Caught in the Nets: James Joyce's Intimate Portraits

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In Book V of *A Portrait of the Artist* (1916), a maturing Stephen Dedalus tells his friend Davin, "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (203). Stephen may be giving voice to his maker's desire for flight, but in actuality the opposite occurs. James Joyce weaves intricate nets for himself that paradoxically tie him closely to the country he seeks to escape. With every step away, he is pulled back through his descriptions of Dublin life and immersed even more deeply into Irish culture. Ireland is, in turn, defined and then transformed by Joyce's depictions. And now, separating Dublin as an entity from Joyce's fictional portrait of the city would be nearly impossible. Both the city and James Joyce are caught in that tangled web.

Despite his protests to the contrary, Joyce does not seek to extricate himself; he is not an ambivalent artist standing outside his subject but one who re-creates and embellishes what ties him to his world. So integrated is Joyce's work that Derek Attridge considers it useful "to think of Joyce as the author of around sixty distinct works—with interesting interconnections—that happen to have been bound together as

the chapters of a number of differently titled volumes" (26). The characters Joyce depicts, the evolving relationships he develops, the actions he imagines, the minute details of Dublin life he records, the literary styles he parodies, the myths he recasts, the philosophy he explores, even the religion he denies—all demonstrate his preoccupation with Dublin and Ireland. His work documents his progressive development as a thinker and a writer but also shows a softening attitude or, even more accurately, a growing affection toward his native land.

In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, dated September 25, 1906, Joyce expresses his feelings for the city he professed, at that time, both to love and hate:

> Sometimes thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh. I have reproduced (in *Dubliners* at least) none of the attraction of the city for I have never felt at my ease in any city since I left it except in Paris. I have not reproduced its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality. The latter "virtue" so far as I can see does not exist elsewhere in Europe. I have not been just to its beauty: for it is more beautiful naturally in my opinion than what I have seen of England, Switzerland, France, Austria or Italy. (*Letters* II 166)

In his "sixty distinct works," Joyce writes constantly of Dublin; he codifies "dear dirty Dublin," the seventh city of Christendom.[1] In doing so, Joyce writes himself; he imprints himself upon these intimate portraits. Rather than flying past the nets, Joyce comes close to William Butler Yeats in practice. At the end of Yeats's *The Shadowy Waters*, Forgael, gathering his muse Dectora's hair about him, says: "Beloved, having dragged the net about us, / And knitted mesh to mesh, we grow immortal" (109). Joyce also "knitted mesh to mesh," and the patterns he wove into his carefully constructed portraits of Dublin society continue to engage readers in the pleasures of the interpretive process, which, in turn, leads to Joyce's enduring reputation.

[1]Joyce repeatedly and fondly referred to Dublin in these terms (Fargnoli and Gillespie 69).

Being Irish is not a prerequisite for being fascinated with Joyce's world. While reconstructing Dublin, he also constructs an imaginative place. Dublin is a metaphor now and no longer simply identifies a place. In that regard Joyce cannot be defined solely as an Irish writer, certainly not in any regional sense, and yet, paradoxically, no writer may be more closely associated with a particular place than Joyce. From his birth in Dublin on February 2, 1882, to his death in Zurich on January 13, 1941, he was preoccupied with re-creating Dublin. And the web Joyce weaves both captures and captivates his readers. The first sentence of Richard Ellmann's 1959 biography of Joyce suggests the allure: "We are still learning to be James Joyce's contemporaries, to understand our interpreter" (1). If anything, this statement is truer today than it was nearly fifty years ago. Joyce simultaneously trains and outstrips his readers with his ever evolving and intricately interconnected vision. Derek Attridge argues that the interpretive pleasures inherent in reading Joyce are endless:

> If we ever succeeded in fully explaining those pleasures, we would no doubt annul them, for they rely on qualities of inexplicability, unpredictability, inexhaustibility. But this is a danger we need not worry about: Joyce's texts are now so woven into the other texts of our culture that they constantly remake themselves as history moves inexorably on, and all our projects of explanation and interpretation get caught up in turn in this changing web, producing yet more transmutations in the very texts which they are trying to pin down. (2)

Like a chameleon, Joyce adroitly plays many roles, engaging his readers in this inexplicable, unpredictable, inexhaustible process. Although Joyce's focus on the city as subject places the novel within the modernist tradition, the many arguments advanced that Joyce is pre-modern or modern or postmodern can all adequately be supported by simply following his signs, his patterns. But that in itself is humbling. Any reading is just that—*a* reading, *one* among many. So how then choose a path into his work? One way is to approach Joyce in his modernist guise, and the

company is good. Maurice Beebe argues both for a literary period called modernism, which he dates from 1870 to 1945, as well as for Joyce's central place: "*Ulysses* in particular can be seen as a demonstration and summation of the major features of the entire movement" (176). Christopher Butler says Joyce "enters the experimental mainstream of modernism by an extraordinary display of technique, and not by any anterior commitment to some avant-gardist doctrine." And yet Butler believes that Joyce, even in the first chapters of *Ulysses*, "could at the very least claim to have bequeathed to his successors new resources which were not simply matters of style" (266).

Where does Joyce himself stand in this discussion? He is wonderfully ambivalent. While enjoying the possibility that his work would engage scholars for generations, Joyce also readily expressed, according to Ellmann, his dislike for literary discussions:

> Once when they [Beckett and Joyce] had listened silently to a group of intellectuals at a party, he commented, "If only they'd talk about turnips!" Occasionally, however, his own point of view emerged in a casual word or two. . . . Of modern writers in general he remarked, "If you took a characteristic obscure passage of one of these people and asked him what it meant, he couldn't tell you; whereas I can justify every line of my book." And another day he remarked, "I have discovered I can do anything with language I want." But it was like him to counter these statements by saying to Beckett with impressive modesty, "I may have oversystematized *Ulysses*." (715)

Whether *Ulysses* (1922) is "oversystematized" is a question readers will continue to address; however, this characteristic—the novel's highly structured nature—makes *Ulysses* a centerpiece of modernist literature.

Joyce may have disliked general literary discussion, but he clearly enjoyed and deliberately invited analysis of his own work, even if he despaired over a lack of intelligent readers. Joyce wrote to Valery Larbaud in 1929: "I am now hopelessly with the goats and can only think and write capriciously. Depart from me ye bleaters, into everlasting sleep

which was prepared for Academicians and their agues!" (*Letters* I 282). In that same year in an enterprising move aimed in part to counteract the bleating "goats," Joyce published *Our Exagmin-ation round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, a collection of critical responses to *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Joyce assigned and then edited the essays, including the one that became the first publication of twenty-three-year-old Samuel Beckett. Published before the novel itself, these twelve essays plus two outrageous, nearly illiterate letters protesting the book answered the many vocal critics of *Finnegans Wake*. For example, in his essay Eugene Jolas emphasizes Joyce's preoccupation with "exploding the antique logic of words" and disassociating words from their usual connections to give "language a more modern elasticity" (83–84). Robert McAlmon in a lighter vein argues that Joyce's style was a result of his glaucoma (110). Joyce's response? "You may be right, and do you think it has impaired my intellect?" (qtd. in Ellmann 626). Ellmann believes that Vladimir Dixon, one of the hostile, hilarious letter writers in the collection, was Joyce himself, and in another particularly Joycean twist, Joyce mentions this publication defending the *Work in Progress* in the published *Work in Progress* (*Finnegans* 284).

Joyce's carefully constructed enticements to enter into his ornate web continue to prove irresistible for many readers, despite the daunting task of becoming knowledgeable or, at a minimum, comfortable with any of his "sixty distinct works." Not only the size of Joyce's *oeuvre* but the inexplicable and unpredictable nature of his works themselves adds to the difficulty of producing even a straightforward reading. In addition to Joyce's actual work is the towering collection of articles, books, and journals focussing on it. Attridge explores the scope of the reading task:

> This metatextual mountain is not in any simple way *outside* Joyce's own writing at all: it could be seen as continuous with the text it surrounds, extending that text to something much larger and richer than it was when Joyce first wrote it; and there is also a sense in which it is *inside* Joyce's original text, interleaving and interlineating it, dilating it to many times its original size. (24)

No analytical study is actually essential to understanding Joyce, though any or all could prove helpful, thus leading to the inexhaustibility of the task and to the curiosity it generates. Joyce's readers have become happily complicit in helping to unwind and then reweave his web. Attridge further explains this dynamic, ongoing process: "Joyce's work has actually been growing over the years, and the number of ways of reading it has also been growing, all of them of some value, none of them final or definitive. There could not possibly be a 'correct' way of reading, or even starting to read, the textual mass that consists of Joyce's texts themselves" (24).

As a start, though, all critical analyses of *Ulysses* focus on aspects of its structure. Beebe asserts that "though we cannot be sure that one hundred per cent of everything we find in *Ulysses* was planted there by its author, we can be reasonably sure that about ninety per cent of it was. This is one of the most completely *intended* and *executed* books in the history of literature" (179). To diffuse some of the correspondence hunting, Joyce removed the chapter headings identifying the novel's eighteen sections that he had borrowed from the *Odyssey*; nonetheless, analyses of the novel continue to use the original chapter names. By 1930, Stuart Gilbert had published Joyce's elaborate yet fragmentary schema, which gives the time and scene for each section, outlines the bodily organ, art or theory, and colors associated with the section, identifies the symbols evident in the section and the technique or style of writing, and lists correspondences between his characters and those in classical literature. So the search for parallels continued unabated. Joyce actually developed two separate schemas which were circulated somewhat secretly among his friends until Gilbert published the later one, primarily to counteract charges of obscenity leveled at the novel and to establish Joyce's literary intentions. Readers initially took Gilbert's book as the final word on *Ulysses* without looking further for understanding. Rather than a search for deeper meaning, reading *Ulysses* was mainly an effort to decipher Joyce's puzzles. This reliance on his schema may be one reason Joyce wondered if he had "oversystematized Ulysses." Deciphering his codes still remains an as-

pect of reading Joyce. But as new methods of reading developed, Joyce's schema began to be treated more as a curiosity than as a viable interpretation of the text. Gilbert's book, despite Joyce's full collaboration in the project, has become merely an early stone in the "metatextual mountain" that comprises Joyce studies.

Regardless of the continuing interest in the structure of *Ulysses*, the actual number of studies that could be identified as *structuralist* is quite small (Roughley 1). Robert Scholes, writing in 1972 about the critical response to *Ulysses*, believes structuralism to be the most important theoretical development during the preceding fifty years which could allow a greater understanding of Joyce's text. Scholes further maintains that critics' reluctance to accept the final chapters of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is part of a "larger reluctance to accept the structuralist revolution. In a very real sense, some of us do not *want* to become Joyce's contemporaries, and we find the collapse of individuated characterization in the later Joyce as threatening as the loss of our own identities in some dystopian nightmare of the future" (161). But over time, the ongoing reading process has developed a greater tolerance both for Joyce's fluid representations of identity and for structuralist analysis: Alan Roughley in 1991 is not as defensive as Scholes had been two decades earlier about critics' difficulties with structuralist methods. Roughley instead outlines what he considers useful structuralist studies of Joyce's work, including Scholes's analysis.

According to Scholes, Joyce was one of very few writers of his time to display a cybernetic rather than a bioenergetic concept of fiction, that is, a paradigmatic or vertical concept of fiction rather than a syntagmatic or linear view. For example, where *Stephen Hero* (1944),[2] *Dubliners* (1914), and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* all show a clear bioenergetic separation between the self and others, in the final sections of *Ulysses* and in *Finnegans Wake* the ego becomes increasingly dispersed, and characters lose their bioenergetic selves, becoming "fluid and inter-

[2]*Stephen Hero* was an early naturalistic novel which Joyce began in 1904; fragments were published posthumously. Contrasting *Stephen Hero*'s straightforward, autobiographical style with the more artistic and imaginative *Portrait*

changeable . . . melting easily into their landscapes to become river and land, tree and stone" (Scholes 164). If these terms, then, were assigned to the central characters in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus would be Joyce's bioenergetic self-portrait, while Leopold Bloom would function as Joyce's cybernetic autobiography. This distinction is important to a structuralist reading of the novel. Certainly, both Stephen and Bloom are widely discussed as autobiographical characters—Stephen is considered the young Joyce and Bloom the mature portrait. But the bioenergetic/cybernetic distinction functions on a different plane from discussions of narrative correspondences. As Scholes explains, "Bloom contains large elements of Joyce's neural circuitry without being recognizable as Joyce; and at some important levels of experience is a 'truer' representation of Joyce than Stephen." Yet remarkably, "that cellular integrity which marks Stephen as Joyce himself and not any other person is lacking in Bloom." According to Scholes, Joyce is not developing in Bloom a character who is un-autobiographical but, instead, "an autobiographical characterization without egocentricity" (165).

To create his intimate portraits Joyce uses ideas from theology and philosophy and works himself into an intellectual position not unlike that of structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who describes mythical thought as a process of "bricolope." Lévi-Strauss says the myth-maker, like the *bricoleur*, "builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets but by using the remains of events: in French 'des bribes et des morceaux,' or odds and ends in English, fossilized evidence of the history of an individual or society" (18). This depiction of mythical thought is an accurate description of Joyce's creative process; Lévi-Strauss therefore offers a key to understanding how a reconstructed Dublin day evolves into myth. Joyce once asked his Aunt Josephine to send him "any news you like, programmes, pawntickets, press cuttings, handbills. I like reading them" (*Letters* I 194). On one of his trips to Ireland, he acquired copies of the Irish newspapers published on the day he selected for Bloomsday—June 16, 1904. He was like a Lévi-Straussian *bricoleur*, a clever handyman, collecting anything that might come in handy. Writing at a distance, Joyce asked various friends or family members to pace out certain sections in

Dublin so he could reproduce precisely his characters' traverse of the city. In his working notebooks, he recorded impressions, quotes from conversations, bits of data, lists of seemingly unrelated words, phrases, thoughts. Then, he used these unlikely collections to create a multi-leveled, paradigmatic construction of his native city. Similar to his elastic use of language, this mythmaking method of *bricolage* made it possible for "Joyce to liberate materials from old contexts, to juxtapose them freely, and allow them to enter into new and unexpected combinations. . . . Some of Joyce's puns and verbal jokes demonstrate this technique of salvaging bits and pieces for new purposes" (Norris 131).

Structuralism may seem outdated in this present period of poststructuralism or, arguably, post-poststructuralism. Although clearly only one possible theoretical approach among many, a structuralist approach to *Ulysses* is nonetheless particularly useful in excavating the embarrassment of riches in Joyce's multilayered text. His deliberate method of covering elicits the opposite impulse to uncover; thus, the complementary processes of writing and reading form a circle. This pleasurable, circular activity can reveal Joyce's conscious structure as well as redefine both writing and reading. Although the disassociation and disintegration inherent in Joyce's method can prove uncomfortable, reading Joyce is, by necessity, a playful process: each detail explained reveals yet more unexplained; each layer uncovered exposes still more layers. The "inexplicability, unpredictability, and inexhaustibility" of the task, therefore, does not deter but engages readers in the game. Both Joyce and his readers have dragged his net about them and are caught up together in the reweaving process, jointly knitting mesh to mesh. Tracing a few of the threads in *Ulysses*, then, can make Joyce's patterns transparent as well as demonstrate the understanding that can be teased out of the text through a structuralist analysis.

The structuralist effort "is not to discover how consciousness forms a system of being and meaning, but how system forms the being and meaning of consciousness" (Detweiler 17). System, therefore, takes precedence. Jean Piaget's definition of structure seems particularly apt in Joyce's case: "the notion of structure is comprised of three key ideas: the idea of wholeness, the idea of transformation, and the idea of self-

regulation" (5). All three key ideas are at play in *Ulysses*. Cer-tainly, the idea of *wholeness* is the most easily observable. Any recognizably literary work demonstrates Piaget's idea of wholeness, and Joyce extends that quality by encapsulating in his novel the whole of one Dublin day. Contained within that vision of wholeness, though, are Piaget's two other "ideas"—*transformation* and *self-regulation*. For example, the Homeric parallels may be Joyce's explicit way to transform this specific Dublin day into a mythic journey but are also one means of regulation within *Ulysses*. The Homeric parallels provide a feedback loop, correcting imbalance and braking any tendency for the work to become "merely random recitations from Bloom's day. And there are many other such loops. Each chapter, in fact, is designed to run down when certain schematic systems are complete and when a certain temporal segment of the Dublin day has been covered" (Scholes 166–67). Even the multiplicity of literary styles Joyce uses in the novel, especially in the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter, can be seen not only as transformation but also as performing a self-regulatory function.

Transformation makes *Ulysses* pleasurable to read but also accounts for its inexplicability, unpredictability, and, especially, inexhaustibility. For example, metempsychosis may be the ultimate example of transformation. Joyce quite magically causes the soul of Homer's Ulysses to transmigrate imaginatively into his Leopold Bloom. Joyce associates Ulysses and Bloom in a metempsychotic way that demonstrates cybernetic transformation, while the Homeric parallel helps maintain an underlying unconscious infrastructure or self-regulation. In turn, this idea of the transmigration of souls is an underlying theme of the novel, thus heightening its literary wholeness. In an instance of wicked humor Joyce has Bloom explain to Molly the meaning of the word *metempsychosis*, which she encounters in a book he has brought home to her: "Metempsychosis? he said, frowning. It's Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls. O, rocks! she said. Tell us in plain words." Bloom muses over a simpler definition of the soul living on after death. Then, as he picks up her scattered clothing, and as she eats the breakfast he has brought up to her, he persists in explaining metempsychosis despite her interruptions: "Some people believe, he

said, that we go on living in another body after death. . . . They used to believe you could be changed into an animal or a tree" (52). Joyce mentions this idea, including Molly's amusing mispronunciation, *met him pike hoses*, in varying detail nine times in seven separate sections of the novel with ever evolving applications; nonetheless, this example of seemingly inexhaustible transformation is still a fairly small thread in Joyce's woven net.

A much longer thread is the image *throwaway*, which comes to stand for Bloom in three distinct ways, providing a particularly ornate instance of transformation. A demonstration of how the image works vertically or paradigmatically must unfortunately overemphasize the linear narrative; the analysis also concentrates on the cybernetic Bloom, thus de-emphasizing Joyce's bioenergetic self, Stephen, although he is integral to much of what transpires. Some background is helpful here. Why did Joyce choose this specific June day for his novel? Yes, he had been able to pick up newspapers for that day while he was in Dublin. Was he then simply exploiting an opportunity? Ellmann claims that 16 June 1904 was the first day James Joyce and Nora Barnacle went walking together (162).[3] But Stanley Sultan believes the only explanation for the date of Bloomsday that makes any sense is that "a horse named Throwaway, a dark horse, in an upset that made the race a memorable one, won the coveted Gold Cup away from the famous Sceptre at Ascot on that day in that year. This alone of the public events of the day enters into the action of the novel" (456). Given the possibilities of *bricolage*, both Ellmann's and Sultan's suggestions or even, no doubt, all of the ingenious arguments put forward for that particular date probably influenced Joyce's choice. Without question, the Ascot Gold Cup race is an important thread in the novel. The race is prominent in thirteen sections with five full accounts of the race itself, each in a different rhetorical style; eleven specific discussions of the contest involve at least eighteen separate persons; even Stephen engages in an interior mono-

[3]Nora, a country girl from Galway, eloped with Joyce to the continent in 1904 although he rejected the institution of marriage. After living together for twenty-seven years, they married on July 4, 1931, out of concern for their

logue about horse racing in general.

How then does the image *throwaway* work in Ulysses? Bloom is first associated with *throwaway* when he loans Lyons his morning paper and then, wanting to move on, tries to give it to him, saying he "was just going to throw it away" (85). Lyons, who is studying the racing page, assumes Bloom means the horse Throwaway. The offhand nature of Bloom's statement, which Lyons asks him to repeat, reinforces his assumption that Bloom is giving him a racing tip. Although Bloom means explicitly that Lyons can keep the paper because he was going to "throw it away," which he later does, Lyons infers from his statement that Bloom is giving him the winner of the race. Bloom wants to be rid of Lyons, which accounts for his diffidence. Since Bloom is unaware of Lyons's inference, he does not realize he has thrown away his prophecy of the race's winner until later when he sees Molly and Boylan's betting stubs on the dresser. Here, Bloom is linked with the action throwaway; only in Lyons's mind at this point is Bloom also associated with the horse Throwaway. Neither the reader nor Bloom is yet aware that Throwaway is the name of a horse in the race. In fact, not until late in the day when Lenehan comes into Barney Kiernan's pub complaining about the "rank outsider" who won the race does the text reveal that the name of the horse is Throwaway (325).

In Lyons's mind, however, the outsider Bloom, a Jew, is associated with Throwaway, the outside chance. This association builds throughout the day. In Davy Byrne's pub while eating a Gorgonzola cheese sandwich, Bloom sits listening to talk of the race but does not join in, although he considers doing so. When he leaves, Lyons reports that Bloom gave him "a dead snip" for the race (178), a possibility others in the pub scorn. Later at Lynam's, when Lenehan runs into Lyons who is betting on a horse that has no chance, Lenehan dissuades him. Right at that moment, Bloom is "a dark-backed figure" looking at a cart of books outside on the street (233).[4] When he sees Bloom, the "dark-backed figure" at the book cart, Lenehan points him out to McCoy as

[4]All of these L-words are clearly deliberate. Bloom is also carrying lemon soap for Molly in his pocket. This playing with sounds which Joyce does throughout the book engages his readers in additional pleasurable transformation and self-regulation.

the one who had given Lyons the bad tip. In a seemingly irrelevant comment McCoy describes how Bloom once bought a book in Liffey Street for two bob—an astronomy book with pictures of comets which was worth twice the money (233).

Much later in Kiernan's, Lenehan enters and reports that the winner of the race is Throwaway, saying it "takes the biscuit" (325); then, Lenehan tries to take a biscuit, but the tin is empty. Bloom hears Lenehan say that Boylan bet two quid for himself and a lady friend on Sceptre, Lenehan's tip for the race, information Bloom uses later to put the association together when he sees the betting stubs on Molly's dresser. Meanwhile, Bloom tries to enter into the conversation in Kiernan's but is scoffed at; he first imagines standing up for himself but then is overcome with feelings of persecution: "But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred" (333). When Bloom leaves Kiernan's, saying he is going to the courthouse to look for his friend Martin Cunningham, the disgruntled Lenehan tells the others that Bloom's story is a blind, that he is really going to collect his winnings because he was the only one who picked the winner—"a dark horse": "He's a bloody dark horse himself, says Joe" (335). This explicit link of Bloom to the dark horse Throwaway follows a conversation in which the Citizen taunts him for being a Jew, an outsider, even though Bloom insists he was born in Ireland. Bloom's Jewishness and his opinions may set him apart but do not make him an outsider. Instead, his lack of enthusiasm for betting on the Gold Cup becomes a symbol for his lack of involvement in male pursuits—work, sex, friendships. Bloom is passive; he is a dabbler, a looker on, an outsider.

The third use of the image *throwaway*—the Elijah throwaway—is shown in an earlier thread. A few hours after Bloom leaves Lyons with his "tip" but a little before he goes into Davy Byrne's for lunch, a young man outside Graham Lemon's confectionery store places a throwaway—or handbill—in Bloom's hand. When Bloom looks at it, he sees "Bloo. . . ." He first thinks that it refers to himself but then thinks "No": the notice says "Blood of the Lamb." Joyce thus links Bloom with Christ. As Bloom continues to walk toward the river read-

ing, he realizes the throwaway is an announcement that Dr. John Alexander Dowie is coming to speak. “Elijah is coming” is the language Joyce uses (151). Now, such a message is very good news for a Jew, even a thrice baptized one like Bloom. If Elijah is coming, the Messiah cannot be far behind: “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6). In another wonderful example of transformation Bloom’s thoughts do not recite the scripture but proceed as if they had. Bloom first thinks of a luminous crucifix he had seen advertised; even in the dead of night one might see Christ hanging on the wall. He then thinks of his dead son Rudy. Next, he sees Stephen’s sister and considers how a home breaks up when its mother dies. He worries because she looks uncared for and underfed. He is now standing on O’Connell bridge looking down at the water and remembering the story Cunningham had told earlier on the way to Dignam’s funeral about a friend’s son who had almost drowned before the father paid two shillings to a boatman to pull him out. Stephen’s father had retorted that the father had paid one and eightpence too much. Bloom’s thoughts have turned to children *and* to fathers.

Looking down at the river, Bloom thinks about throwing himself off the bridge. He then notices the birds and casually throws them the crumpled Elijah throwaway—“Elijah thirtytwo feet per sec is come,” the speed of a falling body. As he watches the hungry birds, he recites lines that Hamlet’s father speaks: “Hamlet, I am thy father’s spirit / Doomed for a certain time to walk the earth” (152), linking himself with Hamlet’s father, Christ, *and* Elijah—metempsychosis taken to the third degree. But still another association in the text is also now clearer—the one between Bloom and Stephen. In the library scene in *A Portrait of the Artist*, Stephen argues convincingly that Shakespeare was Hamlet’s father not Hamlet. Since Stephen resembles Hamlet bioenergetically, readers usually dismiss Stephen’s convoluted argument associating himself with the father, not the son, as a demonstration of a particularly playful Stephen/Joyce capriciousness. But the great similarity in tem-

perament Joyce creates between Bloom and Stephen, especially in their rejection of action, renders them father and son, not actually but certainly in a cybernetic sense. Ellmann believes this association with the passive Hamlet's father instead of the rash son is apt for Bloom, Stephen, and Joyce himself:

> It fits Joyce's notion both of the artistic temperament and of the desirable man. Joyce, Stephen, and Bloom share the philosophy of passivity in act, energy in thought, and tenacity in conviction. Hamlet, on the other hand, is the hero of a revenge-play; however unwittingly and fumblingly, he sheds a great deal of blood. Joyce does not encourage this view of the artist, and so he relates Shakespeare to the suffering father, the victim, rather than to the avenging son. The artist endures evil—he doesn't inflict it. (379)

After watching the hungry gulls fruitlessly chase the throwaway, Bloom begins to move away but then exclaims, "Wait. Those poor birds" (153). The Elijah association becomes clearer as Bloom buys cakes and feeds the birds, a nice reversal of the story of Elijah who first wished for death and then was fed by birds. Bloom has also knowingly thrown away the Elijah prophecy unlike his earlier prophecy which he threw away unknowingly. In another example of metempsychosis, the Elijah throwaway makes its own excursion through the city. Joyce traces the throwaway's progress as it sails down the Liffey under the Loopline bridge, past John Rogerson's quay, and finally past the three-masted schooner *Rosevear*. Joyce always refers to it as a throwaway which reinforces its relationship to the horse Throwaway and the action throw away.

When Bloom returns to Kiernan's, not having found Cunningham at the courthouse but hoping he has now arrived at the pub, Bloom is confused by increased hostility. As a result of Lenehan's story about Bloom's "tip," an even drunker Citizen, angry that Bloom does not share his supposed winnings by buying a round of drinks, berates the astounded Bloom. Bloom shouts back, "Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Savior was a jew and his father

was a jew. Your God" (342). At this point Cunningham enters and manages to get Bloom outside and into his carriage: "He had no father, says Martin. That'll do now." But Bloom cannot leave matters alone and shouts, "Your God was a jew. Christ was a jew like me" (342). The carriage starts out just as the incensed Citizen throws the empty biscuit tin at Bloom, giving him the veritable biscuit. The scene ends with a lyrical passage explicitly linking Bloom, the outsider, the dark horse, with Elijah and Christ in an extraordinary transformation of II Kings 2:11–12, Matthew 17:1–5, Song of Solomon 6:10, and Mark 14: 36:

> When lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel. (345)

By capitalizing *He* and *Him*, Joyce emphasizes the godlike prophetic power Bloom has come to possess. McCoy's description of Bloom's book of comets has predicted his ascension to power. Although Bloom is now explicitly linked with another outsider, Elijah, an Elijah throwaway, this scene where those in Kiernan's pub throw Bloom away is instigated by the association of Bloom with Throwaway, the dark horse. So all three aspects of the image come into play.

In the fifteenth section of *Ulysses*, Joyce's cybernetic approach comes fully into play. This dreamlike "Circe" section reads much like absurdist drama and contains many twisted throwaway links to Bloom. Scenes follow one another as Bloom's distorted mind dictates. Dr. John Alexander Dowie of the Elijah throwaway transforms into "Alexander J. Christ Dowie" (428), who now denounces Bloom to all "fellowchristians and anti-Bloomites" as a libertine from infancy (492). A little

later, Bloom/Elijah is poised above the water much as he had been on O'Connell bridge. But now, the fall is from Lion's Head cliff, and Bloom is the crumpled Elijah throwaway rolling through the summer air into the purple water: "Thirtytwo head over heels per second. Press nightmare. Giddy Elijah. Fall from cliff. Sad end of government printer's clerk" (550). Here is the fulfillment of his earlier passing thoughts about suicide, which follow directly after his memories of sexual thoughts when he was young. Now, even animals come to testify against him. In yet another transformation, Joyce repeats Bloom's fall: "*Through silversilent summer air the dummy of Bloom, rolled in a mummy, rolls rotatingly from the Lion's Head cliff into the purple waiting waters*" (550). Rejected and guilty, he becomes "dummymummy" Bloom (550), the throwaway, tumbling "head over heels" through the summer air. Leaving throwaway Bloom falling through the air is a nice ongoing image. But if Bloom is Elijah, dummymummy throwaway, still unable to fly past the nets, then so is Joyce—a disappointing thought.

Bloom finally understands the throwaway association when he sees Molly and Boylan's betting stubs on the dresser in the penultimate section of the novel. This "Ithaca" episode unfolds in the style of an impersonal catechism. Bloom recalls his day and recites the throwaway convolutions with amusement. In the preceding "Eumaeus" section he had read an account of the race in the late pink edition of the *Evening Telegraph* while in the cabman's shelter with Stephen. Now that he has returned home, all the various coincidences become clear to him. He understands the *throwaway* image but not the correspondence with himself. All day, Bloom has been out and about, exercising his prophetic powers, his expectations, so when he sees the stubs, he tests his mood: "He had not risked, he did not expect, he had not been disappointed, he was satisfied" (676). He is satisfied to have sustained no loss in the race and to have brought gain to others; he is pleased to have played a prophetic role; and since he expected nothing, he is not disappointed. But what is Bloom's mood when he discovers evidence of Molly's adultery with Boylan? He asks himself, "Why more abnegation than jealousy, less envy than equanimity?" (733). Bloom's passivity, his equanimity, while understandable when associated with the horse race,

can seem particularly inexplicable in relation to Molly, raising many questions for the reader. Why does he accept an outsider status in his own home? Why does he not act like Ulysses and drive the suitors out? Why does he accept with equanimity the evidence of Molly's adultery, simply brushing the potted meat out of his bed and noticing with a shrug Boylan's impression in the bedclothes? And why, under these circumstances, does he get into that bed, kiss Molly on the bottom, and order breakfast in bed when he wakes—a complete reversal of their usual routine? He certainly appears to be a satisfied man.

Because of Bloom's satisfaction with his avoidance of risk, and no expectations, disappointment is not possible. Similarly, Molly does not disappoint him because he did not expect her to remain faithful. Just as he is satisfied "to have sustained no positive loss" where the race is concerned (675), he convinces himself that nothing is lost to him by Molly's adultery. How does he justify his sentiments? He moves from a discussion of the fragility of the hymen through a complicated grammatical description of sexual intercourse to the immutable stars (734). The message is clear: if there is no value in the thing, betting or sexual intercourse, no loss occurs. So by risking nothing, nothing is lost. While listing Molly's twenty-five lovers earlier in the day, Bloom laughs at the possibility each assumed he was her first lover. Yet Molly makes it clear that Boylan *is* her first. Scholes claims that "Blazes Boylan is Molly's adjustment to Bloom's sexual retreat" (170). Once a cuckold, a man can stop worrying about becoming one and need no longer fear his own inadequacy. Bloom gambled on Molly and turned the loss into a win; he wins because what he prophesied, what he expected, has finally occurred. But he is unaware of how Molly feels about his self-satisfied equanimity.

While a cursory analysis of her adultery might conclude that Molly has thrown Bloom away, she instead accuses him of throwing *her* away, of "trying to make a whore" of her (746). Contrary to Bloom's expectations, Molly is receptive to him: "its a wonder Im not an old shrivelled hag before my time living with him so cold never embracing me except sometimes when hes asleep the wrong end of me not knowing I suppose who he has" (777). Significantly, Joyce gives Molly the final word

in the novel in the "Penelope" stream-of-consciousness section. Knowing her thoughts would surprise the passive Bloom. He is the man she considers having another child with, the one she contemplates patching up a physical break with, saying one kiss could send them all spinning. She even realizes that Bloom has had to think of her being with Boylan all day, which might account for his strange behavior in ordering breakfast. The feelings she expresses show she has not thrown away their relationship. She is fully aware of Boylan's crude behavior and resents it; she is also aware of Bloom's retreat and resents that. Bloom's passivity and lack of expectations may prevent his feeling inadequate and protect his designation as an "unconquered hero" (264), but, paradoxically, his lack of action pushes his wife away. He may be satisfied, but she is not. Sadly, both Molly and Bloom yearn for each other but have not had sexual relations for the eleven years since their little boy's death.

Joyce's Everyman is obviously a good man, but Joyce creates through Bloom a deeply ironic portrait of the unconquered hero. *Ulysses* ends enigmatically. Tracing the image *throwaway*, although only one of many threads in the novel, reveals one central open question. Molly's final "yes" has often been interpreted as a yes to Bloom and their life together, but that could be true only in so far as Bloom chooses to be part of that affirming yes to life. But Throwaway Bloom has acted otherwise. Bloom alone had the outcome of the race; unknowingly, he gave that away. He held the good news of Elijah's coming; unthinkingly, he also threw it away. He had the power to bring Molly back to him; fruitlessly, he wasted it anyway. Their daughter Milly's being in the house prevented Boylan's presence; knowingly, Bloom sent her away. His all-day absence from the house invited Boylan's intrusion; consciously, Bloom stayed away anyway—throw away, throwaway, Throwaway Bloom.

This discussion of *Ulysses* ends without exhausting even the possible correspondences for Bloom. Nonetheless, the essay, which in itself is a type of *bricolage*, may approach an understanding of the rich, multi-leveled image *throwaway*, which includes many of Bloom's designations: outsider, outside chance, dark horse, dark-backed figure, unconquered hero. The analysis, however, merely touches on Bloom's associations with Hamlet's father, Christ, and Elijah—"ben Bloom Elijah." Not men-

tioned at all are the multiple associations of Bloom with Moses, and the odd designations of old sheepface (345), black wary hecat (265), or possibly the most lyrical, “Leopoldo or the Bloom is on the Rye” (233). But perhaps the process of tracing a few associations for Bloom renders *Ulysses* less inexplicable or unpredictable. Certainly, this discussion demonstrates Piaget’s three keys to structure: wholeness, transformation, and self-regulation (5). One image—throwaway—in its endless transformations, provides a feed-back loop, regulating the seemingly extraneous into a surprising wholeness, a new consciousness. This structuralist effort was not meant to “discover how [Joyce’s] consciousness forms a system of being and meaning, but how system [itself] forms the being and meaning of [his] consciousness” (Detweiler 17).

Rather than being a dummymummy throwaway unable to fly past the nets that have caught his soul, Joyce instead is freed by redefining flight in *Ulysses* while redesigning the nets that had held him back. Nationality, language, religion are all transformed in the novel; he has woven wholly new, intricate patterns in his enticing web. “Dear dirty Dublin” is transformed, but so is Joyce himself, and so are his readers. Joyce’s evident joy in his writing and his readers’ pleasure in the interpretation of it in turn transform the work. In this inexhaustible excavation process of disassembling and endlessly reconstructing the metatextual mountain, the writer James Joyce, his beloved city, his evolving self-portraits, as well as his indispensable readers are all intimately “knitted mesh to mesh.”

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