

The Odyssey of the Body: James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the Act of Writing in "Proteus"

Evi Voyiatzaki

Ulysses and "the cycle of the human body"

Ulysses draws heavily upon the corporeal aspects of creation, utterance and language, incorporating and imitating the functions of a living body. Joyce conjoined his text with the functions of certain organs, "jocoserious[ly]" (*Ulysses* 17: 369) resorting to science and physiology. His ironic view of science and medicine, which, along with other fields of thought, he parodically incorporated within his work, alerts us to the psycho-physiological aspect of his narrative. He characterized his prose for example as "peristaltic" or as conditioned by the "loco-motor ataxia" of the hypothalamus in the "Lestrygonians" and the "Circe" episodes respectively. Moreover, he indicated the essentially textual nature of these parallels through his tables of correspondences, namely the Gilbert and the Linati schemata. Joyce forges his work as self-contained as a human body. As he related to Carlo Linati, *Ulysses* is:

the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life). [. . .] My intention is not only to render the myth *sub specie temporis nostri* but also to allow each adventure (that is every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the somatic scheme of the whole) to condition and even to create its own technique. Each adventure is so to speak one person although it is composed of persons—as Aquinas relates of the heavenly hosts. (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 271)

Joyce's conception of the cyclic movement of the body in parallel to his text answers the problem of the relationship between the mental and the somatic with the skill of a physiologist. Quite Freud-like, he draws our attention to the sensory, muscular, respiratory, metabolic, and procreative functions within his text. The book unfolds in the space of one day, and follows the spatio-temporal movement of its heroes from morning to night. Starting with Telemachus "who does not yet suffer the body," according to the Linati scheme, *Ulysses* ends with Molly's liquefied language, accompanied by her menstruation. Thus the entire book moves from an embryonic stage, as Mulligan's breakfast *ab ovo* suggests, to a decayed corporeal condition that is the excretion of a dead ovum in Molly's menstrual blood. The suggested evolutionary process, from genesis to death, conjoins the passing of a day with the cycle of the human body.

From its very opening, *Ulysses* undermines the sublime aesthetic suggested by its mythic title. The mockery of a mass at the awakening of the company of young men in the Martello tower is interwoven with family relationships, nationalism, history, theology and aesthetic consciousness. In a Eucharistic parody Mulligan debases the chalice to a shaving bowl, and the Holy Trinity to the three eggs served on a breakfast plate. This scenario introduces a ceaseless movement from lofty to lower material and from

the sublime aesthetics of the mental processes to the rudimentary functions of the body. This twofold perspective of the book, of the highly aesthetic and its lowering to the primal bodily material, creates for the reader puzzlement and ambivalence regarding what is serious and what is not. The polyphonic, polymorphic and polyglottic playfulness of this elusive text challenges the very foundations of the novel, narrative and language itself.

The Aesthetics of Emotional Retrenchment

Joyce's defiant exploitation of the body's functions in *Ulysses* derived from his long-term interest in the body's functions. Frank Budgen mentions that, "Joyce in Zurich was a curious collector of facts about the human body, especially on that borderland where mind and body meet, where thought is generated and shaped by a state of the body" (108). Phillip Herring, in *Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in the British Museum*, gives evidence that Joyce "made sure that he had at least a superficial impressive knowledge of medical history to lend authenticity to the terminology he employed" (36). Joyce's *Notesheets* include, among others, the names of the anatomist and embryologist Geronimo Fabrizio (Fabricius), of the discoverer of the circulatory system of the blood, William Harvey, the anatomists Albrecht von Haller, Kaspar Wolff, and Friedrich Henle ("Oxen" 18). The names of such modern physiologists and biologists as Jacques Loeb ("Oxen" 10: 61), August Weisman ("Oxen" 6: 14), and Graham Lusk ("Oxen" 6: 5) are also to be found, as Herring mentions (37). In fact, Joyce's scientific inclinations hark back to his short-lived attempts at studying medicine from which only a taste for the scientific and "the medicinal vocabulary" survived as Richard Ellmann states (*James Joyce* 140). As will be seen, this taste, appearing in almost all of his works, sustained his aesthetics of detachment and antisentimentality.

In *Stephen Hero*, Joyce had already viewed art in close relation to the human body and its instinctual impulses. In Stephen's words, "the modern spirit is vivisective. Vivisection is the most modern process one can conceive." The modern method of examination requires an aesthetic "instinct in action" (190). Stephen's "vivisective" spirit of modernity and his "aesthetic instinct in action" highlight the psychological and bodily substratum of creativity.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen's vivisections are related with Thomas Aquinas's axioms for beauty: "*ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur, integritas, consonantia, claritas*" (184), that is "wholeness," "consonance or harmony," and "clarity or radiance." Accordingly, the first thing perceived by the artist's imagination is the totality of one thing as such; the second is the analysis of its wholeness. The harmony of wholeness and its radiance rest upon the fact that it must be apprehended "as balanced part to part within its limits" (185). This analytic view entails this thing being not just *one* thing but *a* thing interrelated with other bigger or smaller entities: "complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, harmonious" (185).

In fact, Stephen's aesthetic theory propounded the emotional retrenchment of the work of art to be employed later for the making of *Ulysses*. In defining what is proper or improper art, Stephen drew upon Aristotle's *Poetics* and his definition of the tragic emotion. Stephen, like Joyce, endorsed dramatic art and dismissed desire or loathing in art as *kinetic* emotions which belong to improper arts, namely pornographic or didactic. For him, in proper art the emotion was static: "the mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing" (*A Portrait* 179). Two fundamental elements came out of this the-

ory: one concerning the character of the work of art and the other concerning the relation of the creator with his creation. The former highlighted the aesthetics of beauty and the principle of antisentimentality, while the latter stressed the principle of impersonalization, namely the idea of the invisible creator.

However, when Stephen explains the scholastic *quidditas* or *whatness* of a thing, the quality of which is felt when the aesthetic image is first conceived in the artistic imagination, he quotes the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani. This spiritual state of conception is compared to the cardiac condition which Galvani called "the enchantment of the heart" (*A Portrait* 185). While dismissing sentimentality Stephen's theory gives emphasis to the world of senses reflecting Aquinas's words "*pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent* [. . .] *quia sensus delectatur in rebus debite proportionatis, sicut in sibi similibus; nam et sensus ratio quaedam est, et omnis virtus cognoscitiva*" ("for those things are called beautiful which please us when they are seen [. . .]. For the senses delight in rightly proportioned things as similar to themselves, the sense faculty being a sort of proportion itself like all other knowing faculties [. . .]") (qtd. in Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* 56).

In *Ulysses*, this activation of the world of senses manifests itself through the unbiased and impartial representation of the physiological functions of the human body which are part of Joyce's corpuscular world. The employment of physiology and of a scientific or pseudoscientific spirit became the antidotes for sentimentality and kinetic emotions. Consequently, the suggested emotional retrenchment endorsed a multifaceted analytic view expressed in his well-known schemes. Reflecting the early Stephen's "vivisective" spirit of modernity, these schemes present *Ulysses* as a multi-leveled, stratified, organised and organic whole.

On the Crossroads of Science and Art: Joyce's Schemes

Far from being an assortment of disarranged elements, the correspondences of the schemes compose the hierarchical order of the somatic whole. This hierarchical structure, starting from the titles of the episodes, proceeds to time and space, colour, persons, technique, science, bodily organ and symbol, all arrayed in a single pattern to sustain the book's balanced and harmonious wholeness. The somatic structure of this whole is composed of elements deriving from the two great domains upholding its schemes, namely art and science. These evenly dispersed elements enact the interdisciplinary logic of the text, which invites the most advanced thinking of contemporary epistemology to its interpretation. Umberto Eco calls *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* epistemological metaphors which transpose "the phenomena described by contemporary science" (*The Aesthetics of Chaosmos* 74).

Two fundamental elements emerge from Joyce's thought: one is the autonomy of each part, and the other its dependence on the whole. Actually, in Joyce's somatic structure of the whole there are no mutually exclusive "parts" and "wholes." Joyce's ideas may well hark back to nineteenth century organicism while at the same time anticipating the achievements of contemporary biology. The basic premises of these fields scientifically show that a living organism is not an aggregation of elementary parts and its activities cannot be reduced to elementary atoms of behaviour forming a chain of conditioned responses. Already in 1860, the physiologist George Henry Lewes wrote: "life is proportional to organization [. . .]. The body is one; all its parts are subordinate; all

are bound together in a higher unity [. . .]. There is unity [. . .]. It is due to organic subordination: all parts are related; all act together by means of the nervous system, as all parts of an army act together by means of officers and discipline" (II, 352). Today science has made its move away from the mechanistic preconceptions of the nineteenth century according to which the world was an arena of colliding atoms and has realized that hierarchical organization is a fundamental principle of living nature (Koestler, *Beyond Reductionism*; Waddington; Shanin).

Joyce's schemes are infused by a similar scientific logic which anticipates the achievements of the aforementioned fields. In *Ulysses* everything is interconnected. Each episode-adventure has its own hour, place, art, science, and organ which are inter-related in the structural scheme of the whole. Each episode displays a certain autonomy as well as dependence on the whole. The same holds for the constituents of each episode, for each of them has characteristics of its own while at the same time is subservient to the general order. Chemistry, for example, in the "Lotus-eaters" episode, has its own codes and laws in general. However, when it is used on the horizontal axis of the scheme interconnected with the bodily element "skin" and the symbols "host" and "drugs," it functions in a very specific direction: that of the hypnotizing influence of religion on man which resembles the chemical effect of drugs on the human organism. Thus each part has its own codes while at the same time displaying a certain flexibility when used within the wholeness of the book. Accordingly the somatic scheme of the whole allows the interconnection of bodily organs and functions with human activities ranging from trivia to highly symbolic actions. This arrangement has inherent in it the function of communicating vessels and/or the logic of scientific observation.

Arthur Koestler, whose point of departure is biology and psychophysiology, scientifically justifies this early Joycean assumption that each part has its own autonomy while simultaneously being dependent on a larger hierarchy. He views human creativity as an all-encompassing process extending from physiology and biology to symbolic language. He too sees the world and the body as a hierarchically structured whole, ordered by the inter-relation of the part with the whole:

Each member of this hierarchy, on whatever level, is a sub-whole or "holon" in its own right—a stable, integrated structure, equipped with self-regulatory devices and enjoying a considerable degree of *autonomy* or self-government. Cells, muscles, nerves, organs all have their intrinsic rhythms and patterns of activity, often manifested spontaneously without external stimulation. They are subordinate as *parts* to the high centres in the hierarchy, but at the same time they function as quasi-autonomous *wholes*. They are Janus-faced. The face turned upward, toward the higher levels, is that of a dependent part; the face turned downward, towards its own constituents, is that of a whole of remarkable self-sufficiency. (*Janus* 27)

This twofold, Janus-faced function in living organisms appears as a self-assertive tendency of any part to preserve its individual autonomy and simultaneously as an integrative or participatory tendency to function as a part of the larger whole. Koestler's interdisciplinary analysis of the stratified hierarchy inherent in any entity might be compared to Joyce's conception of the arrangement of his schemes. Actually the Janus-faced relation between the part and the whole pervades *Ulysses*, creates the heterogeneity of its texture as a multileveled framework leading to polyphony and multi-signification.

Escaping Cartesian Dualism: the Heterogeneity of *Ulysses*

Heterogeneity in *Ulysses* has been discussed by psychoanalytic and deconstructive criticism on the grounds of multiplicity of meaning. The Lacanian approach, focusing on the language of the unconscious, considers heterogeneity as a result of the unresolved Oedipal trauma (MacCabe). However, this being an interpretation which draws upon Freudian metapsychology, it employs the body only in its symbolic function within the text (either as gender problem or as bodily disturbance). The Lacanian reading treats the problem of language in *Ulysses* from a limited philosophical point of view concerning the unconscious. In fact, this approach, in spite of its opposite claims, still rests on the traditional Cartesian dualism of the body and the mind, and the identification of "mind" with "conscious thinking." It fails to acknowledge psychophysiology's inference that consciousness is not "an all-or-nothing affair but a *matter of degrees*," as Koestler argues (*The Ghost in the Machine* 205). In Joyce's somatic scheme of the whole where functions of the lower stratum of the body easily surface on the higher levels of human mentality and creativity, there are not clear borderlines between consciousness and the unconscious. Joyce's claim that he could "psookoanaloose" himself any time he wanted reflects this view (*Finnegans Wake*, 522.34). In a similar vein, deconstruction, which claims to escape the dualism of ontotheology and metaphysics, and to reject the authority of the One, the Father, interprets Joyce's plurality of meaning as the exploitation of "the gap between world and reality" which allows him to flaunt "its subversive otherness, coded feminine" (Boheemen-Saaf 41).

Interpretations in line with Lacanian and Derridian thought contain incomplete elements of truth, namely the intrusion of the unconscious into consciousness and its feminine otherness. Yet ignoring the biological rhythm of the text, they fail to see Joyce's claim of "all in all" and its inextricable relation to the human organism and its functions.

The structure of *Ulysses* enacts the pluralistic view of a holarchic hierarchy in which each chapter is interrelated with every other within the book's general project. Consequently, while susceptible to multifarious interpretative perspectives, the reality that the book enacts within the multileveled hierarchy of its schemes refuses to sanction any category as a complete account of the human world. The flexibility of each chapter lies in the fact that the same set of data can often be viewed or interpreted in more ways than one. This parallaxic process, taking place in the whole gamut of the hierarchy, unfolds from the lower level of the human body to the highest and *vice versa*. In the vertical axis of the schemes, the self-assertive properties of each chapter display its microcosmic wholeness. The horizontal axis, on the other hand, holds together the stratified transformation of events, from their physical status to their mental sublimation. We could call this function a microcosmic self-transcending property, according to which each element upholding the unity of each separate chapter can be associated with a different element belonging to another field.

The multileveled hierarchy, which the Joycean text enacts, points to a breaking away from the mind-matter dichotomy. Instead, it initiates an ascending and descending spiral mediated by different levels of thought accompanied by biological functions ranging from the highest mental elaboration to the lowest bodily functions. Meaning and signification in *Ulysses* are associated with this stratified operation proceeding from lower to higher levels and *vice versa*, and encompassing the body of the text as a

whole. Hence a scrupulous reading of *Ulysses's* text may reveal all those primary processes relating to the body's functions which precede utterance and language, and can only be perceived as secondary, displaced, symbolic, and metaphoric. As will be seen, the act of writing in "Proteus" displays certain organic functions relating to the conscious and unconscious processes operating in the whole gamut of human creativity revealing the psycho-physiological and biological rhythm of the act of creation.

"Proteus" and the Physiology of Writing

In *A Portrait*, a story of the emancipation and initiation of the young artist, the mystical ecstasies of the young artist do not yet suggest the distant eye of the invisible creator. The free indirect speech of *A Portrait* sustains in its descriptive mode a first-person immediacy. However, the protean Stephen, in *Ulysses*, unfolds his innermost self in a confessional way, namely the conceptualised representation of his feelings on a "conscious" level. The degree of conscious interpretation of his relation to the world dramatically diversifies as he gradually moves from the objective outer material to a more subjective interior world.

The act of writing in "Proteus" reveals Stephen's self-asserting attitude before a world in a process of disintegration. Gathering together bits and pieces of historical, philosophic-theological and psychological frustration in his meditation, Stephen's response to his life's impasses is an act of creation. The writing process is presented as an outlet for the psychological despondency of the young artist. Its representation brings together the death-rebirth motif and its physical substratum pertaining to the body.

Fabricated from a bifocal view which brings together the ever-changing seascape and Stephen's inner one, the episode unfolds by the sea at Sandymount strand. The narrative is conditioned by a liquid element, tide being the basic symbol in Gilbert's scheme. In Linati's scheme, this symbolic analogy is transcribed in "word, tide, moon, evolution, metamorphosis." Stephen's contemplation is centred around the natural order of the world with a special focus on generation.

As the narrative develops with a ceaseless fusion of the objective and the subjective, the boundaries of the self and the world become blurred. The random mutations of Stephen's contemplation, although activated by the external world, are reiterated by his own thoughts. The thematic patterns switch from philosophy to theology and from there to the individual's psychohistory of a "family romance." The birth-death motif upholds the protean changes of the narrative. The employment of the archetype of Proteus, the sea-god of ceaseless permutation and metamorphosis, launches the twofold perspective of the birth-death motif, which subsequently associates the Christian concept of "transubstantiation" with the pagan notion of metempsychosis (Gilbert 115).

Juggling with philosophical and physical ideas, the self-ironic Stephen never manages to make his way out of the farrago of his Daedalian mind before the writing of his poem. In less than one page, Stephen's questing voyage—for this is also a secondary motif at the microscopic level of the chapter—takes him to Aristotle, Jakob Boehme, Hamlet, William Blake, and George Berkeley. The wave-like tides of his language drift into Greek, Italian, French, English, Scandinavian and German. His fluidity of thought substantiates and momentarily crystallizes as he touches upon his personal psychohistory, only to dissolve again in mythical and Christian archetypes—Adam Kadmon, the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Mananaan.

Mythical Archetypes and Protean Permutations

The mythical archetypes which swarm around the central concepts of reincarnation and transubstantiation are superimposed on a sort of vitalism reflected in the liquid element of the narrative, mostly pertaining to the birth-death-rebirth motif. Carl Jung, in his study of religion, has showed that rebirth into a new way of life has been recognized and organized by religions throughout history (Jung, VI 316). As Jung argues, the death-rebirth motif recurs in numerous myths in the form of a sea-sun association:

The sun sails over the sea like an immortal god who every evening is immersed in the maternal waters and is born anew in the morning. [. . .] If, then, we find the blood-red sunrise connected with the idea that a birth is taking place, the birth of the young sun, the question immediately arises: Whose is the paternity? How did the woman become pregnant? [. . .] The resulting myth is that since the sea-woman devoured the sun and now brings a new sun into the world, she obviously became pregnant in that way. [. . .] All these sea-going gods are solar figures. They are enclosed in a chest or an ark for the "night sea journey" (Frobenius), often in the company of a woman (pl. xxiib) [. . .]. During the night sea journey the sun god is shut up in the mother's womb, and often threatened by all kind of dangers (V, 209-10).

Jung's analysis of the regenerating properties of the sea is not a unique discovery. The degenerating-regenerating process, whose basic functions can be found in nature, in the phenomena of re-adaptation and readjustment of species must have been intuitively recognizable in early societies and hence linked with mythic and religious superstitions (Dowben 14). Baptism and the initiation rites of primitive societies are two characteristic examples, related to liquid—the former to water and the latter to blood (Bettelheim 221-22). This sort of approach can also be found in Sigmund Freud, Sándor Ferenczi, and most of all, in archetypal patterns in poetry, among which the Homeric prototype holds the most celebrated position often being the source of similar poetic metaphors combining the sea motif with that of the questing voyager (Bodkin 26-88).

In *Ulysses*, the sea motif, owing both to its Homeric derivations and the Dublin location of its story, has a dominant role. In Joyce's allusions, the sea is both Mulligan's "great sweet Mother" (*Ulysses* 1: 80), after Algernon Charles Swinburne, and the "snotgreen sea" echoing Stephen's dead mother's vomiting "the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver" (*Ulysses* 1: 109). In fact, for Stephen, in contrast to Mulligan and to Bloom, the sea is a fearful and detested substance. In Mulligan's scientific physicality, the sea is viewed from a distant and unemotional point. In Stephen's aesthetic temperament, however, its physical properties and poetic correspondences to blood, vomit, urine, wine, and water become a source of *abjection*—the detestation that one experiences in regression, in recalling the maternal, in Julia Kristeva's terms (*Powers of Horror* 3). This is especially the case because on another level of his mind he associates the sea with his dead mother's ghost which haunts him through the book's day. And yet, Stephen, through his "*physiques, chimiques et naturelles*" (*Ulysses* 3: 176), is quite aware of the transformative dynamics of this primal matter into everything. His train of thought, soon after his finding poetic and bodily relief, harbours an evolutionary perspective. Recapitulating the whole per-

mutational process of the chapter, he concludes: "God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead" (*Ulysses* 3: 479-80). Soon after, he also switches the sea's gender from mother to "Old Father Ocean" (*Ulysses* 3: 483), to suggest its androgynous properties in contrast to Mulligan's female view of the sea.

Degeneration and Regeneration

Stephen associates the archetype of the regenerative sea with the biological concept of evolution. An early assumption that the first form of life originated in the sea underlies all the archetypal patterns of death-rebirth. Owing more to Joyce's than to Stephen's technique of undoing redoing, Stephen's wandering at the seashore accomplishes an evolutionary step of self-repair, a way out of his personal crisis, marked by the act of artistic writing. Stephen's act of writing is Joyce's unwittingly "evolutionary" reaction as an artist, mostly manifested through his staging of the writing process rather than in its outcome. This moment of artistic creation, in its psychosomatic manifestations, enacts a personal psychohistory, a family romance, and a literal cathartic release performed by the urinating Stephen at the very moment of his writing of the poem.

Stephen enters the scene in a Hamletian psychological crisis. Homeless, keyless, historically and psychologically haunted, Stephen unravels all the threads of his present dislocation, as a dispossessed son, an embryonic artist, and a frustrated young man. His undoing of all patterns of thought is viewed through this filter of distress which aims at survival, a way out of his intellectual and emotional *cul de sac*. The mutating scenery interchanges birth with death accompanied by the acoustic effects of the cracking waste material, the wave-like wind, romping round him bird-like, sweet-like and sea-like, "harping in wild nerves, wind of wild air of seeds of brightness" (*Ulysses* 3: 55; 3: 104; 3: 266-67). As these transformations of matter from air to water and from water to blood follow Stephen's steps, his sensual perception also mutates from seeing to hearing to smelling; it culminates in the words: "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. [. . .] What is the word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me" (*Ulysses* 3: 435-37). The shift from the solid external reality to his emotional inner landscape incites the act of writing. And yet, this sensory and emotional shift becomes obvious to the reader only after a long voyage into Stephen's world of ideas, out of which his emotional outlet is derived as an artistic rebirth.

Stephen's ingestion of the outer world starts with the reading of "signatures of all things" (*Ulysses* 3: 2). With a sensual (visual and acoustic) play of introjection into the self and a projection onto the outside world, the opening of the chapter attempts a spatio-temporal orientation of the subject, "walking into eternity along Sandymount strand" (*Ulysses* 3: 18). Stephen's eternity signals a transcendental process of reuniting the self with the world. "Rhythm" (*Ulysses* 3: 23), which plays an essential role in this self-adjustment, has both a biological and an artistic overtone, namely the wave-like rhythm of the sea and the "catalectic tetrameter of iambs" (*Ulysses* 3: 24). However, as the verses spring from the cracking alliteration of the shells, the sea's jettison, a creation out of nature's waste is taking place at a microcosmic level. In one paragraph, the whole theme of the chapter has been suggested: "Creation from nothing" (*Ulysses* 3: 35): where nothing is the waste matter of nature. Regression and progression, undoing and redoing are not separated. They occur almost simultaneously as if out of a principle of complementarity, emulating and activating each other till the moment of cathar-

sis.

The *Frauenzimmer's* bag, hiding "a misbirth with a trailing navelcord," "coming down to our mighty mother" anticipates, *mutatis mutandis*, Stephen's poem and offal (*Ulysses* 3: 36; 3: 456-60). Stephen's assumption that the two midwives are carrying a dead embryo to the sea precipitates a re-creative process indicated by the umbilical telephone cables which are to put him "on to Edenville" (*Ulysses* 3: 40). The navel brings the birth-death motif under the umbrella of regeneration (Gilbert 60-65). Stephen lightens his despondency by envisioning all navel cords extending from Eve. He parallels this image to the mystic monks whose sashes link them together in the present, and trace a path back to God. The *omphalos* motif intersects the birth-death motif with the state of repose of the mystical doctrines, Jung's "night journey," or Freud's Nirvana principle, a psychological state of withdrawal and reinforcement for a new start—a rebirth.

Joyce contrasts birth to death by an antithetical presentation of Eve's unblemished belly, an allusion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the second Eve, and Stephen's view of a bloated carcass of a dog, which is also associated with the vision of the leprous corpse surfacing from the sea. This latter imagery is also, as we shall see, Stephen's projection of himself, representing his despondent psychological state and the rebirth motif. The seawater stands as a source for both birth and death, although, Stephen's thoughts derive more from his "houses of decay" than from an optimistic envisioning of his future (*Ulysses* 3: 105).

Biological and Mental Evolution

Both the physical observation and the psychological dislocation have an inherent analogy with the biological process of creation and the origins of life as indicated by biology. They hark back to the evolutionary phenomenon of "paedomorphosis," described by W. Garstang in 1928. According to this theory, "at certain critical stages, evolution can *retrace its steps*, as it were, along the path which led to the dead end and make a fresh start in a new, more promising direction": nature's escape from stagnation or evolutionary standstill as Koestler argues (*Janus* 216).

Biological research has justified two ideas implicit in Joyce's Protean imagination. One is that it has long been confirmed by science that life originated in the sea (Young 74). The other is that this evolutionary breakthrough came not from an adult stage of evolution but from an embryonic one, as the larval state of the sea cucumber is the source of the creation of the new species (De Beer 118; Huxley 12-13). This rejuvenation involves retreat from the specialized adult forms to earlier, less committed and more plastic stages in the development of organisms, a sort of phylogenetic self-repair.

In mental evolution, as Koestler contends, regeneration occurs by a temporary regression to more primitive and uninhibited modes of ideation, followed by a creative forward leap (*Ghost* 177). Man, being top of the evolutionary ladder, has reduced his physical regenerative ability. This has been compensated for by his mental and psychological ability to break through habitual patterns of stagnant behaviour or to subvert established codes. The phenomenon of regeneration pertains to this capacity to respond creatively to the impasses of his life, as already suggested in the death-rebirth motif and discussed in its archetypal form in mythic archetypes: Jung's "night journey," a descent into obscurity or into a state of repose—the favourite motif of epic and lyrical poetry as well as of religious and mythic literature. Stephen's "night journey" starts

with his isolation from the social environment and his submersion into nature and his inner landscape—daydreaming. In his meditations, Eve’s umbilical cord becomes a telephone cable, becomes the mystic monk’s sash, and the “trailing navelcord” of a misbirth. Subsequently, Stephen ponders on the mystery of his own creation: “Womed in sin Darkness I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath” (*Ulysses* 3: 46).

Stephen’s regression calls upon what Freud, Melanie Klein, Jean Piaget, Hélène Cixous, Jacques Lacan, Kristeva and others of diverse psychoanalytic outlooks, have defined as an unconscious desire to return to early stages, preceding the ego, relating to the mother. It is this retracing backwards of the ego, in critical moments of friction with the outer world, that generates a yearning for the maternal, for a preconscious biological symbiosis in the womb.

Stephen’s choice, however, is not a backwards movement to his “houses of decay,” for he never visits his uncle’s house. The alleged visit takes place only in his imagination, moulding a primary fantasy of return, a background buoying up his attempt to reunite himself with the world. He writes his poem, sea-like, water-like, and bird-like. His reunion with the world takes place at a higher level of the spiral of the human whole, via the symbolic outlet of his writing of a poem. Simultaneously his entrails blend with the universe represented in the physical element of the sea—a symbolic mother.

The primordial Eden, the *omphalos*, the mahamanvantara (a state of repose), and the Hamletian cloud in the shape of a whale (a derivation also alluding to Jonah) overshadow Stephen’s thought. All are signals of yearning for quiescence and withdrawal. Stephen’s restlessness craves a vegetative tranquillity, expressed by his consubstantial relation with a primordial father-mother-ocean. All the mythical, mystical and religious symbolic conjunctions alert us to the artistic persona of Stephen performing in a dream-like imaginary landscape in his act of writing.

Revealing the Physiology of Writing

Joyce exploits the sea’s biological and mythological properties to project the vibrations of Stephen’s artistic stance:

The flood is following me. I can watch it flow past from here. [. . .] I am not a strong swimmer. Water cold soft. When I put my face into it in the basin at Clongowes. Can’t see! Who is behind me? Out out quickly, quickly! Do you see the tide flowing quickly [. . .]? [. . .] A drowning man. His human eyes scream to me of horror of his death. I . . . With him together down . . . I could not save her. Waters bitter death: lost. (*Ulysses* 3: 282; 3: 324-30)

The watery element sustains in its cold and soft, cool and sweet, suffocating and regenerating properties the locus of repose out of which the inspiration springs. Stephen projects his own fear of death and desire for life or creation-birth onto the drowning man. Thus he achieves a symbolic self-submerging into the watery fluidity of his own consubstantial and artistic body of the “Old Father Ocean” (*Ulysses* 3: 483) and/or the mother-sea-water element. He will emerge out of it anew, with the vigour of a symbolic baptism, ready to create and regenerate.

There is a change in the narrative after the drowning man’s fantasy. Stephen’s memories retreat giving way to a rapid motion of verbal images: a woman and a man,

the “cocklepickers” and their dog, the dead dog, the dream about Bloom, all washing up in the sea’s consubstantial and watery blood, coded feminine. Consider the following:

Across the sands of all the world, followed by the sun’s flaming sword, to the west, trekking to evening lands. She trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascinés her load. A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, oinopa ponton, a wine-dark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostchanded. *Omnis caro ad te veniet.* (*Ulysses* 3: 391-97)

Stephen’s sudden urge to get out of his clothes and his apprehension not to lose his sequence of thoughts and words is expressed as follows:

His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of air: mouth to her moomb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth molded issuing breath, unspeached: ooeehah: roar of catacratic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayaway-awayawayaway. Paper. The banknotes, blast them. Old Deasy’s letter. Here. Thanking you for your hospitality tear the blank end off. Turning his back to the sun he bent over far to a table of rock and scribbled words. That’s twice I forgot to take slips from the library counter. (*Ulysses* 3: 401-07)

The staging of the act of writing clearly reveals an emotional and intellectual outburst unravelling in a curve-like process. Starting with the drowning fantasy, emotion ascends in visual imagery as a montage of outer and inner scenes. The verbal images of the sea-blood, wine-dark sea precipitate the sublimation of emotion in a fusion of images and words. In fact, language stops operating at that very moment and diffuses in a momentary dissolution of words in sounds, overcharged by psychosomatic responses, expressed in the form of vocalization. The lips “lipped” out the phonemes in a sonic form, which were rapidly transformed into morphemes. The exhaled air substantiates in the materialized form of the word as it passes through the fingers of the hand “scribbling” them on paper. The circuit can be schematically described as sea-wave, sound-wave, “blood-wave,” muscular-wave (vibration), image-flow. The orifices of the body (ear, mouth, pores) are the receptacles and the exits of this process. It is the musicality of the sea-body that Joyce exploits here, whose intonations in the “Sirens” episode Bloom will transcribe in physiological terms: “The sea they think they hear. Singing. A roar. The blood it is. Souse in ear sometimes. Well, it’s a sea. Corpuscle islands” (*Ulysses* 11: 945-46).

Eventually the whole enterprise harbours a vitalistic urge carried out by the blood circulatory system which operates on a micro- and macro-level, travelling, transforming, transubstantiating, displacing and sublimating sensory and emotional currents of thought. Catharsis is staged in both metaphorical and literal terms: words, language, music and bodily waste are conjoined in this artistic outlet. After writing his vampire poem, Stephen urinates in the sea, his body-waste reuniting him with “the sweet mother,” its vocalization reverberating with the poem’s flow of language: “Listen: a four-word wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, oos. Vehement breath of waters” (*Ulysses* 3: 454). The catharsis is complete and a quiescence of body and soul achieved, “pain is far” (*Ulysses* 3: 44).

Joyce brings together primal and terminal matter by skipping the emotional layers in between. His physiological "earthing" of emotion reveals the processes underlying the anxiety or the stress of creation (*A Portrait* 152). He stages the act of writing as a process of self-transcendence, an attempt at reunion of the self with both the universe and the self's vegetative oneness. The cognitive patterns of his narrative sustain this surrendering to the mythical, mystical and religious archetypes. These patterns navigate the return to preconscious or unconscious processes pertaining to a primordial symbiosis with the progenitors, namely the mother. It is this plunge to a state of repose or relaxation, Jung's "night journey," which the archetypal motifs of death-resurrection or drowning-baptism, recapitulate in Stephen's daydreaming, in his fantasy of a drowning man and in the cloudy atmosphere of the chapter. The rebirth motif takes place in a process of surfacing or awakening. Its fundamental outlet is the act of writing, the symbolic reunion with the universe, the earthing of emotion by meeting the world at a higher turn of the spiral of the human hierarchy. From this perspective, Stephen's act of writing is an attempt at getting out of his despondency, or in biological terms an act of *self-repair*.

The archetypal symbol of the sea has two broad frames of reference: one concerns the mythical fabrications around its magical regenerating powers and the other concerns its biological and physiological properties. The former is a back-door entry into subjectivity: the formulation and emancipation of the ego out of the family triangle, or "family romance." The latter endorses Galvani's "vital force," a derivation from Aristotelian entelechy (*A Portrait* 187). Its materialized metamorphoses give rise to Homer's wine-dark sea, an allusion to blood and its vitalistic and circulatory properties, transcribed in the metaphors of tide-ebb and ceaseless fluidity underlying the operation of language and the act of creation. Thus, the sea motif in its Protean transformation becomes a blood motif, circulating the stress of creativity all over the stratified hierarchy of the human whole.

Language imitates bodily sounds, substantiates them in phonemes and morphemes. It becomes the mediator between the somatic and the intellectual. This bodily representation of the act of writing reflects language's musicality and rhythm, but also meaning and interpretation. In Kristeva's neo-Freudian, psycho-linguistic approach, it is called semiotic activity. "These semiotic operations," she says, "(rhythm, intonation), and their dependence vis-a-vis the body's drives are observable through muscular contractions and the libidinal or sublimated cathexis that accompany vocalizations" (*Desire in Language* 134). Through the blood motif recurring in all the episodes, language substantiates the body in word play, rhythm, intonation, musicality and pulsating acoustic waves. These are transformed into puns, rhymes, poems, songs and congealed narrative fragments, all of them eventually dissolving in Molly's loose language associated with her menses. Joyce's sea-blood motif, ebbing and flowing, brings together the loose-end metaphors of regeneration/degeneration, and ties them up in the body's physiology as manifested in Stephen's body-language and in language itself.

Joyce alerts us to the process of writing as a cathartic outlet, by removing the poem from the landscape. As the poem appears in the "Aeolus" episode (three chapters later), Joyce's focus is not on the poem itself but on the individuating rhythm of the artistic subject—an Odyssey of the inner self and the body. Hence the poem functions as a conduit for all the emotional and linguistic upheaval, transubstantiated into words and rhythm.

Conclusion

Focusing on the disclosure of the physiological substratum of emotions and removing the veils of sentimentality in the act of creation, Joyce revealed the bodily substratum of creation. The emotional retrenchment of *Ulysses* becomes a distant, quasi-scientific focus on physiological and natural phenomena. In *Ulysses*'s multileveled and self-contained organic whole, there are no sharp boundaries between the different layers. Phenomena of the lower stratum, bodily or psychological, surface under the device of stream of consciousness and the physiological lens of the author. In view of that, "Proteus" stages the act of writing in its closest relationship to the nervous system and reveals its physiology simultaneously tracing its links with language—Joyce's celebrated domain.

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