus complex, the recognition of difference between the subject and what is not the subject and this difference being the basis of law; the positions which the subject can and cannot take up.

If we return to Richards' account we can see that he is caught in the paradox of postulating an organising principle before the organisation that will create the organising principle. The process by which the undifferentiated impulses become specific actions is inexplicable without the use of some concept of the organisation of experience in language which exists before any particular individuality. However, Richards has need of the judging subject outside language in order for his theory of language to work and, therefore, he is caught in the paradox that I have indicated. To avoid this paradox, and to achieve a systematic account of his theory, he is thus driven to assume throughout his exposition a set of metaphors implying the primacy of the judging subject; and it is only at the end that he attempts to withdraw this foundation stone and yet leave the edifice standing.

Before we finally return to the concepts at work in his psychology we must now examine Richards' theory of language. As the vocabulary employed is complex and unintuitive it is, perhaps, as well to introduce the terms fairly fully. When a statement is made there are two factors at work. Firstly, if we

regard language as strictly representational, there is the symbolic function of language. This is composed of three terms: there is the word or words themselves (the symbol), there is the mental process (the reference) and there is the thing in the world (the referent). In addition to this strictly representational function there is the emotive occurrence of language as sign. As sign the tone, sound, pitch etc., of words express the feelings of the speaker and these signs are interpreted by the hearer in the light of his past experience.

We will notice that there is a similar structure of explanation at work in the accounts of both these functions of language but first let us look at the account of signs. Signs are defined in terms of the subject's past:

"The effects upon the organism due to any sign, which may be any stimulus from without, or any process taking place within, depend upon the past history of the organism..."¹⁹

Signs are thus anything at all in the whole of experience but are dependent for their definition - on whether they are signs - on the past history of the subject. If the situation has been encountered before then some part of the situation will be a sign of the whole situation and will cause memory to be activated in the subject through what Richards calls an engram:

19. I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden. *op.cit.* p.138.

"An engram is the residual trace of an adaptation made by the organization to a stimulus. The mental process due to the calling up of an engram is a similar adaptation: so far as it is cognitive what it is adapted to is its referent and is what the sign which excites it stands for or signifies." 20

The sign is thus a mode of passage from the actual situation in which the stimulus was encountered, and the interpretation is the psychological reaction which is the product both of the original and the present experience. This, then, is the causal basis of meaning. A stimulus is experienced and causes an adaptation in the organism which determines any subsequent reaction to the same stimulus. The meaning of the signs are the physical changes in the metabolism which were occasioned by the original encounter through the physical contiguity ensured in the brain. Furthermore each reaction to a sign can serve as a further sign:

"What we 'see' when we look at a table is first, modifications of our retinae. These are our initial signs. We interpret them and arrive at fields of vision, bounded by surfaces of tables and the like. By taking belief in these as second order signs and so on, we can proceed with our interpretation, reaching as results tables, wood, fibres, cells, molecules, atoms, electrons etc. The later stages of this interpretative effort are physics. Thus there is no study called 'philosophy' which can add to or correct physics, though symbolism may contribute to a systematisation of the levels of discourse at which 'table' and 'system of molecules' are the appropriate symbols." 21

20. Ibid. p.140.

21. Ibid. p.385.

Signs thus provoke reactions in us which are based on our original experience. These reactions are symbolised by words which stand for things in the world which caused the mental reactions. Words thus appear as determined by their references (the mental processes) which in turn are determined by their referents. However, words appear not only as symbols determined by their referent, but also as verbal signs - that is to say as parts of already encountered contexts of human behaviour and emotion. Richards and Ogden describe this dual appearance which leads to a double interpretation as follows:

"One is interpreted from symbols to reference and so to referent; the other is interpreted from verbal signs to the attitude, mood, interest, purpose, desire, and so forth of the speaker, and thence to the situation, circumstances and conditions in which the utterance is made."²²

However, the authors are at pains to point out that the attitude, moods, desires, etc which may be communicated through the verbal signs can also be communicated through symbolisation:

"Each of these non-symbolic functions may employ words either in a symbolic capacity, to attain the required end through the references produced in the listener, or in a non-symbolic capacity when the end is gained through the direct effects of the words."²³

22. Ibid. p.356.

23. Ibid. p.359.

Thus there is a direct passage to the referent with the sign and an indirect passage with the symbol. How, then, can we guarantee the passage through the symbol? It is perhaps worthwhile to quote a long, but extremely revealing, passage by the authors when they attempt to deal with the problem:

"The first necessity is to remember that since the past histories of individuals differ except in certain very simple respects, it is probable that their reactions to and employment of any general word will vary. There will be some to whom a word is merely a stimulus to the utterance of other words without the occurrence of any reference - the psittacists, that is to say, who respond to words much as they might respond to the first notes of a tune which they proceed almost automatically to complete. At the other extreme there will be some for whom every word used symbolises a definite and completely articulated reference. With the first we are not here concerned, but as regards the others, unless we have good evidence to the contrary we should assume that, clear though their ideas may be, they will probably not be ideas of the same things. It is plain that we can only identify referents through the references made to them. Different references, then, may be to the same referent, sufficiently similar ones must be; and it is only by ensuring similarity of reference that we can secure identity in our referents. For this it is desirable to symbolise references by means of the simple routes of definition discussed above. We must choose as starting points either things to which we can point or which occur freely in ordinary experience."²⁴

We can find in this statement, of how we achieve correct symbolisation and similar references, the same structure of explanation that was at work in the analysis of the interpretation of signs. The symbol is determined in its reference by its

24. *ibid.* pp.230-231.

referent which is identified through a chain of definitions which have their basis in a temporal and spatial present. The symbol is thus totally fixed in its reference (its meaning) through a moment of presence in which the subject identifies the objects in the world. Similarly the sign is determined in its context by the engram which provides the link back to the original experience in which the whole context was present.

Language is thus determined by moments of a full presence; as both symbol and sign it is grounded in a presence and this presence is tied to a specific moment of origin. In the case of the sign the origin is the first time that we experience the context in which the sign will appear. In the case of the symbol the origin is the 'starting point' in the things that we can point to. Literature thus becomes a particular use of language which is peculiar in that all the functions of language are at work to communicate the artist's experience. As sign, the author's language is determined by its origin in the author's past; in his experience of language as sound and tone. As symbols they are located in the references (thoughts) present in the author's mind as he writes. What it is here important to grasp is that it follows that each work of literature therefore possesses a definite meaning - in terms of the references and engrams which the words will call up. But why is there no easy passage to that meaning - why, if the meaning is there in some full sense, do we need to learn to read poetry? The answer is to be located in an excess of intellectual reflection.

Consciousness withdraws itself further and further from any full presence and finally loses the ability to reunite itself with its experience:

"But as general reflection develops the place of the free direct play of experience is taken by the deliberate organization of attitudes, a clumsy and crude substitute... Now reflection, unless very prolonged and very arduous, tends to fix the attitude by making us dwell in it, by removing us from experience."²⁵

With this notion of experience we have the essential corollary to words being fixed in their references and effects (in, that is, their meanings); namely that we all have the same human nature - the same response to stimuli which ensures that the poet's meaning will reach us. Richards' awareness of this necessity can be found in his analysis of the 'normality of the artist':

"If the availability of his past experience is the first characteristic of the poet, the second is what we may provisionally call his normality. So far as his experience does not tally with that of those with whom he communicates, there will be failure."²⁶

There is thus an interpretation of language which fixes the meaning of language once and for all - in the physical reality of the human body. The final level of interpretation is physical reactions inside us which are the same for everybody

25. I.A. Richards, op.cit. p.202.

26. *ibid.* p.190.

(except of course those unfortunates, described above, who have been deprived the free play of experience and are stuck in the fixed organization of attitudes). The inadequacy of this view of language can perhaps best be approached through a consideration of the other side of the subject-object dichotomy namely the object. On this view of language and experience, objects are given in their identity before language which simply serves as a method to represent them to the subject. If we take, for example, the quotation about 'seeing' a table we can understand in this presentation that the table must be all these objects for sight. It must be successively a table, an atom and then visual stimulæ again. But rather than us finding symbols to fit these levels, it is the symbols that produce the various levels. An object is not given to the subject but finds its place within a series of oppositions - of what it is and is not. And it is through the idea of difference and opposition that we can begin to grasp language and structure. Opposed to a notion of language as instituted by a moment of presence (as the meanings injected into words by the judging subject) we can find a notion of language as structure (in which meaning is produced through the sets of oppositions and differences which any body already finds in position together with the places which he, as subject, can occupy). These places are determined by the particular historical and familial conjuncture in which the body finds itself and which determine the sexed and civil subject it will become.

It is within the context of the object and of science (the study of objects) that we can locate the most obvious weakness in the explanation of language that Richards offers. This weakness is not, however, confined to the field of the object for it runs as a fissure, a gap, through both his account of the subject and of language. At the opening of his book with Ogden there are a few pages on the work of one of the great founders of linguistics and semiology Ferdinand de Saussure. These pages crystallize in their contradictions many of the strengths and weaknesses of English, and more particularly Cambridge, intellectual culture of this period. The strengths, which produced the discovery of Frege and Peano, the work of Russell, Wittgenstein and Richards himself, find expression both in the interest of language and the very fact of having read the Cours de linguistique générale which had appeared in 1916 only six years before the publication of their book (and this interest in Saussure goes hand in hand with the reading of other European thinkers such as Husserl and Brentano). The weaknesses, however, are also in evidence in their comments on Saussure which reveal a theoretical and ideological gap, which was to widen considerably and which has yet to be examined, between Anglo-Saxon and continental thought.²⁷

While welcoming Saussure's project of a science of signs,

27. The first starting point for such an examination would have to be Perry Anderson's "Components of the National Culture" in New Left Review No.50, July-August, 1968. pp.3-57.

semiology, the authors attack the great Swiss linguist for not understanding the basic notion of science. They attack Saussure's elaboration of la langue (the object of linguistics - the transindividual code which assures the possibility of any message (la parole)) in the following terms:

"Such an elaborate construction as la langue might, no doubt, be arrived at by some Method of Intensive Distraction analogous to that with which Dr Whitehead's name is associated in Physics, but as a guiding principle for a young science it is fantastic. Moreover, the same device of inventing verbal entities outside the range of possible investigation proved fatal to the theory of signs which follows."²⁸

The idea at work in this passage is that the world is just available for scientific investigation, which consists of the gathering of evident facts and the proper use of symbols. What remains outside the realm of the thinkable for Richards is that it is only after we have set up significant oppositions in theory that we can begin to test their application in practice. Thus 'electron' is not something we 'see' but rather is an element within a whole discourse of sub-atomic physics and finds its definition within this discourse. It is not the individual scientist (the judging subject) who sees or creates the electron but rather the theoretical discourse of physics which assigns a place both to the electron and to the scientist. The difficulty in grasping language as constitutive of both subject and object

28. I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden. op.cit. pp 6-7.

is most stunningly evident in a footnote in which Richards and Ogden explain Saussure's distinction between signifiant (the acoustic image) and signifié (the concept) as the two components of the sign and then add:

"The disadvantage of this account is, as we shall see, that the process of interpretation is included by definition in the sign!"²⁹ (the exclamation mark is theirs).

It is precisely the way that language comes together with its interpretative schema which takes it beyond an individual subjectivity to provide the scene on which any subjectivity must appear. It is this unquestioned belief in the primacy of the judging subject that constitutes one of the major 'blocks' within Richards' work.

We are now in a position to give a general account of the theory advanced by Richards. We are given a fixed human nature and a fixed set of identities in the world; these two elements are united in the experience of the judging subject who uses language to represent and communicate this experience. To this can be opposed the idea of language as structure - that is to say as a set of oppositions and differences which constitute the space in which object and subject confront one another. Literature fits into Richards' general theory with remarkable ease. For literature

29. *ibid.*

is the representation of the author's experience both of himself and of the outside world. Having the same nature and the same world we can understand what the author is representing - his work communicates his experience. Any misunderstanding of the work can be analysed in terms of our misunderstanding our own experience through bad education. ~~It is significant to notice that~~ ^{position} This presupposes a language which is in direct contact with experience - the critic's own - which is never questioned as a form of experience. This ignoring of the form of one's own language entails a very definite attitude to a difficult work. This attitude is of special importance with regard to Joyce whose writings are legendary in their difficulty. Not only Finnegans Wake and Ulysses but also Dubliners and A Portrait have troubled readers. One of Dubliners' first reviewers talked of "the reader's difficulty"³⁰ and early critics of A Portrait complained of the strain it put on readers.³¹ If literature is communication and if language is simply representation then difficulty will simply be the difficulty of divining the message communicated and of discerning what is represented. The insistence that literature is communication is constant in Richards' works and is stated in its clearest form in the following passage from Practical Criticism:

30. Review in T.L.S. 18 June 1914 in James Joyce. The Critical Heritage. ed. Robert H. Deming, vol.1. p.60.

31. *ibid.* pp.81-110 in particular pp.93 and 95.

"But poetry itself is a mode of communication. What it communicates and how it does so and the worth of what is communicated form the subject-matter of criticism."³²

Thus difficulty will be analysed in terms of communication. Difficulty is to be expected in literature because of the complexity of the experiences being communicated which entail the use of every aspect of language as sign and symbol. The resolution of difficulty will thus be in terms of defining the meaning - of identifying it. Whether an identification of meaning is possible will determine the judgement of the work. And it is with this knowledge that we can understand how the article by Leavis which condemns Joyce has common terms with those books that praise him - books we shall investigate in the next chapter. Both attempt to identify meanings - the difference is that Leavis fails to find them where another generation of critics have found them in abundance. Joyce's work, however, is exactly an interrogation of meaning; a constant subversion of language as representation or communication and is thus unreadable within the perspective of a discourse for which a moment of full presence serves as origin. Indeed the whole of Joyce's work can be read as a casting into play of these notions of presence and origin and an attempt to experience the limits of language which determine the scene of any possible presence or origin. What is essential for this reading of Joyce is an abandonment of the idea that a work of literature represents an experience. Instead we

32. I.A. Richards. Practical Criticism. p.11.

must see the writing as a constant traversing of the positions made available to the subject in language - a constant attempt to break down those positions offered by Ireland, the father and the Church. This writing is not representation but practice - the constant transformation of material rather than the transparent rendering of a reality already given.

Richards' analysis rests on an ignorance of his own discourses as a constitutive element of the world. As the objects of science can be found lying about the world independently of man's theoretical activity - so the experiences within poems are just waiting to be observed. But the ignoring of language as form (both for the subject and the object) entails the transformation of the world into an unproblematic content. Nor is this surprising if we consider that each discourse becomes a content for the meta-discourse which talks about it.³³ It is the

33. I use the term discourse (meta-discourse) because the term language (metalanguage) in English is, I think, too firmly linked to the notion of a national tongue and therefore it is confusing to speak of language in the plural within one national tongue unless one is dealing with formal languages. Further while a language can be seen as any significant set of oppositions, discourse is here used to emphasize the positions offered to a speaking subject within any specific language. cf. E. Benveniste *op.cit.* pp.258-263. The closest term within the British philosophical tradition is 'language games' but this too has unfortunate resonances with the notion of 'game'. A meta-discourse 'talks about' (the term is taken from Tarski's article "The Semantic Conception of Truth" in Readings in Philosophical Analysis ed. H. Feigl and W. Sellars pp.52-84) a discourse and transforms it into content by naming the discourse (accomplished through the use of inverted commas) and thus being able to identify both the discourse and its area of application and establish their correspondence.

existence of an unquestioned meta-discourse (in Richards' case this meta-discourse is anchored in the non-existent future of a science of psychology which will reveal our common human natures) that ensures that all form is turned into content.

If we now turn back to Leavis' criticisms of Joyce we can see very much the same constellation of concepts at work in his comments on "Work in Progress". It is because Joyce's experiments lack an origin in the presence of certain problems to the personality that they are condemned as vicious. The presence and origin that Leavis demands is a slightly more complicated affair than Richards' bare 'contexts' but it still involves the subjugation of the medium. It is this that ensures for Leavis Shakespeare's greatness and Joyce is condemned insofar as the medium escapes any personal domination. Leavis' position is, however, different from Richards' in that the justification for the meta-discourse does not find its basis within a yet unrealised psychology but rather within the social basis of discussion amongst that minority section of a society which can appreciate cultural values.

In his evaluation of Richards (significantly the first such study published in Scrutiny) D.W. Harding marks the shift very neatly:

"The conclusion that his account of value gives a basis for agreement only when "normality" (or identical abnormality) is assumed, might seem to

leave us no defence against an endless variety of critical opinions, each justified by an appeal to a fundamental constitutional peculiarity in the critic. Since innate differences do of course exist, we must perhaps admit that in the end we shall have to recognize distinguishable 'types' of critical opinion founded on psycho-physiological differences in the critics, and irreconcilable... (But) it is still possible to show that differences of opinion in literary matters frequently arise from errors of approach which even those who make them can be brought to recognize. With people who assert that they know what they like the one hope is to demonstrate to them that in point of fact they don't, that according to standards they themselves recognize elsewhere their judgement here is mistaken. As these inconsistencies are faced and abandoned the possibility of agreement with other people grows greater." 34

What is, of course, crucial here is "the standards they themselves recognize elsewhere" which provide the basis for agreement. Harding indeed attacks Richards for wishing to include every Philistine in his evangelical work for poetry. Because if shared standards are necessary then the field of the possible converted may be narrow. Harding concludes:

"But whether Richards' methods would be effective in convincing the intelligent and friendly Philistine is another matter. It may be that his work fulfills its purpose by giving those who already value poetry a new assurance that their concern for it is a development and not a distortion, of "ordinary practical living". If this is one of its functions it bears witness to the growing need of those with minority views to justify themselves at the bar of the main community. The main community may not be convinced; perhaps the fundamental need is that the minority should be." 35

34. D.W. Harding. "Evaluation of I.A. Richards' Scrutiny, vol.1, no.4. March 1933, p.334.

35. *ibid.* p.338.

But if the movement from the psychological to the social marks in the political sphere a movement from the democratic to the elitist, there is, however, a certain gain on the theoretical side. For with the notion of a community it becomes impossible to take a simple and crude view of the relation of the individual to language. Rather Leavis oscillates between a view in which the writer simply operates within the genres and discourses of his time and another view in which the writer becomes the dominating creator of language. In general this oscillation is what enables Leavis' criticism to reach such a consistently high standard.³⁶ With regard to Joyce we have already taken note of the way in which his condemnation of Joyce remains tied to a view of the judging subject creating the correct expressive discourse. But in the same review he attacks this same view as it is presented by some of the early defenders of Joyce and it is worth pausing on this attack briefly before leaving the pages of Scrutiny.

The title of Leavis' essay comes from the manifesto published in transition in June 1929 which was written by Eugene Jolas and signed by many of his friends. The confusions within this document can be neatly summarised through a consideration of the change of preposition from the title of the manifesto to its first thesis which reads:

36. See for example the treatment of minor 17th century poets in "English Poetry in the seventeenth century". Scrutiny, Vol.4, No.3 December 1935. pp.236-256.

"The revolution in the English language is an accomplished fact."³⁷ (my emphasis)

With this thesis we find a conception of the writer as working in language - a refusal of the assumption that a judging subject constituted outside language simply uses language to communicate his experience.

On the other hand the attack on pre-established linguistic forms was often justified as the writer attempting to express himself more clearly. On this view the old words and forms were not adequate to the writer's experience and therefore he simply created new ones. This is the revolution of the word where the revolution is imposed from outside - by the writer on the word - rather than a question of the writer working a revolution in the word - the writer engaging in a certain practice of writing which alters the very way in which signs are produced and defined. The sixth thesis of the manifesto neatly contains all these various paradoxes:

"The literary creator has the right to disintegrate the primal matter of words imposed on him by text-books and dictionaries."³⁸

In this sentence we find both an idea of the writer as engaged in a process of disintegration - an idea which points

37. Manifesto "Revolution of the Word". transition nos. 16 & 17, June 1929, p.13.

38. *ibid.*

forward to Joyce's 'scorched earth' policy in which there is a constant ruination of the positions offered to the subject in language.³⁹ But there is also the idea that the 'literary creator' exists outside language - outside the textbooks and dictionaries which are imposed on an already existent 'him'. In his book The Language of Night, which was amongst the books Leavis was reviewing, Eugene Jolas' major emphasis was on Joyce as a creator of a new language. He quotes approvingly the following passage from C.K. Ogden:

"If we separate the functions of language into four main divisions - Sense, Feeling, Tone and Intention - it is clear that Mr Joyce's neologisms chiefly provide blends of the three last. He is not concerned, as is the scientist, with the creation of new names, so much as with the development of fresh emotive and invective gestures..."⁴⁰

Here the idea is simply that Joyce is "inventing a language of his own"⁴¹ and it is this emphasis on the writer as dreaming up new words and forms to enable greater expression of experience

39. "The word scorching has a peculiar significance for my superstitious mind not so much because of any quality or merit in the writing itself as for the fact that the progress of the book is in fact like the progress of some sandblast. As soon as I mention or include any person in it I hear of his or her death or departure or misfortune: and each successive episode dealing with some province of artistic culture (rhetoric or music or dialectic), leaves behind it a burnt up field." James Joyce. Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver. 6 August 1919. Letters vol.1, p.129.

40. From the Preface to Tales of Shem and Shaun quoted in E.Jolas. The Language of Night pp.30-31.

41. E. Jolas op. cit. p.30.

that Leavis is attacking when he criticizes the conception of 'developing the medium to the fullest'. But whereas on the one hand Leavis realizes that the individual cannot exist outside language and simply create a better one, on the other he is forced back on this conception when he comes to talk of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's use of language is presented as finding its determination in an area of experience which is totally separated from language.

What I have hoped to show in this chapter is the outlines of a theory of the relation between the judging subject and language which informs that criticism which rejects Joyce (whether they do it honestly like Leavis or less honestly like Gross, who while pretending to admire Joyce categorizes Finnegans Wake as the "aberration of a great man"⁴²). I have suggested that in order to understand Joyce we would have to attempt to understand him as practising a revolution in the word. But before we move on to consider that attempt it is necessary to examine in some detail the form of that criticism that accepts Joyce and to show why it rests on the same inadequate and inappropriate theories of language and representation.

42. John Gross. op.cit. p.89.

CHAPTER 2

IN THE SHADE OF THE IMAGINARY: PERCY LUBBOCK'S THEORY OF FICTION

It might be thought that an easy method of dealing with the positive reaction to Joyce would be to identify it geographically as the American one. On this view, the problem would revolve around locating the central figures of American criticism and demonstrating how they accepted Joyce, and the theoretical pre-suppositions at work in their acceptance. It is certainly true that the early critics favourable to Joyce and particularly to the problems posed by Finnegans Wake - Edmund Wilson, the transition circle, the Partisan Review critics, Harry Levin - were nearly all American.¹ Furthermore not only has Joyce suffered, and continued until very recently to suffer, neglect from English critics but also, and perhaps more crucially, Joyce has been widely ignored by novelists in England.

However, to adopt this approach of dividing attitudes geographically and then locating the key figures within national sub-divisions, would be to mistake the complexity of the different forces and schools at work within American (and British)

1. Thus, for example, Eugene Jolas writes, "Among the few whose analysis (of Finnegans Wake) struck him as being comprehensive and conscientious were, in rough order of his appreciation, William Troy's essay in Partisan Review, Harry Levin's article in New Directions, Edmund Wilson's essays in the New Republic, Alfred Kazin's review in the New York Herald-Tribune, and Padraic Colum's piece in the New York Times as well as one or two from England and Scotland". Eugene Jolas "My Friend James Joyce" in James Joyce: two decades of criticism. ed. Seon Givens. p.17.

literary theory. It would thus run the risk of ascribing the interest in Joyce in America to an acceptance of him by a series of influential writers (e.g. Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Carlos Williams) and critics (such as Edmund Wilson and Harry Levin). The rejection of Joyce's texts in England would then become the product of the dislike evinced for him by Leavis and Lawrence. If the centrality of Leavis in English literary theory might make such an analysis plausible, the lack of a comparable dominant school in America would leave the analysis less than convincing. But in both cases the analysis would be incorrect; resting as it would, on the unexamined and idealist notion of 'sources'. The 'source' is that ideological concept which along with 'author' functions in literary criticism to protect a specifically asocial origin. Not only is the 'source' pure and self-contained, uncontaminated by any heterogeneity but, in addition, the metaphor of the river grants to the critic an area whose banks, whose limits, are carefully circumscribed. It is through such a coherent set of metaphors that the literary critic can map out the movement of ideas as the ethereal passage of great mind to great mind outside the heterogeneity of social and scriptural practices. For this heterogeneity entails that any idea can only be defined within the practice that articulates it and not in some nether world of geniuses and minds. Indeed any theory of influence - the etymology takes us back again to rivers and banks - depends on a theory of the literary work as a given unchanging object. Such a theory ignores the fact that the work is constantly changing as it enters into new relations

through the production of new works and through more general social changes. It is not that it is unimportant that Blake read Milton, or Byron Pope, but it is only through careful analysis of both the authors and the prevailing orders of discourse that we can determine the Milton and the Pope that they read.

The concept which is perhaps most useful in deconstructing a positivist fixation on the work as an entity outside time and space is the psycho-analytic concept of deferred action. Freud employed this concept to escape the positivist position which conferred an absolute identity on events within the child's life. Rather Freud argued that a new event can produce totally new configurations in the past life of the child i.e. endow a past event with totally new significance. The most obvious example of this mechanism at work is in the child's perception of a threat of castration (a threat understood in a past or future tense according to sex). The statements or the events which are taken retroactively by the child as threats will contain no direct reference to castration - but they will be taken as referring to castration after the recognition of sexual difference has instituted castration as a possibility.²

2. From his very earliest writings Freud demonstrated his recognition of this function: "... I am working on the assumption that our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory-traces being subjected from time to time to a re-arrangement in accordance with fresh circumstances - to a re-transcription." Sigmund Freud. Letter to Wilhelm Fliess. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. vol 1, p.233.

Rather than than becoming involved in the task of differentiating the different positions from which Joyce was read in the United States (a task that would be necessary in order to give that detailed analysis necessary to an historical account of Joyce's reception in America), I shall take another major theoretical text of literary criticism and attempt to disengage a general theoretical structure. The homology between its key concepts and those of Richards will enable us to understand the similarities that unite the opposing views on Joyce. Faced with the amorphous mass of Joyce criticism, this theoretical abstraction is necessary in order to demonstrate the general incorrectness of an approach which I would characterize as that of the literary critic. Obviously the volume of the secondary material on Joyce precludes its exhaustive coverage but hopefully the works here discussed can be taken as typical in their most general theoretical assumptions. What gets lost here is the specificity of particular texts which always, in some sense, escape the full weight of these very presuppositions. This escape is generated by the engagement with the specific text on the one hand and on the other with the socio-historical situation in which the critical work is being written.

Despite its inspiration in certain remarks of Henry James (and although his insights had to a certain extent been anticipated by the German Otto Ludwig ³), Percy Lubbock's book The Craft of Fiction marks the beginning of an important approach to novel

3. O. Ducrot and T. Todorov. Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des sciences du langage. pp.411-412.

criticism. Lubbock starts from the position that the novel is something that the reader can never get hold of; can never fully grasp. When we have finished reading a novel we are left with a certain residue, but this residue is not the whole novel - indeed the whole novel constantly eludes us, even as we are reading. It is impossible to hold the whole of a novel in our minds at once. The task Lubbock thus sets himself, and in many respects it is an admirable one, is to disengage certain techniques within the novel, but the aim of this disengagement, which is more questionable, is to pin the novel down and fix it as an object. What is a premiss right from the start is that the novel is a coherent whole - that all its parts are simultaneously present in some ideal world. The critic must attempt to reach the stage where the novel can become present to him, as it was, it is always assumed, to the writer. Lubbock is crucially aware of the need for the critic not to become immersed in the work but to hold himself back so that he can follow the contours of the work's creation:

"The reader of a novel - by which I mean the critical reader - is himself a novelist; he is the maker of a book which may or may not please his taste when it is finished, but of a book for which he must take his own share of the responsibility. The author does his part, but he cannot transfer his book like a bubble into the brain of the critic; he cannot make sure that the critic will possess his work. The reader must therefore become, for his part, a novelist, never permitting himself to suppose that the creation of the book is solely the affair of the author. The difference between them is immense...

Is it necessary to define the difference? That is soon done if we picture Tolstoy and his critic side by side, surveying the free and formless expanse of the world of life. The critic has nothing to say; he waits, looking to Tolstoy for guidance. And Tolstoy, with the help of some secret of his own, which is his genius, does not hesitate for an instant. His hand is plunged into the scene, he lifts out of it great fragments, right and left, ragged masses of life torn from their setting; he selects. And upon these trophies he sets to work with the full force of his imagination; he detects their significance, he disengages and throws aside whatever is accidental and meaningless; he remakes them in conditions that are never known in life, conditions in which a thing is free to grow according to its own law, expressing itself unhindered; he liberates and completes. And then, upon all this new life - so like the old and yet so different, more like the old, as one might say, than the old ever had a chance of being - upon all this life that is now so much more intensely living than before, Tolstoy directs the skill of his art; he distributes it in a single embracing design; he orders and disposes. And thus the critic receives his guidance, and his work begins." 4

This long quotation illustrates the importance for Lubbock of the artist's act of creation. As a consequence no matter how much emphasis is placed on the work that the reader must do to recreate the novel, such re-creation is always dependent on the prior creation of the artist. In order to understand the logic of this primary creation there is no more obvious text for us than Genesis and indeed the first four verses provide us with the necessary terms and relationships with which to construct that logic:

4. Percy Lubbock. The Craft of Fiction pp.17-18.

"In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be Light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

It should be noticed that both God and Tolstoy have to perform a twofold operation - the first is the act of creation and the second is the erasure of the marks of that act. Given the "formless expanse" (Lubbock), "the earth without form and void" (Genesis) the creator divides and this division is the production of "trophies" or "light". But these first creations still bear the mark of the formless, still carry with them a reference to another heterogenous order. In the second operation "God divided the light from the darkness", Tolstoy "directs the skill of his art; he distributes it in a single embracing design; he orders and disposes." This need for a double operation is the need to preserve a moment of presence and origin unsullied by difference and process. For the first product remains ineradicably marked by its definition in terms of difference - the formless void from which it is divided and which it is not. There is, therefore, a need for a second operation by which the whole thing is defined internally leaving no outside, no difference, no heterogeneity. God now divides the darkness from the light and it is his creation of division which constitutes them both - the formless void has been completely covered over. What is striking about Genesis is not only that it reveals the intimate links between origin and

presence - it is the presence of everything to God that guarantees the possibility of an origin - but also that it demonstrates the link between such a moment of presence and origin and the possibility of comprehension; the production of light. We will see in the next chapter how heavily a writer like George Eliot relies on the metaphor of light to justify her writing and one could say further that the whole tradition of what I shall call classic realism involves notions of presence and origin and the light that is produced from that moment. As such, classic realism remains firmly wedded to the religious attitude - to the search for an original plenitude always since lost and dispersed in the Fall. It is exactly insofar as Joyce's "nightynovel" (54.21) is opposed to this moment of light and breaks definitively with all concepts of origin and presence that it can be regarded as the most irreligious book every written. Similarly Ulysses can be seen as a constant attempt to reintroduce the night into the day, the difference into origin and the process into presence. Early on Stephen talks of Averroes and Moses Maimonides, "dark men in mien and movement, flashing in their mocking mirrors the obscure soul of the world, a darkness shining in brightness which brightness could not comprehend." (p.34) and in the library he tries to combat all notions of creation, origin and presence with his attack on fatherhood,

"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 which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. Amor Matris, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction." (p.266)

If we now return to Lubbock it can be seen that the author, the creator, has everything present in his mind and this presence is the origin of the work. Thus Lubbock can talk of the author as confronted by the whole presence of life, reality, etc. from which he makes a selection which embodies (as the bread embodies the body and blood of Christ) this moment of presence. The reader, however laboriously, has simply to read:

"No selection, no arrangement is required of him; the new world that is laid before him is the world of art, life liberated from the tangle of cross-purposes, saved from arbitrary distortion. Instead of a continuous, endless scene, in which the eye is caught in a thousand directions at once, with nothing to hold it to a fixed centre, the landscape that opens before the critic is whole and single; it has passed through an imagination, it has shed its irrelevancy and is compact with its own meaning."⁵

It is the coherence of the work which it is essential for both author and reader to understand; "The book is not," emphasises Lubbock, "a row of facts, it is a single image."⁶

5. *ibid* p.19.

6. *ibid* p.62.

And with this idea of a single image, generated in the moment of originating presence, we can pose all the questions of technique that are necessary. For, on this view, all technique is required to do is convey the moment of insight in its most effective form. Lubbock explicitly states the problem when he writes in the following terms of the author's relations to the work:

"I suppose his unwritten story to rise before him, its main lines settled, as something at first entirely objective, the whole thing seen from without - the linked chain of incident, the men and women in their places."⁷

The problem then becomes one of rendering this already existing situation so that it becomes obvious to the reader. What does not occur to Lubbock is that the relationship between technique and subject matter, between form and content, is a dialectical one. He does not consider this possibility because to do so would be to introduce process, time and change and, thus, ruin the moment of presence on which the work is ostensibly founded. Beckett's strictures on those who divorce form from content apply word for word to Lubbock:

"And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it. You are not satisfied unless form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one almost without

7. *ibid* p.74.

bothering to read the other. This rapid skimming and absorption of the scant cream of sense is made possible by what I may call a continuous process of copious intellectual salivation. The form that is an arbitrary and independent phenomenon can fulfil no higher function than that of stimulus for a tertiary or quaternary conditioned reflex of dribbling comprehension."⁸

It is through a close attention to Joyce's texts that we shall begin to understand, in more detail, this bald assertion of the relation between form and content. For the moment, however, it is necessary to draw out some of the implications of Lubbock's view of the relationship between subject matter and technique; content and form. For the aim of the techniques ~~are~~^{is} to purify and make present the subject matter and this purification is seen in terms of the removal of the author. It is here that the famous distinction between 'telling' and 'showing' plays its vital role. Throughout his book Lubbock is concerned to distinguish between two kinds of narration, one of which he names pictorial and the other dramatic. He himself states the opposition with perfect clarity in the following passage:

"It is a question, I said, of the reader's relation to the writer; in one case the reader faces towards the story-teller and listens to him, in the other he turns towards

8. S. Beckett. "Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce." in Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Work in Progress. p.13.

the story and watches it. In the drama of the stage, in the acted play, the spectator evidently has no direct concern with the author at all, while the action is proceeding. The author places their parts in the mouths of the players, leaves them to make their own impression, leaves us, the audience, to make what we can of it. The motion of life is before us, the recording registering mind of the author is eliminated."⁹

While Lubbock admits that no novel can simply be drama, his thesis is that the greater the author's success in hiding himself in his own work, the greater the success of the novel. Now it may be thought that, in his wish to eliminate the author from the novel, Lubbock does not subscribe to that dominance of the author which I located as one of the central features of the work of Leavis and Richards. However, the author's disappearance fulfills exactly the same function in Lubbock's work as his super-normality does in Richards - and that function is, paradoxically, to ensure the author's dominance. Richards has to make the author super-normal because the emphasis in his work is on the subject who produces the work. Insofar as each work is to have a common meaning guaranteed by our common human nature then the author, in order to control his meanings, must be as normal as the next man. In Lubbock the emphasis is on the object, on the situation - the object which rises up before the author's eye and which he must then commit to paper in such a way that others will see it too. But in order for others to see it clearly he must remove all merely personal influences which might cloud

9. Percy Lubbock. op.cit. p.111.

the objective picture - he must write himself out of the story. But it is exactly in his writing out, in this process of effacement, that the genius and dominance of the writer operates. It is the skill with which he effaces himself which makes a great author - the skill with which he lets the real present itself (as, in the original moment, it presented itself to him). The job of the author is to control his technique so that he disappears and the best form is arrived at - form being defined by Lubbock as that which makes the most of its subject-matter.¹⁰

We can notice here a discrepancy within Lubbock's position. While on the one hand he wishes to endow the artist with the power of creation, on the other he wishes to emphasize the independence of the object described. What, in effect, he does is to place all his emphasis on the second moment of creation - the elimination from the created object of any sign of the heterogenous order from which it finds its definition in the first moment of creation. There is a consequent lack of emphasis on the author as original creator and a greater attention to the author as the recorder of revelation. The central nature of the artistic activity becomes the presentation of the real real hidden in the formless reality of everyday life. This division of realities, which can be seen at work in the passage quoted above when Lubbock talks of the greater reality of Tolstoy's selection, is the central feature of empiricism and indeed Lubbock's whole account of the novel is best understood as an empiricist account.

10. *ibid.* p.40.

In Lire Le Capital, Louis Althusser locates the specific feature of empiricism not in the confrontation between subject and object which comes anterior to any knowledge (though to be sure empiricism relies on this), but rather in the characterization of the process of obtaining knowledge. This sets up a certain relationship between the object known and the knowledge, in which the knowledge is defined by the object of which it is knowledge:

"Tout le procès empiriste de la connaissance réside en effet dans l'opération du sujet dénommée abstraction. Connaître, c'est abstraire de l'objet réel son essence, dont la possession par le sujet est alors dite connaissance."¹¹

What Althusser is concerned to point out is that the whole conception depends on a play between two notions of real (and ultimately two notions of object) and that this play suppresses and eliminates the process at work in the production of knowledge.

11. Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar. Lire Le Capital vol.1 p.39. "The whole empiricist process of knowledge lies in fact in that operation of the subject named abstraction. To know is to abstract from the real object its essence, the possession of which by the subject is then called knowledge." Althusser points out, in the same argument, that the structure of empiricism is simply the profane transcription of the religious myth of the epiphany. Lubbock, as I have indicated, tends to hover between considering the work as creation and considering it as revelation. What is of interest is that both exist within the same double movement whereby the object created or revealed must have the marks of difference left by the creation or revelation erased. Stephen's famous exposition of the theory of epiphanies reveals adequately the twofold nature of the operation. Firstly the object must be separated from the void, then it must be understood as itself - when both these operations are complete the object is epiphanised. See Stephen Hero. pp.217-218.

Lubbock's account starts out with the real - the continuous endless scene, in which the eye is caught in a thousand directions at once. However having discarded the inessential and the irrelevant, he ends up with the real real - the landscape that is whole and single, compact with its own meaning. What must be hidden by the author is the process by which we arrive at this single but whole landscape; for, of course, on this account the process is completely superfluous as the 'real real' is there all along simply waiting to be seen. Thus, for Lubbock, any concept of process is reduced and eliminated. It is here that we can begin to question a certain realist tendency at work in almost all critics of the novel. We could say, against the traditional analysis, that the novel does not reveal the real but is constituted by a set of discourses which (in the positions allowed to subject and object) produce a certain reality. Together with this emphasis on production we can recall another crucial Marxist term - that of contradiction. For it is not simply that there is one discourse which produces a certain reality - to take that position would be to invite a fall into an idealism complementary to the empiricism just discussed. What is always in question when we analyse a text is a set of contradictory discourses transformed by specific practices. Thus the discourse of Irish nationalism appears in the Cyclops chapter, but the effects generated by the montage in which it appears makes a simple nationalist position untenable for the reader. It is neither a question of the writer using a transparent discourse to render the real, nor of him inventing a discourse

which produces a real. Instead we can understand the writing of a text as involving a work, a practice, a transformation on the discourses available. That one such practice, which I shall term classic realism, involves the homogeneisation of different discourses through their relation to one dominant discourse is a matter of historical but not normative interest. I hope to demonstrate with reference to Joyce how these contradictory discourses and the practices that articulate them together - transform them - have certain political effects. For the moment, and against a traditional realist emphasis, one could say that it is the contradictory positions available discursively to the subject which constitute, at any given time, together with the positions made available by non-linguistic practices, the reality of the social situation.

It is contradiction which Lubbock wishes at all costs to conceal and indeed it is coherence which furnishes him with his crucial emphasis. For Lubbock a work must be completely coherent and no rent or tear should spoil its compact meaning and allow a fall into contradiction. This emphasis on the importance of coherence can be seen in those passages where Lubbock talks of the final weakness of War and Peace. Insisting on the unreconciled opposition between the story of growing up (embodied in the central characters of the novel) and the theme of the broad march of history, Lubbock states his objections as follows:

"I can discover no angle at which the two stories will appear to unite and merge in a single impression. Neither is subordinate to the other, and there is nothing above them (what more could there be?) to which they are both related. Nor are they placed together to illustrate a contrast; nothing results from their juxtaposition."¹²

What is necessary to save the story is some third term which would bind everything together into unity. Anything which is not unity is confusion and as such to be condemned. Lubbock ends his account of War and Peace with the following words:

"Here, then, is the reason, or at any rate one of the reasons, why the general shape of War and Peace fails to satisfy the eye - as I suppose it admittedly to fail. It is a confusion of two designs, a confusion more or less masked by Tolstoy's imperturbable ease of manner, but revealed by the look of his novel when it is seen as a whole."¹³

Simply to oppose two attitudes we could recall Brecht's comment that if he had a fault it was that he had never been able to bear anything but contradiction.¹⁴ So firstly, one might confront on a personal level a passion for unity and a passion for contradiction. But, in fact, we can go further than that. Simply to condemn unity and locate it as the spurious goal of an essentially religious conception (religion being understood as

12. Percy Lubbock, op.cit. p.33.

13. *ibid.* p.39.

14. Bertolt Brecht. Les Arts et la révolution p.41. Unhappily my own lack of German and the paucity of English versions of Brecht's theoretical works have necessitated my use of French translations.

that which will deny, at all costs, difference, contradiction, negativity in favour of a moment of origin and presence where the divided self was (and will be) made whole) leaves us with the problem of discriminating between texts. For it cannot be correct merely to replace unity as a criterion of value with contradiction, for then one could simply justify any text on the basis of finding some features of it contradictory. At this point contradiction would come to function in exactly the same way as the notion of coherence; that is to say without any objective specifications whatsoever - it is always open to the critic to find a set of relationships which make any work coherent. If, however, we turn to Marx in order to discover a sufficiently precise and elaborate concept of contradiction, we find that although Marx is aware of the many sided-nature of contradiction (see for example, his analysis of the peasantry in The 18th Brumaire of Louis ^{Bonaparte} ~~Napoleon~~) he never produces a theoretical elaboration of this many-sidedness. As Louis Althusser writes:

"... toute l'expérience révolutionnaire marxiste démontre que si la contradiction en général (mais elle est déjà spécifiée: la contradiction entre les forces de production et les rapports de production, incarnée essentiellement dans la contradiction entre deux classes antagonistes) suffit à définir une situation où la révolution est "à l'ordre du jour" elle ne peut, par sa simple vertu directe, provoquer une "situation révolutionnaire", et à plus fort raison une situation de rupture révolutionnaire et le triomphe de la révolution." 15

15. Louis Althusser. Pour Marx pp.97-98 "... the whole revolutionary Marxist experience demonstrates that if contradiction in general (but it is already specific: the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production, essentially embodied in the contradiction between two antagonistic classes) is sufficient to define the situation when revolution is 'the task of the day', it cannot of its own simple direct power induce a 'revolutionary situation', nor a fortiori a situation of revolutionary rupture and the triumph of the revolution."

It was Lenin who, in his writings on the Russian revolution postulated that although there was a constant contradiction at work in capitalism and its imperialist development, there ~~was~~ ^{were} further factors which were needed to explain moments of revolutionary change.¹⁶ This moment arrived when a whole set of contradictions, heterogenous amongst themselves, brought their combined weight to bear on the economic and political order and thus provoked a revolutionary situation in a particular state. Russia in 1917 was such a state, with its contradictions between the most advanced capitalist production and the most backward feudal relations in Europe, with an absolutism in contradiction with a bourgeois order which had already produced its own proletarian opponent, with an imperialist world order so shattered by the first war that it could not bring its full force to bear and with many further contradictions which, heterogenous as they were, added to the pressure being applied to the old order. Althusser, in the essay already quoted, has attempted to develop Lenin's insight and certain of Mao Tse Tung's remarks in "On Contradiction" through the Freudian concept of overdetermination. Overdetermination is the concept used by Freud to account for the fact that the neurotic symptom or the symbol in the dream is never the unambiguous representation of a

16. The theme of the set of autonomous contradictions, united in producing a revolutionary situation, is constant in Lenin's reflections on the Russian Revolution from his first comments on the February revolution, "Letter from Afar" (No.1) in Collected Works vol.23 pp.297-308, to his last thoughts before his death, "Our Revolution" op.cit. vol.33. pp.476-479. Althusser provides a brilliant summary of the arguments op.cit. pp.92-96.

single unconscious content. For Freud, the symbol or symptom is the nodal point of a whole tissue of conflicts which can only be separated out through the investigation of the structure in which they are defined. The symptom thus serves as a compromise formation between different conflicts, which conflicts will be inscribed several times over in the patient's behaviour and psychic productions.

This multiple determination should not, however, be confused with an infinity of possible meanings. Freud, himself, explains it with reference to certain languages, particularly ideographic ones, in which the written sentence has a limited plurality of meanings which depend on the tone, pitch, etc with which the written words are pronounced.¹⁷ Althusser uses Freud's concept to articulate Lenin's position and to break with an Hegelian reading of Marx in which all contradictions are finally reducible within a given totality to a unifying determination. Against Hegel, Althusser wishes to emphasize the autonomous nature of certain levels of contradiction which however all bring their force to bear in a given conjuncture - as there is an autonomy of the various psychic conflicts which, however, combine to produce the symptom.

If we return from this detour to ask how contradiction can be used as a criteri^{on} within literary criticism, we can answer that one can distinguish, on the one hand, a whole

17. Sigmund Freud. op.cit. vol.XV. pp.230-231.

variety of contradictions at the level of style, characterization, narration and, on the other, the contradiction between a dominant ideology and its competitors. It is when a number of contradictions of the first type combine and weigh upon the second that we can talk of overdetermination and of a literary revolution - one that breaks at every level with the dominant forms. The criteria^{on} that we can now oppose to Lubbock's ideal coherence and unity is one of a set of contradictions, which in their united force, break with a previous discursive order. An ideology (a discursive order) might be defined as a set of discourses which, although containing contradictions, allows the production of apparently homogenous positions for the subject to take up. It is when we come to examine Joyce's texts that we will be able to make these general statements more specific and delineate the precise nature of the break that Joyce's practice operates, but, for the moment, turning back to Lubbock and Tolstoy we can remark that it is perhaps no accident that the whole book is split between the story of individuals and the story of history. For when, if not in the period after 1848, did the relation of the individual to history become a problem? Can we not learn from the fact that War and Peace is written almost contemporaneously with Capital? - Capital, that first text of a science of history which will decentre the individual into certain effects of the class struggle, and will place that struggle as the major determinant of historical change.¹⁸ The question, then, to be

18. War and Peace was finally published in 1869, Capital in 1867, both were written during the eighteen sixties.

asked about War and Peace is not whether we can find a third term which will render the disparate stories homogenous but whether the primary ideological contradiction (Who makes history?) enters into relation with other specifically poetic ones.

It may be remarked that, on this approach, we would be very likely to end up with the same value judgement on Tolstoy's novel as that advanced by Lubbock but the difference of criteria will become of substantial importance when we are discussing texts such as those of Joyce. We can understand the importance of the change of criteria if we consider the crucial question that Lubbock poses to the novelist. Talking of Meredith and his use of the first person Lubbock asks and the question is worth listening to:

"Does he contrive to conceal the trouble, does he make us exceedingly unconscious of it while we read the book?"¹⁹

The aim is to conceal the trouble - to leave the unconscious unconscious. What, however, one can propose in opposition to this concealment, is not that the author should show us the trouble (how could anyone show us the unconscious?) but rather that he should make that trouble speak - that he should produce a lapse, a joke, a symptom. The change of sense (from sight to hearing) is to emphasize the mistake Lubbock makes in talking of

19. Percy Lubbock, op.cit. p.137.

the novel form simply in terms of vision. To understand fully the implications of this mistake, it is necessary to consider briefly the analysis of vision offered by Jacques Lacan in Le Séminaire XI. For Lacan, vision offers a peculiarly privileged basis to an imaginary relation of the individual to the world.²⁰ This imaginary relationship is characterised by the plenitude it confers on both subject and object, caught as they are outside any definition in terms of difference; given in a full substantial unity. The centrality of the imaginary for the operation of the human psyche can best be understood through an understanding of the mirror-phase.²¹ Somewhere between the sixth and eighteenth month, the small human infant discovers its reflection in the mirror; an apprehension of unity all the more surprising in that it normally occurs before motor control has ensured that unity in practice. The specular relation thus established, which provides the basis for primary narcissism, is now transferred onto the rest of the human world where every

20. Considerable use is made in this thesis of the work of the French psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan. Each Lacanian concept is explained as it is introduced into the text but the central terms can be found defined in a continuous discourse in Colin MacCabe, "Presentation of 'The Imaginary Signifier'" Screen vol.16 no.2. Summer 1975 pp.7-13. The analysis of a Holbein painting which is discussed in this chapter can be found in "Du regard comme objet petit a" in Le Séminaire XI pp.65-109. My understanding of the issues has benefited from Christian Metz' article "The Imaginary Signifier" Screen vol.16 no.2 Summer 1975. pp.14-76 and an unpublished paper on the concept of the imaginary by Jacqueline Rose of University College, London.

21. A full exposition of the mirror phase can be found in Jacques Lacan. Ecrits pp.93-100.

other is simply seen as another version of the same - of the 'I' which is the centre of the world. The philosophical correlative of this psychic stage can be found in solipsistic theories. It is only with the apprehension of genital difference that the child leaves the comfortable world of the imaginary to enter into the world of the symbolic. The symbolic is understood by Lacan (after Lévi-Strauss) not as a set of one to one relationships but as a tissue of differences which articulate the crucial elements within the child's world. It is the acceptance of a potential lack (castration) which marks the child's access to the symbolic and to language. Language in the realm of the imaginary is understood in terms of some full relation between word and thing; a mysterious unity of sign and referent. In the symbolic, language is understood in terms of lack and absence - the sign finds its definition diacritically through the absent syntagmatic and paradigmatic chains it enters into. As speaking subjects we constantly oscillate between the symbolic and the imaginary - constantly imagining ourselves granting some full meaning to the words we speak, and constantly being surprised to find them determined by relations outside our control. But, if it is the phallus which is the determining factor of the entry into difference, difference has already troubled the full world of the infant. The imaginary unity has already been disrupted by that cruel separation from those objects originally understood as part of the subject - the breast and the faeces. The phallus becomes the dominating metaphor for all these previous lacks. Lacan defines the centrality of the phallus for the entry into the

symbolic and language when he describes the phallus as:

"le signifiant destiné à désigner dans leur ensemble les effets de signifié, en tant que le signifiant les conditionne par sa présence de signifiant."²²

The signified here is exactly the imaginary full meaning constantly contaminated by the signifier's organisation along constitutive and absent chains.

In Le Séminaire XI, Lacan attempts to demonstrate the relation between the symbolic and the imaginary at the level of vision and to demonstrate the existence of lack within the scopic field (this lack being the existence of desire within the visual field - a desire which can find satisfaction in a variety of forms.) Taking the picture of Holbein's entitled The Ambassadors, Lacan comments on the death's head which is hidden in the picture by a trick of perspective and which is only visible from one particular angle. The rest of the picture is caught in the world of the imaginary - the spectator is the all-seeing subject and, as if to emphasize the narcissistic nature of this relation, Holbein fills the picture with emblems of vanity. However, the death's head, perceived when leaving the field of the picture, re-introduces the symbolic. For the death's head draws attention

22. Jacques Lacan. op.cit. p.690. "... the signifier destined to designate the effects, taken as a set, of signified, insofar as the signifier conditions these effects by its presence as signifier."

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to the fact that we see the picture at a distance and from a particular angle. For the all-seeing vision we have the particular look. For the objects which are simply and substantially there we have a set of differential relationships; a set of traces left by a paint brush; an organised area of space which, from one particular point, can be read as an object. That the object thus seen should be a skull is in no way surprising when we consider that the entry into the symbolic could be easily described as the recognition of the world independently of my consciousness - to the recognition, that is, of the possibility of my own death,²³ Holbein's picture demonstrates a congruence between the organisation of language and the organisation of the visual field. Just as the constitutive elements of language must be absent in the moment of speaking so the constitutive nature of the distance and position of the viewing subject must be absent from the all-embracing world of vision. The Ambassadors re-introduces the look into vision. As such it bears witness to the separation (castration) on which vision is based but which it endlessly attempts to ignore.

The intervention of the symbolic in the imaginary is already in evidence at the very opening of the mirror-phase. For the infant verifies its reflection by looking to the mother who holds it in front of the mirror. It is the mother's look that

23. It is in this context that one can understand Lacan's reported interest in Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. He has described the play in conversation as "la pièce la plus lacanienne que j'aie jamais vue."

confirms the validity of the infant's image and with this look we find that right at the foundation of the dual imaginary relationship there is a third term which already unsettles it. The mother verifies the relationship but at the cost of already introducing a look, a difference, where there should only be similitude. That this look, which both sets up and potentially destroys the full visual field, is felt as castration can offer us an understanding of why, traditionally, the eye is always evil. We are now in a position to understand why Lacan claims that the visual is organized in terms of a look - defined by the other's look it is not - and of the blot (la tache) which is the term Lacan uses to illustrate the fact that any visual field is already structured so that certain effects will be seen. Lacan writes:

"... la fonction de la tache et du regard y est à la fois ce qui le commande le plus secrètement, et ce qui échappe toujours à la saisie de cette forme de la vision qui se satisfait d'elle-même en s'imaginant comme conscience."²⁴

Lubbock's emphasis on the visual must be understood as an attempt to place the novel in the imaginary and to refuse its disfigurement by any scar which would introduce the symbolic. Writing in its constant exteriority is constantly menacing to a

24. Jacques Lacan. Le Séminaire XI, p.71. "... the function of the blot and of the look is, at one and the same time, that which commands the most secretly, and that which always escapes the grip of, that form of vision which finds its contentment in imagining itself as consciousness."

world of imaginary plenitude and must, therefore, be repressed at all costs.²⁵ In its place a visual world is instituted, but a visual world from which the look, any trace of castration, has been expelled. At this stage, it might be objected that this cannot be Lubbock of whom we are talking; is it not Lubbock who introduced the look, or, to put it in more English terms, the point of view? The distinction, however, between the look and the point of view is the same distinction as that between the symbolic and the imaginary. The point of view is always related to an object. But, insofar as the object is a given unity, there is always a point of over-view from which the object and all the points of view can be seen. Thus, for example, Lubbock in Chapter XI of his book can give a total description of the situation in Henry James' The Ambassadors and a description of the point of view from which Strether sees it. Whereas the point of view is related to an object, the look is related to other looks. The look's field is not defined by a science of optics in which the eye features as a geometrical point but by the fact that the object we are looking at offers a position from which we can be looked at - and this look is not punctual but shifts over the surface. It is thus important that it is a head that looks back at us from Holbein's painting. It might be added, in parenthesis, that in order to develop Lubbock's undoubted insights into Henry James' novel, we would have to search the novelist's The Ambassadors until it, too, began to look back at us.

25. For a more detailed consideration of the threat posed by writing see Chapter 5.

It is an attachment to the imaginary which links literary theorists as seemingly disparate as Lubbock and Richards and which unites Joycean critics of every persuasion. In the shade of the imaginary, language is turned into a pure transparency commanded by the conscious subject and it is this conscious subject who renders language adequate to the evident object. Schematically, and in order to facilitate our move from Richards and Lubbock to the Joyce critics, we could characterize the results of this view of language in three theses. Theses which, in their generality, are intended to cover not simply Joyce critics, but the very activity of literary criticism itself:

1. The text is understood as aiming or tending towards coherence and it is coherence that renders a work's inner essence.
2. The author is theorized as creator: homogenous source of the text.
3. The first two theses guarantee that we must talk of a text's truth in relation to a fixed and separate exterior. (Whether this exterior will be the world of public experience or the world of the author's imagination will depend on how we interpret the first two theses).

Starting with coherence, we can see that whether it is the coherence between sound and sense in Richards (poetry is

exactly evaluated in terms of the bringing into coincidence of the use of the word as symbol and all its various occurrences as sign) or narrative coherence in Lubbock, it is in both a basic requirement. It is coherence that Leavis fails to find in Joyce but which the myriad of Joycean critics have found in abundance. Arnold Goldman's book The Joyce Paradox illuminatingly demonstrates the attachment to coherence. Although Goldman is aware that the majority of Joycean critics have taken one feature of Joyce's texts and used it as the cohering principle through which to read the rest of the texts, he re-duplicates their basic assumptions at a different level. Thus he can declare that "the full spectrum of critical opinion is, as is usually true of the hyperbolic literary forms, a projection of thematic conflicts within the work"²⁶ but then he simply finds a super-theme which fulfils exactly the same function. Goldman distinguishes two main readings of Joyce: on the one hand, there is a symbolist reading in which every event and action in Dubliners, A Portrait or Ulysses merely portrays or betrays the essential nature of Dublin and their inhabitants, and, on the other, there is a realist reading in which the characters are given a certain freedom of choice and their development is of importance. The Joyce Paradox suggests that rather than plumping for one or other of these readings we should see Joyce's texts as a constant balancing of these oppositions:

26. Arnold Goldman, The Joyce Paradox, p.138.

"I hope to prove that a 'symbolist' reading of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist will be essentially different from a 'realistic' reading. It will be a further task to describe their relationship and to show that this relationship is by way of a description of the novel's meaning."²⁷

Goldman is fully aware of how the stylistic changes within Ulysses resist coherence and, unlike many Joyce critics, he takes serious notice of the fact that the styles "approach, more and more radically, discrete and often incompatible modes of vision."²⁸ But just as the contradiction between symbolist and realist becomes the major theme of the texts, so the use of language within Ulysses becomes merely expressive of this and other conflicts,

"... between 'symbolic' and 'realistic' presentation, between literary parody (of high and low literature) and the parody, or extension of common speech, between the super-conscious and the sub-conscious."²⁹

Goldman attempts to find a " 'dialectical suspense' " in which "the opposing forces exist in permanent contradiction"³⁰ in order to find an explanation which takes account both of Joyce's texts and the conflicting readings they generate. However, by making form expressive and by locating a super-theme, Goldman has merely reproduced a coherence for the texts at a higher level. Every

27. *ibid.* p.24.

28. *ibid.* p.99.

29. *ibid.* p.117.

30. *ibid.* p.107.

feature of the text is determined by one theme and, whether one calls this theme a contradiction or not, it functions as a unifying explanation of the texts. The 'permanent contradiction' is something to be represented, not a radical heterogeneity which produces a break in the very methods of representation.

It is when we realize that coherence is guaranteed by the work representing or expressing a theme that must be separable from it, that we can understand how a commitment to a text's coherence entails a commitment to an author (in the full ideological sense already discussed) and to a correspondence theory of truth. The commitment to the author is the necessity to locate this separable theme somewhere - the author's consciousness is the only possible site for this in an age when supernatural forces are discounted. And, equally, the truth of the work is determined by the correspondence between what must be represented and the representation (whether what must be represented finds its unity in some original movement of the author's consciousness or in a reality which is then grasped by the author is, for our purposes, unimportant). Goldman, through his attachment to coherence, is driven to postulate an homogenous creative source for the text. Ulysses, for example, is held to represent at every level - stylistic, symbolic, philosophical - the problems that concerned Joyce with regard to freedom and determinism. That Goldman understands these problems as problems which are directly posed by experience, entails that he places Joyce within a realist tradition. It is, perhaps, no accident

that Goldman does not write about Finnegans Wake, for with Joyce's final text it becomes almost impossible to read it in terms of a classic realism, unless one is going to push the ideas of expressive style to a ridiculous limit. Style can be read as expressive of certain conflicts in reality when those conflicts find an expression within the content of the text - it is more difficult to hold this position when the content of the text becomes as 'contaminated' by style as it does in Finnegans Wake. Goldman realises this difficulty when he writes:

"I have, however, stopped short of discussing Finnegans Wake. Whether the Wake confronts at a different level problems like potentiality for human development or evades them altogether is moot." 31

The attachment to realism entails that Goldman can use Kierkegaard to explicate Joyce without postulating Joyce's knowledge of Kierkegaard. As Kierkegaard and Joyce are both confronting the same human reality - one can compare their texts without any presumption of interaction. Clive Hart, however, in a book like Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake has no such option. Other texts are valuable only insofar as Joyce used them because coherence, which is retained by Hart as a basic presupposition, is now only marginally considered in terms of an exterior reality (unified through a consciousness) and is

31. *ibid.* p.viii.

centrally defined by Joyce's ideas about the world independently of these ideas' truth. Madame Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled and modern sub-atomic physics have the same status because Joyce used them - the criteria for use, when not direct from Joyce or his acquaintances, is through repetition within Finnegans Wake. Whereas, in Goldman, the truth of the text is seen through a correspondence with the order of things in the world - an order of things grasped by the author - for Hart, such reference to the world becomes practically otiose. What matters is Joyce's conception of the world - once we have identified that then the work can be seen as the representation of that conception. Hart's central concern is to demonstrate the coherence of Finnegans Wake:

"A good deal of the excitement in reading Finnegans Wake derives from the gradual mental resynthesis of a complete and highly organised world..."³²

The work on language is either seen in terms of the expression of several enumerable meanings or when those meanings threaten to become infinite the form is seen as imitative of some exterior reality:

"... a certain random element of unpredictability was necessary to Finnegans Wake if it was adequately to reflect the new world of physics of which Joyce was trying to build up a faithful verbal analogue."³³

32. Clive Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p.15.

33. *ibid.* p.65.

Wherever the text might threaten to overrun concepts of representation there is always some large enough abstraction which the form is held to be imitating:

"From the initiating spermatic flood of creation, 'riverrun', to the soft syllable 'the' - the most common in the English language - on which it comes to its whimpering end, the great mass of Finnegans Wake represents eternity; at the opposite extreme it seems to represent the fleeting infinitesimal moment during which it used to be thought that even the longest dream took place."³⁴

One might consider, at this point, that although we can find the assumptions of coherence and the author at work in Hart, it is more difficult to understand how truth can operate within the schema. However, given that truth is established through the correspondence between the text and Joyce's conception of the world, then statements about this relation could be false on two counts. Firstly, we might identify something in the text which could not possibly have been in Joyce's mind - hence Hart's concern with whether Joyce had actually read the texts used for explication (Goldman rather hopes Joyce had read Kierkegaard but it is not essential to his argument³⁵). Secondly, we might claim that the representation could have been more efficient and more coherent:

"Many readers feel that they could improve on trifles of the text, tightening up correspondences

34. *ibid.* pp.69-70.

35. Goldman, *op.cit.* pp.66-69.

here and there and thickening the texture still more." 36

That Joyce's attitudes to his own sources was radically different from the one advanced by Hart can be grasped by indicating that he obviously considered the Russo-Finnish war of 1940 as integral a part of the text as any historical events that had occurred before the publication of Finnegans Wake.³⁷ The sources should not be understood as something to be represented but as methods of escaping traditional conceptions of representation. Writing to Carlo Linati about Ulysses Joyce wrote:

"Each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the structural scheme of the whole) should not only condition but create its own technique." 38

Here, far from being understood in terms of representation, the whole of the elaborate matrices of the book, the Homeric parallels, the organs of the body, the story that is told, are understood as methods of breaking with the author's control of language. In some ways these methods and those like them used in

36. Clive Hart, op.cit. p.34.

37. Hart refers to Joyce's view in passing, op.cit. pp.27-28, when he attempts to laugh Joyce's foibles off. Joyce's attitude does, however, pose a real problem for a critic, who is, in some sense, bound by his theory to take account of what Joyce said. Full details of Joyce's attitude to events occurring after the publication of Finnegans Wake can be found in Eugene Jolas art. cit. p.17.

38. James Joyce. Letter to Carlo Linati. 6 September 1920. Letters, vol.1, p.147.

Finnegans Wake recall the cut-up techniques, used particularly by William Burroughs as a means of avoiding the stereotyped repetition of a reality already given; as a means of revealing the processes by which that reality is produced.³⁹ For while the conscious subject is caught within a fixed area, formed within orders of discourse which reduce the world and the self to a 'comprehensible' content, it is possibly by the juxtaposition of various forms to fracture those discourses in their evident reality and make them appear as discourses - as areas of identity and sense. Joyce himself could be said to have seen his own practice as a kind of 'cut-up' when he wrote, "I am quite content to go down to posterity as a scissors and paste man for that seems to me a harsh but not unjust description."⁴⁰

The critic who has perhaps most thoroughly understood the strategy of Joyce's texts and yet has never pushed that understanding to its conclusion is Hugh Kenner. All the strengths and weaknesses of Kenner's position is evident in the short section on Joyce in The Stoic Comedians. Kenner rejects traditional conceptions of representation explicitly:

"Joyce's techniques - it is one of his principal lessons - are without exception derived from his subject, often excerpted from his subject. They are not means of representing the subject, and imperfectly; they are the subject's very members laid on the page, in eloquent or ludicrous collage."⁴¹

39. See William Burroughs. The Job, pp.27-56.

40. James Joyce. Letter to George Antheil 3 January 1931 Letters vol.1. p.297.

41. Hugh Kenner. The Stoic Comedians, p.50.

Kenner refuses, however, to push the consequences of the collage to its limit. Instead of questioning the position of the writer (and subsequently the reader) in a text deprived of a representational standpoint, he lapses back into the traditional notion of the author outside the text controlling its correspondence with reality. The collage is explained through an authorial attempt to achieve a realism which takes account of the printed word by repeating it, and Joyce's refusal of representation becomes an attempt actually to put the reality of our post-Gutenberg era on the page:

"This is the comedy of inventory, the comedy of the closed system, in which we constantly recognize known things in new fantastic guises; and it is the dead end which Joyce triumphantly prosecuted until it became exactly the image of the city he loved for its variety and distrusted for its poverty of resource."⁴²

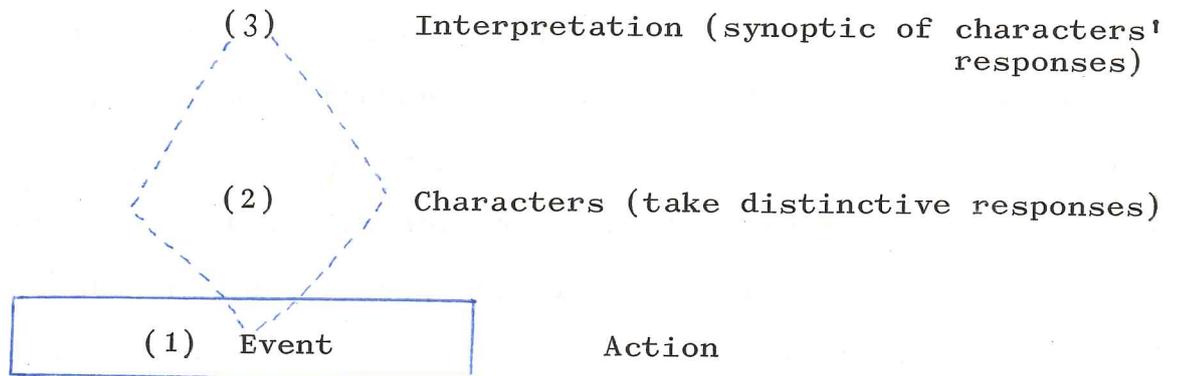
Once again we find coherence ('the closed system') which corresponds correctly ('exactly the image') to a reality perceived by an author ('the city he loved... and distrusted'). Kenner's weakness could be pin-pointed by reference to the fact that he understands Joyce's practice as collage and not montage; for Kenner the objects are simply arranged they are not juxtaposed in such a way as to re-articulate both subject and object.

What is most striking about all these critics is the security with which they organize the text and then compare it to

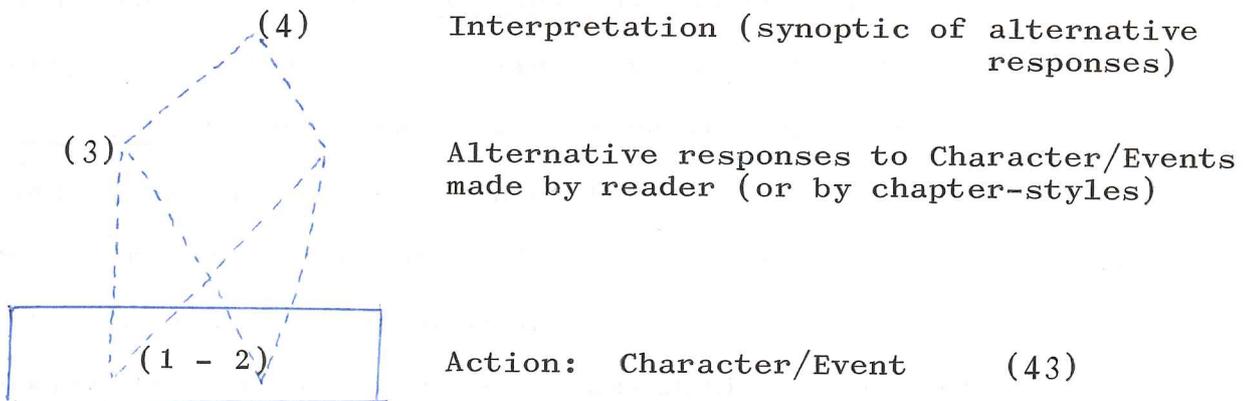
42. *ibid.* p.66.

whatever the text is meant to be a representation of. The critics presuppose that there is a language (their own) which can cover both world and representation without any problem. This security of position can most clearly be seen in the diagram where Goldman attempts to give a spatial representation of the difference between a Joycean and a traditional philosophical novel:

THE PHILOSOPHICAL NOVEL:



ULYSSES:



What is striking about Goldman's diagram is that the interpretative discourse is simply moved a level upwards, while maintaining the same relations with the text. Its position is not troubled by the changes at the other levels - it remains the synoptic discourse which, from a position outside the text orders and articulates it, even if, in Ulysses, the chapter styles become one of the elements to be organised. The belief in a transparent and representational discourse available to the writer is re-duplicated in the critic's attitude to his own discourses. These are seen to pose no problem as the critic assigns meaning and truth to a text; establishing a set of fixed relations which constitute the text as object. The text, however, does not exist independently of the discourses which surround and articulate it. Joyce was completely correct when he thought that the future was as much a part of Finnegans Wake as the past - just as Donne's poetry is changed by T.S. Eliot's verse and criticism, so Paradise Lost can assume new configurations after the birth of a science, psycho-analysis, which takes as its object the articulation of knowledge and desire. The critic can no longer rest secure in the adequacy of his discourses for if he does then he will rest secure in a set of assumptions which are produced behind his back; a set of assumptions which are the constitutive darkness that his light refuses to comprehend. Philippe Sollers has written of this situation in the following terms:

"Nous vivons dans le faux jour d'une langue morte aux significations bornées: nous manquons le jour dans la mesure où nous manquons la nuit que nous

sommes. Mais nous ne sommes pas autre chose que ce mouvement nocturne et diurne du lisible et de l'illisible, en nous, hors de nous, - et cela nous ne voulons pas le savoir." 44

The critic, in fact, becomes involved in a constant struggle - a work on and a transformation of the critical discourses which constitute him as critic, and this practice of criticism is constantly tearing texts from their old meanings in order to make them live again. This practice is not self-generating but is constantly criss-crossed by other contradictions and conflicts. Crucial to the writing of this thesis is those most active and growing points in English writing (e.g. the work of William Burroughs and J.G. Ballard) and the most active contemporary reflections on language, notably the works of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. 45

44. Philippe Sollers. Logiques. p.240. "We live in the false light of a dead language. A language stripped of meaning and of ideologically limited reference. We fail to see the day we are not as we fail to see the night we are. But we are nothing more than that movement nocturnal and diurnal between what can and cannot be read both in- and out- side us and of which we wish to know nothing."

45. Both Lacan and Derrida have acknowledged their debt to Joyce as a precursor of their work. Lacan sees Joyce as the first to enter into a radical experience of language as the play of the signifier: "... après tout l'écrit comme pas-à-lire, c'est Joyce qui l'introduit, je ferais mieux de dire: l'intraduit, car à faire du mot traite au-delà des langues, il ne se traduit qu'à peine, d'être partout également peu à lire." Le Séminaire XI p.252. Derrida, whose work is constituted by an endeavour to read the history of philosophy as the history of a discourse which desires to fix its own limits, has also signalled his debt to Joyce and indeed has described his own texts as a footnote to Finnegans Wake. La Dissémination. p.99.

JAMES JOYCE AND THE REVOLUTION IN THE WORD

"scriptum sum" James Joyce. Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in the British Museum. ed. Phillip F. Herring. p.214.

CHAPTER 3

FROM GEORGE ELIOT TO DUBLINERS:

THE END OF A META-DISOURSE.

If we remember the argument advanced in the first chapter, it is necessary if we wish to talk of revolution with regard to Joyce's texts to talk of a revolution in and not of the word. To understand a "practice of writing which alters the very ways in which signs are produced and defined"¹ we could consider how the unproblematic discourse of the critic, the meta-discourse which turns all form into content², becomes impossible to sustain under the pressure of Joyce's writing. None of the discourses which circulate in Ulysses or Finnegans Wake can master and make sense of the others. Instead the content is continually becoming form, as the text, instead of falling back into the innocent repetition of a given content, investigates the process by which the content is produced - the discursive structuration of reality. The absence of a meta-discourse in Joyce's work might be best approached by a reflection on the fact that, from his earliest writings, Joyce refused to use what he called "perverted commas"³. While those sections in a work which are contained in inverted commas may offer different ways of regarding and analysing the world, they are negated as real alternatives by the unspoken (or more accurately the unwritten) prose that surrounds them. The

1. supra p. 32.

2. See supra pp.28-29.

3. James Joyce. Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver. 11 July 1924. Letters vol.3. p.99.

narrative prose is the meta-discourse that can state all the truths in the object discourse - those marks held in inverted commas - and can also explain the relation of this object discourse to the world. The meta-discourse can thereby explain the strange methods by which the object discourse attempts to express truths which are straightforwardly conveyed in the meta-discourse. An unwritten prose (a meta-discourse) is exactly that discourse which, while placing other discourses between inverted commas and regarding them as certain material expressions which express certain meanings, regards those same meanings as finding a transparent expression within the meta-discourse itself. Transparent in the sense that the meta-discourse is not designated as material: instead it is de-materialized in order to achieve perfect representation - to let the identity of things shine through the window of words. For insofar as the meta-discourse is treated itself as material, it, too, can be re-interpreted; new meanings can be found for it in a further meta-discourse. The problem here is that of the perpetual separation between what is said and the act of saying; a separation which must be considered as both temporal and spatial. As the space, which in the distance from eye to page or from mouth to ear, allows the possibility of mis-understanding, as the time taken to traverse the page or listen to a sentence, which ensures the necessity of a deferred interpretation of words which are only defined by what follows. The problem is that although when we say a sentence the meaning (what is said) seems fixed and evident, in fact what is said does not exist solely for that moment and is open to further

interpretations. Even in this formulation of the problem I have presupposed an original moment when there is strict contemporaneity between the saying and what is said, but the difficulty is more radical for there is no such original moment. Separation is always already there as we cannot locate the presence of what is said - distributed as it is through space, nor the present of what is said - distributed as it is through time.

It is this separation that the unwritten text attempts to anneal, to make whole, through denying its own status as writing - as marks of material difference distributed through time and space. Whereas other discourses within the text are considered as materials which are open to re-interpretation, the narrative discourse pretends simply to allow reality to appear and thus denies its own status as discourse. This relationship between discourses can be taken as the defining feature of the classic realist text. The normal criterion for realism (whether a discourse is fully adequate to the real) merely accepts the conception of the real which the classic realist text proposes for its own project. Thus a traditional anti-realist position that no discourse can ever be adequate to the multifarious nature of the real assumes the classic realist division of language and reality. The classic realist text should not, however, be understood in terms of some homology to the order of things but as a specific hierarchy of discourses which places the reader in a position of dominance with regard to the stories and characters.

However, this position is only achieved at the cost of a certain fixation, a certain subjection. We can see this discursive organisation at work in a writer such as George Eliot.

In the scene in Middlemarch where Mr Brooke goes to visit the Dagley's farm we are presented with two discourses. One is the educated, well-meaning, but not very intelligent discourse of Mr Brooke and the other is the uneducated, violent and very nearly unintelligible discourse of the drunken Dagley. But the whole dialogue is surrounded by a meta-discourse (which being unspoken is also unwritten) which places these discourses in inverted commas and can thereby discuss these discourses' relation to truth - a truth which is illuminatingly revealed in the meta-discourse. The meta-discourse reduces the object discourses into a simple division between form and content and extracts the meaningful content from the useless form. Thus when we approach the end of the chapter, we read the following passage:

"He (Mr Brooke) had never been insulted on his own land before, and had been inclined to regard himself as a general favourite (we are all apt to do so, when we think of our own amiability more than of what other people are likely to want of us). When he had quarrelled with Caleb Garth twelve years before he had thought that the tenants would be pleased at the landlord's taking everything into his own hands.

Some who follow the narrative of his experience may wonder at the midnight darkness of Mr Dagley; but nothing was easier in those times than for an hereditary farmer of his grade to be ignorant, in spite somehow of having a rector in the twin parish who was a gentleman to the backbone, a curate nearer at hand who preached more learnedly than the rector, a landlord who had gone into everything, especially fine art and social improvement, and all the lights of Middlemarch only three miles off."⁴

4. George Eliot. Middlemarch. vol.2. p.188.

In this passage we are given the necessary interpretations for the discourses that we have just read. Both the discourse of Dagley and Mr Brooks are revealed as springing from two types of ignorance which the third discourse can expose and reveal. Thus we have Mr Brooke's attitude to his tenants contrasted with the reality which is available to us through the narrative prose. The discourse is not allowed to speak for itself but rather it must be placed in a context which will reduce it to a simple explicable content. And in the claim that the narrative prose has direct access to a final reality we can find the claim of the realist novel to present us with the truths of human nature. The ability to reveal the truth about Mr Brooke is the ability that guarantees the generalisations of human nature. And here once again we can find that theoretical intersection in which the claim to communicate coincides with the claim of a common human nature and with certain claims about the real world and the activity of science. But it is not only Mr Brooke's discourse which is interpreted, there is also the "midnight darkness" of drunken Dagley. The metaphor employed in the passage exactly contrasts the darkness of Dagley's discourse with the daylight clarity of the prose that surrounds and interprets it. An additional point to notice in this passage is the method by which Dagley's accent is rendered phonetically. This emphasis on the material sounds of Dagley's discourse are directly in proportion to the difficulty in understanding it. The material of language is essentially a material that obscures. It is insofar as the narrative prose is not material that the truths of the world can shine through it.

When we move onto the irony of the passage which expresses its mock astonishment at the fact of Mr Dagley's ignorance when surrounded by such illuminating figures (and having 'all the lights of Middlemarch' only three miles away), this irony works through the knowledge we already have of the situation and in no way damages the narrative's claim to be representing reality without intermediaries. There is a kind of irony (we will come to it later in our reading of Joyce) ~~in~~ which ~~the irony~~ works without any fixed rules for re-writing the ironic passage. This lack of interpretative rules is exactly what makes for the difficulty of reading Joyce's texts. However, in this example from George Eliot we can find the more classical irony; in which the irony is established by the distance between the original sentence and the sentence as it should be, in the light of the reality made available to us elsewhere in the text. For us readers there is no astonishment that such midnight darkness as Mr Dagley should exist not three miles from Middlemarch because the lights of that town have been exposed as shadows by the greater light of the text itself.

The conviction that finally the real can be laid out and examined through some perfectly transparent discourse is to be found in the preface to Middlemarch where George Eliot states that "who that cares much to know the history of man and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of St Theresa..."⁵

5. George Eliot. op.cit. vol.1. p.1.

This discourse is that of objective science - the text will be a report of one of those experiments and the conclusions will be laid out with scientific objectivity. The view of science here implied is, it must be noticed, of a piece with a view of the immutable quality of human nature. For as language disappears and absents itself from the stage, we can clearly see the two-faced character Janus, the god of communication, one face that of human nature and the other that of the external physical world. To transform language into pure communicative absence is to transform the world into a self evident reality where, in order to discover truth, we simply have to look. This complete refusal to interrogate the form of the investigation, the belief in the transparency of the language being used can be clearly seen on those occasions (frequent enough) when George Eliot reflects on that form. Thus in Middlemarch at the beginning of Chapter 15:

"A great historian, as he insisted on calling himself, who had the happiness to be dead a hundred and twenty years ago, and so to take his place among the colossi whose huge legs our living pettiness is observed to walk under, glories in his copious remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work, and especially in those initial chapters to the successive books of his history, where he seems to bring his armchair to the proscenium and chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English. But Fielding lived when the days were longer (for time, like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly in the winter evenings. We belated historians must not linger after his example, and if we did so, it is probable that our chat would be thin and eager, as if delivered from a camp-stool in a parrot-house. I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be

concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over the tempting range of relevancies called the universe."⁶

Although, at first sight, George Eliot would appear to be questioning her form, the force of the passage is to leave us convinced that we have finally abandoned forms to be treated to the total unravelling of the real. Fielding's digressions, which, as it were, placed his fictions as fictions, are held to have been due to the "lusty ease of his fine English"; that is to a certain style. It is interesting to note in this context that pleasure ("lusty ease" in language) is linked to a certain obscuring of reality. Fielding insisted on calling himself an historian but the import of the passage is that he was not a real historian in the sense that he was too preoccupied with his own position on the stage, "the proscenium", to ~~simply~~ present the real to his readers. But "we belated historians" who no longer have any style, whose "chat would be thin and eager" can merely unravel the real.

The digression itself is no real digression because, situated in the middle of the narrative, its function is merely to efface itself; to testify to the reality of the story in which it is held. Where in Fielding the digression testifies to the written nature of the work, situating the narrative as construction, in Eliot the digression situates the narrative as pure representation, in which the author could not interfere because the author can no longer speak. In the same way the

6. *ibid.* pp.213-214.

disclaimer of the "tempting range of relevancies called the universe" in no way damages the narrative's claim to be representing the world as it really is; because the particular "web" is going to be fully revealed. And significantly, once again, we find the metaphor of "light", which is what the text is going to produce. These disclaimers have the function of ensuring, like the wealth of irrelevant detail which is heaped up in the text, the innocence and absence of a form and a language in which content might be distorted. We are persuaded that language and form have disappeared, allowing light to shine on the previously obscured world. Another example of the same kind of effect can be found in Daniel Deronda:

"She spoke with dignity and looked straight at Grandcourt, whose long, narrow, impenetrable eyes met hers, and mysteriously arrested them: mysteriously; for the subtly-varied drama between man and woman is often such as can hardly be rendered in words put together like dominoes, according to obvious fixed marks. The word of all work Love will no more express the myriad modes of mutual attraction, than the word Thought can inform you what is passing through your neighbour's mind. It would be hard to tell on which side - Gwendolen's or Grandcourt's - the influence was more mixed. At that moment his strongest wish was to be completely master of this creature - this piquant combination of maidenliness and mischief: that she knew things which had made her start away from him, spurred him to triumph over that repugnance; and he was believing that he should triumph. And she - ah, piteous equality in the need to dominate! - she was overcome like the thirsty one who is drawn towards the seeming water in the desert, overcome by the suffused sense that here in this man's homage to her lay the rescue from helpless subjection to an oppressive lot."⁷

7. George Eliot. Daniel Deronda. vol.2. pp.38-39.

Once again, the objections against the form of describing reality, 'the obvious fixed marks' of writing are swept away as we get taken beyond that 'word of all work Love' to be presented with the very mystery of the drama. The spectre of words deforming reality is raised only to be dissolved by the rising sun of the prose, a very common strategy in realist novels of the nineteenth century where within the realist, and hence unwritten, text the common example of that which is most unreal is the novel, the written text.

It would be a distortion to consider George Eliot's texts as completely caught within the transparency of what I have defined as the classic realist text. Within her novels there are always images which counter the flat and univocal process which is the simple shewing forth of the real. Casaubon's key to all the mythologies, Romola's blind father and, perhaps most powerfully of all, the Hebrew language which rests uninvestigable at the centre of Daniel Deronda, question and hold in suspense the project of Eliot's text. Romola's blind father, who stands in the same relation to the girl as does the author - the relationship of creator - reveals within the text the inability of the author to see the world she is creating. The impossibility of writing an historical novel is thereby admitted at one level of the text while, at another, the meta-discourse tries to deny the distance between itself and the discourses of the 15th century Florentine burghers. Similarly Deronda's discovery of the Jewish language and the poems of Mordecai troubles the meta-discourse insofar as

the Jewish language constitutes an area outside its control. (It is significant that Deronda hears the news that Mordecai's work is in Hebrew with 'anxiety'⁸). Indeed the meta-discourse, in its inability to state all the truths in the object discourses, forfeits its claim to be a meta-discourse.⁹

The problems and method of reading a realist text may be usefully compared to the problems an analyst faces with a neurotic's discourses and the methods which he utilises to disengage significant interpretations from those discourses. The neurotic has a number of psychic productions which result from conflicts within the psyche. These productions (dreams, symptoms) are described and explained by the neurotic in discourses which render the dreams coherent and the symptoms rational. He invites the analyst to offer him an explanation of the symptoms or the dreams within these explanatory discourses. The analyst, however, has, as it were, to disengage the symptoms and the dreams from these explanatory discourses and in this disengagement to show not only how these explanatory discourses are themselves productions of the same conflict but also to locate that very

8. *ibid.* p.336.

9. It is through an analysis of the sense in which both Daniel Deronda and Romola are written at that limit of realism where the realist project becomes impossible (Romola at the limit of time - the historical distance between the 15th and the 19th century - and Daniel Deronda at the limit of space - as the text cannot encompass the Jewish language so it cannot encompass Israel which is too great a distance from England) that we may seek to understand the traditional critical dislike for these novels. cf. F.R. Leavis. The Great Tradition. pp.47-52 and 79-125.

conflict in the relationship between the explanatory discourse and the dreams or symptoms.

Let us take, for example, the analysis of the dream and examine the formal structure of this analysis, remembering that this formal structure is realised in the analytic situation as a complex and dialectical process in which each element of the analysis interacts with the other. The patient relates a dream which sounds coherent. Starting from that element in the dream which lacks the coherence of the rest of the material (this might be an addition or a hesitation) the analyst attempts to disengage the dream from the operations of the secondary revision. The secondary revision is exactly the explanatory discourse in which the dream is placed. Starting from the productions of the primary operation in the dream work (the displacement, condensation and considerations of representability) the secondary revision renders the material coherent. Therefore, when the analyst has stripped away the operations of the secondary revision from the dream, the dream has actually been altered and it is this altered dream that the analyst begins to analyse. In the process of the analysis certain key conflicts will become apparent. These conflicts are caused by the fact that certain unconscious desires cannot find access to consciousness. The fact that they cannot find access to consciousness is revealed in the dream by gaps where the censorship has refused to allow an element of the dream through. It is these gaps that the secondary revision attempts to cover over because these gaps stand witness to the existence of these unconscious

desires and to the activity of repression. Now these unconscious desires will find expression in the secondary revision but, more importantly, it is in the need of the secondary revision to accomplish its work that lies the very conflict itself - the need to deny the existence of these desires which consciousness refuses to accept. There are therefore two stages of the same process at work here. We have the original repression of the desire because it is unacceptable to consciousness and then we have the further repression of the fact it has been repressed. The analyst, therefore, attempts in one and the same moment to bring the existence of these unconscious desires to the consciousness of the neurotic and to persuade the neurotic to abandon the explanatory discourses which linked all the results of repression to reality. For the neurotic is constantly ignoring the results of repression and thus denying the existence of unconscious desire through an appeal to reality which justifies the dreams or symptoms.

One can indicate how this comparison can be used to read a realist text by a further brief consideration of one of George Eliot's texts. One can regard the content of the story (the dialogues, events etc.) as the original psychic productions and the form of the story (the narrative meta-discourse) as the secondary revision; the explanatory discourse, which attempts to justify the content in terms of an appeal to reality, at the same time that it unifies and makes coherent the content. In Daniel Deronda, for instance, the content is placed by the form within a certain problematic - who are Daniel's parents, where does he come

from, who is he and what shall he do? One way, then, of reading Daniel Deronda is to accept the problematic offered by the meta-discourse and with it the relationship of dominance between the meta-discourse and the content (the meta-discourse dominates the content through an appeal to reality). The reader can then insert his own discourse in that fixed relationship and condemn the story in relation to reality as his discourses determine it. This condemnation can be further theorized in terms of George Eliot's lack of moral courage in following the dilemma through or wrong ideas brought on by a contact with Zionism or whatever. The other way, I have suggested, is to pick on some weak point in the text and through this to attempt to read the relationship between the meta-discourse and the object discourses as neurotic - that is to say that the meta-discourse attempts to deny in the name of reality those gaps in the text which gave evidence of unconscious desire.

Thus if we start with the Jewish language as the weak point within the text we can see the Jewish language as significant not because Deronda really is a Jew but because it offers as mother-tongue the undifferentiated plenitude which is an escape from the law of the father (this escape can be condoned because Sir Hugo is not really his father) which seeks to fix an identity on the son. Within England and English Deronda must choose a career - define himself in terms of difference, but the mother offers a future in which there will be no difference - his full being will flower in Israel. This escape from the domination

of the father (the law of difference signalled by the possession or non-possession of the phallus) can be further read back into the story of Gwendolen's conflict with Grandcourt. For what does Grandcourt do but attempt to define Gwendolen and what does Gwendolen do but kill Grandcourt (of course she doesn't really kill him)? Thus in the text of Daniel Deronda we can read the desire to transgress the law of the father but at the same time the attempt to deny that desire. The denial is to be found in the meta-discourse which attempts to explain and justify everything in terms of an evident reality but this discourse itself in its desire to be an in-different language points the way to our analysis of the text in terms of the desire to transgress the law of the father and seek plenitude (a life not defined - beyond difference).

Lest anyone think that this pretends to be a final analysis of Deronda it is necessary once again to refer back to our model of the analyst analysing a neurotic. As with a dream it will be necessary to return again and again to the original text (the dream as retold by the patient) and to seek fresh gaps in the narrative with which the text can be re-read and the interpretation each time will be determined by whether the desire uncovered can be located in many parts of the text - not least within the meta-discourse itself. It is in terms of the multiplicity of fissures within a given classic realist text that one might approach the question of its value. It is insofar as the text bears witness to its own activity of repression - insofar as the repressed makes

a return - that one can evaluate such texts.¹⁰ But whereas we have to read against the meta-discourse in a realist text, Joyce's texts, without inverted commas, lack any final and privileged discourse within them which dominates the others through its claim of access to the real. If we continue briefly the use of psycho-analytical theory as a model we can say that whereas the realist text is a neurotic discourse, Joyce's texts are psychotic discourses. For the neurotic attempts to repress certain desires and ignores the compromise formations which find their way into consciousness through an appeal to 'reality', whereas, in the psychotic, the desires dominate the ego and the ego therefore produces discourses which ignore reality (delusions). (Later in this chapter when we will push this analogy further we will see that Joyce's texts can best be characterized neither as neurotic nor psychotic but as perverse). His earliest prose writings, the Epiphanies, lack any appeal to reality which would define what ~~that~~ the writing produces. The conversations and situations which make up the epiphanies lack any accompanying explanation or context. In place of a discourse which attempts to place and situate everything we have discourses which are determined in their situation simply by the reader.

And it is within this perspective that we might consider the distinctions that Joyce draws in his youthful paper 'Drama and Life' between a drama which comes complete with its own

10. For an example of a full analysis of a classic realist text and its fissures see Roland Barthes' S/Z.

interpretation and caught within the stereotype of its age, a drama which Joyce describes as purveyor supplying plutocrat with a "parody of life which the latter digests medicinally in a darkened theatre"¹¹ and the drama of Ibsen which gives us the pleasure "not of hearing it read out to us but of reading it for ourselves, piecing the various parts and going closer to see wherever the writing on the parchment is fainter or less legible".¹² Thus the contrast for Joyce is between a text which asks to be read in a certain way and a text which is determined by our reading.

The lack of a dominant discourse which places such emphasis on the reader in Epiphanies can also be found at work in Dubliners. In Dubliners we can read the banality and paralysis of Dublin without at any stage the writing doing the interpretative work for us by offering a point of insertion for our own discourses in an agreed hierarchy of dominance. The text works paratactically, simply placing one event after another, with no ability to draw conclusions from this placing. It is important to recognise that these are not stories 'about' Dublin in the sense that Dublin is an entity understood and referred to outside the text. Rather it is a question of the reader producing Dublin through the interaction of his own and the text's discourses. The movement of the text is not that of

11. The Critical Writings of James Joyce. Edited by Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. p.44.

12. *ibid.* p.50.

making clear a reference already defined and understood; of fixing the sense of an expression. Instead the text dissolves the simple sense of Dublin as a city, as a context within which people live their lives, and replaces it with the very text of paralysis. It is for this reason that Joyce could talk of a "special odour of corruption which, I hope, floats over my stories"¹³ (my emphasis) and in this "floating" we have the specific refusal of a fixed sense which is conveyed by the text - which is the message inscribed in the code. The meaning of the text is provided by the reader's own discourses although the text determines that a certain odour of corruption will float, always in suspension, over any such meaning. If we take for example 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room' we find no purchase in the text which will enable us to grasp its import. The refusal of the narrative to do more than report spatial positions, or give information strictly relevant to what is happening from moment to moment, leaves the dialogue between the various occupants of the committee room suspended in a vacuum of sense, a vacuum that must be filled by the reader. Parnell simply becomes a function of the text; held in play between the various dialogues. The narrative discourse offers no move outside the committee room which will give the sense of Parnell or of the dialogues which turn about his name.

Although the narrative discourse rests between the various

13. James Joyce. Letter to Grant Richards. 15 October 1905 Letters vol.2. p.123.

dialogues it is instructive to see some of the methods by which it questions and negates itself. And this negation is not the simple effacement of the realist text but a process through which the narrative discourse works its own destruction. For example there are two moments at the beginning of the text where an unexplained reference is made to the ivy leaves worn by Mr Hynes and Mr O'Connor. And these two references, standing out as they do from the flat level of the text in which what is described is in no way surprising, set up an expectation that the explanation of why these leaves are being worn will also explain why the ordinariness of the room is being written about. But this expectation is dissolved as the explanation comes from within the ordinariness of the room and offers no transcending explanation of the whole action.

It is perhaps revealing with regard to this story to look at the one occasion on which the narrative abandons external description and does present us with the explanation of what is happening. Mr Crofton's silence is described in the following passage:

"Mr Crofton sat down on a box and looked fixedly at the other bottle on the hob. He was silent for two reasons. The first reason, sufficient in itself, was that he had nothing to say; the second reason was that he considered his companions beneath him." 14

14. James Joyce. Dubliners. p.146.

Instead of a dialogue we can read in this passage the explanation of a silence but this explanation places the silence within the various stereotypes that circulate within the text. And it is as a collection of stereotypes without an explanatory discourse, which will contain these stereotypes within a narrative prose, that one can situate the essentially ambiguous nature of Dubliners. The narrative, in its refusal of a discourse which will explain everything, resists the reduction of the various discourses to one discourse shared by the author and the reader. It is in this context that we can understand Joyce's use of indirect free style. Other stories in Dubliners may appear to use more traditional realistic devices in which the narrative goes behind a set of actions and explains them. But the explanation is always within the same discourse that the major character uses when speaking and thus there is no hierarchy of dominance into which the reader can comfortably insert himself. The position we take with regard to the discourses of the text is not mapped out for us and as a result there is no unquestioned discourse in which we can comfortably read the repetition of our 'evident' selves and our 'evident' reality.

The final sentence of the story, "Mr Crofton said that it was a very fine piece of writing", reproduces the whole ambiguity of the text. For the first time someone's words are reported in indirect speech and with this move the narrative language of the text, for the first time, masters the discourses that flow back and forth in the committee room. But this mastery,

coming in the final sentence of the text, does not make clear what has been happening and, while testifying to its power at a formal level, simply emphasises the lack of a position from which we can read the poem on Parnell's death or the whole story. It is in this context that one might profitably compare the kind of irony engendered by Joyce's text with the more evident irony used in the George Eliot passage quoted above. While we know exactly how to re-write the George Eliot passage, it is almost impossible to re-write the Joycean one: because the text offers us no discourse in which to re-write it. We are therefore forced to re-write it in our own discourses but this personal re-writing is difficult because we must situate our discourses as dominant - the text will not undertake this situation for us. And in that moment where we become aware of the imposition of our discourses on the text we also become aware of the stereotype within our own discourses. The agreements which we presume and never question make their appearance at that point where the agreements no longer operate. Dubliners generates, through this lack of a meta-discourse, an endless irony between the stereotypes of the canvassers in the committee room and the stereotypes of our own discourses. Where in the realist text we find a central discourse controlling the other discourses (and it must be emphasized that it is the position of this discourse vis à vis the other discourses that matters and not its content), in Dubliners we can read merely the various discourses which produced a city at a given historical moment and which, besides their contemporaneity, escape any unifying force other than the discourses of the reader.

It could reasonably be objected to this account that what is still left unexplained is the persistence of the 'odour of corruption'. But the odour of corruption is the result of the functioning of stereotypes which in their paralysing effect refuse to allow any new relations between the subject and his own discourses. It is this paralysis which seizes hold of Eveline on the quay. Eveline is unable to escape from a life of servitude to her father because finally she cannot allow herself to be defined except in terms of the demands addressed to her by her father. But insofar as she is simply defined by the demands ^{addressed to her} she cannot find any space in which her own desire could speak - it is for this reason that she is literally speechless at the end. But if, in the fixity of stereotypes, we can locate the source of the odour of corruption (the frustration of desire) it must be noticed that the reading subject is neither placed in the same position as Eveline nor is there a position from which to read her discourses.¹⁵ And it is in the distance between the position of Eveline and the position of the reading subject that the text provides the experience of the other side of neurosis namely perversion. Freud often talked of the neuroses as the negative

15. By an exemplary coincidence it is with exactly the same image of an odour of corruption that the psycho-analyst Moustafa Safouan attempts to describe the sensations of a psycho-analyst when he first listens to a neurotic patient: "Et quand, de réponse en réponse, une odeur se lève à cette place de la jouissance, qui n'est plus de déchet mais de pourriture qu'est-ce qu'il reste comme issue? Rien d'autre que ce qui a déterminé l'entrée" "De La Structure en Psychanalyse" p.297 in Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme? ed. François Wahl.

of perversions and Joyce's writing is perhaps best defined as perverse.¹⁶

The perverse nature of the Joycean text can most evidently be seen at work in the opening story of *Dubliners* - 'The Sisters'. It is interesting, for our purposes, to compare the two versions that we have of this story. In the first version of the text which was printed in the Irish Homestead in 1904 we can find most of the details which appeared in the final version of the events and conversations which immediately followed the death of Fr. Flynn. What, however, is almost entirely missing from this first text is the reflections of the 'I' persona over and above his immediate reactions. This is evident if we compare the opening paragraphs in the two texts:

1. "Three nights in succession I had found myself in Great Britain street at that hour, as if by Providence. Three nights also I had raised my eyes to that lighted square of window and speculated. I seemed to understand that it would occur at night. But in spite of the Providence that had led my feet, and in spite of the reverent curiosity of my eyes, I had discovered nothing. Each night the square was lighted in some way, faintly and evenly. It was not the light of candles so far as I could see. Therefore it had not yet occurred."
(Irish Homestead)¹⁷

2. "There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke. Night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time) and studied the lighted square of window: and night after night

16. cf. Sigmund Freud. The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. vol.7. pp.165 and 231.

17. James Joyce. The Irish Homestead. August 13, 1904, p.676.

I had found it lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. If he was dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of candles on the darkened blind for I knew that two candles must be set at the head of a corpse. He had often said to me: I am not long for this world, and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true. Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my ears like the word gnomon ^{the} in Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work." 18

In the second text we find that introduction of the theme of paralysis and this word together with 'gnomon' and 'simony' provides a collection of signifiers which are not determined in their meaning by the text. The difference between the situation of the reader in the ^{first} ~~1st~~ and ^{second} ~~2nd~~ text is crucially different. In the first passage the reader is placed in a state of ignorance (what is the situation the text is describing? What is the significance of the lights? etc.) but this ignorance is what the rest of the text will dissipate (It is the death of a priest etc.) but in the second text the reader is introduced to a set of signifiers for which there is no interpretation except strangeness and an undefined evil. There is here what one might call a certain excess of the power of signification (the production of a surplus of meaning) which occurs again with the second major addition in the final version: the dream the narrator has in which the dead priest pursues him:

18. James Joyce. Dubliners. p.7.

'But the grey face still followed me. It murmured; and I understood that it desired to confess something. I felt my soul receding into some pleasant and vicious region; and there again I found it waiting for me. It began to confess to me in a murmuring voice and I wondered why it smiled continually and why the lips were so moist with spittle.'¹⁹

Once again we find a certain excess of meaning in the priest's act of confession. The gap between the act of signification (saying, writing) and what is signified (said, written) is accentuated and in this gap the reader's own discourses are left to circulate. This distinction between the signifier and the signified is what marks the radical difference between the texts of Joyce and those of George Eliot. In Eliot's texts this division is elided at the level of the meta-discourse which attempts to suppress the act of signification (the act of writing) to leave a predetermined signified in place. And this signified (this meaning) in Eliot's texts is the evident reality of things. Even if the reader disagrees with the explicit identifications of the meta-discourse (one can argue about Dorothea's character), it is exactly the position of the meta-discourse vis à vis the rest of the text that allows for the disagreement. Because there is an elision of the distance between the act of writing and what is written - so similarly there is an elision of the act of reading and what is read. The reader is placed in a position where he simply sees what is there in the text and can ignore the productive

19. *ibid.* p.9.

effect of his own discourses.

We have noted that the desire at work in George Eliot's texts (or at least in Daniel Deronda) is that finally there will be no difference - that there will be oneness. But this is exactly the neurotic negation of desire, for desire depends entirely on difference - on the establishment of an object that can be desired insofar as it does not appertain to the subject - insofar as it is radically other. And this difference (this separation) is not achieved insofar as there is a discourse which unifies all the others - the meta-discourse. Desire is thus left without an object because there is nothing in the text which is absent. The multitude of objects which appears in Eliot's texts do not appear as one side of an opposition of which the other is always absent but rather each thing appears as sameness; as its own thing in itself. It is this lack of an absence that constitutes the repression of desire. Joyce's text is very different because although reality is constituted by the ever present demand of the father, the Church, the past - the subject can institute difference through splitting himself and can thus create an object which is absent and other and which can be desired. Far from identity being fixed by an appeal to reality which fixes the subject - thus the mother tells Deronda who he really is as the text tells the reader who we really are - there is a split in the subject which allows desire to function. This desire can be defined as perverse (involving as it does the lack of any other independent of the subject) and it must be

remembered that it is perversion which is the fundamental mode of sexuality in Joyce - there is no example of 'normal' sexual intercourse in the whole of his work. Even in Finnegans Wake, when H.C.E. and A.L.P. copulate in the morning, H.C.E. fails to reach orgasm as is pointed out in the text by the famous "You never wet the tea" (585.31).

The splitting of the subject is achieved exactly through the distance between the 'I' of what has been said and the subject of the act of saying. And it is this split which is effected by those moments in the text of Dubliners when the reading subject is no longer assured in his situation but experiences his own discourses as productive of meaning. The particular signification that will be associated with paralysis or the act of confession depends on the significant oppositions of the reader's own discourses. And the reader will thus be placed in the situation of reading his own discourses. This situation with all that it carries of a fundamental alienation is the one experienced by the narrator with regard to the word paralysis. 'I said softly to myself the word paralysis' - it is in the distance between the speaking and the hearing of the word that desire is instituted - 'I longed to be nearer to it'.

What is essential to grasp in the articulation of Joyce's texts is that there is no position within them where the reading subject can insert himself to consume some paralysed reality. Before the ever present demand of this reality the writing subject

institutes desire through splitting himself and thus instituting an object which is absent and can be desired. The reading subject must follow the positions taken up by the writing subject and in the split this instituted can begin to read his own discourses - not as some transparent window onto an evident reality but as a set of significant oppositions in which the subject's world is constituted and in which, if the subject begins to listen attentively to them, he can hear his desire speak. It is this attention to the forms of discourse which characterizes Joyce's practice of writing. Stephen Heath has written of the displacement from classic realism to such a practice in the following terms:

"This shift is not to be understood in the traditional terms of a change from 'social realism' to 'psychological realism' or whatever, but in terms of the deconstruction of the very 'innocence' of realism. Its foundation is a profound experience of language and form and the demonstration of that experience in the writing of the novel which, transgressed, is no longer repetition and self-effacement but work and self-presentation as text. Its 'realism' is not the mirroring of some 'Reality' but an attention to the forms of intelligibility in which the real is produced, a dramatization of possibilities of language, forms of articulation, limitations, of its own horizon."²⁰

What is important about this attention is that it is also, always, a transformation. In Dubliners the banality of everyday discourse is removed from its quotidian normality and transformed into a text which can be analysed. This analysis cannot, however,

20. Stephen Heath. The Nouveau Roman. p.22.

be constructed in terms of some external truth which the text represents or embodies. Instead we should consider it in terms of the lines of force that constitute the text and which engage with those same forces in our own discourse. Truth is no longer correspondence but struggle.

CHAPTER 4

THE END OF THE STORY:

STEPHEN HERO AND A PORTRAIT

Truth as struggle. No longer is it a question of correspondence but of the forging of positions of judgement - the establishment of areas where correspondence is installed. Forging, here, is the appropriate word - both force and forgery. Jim the Penman, the forger, is exactly he who places himself in another's position and understand its contours not as natural and given but as a continuous production. Julia Kristeva, within a continuing work on the specificity of the poetic use of language, has considered these different conceptions of truth in terms of a distinction between symbol and sign. The symbol: one to one correspondence between word and thing; a correspondence always guaranteed by God in one or other of his guises. The sign: a constantly shifting world where the fundamental discontinuity between signifier and signified hesitates and refuses the movement towards an exterior truth to discover its own systematicity - the area of its own truth.¹ The symbol is the guarantee of the realm of simple disjunction: the word either does or does not represent a state of affairs. The exit from this realm (the fall from grace) is the experience of the sign; experience of a world where a system of differences constantly open to re-articulation defines the word and where, therefore,

1. See Julia Kristeva. Le Texte du Roman. pp.25-35.

the simple either-or is held in a state of suspension. The experience and development of the non-disjunctive nature of the sign is, for Kristeva, one of the essential tasks in the struggle against platonism and christianity; a struggle which already has many fronts:

"L'idéologème du signe, en effet, non-disjonctif et transformationnel, est à la base des grands moments que notre culture a enregistrés. Citons parmi eux: la conception de la négation et de la permutation dialectique chez Hegel et Marx; le développement de la linguistique après Saussure et de la logique après Pierce, c'est-à-dire la constitution de systèmes formels qui n'ont pas de support idéologique, éthique ou véridique en dehors d'eux-mêmes mais intègrent leur 'vérité' dans la construction simultanée de leur modèle; et enfin, la constitution de la sémiologie comme nouveau mode de pensée absorbant dans le signe (le modèle) les différents systèmes signifiants."²

More familiarly for us in England, it is the work of Wittgenstein which constitutes this reflection on the sign and the consequent change in the location of truth. Michael Dummett, in an article signalled as a commentary on Wittgenstein³, has

2. *ibid.* p.190. "The ideologem of the sign, in effect non-disjunctive and transformational, is at the base of the great moments that our culture has recorded. Amongst them one could cite: the concept of negation and dialectical permutation in Hegel and Marx, the development of linguistics since Saussure and logic since Pierce, that's to say the constitution of formal systems which have no ideological, ethical or veridical support exterior to them but integrate their "truth" in the simultaneous construction of their model; and finally, the constitution of semiology as a new manner of thinking, absorbing in the sign (the model) the different signifying systems."

3. Dummett ends his article thus: "Of course the doctrine that meaning is to be explained in terms of use is the cardinal doctrine of the later Wittgenstein; but I do not think the point of this doctrine has so far been generally understood." Article entitled "Truth". Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society. Vol. 59. (1958-59) p.162.

formulated the new organisation of truth thus:

"We are entitled to say that a statement P must be either true or false, that there must be something in virtue of which either it is true or it is false, only when P is a statement of such a kind that we could in a finite time bring ourselves into a position in which we were justified either in asserting or in denying P; that is, when P is an effectively decidable statement."⁴

Dummett, thus rejects an disjunctive analysis of discourse in favour of a non-disjunction which can only be resolved by a "bringing of ourselves into position". The elaboration of this play between discourse and position was forced on Wittgenstein after he had proposed, in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, what will probably prove to be the last of the great correspondence theories of truth. Wittgenstein's correspondence theory was original in that it did not involve a homology of word and thing at the level of ordinary speech, for this ordinary speech was a complex function of simpler elementary propositions, the analysis of which was made possible by Frege and Russell's development of the propositional and predicate calculus. Thus a structural homology was asserted which related elementary propositions to states of affairs (Sachverhalte). The states of affairs are combinations of simple objects; the elementary propositions concatenations of names. (2.01,4.22) Names are

4. *ibid.* p.160.

considered as that linguistic form whose only relation is to the object it names (a mistake Wittgenstein later identified as a confusion between the bearer of a name and its meaning). Given this one to one correspondence between object and name all that was further needed was a similarity of form between the combination of objects and the concatenation of names. This similarity is understood through a consideration of how a picture represents, a consideration which finds its clearest expression at 2.17:

"What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in the way it does, is its pictorial form."

Similarly in order for language to depict, there must be an identity between the form of language (logical form) and the form of reality.

The meaning of an elementary proposition is "given by a condition of reality, a state of affairs, which is the truth-condition of the proposition"⁵ and the truth-conditions are exactly the permutation of the disjunction of a proposition and its negation. This is what allows Derek Bolton to argue that the essential novelty of the Tractatus is as follows:

5. Derek Bolton. A Study towards an understanding of the Philosophy of Wittgenstein. Unpublished Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, p.34.

"This simple interdefinability (the fact that all sixteen truth functions of two elementary propositions can be defined using only negation and conjunction i.e. $P \vee Q = \text{df. } \neg (\neg P \ \& \ \neg Q)$) reminds us that all propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. This is the central point, to which all the apparatus of truth function theory is only corollary. The theory enables us to express in a clear and advantageous way, the fact that given elementary propositions, we may negate them, and add them together. The novelty is that in specifying the sense of compound propositions we avoid, as it were, fresh reference to reality, to the states of affairs they represent. Instead their sense, what they represent in reality, is given by appeal to the truth conditions of elementary propositions."⁶

But not only does this anchoring of language in elementary propositions avoid the need to refer to reality again, it also, and more importantly, avoids conceiving of language as a system of signs defined diacritically; it establishes the meaning of language as representation - independent of any inter-linguistic relations. Wittgenstein's doubts about the Tractatus, expressed in conversations with the Vienna circle, began when he realised that the discourse of colour, which looked as though it should contain elementary propositions ("This is red" does not suggest the possibility of further analysis) could not, in fact, be defined through a combination of negation and conjunction. "This is red" did not simply enter into a disjunct with "This is not red" but implied the statement "This is not green". In other words it was impossible to disengage the colour propositions one

6. *ibid.* p.36.

from another in the way that the Tractatus had envisaged.⁷

This problem prompted Wittgenstein's return to philosophy and the rest of his work constitutes a constant interrogation of language as system and set of heterogenous systems; an interrogation which takes place at the level of form and content. But although language is considered as a system, its systematicity is still something outside experience - something strange; "The system of language", writes Wittgenstein, "is not in the category of experience."⁸ The only reason we need to pay attention to language as system is as therapy for the philosophical disease brought on by a "one sided diet"⁹; it is through attempting to find a single system for the heterogenous multiplicity of systems that we fall into error. The aim of philosophy in its new role as therapy is to lead us back into the areas where language is obvious, where "The chain of reasons has an end,"¹⁰ where language becomes transparent within its appropriate practice.¹¹ This is the "bringing into position" which Dummett mentioned - A statement

7. Charles Larmore of Yale University, in an unpublished paper entitled "Use and Representation in Wittgenstein" summarises these arguments from Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis. Shorthand notes of F. Waissman. ed. B. McGuinness.

8. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Grammar. p.170.

9. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigation. p.155^e

10. Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Blue and Brown Books. p.143.

11. For a brilliant exposition of Wittgenstein's arguments on this theme see D. Bolton op.cit. ch.7.

becomes effectively decidable within a practice which provides criteria of judgement. What is interesting is that, for Wittgenstein the perception of language as system, as non-disjunctive discourse, is only needed as a cure for the philosophical disease; in some sense, normality is always "being in position". However, it is not simply disease that leads us from position to system - this movement is constantly forced on us by the very nature of the sign. Nor is it simply a question of finding those customary non-linguistic practices where discourse becomes transparent, where everything is rendered coherent; it is also a question of forging new practices and the discourses appropriate to them - moments, exactly, of incoherence. Michael Foucault, in a diametrically opposed thesis, regards the bringing of discourse into position, the bringing of interpretations to an end, as an operation of violence rather than a move back into a comfortable order.¹²

Thus while Wittgenstein opens up the non-disjunctive nature of the sign, it is always as part of a process of sickness and cure. This procedure is exactly the process of narration and it is narrative that Wittgenstein uses to give an example of how system (discourse) is effaced from experience:

12. Michel Foucault. "Marx, Freud, Nietzsche". VII^e Colloque Philosophique International de Royaumont. 1967. Cahiers de Royaumont. Philosophie No.6. pp.183-192. For earlier consideration of these problems, see C. MacCabe, "What is wrong with philosophy?" Granta, Vol.75 No.3. February 1970, pp.6 & 7 and "The problems of living in an Interpreted World", Radical Philosophy No.2. Summer 1972, pp.9-11.

"Certainly I read a story and don't give a hang about any system of language."¹³

Here the reading of a story is opposed to an understanding of language as system, a systematicity which lies outside "the category of experience". Joyce gives us the experience of system, of a discourse which is constantly forging positions, but he can only do that through a destruction of that which hides the system - the story that narrates - which through its coherence gives us an evident position: "A sentence in a story gives us the same satisfaction as a picture"¹⁴. Satisfaction of the imaginary, plenitude, narcissism - the story is that which restores a fullness whose loss is its own condition of possibility. "Innombrables sont les récits du monde", writes Barthes¹⁵ and if we are to isolate the

13. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Grammar. p.171. Charles Larmore argues at the end of his paper that Wittgenstein's attachment to a transparency of language could most usefully be interrogated from the perspective that Freud opens up of a subject who is never in control of 'his' own language: "One assumption of any theory of representation, which I have not yet mentioned, and which is apparent throughout Wittgenstein's writings, is what I shall call a certain "egocentrism". The only way I can "live" in a system of signs is that, when the signs efface themselves from perception, in order to show what they represent, it is from my perception that they efface themselves. And for this reason, Wittgenstein writes that I use a sign. Wittgenstein could never really come to terms with Freud's claim that we can "live" within systems of signs that the perceiving "ego" is not in a position to use."

14. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Grammar. p.171.

15. Roland Barthes. "Introduction a l'analyse structurale des récits." Communications. No.8. 1966 p.1. "Innumerable are the stories of the world." This chapter takes much of its inspiration from the closing statement of this remarkable article: "Bien qu'on n'en sache guère plus sur l'origine du récit que sur celle du langage, on peut raisonnablement avancer que le récit est contemporain du monologue, création, semble-t-il, postérieure a celle du dialogue; en tout cas, sans vouloir forcer l'hypothèse phylogénétique, il peut être significatif que ce soit au même moment (vers l'âge de trois ans) que le petit de l'homme "invente" à la fois la phrase, le récit et l'Oedipe."

way in which the story exhibits the structure of awareness of the non-disjunctive nature of the sign and the repression of that awareness, which I have sketched as the basis of Wittgenstein's reflections on language, then it is necessary to distinguish amongst these innumerable stories. In particular we need to isolate those features of stories that participate most fully in this movement of awareness and repression. Schematically, and within the perspective here chosen, we can divide our approach to stories into two. On the one hand we can see the story as the assertion of a set of disjunctions whose permutations produce actions. V. Propp and A.J. Greimas have attempted to formalise these permutations in various ways. Propp in terms of a combinatoric of functions, which are defined as "an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action"¹⁶; Greimas in terms of actants "that is, in terms of narrative agents treated as the modes of assumptions of functions".¹⁷ On the other hand we can consider the story as the assertion of a set of disjuncts, which are held in suspension until finally an identity is asserted and the original disjunction denied. Julia Kristeva attempted to contrast these approaches as the difference between the epic and the novel in Le Texte du Roman. The epic is pure combination in which all the oppositions are known before and after the text; the position from

16. V. Propp. Morphology of the Folktale. p.21.

17. Cleanth Peters. "Structuration of the novel text: method and analysis." Signs of the Times. ed. Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe, Christopher Prendergast. p.62.

which to read the text is given anterior to the text in the ideological world of religion. As reader of an epic we know that the hero is good and the villain is bad and that these two worlds cannot overlap and contaminate each other; the disjuncts are constantly maintained in the world of the symbol - guaranteed in their truth by a separate and exterior realm. The novel suspended these disjunctions for the course of the narration - is the hero good or bad? - only to affirm a final identity - the hero is good. In her later work La Révolution de Langage Poétique, Kristeva abandoned these distinctions and placed both within the category of narration which was now centrally dependent on the closure of disjunction.¹⁸ While it is true that a rigid distinction is impossible, there is an important difference to be theoretically maintained. While all classification has a certain arbitrariness let us propose a distinction between epic, which is linked to story-telling, and classic realism, which is linked to narration. What is central to the second form is both the elaboration of non-disjunction and the denial of this elaboration; the deep experience of difference together with a pressure to deny that experience. The elaboration of truth as struggle between text and performer (writer/reader) goes together with a desperate assertion that the text exists only in correspondence to a truth that is given in the world (which is also the assertion of a separate role for writer and reader). It is a heterogeneity and a surplus which provides the impetus for narrative - a heterogeneity

18. cf. Julia Kristeva. La Révolution du Langage Poétique. pp.86-89.

which must both be overcome and prolonged. At the start there is an incoherence between word and world (illusion) which is then resolved (knowledge). The passage from innocence to, if not guilt (but guilt will always be there as the index of a desire which has been worked over and repressed) then to knowledge. But this is a passage which is denied as process - the knowledge is always already there as the comforting resolution of the broken coherence (in this sense narration is always a suspense story). Stephen Heath has described this suspended state on which narrative depends, as follows:

"The paradox of such a narrative is then this: aimed at containment, it restates heterogeneity as the constant term of its action - if there is symmetry, there is dissymmetry, if there is resolution, there is violence; it contains as one contains an enemy, holding in place but defensively, and the strategic point is the implacable disjunction of narrative and discourse, énoncé and énonciation, the impossibility of holding entirely on the subject-position of the one the subject-process of the other..."¹⁹

In its passage from an incoherence to a coherence which is always guaranteed in advance (in its passage from innocence to knowledge, in its passage from confusion to identity), the novel is always the story of lost illusions: Illusions Perdues. Balzac's novel here demonstrates, dramatizes this movement of narrative that requires the production of and desire for a

19. Stephen Heath. "Film and System: Terms of Analysis" Part 1. Screen. Vol.16 no.1. Spring 1975. pp.49-50.

coherent position (to figure an identity and to enjoy the security of knowledge) but, at the same time, wants to know nothing of desire and production. Indeed it is in the very miscognition of knowledge as security that we can locate the neuralgic point of narration. Knowledge always involves the breaking of an imaginary unity of subject and object, it is belief that guarantees it. One has only to reflect on the logical grammar of knowledge and belief statements to grasp this point: To say "I know that x" is to involve myself in a system of differences independent of my subjectivity, but nothing exterior can disturb the statement that "I believe that x"²⁰

In Balzac's novel the position allocated by the formal interrelationships discussed in the previous chapter is guaranteed by a process of placing the reader in position - albeit by a process that is concealed. The discourse charged with the relating of the narrative does, of course, have this formal relation of control over the object discourses that circulate in the text. Thus, for example, a pun will be spelt out lest the meta-discourse be troubled by an ambiguity²¹ but it is a pun within the meta-discourse itself which opens up the world of non-disjunction and which guarantees the time of the narrative on the condition that it will be finally resolved. The problem that the

20. The way in which weaknesses in Wittgenstein's Later Position become totally debilitating in some of his disciples can be seen in Malcolm's attempt to conflate knowledge and belief in "Knowledge and Belief" in Knowledge and Belief Ed. A. Phillips Griffiths pp.69-82.

21. Honoré de Balzac. Oeuvres Complètes. Vol.12. p.268.

text demands shall be solved is, here as always, the problem of sexuality; specifically: (both objective and subjective genitive) the desire of the mother. This desire is the excess - an orgasm which, in its lack of place, disturbs an homogenous order. Freud in his Studies in Hysteria talked of the fact that "the great majority of severe neuroses in women have their origin in the marriage bed"²², and expressed surprise that "the case histories I write should read like short stories."²³ But there should be no surprise: narration is always the masculine reappropriation of the hysterical, the feminine - its process is the closure of heterogeneity. It is when Freud stopped trying to write these stories that psycho-analysis proper begins.²⁴ For Balzac's text, it is Madame de Bargeton who erupts as a heterogeneity both sexual and social into the lives of the two poets; this eruption is explicitly marked by the text as a lack of sexual satisfaction, for her husband has been "endommagé" by his earlier sexual exploits and suffers from an "impuissance

22. Sigmund Freud. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works. vol.2. p.246.

23. *ibid.* p.160.

24. Originally Freud demanded that his hysterical patients told him stories of a primal traumatic encounter with sexuality. It was when he realised that these stories had to be considered as phantasy - the circulation of the subject along a signifying chain - that psycho-analysis begins. cf. Letter to Wilhelm Fliess. no.69. The Origins of Psycho-Analysis. pp.215-218. The editor of the Standard Edition marks the shift thus: "In the years immediately following the studies Freud abandoned more and more of the machinery of deliberate suggestion and came to rely more and more on the patient's flow of "free associations"." vol.2. p.xviii. No longer the demand by the analyst for a story to be told but a silence around which discourse can explore its own contours.

d'esprit"²⁵. Further Madame de Bargeton is evidently old enough to be Lucien's mother and her sexuality, which can find no other outlet reveals itself above all in the mother-tongue: "Elle prodiguait démesurément des superlatifs qui chargeaient sa conversation où les moindres choses prenaient des proportions gigantesques". Language becomes sexual where it is a question of woman: "car il faut violier pour un moment la langue, afin de peindre des travers nouveaux que partagent quelques femmes."²⁶ (my emphasis). Thus the problem of woman is also the problem of language - of difference. The novel turns around a set of suspended disjunctions: Chardon or de Rubempré, thistle or daisy, spike or not spike²⁷. Lucien, as hero, is constantly caught up in this movement, he is both male and female, both good and bad, both unscrupulous and honourable. But, at the same time, the narrative always maintains that he is chardon, spike, - always maintains his real identity at every level. Lucien's desire to call himself de Rubempré is the world of illusion that the novel must lose so that it can begin to write itself. In particular it is Lucien's attachment to the female world that must be worn down in the course of the narrative. The novel is written from the position Lucien will occupy at the end of the novel when he

25. Honoré de Balzac. op.cit. vol.11. p.212.

26. ibid. p.214.

27. The meaning of chardon as thistle is spelt out in the spoof poem. vol.12. p.320 but the other meaning of chardon - spike - remains unspoken within the text.

can understand Vautrin's lesson which he takes from Otway's

Venice Preserved:

"As-tu compris cette amitié profonde, d'homme à homme, qui lie Pierre à Jaffier, qui fait pour eux d'une femme une bagatelle, et qui change entre eux tous les termes sociaux?"²⁸

He will gain the name of de Rubempré but it will be a name conferred by a father:

"Je veux aimer ma créature, la façonner, la pétrir à mon usage, afin de l'aimer comme un père aime son enfant. Je roulerai dans ton tilbury, mon garçon, je me réjouirai de tes succès auprès des femmes, je dirai: - "Ce beau jeune, c'est moi! ce marquis de Rubempré, je l'ai créé et mis au monde aristocratique; sa grandeur est mon oeuvre, il se tait ou parle à ma voix, il me consulte en tout."²⁹

Illusions Perdues thus traverses the classic path of narrative in that it is a desperate attempt to deny sexuality, the knowledge of which provides its first impetus. Philippe Sollers analyses this denial of sexuality as the creation of a false father:

"Un faux père... mis là... à seule fin d'éviter fantasmatiquement que la mère n'ait pas le phallus, qu'elle soit genitale, qu'elle jouisse. Ce père est une mère. Phallique. Le père, lui,

28. *ibid.* p.552.

29. *ibid.* p.553.

serait en réalité un nom. Mais, de cela, nul n'a plus peur que l'idéaliste." 30

The Name of the Father which is the name without a bearer is the index of language as system of difference and inauguration of desire. It is the separation of the name of the father from its bearer which is, for Lacan, the crucial event for a successful entry into the symbolic order. If, however, we can find a bearer for this name then we can ignore difference i.e. ignore the mother. This father is, for the narrative of Illusions Perdues, David Séchard. It is his passage from the world of maternal into which he throws himself at the beginning of the novel (adoration of Lucien with Eve and Madame Chardon) to the world of the paternal (reproof for Lucien with Eve and Madame Chardon) which is the counterpart of Lucien's movement from ignorance to knowledge. The name of the father - Chardon - is given body, substantified, by David who absorbs it by marrying Eve and thus excludes Lucien from the feminine world he has always inhabited. It is the work that the narrative has done in providing a function for the father that enables Vautrin to take it up. Balzac's novel does, however, end in some suspense, for Lucien has not entirely left the world of the feminine. His scoffing of Vautrin's offer by reminding him that the abbé of Vermont had led Marie Antoinette to the scaffold and the fact

30. Philippe Sollers. Sur Le Matérialisme. p.61. "A false father set up for the sole purpose of avoiding fantasmatically the mother not having a phallus, of avoiding her being genital, her coming. This father is a mother. Phallic. The father in reality is a name but no one is more afraid of that than the idealist."

that, amid the welter of surnames that end the book, Lucien's name appears without any definition, both refuse total closure. This final lack of the name of the father has a double determination. Firstly as part of a larger text, the narrative must re-introduce a certain heterogeneity to ensure that another volume can begin. Secondly as an index of a desire that still retains some force, the narrative cannot finally close itself - it leaves a limited plurality as possibility.

The classic realist text does not, however, simply produce a different economy of desire from that found in epic but also submits the reader to a different temporal order. The constant disjunction in epic keeps the énoncé separate from the énonciation. The story-teller remains independent of the epic which is no more than a simple succession of events. The epic can be told by anybody at any time. In the classic realist text it is the final closing of the non-disjunction in an identity which makes the narration possible: the énonciation is only made possible from the end of the time of the énoncé. In other words the end of the story becomes the inevitable progress of the narration. This introduction of meaning into time (the meaningful progression of events) is the transformation of epic into history i.e. the production of the classic realist text. For this reason the classic realist text is both historicist - each level finds itself determined by the central movement of the narration - and (with perhaps the inevitable corollary of historicism) it is also written from a present which has no future - the apogee of the

triumphant progress of time. This necessity to place everything in the past in order that the text can display its own order involves the appropriation of the public realm of events: Lucien's face is explicitly bound up with the political movements and crises of the 1820s.

Finally we must notice that it is this suspension of disjunction which allows the investigation of psychology. The opposition of d'Arthez to Lousteau is both posed and then suspended in Lucien who is both d'Arthez and Lousteau. The novel's end is his discovery of his true self - a problem that does not arise for the hero of an epic given in a set of static disjuncts. The endless meanderings of the psychological novel are made possible by the organisation of discourse described above. With Joyce we enter into a new organisation, a new order which is neither an epic nor a form of classic realism, but instead involves the transformation of both these terms.

It is in the perspective opened up by a consideration of narrative that we can understand the rupture between Stephen Hero and A Portrait of the Artist as a young man. The first is caught within the classic realist text, the second announces a fresh start which has no beginning, but offers instead a rhythmic destruction (deconstruction) of the previous economy of discourse; word without end or beginning.³¹ I have attempted to identify

31. "Mon hypothèse, en effet, est que Finnegans Wake est un mot, un seul et immense mot mais en état de dérapiage, de lapsus." Philippe Sollès. Tel Quel no.64. Winter 1975 p.18.

narration as the constant movement towards the place of knowledge from which narration can occur i.e. the smoothing of an incoherence which is always already guaranteed from the start. Problem of sexuality, of difference, of women - problem which is both asserted and then denied - it is this which is the basic movement of narration, it is this also which is the principal force at work in Stephen Hero.

Dublin and Stephen are described from the position of knowledge to which the text tends, although the fact that the story remains unfinished is an index of the difficulties within the text; an incoherence which refuses to resolve itself into a simple position. Because it lacks not only an end but also beginning we cannot trace the logic of the narrative in its entirety but Emma Clery figures as that disorder which threatens Stephen's world and which must, therefore, be smoothed over and ironed out. The outburst when he confronts her with his desire, is the product of illusions which must be unmade by the progress of the text - an unmaking which involves the creation of the false father - Ibsen.³² The same illusion can be found in the attempt to learn Irish, and, its unmaking, in the trouble caused by the mother tongue: "Stephen found it very (hard) troublesome to pronounce the gutturals but he did the best he

32. In some sense this would be the ending of Stephen Hero: a flight from Ireland and then a meeting with Ibsen who would make Stephen his spiritual heir.

could."³³ This trouble with women receives a partial solution (as in Illusions Perdues with the death of Coralie) through the annihilation of women: Isabelle suffers the penalty of having "acquiesced in the religion of her mother"³⁴ (my emphasis). As with the mental annihilation of Emma Clery, this death provides part of the place at which the narrative must arrive to write itself.

But the narrative's final failure to arrive at that place can perhaps best be understood through a consideration of the temporality within the text - the difficulty posed by history. Classic realism can be understood as working with that division of language characterised by Emile Benveniste as discours and histoire. For Benveniste the distinction is between that form of language (discours) in which the speaking subject is implied - where an 'I' appears which is interchangeable with a 'you' (possibility of identification and exchange) - and a form of language in which the speaking subject is not involved - where "il s'agit de la présentation des faits survenus à un certain moment du temps, sans aucune intervention du locuteur dans le récit."³⁵ Benveniste axes his distinction between the past

33. James Joyce. Stephen Hero p.65.

34. *ibid.* p.131.

35. Emile Benveniste. Problèmes de Linguistique Générale. p.239. "It's a question of the presentation of facts which have occurred at a certain moment without any intervention of the speaker in the story." The distinction finds a full exposition in the essay from which this quote is taken "Les relations de temps dans le verbe français" pp.237-250. It is sympathetically criticised from a position similar to my own in Julia Kristeva. Le Texte du Roman p.179.

historic and the compound past in French. Lacking such a clear distinction of verbal forms in English one would have to content oneself with organising the distinction around forms of language in which 'it' or 'there' functioned as an impersonal subject and those where the interchangeable personal pronouns govern the verbs. But Benveniste's distinction, while useful at one level, obscures the fact that at a deeper level all histoire is already discours - that the impersonal mode of narration offers a certain set of exchanges with the reader - offers a position. The suspense of classical narration is the interplay between these two uses of language. The 'it' of histoire must join the 'I' of the discourse at the end - where the story will be written from. This disjunction between the 'it' and the 'I' is constantly played with in the classic realist text; a play which is only allowed on the condition that they will fuse into one. It is this that guarantees progression: a continuous present in which there is a suspended disjunction (the narrative tells us both that Lucien will fail in Paris, and also that Lucien thinks he will succeed - we move between the two) but this movement is disposed - laid out - from their eventual union. The dialectical movement of history requires an Absolute present from which it is written. If we look at Stephen Hero we will be able to see its difficulties as so many difficulties of narration involving new orders of discours and histoire i.e. the problem of history:

"By all this society liberty was held to be the chief desirable; the members of it were fierce democrats. The liberty they desired for themselves

was mainly a liberty of costume and vocabulary: and Stephen could hardly understand how such a poor scarecrow of liberty could bring (to their) serious human beings to their knees in worship. As in the Daniels' household he had seen people playing at being important so here he saw people playing at being free. He saw that many political absurdities arose from the lack of a just sense of comparison in public men. The orators of this patriotic party were not ashamed to cite the precedents of Switzerland and France. The intelligent centres of the movement were so scantily supplied that the analogies they gave out as exact and potent were really analogies built haphazard upon very inexact knowledge. The cry of a solitary Frenchman (*A bas l'Angleterre*) at a Celtic re-union in Paris would be made by these enthusiasts the subject of a leading article in which would be shown the imminence of aid for Ireland from the French government. A glowing example was to be found for Ireland in the case of Hungary, an example, as these patriots imagined, of a long-suffering minority, entitled by every right of race and justice to a separate freedom, finally emancipating itself. In emulation of that achievement bodies of young Gaels conflicted murderously in the Phoenix Park with whacking hurley-sticks, thrice armed in their just quarrel since their revolution had been blessed for them by the Anointed, and the same bodies were set aflame with indignation (at) by the unwelcome presence of any young sceptic who was aware of the capable aggression of the Magyars upon the Latin and Slav and Teutonic populations, greater than themselves in number, which are politically allied to them, and of the potency of a single regiment of infantry to hold in check a town of twenty thousand inhabitants." 36

Here, discours and histoire refuse to be maintained as a suspended disjunction to be resolved in unity at the end but instead contaminate each other. Not the slide from Lucien to the narrative and back, but instead a constant disruption of

36. James Joyce. *op.cit.* pp.66-67.

histoire by Stephen's discours. This confusion between discours and histoire, between personal and impersonal can be seen in the long passage between "He saw" and "a young sceptic" where the readers are in the realm of the impersonal, only to find themselves back in the personal. This confusion poses a problem of knowledge because there is no gap between Stephen and the narrative - no suspended disjunction which must be collapsed into unity - which is the indispensable guarantee of the whole business of narration. It could be said that this is simply another way of describing indirect free style. The problem, however, is that the imprecision of the term indirect free style covers a variety of discursive organisations. The place of the histoire of the narration and the discours of the hero can appear to be joined together (various forms of first person narration) if the discours of the hero at the beginning of the novel is different from the histoire it will become at the end when the text can be written. If the first person novel is of such a kind (i.e. if it is written backwards) then it is merely a version of the classic realist text which always has an end. This end is the moment at which the possibility of exchange and identification are fully defined: the 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she' of discours are finally shown to be in an identical position as the 'it' of histoire. The reader is allocated the same place on all sides - happy ending. It is this happy ending, and its promise, which obscures histoire as discours and defines any discours simply from the point of view of histoire - in terms of truth or falsity. (Epic is distinguished from classic realism in that it does not

have the pressing necessity of an end - our positions vis à vis the discours of the characters is obvious from the world outside the epic).

A discursive organisation which contains no promise of an end reveals its own contours and organisation, and at this moment histoire becomes impossible - it is unmasked as discours. It is significant that it is at the moment that Marx abandons Hegelian historicism (history as suspended disjunction, movement of the dialectic towards the Absolute) that it becomes possible to study society as system.³⁷ Stephen Hero is caught between these two moments and histoire keeps collapsing into discours only to struggle on again. This disease, this impossibility of suspense has a name: paralysis.

It is easy to say that this is the result of shallow egotism on Joyce's part or lack of subtlety or failure of sensibility but so to do is to ignore a fundamental disorder of discourse for some of its effects. If discours is jammed on histoire then paralysis ensues. The difficulty of this paralysis reveals itself symptomatically as a difficulty of pronouns - the difficulty of those exchanges necessary for identification. Turpin Hero could begin in the first person and end in the third

37. The debate about Marx's historicism has been long and violent over the last few years. For a statement of the position here asserted see Louis Althusser. Lire le Capital. Section V. pp.150-184, and the brief discussion supra pp 52-54.

because of the interchangeability of pronouns and the resultant possibility of identification. It is this suspended exchange that Balzac's novel is based on - we are both within the discours of Lucien and the histoire of the narration, on condition that they will finally become the same. In Stephen Hero the disjunction is no longer possible and it is this disorder which makes Stephen Hero such a clumsy book. The discourse charged with the narrative can dominate the other discourses but it has become conscious of itself as discourse and thus the resulting writing jars:

"When a demand for intelligent sympathy goes unanswered he (it) is a too stern disciplinarian who blames himself for having offered a dullard an opportunity to participate in the warmer movements of a more highly organised life. So Stephen regarded his loan of manuscripts as elaborate flag practices with phrases."³⁸

In this passage the impersonal use of the verbs presumes a situation which can be explained and understood in terms of a common reality available to reader and text. The events of the text are subsumed under a set of agreements i.e. the promise of the end. The meta-subject of histoire is the guarantee of the solidity of the classic realist text and we can slide between it and the discours of a Lucien secure in their final identity. But the meta-subject - the 'it' of the narration is becoming impossible to sustain and, for this reason the subject 'he' can no longer

38. James Joyce. op.cit. p.88.

be identified - 'he' becomes an index of strangeness rather than a comforting identity. As this 'he' surfaces, the meta-subject is destroyed and the result is final - no more agreements; no more ends; no more stories. Balzac can be sure of this end because he assumes that all societies which are not true monarchies will fail. A Marxist writer (and during some of the period that he was composing Stephen Hero and A Portrait Joyce would call himself a socialist³⁹) can never posit an end to history because history can have no end.⁴⁰ All that can be done from a Marxist position is to investigate the discourses of the day - an investigation which in its radical interrogation will always be revolutionary, a revolution of the word.

A Portrait opens with a story - typical in that it is told by the father and that it provides in its structure an identification - "He was baby tuckoo."⁴¹ But the text then

39. See Richard Ellmann. James Joyce pp.247-248. See also various letters, written from Rome in 1906, to Stanislaus Joyce. Letters vol.2, pp.148, 173-4, 187-8. Ellmann describes the end of the first short draft of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (written for Dana in 1904 and published in The Workshop of Dedalus. ed. Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain. pp.40-48) as "a stirring peroration compounded of Zarathustra, a dash of Marx and Joyce." op.cit. p.152.

40. For the concept of a process without end(s) see Louis Althusser. "Remarque sur une categorie: "Procès sans Sujet ni Fin(s)" in Réponse a John Lewis. pp.69-76. Althusser opens this brief note with the comment that "Cette formule ("procès sans Sujet", "procès sans Sujet ni Fin(s)") a tout ce qu'il faut pour heurter les "évidences" du sens commun, c'est-à-dire (Gramsci) de l'ideologie dominante, donc de se faire des adversaires convaincus à peu de frais."

41. James Joyce. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. p.7.

constitutes so many struggles against identification, so many evasions of the paternal and so many attempts to accede to the feminine. Counter to the classic realist text A Portrait is the product of the desire to make of the father only a name and thus accede to a chain of differences where one is not fixed to a single point but can come and come and come again.

The problem of Stephen Hero is that the neutral histoire is constantly interrupted by a discours and this interruption destroys the movement of the narrative. But what is a problem in Stephen Hero becomes the constitutive principle of A Portrait. Montage of discourses, A Portrait refuses to tell us stories. Simply to take Stephen's encounters with the university authorities, one can remark that in Stephen Hero these are all given strong diegetic motivation in terms of the recognition by the college authorities of Stephen's identity as a rebel and as a dangerous opponent. As such these encounters become confrontations or battles of identities, so many attempts to be recognised by a father. In A Portrait, the absence of diegetic motivation allows system to appear instead of position, discours instead of histoire. Thus we can focus on the different words to describe the same thing (tundish, funnel) and the different pronunciations which mark the divide between Stephen and the dean:

" - The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so

foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language." 42

With this appearance of discourse, there is a lack of position for the reader to occupy. No longer the assumption of a sure identity (the nature of which is deferred until the end) reading becomes a perpetual displacement. If Stephen still longs for a purely expressive language, the reader is denied that possibility by the juxtaposition of the five sections without any overriding unity. Deprived a final resting place our own discourse becomes incoherent but also open, it becomes a process without end.

Narratively any possible ending (assertion of identity, union of discours and histoire) is taken up and ironised. Thus the heroic end of the first section becomes the joke of the second in a movement that gets repeated throughout the text. In a reciprocal moment, the psychological investigation of what our hero will become (Stephen or Maurice, Stephen or Cranly, Stephen or Cosgrave) is transformed so that the other major characters, far from possessing some full identity, determine certain forms of address - practice a certain punctuation of Stephen's discourse.

42. *ibid.* p.194. In Stephen Hero this encounter is because the dean "to whom the emergence of these unusual qualities had been duly reported, spoke one day to Stephen with the purpose of "sounding" him." (p.33). Interestingly the dean loses both his name and the appellation "Father" in A Portrait.

Lynch's punctuation is a certain mechanical materialism: as Stephen discourses on his aesthetic theories, Lynch interrupts with comments about his lack of money and they are both interrupted by the passage of commerce:

"A long dray laden with old iron came round the corner of sir Patrick Dun's hospital covering the end of Stephen's speech with the harsh roar of jangled and rattling metal. Lynch closed his ears and gave out oath after oath till the dray had passed."⁴³

Cranly spaces Stephen's words with a certain femininity: he talks of a mother's love and it is during this final conversation of the book that a woman's singing breaks into the passage of their thoughts. Stephen acknowledges that Cranly felt "the sufferings of women".⁴⁴

But if the father is held at bay, he is not finally pulverised, dissolved, anatomized - he continues to menace a certain identity. Although the name is separated from its bearer, there is always the hope that a true bearer who will merge with the name can be found. "Fosterchild"⁴⁵ Stephen will search for a mythical father: for a Dedalus who will occupy the name fully.⁴⁶

43. James Joyce. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. p.213.

44. *ibid.* p.249.

45. *ibid.* p.101.

46. If one were to recast A Portrait in terms of a bio-graphy, then one might say that, despite James' search, there was no father who was not exceeded by the name Joy; even the Viennese Freud.

These contradictory pressures can be found at work on the side of the feminine. A Portrait in its hesitation of any identity, marks a distinct openness to the feminine; term which ensures the circulation of phantasy rather than a fixed position. The woman standing in the door at the end of Davin's story is the exemplar of this moment of circulation, caught on the border between inner and outer the woman disturbs any simple symmetry between the two:

"The last words of Davin's story sang in his memory and the figure of the woman in the story stood forth, reflected in other figures of the peasant women whom he had seen standing in the doorways at Clane as the college cars drove by, as a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed."⁴⁷

But the woman's lack of a name⁴⁸ points towards the idea of the woman as simple plenitude; counterpart of the father who will fill up the name. This idea of woman as plenitude finds demonstration in the passage just quoted where there is a hovering between the idea of the woman as full symbol for the young artist and the function of the woman as the point of disruption of any such discourse. It is the passage between the

47. James Joyce. *op.cit.* pp.186-187.

48. Emma Clery becomes E---- C----- . *ibid.* p.72. This lack of a name hesitates any final attitude towards her. The dismissal on page 238 has its hesitation on page 256.

plenitude of woman and the mythic father which the text both undertakes and refuses. This double movement does indicate the possibility of a final exit but, still caught within disjunction, this exit is that of perversion. The neurotic, having accepted the disjunction of the sexes wants to deny any possibility of their conjunction together for he cannot bear the idea of mixture. The pervert, however, plays in the space of opening up and closing down this disjunction - endlessly deferring any final resolution. Thus the five episodes circulate by promising a conclusion that is never reached and refusing the expected coherence and correspondence in a markedly perverse struggle. It is this perversity that allows a minimal pleasure to be taken in the mother-tongue:

"He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of a vague speech; and between them he felt an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin, softer than sound or odour." 49

There are endless discussions of A Portrait which circulate around the attempts to find the position of the author

49. *ibid.* p.104.

in this "authorless" work.⁵⁰ All such attempts ignore the fact that the structure of the work allows for no such authorial stance and that this same structure denies one to the reader also. The reader is constantly at work as discourse after discourse is forced on him/her without any fixed hierarchy to ensure the control and distance necessary to a position. If we wish to take seriously this question of Joyce's position in the work then it is perhaps Brecht who provides the most appropriate and literal answer in his comments about his novel The Business Deals of Mr Julius Caesar:

"My own activity seems to me to be of a wider range and more diverse than our theorists of realism believe. I feel myself to be very badly served by them. I am working at present on two novels, a play and a collection of poems. One of the novels is historical and requires extensive research in Roman history. Now the

50. Wayne Booth so describes the work on page 326 of The Rhetoric of Fiction. He then attempts to discover whether we should share Stephen's view of his flight (p.327) because, if we do not know what attitude we are to take to it, then we run the risk of retreating into "babbling and incommunicable relativism" (p.328). The assumption throughout Booth's consideration of A Portrait is that Joyce had a definite attitude to Stephen that he was trying to express and A Portrait is judged a magnificent failure because "Even if we were now to do our homework like dutiful students, even if we were to study all of Joyce's work, even if we were to spend the lifetime that Joyce playfully said his novels demand presumably we should never come to as rich, as refined, and as varied a conception of the quality of Stephen's last days in Ireland as Joyce had in mind." (p.336) The traditional defence against this attack is to take the argument one step further back and say that Joyce intended to communicate ambiguity cf. Morris Beja. Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. A selection of Critical Essays. ed. Morris Beja (Casebook Series) p.26.

novel is the territory of our theorists. But I am not being malicious when I say that for my work on this novel: The Business Deals of Mr Julius Ceasar, I have been unable to get any help from them. I can see no use for this accumulation of personal conflicts which the bourgeois novel of the last century borrowed from drama, for these long scenes, with painted backcloth and the evocation of interiors. For large sections I use the diary form. For other parts it has been necessary to change the "point of view". As for my own personal point of view, it appears in the montage of the two different points of view of the fictional narrators.⁵¹ (The first "point of view" appears in English⁵¹ in the original text) (my emphasis)

This, then, is Joyce's position (in the montage, in the arrangement) but this is no position but an articulation, the articulation which is the 'I' at the end of the text. Turpin Hero in its passage from 'I' to 'he' establishes the necessary equivalence for discours to become histoire: because all pronouns

51. Bertolt Brecht. Sur le Réalisme. pp.89-90. I have directly translated from the French. "Our theoreticians" is, above all, a reference to Lukacs. The quotation is taken from an essay entitled "On the formalist character of the theory of realism" which was written about 1938. About this time Lukacs' positions were becoming dominant within the Third International and Walter Benjamin in an entry dated 21 July 1938 notes that "The publications of Lukacs, Kurella et.al. are giving Brecht a good deal of trouble" Understanding Brecht. p.116. A full background to the political situation of Brecht, at that time, can be found as a preface to a selection of some of his writings against Lukacs in New Left Review no.84. March - April 1974 pp.33 - 38. For an attempt to recapture Brecht for a Lukacsian position and an attack on this attempt see Stanley Mitchell. "From Shlovsky to Brecht: Some preliminary remarks towards a history of the politicisation of Russian Formalism" and Ben Brewster "From Shlovsky to Brecht: A Reply" both in Screen vol.15 no.2. Summer 1974. Special Number: "Brecht and a Revolutionary Cinema" pp. 74 - 103.

are fully interchangeable the impersonal 'it' of the narrative is constituted. In A Portrait we find the passage from 'he' to 'I' in which histoire becomes discours and there is no easy equivalence between pronouns. The 'I' here is not the transparent position which can be exchanged against a 'you' but a montage of discourses i.e. a set of effects of language. The end of the text is the guarantee of its beginning as the artist is produced who will write it; in this endless circulation there is no moment of dominance from which the reader's discourses are invited to a complacent and suppressed entry. It is this lack of dominance which enables us to locate the author - not as a simple source who, outside the text, can identify himself and then communicate this identity through a discourse but rather as the play of possibilities produced by the various discourses of the text. The discourses in question are those of Catholicism and nationalism, of aesthetics and the artist which produces the 'I' that ends the text, and immediately starts it again.

It is in the perspective of a lack of a hierarchy of discourses, of a montage of different modes which forces work on the reader, that we can best understand Joyce's relationship to Flaubert - a relationship which is often discussed but usually in terms of a rather barren psychologism or an empirical search for similarities⁵². In a "Lost Illusions" novel we have a clear

52. The reference to Flaubert was explored in some depth by Hugh Kenner first in Dublin's Joyce and more fully in The Stoic Comedians. Richard K. Cross's Flaubert and Joyce is a study whose psychologism can be immediately perceived in the sub-title: The rite of fiction, and the title of the first chapter: The Priesthood of Art - Two Vocations.

divorce between discours and histoire but, in Flaubert, this divorce is no longer absolute and there is a consequent difficulty of interpretation⁵³. In L'Education sentimentale, and with even more emphasis in Bouvard et Pécuchet (work which becomes impossible to finish), there is no place for the reader to occupy. Flaubert stated that his desire was to write a book about nothing - "un livre sur rien"⁵⁴ - and his texts tend increasingly towards a simple traversal of the rhythms and fixities of contemporary discourses. From this perspective Le Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues thus marks the apogee of his writing. There are no ends in his novels in the sense that there is no knowledge that the reader gains from the end with which he learns to understand the beginning. And this lack of knowledge is the product of the same process which leaves Frédéric Moreau and Bouvard and Pécuchet as ignorant (or as knowledgeable) at the end of the books as at the beginning.

The destruction (de-construction) of narration, of stories has as consequence the bringing to attention of discourse. Here we find Flaubert's endless and meticulous attention to the forms and contours of the sentence. It is the sentence that Barthes

53. For Cross such difficulty is the inevitable result of subtlety: "In the case of a novel whose vision is as intricate as that of A Portrait of the Artist or L'Education sentimentale, the problem of interpretation becomes exceptionally acute." op.cit. p.37.

54. Gustave Flaubert. Correspondance. vol.2. p.345.

argues is the basic unit of Flaubert's work⁵⁵, and one could mark the movement from Balzac to Flaubert as the change of basic unit. Balzac asks to be divided in terms of plot, Flaubert in terms of language. The collapse of histoire into discours is the impossibility to hold language at a safe distance as simple énoncé in which one knows one's position, and instead we find the fall into the endless passage of énonciation, where there is no position to occupy. Deprived of an outside (an end) to the text in which one can place oneself securely, we have to read each sentence - we have to support and uphold its contours with our own body. It is the movement between this immersion in language and its partial rejection (the father still sought in A Portrait, the sense in which one can attempt to read L'Education sentimentale as Illusions Perdues) that constitutes that perverse vacillation which I have described in Dubliners and A Portrait. The endless splitting of the subject which continuously (re)finds a moment of unity; the constant calling into question of one's own discourses together still with a minimal promise of final security. It is in the light of a consideration of how Flaubert's writing opens up the world of discours and énonciation that one can understand his enigmatic remark - "Madame Bovary - C'est Moi" - as a linguistic and not a psychological statement. Deprived of a position we must be touched by the discourses that surround us and it is this contact which constitutes momentary access to the feminine.

55. Roland Barthes. "Flaubert et la phrase" in Le Degré Zéro de l'écriture suivi de Nouveaux essais critiques. pp.135-144.

The movement from classic realism to this new category of writing can be located not simply in the passage from Stephen Hero to A Portrait but also in the passage from La Première Education sentimentale to L'Education sentimentale proper. The first book is almost a simple re-writing of Illusions Perdues - a phrase which punctuates the novel at every turn⁵⁶. Two heroes, Jules and Henry divide the novel. The one rests in the country, the second comes to Paris. Henry falls in love with Madame Renaud and flees with her to New York but he soon realises that the passion of love cannot last and returns to France having lost his illusions. Here already the text begins to pose problems. If Lucien can really be said to have acceded to knowledge (although there is always the problem that his weakness of character may entail a fall back into illusion), Henry's loss of a set of romantic stereotypes about love is simply the acquisition of a further set of stereotypes - those of the man of the world. This difficulty surfaces elsewhere in the text and with more insistence in the figure of Jules. Far from submitting

56. Thus "... Henry espérait, il attendait, il rêvait, il souhaitait, il croyait encore à la volupté qui s'écoule du regard des femmes et à toute la réalité du bonheur de la vie, époque d'illusions, ou l'amour bourgeoise dans l'âme." Gustave Flaubert. Oeuvres Complètes. vol.1. p.290. Later "Jules s'enrichissait ainsi de toutes les illusions qu'il perdait..." ibid. p.358 and "Il est un âge où l'on aime tous les vins, où l'on adore toutes les femmes; alors, assis devant la vie comme autour d'un festin, on chante tous ensemble dans la joie de son coeur, les convives ont la même gaieté et la même ivresse; mais une heure arrive où chacun prend sa bouteille, choisit sa femme et s'enfuit chez lui, puis d'autres viennent boire aux mêmes illusions et se griser des mêmes espérances." ibid. p.360.

a woman to his name - becoming the father who can ensure the knowledge of the text - Jules is tricked by his first love and becomes immersed in bitterness. After vain attempts to cover every field of knowledge (precursor of the futile quest of Bouvard and Pecuchet) and thus accede~~d~~ to the knowledge which would guarantee the text, he finally becomes a writer⁵⁷.

If, as I have argued, the process of narration is the smoothing over of the feminine by the creation of a coherence, then the narrative only half accomplishes its work. Although Madame Renaud is banished to her room from which she hardly ever comes out⁵⁸, there is no counterpart of this suppression of the feminine in particular there is no masculine assumption of a coherent knowledge in the text - Henry is as stupid at the end of the story as he was at the beginning. It should not surprise us, therefore, that the repressed returns elsewhere in the text in a movement of incoherence. Madame Renaud makes her return in the electrifying scene in which Jules, walking along a country road, is confronted by a limping dog which by its revolting appearance and behaviour attracts both his sympathy and disgust. Drawn towards it he is repelled when he attempts to stroke it:

57. Whereas at the beginning Jules' writing is like Lucien's (Lucien's great book is l'Archer de Charles IX, Jules' Le Chevalier de Calatrava) and, as such, controlled by the meta-discourse, the writer he becomes is not comprehensible to the text - his writing becomes a blind spot.

58. Gustave Flaubert. Oeuvres Complètes. vol.1. p.371.

"... l'impression chaude de cette peau toute nue et rugeuse lui fit retirer sa main de dégoût, et il s'en écarta avec la nausée."⁵⁹

The dog, despite violent beatings, constantly returns and the moment when Jules gazes into its eyes is the vertiginous moment of the book - the vortex which leaves nothing in place - the moment which cannot be given any real diegetic motivation. The dog, and the narrative hesitates¹ considerably on this point (hesitation which is always the index of a repressed desire), is that dog which Jules gave to his unfaithful lover Lucinde and which is thus identified with the feminine. More significantly, the dog's name of Fox brings the return of Madame Renaud (renard) signifying the repressed cannot be hidden. Hence the difficulty of the novel, sliding between a confident narration and, under various kinds of pressure, withering into a direct form of address (letters) or breaking out into dialogue⁶⁰. L'Education sentimentale itself resolves this problem through the constant hesitation of the end. There is no moment at which Madame Arnoux will be submitted to Frederic and thus no possibility of the smoothing of incoherence. The result of this hesitation is the endless experience of discourse as discourse, a perverse motion which is the only possible response to the paralysis of stereotype offered by the French bourgeoisie.

59. *ibid.* p.352.

60. The most striking example of this pressure is provided by Henry's parents - endless repetition of stereotypes. Before their banality the text breaks into dialogue (cf. *ibid.* pp.337-338 and 340-341) much as, later, Bouvard and Pécuchet turn into a set of Encyclopedia entries.

CHAPTER 5

A RADICAL SEPARATION OF THE ELEMENTS:

THE DISTANCIATION OF THE READER IN THE SIRENS AND CYCLOPS.

In the programme notes to Mahagonny, Brecht defines epic theatre as involving a radical separation of its elements and distinguishes three such elements in opera - the music, the text and the setting.¹ He expresses his desire for such a separation and his opposition to any integration of elements, in the following passage:

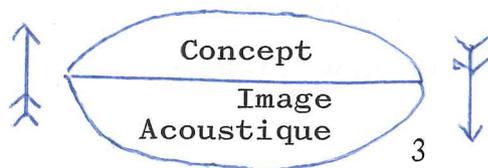
"So long as the expression 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (or 'integrated work of art') means that the integration is a muddle, so long as the arts are supposed to be 'fused' together, the various elements will all be equally degraded, and each will act as a mere 'feed' to the rest. The process of fusion extends to the spectator, who gets thrown into the melting pot too and becomes a passive (suffering) part of the total work of art. Witchcraft of this sort must of course be fought against. Whatever is intended to produce hypnosis, is likely to induce sordid intoxication, or creates fog, has got to be given up."²

Brecht's objection to the 'integrated work of art' can best be understood as an objection to the hiding of the relationship between signifier (the material image) and the signified (the meaning) - an objection which is based on the subjective effects of this concealment. It is possible, indeed in some sense inevitable, that the very distinction signifier and

1. Bertolt Brecht. Brecht on Theatre. p.37.

2. *ibid.* pp.37-38.

signified suggests a perfect one to one correlation between material image and meaning. Saussure, in the Cours de Linguistique Générale, introduced the concepts with the aid of this diagram:



and all later diagrams are of a similar nature.⁴ Although Saussure emphasizes that both signifier and signified are defined diacritically the circle around them both suggests that there is some simple, indeed almost natural, relation between the two. No matter how often Saussure emphasizes the arbitrary nature of the sign, it is doubtful whether given his own formulation of its constitution it is possible finally to escape a certain belief in a natural one to one relation. Given this one to one relation it is doubtful if one can escape awarding a certain primacy to the signified - a primacy which finds its diagrammatic expression in the fact that the signified is placed above the signifier. Finally as a correlative of this dominance of the signified, there will be a tendency to ignore Saussure's strictures that signifier and signified are indissolubly entwined one with another (the famous image is the recto and verso of a piece of paper)⁵ and imagine an autonomous world of the

3. Ferdinand de Saussure. Cours de Linguistique Générale. p.99.

4. cf. *ibid.* pp.158, 159, 162.

5. *ibid.* p.157.

signified. The possibility of such an autonomous world encourages a mistaken belief in a relation of the subject (collective or individual) to the world of meaning, which is simple and unitary i.e. one of full access and comprehension. The signifier then becomes simply the instrument of communication between two individual subjects or two instances of the same collective subject, in either case both speakers bathing in the luxury of an evident logos.

The problem, in Saussure's work, is that there are two conflicting conceptions of language side by side - both opposed to the reigning comparative school but with contradictory consequences at certain levels between themselves. Saussure's main purpose in the Cours is to found an object for linguistic - la langue - in which each element finds its definition through the differential structure (Saussure calls it a system) in which it is articulated. This notion of language is opposed to any notion of language as representation of thought - the position held by the dominant comparative linguistics of the day. The comparativists held that the cause of change in language was a degeneration of this pure representational state because of the exigencies of communication.⁶ Against this view, Saussure argues for the primacy of communication in language⁷. However

6. See Oswald Ducrot. "Le Structuralisme en Linguistique." in Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme? ed. François Wahl. pp.33-34.

7. Saussure takes the communicational situation as basic to the description of language. See op.cit. pp.27-28.

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Saussure's belief in language as a differential structure and his belief in language as communication are at odds with one another.⁸ It should not be thought, however, that this problem can be simply resolved - for in the interplay between communication and structure, Saussure touched not simply on some insignificant feature of language but on the constitutive contradiction of human subjectivity. If his own conception of the sign pulls language back to a simple one to one relation and the subject to a full world of meaning, his radical insight into language as system denies the subject any such plenitude. Jacques Lacan has

8. It is in the emphasis of one or other of these aspects of Saussure's thought that the dispute between the functionalists and the glossematians takes place. The functionalists attempt to investigate the systematic organisation of the signifier through effects at the level of the signified. The only differences that matter are those that produce a change in meaning; those that alter the communicational charge of a particular linguistic unit. "The phoneme can be defined satisfactorily neither on the basis of its psychological nature nor on the basis of its relation to the phonetic variants, but purely and solely on the basis of its function in the system of language." N.S. Trubetsky. Principles of Phonology. p.41. (my emphasis) "Une langue est un instrument de communication..." Andre Martinet. Eléments de Linguistique Générale. p.20. The problem with this approach is that the basic elements of the system have certain positive characteristics, although these are defined oppositionally (thus the phonemes are described as voiced/voiceless etc.), rather than being of a strictly differential or formal character. Hjelmslev, rejecting such positive definitions as a misunderstanding of Saussure's radical insight that the object of linguistics is the form of language (insight which finds its clearest expression in Saussure's metaphor of chess, Cours. p.43), attempts a purely formal definition of a given language such that each element is simply defined by its relation of implication with other elements. See Louis Hjelmslev. Essais Linguistiques. Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague. Vol.XII. p.71 and the whole of the essay entitled "Langue and Parole" op.cit. pp.69-81.

attempted to develop Saussure's insight and correct this psychologistic weakness by recasting the diagram first proposed by Saussure into an algorithm of the form $\frac{S}{s}$.⁹ The importance of this reformulation can be summarised in three points. Firstly the primacy of the signified over the signifier is reversed - a reversal which is marked by the capitalisation of the signifier and the italicisation of the signified as well as by their change of place. Secondly the use of an algorithm suggests two different levels rather than Saussure's faces and thus the unity of the sign is minimised in favour of the assertion of two heterogenous areas. Thirdly this heterogeneity and the radical discontinuity between the two levels is emphasized both by the removal of the circle and the accentuation of the bar. For the bar can never be fully crossed and its resistance refuses to any sign the possibility of transparency, as the signifier constantly moves along its own differential chains.¹⁰

9. "Pour pointer l'émergence de la discipline linguistique, nous dirons qu'elle tient, comme c'est le cas de toute science au sens moderne, dans le moment constituant d'un algorithme qui la fonde. Cet algorithme est le suivant:

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

qui se lit: signifiant sur signifié, le sur répondant à la barre qui en sépare les deux étapes.

Le signe écrit ainsi, mérite d'être attribué à Ferdinand de Saussure, bien qu'il ne se réduise strictement à cette forme en aucun des nombreux schémas sous lesquels il apparaît dans l'impression des leçons diverses des trois cours des années 1906-1907, 1908-1909, 1910-1911, que la piété d'un groupe de ses disciples a réunies sous le titre de Cours de Linguistique Générale: publication primordiale à transmettre un enseignement digne de ce nom, c'est-à-dire qu'on ne peut arrêter que sur son propre mouvement." Jacques Lacan. Ecrits, p.497.

10. For a fuller exposition of the differences here mentioned see Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe. le titre de la lettre. pp.37-40.

The significance of Lacan's reading of Saussure is that there is now no possibility of the subject's full access to the world of meaning. Instead the subject is constantly caught and divided between two worlds (a division which is constitutive of them both). While at one level the conscious subject rests in the world of the signified, at another level there is an other and dominant subject which races along the differential paths of the signifier and constantly disrupts the imaginary unity of the first. What is important is that Lacan's insight enables us to read in the organisation of language, the fundamentally divided order of subjectivity. François Wahl has brilliantly described this importance in relation to Lacan's analysis of Jakobson's thesis, in which language is constituted by the functioning of the two basic tropes of metaphor and metonymy (language being formed by a horizontal paradigmatic axis and a vertical syntagmatic axis):

"Une chose est de repérer la métaphore comme loi d'organisation du discours, de la fonder comme un des deux pôles fonctionnels du langage, de la retrouver dans les procès de condensation du mythe ou du rêve; une autre chose de lire, sous la substitution de signifiants qui fait la substance de la métaphore, un transport, une méta-phore du sujet: de reconnaître ainsi la place d'un sujet (du signifiant, c'est-à-dire de l'inconscient) excentrique à celui qui, sous les espèces du moi conscient, prétend parler; et d'en conclure qu'à se poser toujours dans le fonctionnement indéfiniment substitutif de la

signifiante, le sujet ne peut être que toujours ailleurs, toujours avant."¹¹

The subject, considered in these terms, is no longer a full unity but a constant set of displacements inaugurated by a primal (but never original) exclusion (castration) from a world that was never full until it became empty; which emptiness we constantly attempt to fill. The political consequences of such a recognition are enormous. For it signals, in some sense, the end of that idea of a full and self-sufficient individuality, which has been dominant for so long in the West,¹² and heralds

11. François Wahl. "Philosophie et Structuralisme" in Ou'est-ce que le structuralisme? ed. François Wahl. pp.393-394. "It is one thing to discover the metaphor as law of organisation of discourse, to place it as one of the two functional poles of language and to find it at work in the processes of condensation in myths or in dreams; it is quite another thing to read, under the substitution of signifiers which is the substance of the metaphor, a transport, a meta-phor of the subject: to thus recognize the place of a subject (of the signifier, that's to say of the unconscious) excentric to he who, under the cover of the conscious ego, claims to speak; and to conclude from this that to continually pose itself in the indefinitely substitutive functioning of signification entails that the subject can only always be elsewhere, only always ahead." Jakobson's distinction can be found in "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance." in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle. Fundamentals of Language. pp.69-96.

12. To date the rise and fall of such notions is a hazardous work, possible only after the most arduous empirical research and theoretical reflection. Suffice then to guess that it is in the seventeenth century that one could locate the mutation that gives birth both to the category of the subject and to that notion of individuality. Cartesian philosophy, Newtonian physics and the grammar of Port Royal all involve very precisely that notion of a unified and individual subject of experience. It is the work of Locke which provides perhaps the most obvious example of the need for a category of the subject in the justification both of the new science and the new civil order - the order of the bourgeoisie who had acceded to State power in England and already posed a certain threat elsewhere in Europe.

in its place - the ideal Brechtian crowd. Brecht's aim in his separation of the elements is to remove any possibility of an imaginary full individuality (such individuality is always seen in terms of witchcraft or drugs) and to replace it with a constant difference - constant separation. This distance or separation is the gap between the full imaginary unity of a character and the reality (which is indifferent to the character's phantasy of a rational progression to his life). It is the distance between the time of a life which appears to have its own logic (tragedy) and another historical time which ignores this imaginary logic. And it is also the separation which occurs between the spectator who casts himself in the full imaginary situation of a theatre-goer and the indifference of the play to that role. To accomplish this last task (and it must be said that this task is essential to the accomplishment of the others, for the spectator must be de-centred too, lest he provide a centre for the play in his judging consciousness) there must be a separation between the mechanisms of signification and what is signified. In other words we must be aware of ourselves as part of a crowd watching and looking at a play and this awareness will be the awareness of the differences and contradictions at play in the crowd and in ourselves. The spectator is thus constantly divided from himself - constantly distanced - and this division is the fundamental recognition of otherness.¹³

13. "... la conscience accède au réel non par son développement interne, mais par la découverte radicale de l'autre que soi." Louis Althusser. "Le "Piccolo" Bertolazzi et Brecht - Notes sur un théâtre matérialiste." in Pour Marx. p.144.

This distance and division are conventionally hidden within classical theatre and are further occulted by various pressures in our society, a society concerned at all costs to establish an immutable human nature and a given reality. Jacques Derrida, in a series of brilliant and original works, has attempted to analyze the problem of the imaginary unity of subject and meaning and to de-construct this full relation through an attention to writing. It is writing which, in the history of Western philosophy, has functioned as the emblem of drug, parasite, supplement i.e. a heterogeneity which is always scandalous.¹⁴ Derrida has insisted that in the immediacy of the spoken word we can ignore the fact of language as constituted by material difference and find a moment in which truth will present itself. The precise form in which this truth is theorized whether as Platonic eidos, Cartesian clear and distinct ideas, Russellian knowledge by acquaintance or whatever is, in this context, unimportant. What these concepts share is a commitment to those notions such as correspondence and coherence which are menaced by writing, a fact which is recognised in philosophy by the distrust of the written word that Derrida demonstrates to be so general. Whereas in the spoken word we can pass to an interior, a single source of meaning, - the speaking subject, it is impossible to accomplish this interiorisation with the written word. For writing always runs out of itself towards an outside

14. See for example the analysis of Rousseau in terms of the supplément in De La Grammatologie. pp.145-445 and "La Pharmacie du Platon" in La Dissémination. pp.71-197. See also Marges (de la philosophie) passim.

that surrounds and defines it and it is only in terms of this outside that we can understand any sign. The individual letter gets its meaning from the letters and spaces that surround it and the book from the books and spaces that surround it. The emphasis is thus moved away from a meaning which is founded in a present and a presence, towards a conception of meaning which is produced in the movement through time and space. This threat to meaning is, of course, a threat to truth. For as the writing subject is fragmented into the play of differences constituted by the various discourses he is writing (and which depend for their meaning not on the individual subject but on their situation in time and space) so the presence, temporal and spatial, which is essential to the concept of truth is also fragmented into the play of differences. It is these differences which determine what objects will present themselves within a set of oppositions which are themselves always already constituted. It is in this perspective that we can grasp the force of Derrida's comment that:

"Cette expérience de l'effacement du signifiant dans la voix n'est pas une illusion parmi d'autres - puisqu'elle est la condition de l'idée même de vérité..."¹⁵

The immediacy of the spoken word sustains dually the notions of presence and origin essential both to a conception

15. Jacques Derrida. De la Grammatologie. p.34. "This experience of the effacement of the signifier in the voice is not an illusion amongst others - for it is the condition of the very idea of truth..."

of truth as independent and to a conception of language as representation and communication. This twofold im-mediate nature can be characterised as follows:

1. The spoken word as immediate finds a present which is marked by the unity of experience rather than by the movement of continual difference "through which all future plunges to the past." ^{Usses} (p.238)

2. the spoken word is experienced as im-mediate that is to say that the medium of language (the vibrations which constitute the spoken word) is ignored as, in the existential situation, we perceive directly the presence of thoughts.

The voice is thus an experience of a presence and present continually obscuring the reality of difference.

Language as representation and truth as presence are two sides of the same coin. The idea of language as non-productive is dependent on the idea that truth originates elsewhere (correspondence between world and mind) and is simply communicated by language. Thus in answer to the infantile question "Where did thots come from?" (597.25) (Where do the thoughts we have or the children (tots) we produce come from?) the experience of the spoken word offers explanations in terms of origins in a full presence. Thoughts originate in the presence of the subject to himself in self-consciousness, the child originates in the presence of the

father at the moment of conception. Language represents the thought which exists independently of it and communicates this thought without interference; the son represents the father and communicates his seed without interference. But these answers are already infiltrated by a third term in the original question. "Thots" also includes "Thoth", the Egyptian God of writing and with writing all such notions of representation are undermined. As writing runs ever outwards in that movement of exteriority already described, the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence is constantly being altered. Writing is thus represented in our own philosophical tradition (which Derrida analyses with such painstaking attention) as the very image of interference. It can only be interference because of the prior assumption of some natural state of pure representation or communication. However rather than interfering with some previously existing meanings, writing is in fact the producer of meaning. In an analogous fashion the mother can be thought as the productive element (the activity of difference) which makes of the child not the copy of the father but the product of an activity.

It may be objected that this is "heady stuff" or that it is impossible to "export" such ideas across the Channel.¹⁶

16. These remarks have been made to me on the subject of Derrida's philosophy by Dr Philip Pettit of Trinity Hall, Cambridge and Professor Bernard Williams of King's College, Cambridge respectively. For further considerations of the relevance of Derrida's work in an Anglo-Saxon context see Colin MacCabe "Introduction" and Charles Larmore "Reading Russell, Reading Derrida" both in Cambridge Review Vol.95 No.2219, March 1974, pp.86-93.

But the distrust of writing as somehow in its materiality false and delusive and the corresponding idea of the voice as a guarantor of the presence of consciousness to itself and thus the guarantor of truth is, and has been, central in England. To take merely one example of the crucial importance of this distinction between the spoken and the written word in our cultural history, we can look at the concepts formulated by Leavis in the early Thirties concerning the idea of poetry as an imitation of speech. If, for example, one looks at an early article by Leavis on Milton one can find the opposition stated in very obvious terms. When talking of a piece of Milton's verse that he admires, Leavis writes:

"The texture of actual sounds, the run of vowels and consonants, with the variety of action and effort, rich in subtle analogical suggestion, demanded in pronouncing them, plays an essential part, though this is not to be analyzed in abstraction from the meaning. The total effect is as if words as words withdrew themselves from the focus of our attention and we were directly aware of a tissue of feelings and perceptions."¹⁷

In this passage one can read the distrust of words which in their materiality prevent the experience of the author (life) shining through. Leavis continues by remarking that despite his talent as a poet, Milton abandoned speech in favour of a particular way of writing:

17. F.R. Leavis. "Milton's Verse". Scrutiny Vol.2. No.2. Sept. 1933, pp.127-128.

"It became of course, habitual to him; but habituation could not sensitize a medium so cut off from speech - speech that belongs to the emotional and sensory texture of actual living and is in resonance with the nervous system; it could only confirm an impoverishment of sensibility"¹⁸

Indeed the whole opposition between the Metaphysicals and Milton which was so powerful in England for so long can be very largely seen as an opposition between the truth of the voice and the falsity of writing. By an exemplary coincidence this article on Milton comes from the same issue of Scrutiny as that which contains the essay on "James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word."

Writing menaces any simple notion of origin - any simple notion of an author - and with it the complementary notions of correspondence and coherence. In The Sirens we find writing revealing its own contours and in the same moment we find the deconstruction of the voice as a moment of simple origin. The reader can no longer pass through signifier to signified, can no longer bathe in the imaginary unity of a full self but must experience himself as divided, distanced, as other. The Sirens, indeed must be read as an interrogation of the distinction between the spoken and the written, an interrogation which involves a deconstruction of any possible origins (either fathers or authors). This deconstruction has definite political effects

18. *ibid.* p.130.

as it demonstrates a contradiction between writing and nationalism.

The Sirens commences with 58 phrases of unequal length varying from the single word "Listen!" (p.329) to the seven short sentences of "Decoy. Soft word. But look! The bright stars fade. O rose! Notes chirruping answer. Castille. The morn is breaking." (p.329) and the eleven phrases of "Avowal. Sonnez. I could. Rebound of garter. Not leave thee. Smack. La cloche! Thigh smack. Avowal. Warm. Sweetheart, goodbye!" (p.329). Of these 58 phrases 57 of them occur within the body of the text although they are often transformed and altered in their appearance. Thus the very first phrase "Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing Imperthnthn thnthnthn" (p.328) gets distributed through the first two pages of the main body of the text. We find the "Bronze by gold, Miss Douce's head by Miss Kennedy's head, over the crossblind of the Ormond bar heard the viceregal hoofs go by, ringing steel." (p.331) but Imperthnthn thnthnthn recurs a page later in "Imperthnthn thnthnthn, bootsnout sniffed rudely, as he retreated as she threatened as he had come." (p.332) while the exact phrase "heard the hoofirons, steelyringing" does not recur at all. Or, to take another example, the phrase "A moonlight nightcall: far: far." (p.329) recurs on pages 359-360 as "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". The 57th phrase in the opening "Done" (p.330) is the same word that closes the whole section on page 376.

What we can read in this passage is the interplay of letters and words as material. Far from attempting to efface the process by which meaning is produced Joyce is concerned to show how the mechanism of writing works. The first two and a bit pages, in which phrases without a context present themselves, refuse all possible meaning. The words deprived of a context in which we could read them (that is to say ignore them as signifiers in order to consume the signifieds that they communicate) become material objects which resting on the page resist our attempts to subject them to a certain meaning. Words without context cannot be read in terms of meaning because words derive their meaning, not from the fact that each word is charged with a certain thought, but from their position, in regard to other words, in the flow of whole sentences and paragraphs. A word is defined in terms of difference, the different letters that go to make it up, the different words that surround it and this difference is a difference which is activated across time and space through reading. Our attention is forced on our own activity as involved in the process of reading. No longer the simple consumption of a full unity but the constant movement of division. The important element to be grasped is the investigation of writing in time and space which this sequence undertakes. For the difference occurs both across the page and through time. The spatial organisation of letters is what determines meaning but this spatial organisation is grasped in its particularity, as difference, through time and it is always in a deferred moment that the reader grasps the meaning of various signs. This deferred moment is at work through-

out Ulysses where we constantly find phrases or words in new situations which cause us to re-read their earlier occurrences. But the Sirens is that section in which the deferred moment is the major productive principle at work. After the 57 opening phrases we have the command "Begin!" which institutes the process of writing, a process exaggerated throughout the Sirens. The repetition (our second reading) provides a large enough space of difference for the original phrases, and thus through time we can read their meaning. We cannot ignore the materiality of the letter because the words, no longer caught in a normal set of differences (which accord with our expectations and are thus not experienced as the distribution through space and time but rather as transparent windows onto reality, thought or whatever) are strange to us. The strangeness of the words is a strangeness of ourselves. They/we are no longer an evident source of meaning.

In this emphasis on the materiality of writing, Joyce's text breaks with a notion of internal thought or external reality outside a materially existent socially formed language. Thus the use of the Greek ϵ , the difference of material inscription marks the distinction between the text of Bloom and the text created by Bloom of Henry Flower. And as Bloom creates the character of Henry Flower so Joyce creates the character of Bloom, not in terms of creation and consciousness but in terms of production and language i.e. by the production of meanings through a practice of writing, a process of differentiation of material signs. And as the Greek ϵ marks the different articulation of space so, in the text, this distance is grasped through time in a deferred moment:

"On. Know what I mean. No, change that ee." (p.360)

"You know now. In haste. Henry. Greek ee."(p.361)

There are many other instances where at macro-levels within the text the significance engendered by the material of words becomes a focus of attention. To take merely two examples on page 334 we read: "Blo~~o~~ whose dark eye . read Aaron Figatner's name. Why do I always think Figather? Gathering figs I think.", and on page 346:

" - You did, averred Ben Dollard. I remember those tight trousers too. That was a brilliant idea, Bob.

Father Cowley blushed to his brilliant purply lobes. He saved the situa. Tight trou. Brilliant ide."

In this second example not only are the words "situation", "trousers", and "idea" de-composed into material letters but the word brilliant too is defined by what follows, by the difference which comes afterwards in a deferred moment. In Homer's Odyssey, the Sirens represent that which cannot be described by the text, for the unity of the voice escapes the difference of writing.¹⁹ Within Joyce's text, however, the Sirens stands not as an

19. See the descriptions of the Sirens in Homer. The Odyssey. trans. E.V. Rieu. pp.190 and 194. Heinz Wisman of the University of Paris IV has assured me that there is no description of the Sirens in the original Greek. As Joyce did not know classical Greek this may be of minor importance but all the translations I have consulted preserve the non-description of the Sirens although they sit "in a meadow piled high with the mouldering skeletons of men, whose withered skin still hangs upon their bones" op.cit. p.190.

example of the power of the voice and the spoken word but rather of the decomposition (in the musical sense of compose) of the voice and sound into the same play of material difference (play here considered in its mechanical sense, as the space in or through which a piece of mechanism can and does move) which constitutes writing. We have discussed the way in which the voice offers an experiential effacement of the material signifiers but it must be remembered that it is an effacement and not an abolition of this material. Marx was one of the first to emphasize the materiality of the spoken word when he wrote:

"From the start the "spirit" is affected with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language."²⁰

The Sirens can be read as the dramatisation of the materiality of language and it is Bloom as the writer in the drama who acts for the reader as the de-composer of the voice and music into material sounds. The voice is involved in the same play of difference through time and space that the text enacts in its practice of writing. Bloom, indeed, is identified as aiding the reading of this section when on page 360, in order to gain a pretext for writing he looks at the pages of the Freeman:

20. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The German Ideology. p.41.

"Down the edge of his Freeman baton ranged Bloom's your other eye, scanning for where I did see that." (my emphasis).

It is Bloom who is the reader's other eye and is, at the same time, his other I. By introducing writing, Bloom reads the voice for us but this reading introduces difference - introduces otherness - to the reader. Bloom locates the voice and music in material terms for the reader:

"The human voice, two tiny silky chords.
Wonderful, more than all the others.

That voice was a lamentation. Calmer now.
It's in the silence you feel you hear.
Vibrations. Now silent air." (p.357)

Bloom de-composes the voice into the difference set up by the vibrations and their absence - the fundamental opposition on which the voice is dependent. Similarly it is Bloom who recognises the importance of time (the deferred moment) in understanding sound:

"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. He doesn't see my mourning. Callous: all for his own gut. 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.

Instance he's playing now. Improvising.
Might be what you like till you hear the words.

Want to listen sharp. Hard. Begin all right:
 then hear chords a bit off: feel lost a bit.
 In and out of sacks over barrels, through wirefences,
 obstacle race. Time makes the tune." (p.359)

Once again pure creativity "Improvising now" gives way to a production of significance through an operation of a set of oppositions through time and space - it is time that makes the tune, as Bloom insists again: "Beauty of music you must hear twice". (p.367)

Bloom, however, is not the only indicator of the materiality of sound. Pat, the deaf waiter, stands as an example of a figure deprived of the experience of the effacement of the signifier in the voice. He "seehears lipspeech" (p.365) and this dependence on seeing the different shapes of the mouth which produce speech entails an awareness of the voice as a production of a set of differences. It is exactly this "seehearing" that is required for the "soundscript" (219.29) of Finnegans Wake.) Symmetrically the blind piano-tuner depends on the different vibrations caused by his ubiquitous tapping stick and must thus attend to the sound as material. But perhaps the most powerful image of the materiality of sound is the tuning fork which rests in the centre of the Ormond Bar as a reminder to the reader of the vibrations that produce sound. It is interesting to note within this perspective that Joyce appears to have told Gilbert that the tuning fork could be identified with Bloom.²¹

21. Stuart Gilbert. James Joyce's Ulysses. pp.218-219.

Writing in the Sirens subverts any notion of full presence of reading through an attention to, and a dramatisation of, the exteriority and the materiality of writing. In the same movement it dramatises the voice and sound (it is in this sense that we can understand the sequence as an "imitation" of music) as the play of difference through time and space. But as this presence is subverted we lose not simply any coherent truth which corresponds to a separate reality but also the idea of any origin for the text. The author does not create the meanings which are then conveyed by the text. For as the meanings of the text are seen to be produced by the distribution of the words through space and time it is impossible to isolate the words of the text from the contemporary words surrounding it - the words of the reader. Despite appearances there is no definite limit to a book. The fact that we can read it involves it in a play of discourses which runs beyond the covers of the book and beyond any individual reader in the same moment. We cannot make the move to an author outside the text who produces meanings inside the text because we cannot locate the outside of the text. Although we can distinguish its physical limits, we cannot 'close' the book. For if meanings are created through the interplay of words and discourses then there is no outside to the text - there are no words which are not implicated in the play of the text. Thus is the text caught up in time and in the movement of history. The attempt to move outside language and to find (found) the author as the creator of meanings is the attempt to fix meanings in an origin "outside" the text. This is an attempt which can

only become more and more desperate for if we cannot close the endless distance and difference opened up by the text then there is no longer any possibility of 'closing' ourselves. We become bodies of discourses which are constantly re-articulating themselves through time.

The image with which we can elaborate this radical concept of text is the shell which Miss Douce has bought back from the beach at Rostrevor and which adorns the shelf below the bar mirror "... where hock and claret glasses shimmered and in their midst a shell." (p.332) Those in the bar who listen to the shell and who are caught up in the experience of speech, locate the sound as present in the shell and originating in the sea. For us, however, guided by our writer Bloom, the sound is produced by the process of listening:

"The sea they think they hear. Singing. A roar. The blood is it. Souse in the ear sometimes. Well, it's a sea. Corpuscle islands." (p.363)

Our ideas about what happens when we read a text are similar to the ideas of the drinkers about the shell. As we read a text we are convinced that the meanings that we read are present in the text and originate in the author. But just as what the drinkers in the bar hear is produced through the interaction of the shell and ear, so the meanings we read are produced through an interaction between our discourses and the discourses of the text. The sound is not present for the ear in the shell as the meanings

are not present for the eye in the text. The sound is created between the shell and the ear but this 'between' does not point to a specific place 'between' the shell and the ear but rather the whole process created 'between' (in the sense of together) the shell and the ear.

The sea which the hearers wish to locate outside the act of hearing is, in fact, within it - indeed it is constituted by it. It is not the sea of Rostrevor they hear but the sea of their own blood. There is no beginning, no origin outside the act of representation and therefore there is no full presence within the representational field but instead a play of differences in which each presence is defined metonymically by the absences that surround it. Thus we lose not merely such notions as correspondence and coherence but also the author, all displaced into the movement of writing. The lack of a simple beginning can be read in the text in the place of the command "Begin". This is the 58th phrase of the opening sequence and constitutes the beginning of the text we are reading, but the command is already caught up within the flow of language and cannot be situated outside it. There is no outside to the text where meaning originates before language - rather the text's meanings are constantly being produced in the act of reading; in the juxtaposition of the discourses of the reader and the text.

The separation of the elements that Brecht demanded as

the condition of an epic and political theatre was, above all, directed against any "fusion". It is, of course, at that moment of the text that Bloom submits to the singing - to the effacement of the signifier - that such a moment of fusion occurs. Caught up in the signified everyone merges into a single identity:

"The voice of Lionel returned, weaker but unwearied. It sang again to Richie Poldy Lydia Lidwell also sang to Pat open mouth ear waiting, to wait. How first he saw that form endearing, how sorrow seemed to part, how look, form, word charmed him Gould Lidwell, won Pat Bloom's heart." (p.354)

It is this general fusion that provides the particular case of "Siopold" (p.356). As everybody in the bar forgets difference to become a fictional unity (they are all Lionel), Leopold and Simon join together. It is with such a moment of identity that the interchangeability of pronouns is established:

"Come. Well sung. All clapped. She ought to. Come. To me, to him, to her, you too, me, us." (p.356)

It is also, of course, famously, the moment of the illusion of fatherhood, the moment when the text finds an origin for itself as issued from the double loins of Leopold Bloom and Simon Dedalus. But, as with all such moments, the products of the effacement of the signifier involve moments of paralysis. This is demonstrated clearly in Circe when the mirror (emblem of the effacement of the signifier) is the cause of a fusion between

Stephen and Bloom; fusion which is paralysis (p.671). It is this paralysis which grips those drinking and talking in the bar but which Bloom can escape through writing. It is as Leopold begins to write to Martha that he takes up that unstable position in which every sign we produce sends back a message to us rather than communicating a meaning to another (who is the same). It is this unstable position that the reader is moved along throughout the Sirens - it is as "letter selfpenned to one's other" (489. 33/34) that we must read the text.²²

The political effect of this divided and distanced subject is such that one cannot fall into the full unified identity offered by an absolute nationalism. As the drinkers listen in sentimental unity to the song of the Croppy Boy, Bloom considers Emmett's last words from the dock, those words which deny any possibility of writing until the achievement of nationhood. But this indicates exactly the paralysis of nationalism - a paralysis of writing which is the only possible activity that can furnish a real liberation from the dominance of priest and king (priest and king being so many names for the signified). Bloom's response to Emmett's injunction, however, is to fart. Bloom's anality introduces a separation which cannot ignore its

22. The formulation of Finnegans Wake is reproduced almost exactly in the formula which François Wahl describes as "une des plus anciennes dont ait usé Lacan: que son propre message, le sujet (émetteur) doit le recevoir de l'autre (le sujet récepteur), qui le lui renvoie sous une forme inversée." art. cit. p.399. This proposition can be found scattered throughout Lacan's Ecrits - particularly one might notice its appearance on the first page of the whole volume, p.9. or in the closing paragraph of "Le Séminaire sur 'La Lettre Volée' " op.cit. p.41.

own process; the process of separation is too evident for the separated object to be taken as completely independent. It is this complete independence that is the condition of the normal use of language notably that the objects in the world may appear as independent (outside any process of difference or separation they simply present themselves). Before them the signifier dissolves to leave referent and meaning in direct contact, allowing a position of simple unity for the subject. Anality re-introduces separation there where it cannot be ignored and thus corrodes the evident signified, a corrosion which is the irruption of the signifier. An irruption which in the Sirens takes the form of the barrage of letters that are sprinkled through the closing lines of the section.²³ The last word of the text is "Done" but where Emmett gave it one meaning, the text adds the meaning that the sequence has finished and that Bloom has farted. This fissuration of "I have done" ensures that there is no final end to the text from which a one to one relation between signifier

23. The argument here presented summarises extremely briefly Kristeva's argument in section A. 2. of La Révolution du Langage Poétique pp.101-150, particularly sub-section 7. Kristeva describes the character who lives this resurgence of anality as follows: "Si on veut penser au "personnage" qui devient le lieu de ce procès, on obtient la représentation intolérable pour la conscience normative, d'un polymorphisme qui connaît toutes les perversions et n'adhère à aucune, qui traverse tous les vices et n'en assume aucun, in-identique, in-authentique, sagesse de l'artifice, sans intériorité, rejet constant" pp.142-143.

and signified can be imposed and this refusal of an ending is further emphasised by the fact that the "Done" refers back to the command "Begin". No more than in any other Joycean finale, there is never a moment at which the text closes itself.

The idea of music as the perfection of the voice is a common one at the end of the 19th century and it is insofar that music promises a moment of origin that it must be written through.²⁴ By an exemplary coincidence it is at this same time that the revolutionary composer Eisler and the revolutionary writer Brecht were combining in order to de-originate both the voice and music. Walter Benjamin comments on this process as follows:

"In other words, the task consisted in the 'functional transformation' of the concert-hall form of music in a manner which had to

24. Nietzsche provides a symptomatic example of the conflation between music and the voice in this period. The Birth of Tragedy is written as a defence of Wagner and Bernard Pautrat in his book on Nietzsche remarks that "Durant toute cette période, la musique est pensée comme une sorte de voix idéale, mode d'expression éminent et premier par rapport auquel toutes les autres voix pourraient être jugées et évaluées." Versions du Soleil. p.46. Nietzsche's texts also contain, however, the germs of a conception of writing which is in contradiction with the search for a pure expression. cf. Pautrat. op.cit. pp.48-122. It is these germs which allow Nietzsche to read his text with some pleasure 14 years later after he had broken with Wagner - see F. Nietzsche. The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals. pp.3-15. Joyce himself would appear to have shared this belief in sound (music) as the true expressive medium: "He read Blake and Rimbaud on the values of letters and even permuted and combined the five vowels to construct cries for primitive emotions." Stephen Hero. p.37. Later, however, he was to say that Rimbaud, although he had the artistic temperament, was "hardly a writer at all." Letter to Stanislaus Joyce, about 24 September 1905. Letters. Vol.2 p.110. (my emphasis).

meet two conditions: that of removing, first, the dichotomy of performer and audience and, secondly, that of technical method and content. On this point Eisler makes the following interesting observation: 'We should beware of over-estimating orchestral music and thinking of it as the only high art-form. Music without words acquired its great importance and its full development only under capitalism.' This suggests that the task of transforming concert music requires help from the word. Only such help can, as Eisler puts it, transform a concert into a political meeting. The fact that such a transformation may really represent a peak achievement of both musical and literary technique - this Brecht and Eisler have proved with their didactic play The Measures Taken." 25

This passage of Benjamin's is perhaps the best introduction we can have to reading the Sirens. For the Sirens makes of the reader a Brechtian crowd, a crowd which is not a unity, but a set of divisions that divide across as well as along individual bodies.

The Sirens dramatises the lack of a simple origin for a text - it deconstructs any possible author - and this dramatisation, deconstruction has immediate results. Deprived of the necessary interchangeability of pronouns, no dominant discourse can regulate and homogenise the heterogenous discourses that make up the characters. With the end of an agreed 'it' of narration, there can be no more characters - only the constant interplay of discourses. The Cyclops sequence demonstrates this clearly, for the text works as a montage of discourses, without at any time

25. Walter Benjamin. "The Author as Producer" in Understanding Brecht. p.96.

offering us a final meta-discourse (an author's impersonal voice) which could control the riot of language which composes the text. The consequence of this riot is the lack of a standard by which we can judge the correspondence of these discourses to an exterior reality and the consequent experience of incoherence. Joyce described the Cyclops section as proceeding "explanatorily"²⁶ but as one discourse takes up and explains another there is nothing we can understand - we can only experience the interplay of language. The whole sequence works around a basic division between the narrative of the 'I' (the Nameless One) and the way this narrative is taken up and 'explained' by other discourses. But within this basic division there are further distinctions at work. Thus, within the discourse of the Nameless One, we can read the discourse of the Citizen and Bloom, not to mention a host of minor characters. The discourses of the counter-text are in no way uniform - varying from the legal (pp.377-378) through the Heroic (pp.378-380 and continuously throughout the section), the spiritualist (pp.389-390), the scientific (p.394), the academic (pp.403-404), the parliamentary (p.409), the sports journalist (pp.412-414), the elizabethan (pp.436-437), the religious (pp.440-442), and the biblical (p.449). Not that this list is in any way exhaustive, there are several passages which are extremely difficult to describe exactly, such as the marriage of Jean Wyse de Neaulan and Miss Fir Conifer (social-arboreal?) or the

26. James Joyce. Letter to Frank Budgen. 19 June 1919. Letters. vol.1. p.126.

enumeration of the beauties real and symbolic of the Citizen's handkerchief.

To see exactly how the section works, let us look at the following passage which occurs on page 385:

'And lo, as they quaffed their cup of joy, a godlike messenger came swiftly in, radiant as the eye of heaven, a comely youth, and behind him there passed an elder of noble gait and countenance, bearing the sacred scrolls of law, and with him his lady wife, a dame of peerless lineage, fairest of her race.

Little Alf Bergan popped in round the door and hid behind Barney's snug, squeezed up with the laughing, and who was sitting up there in the corner that I hadn't seen snoring drunk, blind to the world, only Bob Doran. I didn't know what was up and Alf kept making signs out of the door. And begob what was it only that bloody old pantaloon Denis Breen in his bath slippers with two bloody big books tucked under his oxter and the wife hotfoot after him, unfortunate wretched woman trotting like a poodle. I thought Alf would split.'

In these passages we can read two descriptions of the same event. We can see this more clearly if we rewrite the text in the following fashion:

1st text

And lo, as they quaffed
their cup of joy

a messenger

godlike, radiant as the
eye of heaven, a comely
youth

2nd text

(This takes up the Nameless
One's preceding lines)

Alf Bergan

little

<u>1st text</u>	<u>2nd text</u>
came in	popped in
swiftly	round the door
and behind him	(in the second text this is expanded in the section from 'squeezed' to 'door')
and behind him	And begob what was it only
an elder	Denis Breen
of noble countenance	that bloody old pantaloon.
of noble gait	in his bath slippers
bearing	with... tucked under his oxter.
the sacred scrolls of law	two bloody big books
and with him his lady wife	and the wife hotfoot after him
a dame of peerless lineage	unfortunate wretched woman
fairest of her race	trotting like a poodle

Ignoring for the moment that part of the second text which has no parallel in the first, what is at issue in this passage is not the truth or falsity of what is being said but the same event articulated in two different discourses which offer us different representations (different truths). Behind "an elder of noble gait and countenance" and "that bloody old pantaloon Denis Breen in his bath slippers" we can discern no pure object. Rather each object can only be identified in a discourse which already exists and that identification is dependent on the possible distinctions available in the discourse. Therefore "an elder of noble gait and countenance" can only mean something in relation to the other descriptions available within this heroic

discourse. As "that bloody old pantaloons etc" is not one such description, it cannot be said to contradict it. Similarly "that bloody old pantaloons" does not give us a direct access to some pure object existing independently of the human world but again only means something within the whole system of the discourse in relation to the other descriptions it is not.

But there is more to say than this. For we recognize these representations as representations of the same event. But where can we obtain this identity except through some third discourse which identifies both as inadequate representations of the same event which is adequately represented in this third discourse? This third discourse is the reader's own which is thus called into the play of the text. It is important to realise the crucial difference as to the point of insertion of this discourse in a text without origin (without an author). Whereas a realist text in a similar situation gives us the third discourse to explain the other two (thus the discourse charged with the narrative in Middlemarch explains the discourses of Mr Brooke and Mr Dagley) and which offers the reader a point at which his discourses can innocently enter the text, Joyce's text offers no such point of entry. It is within this perspective that we can read the whole joyous activity of the Cyclops sequence which takes up in turn these endlessly different ways of signifying the world and places them beside each other. This activity produces a certain lack of sense, a certain humour, which prevents us from ignoring the text in order to pass through to some given order of

reality. And as the object is thrown into the play of discourse so is the reading subject. For if the object is produced by the various positions and oppositions available within a given discourse, the positions that the 'I' can take up are equally limited. The ways in which the self can be identified and expressed in the discourse of the nameless one and the heroic discourse of the counter-text are as different as the objects produced by these discourses.

In its lack of a commanding position from which the reader can consume the discourses of the text, the Cyclops sequence involves the reader's own discourse on the same level as the other discourses of the text. Whereas the reader can enter the discourse of the realist text at an invited point (one could make a study of the interaction between the 'you' of the invitation at the beginning of the realist text and the 'we' that replaces it) and then leave it at an indicated point having consumed the content, the Cyclops sequence refuses this simple point of entry and exit. The realist text, in its assumption of a final language which effaces itself before an evident reality, leaves unquestioned, in a reciprocal movement, the reading subject which in the area outside inverted commas can grasp its own organisation in the absence of language.

It would be relevant here to consider the definition that Lacan gives of the written as opposed to the spoken word at the beginning of his essay "L'Instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient":

"L'écrit se distingue en effet par une prévalence du texte au sens qu'on va voir prendre ici à ce facteur du discours - ce qui y permet ce resserrement qui à mon gré ne doit laisser au lecteur d'autre sortie que son entrée, que je préfère difficile."²⁷

The difficulty of entry into a text is exactly the lack of an agreed representational language - an agreed level of truth established on the equivalence of position between author and reader. The subject always takes his own discourses to be simply representational and the lack of an agreed level where he can insert them will cause a difficulty which can be understood as laughter, fear or boredom. It is perhaps easiest to understand these trio of reactions by reference to the two experiential situations which produce the conditions of the subject before a written text. Firstly the child listening to his parents talk before he has finally mastered language. Secondly the analysand listening to his own discourses come back to him punctuated by the silence of the analyst.²⁸

In the development of the child there is a moment when the infant (infans - unable to speak) learns a language. In this

27. Jacques Lacan. op.cit. p.493. "The written distinguishes itself in effect by a prevalence of text, in the sense one is going to see accrue to this factor of discourse, - and this permits the tightening which according to my inclination would not leave the reader any other exit than his entry which I prefer to be difficult."

28. The argument that follows summarises an article by Luce Irigaray entitled "Communications linguistique et spéculaire" in Cahiers pour l'Analyse no.3. Mai-Juin 1966, pp.39-55. See also Kristeva, Le Texte du Roman pp.81-85.

process of learning he becomes aware of certain places which he or she (as subject) can occupy - these are the points of insertion into language. Crucially this involves the learning of pronouns: the realisation that the 'you' the child uses to address the father or the mother can be permutated with an 'I' in a situation from which it is excluded - when the parents speak to each other. This realisation comes with the realisation that the 'you' with which he (or she) is addressed can be permutated with a 'he' (or 'she') - which is the possibility that the proper name is articulated in a set of differences - and that the child is only a signifier constantly defined by a set of substitution relations. The binary 'I'-'you' relation is transformed from two terms into a relational structure by the passage through the empty place of the 'he' (or 'she') - and it is through the experience of this empty place that the child learns language. The passing through this empty place is the necessary experience of exclusion which is essential to the proper control of language and the experience of this exclusion is the experience of death.²⁹ It is this which gives discourse its fearsome quality because it involves at the linguistic level a castration - a narcissistic wound which must be submitted to if one is to accede^{de} to the adult world. As well as the experience of fear, however, the child can experience a discourse in which he or she is uncertain of

29. For the necessity of this exclusion for the construction of any infinite series see Jacques-Alain Miller "La Suture" in Cahiers pour L'Analyse no.1. Janvier 1966, pp.37-49.

his or her place as boredom (when the child gives up trying to understand) or as laughter (when the child takes as significant relations which are not allowed by the discourse). When the substitution rules have been mastered the child finds itself divided between two worlds - the world of the énonciation, where he or she is constantly in play as signifier - and the world of the énoncé, where he or she is constantly in place.

The classic realist text constantly tries to ignore the énonciation in order to stay in the world of the énoncé. Firmly established in their interchangeability, the text attempts to repress the pronouns as relations and assert them as absolute terms. It thus attempts to give itself an origin, outside a systematic substitutability, in a fixed set of exchanges. The realist text generates itself by the same process of circulation through an empty term which we have identified in the child's mastery of language. This empty term is the 'it' of the narration and the result of the passage through "it" is that the realist text has the power to name i.e. to designate. The realist text, however, wishes to take this 'it' as full, as the origin that provides the text with its reality ("It happened that..."). Histoire is firmly divorced from discours and when the two become equivalent (as they must for there to be an end) it is simply because a character has given up illusions, his or her discours, in order to face reality.

Joyce's text in its emphasis on writing refuses the

possibility of any origin and therefore histoire falls back into discours as the text refuses to give us any fixed substitution rules. One of the results of this loss of a masterful 'it', is that the text loses the power to confer names. It is no accident that the story is told by the Nameless One and that all of the characters appear predominantly as initials or as nicknames, rather than as proper names.

It is the possibility to name the object that characterises the realist text and it is this same power which allows it to create a character - donate a proper name. It is in the immediacy of these objects and characters that we ignore the structure of language and take the subject as given. By ignoring language as structure, the subject denies his or her own limits, but at the same time accepts them. The subject is, at one and the same time, dominant in his or her 'presence' in the world and 'subjected' through the already fixed positions allotted to him or her and his or her experience by the structuring action of language ("Structure donc: ce qui met en place une expérience pour le sujet qu'elle inclut.")³⁰ Ulysses through its refusal of any definite set of objects - and fixed identities - glories in its investigation of language as structure. The result of this attention to structure is to displace the subject as the

30. Jacques-Alain Miller "Action de la Structure" in Cahiers pour L'Analyse no.9. Eté 1968. p.95. "Structure is that which puts in place an experience for a subject which it includes"

founding source of its world - a 'presence' - and thus to remove it from its condition of subjection and to allow the reader to take up many contradictory positions. It is this liberation of the subject from this condition of subjection that constitutes the burst of laughter that marks the joke and, if one remembers Freud's comparison of the joke and the dream as similar psychic products,³¹ then one could say that Ulysses is the joke to Finnegans Wake's dream. The importance of this laughter in Ulysses can be gauged by the attention to the laugh produced by Stephen in the schoolroom sequence. The laugh is produced by a riddle. The structure of a riddle is another way of producing the uncertainty of identities experienced in the Cyclops sequence. Stephen's reaction to it is a burst of "nervous laughter" (p.32) which in its "dismay" marks the extent to which he is still subjected: "Secrets, silent, stony sit in the dark ^aplaces of both our hearts: secrets weary of their tyranny: tyrants willing to be dethroned." (p.34) This de-throning (the liberation of the subject - the liberation of the signifier) is achieved for the reader in the text by a de-construction of any origin (any author) for the text which could establish the text as a representation passing between two identities. Thus the reader is cast unprepared into the text (as the child before the parent's conversation) uncertain of what position, if any, is to be allocated to it. Experience of fear, laughter and boredom.

31. "... the dream-work operates by the same methods as jokes, but in its use of them it transgresses the limits that are respected by jokes." Sigmund Freud. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works. vol.8. p.173.

The specific textual practices which produce this lack of identity are too numerous to catalogue in detail but, in addition, to the simple juxtaposition of two descriptions of the same event, one could notice the use of lists within the text. On page 424 we are informed by the Nameless One of the danger of Ireland being de-forested and Lenehan says "Europe has its eyes on you." Starting from the double sense of this phrase (taken literally it can be taken to mean that Europe is looking at Ireland's forests and whether England is ruining them and taken in the sense of the social cliché 'the eyes of the world were on Hollywood tonight for the all star premiere...') it can be understood to mean that Ireland's trees are at the centre of Europe's social world) the text marries together two separate sets of distinctions. The discourse of the forest and the discourse of the society columns are joined together to produce the wedding of "the chevalier Jean Wyse de Neaulan, grand high chief ranger of the Irish National Foresters, with Miss Fir Conifer of Pine Valley." In this whole passage with its extensive guest list, a certain vocabulary which forms a very specific whole, that of the forest and all the trees in it, is grafted onto the form of a social column.

We can perhaps best grasp the 'shock' we feel on reading Joyce's list of trees by contrasting it with how George Eliot employs the vocabulary of trees in the following passage:

"Brackenshaw Park, where the Archery Meeting was held, looked out from its gentle heights far over

the neighbouring valley to the outlying eastern downs and the broad slow rise of cultivated country hanging like a vast curtain towards the west. The castle, which stood on the highest platform of the clustered hills, was built of rough-hewn limestone, full of lights and shadows made by the dark dust of lichens and the washings of the rain. Masses of beech and fir sheltered it on the north and spread down here and along the green slopes like flocks seeking the water which gleamed below."³²

In this passage 'beech and fir' are simply part of an extensive list and this list functions, in its catalogue of obvious identities, as a guarantee of an evident external reality which is being revealed in the book and exists independently of the book's written existence. The activity of writing as the production of a set of meanings is effaced to become simple representation, the rendering of identities existing independently of language. 'Beech and fir' in their solid particularity guarantee the neutrality and transparency of the writing. Joyce's list functions in almost exactly the opposite manner. First of all its completeness, by including all trees, ruins the particularity of the identities. 'Beech and fir' work through their exclusion of other possibilities but in Joyce's text there are no possibilities which are excluded and with this overload of sense we fall into nonsense.³³ Instead of the identities shining

32. George Eliot Daniel Deronda. Vol.1. pp.144-145.

33. One might say that nonsense is the way of talking or writing which is always drawing attention to its own status. This is true from the Cretan Liar onwards.

through and effacing the writing, the progressive adding of more and more identities achieves the opposite effect. Our attention is directed to the way in which the writing is acting as a producer of meaning rather than as a picture of an unconstituted reality. Representation gives way to production.

But Joyce's text draws attention to its activity as a producer of sense in a second way. For the content of the list (the trees) is enumerated within a different form (the society column). This transposition of languages, this confusing of form and content, refuses to allow us to ignore the words and merely pass through them to some given reality. The words no longer serve as a passage between two moments of full presence (the object and consciousness) but instead interrogate the reader's consciousness through the attention that is paid to the reality of the discourses ^{which} exist prior to any individual subjectivities or objects. "But the world, mind, is, was and will be writing its own runes for ever, man, on all matters that fall under the ban of our infrarational senses" (19.35/20.1).

The divisions we can create in language are always already made as are the positions that can be taken up by the subject. It is in this respect that we can consider the practice of listing which is constant throughout the Cyclops. To list is precisely to apply a set of identities to the world and it is the power of language to produce lists, to set up a set of divisions which is the power to produce a world for the senses. The lists within the

text are all in some sense ruined; deprived of their ability to disappear and reveal the world. Instead it is writing which dominates the scene. The continuous setting up of differences, the endless production of identities and sense - it is this which constitutes the text of the Cyclops. It is worthwhile in the context of this chapter to look back at the original version of the Cyclops which appeared in The Little Review ^{from} ~~in~~ November 1919 ^{to} and March 1920. Practically every list that appears in The Little Review text is expanded for the final book publication. We can best grasp this process by looking at the list provided to describe the images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity. In the original version the list preserves the opposition Irish and non-Irish in the list: 'Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, Brian of Kincara, the Ardri Malachi, Art MacMurragh, Shane O'Neill, Father John Murphy, Own Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Dom Philip O'Sullivan Beare'³⁴ When we get to Ulysses the list has increased to nearly a 100 names and its ability to function as a list is ruined by the inclusion of 'Patrick W. Shakespeare', 'Goliath', 'Herodotus' among numerous others (p.383). This ruination of the immediacy of the object allows, in the appearance of language as structure, the liberation of the reading subject from the positions in which he is subjected in his own discourses. I have already talked of the way in which Ulysses is no longer concerned with representation but with montage - and it should now be clear that montage involves,

34. The Little Review. November 1919. vol.6. no.7. p.42.

as the essential motor component of its effects, the discourse of the reader.

This dynamic effect of the reader's discourse is achieved because the text offers no moment of entry for the reader's discourse - no fixed position from which to consume the discourses of the text. Caught as it were between the various discourse of the text, the reader's own discourse slips and slides as it takes up endlessly new relations with the discourses surrounding it. Corresponding to this lack of an entry to the Cyclops there is also a lack of an exit - a lack of a moment of closure in which the various discourses of the text are grasped and explained. If we look simply at the story related by the Nameless One, this lack of closure becomes obvious. Within the text of the Nameless One there are two main discourses, two main areas of representation and meaning. There is the discourse of the Nameless One which identifies everything in terms of malicious motives and hypocritical actions and there is the language of the Citizen which identifies everything in terms of Ireland. There is a certain expectation that either the narrative text or Bloom (our hero) will explain and reveal the mistakes that the Citizen and the Nameless One are making and will thus reveal the true nature of things. But, if we look at the physical end of the sequence, we can see this closure refused through a multiplicity of discourses. Throughout the section the juxtaposition of discourses has undermined any single discourse within the text. But in the final paragraph this

mutual subversion of discourses is carried over from the paragraph to the sentence. At the very end of the sequence the language of the Nameless One and the prophetic language of the explanatory text are placed side by side in the same sentence; "And he answered with a main cry: Abba! Adonai! And they beheld Him even Him, ^bBen Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel." (p.449). No discourse within the text is even given the privilege of physically ending it. Rather than offer us a definition of the discourses within the text - this juxtaposition throws us back to the ceaseless interplay of relations which is produced by the reader's discourse acting on the text.

But if the narrative discourse can offer no position for the reader's discourse (where the narrative discourse itself holds no fixed position), our hero Leopold might be expected to do the job. But Bloom's discourses, related by the Nameless One, reproduce the montage of discourses within the whole sequence. For Bloom, unlike the Citizen and the Nameless One, is not caught up within one dominant discourse but rather takes pleasure in as many discourses as are available. Thus, in the brief time he is in the pub he enters into the discourse of science (p.394), and of law (p.405), as well as the discourses of Irish nationalism (p.410) and human compassion (p.416). And Bloom, entering into the play of languages, cannot erect a fixed representation of the world which will explain the other languages. When asked to

define what life really is he comes out with "Love, says Bloom, I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now..." (p.432). Bloom refuses to stay to define the identity of life, to represent and to fix it. What is opposed to the violence of the citizen (based as it is on a fixed representation of the world) and the verbal violence of the Nameless One (based equally on a certain fixed meaning given to all actions and events) is the joyful entering into the various ways of signifying world and self. This is both Bloom's activity in the text and the activity of the reader in reading the text.

This insistence on a dominant discourse can be linked specifically to violence. The Citizen's violence in the text arises from the misunderstanding of Bloom's remark to Bantam Lyons that he was just going to throw his newspaper away. This remark on Gold Cup Day can only be given one interpretation, one identity, by the betting fraternity of Dublin. It can only be seen in one way and it is this fixed interpretation that leads to violence. The Cyclops section is that part of Ulysses which is concerned with the eye and with sight. What we realise as we read through the endless juxtaposition of various discourses is that the world we see is determined by the discourses we speak. Our senses and our sense are one. If we return to the passage already discussed when Denis Breen passes the pub it will be seen that there are some actions (Bob Doran asleep in the snug and Alf Bergan laughing at him) which cannot be seen by the heroic language. But there is no discourse which sees everything, no discourse which will reveal

the world in some pure state. And it is action based on the idea of some final fixed reality which is allied in the Cyclops (as elsewhere in Ulysses) with violence and intolerance.

The contrast between the Citizen's use of lists and parodies within the narrative of the Nameless One and the use of lists and parodies within the 'counter-text', reveals the links between the fixing of an object and a subject and the eruption of violence. The Citizen reads out one list and one parody (pp.384-5 and pp.434-5). But both the list and the parody are immediately placed within the fixed area of representation which constitutes the Citizen's world - this is, of course, the perfidy of England and the glory of Ireland. The list of births, marriages and deaths in the Irish Independent represents only the English domination of Ireland. Similarly the parody in the United Irishman is read in relation to the same fixed reality. Bloom threatens the area of the Citizen's representation because he cannot be identified. Is he a Jew or an Irishman? And it is this difficulty of identity that creates violence for, in the threat to the Citizen's area of representation, Bloom poses a threat to the Citizen himself. If the object disappears then in a reciprocal movement the subject is displaced. The struggle against this displacement is the very root of violence.

Destroying correspondence, disrupting coherence and subverting any possible origin, Joyce's texts open a certain distance within the reading subject. This distance, this otherness

is what allows a certain access to the feminine. These methods of subverting the reading subject suggest that Joyce's texts can be considered as the novelistic equivalent of a Brechtian drama. It is interesting that, independently, both of them turned to the term 'epic' to describe their work. Not that epic should primarily be understood as a positive term. In fact it functions as a negative moment in a constant struggle against classic realism and narration, against origin, coherence and correspondence and for a discontinuous movement which constantly distances the subject from any identification. It is in this perspective we can understand the relative lack of interest of both Exiles and Joyce's poetry. In them there is an insufficient separation of the elements - an origin is all too insistent. One can, however, indulge for a moment in a fantasy - Exiles produced by Brecht while in Denmark in 1938, in exile and working on novels, - that indeed might have been interesting!

CHAPTER 6

CITY OF WORDS, STREETS OF DREAMS:

THE VOYAGE OF ULYSSES

Ulysses is a voyage through meaning - a voyage through all the discourses available in English in 1904. As Bloom and Stephen move through Dublin so the writing moves through the city of words that is English. And in this attention to discourses it is not simply the reality produced by these discourses that is in question but the desire that speaks through them. In my analysis of George Eliot's texts I attempted to show how the appeal to a final meta-discourse (which gave directly onto reality) was linked to an attempt to deny the existence of desire in a quest for a final oneness. It was suggested that one way of reading these neurotic texts was to take those moments where the main discourse broke down and to use those fissures to read back through the text disrupting that evident meta-discourse. This disruption has the effect of removing any position in which the reading subject can place himself unawares and innocent in the consumption of reality and replaces it with a variety of discourses with no fixed position for the reading subject. The process of reading then becomes an active operation by the reader in which the reader's discourses and those of the text meet to produce new discourses in which the subject's place is no longer assured.

In Joyce's texts this work of disruption is already accomplished for the reader and in the attention paid to the material fact of language we have both the fragmentation of a

fixed reality and the possibility of desire 'speaking' through this fragmentation. But what it may be demanded is desire? Desire can be defined (after Lacan) as neither a need which is satisfied by an object (thus hunger and food) nor a demand which is addressed to an other (thus the demand for love which can be answered). Rather it is a relation to phantasy which is the space instituted by language where the subject cannot grasp himself:

"Il n'y a pas un inconscient parce qu'il y aurait un désir inconscient, obtus, lourd, caliban, voire animal, désir inconscient levé des profondeurs qui serait primitif et aurait à s'élever au niveau supérieur du conscient. Bien au contraire, il y a un désir parce qu'il y a de l'inconscient c'est-à-dire du langage qui échappe au sujet dans sa structure et ses effets et qu'il y a toujours au niveau du langage quelque chose qui est au-delà de la conscience et c'est là que peut se situer la fonction du désir"¹

1. Jacques Lacan. "Psychanalyse et Médecine" in Lettres de l'Ecole Freudienne. no.1. p.45. quoted by Moustafa Safouan art. cit. pp.252-253. "There is not an unconscious because then there would be an unconscious desire which was obtuse, heavy, caliban-like even animal-like, an unconscious desire lifted up from the depths which would be primitive and would have to educate itself to the superior level of consciousness. Completely on the contrary, there is desire because there is unconsciousness - that's to say language which escapes the subject in its structure and its effects and there is always at the level of language something which is beyond consciousness and it is there that one can situate the function of desire".

In those stages which are used to characterise the small infant's development - that familiar trio of the oral, the anal and the phallic - the central question is one of separation - the separation from the breast, the faeces, the phallus. It is these separations which allow language to function, and as a necessary corollary, desire to run its endless course. If we consider the small infant in the first stage of his development, we can postulate the child as initially experiencing two states of being - one of satisfaction at the breast and one of dissatisfaction which finds animal expression in the cry. It is in the moment when the infant correlates the cry with the experience of dissatisfaction and its abolition that the cry ceases to be a signal and becomes a sign (whose meaning is defined diacritically with the possibility of not crying). But the correlation of the cry with the experience of dissatisfaction and its abolition is exactly the identification of the breast as an object in the control of an other. As object - that is to say as a perpetual play of presence and absence. And it is with this play we enter into the world of desire. Desire not here to be confused with the pleasure of union with the breast (the state of satisfaction and a minimum of tension), but the desire for an object which can bring about the abolition of dissatisfaction. Insofar as it is an object - that is to say a play of presence and absence - it will be desired again even in the experience of the abolition of need. The aim of the body is no longer a constant minimum of tension but the maximum and its discharge in a never-ending chain. The setting up of the world

of communication - of demand - is also the setting up of the unconscious - of desire. Desire is that which rests over and above any demand and which is indeed, to use Lacan's term, completely "excentric"² to consciousness. In this respect, desire is not centred like demand in the needs of the subject and, indeed, is not centred at all, but occurs as the movement along the chain of differences that constitute the recognition and abolition of need through the world of demand.

The representational text, or rather, the text that wishes itself representational attempts to elide the virtuality of language and desire and to allow reality to appear directly outside a play of difference. As communication between two subjects, reader and writer, the text attempts to treat language as pure transparency. Outside the constitutive process of separation it wishes to treat language and reality as separate. It is insofar as this process of separation makes itself felt (as anxiety) that the text is neurotic. It is insofar as separation has been hidden successfully that the text can glory in its own self-possession - in its undoubted command of a founding consciousness. This self-possession (as we shall see) is predicated on the possession of the power of the phallus - a possession conferred by a radical misrecognition of sexual difference. The Buck, as his name implies, stands for a phallic world that can ignore the possibility of difference

2. cf. Jacques Lacan. Ecrits. p.11.

because it is sure of its possession of the phallus. His phallic smile, "his white glittering teeth" (p.5) contrasts with "Toothless Kinch" (p.27); Stephen with a mouthful of rotting teeth. The realm of the Buck is also marked as the realm of communication - not simply in his easy rhyming poetry and facile conversation but explicitly when the text identifies him with Mercury, the God of communication (p.23).

Stephen, however, cannot accede^{de} to this realm because he is still caught in relation to his mother. If separation is the crucial factor in the working of desire, it is exactly this separation that Stephen is unable to operate. The separation from the mother is the essential moment in the structure of the Oedipus complex which Freud theorized as the determining factor in the transformation of small human animals into men and women.³ If, in the first instance, the male child in its position of dependence constantly asks itself why it is loved by the mother, then it is also at this stage that he constantly attempts to fit himself to her desires. Insofar as her desire is unconscious, this attempt is an attempt to mould himself to what she asks him to be - to her demands. It is with the recognition of sexual difference that the child understands what he is loved for - he is the phallus that the mother lacks; together they make one. But simultaneously, in a logically distinct moment,

3. Although Freud originally postulated a simple reversal of the Oedipus complex for women, cf. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works vol.4. p.257., later in his life he saw that the attachment to and separation from the mother was perhaps the most important factor in the development of the female psyche as well cf. vol. 19 pp.249-251 and vol.21. pp.225-227.

he recognises that the mother's desires are organised in terms of the father and the father is thus seen as being the phallus (and thus a rival). If the mother is now understood to be fundamentally lacking in her being - thus her love for the child and the father - the father is understood as a full presence, as the cause of his own desire that is to say the phallus incarnate. It is at the third stage when the child realises that the father's desire is also organised in terms of a lack, that he too possesses an unconscious and has undergone a symbolic castration that the element of hate enters. He hates the father because he is not the full presence that he promised to be. Popular accounts that the child sees himself as the rival of the father reduce the significant feature of the third stage of the Oedipus. For insofar as the father is a rival they are both endowed with the phallus; it is because the father is not the promised cause of his own desire that the child hates him. It is at this third and final stage when the child admits that he can never become an omnipotent creature that he submits to a symbolic castration which entails the end of the Oedipus complex. When this possibility is realised, he introjects an ego ideal which contains, as its central core, the lack in being which constitutes us as speaking and desiring animals. This lack in being is also the fundamental recognition of the otherness of the other - never the full mirror image of ourselves. Further this introjection involves the taking up of those previously deeply felt separations - the oral and the

anal.⁴ This third stage, however, remains for us, caught in a patriarchal society, only a partially realised possibility. A possibility which finds its fullest realisation in those writers and thinkers who mark the end of an era characterised by Derrida as phallogocentric,⁵ but who realise this possibility at the risk of madness.⁶ Insofar as the third stage remains only a partially realised one for us, it is to a further understanding of the first and second stages that we must return to understand the process that is the writing of Ulysses.

If we consider that moment of startling significance in the life of the young boy (a moment to whose importance all the experience of psycho-analysis testifies) when he realises that the woman does not have a penis we can understand the relations between the first and second stages of the Oedipus complex. In order to grasp the fact of absence, the child must place this absence in an interplay with the presence of his own penis. But to do this is to admit the possibility of the absence of the penis - to accept the penis as signifier (the phallus). But insofar as the small boy is not willing to consider the possibility of the absence of the penis, he must deny the phallus

4. In the initial part of the phallic phase the penis serves as a cover for the earlier losses as Freud suggests in his remarks on the dissolution of the Oedipus complex op.cit. vol. 19. p.175.

5. Jacques Derrida. "Entretien avec Derrida." La Quinzaine Littéraire du 16 au 30 Nov. 1972. p.16.

6. Joyce said of Ulysses "... c'était terriblement risqué, ce livre. Une feuille transparente le sépare de la folie." Jacques Mercanton Les Heures de James Joyce p.46.

as signifier and turn it into a perpetual signified. To attempt to be the phallus the mother lacks is the neurotic condition. Representation is the same movement which is inaugurated by the fixing of the signifier for the subject in a perpetual signified. But this fixing of the signified frustrates the movement of desire for there is now no absent object which can be desired. The fetishist, to overcome the fixity however, inaugurates desire by the replacement of the mother's penis. It is because the fetishist admits the absence of the object, that his desire can focus on its replacement - the fetish. The neurotic is caught in a repression of the signifier - constantly trying to define himself in terms of the mother's desire. However because this desire always remains opaque, it is experienced by the neurotic, as a desire for demand. The fetishist while he admits the possibility of lack admits of it only externally as the reflection on his own secure possession. For Freud the prototype of the fetish was the man's own penis.⁷ This fetishism which is, in some sense, the normal conclusion of the Oedipus in our patriarchal society corresponds to the introjection of a phallic ego-ideal where the father functions as pure cause of his own desire. The rejection of the third stage of the Oedipal process occurs at the moment at which various remote objects are designated with phallic authority

7. Sigmund Freud. op.cit. vol.21, p.157.

in the face of the evident failure of the biological father.⁸

If we return to our characterisation of the setting up of the world of communication and the unconscious, of demand and desire, we can make some attempt to characterise the three stages of the Oedipus in terms of various relations of the speaking subject to language. The neurotic attempting vainly to unite himself with the mother threatens to abolish the world of demand and thus of desire (Freud, if he teaches only one thing, teaches us that desire, to be desire must have a limit - the desire of the mother is that limitless desire that spells the frustration of desire). It can thus be said that the neurotic is always speechless (the job of the analyst is exactly that of furnishing the patient, from the patient's own discourse, with the material for his desire to speak). The phallic world is the world of communication where because desire is under control (he who has the phallus controls desire) so is demand. Language is reduced to the pure meeting of minds (provided those minds have bodies similarly endowed - women, of

8. "What happened, therefore, was that the boy refused to take cognizance of the fact of his having perceived that a woman does not possess a penis. No, that could not be true: for if a woman had been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger; and against that there rose in rebellion the portion of his narcissism which Nature has, as a precaution, attached to that particular organ. In later life a grown man may perhaps experience a similar panic when the cry goes up that Throne and Altar are in danger, and similar illogical consequences will ensue." *ibid.* p.153 (my emphasis)

course, are rigorously excluded from this world).⁹ It is the pervert (the other side of neurosis - the possibility of escape) who moves constantly between language as communication and as system. Aware of the reality of the other, of women, the pervert is condemned to submit to a circulation of signifiers, phantasy, in which his position is never assured and in which he experiences language as system. Insofar as from this experience he can find a place of rest he will rejoin the world of communication, insofar as he fails he will sink beneath the waves of psychosis.

Stephen, in the opening of the book, is caught between the first and second stages. While on the one hand he wishes to accede to the phallic world of communication, he is unable to, except it may be noticed under the influence of drink. "The sacred pint alone can unbind the tongue of Dedalus" (p.21), says Mulligan, and throughout Ulysses drink provides the access to a male world of communication. It is the mother which lies as a barrier across his access to the world of communication which renders Stephen speechless. Insofar as Stephen feels himself the subject of his mother's desire he cannot believe in the father as self-sufficient cause and fulfilment of desire. Only by undertaking the voyage of writing can he create room for his desire to speak - that desire of which he knows nothing.

9. Emblematically one could recall those Platonic dialogues which provide the starting point of Western thought and from which women are rigorously excluded. "Since, then, we have come to this decision," said Eryximachus, "that each man shall drink merely as much as he chooses, and that there shall be no compulsion, I propose in addition that we should send away the flute-girl who has just come in - let her play to herself or, if she likes, to the women of the household - and entertain ourselves today with conversation." Symposium 176e.

The opening of the book finds him still struggling to be that full presence which constitutes neurosis. On the beach he talks of "Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot" (p.45) and the whole of the opening three chapters are a process of reading the signatures from the history lessons, the mathematical symbols, and Mr Deasy's letter about foot and mouth disease. The signatures, however, are conceived as presenting some full meaning which his full "I" can decipher. But it is exactly this full 'I' which can know nothing of writing - of the experience of lack and difference. Thus the poem that Stephen writes on the beach is invisible. For within this section writing exists only as repressed possibility: an insistence on materiality and difference, absence and lack which, in its return will disrupt the clear subjectivity of this section and make desire possible.

For the reader, as for Stephen, the dominance of the speaking or reading subject is, in this section, total. Language is purely an instrument of communication and it is in the necessity to displace the speaking and reading subject that the voyage is undertaken. The full presence is first broken by the change in the method of reading. Bloom, like Stephen, spends the majority of his introductory chapters reading. The advertisements for the farm at Kinnereth, Milly's letter, Matchan's masterstroke, Ruby: the pride of the Ring, the Plumtree advertisement, the multicoloured hoardings, Martha's letter - the list is very long.

What is significant for our purposes is that the reading is, as it were, a reading at double remove - we are placed in the situation of reading through reading. This fact is brought to our attention by the move from Stephen to Bloom. Where with one set of discourses we can settle ourselves in a fixed position, two reveal system rather than position, discourse rather than subject.

This displacement is accentuated at the first moment when the two discourses cross each other in the newspaper office. What is important in this meeting of discourses is those phenomena of repetition which are crucial within the text of Ulysses and which constitute the constant insistence of the text as written - as a set of traces that can be constantly re-worked. In the opening six episodes there are many examples of repetition. For instance Bloom reads the letter from Milly twice, once briefly (p.75) and once at length (pp.79-80). The repetitions in these chapters retain the same significant oppositions in both versions - the same discourse prevails. Although the letter is expanded, it is expanded without altering the position of the reader. If we turn to the Aeolus section we find that the repetition in question is of a different order:

"SOPHIST WALLOPS HAUGHTY HELEN SQUARE ON PROBOSCIS.

SPARTANS GNASH MOLARS. ITHACANS VOW PEN IS CHAMP.

-You remind me of Antisthenes, the professor said, a disciple of Gorgias, the sophist. It is said of him that none could tell if he were bitterer against

others or against himself. He was the son of a noble and a bondwoman. And he wrote a book in which he took away the palm of beauty from Argive Helen and handed it to poor Penelope. Poor Penelope. Penelope Rich. They made ready to cross O'Connell street." (p.188)

In this passage the repetition brings something new into play. If we investigate the constitution of this novelty more closely, we can perhaps understand the way in which the reading subject can no longer hold himself in a position of dominance with regard to his discourses. The confident 'I' of communication - the analogue of phallic security - disappears to allow something else to speak. This something else is discourse out of control of a subject - desire which in its radical otherness strikes at the heart of our narcissistic constitution. The original newspaper headline is written within one set of significant oppositions (those of popular journalism) and repeated in another (those of classical scholarship). The phenomenon recalls those practices that we saw at work in the Cyclops section and one can notice the same effect - that is to say that the subject can no longer take himself as in a founding position outside the discourses but rather that he is articulated within them. It is in the newspaper office that the reading subject is prevented from innocently taking up a fixed position; rather he is caught in the sudden juxtaposition and interplay of discourses. And this interplay of discourses is the activity of the writing of the text. The act of writing is no longer hidden in the copying down of an already written (reality) but is rather the active investigation of the subject's

position. With this insistence of writing the poem that Stephen wrote on the beach can make its appearance (p.168). The dominance of the subject has been replaced by the dominance of the signifier (the sets of significant oppositions). The extent to which the subject has been displaced from his situation of dominance can be gauged when on page 177 we suddenly read:

"I have often thought since on looking back over that strange time that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives."

With this sentence we find a perfect example of a controlling meta-discourse in which the subject can treat language as pure transparency. Caught up as it is, however, in the intertwining discourses of Joyce's text, it demonstrates nothing except its own structure - the structure of a control that the text is in the process of dissolving.

In the newspaper office, this activity of writing is explicitly contrasted with the paralysis imposed by the newspaper's discourse. Bloom, as he stands behind the foreman and watches the presses turning, thinks:

"Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew how to stop them they'd clank on and on the same, print it over and over and up and back." (p.151)

This theme of paralysis is continued when Myles Crawford tries

to tempt Stephen into using his writing talents in the newspaper, with the promise that together they will paralyse Europe (p.172). The discourse of popular journalism with its evident reality and obvious position for the reading subject is exactly a discourse of paralysis. And it is this paralysis which is Dublin, stuck in the nauseous repetition of stereotypes.¹⁰

The text itself, in its activity as writing, offers an alternative to this paralysis and with this activity we begin a set of constant references to Joyce as writer. These self-references can be seen in the passage already quoted where Stephen is equated with Antisthenes who gave the palm of beauty to Penelope. Joyce himself is not hidden behind the text (in the anonymity of a copier of reality), but emerges as one of the humorous references within the text. For this reason we get caught up in an endless set of deferred terms - Joyce is the writer who is writing the text so that the text will produce the writer who can write the text and so on. The stream of consciousness techniques must not be understood as the representation of some final reality but, as Joyce told Gilbert, the bridge across which he could march his troops¹¹ - the troops in question being so many different discourses.

10. The whole of the Aeolus sequence contains several references to Dubliners. Gabriel Conroy crops up on page 159 and the parable of the plums asks to be included as one of the stories of spiritual paralysis.

11. Stuart Gilbert. James Joyce's Ulysses. p.28.

The opening section of Ulysses from the Telemachus to Hades can be read as the presentation of two subjectivities, two different patterns of language, two different texts. Just as Aristotle, Swift, Shakespeare and others circulate in Stephen's mind providing the sentences with which he experiences the world and himself, so Bloom's mind is composed of snatches of the planter's handbill, Matcham's masterstroke and popularising scientific works. Joyce made this point when Valéry Larbaud, then in the process of translating Ulysses, asked him if quotations should go between quotation marks. Joyce replied that "the fewer quotation marks the better" and that even without them the reader "will know early in the book that S.D.'s mind is full like everyone else's of borrowed words."¹² The process by which consciousness is demonstrated as a constant articulation rather than an originating moment can be seen by looking again at the reference to Antisthenes. First used by Professor MacHugh it gets taken up by Stephen on p.310 and p.638.

There is a contradiction in the fact that Stephen the artist wants to write from a fixed position, for this fixed position is incompatible with writing itself. This can be clearly seen in the Scylla and Charybdis section. Stephen is constantly trying to fix his 'I' in a stable énoncé but énonciation keeps multiplying the instances of the pronoun

12. James Joyce. Letter to Valéry Larbaud. 4 June 1928. Letters. Vol.1. p.263.

beyond any such stable state. (p.242). Symmetrically he is attempting to fix Shakespeare in a certain position in his texts so that the texts become communication or representations of Shakespeare's life. Finally he gets caught in contradictory statements and laughs' to free his mind from his mind's bondage" (p.272) in that same laugh which is engendered by the contradictory positions for the reader within the text of Ulysses. It is with this laugh that he abandons the attempt to locate Shakespeare's writing from a fixed authorial position and instead considers him as the movement of difference that constitutes the plays. Shakespeare is no longer the controlling subject representing a separate realm but is the fugitive subject articulated from character to character:

"He is all in all.
 - He is, Stephen said. The boy of act one is the mature man of act five. All in all. In Cymbeline, in Othello he is bawd and cuckold. He acts and is acted on. Lover of an ideal or a perversion, like Jose he kills the real Carmen. His unremitting intellect is the hornmad Iago ceaselessly willing that the moor in him shall suffer." (p.272-273)¹³

Stephen wishes to enter the realm of communication but remains barred from it - aware through the pull of the mother of the radical insufficiency of the father. But insofar as the

13. William T. Noon S.J., not perhaps surprisingly, sees this moment as evidence of Stephen's failure because he cannot hold apart Father and Son, Creator and Image - see Joyce and Aquinas. ch.6 especially pp.123-124. Noon is correct to hold that art becomes impossible at this point, and with art religion, but it is at that same conjuncture that writing begins.

mother's demands hold sway over him he is constantly being forced to find a father. He is thus still searching to find the self sufficient cause of desire, even though, as his theory of Shakespeare shows, he is aware that in order to be a "lord of language" (p.251) it is necessary to be wounded "there where love lies ableding." (p.252).

Mulligan with his rhymes and phallic imagery¹⁴ stands as one example of the world of communication, the singers in the Ormond Bar are another. They (in the world of voices) are opposed by Bloom the writer - an opposition which is given explicit sexual point by the use of membranes within the text. Bloom, as he sits writing in the dining room, is contrasted with Ben Dollard who is singing. But whereas the singer will enter the body of another with his voice (in the same movement that Boylan is accomplishing with Molly), the writer receives his pleasure in the constant losing and finding of himself. If the voice and the phallus constantly find a mirror confronting them, the writer finds his own other. Those who wish to burst the membrane - Dollard and Boylan - are contrasted with Bloom and the reader who play on the surface of the text which sends back a message always different from the one that was originally sent.

14. The phallic nature of Gogarty's relation with Joyce can be seen in the account James F. Carens gives of their friendship in "Joyce and Gogarty" in New Light on Joyce from the Dublin symposium. ed. Fritz Senn pp.28-45. In particular one might notice the description of the letter containing the Song of Medical Dick and Medical Davy. pp.33-34.

On page 348 we find the following passage:

" - 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."

The link between the tympanum and the hymen is here made explicit by Simon Dedalus and is contrasted with the attitude of Bloom to the membrane constituted by the page which is specified as being vellum - parchment made from skin in its original sense¹⁵ - and which is compared to the hymen in the following terms:

"Blank face. Virgin should say: or fingered only. Write something on it: page." (p.368)

Bloom's desire is to write on the page rather than burst through it for Bloom too has had to face up to the radical insufficiency

15. The word vellum seems also to give a reference to velum. This word, in English, refers to the membrane on the soft palate which is an important factor in our production of sound. More tendentiously, through its etymology (Latin velum - a sail) the word links up to the constant reference to 'sails' and 'veils' in the text. The French word 'voile' which translates both meanings is of extreme importance for Mallarmé. Indeed the whole cluster of wave, sea, siren, veil imagery suggests that the whole of the Sirens could be read as a prolonged meditation on the similarities suggested by Mallarmé between writing and the sexual act. Such a reading would have to start from Robert Greer Cohn's magnificent Mallarmé's Un Coup de Des. Over and above the fascinating reading of Mallarmé, this book provides some most searching comments on Finnegans Wake.

of his father through Virag's suicide. Unable to support a simple phallic ego ideal, Bloom has to allow his desire to circulate along a wider movement of signifiers, along elaborate phantasies. In other words, Bloom submits to writing - the very exemplar of perversion. But if the movement of writing, of perversion, is a constant exposure to the danger of otherness, of the feminine, it is the moment at which the fantasy is arrested that the pervert saves the phallus and joins the drinkers in the bar - and this, of course, is what Bloom does. After masturbating on the beach he joins the drinkers in the house of Horne.

So far the concept of the perverse has been used in a simple opposition with the neurotic and it has been used to elucidate an openness to the otherness that the neurotic refuses to acknowledge. But it is now clear that we must elaborate distinctions within the area of perversity that Freud himself did not make. That is to say we must distinguish between a perverse structure which, while suspending the either/or of sexual difference and investigating the non-disjunctive nature of discourse, undertakes this suspension and investigation only with the guarantee that the process will be ended and denied, and, on the other hand, a perversion so radical that there is never any question of arresting the process. The first is the fetishistic structure which we saw at work in Balzac's text and although Flaubert and the young Joyce hold the disjunction open for longer and longer, a close will always

loom as a possibility unless the disjunction is endlessly multiplied. The phallic position must not simply be held in suspense but it must be positively pulverised in a true anatomy, a cut up. The male position must be finally abandoned for the female one. If we pass from the neurosis of Stephen to the perversion of Bloom, it is not until we reach the radical refusal of position in Molly that we have left behind the world of representation.

Bloom's perversity allows a resurgence both of anality and orality in the Sirens sequence. Evidence of the process of separation and thus return of the signifier against the signified which holds everything separated, the anal and the oral are repressed in the world of communication but return in Bloom fascinated as he is by the mechanisms of the mouth and submitted to the return of drink "It must be the cider or perhaps the burgund." (p.375) already discussed.¹⁶ If the voice is phallic, the ear is the register of vibration which deconstructs presence into difference, the imaginary into the symbolic. There is, however, another organ, which provides a privileged site for the imaginary¹⁷, and which is opposed to the ear throughout Finnegans Wake as well as Ulysses. The eye is the organ with which the singers confront the world as they forget

16. see *supra* pp. 170-171.

17. see *supra* pp. 56-62.

the ear.¹⁸ Similarly in the Cyclops, the one-eyed¹⁹ is the aggressive world of drink and communication from which Bloom is excluded. In the world of the eye, the barmaids simply act as mirrors to the masculine world. The various equations of the Sirens between eye, voice, phallus, nationalism and religion find particular emphasis in their reflection by Lydia Douce as she listens to the song of the Croppy Boy:

"On the smooth jutting beerpull laid Lydia hand lightly, plumply, leave it to my hands. All lost in pity for croppy. Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows his eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in pity: passed, repassed and, gently touching, then slid so smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel baton protruding through their sliding ring." (p.369)

In order to confirm male power, women can only function as mirrors; they must deny their own sexuality. If Bloom manages to ignore the mirrors of the Sirens he finally succumbs to an arresting of the signifiers in Nausicaa. Gerty McDowell is constantly attempting to turn herself into the fetish prescribed by the woman's magazine discourse which articulates her experience (it is the same discourse which Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy use).²⁰ This is the point at which Bloom if only

18. see supra p. 167-168.

19. As one-eyed, the Citizen can be read as a huge phallic pun.

20. Fritz Senn makes the same point in his very interesting essay on Nausicaa contained in James Joyce's Ulysses ed. Clive Hart and David Hayman. pp.277-311. Senn's article points out not merely that Gerty uses the same discourses as the barmaids but the same one as Molly pp.300-301. What is radically different about Molly's, however, is the articulation which abandons the carefully ordered form which Gerty is constantly trying to impose.

through a prolonged detour, reaffirms the power of the phallus. That this power is dependent on a repression of female sexuality, and above all of female genitality, is made obvious through a variety of devices. Firstly there is Gerty's constant attempt to ignore the onset of her period. This effort reduplicates her struggle to remain in control of the flow of her discourses. The attempt to ignore the body and the attempt to preserve the subject-predicate form are here presented as different elements of the same structure. Secondly there is the constant reference to the Virgin - the Virgin being the means whereby the passage from father to son, which Stephen correctly analysed as crucial to religion is produced by the denial of the mother's sexuality.²¹ The virgin as mother is exactly the power of the phallic wor(l)d of communication - the voice of the father shatters the tympanum to produce the son.²² Finally Gerty's limp marks her as less than perfect, an example of the inferior version of the male that women must represent in a phallogentric order. Before this female denial of female sexuality Bloom becomes a direct phallic 'I', eyes and masturbates.

21. Some of these references to the Virgin are worked out in detail by Fritz Senn. art.cit. pp.291-295.

22. When Ben Dollard reappears in *Circe* it is in response to the cry by Virag "He burst her tympanum" (p.637) Weldon Thornton Allusions in Ulysses p.400 tells us that this is an allusion to the medieval theory "that the Virgin Mary conceives Christ through her ear, by agency of the Word of God." Mulligan who thinks himself a transgressor because of his emphasis on the male sexual organs does not realise that he is simply the degraded successor of the same logic. This is also made clear in the parable of the bull in the Oxen of the Sun.

By the end of the *Nausicaa* section both Stephen and Bloom have been exhausted by the voyage of the text. Both find access to the phallic world of communication difficult because of the problems of paternity and the mother but both attempt to enter it and at the nursing home they are both stuck in it. True they both keep those characteristics assigned to them by the text and with which they dissociate themselves from others but this dissociation is now at the level of action and emotion - the activity of writing has been completely taken over by the text and it is only the writer/reader who is still voyaging through sense. The reader, through the passage of the text, has been displaced from the world of communication in which the medical students revel. This is the world of the bull whether it be the complicated medieval world or the more simple post-Renaissance one where the only bit of the bull's grammar that is masterable is "the first personal pronoun which he copied out big" (p.524). The *Oxen of the Sun* takes us through the history of the English language but a language which has now become pure system. With each change the figures before us reform like elements in a kaleidoscope, with the difference that with each change the position of the viewer also alters - subject and object both mere effects of this anatomy of discourse. Language has been displaced from fixity into that pure flow that was prefigured earlier in the mathematical symbols - moving across the page "in grave morrice." (p.33.)

The repetition of certain phrases is one of the most noticeable features of Ulysses. They testify to the indestructible materiality of the signifier and to its dominance over the signified. The trace, the wake, is never finally eradicated, a thought that occurs to Bloom as he prepares to blot his letter to Martha Clifford and reflects that his letter could be read off the blotting pad (p.361) Bloom's immediate reaction is to think that this could form the basis for a prize detective story, a reaction dependent on the written trace left by Matcham's Masterstroke. In a welter of repetitions the text now recalls Mrs Purefoy and U.P.: up. and, as Bloom reflects that language is littered with quotations from Shakespeare, the text rewrites two lines that have occurred earlier in the library sequence on page 259.

The point of ^{these} repetitions ^{is} ~~are~~ that they both mark the text of Ulysses as written and allow different meanings to attach to the signifiers. It is exactly this possibility of new meanings which is the possibility of desire speaking. The word escapes the control of the speaking subject insofar as it is always open to new definitions and it is in these new definitions that desire finds expression. Desire is the passage along the metonymy of signifiers and it is in those moments when the signifier is no longer completely under the domination of the signified that desire speaks - that 'it' talks there where 'I' have lost control. Thus the nonsense of a verbal parapraxis is the slip in the metonymic chain which

points to the waking of desire. If the movement from signifier to signifier is the movement of phantasy, this movement always comes back to the conscious mind as fixed, as énoncé - a certain meaning, a definite signified. Examination of the signifiers reveals, however, that as the body moves along the signifying chain it takes up all the positions offered to it. The movement at work in a simple phrase was demonstrated very clearly in Freud's analysis of the phantasy "A child is being beaten" where grammatical substitutions reveal the wealth of desires being articulated in a simple phrase.²³

In *Circe* the whole text of Ulysses is taken up and repeated, a repetition which allows the speaking of desire. *Circe* is the text's unconscious as the events of the day get reworked in Nighttown.²⁴ If the movement of writing, of perversion, is the insistent pressure of the feminine then in *Circe*, with the removal of the fetish (Bloom's potato discovered under his mother's skirt (p.570) is taken from him by Zoe on page 599 and only returned on page 663) and the removal from the reader of any fixed position whatever, the effects of writing can be experienced at their most corrosive as Bloom

23. Sigmund Freud. op.cit. vol.17. pp.179-204.

24. The transformations at work in *Circe* recall those processes which Freud describes as basic to the working of the unconscious - condensation and displacement. Kenner comes close to a correct description when in an essay on *Circe* he describes it as "a nearly accidental psychoanalysis, wholly lacking an analyst" James Joyce's Ulysses. ed. C. Hart and D. Hayman. p.360.

becomes a woman. It is this experience of the feminine which is the only way out of the mother's demand that both presses the claims of a father but in its insistence reveals his essential lack. The only way to avoid the pressure of that demand is to disinter the desire that it conceals - the mother's repressed desire must be spoken through the child lest the child languish in neurosis. But the movement of desire is, in its insistence and its excentricity, also the movement of death - the annihilation of the conscious subject in the system of language. Caught in the demand of the mother Stephen cannot experience language - he has yet to be told the word that is "known to all men" (p.682). That word is exactly a signifier in excess of a signified, a name in excess of its bearer: the Name of the Father. But the mother's demand is that he should find a bearer worthy of the name. Stephen must kill the priest and king in his head because the mother has made their position untenable. Her demand that he should serve is exactly, in its insistence, that which has already revealed the priest and king as unservable. It is with the experience of the writing of Circe that the mother's desire can be disintered and with this disinterment we find the death of the world of demand constituted by religion and nationalism. This is the death the text recounts on page 691 with the hanging of the Croppy Boy. The Croppy Boy is significant in Ulysses because the mistake he makes reveals the true identity of priest and king. Furthermore the Croppy actually confesses in shame to that which he should relish as freedom - forgetting

to pray for his mother's rest. The Croppy Boy stands for all the disastrous choices that have to be made in Ireland and from which one is only released in death. The passage through death is the passage the child realises as he finds himself no longer a full name but simply the value of a variable. To deny that death is to bar the child from the world of the signifier and of desire. The Croppy Boy's death sees the return of the signifier against the mother's demand "Horhot ho hray ho rhothor's hest" (p.691) and also provides access to the world of desire - of orgasm. The "gouts of sperm" that fall on the cobblestones provide the only father the text can have - from the only orgasm represented within it. Circe literally spells death and it is small wonder that Joyce suffered such strain writing it and was so desperate to make sure that he had the protection of the God of communication as he descended to the experience of the signifier.²⁵

The end of the text - the Nostos - can be considered as a persistent refusal to close the text - a refusal which in the same way, but on a grand scale, reduplicates that refusal of closure which I have indicated throughout Joyce's work. In the Eumaeus episode the reader might expect to be given the significance of the day's events and Bloom, manfully, attempts to do that by writing the short story he has been contemplating all day which he entitles "My Experiences, let us

25. cf. Letter to Frank Budgen Michaelmas 1920. Letters. vol.1. p.147-148.

say, in a Cabman's Shelter." (p.750). Despite, however, the hopeful conglomeration of characters at Skin-the-Goat's, nothing emerges until the last paragraph when as Bloom and Stephen walk off, and seem to be talking of the book's themes "sirens, enemies of man's reason, mingled with a number of other topics of the same category, usurpers" (p.775-6) ~~the~~ the reader, ~~is~~^s firmly placed outside the "tête-à-tête". Similarly Ithaca in its surplus of answers gives no place, at which the reader can satisfactorily find a moment of rest from where the text will make sense.

Ithaca, as Joyce said, is the end (if not the close of the book)²⁶, for Penelope is simply the movement of the book all over again, the movement to writing and the experience of the mother's desire. With the breakdown of the subject-predicate form the text becomes the undulations of énonciation. The clichés which make up the content of Molly's thought are here unimportant as we achieve that motion of the signifier which has been the motion of the voyage. All that perhaps should be noted is that this section marks that to which the text is dedicated - the pulverisation of phallogentrism. It is often said that there is no slaughter of the suitors in Ulysses²⁷ but this ignores the fact that Joyce implicitly

26. Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver. 7 October 1921. Letters vol.1. p.172.

27. cf. Richard Ellmann. James Joyce. p.371.

placed such a slaughter in Penelope²⁸. No Gerty ^aMcDowell, Molly refuses to conform herself to the wishes of men - as such she is fatal. Much speculation has been devoted to what happens after the end of Ulysses, but no-one seems to have remarked that what is certain is Boylan's death.²⁹

28. On the 10 December 1920 Joyce writes to Frank Budgen "At first I had not thought of the slaughter of the suitors as in Ulysses' character. Now I see it can be there too. I am going to leave the last word with Molly Bloom..." Letters vol.1. pp.151-152. Towards the end of February 1921 he writes to Budgen again when having said that he is leaving the last word to Penelope, he adds "At one time I thought the slaughter of the suitors un-Ulyssean. In my present frame of mind I have modified my opinion." Letters vol.1. p.160.

29. Molly's fatal effect on the male sex is most evident in the death of Rudy. The equivalence between Rudy and her lovers can be found in the equation Joyce noted down on the Notesheets for the Oxen of the Sun: "Rudy=Mulvey" James Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in the British Museum. Ed. Phillip F. Hering. p.256.

The Revolution in the Word and the Revolution.

"If it is not far-fetched to say that my action, and that of men like Ibsen & c, is a virtual intellectual strike I would call such people as Gogarty and Yeats and Colm the blacklegs of literature. Because they have tried to substitute us, to serve the old idols at a lower rate when we refused to do so far a higher" James Joyce. Letter to Stanislaus Joyce. 6 November 1906. Letters vol.2. p.187.

"The practical methods of the revolution are not revolutionary, they are dictated by the class struggle. It is for this reason that great writers find themselves ill at ease in the class struggle, they behave as though the struggle was already finished, and they deal with the new situation, conceived as collectivist, which is the aim of the revolution. The revolution of the great writers is permanent." Bertolt Brecht Sur Le Cinéma p.25 (Translated directly from the French).

CHAPTER 7

FINNEGANS WAKE AND THE EASTER RISING

It should be clear from the arguments advanced in the four previous chapters that the phrase "James Joyce and the Revolution in the Word" has a certain intelligibility. Joyce's texts do participate in such a revolution. A revolution which is brought about by a constant attention to the means by which sense is produced and a practice of writing which dramatises these means of production; a dramatisation which, in its process, alters the very conditions of production. Writing of Joyce and Finnegans Wake, Samuel Beckett commented that "his writing is not about something; it is that something itself"¹ and, in many ways, this thesis is simply devoted to tracing the consequences of that statement for all of Joyce's texts. Consequences which reverberate centrally in the areas of desire and power; of sexuality and politics. Finnegans Wake concentrates on these reverberations and the text, as Stephen Heath remarks, "ne cesse d'énoncer, de façon très claire... les rapports écriture/sexualité."² But it is not only

1. Samuel Beckett. "Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce" in Our Examination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress p.14.

2. Stephen Heath. "Trames de lecture" Tel Quel. no.54. p.5. "The text never ceases to state, in clear fashion, the relations between writing and sexuality." This article and Heath's earlier "Ambiviolences" (Tel Quel no.50 pp.22-43 and Tel Quel no.51. pp.64-77) constitute one of the most serious attempts to engage with Joyce's writing in recent years. Oriented towards Finnegans Wake, they provide a basis for reading the text although there are two important areas where these articles require revision and expansion. The first article tends towards an "infinite" reading of Joyce and not enough emphasis is placed on the fact that the text must be understood as a continuous lapsus working within a definite linear flow see *infra* pp.233-234. The second article corrects this tendency but the account given of the links between sexuality and language ignores Issy and thus one of the central concerns of the text.

the secrets of sexuality that are contained in the material of the letter, it is also constantly concerned with politics as the intricate play on the Piggott forgery bears witness. And that which articulates these levels of language, sexuality and politics is the constant desire to rise and the constant necessity of a subsequent fall:

"When men want to write a letters. Ten men, ton men, pen men, pun men, wont to rise a ladder. And den men, dun men, fen men, fun men, hen men, hun men wend to raze a leader." (278.18/21)

But if there is a general awareness of the importance of Parnell within the texts of Joyce, his importance is constantly de-politicised so that he becomes simply a symbol of the treachery of Ireland.³ Indeed amongst the plethora of articles that confronts the student of Joyce, there is very little material which deals seriously with Joyce's political positions.⁴ For who

3. See, for example, Hélène Cixous' treatment of Parnell in L'exil de James Joyce ou l'art de remplacement. pp.233-249. Cixous was the first to use extensively the political content of the letters to Stanislaus in Letters vol.2 but her treatment of Joyce's politics is entirely dominated by psychologism. One has simply to read the title of the chapter on socialism ("La Pose Socialiste"), or the title of the whole section on politics("La Tentation de La Politique") to devine that Cixous' approach is a constant reduction of the political to the personal.

4. Philip F. Herring can be taken as articulating a widely held position on Joyce and politics when he writes, "Institutions were important only because his personal reaction against them helped to define his artistic consciousness." "Joyce's politics" New Light on Joyce from the Dublin Symposium. ed. Fritz Senn pp.4-5. The most serious consequence of this psychologisation of Joyce's politics is the undervaluing of Joyce's commitment to socialism before the First World War and Herring can once again be taken to be stating an accepted position, although on this occasion in an extreme form, when he writes that: "Joyce contented himself with opposing the forces that made his exile necessary; that those same forces (British imperialism, a Church hierarchy preoccupied with its own power, provincial narrowness of mind) had been condemned by his fellow Irish socialists as largely responsible for the poverty, emigration and spiritual stagnation of the Irish people during past centuries was for him merely coincidental." *ibid.* p.10.

could be more evidently un-political that the writer of "Dooleys-prudence"? Who could have less connection with the political struggles of Ireland than a writer who left his country eighteen years before it achieved independence and who felt himself so little concerned with the Irish Free State that he never visited it nor even surrendered his British passport in exchange for an Irish one?⁵

Along with a lack of interest in Joyce's politics, there has been a general failure in Joyce studies to deal seriously with Joyce's use of language. Since Margaret Schlauch's penetrating article in the magazine Science and Society in 1939, there have been very few articles on this topic produced within the considerable academic framework of Joyce studies.⁶ Politics

5. cf. Richard Ellmann. James Joyce. p.751.

6. It is the introduction of the reader into the systematic order of discourse in Finnegans Wake, which has made the book so intractable to linguists. Recently Strother Purdy has made an admirable effort to come to terms with the Wake's language in "Mind Your Genderous: Toward a Wake Grammar" in New Light on Joyce from the Dublin Symposium. ed. Fritz Senn. pp.46-78. Purdy's interesting researches are, however, doomed to partial failure insofar as he is committed to a philosophy of language as communication and to using a theory of language which ignores the place of the subject in his discourses. Any account of Finnegans Wake must explain the effect that F.G. Asenjo tried to specify in an idealist vocabulary in his article "The General Problem of Sentence Structure: An Analysis prompted by the loss of subject in Finnegans Wake" in Centennial Review of Arts and Sciences. VIII (1964) pp.398-408. Asenjo tried to explain how each word within the sentence could take up the position of the subject with regard to the rest of the sentence but his account is held back by an ideology of expressivity that runs through his account. Margaret Schlauch's article entitled "The Language of James Joyce" Science and Society. vol.3. Fall 1939. pp.482-497, made the point that personal connections of the reader were allowed in by the language structure: "Joyce demands more active participation from his public than any other writer I can recall." (p.490). With the work of Benveniste and Kristeva, we are approaching the situation where we can begin to give a theoretical account of how language works in Finnegans Wake, but it is certainly not the case that this account will involve the simple application of linguistic theories to the Wake. Rather it will involve the use of the Wake to elaborate linguistic theories. I can envisage a time when Finnegans Wake will be an essential part of any linguistics course. Any such advances will lean heavily on the insights, if not the vocabulary, of Anthony Burgess' Joysprick, a work produced outside the academic framework of Joyce studies.

and language are what lies buried beneath the endless studies on the symbolic correspondences, on the autobiography, on myth, on the meaning of the works. It is to questions of the relations between politics and language in Joyce's work (the connections between the revolution in the word and the revolution) that I wish to devote this chapter but before turning to these substantial questions I want to indicate the importance of the omission of a consideration of Joyce's politics at the most evident level.

Emblematically one could consider the critical reception afforded to that metaphor which Joyce used to illuminate his progress around Europe. Hundreds of thousands of words have poured forth on this exile; on the artist holding himself away from his people; on the sensitive soul escaping the provincial deadness of Ireland; on the heretic fleeing the Catholic Church. But what is never investigated is the real basis of this imaginary figure - the economic subservience in which Ireland was held by the imperial power of England. This subservience has ensured that for the 120 years since the famine, exile has been the normal condition of the Irish man and woman.

F.S.L. Lyons has described the situation after the famine as follows:

"Emigration, therefore, there had to be, emigration which in one form or another was to form part of the very fabric of Irish society during the succeeding hundred years."⁷

7. F.S.L. Lyons Ireland since the Famine. p.45.

The difficulty of getting a job in Ireland was one of the crucial factors in Joyce's decision to leave Ireland and that he was aware of how he shared this fate with his countrymen and women is made clear by the words he addressed to his fellow Triestinos on this subject:

"Finally, in the field of practical affairs this perjorative conception of Ireland is given the lie by the fact that when the Irishman is found outside of Ireland in another environment, he very often becomes a respected man. The economic and intellectual conditions that prevail in his own country do not permit the development of individuality. The soul of the country is weakened by centuries of useless struggles and broken treaties, and individual initiative is paralysed by the influence and admonitions of the church, while its body is manacled by the police, the tax office, and the garrison. No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar as though from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angered Jove.

From the time of the Treaty of Limerick, or rather, from the time that it was broken by the English in bad faith, millions of Irishmen have left their native land. These fugitives, as they were centuries ago, are called the wild geese...

... even today, the flight of the wild geese continues. Every year, Ireland, decimated as she already is, loses 60,000 of her sons. From 1850 to the present day, more than 5,000,000 emigrants have left for America, and every post brings to Ireland their inviting letters to friends and relatives at home. The old men, the corrupt, the children, and the poor stay at home, where the double yoke wears another groove in the tames neck; and around the death bed where the poor anaemic, almost lifeless, body lies in agony, the rulers give orders and the priests administer last rites."⁸

It is only through a consideration of the real basis of Joyce's exile that we can understand the uncertainty and irony

8. James Joyce. "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" in The Critical Writings of James Joyce ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann pp.171-172.

which is generated around Stephen Dedalus' appeal to exile as the solitary way. An added autobiographical joke has Stephen, confiding ^{served as a model for Cranly} this to Cranly. For Joyce's friend Byrne, who ~~Cranly is based on~~, was also to choose exile six years after Joyce by emigrating to America.

It is not, however, simply the consideration of such a major theme in Joyce's work that suffers because of the general lack of interest in Joyce's politics. In the Aeolus section of Ulysses we are treated to the spectacle of the political paralysis of Ireland as the old Parnellites bemoan the speech of the night before.⁹ The decline of the papers founded to help the nationalist cause and the windbags that have replaced Parnell are two symptoms of the spread of the disease. But the chapter is interesting in that it moves briefly outside the normal petit-bourgeois world of Ulysses and, in that move, it demonstrates a surprisingly clear awareness of the nature and extent of the political paralysis that afflicts Ireland. Nannetti, the foreman with whom Bloom discusses the question of the Keyes' advertisement is one of the few members of the unionised working class who figures in Ulysses. He was a M.P. for the nationalist party and was constantly cited as the example of how the nationalist cause embraced all classes. Indeed Nannetti was appointed as liaison officer between the Irish T.U.C. and the nationalist party, and his

9. see supra. pp.205-206.

was a powerful voice within the trade-union movement against the setting up of a separate working-class party.¹⁰ In addition it may not be farfetched to see another political allusion in the text in the prominent place assigned in the chapter to the trams of Dublin and the newspaper boys. In 1913, in an attempt to break the growing power of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union which Larkin and Connolly had been so successful in establishing in the previous five years, the Dublin employers organised a lock-out. The Dublin Lock-Out (which provided the bitterest and longest industrial struggle of Irish history and which was the occasion for the foundation of the Irish Citizen Army) turned around the unionisation of the trams and of the newspaper delivery boys.¹¹ The employers were led by William Martyn Murphy a former nationalist M.P.

What I want to suggest by indicating these facts is that in the Aeolus section the analysis of the political paralysis of Ireland is far more than a simple statement that Parnell is dead and gone. The resonances and allusions of this chapter indicate that it is the way in which the nationalist struggle obscures class antagonisms which is the crucial factor in the paralysis of Ireland. That this is the political analysis made by the young Joyce and that this analysis provides the constant impetus of the later literary

10. see J.W. Boyle. *The Rise of the Irish Labour Movement 1888-1907* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Trinity College, Dublin.) pp.218-220.

11. For an account of the Lock-Out see C. Desmond Greaves. The Life and Times of James Connolly. chap.XVII. The details concerning the newsboys and the tramwaymen can be found pp.306-308.

works is what I wish to show in this chapter.¹² But what must be emphasized at this stage is that it is necessary to take politics far more seriously than is usual in Joyce studies in order to grasp even the references in the works. Normally politics is glossed over by some appeal to the personality of the "great Irish artist". As an example of the deadening effect that such an approach has had, one could quote the following passage from Ellmann's biography which deals with Joyce's stay in Trieste:

"Trieste resembled Dublin, too, in its Irredentist movement; the similarity here was so striking that Joyce found he could interest his Italian friends in Irish political parallels, though no doubt he would have compelled them to listen in any case."¹³
(my emphasis)

The trivialisation of this last phrase distracts attention from the real political similarities between Italy and Ireland; similarities so striking that James Connolly learned Italian at the same time that Joyce was arguing about the Irredentist movement in Trieste.

12. That this was the analysis held by the young Joyce can be seen in the letters to Stanislaus see *infra* p.256. I am not trying to suggest in this chapter that Joyce continued to hold the same political views throughout his life and that he consciously wrote Finnegans Wake to serve certain political ends. It is certain that after the outbreak of the First World War he lost any immediate interest in politics. What I am trying to suggest below is that both the political analyses and the literary works were produced within a certain political conjuncture and that one can understand them both in political terms.

13. Richard Ellmann. *op.cit.* p.203. Ellmann's biography, magnificent achievement that it is, is sadly wanting in its descriptions of Joyce's political beliefs. Joyce's comments are constantly reduced to the ramblings of a great artist.

Connolly's biographer explains why Connolly learned Italian at this time by stating, this time without any qualifying phrases, that "he thought that their problems resembled those of the Irish"¹⁴

The purpose of these remarks is not to create another context for Joyce in which the texts will finally body forth their true meaning (at long last the political one that those with left wing sympathies have been waiting for all along). Rather these considerations are simply designed to disrupt those expectations of the non-political nature of Joyce's writing and to allow some new considerations of Finnegans Wake. The Wake insists constantly on the relations between language and sexuality; on the secrets that the letter will reveal about the father's encounters in Phoenix Park. What has not been sufficiently understood is that these considerations of sexuality have certain political consequences.

If Stephen in A Portrait still considers himself a "foster-child" who may find a father worthy to bear the name of Dedalus, in Finnegans Wake the split between bearer and name is made absolute as the father just becomes the permutations of a set of letters. It is the divorce between bearer and name which makes language possible but this divorce is constantly covered over, repressed, in the normal workings of language. Finnegans Wake disrupts this normal process of language in order to allow this

14. C. Desmond Greaves. op.cit. p.185.

divorce to make itself felt. In the imaginary world of the child there is a simple correspondence between sign and referent; the two are magically linked together in a one to one relation. But the word finds its meaning not through its relation to the thing but by the diacritical relations into which it enters on the phonic and semantic levels. It is the recognition of the systematic nature of language (that names are defined through a set of substitutions; that they find their definition in a nexus of differences rather than a plenitude of being) which is the condition of the successful use of language. What Joyce makes us experience in his writings is what Freud was teaching contemporaneously: that the determining moment in this process is the recognition that the father is no more than a name but that this recognition is constantly obscured in the necessity to control language.

One can restate this paradox in slightly different terms. As I write, each word finds its sense and meaning through the differential oppositions that define it within the English language, but I constantly have the impression of injecting the meanings into the words as I write. This division is the constitutive feature of language and subjectivity and it is the division which Freud categorised in terms of the conscious and the unconscious, the ego and the id, the "I" and the "it". For as I write I constantly find myself securely in position as the "I" of the statement but in the act of writing I pass along the material of language where there is no such fixed position but simply an

endless set of substitutions. Thus the importance of the lapsus for Freud because it is at that moment when the subject loses control of his or her discourses that something else speaks - "it" speaks there where "I" have lost control.

The Wake is a continuous lapsus. It declares itself to be the "lapse not leashed" (63.24) and it is the mechanism of the lapsus which is the mechanism of the progress of the work. The lapse is the moment in the world of communication when another subject speaks to another addressee across the phonic and semantic material of language. The lapse reveals us in our discourse and out of position; not placed in the comforting "I" but displaced in the wake of our progress through language. Thus Finnegans Wake hesitates between a minimal control which takes us from line to line and a riot of meanings which invoke relations along a myriad of different levels (semantic, phonic, factual, inter-linguistic). One consequence of this is that we must recognize that Finnegans Wake is written in English. The answer to the question "Are we speachin d'anglas landadge" (485.12/13) must be yes although it may be noted that after Finnegans Wake the English language has been radically transformed, has, in some sense, been permanently deprived of the possibility of providing transparent expression for the triumphant ego. A further consequence following from this consideration of the mechanisms of the lapsus is that we must follow both the syntax and the major semantic concerns of any particular passage of the text lest it becomes a simple collocation of letters which offers

no initial opposition to our passage through it.

Finnegans Wake should be studied as "nat language at any sinse of the word⁴" (83.12). Which is to say language which goes beyond meaning (sense) and time (since) in an attempt to understand and abolish the sin involved in language - the guilt inherent in the very act of speaking or writing. It is in the second section of Book 2 of Finnegans Wake, the Night Lessons of the children that we find this concern pushed to the very limit. This section caused Joyce almost more trouble than any other when he was writing it and he was forced, most unusually, to abandon some of the material he wished to use.¹⁵ "The Muddest Thick That Was Ever Heard Dump" was the initial title that Joyce gave to the geometry lesson and it is the geometry lesson which provides the central focus of the kaleidoscope of the book. Night lessons of a "nightynovel" (54.21), they are the essentials of the NIGHTLETTER (308.20). It is the section where Dolph, the Shem figure, describes to Kev, the Shaun figure, what is underneath the mother ALP's skirts. Kev secure in a male narcissism thinks that the results will be "like pah" and "as plane as a poke stiff" (296.28/30); he refuses to accept the possibility of difference. For it is at the moment that such a difference is accepted that the father ceases to be a full presence and gets caught up in the nets of difference.

15. Details of the composition of the chapter can be found in David Hayman's "'Scribbledehobbles' and How They Grew." in Twelve and a Tilly ed. Jack P. Dalton and Clive Hart. pp.107-118. There is also a description of the growth of the chapter in A First Draft Version of Finnegans Wake. ed. David Hayman. pp.31-33.

What Joyce demonstrates in this section is that it is the phallus which is the determining term within the signifying order and the access to language and writing. The phallus not to be confused with the penis - the anatomical reality - but to be understood as the signifier of sexual difference, the possibility of the presence or absence of the object. It is with this possibility that the father gets caught up as a term within the symbolic order; that the name becomes separated from the bearer. But if it is this rupture which guarantees language, this rupture is constantly obscured and there is a constant attempt to minimize and avoid this fundamental lack in that second movement of the Oedipus that I have already described.¹⁶ Within Finnegans Wake it is nationalist politics which serves as the constant image of a new secure position for the subject where the trauma of difference can be ignored. Kev can disavow what he has seen beneath the mother's skirts by fixing on another model of a full presence - on the heroic struggle for national liberation. But Dolph is intent on driving home the lesson of difference and of the secrets of writing. He urges Kev to "pose the pen, man, way me does" (303.2/3) for if he does he will see that "This is brave Danny weeping his spache for the popers. This is cool Connolly wiping his hearth with brave Danny. And this, regard! how Chawleses Skewered parparaparnelligoes between brave Danny boy and the

16. See supra pp.196-198. Insofar as the second stage marks a successful conclusion of the Oedipus complex in our society, one can assent to Stephen Heath's judgement that Shaun is "L'Oedipe réussi, le sujet sans faille" "Trames de Lecture" Art.cit. p.7. It should be noticed that there is a grave danger in overpersonifying the opposition between system and position, discourse and communication which runs through Finnegans Wake. With Shem and Shaun one describes different aspects of the one organisation of discourse and desire. cf. infra.pp. 236-237.

Connolly. Unpanishadem! Top. Spoken hath L'arty Magory.
Eregobragh. Prouf!" (303.8/14).

It is at this moment, as Dolph ridicules the three great heroes of Irish nationalism: Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell and James Connolly, that Kev finally attacks his brother and knocks him down. To take up the position of writing, to allow absence to make itself felt is unthinkable for him. At all costs meaning and the father must be preserved against the onslaughts of Dolph, against the mocking of Erin Go Bragh. The proof that Dolph outlines is that the mother reveals the insufficiency of the father. It is this insufficiency that Kev cannot support and when the refuge he has taken in nationalism and its heroes is threatened with dissolution by writing, he reacts in the only way possible - with violence. The mechanisms at work here are the same as those at work in the Cyclops episode when the Citizen attacks Bloom. Confronted with the reality of difference and the impossibility of definition (Bloom is both Irishman and Jew, the name is separated from the bearer) the secure ego reacts against this threat of displacement with violence.¹⁷

To speak is to have accepted a symbolic castration; to have accepted difference and absence. To enter into language is thus to have denied to the father his self-sufficiency and it is this denial which constitutes the guilt associated with language. The Shauns attempt to disavow this guilt and to concentrate simply on

17. see supra pp. 189-190.

language as meaning but are thus excluded from the world of desire and writing; the Shems wallow in the guilt, become "Shame's Voice"¹⁸ but are exiled from the world of communication. If only Shem can write the letter, only Shaun can deliver it. The two are different elements of the same structure and it is for this reason that one can turn so easily into the other as the story of the prankquean demonstrates. System is always likely to solidify into the position it upholds and position is constantly threatening to dissolve into the system that upholds it. The dissolution of Shaun in 111.iii provides an enactment of this process.

The Wake makes of the father only a name as he is "variously catalogued, regularly regrouped" (129.12) in a play of language which turns him into a set of "normative letters" (32.18) such that he becomes an "apersonal problem, a locative enigma" (135.26/27). We are no longer engaged in the search for the father, for an origin, but in a study of the "paradigmatic ear" (70.36) which is the place produced for the father by our forms of address, by our orders of discourse. Metaphorically in the Wake that place is the fixity of Howth head as the water takes its different forms around it - river, sea, vapour, rain. If the "masculine monosyllables" (190.35) serve as the fixed point around which the rhythm flows, it is the feminine stream which provides the movement. Language

18. This is how Joyce is addressed in a "litter" written by Vladimir Dixon and published in An Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress. p.193 Ellmann confirms that Dixon is a pseudonym for Joyce. James Joyce. p.626.

is a constant struggle between a "feminine libido" which threatens to break all boundaries and a "male fist" which threatens to fix everything in place:

"... who thus at all this marvelling but will press on hotly to see the vaulting feminine libido of those interbranching ogham sex upandinsweeps sternly controlled and easily repersuaded by the uniform matteroffactness of a meandering male fist." (123.06/9)

Anna Livia breaks with all forms of law be they secular or religious (139.25/28) but insofar as language depends on law - on a series of exclusions and oppositions - Anna cannot use language; she cannot write down her secrets. Symmetrically Shaun who is the law-giver and embodies the law, is so fixed by its oppositions that he cannot create enough movement to let the symbols operate. For him, letters are "tame, deep and harried, in my mine's I" (425.25) and this fixity of language as controlled by an ego means that despite all this protests in 111.i. he cannot read the letter. If Anna Livia refuses to pay the necessary attention to sexual differences which would enable her to write, Shaun having recognised it unwillingly attempts to identify himself with the phallus - to make of himself a "letter potent" (419.24) and thus banishes himself from the world of writing. Carried along by the river, he constantly ignores its flow and thinks himself the master of his own destiny. It is Shem who provides the point of intersection between the male and the female which allows of the possibility of writing. It is Anna Livia's voice that breaks

through Mercius' speech and it is Shem's ability to speak the mother which is his power to make the "dumb speak" (195.5).

Writing through its constant demonstration of the differences and absences with which language is constituted allows a constant openness to the feminine.¹⁹ Finnegans Wake by investigating the very act of writing lets the unconscious speak; it tells us the mother's secrets. As bodies that find ourselves constituted in language we should understand that the Beckett quote with which I opened is not an appeal to an empty formalism but draws attention to that imperfect union of word and flesh which can be investigated in writing. The Wake suggests that there are two fundamentally different attitudes to language which are articulated along sexual divisions. But it is at this point that we reach the limits of this thesis. So far I have been content with explaining how Joyce's writing breaks with that relation between the subject and language which is exemplified by Shaun and which I have characterised in Freudian terms as the second stage of the Oedipus. The question of the other relation to language has constantly been defined negatively in relation to this "normal" relation. Finnegans Wake demands, however, a more positive definition for it suggests that there is a totally different attitude to language which can be characterised as female.

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19. For the analysis of writing see supra. pp.153-158.

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of a different attitude to language. During the Nightlessons she regards the twins' struggles as an irrelevance. While the "jemmijohns" will cudgel each other, she will not give a damn ("her tootpettypout of jemenfichue") because she has had an opportunity of studying "gramma's grammar" (268.07/17). Gramma's grammar insists on the dialogic basis to language and draws attention to the consequent reflexivity of both language and desire which makes of "mind your genderous" an appropriate warning to anyone who attempts to speak (268.17/29). It is the lack of the knowledge of grandma's grammar which leaves the twins obsessed with the independent Cartesian ego - Kev wallowing in it and Dolph/Jerry attempting to write his way out of it (304.31). Grandma's grammar serves as the term to distinguish a language in which the experience of loss and absence is not determined by the reaction to sexual difference; a relation to that experience of absence and loss which finds no unification in the symbol of the phallus. In an attempt to indicate what such a language and such an experience might be we must make one further brief reflection on the process of insertion into the world of the symbolic and of language. This reflection, however, must remain even more tentative than heretofore because with Grandma's grammar we approach that area which psycho-analysis has yet to theorise at all adequately. Freud, at the end of his life, was forced to recognise this inadequacy when he asked the famous question "What does a woman want?". Here Joyce's practice remains in excess of any theoretical development. Here Joyce is still writing in our

future.²⁰

I have attempted to explain how it is a submission to a central lack in being, a gap in the letter, that is the condition of the existence of desire and language. While in an original moment an identity of being is presumed, the correlation of alternative states of being with certain sounds entails the recognition of a set of differences which, from the undifferentiated world of being, pluck an object. The object is immediately already a possible absence, a lack in being, and its correlation with any given word depends on a set of diacritical relationships rather than on some divinely ordered one to one correspondence. The indeterminacy of these diacritical relationships is what ensures that already in the moment it is discovered, the letter has a gap in it. This process of separation which constitutes world and word in the same movement is constant throughout the small child's life but it is the phallus which takes up metaphorically all these previous separations and thus becomes the privileged signifier - the key term around which all differential oppositions function. It is thus in terms of certain relations

20. Julia Kristeva's distinction between the semiotic (an ordered rhythmic use of sound without any crucial determination) and the symbolic (the achieved use of language), which is advanced in section A.1. of La Révolution du Langage Poétique could well be elaborated in terms of the writing of Finnegans Wake. To do this, however, would require a detailed phonemic study of Finnegans Wake of the sort that Kristeva applies to Mallarmé in section B.1. of the same work.

to the phallus that we can understand the terms of the entry of the subject into language and desire.

The central role of the phallus is not simply determined by anatomical difference but by the way that the child understands it to be taken up in the mother's own desire, as the mark of her own submission to the world of difference and language. It is thus the maternal grandfather who is the determining term for the child's access to the symbolic. However, behind the mother's relation to the maternal grandfather, there rests her attachment to her own mother - the maternal grandmother. It is in the availability of the relation to the maternal grandmother that we might try and sketch the outlines of the central differences between the formation of the male and female unconscious. These differences which find no explanation within psycho-analytic theory are, I believe, essential to any explanation of the language of Finnegans Wake which affords to the text the importance it deserves.

Joyce indicates that "gramma's grammar" is available to girls but not to boys. This asymmetry can be explicated in psycho-analytical terms by the fact that before the little girl can take up her symmetrical Oedipal relations with her father, she must separate herself from her mother. In one of his last attempts to deal with this problem, the essay entitled "On Female Sexuality", Freud wrote of this first relation to the mother in the following despairing terms:

"Everything in the sphere of this first attachment to the mother seemed so difficult to grasp in analysis - so grey with age and shadowy and almost impossible to revivify - that it was as if it had succumbed to an especially inexorable repression."²¹

Some reflection on this first attachment and separation should convince us that it is impossible for the phallus to take up previous separations for the little girl in the same way that it does for the little boy.

For in the separation from the mother the small boy undergoes a fundamental wound to his narcissism which ensures an access to language but also a defence against the recognition of the wound that ensures the access is constantly obscured. The little girl's separation from the mother receives no such single determination. While the recognition of sexual difference must eventually function as the recognition of a possible loss, the little girl's first reaction is Issy's patronising "Funny spot to have a finge!" (144.35). It is only after the little girl has taken up a position as inferior that the phallus can come to take up the central position. What is important to notice is that insofar as the little girl's first identification proves correct, her narcissism is fundamentally different from the male's. Shaun's narcissism is always a defence involving aggression. Issy, like Alice, just looks in the mirror. But insofar as this fundamental narcissism is not challenged so the girl's grasp of language is

21. Sigmund Freud. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works. vol.21. p.226.

not so sure - for there is no one term which takes up and stabilises the separations. One might ask what kind of discourse this organisation would produce and the answer might well be Finnegans Wake. Or, rather, it is the impact of this discourse on the phallogocentric male discourse which produces Finnegans Wake.

If we lack the necessary theoretical concepts in order to develop this relation fully, we can say that in the Wake the female is she who exceeds the limits imposed on her by the male, and, in that excess, reveals those limits as limits. The daughter holds the last promise for the father of finding a being who will believe in him as source of his own desire, "what wouldn't you give to have a girl!" (620.26/7). But he is doomed to fail again for the mother spells out "my yearns to her" (620.36) and he is revealed again. Into the oppositions male and female, fixity and movement Finnegans Wake introduces writing: movement in fixity, fixity in movement, an ineradicable bisexuality, a constant process, "The Seim anew" (215.23)

This acceptance of movement and process coupled with the awareness of identity as a constant effect of the passage of language has profound political implications for a society based on a notion of the individual as an independent and self sufficient entity. It is only through the acceptance of the most reductive account of the relation between politics and literature that Joyce's texts can be dismissed as non-political. Traditionally we are accustomed to understand questions of the

political nature of literature in terms of the specific political positions that are espoused or rejected within a work. But Joyce's writing renders such a criterion obsolete. Given the refusal of any hierarchy of discourses within a text, the political discourses which appear do so without any of those determinations which enable the reader to correlate them as true or false against a given reality. Of course, the temptation may be to read them within the framework of classical irony and presume that we are merely being shown the emptiness of all politics but such a strategy of reading would have to supply a meta-discourse which Joyce's tests resolutely refuse. A refusal I have demonstrated in my analyses of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" and the Cyclops sequence.

Rather than engaging in the direct espousal of political positions, Joyce's work poses new questions about the relation between reader and text in ways that I have attempted to explicate. What remains to be discussed is the politics of this relation and the consequences of a practice of writing which subverts traditional political discourse. I have suggested that the crucial difference in the reader's position confronted by Joyce's texts is that instead of a set of discourses so organised that the reader can take himself in some imaginary unity, the reader finds a disruption of his own position such that his unity is transformed into a set of contradictory discourses; an investigation of his own symbolic construction. What is lost here is the full Cartesian subject and this loss is a political

event of the most central importance. For with the loss of this punctual subject one ceases to have discrete areas in which the punctual subject can find a position. Instead one is confronted with a set of overlapping and contradictory activities which produce the subject in his contradictions. But with this conception of the subject, a separate political discourse tied to a separate political party becomes an impossibility. I would argue that Joyce's texts are revolutionary texts in the sense that they are committed to the overthrow of the possibility of contemporary (both his and still ours) political discourse but I would further argue that they are, in one important sense, profoundly ineffective revolutionary texts.

To understand this contradiction it is necessary to return to the earlier definition I gave of a literary revolution. I argued that a literary revolution was one in which a number of specific poetic changes combined with an ideological contradiction to produce a radical break in the forms of fiction.²² It is now time to begin to expand this definition. Joyce's texts produce a multitude of breaks with previous literary forms and I have demonstrated that these breaks can all be articulated in terms of the allocation of contradictory positions to the reading subject. Centrally I have already discussed how Joyce's texts are devoted to producing a separation between signifier and signified and thus to de-constructing the transparenence of signification which allows

22. see supra. pp. 54-56.

the imaginary production of a full subject.²³ But insofar as one merely makes a formal claim for separation it would seem that an ideal text would be a simple collocation of letters. I have, however, argued against such an abstract formalism and I have suggested, in this chapter, that it is through a consideration of the lapse that we can understand the necessity for the text to provide enough unity for the separation to be effective as process. For insofar as the text remains simply unreducible to any activity of the subject it can be experienced only as boredom, it is the extent to which it subverts expectations within an activity that the text submits the reader to the experience of separation. It is in terms of the relation between unity and separation that we can begin to discuss the primary ideological contradiction which I claim is a component of a literary revolution. For it is certain that such a component cannot simply be the insertion of "correct" political views for we have already seen that Joyce conducts an investigation of discourse such that no one position within the text could determine the text in which it appears. But through a consideration of unity and separation we can provide an analysis of the political determination of a text and thus begin to consider why although Joyce's writing has profound political implications, there is no attempt to link these effects to any direct political situation. The question can be phrased as "Why is there no articulation of the politics of Joyce's texts at the political level?".

23. see supra pp. 145-152.

It is Brecht, the greatest theorist of literary revolution that this century has yet produced, to whom we must return in order to understand the politics of separation within a text. Brecht's ^{appeals} ~~call~~ for an epic theatre were above all calls to break the unity that works of art conferred upon the spectator and to transform the passive consumption of meanings into the active appropriation of knowledge.²⁴ Rather than a text compact with its own meaning, a text which confers a unity and gives a position to the subject, Brecht demands a text whose fissures and differences constantly force an activity of articulation on the subject - an articulation which in its constant changes and contradictions makes known, demonstrates, the contradictions of the reader's position both as reader and, in consequence, as agent in the world. But in order to achieve this work of separation (the work that Finnegans Wake constantly forces on us) it is necessary to begin where there is an identity. If we think back on those constitutive moments which produce us as sexed human beings then we can recognise a regularity whereby each psychic stage is the transformation of an identity - with the breast, the faeces, the phallus - into a separation. What is remarkable about each of these transformations is that they involve also the fall from pleasure into desire and from belief into knowledge. For insofar as there is unity and identity the subject is a founding

24. see supra p. 145 and p. 152. See also the whole of "The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre" Brecht on Theatre pp. 33-42.

source, secure in its own self-sufficiency. The creation of an object defined through its differences changes all this. For it creates both the possibility of knowledge (the studying of sets of differences which find their determination independently of their relation to the subject) and the possibility of desire because the object (in the very fact of its recognition) becomes a possible absence. It is this possibility of absence that banishes forever the chance of total satisfaction because there can be no total enjoyment of an object. Consciousness, however, is, in some sense irrevocably bound up with a world of belief in which subject and object merge in an undifferentiated presence. Insofar as the object exists for consciousness it has been plucked forth from the undifferentiated mass of existence; it is defined through a set of differences. But in its concern to maintain life consciousness must studiously ignore this set of differences which must be there for the object to appear at all. It was in relation to this problem that Freud first located the existence of an unconscious when he recognised that the defining chain of differences constantly threatens to break and disrupt the necessarily homogenous world of consciousness. Caught in the homogenous state of consciousness, the object finds itself trapped in a unity of belief - conferred an identity. In order for knowledge to occur, there must be separation so that an identity can be broken down in its constitutive relationships. On the one hand we find identity and there we discover pleasure and belief and, on the other, we can produce separation and there we will find desire and knowledge.

The political question can now be grasped as the problem of locating an identity which must be separated out so that it can be appropriated as knowledge. The concept which enables us to resolve this question is the central concept of epic theatre - the gest. Benjamin, writing of epic theatre, defined the gest in terms of interruption - the freezing of a moment so that instead of an imaginary vision of obviousness we are forced to examine a set of relationships:

"The damming of the stream of real life, the moment when its flow comes to a standstill, makes itself felt as reflux: this reflux is astonishment... But if the stream of things breaks against this rock of astonishment, then there is no difference between a human life and a word. In epic theatre both are only the crest of the wave. Epic theatre makes life spurt up high from the bed of time and, for an instant, hover iridescent in empty space. Then it puts it back to bed."²⁵

Benjamin's characterization of a word and a human life as the same for epic theatre serves to emphasize that epic theatre breaks with that identity given to a life in the course of the flow of experience, or a word in the flow of speech, in order to make clear that their identity can only be defined through a set of differences - the relationships that define them. The gest, then, is a set of relationships revealed by an interruption and one can see how usefully this concept could be used to characterize Joyce's work where it is constantly a question of interruptions which reveal a set of relationships (one could use the gest to

25. Walter Benjamin. Understanding Brecht p.13.

define the structure of Dubliners). But in order for astonishment to be generated it is necessary that an obvious identity must subsume the relationships which are revealed by the interruption. In other words it is when the world of pleasure and belief is interrupted that we set up desire and knowledge but it is necessary to start there where there is an identity in order to achieve the necessary separation.

We can now understand that the problem of the ideological level of contradiction within a text is not in terms of whether the text 'contains' the correct political line as part of its content but whether it aims at a specific identity or identities which its procedures and practices then transform into a set of relationships. The question thus becomes one of determining a specific audience for which certain identities can be asserted and then deconstructed. The political question to be posed in relation to Joyce's text is whether the multitude of breaks within the text find a determination in terms of a particular audience and thus a particular political situation.

When we phrase the question in this fashion it becomes clear that Joyce's texts are so politically ineffective because they lack any definite notion of an audience to which they are addressed. Joyce's disappointment at the reaction to Ulysses and Finnegans Wake reveals a radical failure to differentiate amongst his readers in such a way that his texts could become effective. The inevitable result of this weakness is a certain

homogenisation of the audience such that Joyce can appear to be addressing some immutable human nature and this appearance is strengthened by the use of such theorists as Vico. It is important to stress that the practice of Joyce's writing moves beyond any immutable individual human nature to investigate the very processes of that nature's variable construction but the inability to specify an audience means that in order to ~~fully~~ experience this investigation it is necessary to draw on the endless efforts of the Joyce scholars. In order to place ourselves in the position from which the process of separation in Finnegans Wake can be experienced, it is necessary to have a commitment to Joyce. Joyce's only audience become Joyce scholars.

The reasons for Joyce's failure at this level are not of a personal nature but are to do with the political situations in which he found himself. The simple reduction of Joyce's interest in politics to a traditional model of the egocentric artist has had seriously deleterious effects. It has deflected attention from the fact that in pre-war Dublin and Trieste, Joyce was privileged to involve himself in debates which seemed of little interest at the time and yet which were to have momentous political effects not just in Ireland and Italy but throughout the world. In the first twenty years of the twentieth century the three great political themes of the nineteenth century - democracy, socialism and nationalism - were altered, negated and combined to produce the three new political movements of the twentieth century: anti-colonialism, Communism and Fascism. After

the fall of Parnell, Ireland witnessed a general disenchantment with parliamentary politics which made the Dublin of Joyce's youth the breeding ground for the Easter Rising and one of the twentieth century's first anti-colonial struggles.²⁶ The Trieste in which he argued against the Irredentists became, five years after he left it, the first Fascist city in Europe.²⁷ Two out of the way cities of Europe gave Joyce access to the mainstream of two of the three political movements which have so dominated the twentieth century.

The major component, however, in both the embryonic movements in whose gestation Joyce participated was nationalism and it is nationalism that dominates both the political writings of the pre-First World War days and the political concerns of the later texts. In the political comments that punctuate the long letters to Stanislaus, in the lectures he gave in Trieste, in the political articles he contributed to Il Piccolo della Sera, it is the problems of Irish nationalism which were the constant focus of Joyce's thought about Ireland and politics. And, for Joyce, the one central problem of Irish nationalism was that while Irish claims to independence were fully justified, the political manifestations of nationalism were profoundly reactionary. In particular he found the nationalist movement's subservience to the Catholic Church an index of its futility for, as he told the

26. see F.S.L. Lyons. Ireland Since the Famine.pp.202-260.

27. "During the first half of 1920 the new fascist movement remained a circumscribed phenomenon of little importance. The only Italian city it succeeded in penetrating was Trieste, whose atmosphere was in many ways exceptional: the closeness of Fiume, the military administration to which the city was subjected, and above all the existence of a state of chronic tension between the Slav and Italian populations, which had been greatly aggravated by the end of Austrian rule, made Trieste a good breeding-ground for an intensely nationalistic movement such as fascism." Giuliano Procacci. History of the Italian People.pp.415-416.

inhabitants of Trieste:

"... I confess that I do not see what good it does to fulminate against the English tyranny while the Roman tyranny occupies the palace of the soul."²⁸

Joyce's commitment to socialism was largely determined by his conviction that it was only socialism that would rid Ireland of both England and Rome. Catholicism was the paralysis of Ireland and this paralysis found its focus in the institution of marriage with its inbuilt hypocrisy about sexuality. Sinn Fein's campaign against the "venereal excess" of the English reduced him to paroxysms of rage:

"I am nauseated by their lying drive l about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever: blatant lying in face of the truth. I don't know very much about the 'saince' of the subject but I presume there are very few mortals in Europe who are not in danger of waking some morning and finding themselves syphilitic."²⁹

When he heard that Gogarty had married he wrote to Stanislaus:

"You have often shown opposition to my socialistic tendencies. But can you not see plainly from facts like these that a deferment of the emancipation of the proletariat, a reaction to clericalism or

28. James Joyce art. cit. The Critical Writings of James Joyce. ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. p.173.

29. James Joyce. Letter to Stanislaus Joyce. 13 November 1906. Letters vol.2. p.191-192.

aristocracy or bourgeoisism would mean a revulsion to tyrannies of all kinds. Gogarty would jump into the Liffey to save a man's life but he seems to have little hesitation in condemning generations to servitude... For my part I believe that to establish the church in full power again in Europe would mean a renewal of the Inquisition..."³⁰

Socialism was the only possible defence against the servitude of belief and earlier he had written to Stanislaus in much the same terms:

"It is a mistake for you to imagine that my political opinions are those of a universal lover: but they are those of a socialistic artist. I cannot tell you how strange I feel sometimes in my attempt to live a more civilised life than my contemporaries. But why should I have brought Nora to a priest or a lawyer to make her swear away her life to me? And why should I superimpose on my child the very troublesome burden of belief which my father and mother superimposed on me?"³¹

But if Joyce saw clearly at this time that the only way forward for Ireland was a union of the social and national struggles, he did not understand how this union was to be brought about. A convinced anti-parliamentarian, Joyce saw some possibility of advance in Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein movement which in an article on Fenianism he identified as the true

successors of the 'physical force' tradition in Irish politics.³²

30. James Joyce. Letter to Stanislaus Joyce. About 12 August 1906. Letters vol.2. p.148.

31. James Joyce. Letter to Stanislaus Joyce. 2 or 3 May 1905. Letters vol.2. p.89.

32. The Critical Writings of James Joyce. ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. p.191. Earlier in the same article Joyce agreed with the "physical force" party that "any concessions that have been granted to Ireland, England has granted unwillingly, and, as it is usually put, at the point of a bayonet." p.188.

But he despaired of the racialism that was prevalent in the paper and which was fostered in particular by some articles of Gogarty which condemned the English for their sexual habits.

Joyce wrote to Stanislaus:

"What I object to most of all in his (Griffith's) paper is that it is educating the people of Ireland on the old pap of racial hatred whereas anyone can see that if the Irish question exists, it exists for the Irish proletariat chiefly. I have expressed myself badly, I fear, but perhaps you will be able to get at what I mean."³³

Joyce's difficulty of expression was not fortuitous but rather bore witness to the real political problem of winning the progressive side of nationalism away from that part that was tied to a reactionary Catholicism. That Joyce could see no solution to this problem reflects no discredit on him for it was the problem that was to dog the Irish nationalist movement up to independence and beyond. F.S.L. Lyons sums up this dual aspect of the Irish situation in the following terms:

"In their continuing reliance upon the efficient functioning of a more or less benevolent government, in their reluctance to innovate in either industry or agriculture, in their attachment to their religion, and in their unchanging moral and social attitudes, the Irish presented to the twentieth century world the strange and paradoxical spectacle of a people who, having pursued with immense tenacity and a great measure of success the goal of independence, were content to rear upon the foundations of that independence one of the most conservative states in Europe."³⁴

33. James Joyce. Letter to Stanislaus Joyce. 25 September 1906. vol.2. p.167.

34. F.S.L. Lyons. op.cit. p.103.

If the union of Connolly and Pearse in the Easter Rising constituted the one real moment when the social and national struggle became one, it was a union which was to fall apart with the deaths of the two leaders. The social content of the proclamation of the independence read out on the steps of the Post Office has been described by the leading historian of modern Ireland as "the brightest hope for the future", but also as "the seed of the deepest disillusionment".³⁵ For if the alliance between Connolly's Irish Citizen Army and Pearse's Irish Republican Brotherhood achieved in practice that union which Joyce ten years earlier had recognised as essential, there was no theoretical basis which would sustain the alliance through the years that followed. After Connolly the labour movement refused to participate in the nationalist struggles and thus condemned themselves to the sidelines.³⁶ This failure left the political field open to that nationalist ideology most wedded to the Catholic Church. The extent of Catholic dominance in the state that finally emerged after 1922 is perhaps common knowledge but in brief one could recall that the Irish constitution claims to derive its power from God³⁷ and that in 1939 the Irish Labour Party, because of objections raised by the Irish hierarchy, removed from its constitution the demand for a Worker's Republic, a demand that had been inserted three years previously.³⁸

35. *ibid.* p.371.

36. *ibid.* pp.524-525.

37. see Tom Nairn "Ireland" Bananas. Early Summer 1975. p.28.

38. F.S.L. Lyons. *op.cit.* p.525.

Finnegans Wake, in its political aspect, can be judged as the aesthetic counterpart to the Easter Rising. And, in this respect, Finnegans Wake merely emphasises the political tendencies of the earlier works. If Connolly underestimated the reactionary nature of nationalist ideology and the Catholic Church, Joyce had come to see them as the major enemies. Any discourse which held out the promise of an identity and belief had to be resolutely undermined so that language could speak through the ego, so that the female could speak through the male. Finally taken to its limit this entailed the systematic deconstruction of the national and mother tongue so that grandma's grammar could finally delineate the limits of our being. But in this activity Joyce left behind the objective audience in Ireland who would have given his texts the specific political determinant of attempting to drive a wedge between the ambitions of the national revolution and the reality of Catholicism. Rather than starting from an audience which his texts could then subvert, rather than his texts figuring a social identity which could then be "shocked" into a set of relationships, Joyce's texts were addressed more and more to an audience of his own imagination. The subjective drive to destroy the possibility of identity and belief, the desire to ~~finally~~ ^{glutly} undermine any dominant discourse became the determining political feature of his work. Lenin defined this over-estimating of the subjective factor in politics as leftism and Eisenstein can thus be seen to be making an acute political judgement from his Leninist position when he declared that in art Joyce was a "leftist".³⁹

39. S. Eisenstein. The Film Form. p.185.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is divided into four parts. In the first three sections my purpose has been to list all the works mentioned in the dissertation together with works that were of importance in the writing of the dissertation but which escaped mention in the text. Neither of the first two sections are meant to be exhaustive. Thus the first section which deals with Joyce's own writing gives details of the first version of "The Sisters" and the first published version of the Cyclops section because they are mentioned in the main body of the text, but there is no attempt to cover the immense range of Joyce's publications in magazines. All such details can be found in Slocum, John J., and Herbert Cahoon, A Bibliography of James Joyce 1882-1941, London 1953. The second section which deals with secondary material on Joyce is necessarily very selective. Full details of Joyce studies up to 1961 can be found in Deming, Robert H., A Bibliography of James Joyce Studies, Kansas 1964. These original bibliographical studies can be supplemented by the bibliographies in the PMLA and the additional details published in the James Joyce Quarterly. The third section deals with other material used in the dissertation and is, in consequence, extremely disparate. There seemed little point, however, in introducing further distinctions within this material.

The final section is devoted to works by and about the French psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan. Insofar as Lacan's work is inscribed within the huge field of psycho-analysis, I have limited myself, in listing the secondary material, to texts which are

explicitly devoted to exposition or criticism of Lacan and I have not attempted to produce a bibliography of work which makes use of Lacanian concepts. Despite this limitation, this fourth section constitutes, to my knowledge, the most thorough bibliography of Lacan and works devoted to Lacan.

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a. Writings published in Joyce's lifetime.

Note: Whatever edition is used, the order of Joyce's texts follows the chronology of original publication.

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