

The Narrative of Joyce's *Ulysses*: Modernist Mainstream, Postmodernist Source

Sonja Bašić
Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb

Joyce's work, and *Ulysses* in particular, is seen as the paradigmatic modernist battlefield, in which representability and non-representability, transparency and opacity, récit and discours are pitted against each other. In the specific field of Joyce's narrative discourse in *Ulysses* formalist-structuralist "narratology" is seen as an invaluable approach to the modes of transmission and mediation prevailing in the chapters up to "Sirens". Beginning with "Sirens", however, another type of narrative discourse begins to prevail, in the analysis of which narratology can be and has been misapplied in the attempt to naturalize and personalize the narrative "voices". This second narrative-stylistic complex, as it has been called in this paper, requires other complementary methods better attuned to the parodic mediation prevailing in it, stemming from the critic's awareness of its non-representational, writerly aspect.

This text has been prompted by the belief that regardless of the new poststructuralist readings of Joyce, there still remains much unfinished business in the field of "post-Genettian" narrative theory, especially if conjoined with reader-oriented approaches¹ and an awareness of the dialogue of fictional discourses conducted within one novel, and perhaps more importantly, between one novel and other representatives of the genre in the synchronic and diachronic context.

1. A contemporary author, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, characteristically refers to "Anglo-American New Criticism, Russian Formalism, French Structuralism, the Tel-Aviv School of Poetics and the Phenomenology of Reading" (*Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics*, Methuen 1983, p. 5). Particularly relevant for this paper has been the work of Wolfgang Iser, Gérard Genette and Dorrit Cohn.

Whatever turns out to be our final verdict on the power of literature to represent, it seems incontrovertible that Joyce's work, and *Ulysses* in particular, is the paradigmatic textual battlefield, or marriage-bed in which the warring drives towards representability and non-representability, transparency and opacity, *récit* and *discours* confront each other, such paradoxical duality being perhaps the prime constitutive function of modernism.

The two divergent, but in no way incompatible drives are also significantly reflected in many aspects of the narrative of *Ulysses*: the kinds and degrees of mimetic illusion or narrative authority it produces, as well as the kinds and degrees of narrative mediation through which it refracts its story. Particularly fascinating and insufficiently studied in this context have been Joyce's strategies: narrative distancing using discourse to subvert the story, and in particular his merging and juxtaposing mutually subversive discourses within the novel, indeed on each of its pages, down to the individual sentence.

A study of these narrative features should also help us to place *Ulysses* on the continuum of literary history, growing out of realism, naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, triumphantly embodying modernism² and prefiguring post-modernism, or whatever we decide to call the experimental literature of the present.

I propose in this paper that each of these two drives produces a specific narrative matrix, or better, a number of variants, which can be fitted into one narrative / stylistic complex.

As manifested in *Ulysses*, with its varied and frequent use of interior monologue and free indirect style (and the related mutual contaminations of the figural and authorial idioms)³, the first narrative complex often quotes or reports to us the spoken or silent words and the flow of perceptions of Stephen and Bloom represented in accordance with the conventions of mimesis and verisimilitude.⁴ These modes concentrate on representing consciousness and mind, focalizing the narrative through the characters and keeping narratorial mediation in check. The narrative horizon (point of view) is mainly limited to what the characters see, and often rendered through a conventional approximation of what they could say. In addition, there is strong psychological motivation and a tendency to use language as "experiential activity".⁵ The first narrative complex of *Ulysses* is therefore illusionist, also striving for what Barthes has called "l'effet de

2. Cf my paper "Transparent or Opaque? The Reader of *Ulysses* between Involvement and Distanciation", *New Perspectives on James Joyce*, Whitston 1986.

3. Rimmon 1983, p. 109—10, following McHale, distinguishes seven types of speech presentation; Monika Fludernik, following Stanzel (*Journal of Narrative Technique* 16:1 (1986), p. 16), offers a somewhat different schema.

4. Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds* insists on the mimetic basis of interior monologue. Cf her debate with Gérard Genette on the subject.

5. Bradbury M. / McFarlane J., eds, *Modernism*, Penguin 1976, p. 222.

réel". In spite of the constant, everpresent subversive and distancing current (of both discourse vs story and discourse vs discourse!), this complex remains tied to the tradition of mimetic writing, to realist and impressionist strategies. This complex is particularly well suited to the rendering of figural consciousness.

Let us remind ourselves that historically modernism represents and embodies the ultimate reaches of consciousness-dominated fiction. All this writing is psychologically charged, centering around internally focalized feeling, or at least perceiving *minds*, often simulating mind function. It adheres to the convention in which the narrative instance tends to merge with, or at least concentrate on, figural perception and emotion, while the narratorial (authorial) perspective remains subdued. In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, the sum of the figural perspectives and voices is all-important; it amounts in fact to what could be considered the experiential and ideological horizon of the book. The final realizations of Prince and Princess combined, of Strether, of Stephen in *The Portrait*, are nearly identical to the final realizations achieved by their respective novels. This could also be one way of defining the subjective and solipsistic side of these novels. In spite of their limitations, as models of human individuality, sensibility and/or moral awareness, these characters are most important, even central to the modernist novelist's concern. In spite of their "sense of the abyss", and of their artifice, these novels still give the greatest prominence to the figural mind and the construction of its awareness, its memories, passions and hosts of perceptions. In the last analysis, these minds are often all there is of fictional reality, they replace and subsume other objective models of reality, and remain representative in spite of their fragmentariness. The effect of wholeness — if and when it is achieved or approximated — often derives from an aesthetic faith, which remains a modernist asset in spite of the "nostalgia for presence" so fascinatingly posited by Jean François Lyotard as the dominant trend of the modernist masters.⁶

It is quite remarkable to notice how strongly this type of modernist narrative/stylistic complex still relies on the mimetic convention and the rendering of psychological verisimilitude. Most of the narrative and stylistic strategies are used to support the reader's illusion that the direct presentation (evocation) of human experience, even when most trivial, is still the central preoccupation of the writer. Even when embroidering mood and atmosphere, insisting on poetic ambiguity and irony, or subjective, impressionist fragmentation of experience, or intellectual difficulty — all devices diverting the reader from direct and immediate participation — the modernist novelist sticks to the representative experience of the ubiquitous figural consciousness. For Proust, or James, or the Joyce of *The Portrait*, it could even be said that closure is achieved at the point in which the hero — Marcel, Isabel, Strether, Stephen — has

6. "What is Postmodernism?", *Innovation/Renovation* (I. & Sally Hassan eds), The University of Wisconsin Press 1983, pp. 329—341.

learned and understood whatever the novelist has shared with him, and this, to use another Jamesian hyperbole, is "everything". In other words, there is nothing in these books that these characters have not done or seen, or could not have done and seen, and there is nothing they have not perceived. Figural consciousness reigns supreme in these novels, and the narrative modes are made to fit its demands, allowing the figural perspective and voice to significantly contend with, and even supplant, the perspective and discourse created by the narrative instance, with free indirect and free direct discourse at their most expressive and elaborate.

In Joyce's canon, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* remains the best overall example of this modernist tendency, although only *Ulysses* achieved its supreme embodiment in its interior monologues. *Ulysses*, however, also branched out into other modernist areas. Firstly, it has considerably restricted the aristocratic modernist solipsism of the author-protagonist persona in the novel, by supplementing it with Bloom's earthiness and Molly's super-earthiness. Secondly, Joyce has returned *Ulysses* to a stunningly varied and detailed materiality, which surpasses even the wildest dreams of more traditional realists and naturalists. Thirdly, and most pertinently for us at this point, he has created a strong distancing countercurrent, narrative/stylistic complex, or discourse, contrasted to the first psychological, anthropocentric and mimetic trend. Nevertheless, the main thrust of chapters such as "Proteus", "Calypso" or "Lestrygonians" keeps them firmly linked to the tradition of mind-oriented, expressive modernist writing. A wealth of examples of this can be selected from among the sensations, thoughts and memories of Bloom and Stephen on that sunny morning in June: the threadbare cuffedge, the bowl of bitter waters, the cracked looking-glass of a servant; Bloom feeding his cat, sniffing the gelid air, assailed by perfumes of embraces, reliving his moments with Molly on the Hill of Howth. Let me add that the illusion produced leads to what might be called, metaphorically, reader involvement or empathizing.

In *Ulysses* the second, distancing drive produces a narrative/stylistic complex much more difficult to encompass and define. Everyone agrees that, except for Penelope, there is little interior monologue in *Ulysses* after "Wandering Rocks". Much less numerous are those who see that there is also very little free indirect discourse — at least as long as FID is seen as a specific merger of figural and authorial discourse contextualized mimetically.⁷ True, this discourse is one of the triumphs of "Nausicaa". However, careful study of Gerty's section will reveal that this text is already poised in a precarious embrace with parody and pastiche: words which might be authenticated as Gerty's within a mimetic narrative matrix,

7. Cf Rimmon 1983, p. 114: "The concept of FID is meaningful only within mimesis (in the broad sense) (Ron 1981), because the need to attribute textual segments to speakers as well as the urge to account for apparently false statements and reconcile seeming contradictions exists only when the text is grasped as in some sense analogous to (mimetic) reality. A non-mimetic text would tend to play havoc with such attributions; in it, as Barthes says, 'the discourse, or better, the language speaks: nothing more'."

are constantly juxtaposed to or overlaid by the sentimental styles of women's magazines and novels. Thus not only does Gerty's idiom merge with that of the narration, but it is itself contaminated by literary pulp styles, a trend which either brings FID to the limits of its traditionally accepted mimetic boundaries or forces us to further distinguish between types of FID, straining the very links which have given this category its (limited) usefulness. Thus, it is possible to see "Eumaeus", much more than "Nausicaa", where the trend is in its inception, as a huge parody of free indirect style. In this chapter Bloom sees, but hardly ever silently speaks / thinks without great parodic distortion, which directly undermines the traditional task of FID: the heightening of figural presence by lending figural voice to a narrated text (in third person plus sequence of tenses).⁸ Although I am aware of recent theoretical attempts to broaden and depersonalize the notion of FID, I should plead at least for a sliding scale, which in *Ulysses* would enable us to differentiate between models allowing for (however tentative) figural idiom (vocabulary, tone, semantics)-identification, and those in which the source of the voice becomes much more problematic, in "Sirens" or "Eumaeus" or "Ithaca", where as Barthes says: "the discourse, or better, the language speaks: nothing more".

With internal monologue and free indirect style in abeyance, as the novel proceeds *Ulysses* relies more and more on narrative mediation. While this will take us quite far, for example, in determining William Faulkner's later style, *Ulysses* requires additional qualifications. For instance, thinking in more traditional Boothian terms, one will conclude that "Oxen of the Sun" has elements of omniscient narration (which Genette would call both hetero and extradiegetic). Bloom is described from the outside, both as he acts and thinks, pitying Mrs Purefoy, women's woe pondering, reprimanding the medical students for their heartlessness etc. Omniscience is, further, very prominent in "Ithaca", where we are offered a great deal of information about Bloom's and Stephen's opinions and thoughts. However, stressing omniscience, we do not seem to be stressing the right thing, because the change in the discourse seems to come from other sources. The entire question of perspective, even including the more modern Genettian division into seeing and speaking, seems to fall short of the narrative puzzle of these chapters.

It is, of course, important to realize that a great many effects now seem to derive from the drastic curtailment of the direct recreation of figural consciousness, accompanied by a growing affirmation of the narrative instance which is *not* focalized through the character. The narrative of the "Telemachia" is coextensive with Stephen's consciousness to a very high degree, and is interlaced with his voice; the same can be said of "Hades", "Calypso", "Lotus Eaters" and "Lestrygonians". In the later chapters, in many of which Bloom gets more of the limelight, the perspective is often his, but we very rarely hear his voice. Interior monologues, as we have said, appear much less frequently, and in the narrated

8. Cf Brian McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse: a Survey of Recent Accounts", *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3 (1978).

passages his voice and idiom is distorted, hyperbolized, caricatured, drowned. In "Cyclops" the story is told by a homodiegetic narrator; in "Circe" every effort to naturalize various idioms leads to disaster. In "Ithaca" the perspective is broad and all-inclusive, completely blocking the inside view. In "Eumaeus" the perspective is again entirely Bloom's, but his idiom is *perhaps* reflected in the narrator's parody of the style he might use *if he were* a writer ... in any case we are far away from whatever limited and distorted verisimilitude we were granted in the earlier chapters. As said before, in "Ithaca" the narrator is most certainly omniscient. However, he is confusingly and differently so, mainly because the information seems to be so madly wayward in scope and kind, intensely delayed and mediated by the improbabilities and vagaries of the "catechistic" method, departing from narrative proper in ways not usually encountered in novels (except in such extravagant predecessors as Melville's *Moby Dick*).

One thing should be said about the strategy employed by the narrator in the non-stream-of-consciousness chapters. He never meddles in the story, nor does he meddle directly in the discourse (he is therefore not the typical self-conscious narrator). He is never explicitly intrusive: implicitly, however, he creates an intensely metafictional effect, an intense consciousness of the medium itself.⁹

Although I have been referring to "early" and "late" chapters, I have not been arguing in favour of an "initial" style¹⁰, nor was it my intention to slice *Ulysses* into two separate parts. I see the two narrative complexes as dynamic and fluid shaping forces rather than static and fixed narrative/stylistic formations. The second, distancing impulse is certainly produced in the novel from the very beginning: in Yeats's woodshadows smuggled into the physical world of the Martello Tower, in the reversed word-order of the first sentence in "Lotus Eaters", the headings of "Aeolus", etc. It is the omnipotent principle informing this writerly text, constantly drawing our attention to its existence over and apart the story it relates, or in other words, inciting us to toil endlessly and arduously at constructing meaning which is not made readily available to us. Still, I cannot help agreeing with those critics who stress that a *Ulysses* consisting of the first ten chapters would not only be a different novel, being shorter and somewhat incomplete, but it would also be a different kind of narrative. This shorter *Ulysses* would have been a novel dominated by the internalized figural perspective, and idiom, it would have been a stream-of-consciousness novel which, such as we have it today, it is not.

Perhaps one of the ways in which this second narrative complex may be approached is through the realization that, neglecting the complications of narrative mediation limited by structuralists to the modes of transmitting a story

9. Cf Wolfgang Iser, *Der Implizite Leser*, Fink 1972, for a reader-oriented approach to this aspect of Joyce; an interesting poststructuralist discussion is Carla Marengo, "Joyce and Metafiction, The Case of Eumaeus", *New Perspectives on James Joyce*, Whitston 1986.

10. Cf Fludernik 1986 for a recent discussion, from whom I differ in emphasis rather than essence.

in the process of narrative communication, the stress has now shifted in the direction of non-referentiality and non-representability, notions calling into question some basic tenets of narratology. Wolfgang Iser was certainly referring to this aspect of the novel when he stated that by juxtaposing nearly all the existing narrative modes, and all the schemata of representation in fiction made available by tradition, including a unified point of view and the concept of fabula as a structuring principle, *Ulysses* can be seen as a monument to the downfall of representability:

Ulysses is a system of expectations, called forth then voided; at the same time it is an enormous display of information which has been denied mutual relation. From this angle it appears as the ruin of representational thinking, for what is presented by it affects us as the foundering of that which the novel as a genre had originally promised to achieve.¹¹

While in several early chapters we have a lot of mind-centred interior monologue and the illusion-of-the-figural-voice strategy of free indirect style, in the course of the novel we become more and more involved with an ironic/parodic orchestration of the text freed from psychological verisimilitude. Having stressed in an earlier text the great difference between *Ulysses* and the tradition of the novel as it existed before it¹², in the text quoted above Iser sees *Ulysses* as the paradigmatic object lesson that the world of the book must be constructed by the reader during the process of reading, just as it is constructed by the novel's characters who are shown as living it. Even if we are not ready to go with them all the way, such views help us to grasp those aspects of *Ulysses* which work against the notion of representability. Furthermore, it is my belief that the second narrative/stylistic complex is primarily responsible for this effect, foregoing the experiential use of language, psychology, as well as attempts at recreating the mind-function of characters, embarking on processes more abstractly compositional and structural, more subversive of the ways readers traditionally read novels, creating another type of involvement altogether, drawing the reader into the process of writing.

Here we should stop for a while and consider the term "narrative". Narrative is not a synonym for the novel as a genre (it is both broader and narrower, if you like). Narrative theory has historically grown out of formalism, structuralism and linguistics, which gives it its scope and perhaps also entails some limitations. It stresses narration as communication, the transmission or mediation of a story in a temporal arrangement between author or reader or, between narrator and narratee, involving as it does time, person, perspective and voice.¹³ As outlined above, Iser's approach might be understood as an injunction for his reader to see

11. Wolfgang Iser, "Joyce's *Ulysses* und die Wirkungsästhetik. Zur Wechselbeziehung von Literatur und Theorie", *In Memoriam Erich Kohler*, Heidelberg 1984, p. 255.

12. Cf Iser 1972, p. 356.

13. Cf in particular Gérard Genette, *Discours du récit* and *Nouveau discours du récit*. Also Mieke Bal on focalization.

Ulysses as one of those epoch-making works which flout or at least expose the weaknesses not only of the traditional expectations of novel readers, but also of many critical approaches. So there is a time and place for "narratology", but there are moments when one acknowledges the honourable limitations of a discipline and feels the need for new complementary (not necessarily incompatible) approaches. I think that the refined and developed post-Genettian theory can do wonders with what I have called the first narrative / stylistic complex of *Ulysses*, which also embraces the narrative modes of *The Portrait*. It is less useful with the second mode where, especially when applied too literally (mimetically) it has created a lot of confusion. Let us stress, however, that the work done in narrative theory from James to Booth, and from Scholes to Stanzel, Cohn and Genette, is of permanent and inestimable value. On one level of discrimination and analysis it has led to insights which cannot be overestimated. Too many "joyceans" have decided to bypass the results achieved by the above theorists without learning their lesson. For example, the difficult and fascinating ambiguity of free indirect style: the elegant debate between Gérard Genette and Dorrit Cohn has sharpened our awareness of the inherent and perhaps insurmountable gap between structuralist and psychological / mimetic definitions of free indirect style and interior monologue. However, Genette hardly touched upon Joyce's narrative in his incomparable *Narrative Discourse*. Is it only because he had, simply, other examples at hand? Or is it also because he felt that *Ulysses*, apart from its fascinating complications of mode and voice (merging of figural and authorial perspectives), was perhaps even more notable for another type of complication? That of parodic metafiction, for example, drawing us into broader definitions of discourse?¹⁴

Be that as it may, such and similar considerations render us more sharply aware of the fact that *Ulysses* is a minefield which explodes all comfortable old certainties, particularly those of naive, and even not so naive, mimeticism.

With respect to narrative mediation (transmission) this novel can for example be seen as a huge conspiracy against our trying to find out who speaks, both in the anthropocentric strategies of the first narrative complex (where we can still operate with the notion of figural perspective and voice) and especially in the second, parodic and distancing one where the question itself often seems to lose both point and scope, with its earlier validity set into particularly sharp (self-conscious, metafictional) perspective. In "Circe" in particular there is no point in asking this question. Firstly, because owing to Todorov's criterion of hesitation this chapter has a strong fantastic side. Secondly, because in this chapter no subject (either human or non-human) talks even remotely in an idiom which might be authenticated as figural in any significant sense. Not only do the

14. Discourse perhaps not limited by linguistic notions stemming from de Saussure, and including Emile Benveniste, but as conceived by Mikhail Bakhtin or, differently, by Derrida? A line to be taken with Bakhtin is suggested in David Lodge's article "Double Discourse: Joyce and Bakhtin", *James Joyce Broadsheet*, June 1983.

non-human subjects (kisses and wreaths) fail to approximate any recognizable linguistic idiom (such as that spoken by the king and queen of hearts in *Alice in Wonderland*, for example), but the human subjects themselves speak a language which markedly differs from their idiom in most of the earlier chapters and in addition sounds particularly alienating. "Circe" has many aspects of a hallucination but, as Hugh Kenner has pointed out, is not shown as hallucinated by anyone in particular. It is not directly related to any particular individual consciousness, but should rather be seen as an oblique, figurative rendering of certain aspects of subconsciousness. From the point of view of character presentation "Circe" may be as important for our understanding of Bloom or Stephen, as is "Telemachus" or "Calypso". However, the awareness that this presentation is effected by radically different strategies should make *all* the difference to a student of Joyce's narrative. This critic should become aware at this point that questions of focalization, mode and voice lose relevance in narratives where the story of the characters is overlaid by distancing screens of language (discourse), where consciousness is not presented either directly or transparently, where the voices of the characters flout all the conventions of *vraisemblance*. In Joyce, even when dealing with evident author-figure contamination, it is often risky to haggle about exact word-attributions (who says that Lily the caretaker's daughter was literally run off her feet? who says gelid? who says Chrisostomos?) In the later chapters of *Ulysses* this becomes even riskier and at certain moments downright impossible or beside the point. At such moments naturalization can degenerate into an effort to recuperate "an arbitrary imposition of sense".¹⁵ Thus, disagreeing respectfully with Franz Stanzel, I do not see the opening segments of "Sirens" as the stream of a "reflectorized" teller character, but rather as an attempt on Joyce's part to literally imitate (with parodic effect?) the structure of music. It seems to me, firstly, that the processes accompanying focalization (using characters as reflectors) are not reversible, and that a reflectorized teller is somehow comparable to a mock turtle. Secondly, and this is much more important, I think we must realize that Joyce's character presentation in the later chapters is strongly de-psychologized and therefore conceptualized. Let us stay with "Sirens" for a while, the earliest chapter completely overshadowed by the second narrative/stylistic complex. In this chapter the characters remain *in tune* with their previously established fictional selves, but they are treated as *elements of a tune*. Like the literary parodies in Cyclops and Oxen, these are stylistic exercises, only obliquely related to the human and psychological progress of the story counterbalanced by the musical structure. If we take Joyce's attempt to approximate the structure of music seriously — as Gilbert and others indicate we should — we shall look at the introductory segment as prefiguring the themes of the chapter just as an overture would prefigure the musical themes of a composition, and ignore the associativeness underlying stream of consciousness. In "Sirens" even passages

15. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*, Cornell UP 1975, p. 200.

which are to be taken as Bloom's interior monologue (present at the ratio of about 1:20 in relation to the narrated passages) so often hover on the edge of speech imitation – without crossing it, however! («To Martha I must write»). All this derives from the musical structuring imposed on the text, the attempt to imitate not only sonorities and rhythms, but more abstract entities such as the “perfect seventh” or “empty fifth”. In this way “Sirens” becomes a continuous process of frame making and frame breaking which produces a decidedly non-representational effect. This is particularly true when words, names and phrases are repeated in truncated or otherwise changed shapes, *not* in imitation of the flow of thought, as in “Calypso”, but in analogy to notes, chords and larger musical forms which in their abstracting drive counter the mimetic and referential effect. The wish to impose a musical pattern here is as strong as the wish to reveal Bloom's mind (or even stronger, if we consider the persistence of the musical patterning). In a humoristic aside we might note that Bloom's thoughts seem less amenable to musical structuring than the sounds of his intestinal “wind instruments”! It is also very interesting to observe that in “Sirens” the narrated parts are much more artificial than the passages of interior monologue, as if the latter had to be more mimetic in order to be authenticated as coming from Bloom's mind. Joyce here abandons the limited perspective of most earlier chapters, also introducing notations of actions outside Bloom's vision. Moreover, it is even more important to see him introduce parodic variations of phrases used in earlier chapters. For example, the introductory sentence of “Calypso” is reintroduced here by the intrusive sentence “as said before” (“As said before he ate with relish the inner organs...”). Furthermore, a phrase which appeared earlier in Bloom's interior monologue, now appears in a passage of narration, the two narrative modes thus juxtaposed in ironic (parodic?) counterpoint. (“Through the hush of air a voice sang to them, low, not rain, not leaves in murmur, like no voice of strings of reeds or whatdoyoucallthem dulcimers...”). The frame-breaking process of this passage continues first in evocative, incantatory fashion, then by playing on syntactical irregularity (“still hearts of their each his remembered lives”). This is in turn followed by a very banal, colloquial phrase (“heard from a person wouldn't expect it in the least”) and ending “musically” again, (“her first merciful lovesoft oftloved word”). Finally, what is more frame-breaking and therefore metafictional in respect of the alleged mimetic expressiveness of interior monologue than this sentence made completely artificial by punctuation alone: “Will? You? I. Want. You. To.” Joyce has been quoted as saying that each adventure, i.e. episode or chapter of *Ulysses* “is so to say one person, although it is composed of persons”. If chapters are to be seen as persons, however, then the very notion of person has been subverted, bringing us to the doorstep even of postmodernism! Reading into “Sirens” and after, we become intensely aware that narrative theory must find ways of extending the notion of discourse to include stylistic (semantic) and historical awareness. In a chapter like “Sirens” or “Eumaeus” the whole question of knowledge and information being transmitted (limited or not by reflectorization), and of vision being filtered through figural minds, loses its relevance. The discourse is too artificial and extravagant for the narration to be regarded

“reliable” in most of the traditional senses of the word. A whole set of distinctions thus becomes inoperable, or at least less operable, and the narratologist must tread very carefully going about his business. He should be wary of “naturalizing” or motivating too literally (personally), just as the symbolist critic should not rely excessively on “vertical allegoresis”. It is Gilbert who informs us, probably on Joyce’s authority, that the “Homeric correspondences in this episode (“Sirens”) are, generally speaking, rather literal than symbolic”.¹⁶ This seems to be in tune with some postmodernist trends: to keep meaning-and-image relationships operating horizontally in the text and to return to referentiality in a literal and rather random way (Mr Dedalus “picking chips off rocky thumbnails” having no ulterior symbolic meaning except being a literal Homeric reference to the rocks on which the Sirens sat). There is something (emotionally) flat, abstract, unallusive and unsuggestive as well as unsymbolic in all the later chapters of *Ulysses*, although moments of human identification keep the human story afloat (meek Sir Leopold talking of love, not hate, having a vision of Rudy, watching the sky hung with humid nightblue fruit, as well as generally judging events with equanimity and compassion). An interesting comparison can be established here with the distinction¹⁷ between the immanent critic seeing the modernist work as an autonomous artifact substituting for its referent, and the postmodern critic (and writer) aware of “narrative allegory”. Instead of traditional vertical “alegoresis”, narrative allegory should pertain to the writerly level of discourse, studying polisemous meanings accessible in the words themselves, specifically as singled out by deconstruction. This notion of narrative allegory should bring us closer to the material of the signifier than the meaning of the signified, introducing a new, constructive, active and non-melancholy notion of allegory. This quality could somewhat paradoxically be seen as more personal (on the part of the author), while figurally more impersonal (refraining from modernist psychological recreation of the character’s consciousness), both more abstract and yet more concrete in its random matter-of-fact referentiality, and clearly discernible in what I have described as the second narrative / stylistic complex of *Ulysses*. This trend can be dissociated from modernism and connected with postmodernism.

These and similar notions have to be used in order to justify the notion of “parodic mediation” in our approach to *Ulysses*. Parody in the traditional sense, i.e. the deliberate and subversive imitation of a literary style is certainly one of the devices which unsettles our notion of modernist narration, thwarting our search for narrative authority. This unsettling effect can be seen as an important but subsidiary component of the constant and violent juxtapositions of styles accompanied by the deconstruction of whatever was constructed in the chapter or passage, or sometimes sentence, that preceded: meanings, syntaxes, idioms, the narrative strategies themselves. All of this disperses and explodes our notion of an

16. Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses*, Penguin 1969, p. 220.

17. For this suggestion cf Gregory Ulmer, *Applied Grammarology*, Johns Hopkins 1983.

author-person (even if we were tempted to inscribe one into the text), leaving us with an author-writer who absolutely denies us guidance. The very idea of narrative transmission, the bedrock of the definition of narrative, presupposes a narrating instance which naturally should have narrative authority. The narrative mediation which dominates *Ulysses* as a whole rests, however, on too many sources (most of them disguised and camouflaged), and finally with none. No psychological, moral, personal, individual voice, either inside or outside the narrative, has final authority in *Ulysses*. It is in fact one of the points of *Ulysses* to prevent us, in Barthes' phrase, from answering the question "who speaks"? The ultimate narrative authority of this novel rests with the ubiquitous principle of the novel's making and its product, the text.

Parody can, however, be understood, and has been understood by Mikhail Bakhtin for example, as much more inclusive, much more than just a learned or eclectic literary game, miming either inadequate styles (as Joyce does in "Nausicaa" or in the jounalese of "Cyclops") or undermining the seriousness of characters or events by describing them in imitative and inappropriate styles. More significantly and profoundly this new broader concept sees parody as an important aspect of the discourses of novels pitted against the background of other already existing discourses, the mirroring of discourses also possible within one and the same novel.¹⁸ The notion of parody thus set in the fascinating realm of Bakhtin's "slovo" also helps to undermine the notion of *Ulysses* as representing any one particular authority, but rather making us see it as part of a constant and broad but mainly *subversive* interaction of cultural and linguistic texts, codes, voices, and myths.

Summing up the achievement of Marcel Proust, Genette says that in Proust we have the

paradoxical coexistence of the greatest mimetic intensity and the presence of a narrator, which is in principle contrary to novelistic mimesis; the dominance of discourse, intensified by the stylistic autonomy of the characters (the height of dialogic mimesis) but finally absorbing the characters in an immense verbal game (the height of literary gratuitness, the antithesis of realism); and, finally, the concurrence of theoretically incompatible focalizations, which shakes the whole logic of narrative representation. Again and again we have seen this subversion of mood tied to the activity, or rather the presence, of the narrator himself, the disturbing intervention of the narrative source — of the narrating in the narrative.¹⁹

In Genette's schema, discourse remains a not too clearly distinguishable enmeshing of the highly metaphorical and the distinctly discursive, the latter pertaining to Proust's commentary, touching shoulders with the essayistic,

18. Cf for example Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, Cornell UP 1986, p. 152: "If we listen carefully, according to Bakhtin, we may hear two kinds of dialogue in narratives other than those included in quotation marks. Through the tone set in narration, the writer can engage in an implicit conversation with the characters ... and through parody and stylistic imitation he may also comment indirectly on other authors and conventional uses of language ... The interaction of our linguistic knowledge with the words on a page produces still other dialogues."

19. Genette, Gérard: *Narrative Discourse*, Cornell UP 1980, pp. 210—211.

affirming the process of narration, of telling. Joyce's subversion is different, but it is subversion nevertheless — and it might be termed parodic in the broader sense suggested above.²⁰ The notion of subversion further helps us to connect Joyce backwards to Proust, the great master of what Frank Kermode has called paleomodernism, who in Lyotard's phrase, wrote *au trop de temps*, and also to project him forward, through neo-modernism and postmodernism, to the writing characterized by Lyotard as *au trop de livre*.²¹

The parodic discourse of *Ulysses* can thus be seen as strongly invading (another Genettian word) Joyce's *récit*, subverting the very fabric of figural consciousness, perspective and narrative authority. We can also see it as a strategy taking *Ulysses* away from the "nostalgia for the unrepresentable" towards "jubilant" combination and play, away from the grand tragic designs of modernism (seen as an elitist movement) to a more popular, democratic, generally more slack and tolerant spirit, more pluralist, (everyone as he pleases, every book as it pleases) and humoristic.²² Joyce was both elitist and difficult in T.S. Eliot's sense. However, in *Ulysses* we encounter a deluge of common details, an eruption of trivia, an irreverence and humor, which go in the other direction.

"Penelope", the last chapter of *Ulysses*, can be seen as Joyce's paradigmatic paradoxical somersault, bridging the two trends outlined above. Modernist in its return to internal monologue, *the* autonomous monologue to end all monologues in its uncompromising bravura. Also so very human in its return to the consciousness of this triumphantly alive *Weib*. On the other hand, the text of "Penelope" seems to prefigure postmodernism in its humoristic, plebeian tone, heading for survival both owing to the utterly unromantic ordinary of the figure it presents and the "jubilation" of the language which creates her.

20. I am fully aware that at this point this is no more than a suggestion, which I propose to investigate in a subsequent paper.

21. Hassan 1983, pp. 322 and 329—341.

22. Cf the notion of postmodernism in a "humoristic society" offered by Gilles Lipovetsky in *L'ère du vide*, Gallimard 1983.

PRIPOVIJEDANJE U JOYCEOVU »ULIKSU«: MODERNISTIČKA MATICA A
POSTMODERNISTIČKI IZVOR

Joyceovo djelo, posebno *Uliks*, tipičan je primjer modernističkog teksta u kojem se sukobljuju prozirnost i neprozirnost, referencijalnost i hermetičnost, *récit* i *discours*.

Na specifičnom području narativnog diskursa »naratologija« formalističko-strukturalističkog smjera, od Jamesa i Bootha do Genettea, Stanzela i Dorrit Cohn, posebno je korisna za analizu prvog narativno-stilističkog kompleksa koji u *Uliksu* prevladava do "Sirena". Poslije "Sirena" u *Uliksu* počinje prevladavati drugi narativno-stilistički kompleks u kojem mimetički pokušaj razlikovanja između idioma autora i likova često mora ustuknuti pred autorovim pokušajem da nam uskrati odgovor na pitanje »tko pripovijeda«. U tom drugom kompleksu prevladava parodijsko posredovanje u kojem joyceovski diskurs gotovo potpuno preplavljuje priču.