Joyce the Verb
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in the muddle was the sounddance

FW 378.29

I begin with a few sample quotations. These are not for your applause or disagreement, but merely in order to probe and appreciate the semantic variety of the one recurrent word, "Joyce":

Joyce was born in 1882. —The Tenth International James Joyce Symposium. —Joyce was conscious of his control of English and other languages. —This book enters Joyce's life to reflect his complex, incessant joining of event and composition. —From his late adolescence onward, James Joyce intended to be a writer. —The sacred is at the heart of Joyce's writing experience. —Joyce insists that man's will is free, that it can be exercised for good or evil, and that the state of the world's affairs will vary with the quality of leadership. —What does Joyce assert or imply about guilt in Ulysses? —Joyce is disgusted by sexual impulses regarded as normal by most standards of behavior. —Joyce's mind was at all times engaged in the search for truth. —When I first met Joyce in 1901 or 1902, he was beginning to emerge as a Dublin "character." —Joyce was too scrupulous a writer to tolerate even minor flaws. —Joyce spent his life playing parts, and his works swarm with shadow selves. —Joyce's laughter is free and spontaneous. —Joyce wrote not for literature, but for personal revenge. —Jim Joyce devoted a whole big novel to the day on which I was seduced. —Joyce is writing the book of himself.

There needn't be any contradiction at all, but meanings differ. It is equally true to say "Joyce has been dead for 45 years," as to claim "Joyce is alive." "Joyce" does not equal "Joyce": What is the statue of Joyce in the Fluntern cemetery of Zurich a statue of? Joyce Symposia, among other events, give partial answers. The question will not be pursued here. It is the name, noun, nomen, "Joyce," that interests. It epiphanizes a bewildering diversity of meanings, semantic differences that we, the professional differen-
titators, do not always notice. The diversity at first sight would appear odd, for names, of all words, ought to distinguish persons; it is their function. They often fulfill it. Reading Joyce (you see, we use the name but don't mean the person), we might learn about the chanciness of easy identification by nominal labels. Insofar as names are for things, the distinctions work reasonably well. But even so, undoubtedly concrete objects like keys or bowls are not just objects. Keys can open or lock, they are for entering, for excluding, for taking along, for forgetting, for being handed over, for ruling or usurping. Bowls are for carrying (or "bearing"), for holding aloft, for shaving, for mocking, they may play the roles of chalices at times, and chalices, we have read, may contain wine, or be empty, even "idle," can be broken—or not broken. Such objects, many at the beginning of *Ulysses*, are for actions, or acting.

Those privileged and, usually, capitalized nouns, however, that have no general referent, the names, serve to keep persons apart for convenient identification. Not unconditionally. You may remember Kitty O'Shea, the one that, Molly says, had a "magnificent head of hair down to her waist tossing it back," and who lived "in Grantham street" (*U* 18.478). This name then has different reverberations for a reader who (a) knows no Irish history at all, for one who (b) knows a little, and for one who (c) is an expert. It is the knowledge we bring to bear on the name that makes the difference. But even a historian well versed in late nineteenth-century Irish affairs will have to match Molly's acquaintance, at least for a fleeting instant, against the bad woman "who brought Parnell low," and then decide against an attractive identification. A name translates into knowing, or not knowing. Walter W. Skeat, the English etymologist, makes one of his infrequent negative remarks in the entry on "NAME": this work and its Latin cousin *nomen* are "not allied to 'know.'" The two word families are not related, but in practice they work together. The cognates of "know," however, are allied to that one item in the much-quoted triad of strange words at the opening of "The Sisters"—"gnomon" (*D* 9). And this gnomon merely sounds like, but has nothing to do with, Latin *nomen*, though it happens to be one; the similarity is deceptive and ominous.

The platitudinous pay-off of all this, predictably, is that in identifying we are *doing* something. All the meanings we concede, knowingly or not, to the term "Joyce" imply some kind of activity. At one extreme the word does duty for a life lived in various cities
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in the course of almost sixty years; at the other possible ends of the scales it suggests writing, thinking, creating, developing, intending—you name it, and you name it appropriately by verbs. Such verbs also become our panels and lectures and animated disputes. Aware of such dynamisms, some of us have quite independently—when this could still be done with impunity and even self-respect—coined the verb REJOYCE or REJOY칭.

Even the adjective “Joycean” predominantly means not some stable quality, but rather what Joyce actively provoked and what, conspiratorially, we now do in turn and with considerable energy. None of us may be able to define “Joycean” adequately, but we vaguely sense that it connotes some heterogeneous, but characteristic hyperactivity: words seem to be charged, or else we readers charge the words, somehow, it seems, beyond the norm. Ask anyone in Dublin.

To simplify the foregoing, names, for all their accepted substantiality, soon dissolve into doings, into the verbs from which grammar distinguishes them, at least in Indo-European languages. If at this point you nod facile assent and find, rightly, that I am kicking outdated horses and dismiss notions long out of date—or that someone has already put all this into a system of trendy abstractions—then just look at most of our practical applications. Look at how we, commentators or critics, seem often at pains to re-reify all that elusive work in progress, to freeze it into solid theses, symbols, parallels, discourses, or even “puns,” things that we can categorize and administer.

Joyce might be the antidote. His works release the processes out of the nouns, nouns which are so much easier to handle than events or doings. The pioneering etymologists who drew up a set of language origins of common Indo-European ancestry, usually tabulated roots that tended to be verbs of action. Joyce seems to descend to such origins. The roots of the two cultures that he revived bear this out as well.

**Dominenamine (U 6.595)**

Once the God of the Old Testament had spoken light into being and approved of it, he went on and “called the light Day” (Gen. 1:4). Genesis follows the birth of the world right away with the birth of the first noun. Somehow Joyce celebrated this pristine noun thus generated in his secondary creation; we in turn now also use “Blooms-
God then, soon after, shaped a being that was called "man." His personal name emerges first in the midst of another naming process:

The Lord brought [the beasts of the field] unto Adam, to see what he would call them [and we find an almost Joycean sort of divine curiosity]: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. (Gen. 2:19)

Calling ("quod vocavit," as the Vulgate has it) precedes the name ("ipsum est nomen eius"). And Adam, the first-named, started giving the animals around him names; he also decided that the outgrowth of his rib shall

be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. (Gen. 2:23)

Adam is the object of naming and becomes its prolific active subject right away. Creator and first creature are both protonomastic, not only the first namers around, but also those who start with naming before almost anything else they do on the record. The names, of course, allow the record to be written. Conversely, the calling of names in the upward direction, towards the divinity, might be tabooed. Potent naming and ineffability go together. Naming is potent, and so is knowing or uttering a name. Adam's powerful prerogative is shared by writers of fiction.

The Hellenic version differs in conception and idiom, but the Greek epics, oldest witnesses, work the naming of some of their heroes into their tales. In the most famous digression in literature, Odysseus is named in what appears the most arbitrary and whimsical way, in almost Saussurean fashion, and yet the random signifier becomes potently ominous. Since grandfather Autolykos passing by at the birth happened to be "odyssamenos," the child was called, "eponymously," "Odysseus." The participle form "odyssamenos" is either "made angry" or else "making angry" (reductive philologists, like their Joycean counterparts, may disagree); it suggests a man connected with wrath or odium, and it came to signify both a wrath inflicted and a wrath suffered.

So naming has been around, from the beginning. Joyce, the Namer, is well within a tradition that allowed for metamorphotic scope. A central name "Bloom" coincides with a common noun, offshoot of a verb BHLO (cf. *florere*, blühen, etc.), but a noun for some live process, blossoming, growing, changing, withering, radi-
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ating, smelling, all astir with poetical echoes. When Miss Marion Tweedy adopts it by patriarchal custom through marriage, her rivals inevitably joke: “you're looking blooming” (U 18.843). The verbal connection offers an appropriate flourish for the central onomastic cluster. Names, necessary social designations, arise out of, and turn again into, verbal energies, long before Finnegans Wake.

Joyce the Writer set off with almost no names, as suits lyrical poetry. Chamber Music can do, practically, without them. But not prose narrative; Dubliners has a wide range of appellative possibilities: full-fledged name (Ignatius Gallaher), last name only (Lenehan, Farrington), or first name alone (Maria, Lily), with or without a honorific (Mr James Duffy, Mr Duffy, but Corley), with a sprinkling of eponymous flourishes (Hoppy Holohan, Little Chandler). In all this diversity, the first three stories do not divulge what the protagonist narrator is (or the three narrators are) called. The technique of gnomonic elision or silence extends to names: one that is pointedly withheld seems to assume even more power than those known. But from now on there are names in abundance: a whole critical study (Who's He When He's At Home?) can be devoted to them. Some were taken from Joyce’s own background, some appropriated abroad, from printed sources, or invented, many synthesized. Perhaps the most outstanding example of imaginative naming is “Stephen Dedalus,” in defiance of almost all realistic plausibility: it represents a soaring, mythical, high water mark of portentous naming—its growing significance is thematized in A Portrait. But more and more, especially from Ulysses onwards, personal names are shown to be problematic. In the final work, they have lost their discriminative graphic edges, and identification becomes our readers’ necessity and pastime more than an overt concern of the work. It would be difficult to talk about the Wake if we had no nominal handles for its profusion. But its nominal blurrings would not be accepted by immigration officers on our passports, and our computers too would be obstinately uncooperative.

So we might roughly sketch a curve rising from pristine, lyrical anonymity to mythological ostentation, and down again towards a terminal pseudonymous fuzziness. But such a simplification would obscure the innate perplexity in between, the inherent riddling nature of names. But throughout, I submit, the naming is at least as important as the individual names used. Joyce’s methods are often genetic. Ironically, the first occurrence of “name” in Dubliners is
connected, not with something coming into being, but with the loss of the vital force. The reverberating term “paralysis” is introduced as sounding strangely like the name of some maleficent and sinful being (D 9), attached to a mortal activity, an action which means the disablement from acting. Appropriately then, the priest’s name is not communicated to us until it is being read on his death notice, when paralysis has done its fascinatingly “deadly work.”

Before any one person in *A Portrait* has been identified, the process of naming is put before us. The opening tale within a tale features a “nicens little boy named baby tuckoo”—named. Named by others, from outside, imposed from above. It will happen to the main character soon “—O, Stephen will apologize,” and whether guided by the precedent of Genesis or simply by empirical common sense, we take the name on trust ever after. Stephen hardly thinks about it until others remark on its strangeness. Once the naming of “baby tuckoo” has taken place, incidentally, the fairy story is discontinued right away, as though it had now, the secret being out, lost all further interest.

When real names do take over, we are not always helped. One fully labeled “Betty Byrne” is never heard of again. Soon we will come across a “Michael Davitt,” but few readers nowadays could tell, offhand, untutored, who he is; for all we know at first, it might be a member of the family. (If you disagree, you are simply substituting scholarly annotation for average knowledge.) One early conspicuous name, “Dante,” is flickeringly misleading. Most of us, semi-erudite, will have to discard the nominal association of an Italian poet who will be named, towards the end of the book. But the person called Dante early on will later translate itself unexplained into “Mrs Riordan.” In life and in literature, we usually come to terms with such confusion. Joyce exploits the confusions inherent in naming. Coincidences and convergences will later facilitate the mechanisms of *Finnegans Wake*.

When Stephen’s family name, commented on all along, is linked to its mythological origin and import, it translates into such actions as flying, soaring, falling, creating and, later on, estheticizing, or forging. Most of these active revelations follow close upon the mocking evocation of a Greek participle, “Bous Stephanoumenos,” in which Stephen’s Christian, very Christian, name is made to derive not from crown, the object, but from a verb for crowning. The fourth chapter, where all this happens, moves from a static beginning
of almost lifeless order and institutional clusters to an ecstasy of motion.

It would be idle to repeat how deceptively the first names come on in *Ulysses*, "Buck" and "Kinch." Commentators who claim that "Chrysostomos" in the earliest non-normative, one-word, sentence, "is" the name of some specific saint disregard the inherent process of naming through characterization, a process which may very well then lead to one particular saint. Stephen silently bestows an appellation on the usurper² who towers over him, one that fittingly singles out his most prominent organ. In some way this is Stephen's tacit hellenized tit for Mulligan's loudly voiced tat, "Kinch." *Ulysses* starts naming procedures even before the absurdity of "Dedalus" or the trippingness of "Malachi Mulligan" are remarked upon.

One whole chapter is notably given over to the bafflement of naming. It begins with "I," the polar opposite to individual verbal labels, a pronoun without a noun. Unique among words, its meaning changes with every speaker. As Stephen intimates in a passing "I, I and I. I." (U 9.212), the meaning may even change for any one person—through time; "I am other I now." The "Cyclops" chapter, whose governing saints are "S. Anonymous and S. Eponymous and S. Pseudonymous and S. Paronymous and S. Synonymous," contains "Adonai!" in its terminal paragraph (12.1915), a word that looks and functions like a name but pointedly is not. It is in fact a substitute for one that is unspeakable and prohibited. "Adonai" is making a nominal noise for a sacred onomastic absence.

One minor event in *Ulysses* is the devious misnaming of "M'Intosh" by a collusion of oral, written, and printed communication. The mystery surrounding this figure is mainly due to its being given a name that we know to be chancy. If there had been no newspaper reference and if Bloom had wondered, at the end of his day, who the man in the macintosh was, very little print would be expended on him. It is our knowledge of his pseudonymity that provokes so much curiosity. As naming, however, the procedure is true to universal type. What we wear can turn into what we become known by (Robin Hood may be a case in point; his sister Little Red Riding certainly is).

The misnomering integrated into the texture of *Ulysses* is intimately tied up with fiction, a process of feigning (or the invention of "figures"). As an obliging intermediary, Leopold Bloom assists in dissimulating the presence of M'Coy among the mourners (who
is neither present nor mourning). Newspaper fictions get M'Coys as well as Stephen Dedalus B.A. into this second Nekyvia. In the midst of what looks like the least questionable list of mere names some fictions have intruded; we, in our superiority, translate the fictions into complicated actions and dysfunctions of information. We still don't know who "M'Intosh" is (some readers have thought they do, others claim we never will; but knowing who he "is" would mean substituting his wrong name by one that is considered circumstantially plausible—a change of labels), but we recognize "M'Intosh" as a series of mishappenings. Joe Hynes's misunderstanding also shows the reporter's need for labels of that sort. As we do not know the civil service data of the person who tells us what goes on in Barney Kiernan's bar, we change this negative condition into a name and refer to his as "The Nameless One," following a hint (U 15.1144). Namelessness is unsettling. So that in Finnegans Wake we are striving for identification tags to attach to the paronymous noncharacters, and we co-create Earwickers and Porters, or pit Shems (in Hebrew shem intriguingly means name) against Shauns even where these configurations of letters do not occur, in the majority of cases, and we treat them as though they were friends of the family we would recognize anywhere.

Naming confers power. The namer feels superior to the namee (who is generally a helpless infant). Once a name is given, it tends to stick. Only when we assume important positions, like Pope or King, may we choose our own different names. Writers can do it too. They can name themselves, or one of their figures, "Stephen Daedalus" or "Dedalus." Or they can title a prose work about a day in Dublin "Ulysses," and we realize the potency of this when we consider what difference it would make if someone discovered that Joyce's real intention had been something like "Henry Flower" or "Love's Old Sweet Song," "Atonement," or "The Rose from Gibraltar."

If we look at it verbally
Naming, however, is just one of the many activities we find in Joyce's cosmos, but a prominent one—of paradigmatic significance: an action through words. My exemplification is simply a renewed demonstration of a direction away from the stability of things or persons towards movement, change. Verbs, which here represent action, movement, processes, are less tractable than nouns (nouns
are ideal for catalogues or filing cards), less easy to pin down. Verbs have more flexibility, or flexion. They extend beyond the immediate present, or presence, into the past and the future; they are not restricted to what is, but can imply variant attitudes towards factuality, what might be. They have, in other words, tenses, moods, aspects, voices. At the present stage of ignorance it might be more profitable to phrase our views of literature in general, and Joyce in exemplary particular, in terms of inflexion and syntactic interaction than as an assembly of themes, ideas, messages. Physics in the twentieth century developed in a similar direction: things, bodies, mass, matter seemed to give way to motion, energies, speeds—nouns into verbs. Contemporary theories also tend towards verbal processes. I hope the simplistic way of putting it here is seen for what it is, a corrective convenience for illustration. As *Finnegans Wake* tries to spell out, "perhaps there is no true noun in active nature" (523.10).

I am going to apply my figure of speech—taken from the parts of speech—to the newly edited text of *Ulysses* on the occasion of its first rebirth in a new dress, the paperback Blue Book of Errors Corrected. Some of the arguments of last year (1985) might have been controverted with more urbane understanding if the issues had not been treated as things, choices right or wrong, but had been seen as problems of the verbs that are implied. What the text of 1984 offered is not so much an object rectified in 5,000 instances and made reliably stable—or else, in an opposing view, a product wholly misconceived and faultily executed. It is, if anything, rectification in visible progress. The process is spread over the entire synoptic array on the dynamic left-hand page, down to footnotes, into the back of the book with textual notes, a historical collation, and a discursive afterword. The constant scuttling it demands of its users is troublesome, but essential, work in progress. The left-hand page activates us.

One might say in metaphorical exaggeration that the left-hand page, the one with all the action, constitutes the verbs as against the deceptively stable nouns on the page that provides the final (not definite) results in undisturbed typography. By common, misleading, usage a text is called "established"—the Munich text emphasizes establishing. Those sinistrous verbs have changing forms, have tenses (the page is diachronic), have moods, have voices. All the nonalphabetic features, those elevated diacritical irritations, are functional imperatives: they tell us what to do, where to go—to the drafts,
fair copies, proof sheets, and all the rest. They also actively report what Joyce did.

It is for us to translate the left page, which by itself does not make immediate sense, and not because of the editors' instinctive nastiness. The pages on the left are "genetic," they display becoming. Our own postcreative retracings match the author's creative bustling: an author who was indeed auctor, an "increaser," and an excreaser. To bone-set, after the act, excrescences that extended over three cities and seven years is a task to tax the best prepared of experts, almost beyond the reach of prescriptive principles. That the synoptic, left-hand page and the internal explications offered in the edition require conjugations that happen to surpass my own mental capacities does not detract from the necessity for conjugation, Joycean conjugations.

What we face, inevitably, is not a text freed from error (though this in itself was a worthwhile goal which resulted in a great number of unquestioned improvements), but a refined documentation of what an error might be. The apparatus shows how errors came about. The text, in its hazardous growth, was in itself erring all along (the drafts show abortive attempts and wrong starts). It, Ulysses, in its laborious progress from abandoned short story to no-longer novel, had its share of vicissitudes or, to borrow some quotations, it travelled far—was fated to roam—many a way wound—was harried for years on end—was driven far journeys—was made to stray—had a changeful course—multum erravit.

All these paraphrases refer, of course, to Odysseus, whose changeful course was due to force of circumstances and to his own nature. The text of Ulysses, similarly, was redirected at various points, on various pieces of paper. It had to suffer countless injuries done to it from outside, but it also, in the nature of its being, caused many of its own predicaments. Ulysses was in need of reediting, not only because of the shortcomings of typists and printers, but because it is as it is.

So it is now for us to sort out the highroads and the deviations and to synopt. We know that some of our synoptions are chancy, many wayward itineraries of long ago remain irretrievable. The new edition strives to leave out scribal sins—what inattentive or meddlesome copyists had committed or omitted by faulty conjugation, departures that usually consist of words known to all men with the possible exception of French typesetters in Dijon. What all this implies, in practice, is that Joyce (here in the sense of someone
writing, revising, adding, proofreading), actively engaged in new creations, was passively overlooking thousands of wrong turns, or gaps. Preoccupied with what lay still ahead, he was not undoing the doing of fallible mediators. The Munich team stepped in and did the close examination that Joyce was incapable of, had failed to carry out, and so they incurred, as one might telegrammatically put it, the immense debtorship of a thing done sixty years later.

From my given bias, I stress the verbal framework—Joyce actively composing the end of *Ulysses*, passively overlooking numerous misadventures of transmission. "Passive authorization" is a conventional technical contradiction of terms, the notion for a principle that is not valid for the new edition of *Ulysses*. The principle defines Joyce's oversights as failed actions, failures by inattention, which the approval of a *bon à tirer* does not authorize. If Joyce had noticed the errors, the assumption is, he would have interfered. You notice that an edition of *Ulysses* can hardly remain in the indicative mood; conditional or subjunctive aspects (what would have been, or should have been) come into play.

The accomplicity long after the fact, which results in so many improvements, worries me all the same. How are we to deal rationally with what, by definition, is not a rational decision, is outside the normal range of conscious volition? A new psychology that was coterminous with Joyce's development and coincided with some of his insights, diagnosed overlooking—forgetting, lapsing, erring (and all parapractic varieties)—no longer as neutral, accidental blanks among business as usual, but as negative *actions*, as significant *not* looking, *not* recalling—as twisted, deviant, aberrant *doings* outside of consciousness. Psychomorphoses of that kind are, furthermore, vitally part of Joyce's realistically erroneous cosmos of words; the verb to *err* is integrated into Joyce's works (and I still believe that its concurrence in the first word of *Finnegans Wake* is significant: "Riv-err-un"). What is the meaning of that other world, the one thought to be outside of what our minds know they know? How are we to deal with those verbs below the surface of reason and, perhaps, an author's conscious control?

Or, to put it differently, if so much care was not taken by Joyce, as evidenced by the much touted number of 5,000 errors, would not this fact in its totality constitute a kind of vague cumulative volition? Authorization and will are related. "Which will" ("We are getting mixed," *U* 9.794)? Who was it again that was troubled
all day long about the correct voicing of—"voglio"—or is it perhaps "vorrei"? (auxiliary verbs are tricky and ubiquitous). I have no solution to offer for what the author's will may have been when. This was an author fretted, harried, optically handicapped, oblivious and, at that stage, not omniscient, certainly no longer scrupulous over minor flaws, an author who missed hundreds of commas that had been officiously introduced into the typescript of "Eumaeus." We all have overlooked commas in our petty time, nothing is easier. But can the wholesale sprinkling of them be missed? Does Joyce's noninterference mean Will, Impotence, Carelessness, or Passive Resignation? If Joyce—"writing the mystery of himself" (FW 184.9), "lisant au livre de lui-même" (U 9.114), that is rereading the proofs of himself—so often forgot himself, which part of Joyce are we going to call up in his stead? I, for one, do not have the strong verbs to tackle such questions, and so commas will continue to haunt, subjunctively, the Eumaean prose for me.

My phrasings have been hovering, in subtle confusion, between activity and passivity in which author and transmitters shared. The text was made, begotten, augmented, changed, it suffered damage, neglect, was interfered with, but there is also a sense, much amplified in current vogues, in which Joyce's texts seemed to have a will of their own, appear to have written themselves, autogenetically. The synopsis of the new Ulysses, writes Hans Walter Gabler, using a reflexive form, displays "a text as it constituted itself in the process of writing". The works, moreover, tend to comment on themselves in narcissistic self-preoccupation and internal reciprocity. Later texts also look back, retrospectively, on the earlier ones. We now discover more and more, and pontificate on, how Ulysses and Finnegans Wake are self-reflexive.

reluctant to use the passive voiced (FW 523.8)

Now verbs can be used either actively or passively in our languages (those that concern us here), and that seems to be all. But our Indo-European dialect once expressed a third, in-between, possibility, with separate forms. The Greek prototexture of a work entitled "Ulysses" may permit a look into that language, a characteristic it had preserved from its ancestors. The verbal system included what was called a "middle diathesis" (disposition), in Latin grammar the genus "medium," the so-called Middle Voice, partaking of the active and the passive. It was an old, original part of its inflected system (in fact
the passive voice has been thought to derive from it). "But learn from that ancient tongue to be middle" (FW 270.17).

Nowadays the main use of the Middle Voice is to bewilder the student of Greek and the translators, but it once expressed, very sensibly, a most common involvement of the subject beyond its own grammatical confinement within the sentence. Definitions speak of "actions viewed as affecting the subject," which is a very general condition to which formal attention was paid long ago. The Middle Voice is an "intermediate between active and passive," or a voice which "normally expresses reflexive or reciprocal action." Another traditional way describes its function as "the voice of verb inflection in which the subject is represented as acting on or for itself." By chance this may almost sound like, and remind us of, Stephen's Shakespeare: "He acts and is acted on" (U 9.1021). A Greek writer might well have used one verbal form for this, and we would then wonder if the passive or the medial sense is dominant. The verb "act," Stephen's choice, is a good paradigm: it shows that verbs too play roles, roles that were distinguished and highlighted in Greek. "Epiphany," a favorite term of Joyce's youth, has much to do with the middle voice: "epi-phainesthai," "to manifest itself, appear, come into view"; it can also mean, of course, passively, "to be manifested." The Latin equivalents are the Deponents, verbs with passive forms but active function—hybrids. Joyce acknowledged them. A defendant in court becomes a "Deponent" (as a witness he would have to "depone"):

the deponent... may have been (one is reluctant to use the passive voiced) may be been as much sinned against as sinning, for if we look at it verbally perhaps there is no true noun in active nature... (FW 523.7)

Anyone accused is likely to present himself not as an agent but as a passive victim; "more sinned against than sinning" is a moral medial position between the voices that grammar keeps apart. A deponent verb is passive ("sinned against") in looks but active ("sinning") in intent. Another court room situation also plays on the morality of the verb:

no longer will I follow you oblique like through the inspired form of the third person singular and the moods and hesitencies of the deponent but address myself to you, with the empirative of my vendettative, provocative and out direct (FW 187.2)

Grammatical terms reappear:
And egg she active or spoon she passive, all them fine clauses... never brought the participle of a present to a desponent hortatrixy, vindicatively...(FW 269.29)

The verb contained in "hortatrixy" is a well-known paradigm for the deponent, hortor or hortari, passive in appearance, in the active sense of exhort or incite.

Being "one of those mixed middlings" and volatile, unstable, formally not always distinguished from the passive, the Middle Voice tended to disappear as a separate category, not, however, as an inherent assignment in language. If we want to express medial participation in English, we usually choose a form in which the subject finds itself at either end of the inflected verb. My sentence just did that: "the subject finds itself..." Characteristic is a bending (flectere) back (re-) upon the agent, so we call it "re-flexive."

Stephen's theory can be rephrased in grammatical metaphor. One of its cornerstones is the report that Shakespeare the actor took the part of King Hamlet's ghost. A premise is that Shakespeare played, acted, himself in this role, and from this a whole algebra of equations is then extrapolated. Of Shakespeare, named Will, the "unremitting intellect is...Iago ceaselessly willing that the moor in him shall suffer" (U 9.1023). This is the activity and passivity of suffering. Shakespeare's errors are "volitional"; yet he is pained because he was "overborne in a cornfield" (9.456) by Anne who "hath a way" over others' will. So—always according to Stephen's self-projections—Shakespeare, partly driven, in varied reiteration wills himself into his writing. Hamlet is, in Mallarme's phrasing, "lisant au livre de lui-même, don't you know, reading the book of himself." He does this, we are told, walking—in reflexive French: "il se promène" (9.114).

Stephen may vary his views in terms of scholastic actuality and possibility: "He found in the world without as actual what was in his world within as possible," and he adduces a saying of Maeterlinck's "If Socrates leave his house today he will find the sage seated on his doorstep" (9.1041). The "sage," reciprocally, is Socrates, the subject. We walk through ourselves, meeting many people along the road, but always, in fateful fulfillment, meeting ourselves.

The Shakespeare posited by Stephen is that of a compulsive and highly versatile auto-bio-grapher of enigmatic genius. Psychologically, the life acted and suffered and partly self-determined, can hardly help writing itself out into the plays. Autobiography is
Joyce the Verb

tautologically medial. So is a basic assumption of a writer’s biography: the personality must be reflected, repeated, modified, conjugated, “worked off,” in the work. The consubstantiality of any writer’s life and writings looks like a medial truism. Whitman’s “One’s self I sing” could be seen as the traditional epic invocation translated into the Middle Voice and into English near-reflexivity.

In the following presentation I will deflect the Middle Voice (often using the Latin term medium) as an analogy or descriptive handle for Joycean features that are already well known, in what I hope will be mainly quick illustrative flashes.

“What would grammar matter?” (D 66)

“The Boarding House” may serve as a convenient sample. Consider dominant Mrs. Mooney, who manipulates two lives with a firm hand, as almost exclusively expressed in the active voice, with purposeful active verbs. And isn’t her voice active! She even does the speaking for others, her own last word is on behalf of Doran: “Mr. Doran wants to speak to you” (D 69). Mr. Doran, in the role of victim (as he would see himself), is largely and momentously passive, in behavior and in grammar: he is being sent for and being decided on, even his “wants” are expressed for him: “he was being had” (D 66). Polly Mooney, the strategic intermediary, conducts herself a good deal in the middle voice: “She knew she was being watched... She would put an end to herself.” In her own little scene towards the end, “she dried her eyes...refreshed her eyes...She looked at herself in the mirror.” She falls into a revery, withdraws into her own memories and visions. When her story is continued into Ulysses, the brief sketch of “the sleepwalking bitch...the bumbailiff’s daughter,” retains its typical quasi-reflexive syntax even in hyperbole: “without a stitch on her, exposing her person” (12.401).

Bob Doran finds fault with Polly’s vulgar grammar: “sometimes she said ‘I seen’” (D 66). What she means is, actively, I have seen, but her wording is passive, as though she were using a Latin deponent. Her “being seen,” of course, is literally an ingredient in the seduction (a scene mainly hidden from us). Seduction, as active strategy, passive entrapment, or some medial involvement, of the main persons, is one of the story’s themes. Up to a point, the grammatical distribution
works; if taken too far into a system, it would become as absurd and constrictive as all such attempts.

**Stephanoumenos**

We also find the detached artist-God in Stephen’s esthetic proclamation on either side of the verb:

The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork... (P 215)

and no matter how refined out of existence, or indifferent, the pose expressive of such indifference is manifested by the type of verbal form which in Greek grammar is always instanced as typical middle voice (*louomat bous podas*: I wash my feet = myself): “paring his fingernails” (P 215); which becomes, naturally, a reflexive form in French: (“*en train de se limer les ongles*”).

The would-be artist who thinks like that is to declare, programmatically: “I will not serve that in which I no longer believe... and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can” (P 224). Our stress is on “myself.” The triad of arms to be used in defense ends on “cunning,” and it is oddly fitting that the Greek prototype name Daidalos translates into “cunning.” Dedalus using cunning (the skill of being daidalos) is a piece of philological reflexivity.

One of the classmates’ appellations, “*Bous Stephanoumenos*,” will be repeated and remembered in *Ulysses*, where it leads to another Greek participle of echoing ending and like form, “*Autontimoromenos*” (9.939). The latter is close to the title of a play that Terence adapted from Menander. The title is conspicuously reflexive: it moves the self into the accusative case: *auton-*; the “Self-Tortmentor,” as it is translated. The Greek participle written into *Ulysses* is in the middle voice. Tormenting and being tormented: so is Stephen. The verb *timoreo* (active), originally did not mean torment, but “to help” and then “to revenge.” In this collection we also see a change rung on the *Hamlet* theme. Prince Hamlet and Stephen do take revenge, but in part on themselves; an unvoiced middle participle brings this out.

Stephen’s entry into *Ulysses* is revealing. He is first an object when Mulligan catches sight of him and goes into a mimetic routine of exorcism. Then the perspective changes:

Stephen Dedalus, displeased and sleepy, leaned his arms on the top of the staircase.
He leans part of himself (or, in reflexive French: "il s'inclina") onto the world outside. Soon after he will "lean his palm against his brow" (1.100). In "Eveline" such leaning had a strongly passive air, here it expresses a more in-between stage. Notice what Stephen is: "displeased." No doubt the overbearing Mulligan displeases him, perhaps also the raving Englishman in the tower; but the word mainly expresses an internal disposition. In translation such medial forms usually come out twofold: passive (as in "contrarie" or "contrariato"), or in partial self-inducement: "malhumorado-mis-slaunig-med mishag." In A Portrait Stephen had been characterized twice as "displeased"—one of his habitual moods. It is hard to imagine him pleased. The opening beat, "displeased," is in the right medium. The epithet relates him to Telemachos, who was beset by afflictions from outside, and it also differentiates him from the Greek role and prepares the way, psychologically and grammatically, for Autontimoroumenos.

**Psychogrammar**

On a much grander scale, we may redescribe what has been Bloom's affliction. He suffers his wife's adultery, is being injured and victimized, yet he also co-determines this state of the affair, he connives and goes out of his way to make it possible. All of this is, in the characterization of the middle voice, action also "for himself." The hyperballistics of the Circean mode transform such attitudes into large stage action and passion. In a climactic scene Bloom watches and applauds Boylan's copulation with his wife through a keyhole in twisted enjoyment of cockoldry, being "bawd and cuckold" (9.1021). The situation leads right into the vision of Shakespeare's face in the mirror: the optical multiplicity involves Stephen and Bloom and, in widening perspective, the creator of the scene and its voyeuristic readers. It is an interreflective node of voices and visions, a muddle of reciprocity.

Bloom's medial actions do not always, as we recall with divergent evaluations, conform to the stereotypes of sexism. It is on record that the male has predominantly been equated with active action, the female with passive submission. Something of this sexual grammar is mediated in an Ithacan passage

the natural grammatical transition by inversion involving no alteration of sense of an aorist preterite proposition (parsed as masculine subject, monosyllabic onomatopoetic transitive verb
with direct feminine object) from the active voice into its
correlative aorist preterite proposition (parsed as feminine subject,
auxiliary verb and quasimonosyllabic onomatopoetic past participle with complementary masculine agent) in the passive voice
(U 17.2217)

Into such a system, which Dublin society at the turn of the
century would no doubt uphold, Joyce inserted a middle way which
manifests itself first, mildly, in Bloom's sympathy, or compassion, for women: he can put himself in their position. This makes him
an outsider, particularly in the male congregation of the maternity
hospital. In a transitive sense, Bloom is not very active. Activity is
the role of the Boylans and the Mulligans who in turn are not too
sensitive and, on the whole, lack empathy. When critics, superior
by self-appointment, judge Bloom a failure or decree, for instance,
that throughout his day he takes the "wrong choices" (not going
home to assert a possessive masculinity), it is generally done within
a transitive patriarchal framework.

Bloom, the reproach goes, is "one of those mixed middlings.
Lying up in the hotel... once a month with a headache like a totty
with her courses" (12.1658). In "Circe" such traits are externalized
and Bloom is turned into yet another paradigm, "a finished example
of the new womanly man" (15.1798). This puts him midway between
the "manly man" of Gerty MacDowell's imagination, and how very
soon after she views herself as a "womanly woman" (13.210,435).
There is then, as Bloom asserts in one of his defense speeches, "a
medium in all things" (15.878). He is not explaining Greek grammar
by a Latin term, but echoing Horace's familiar "*est modus in rebus"
("there is a measure in all things"), and asking for moderation. But
medium he is, all the same, also between male and female.

Circean androgyny enables the newly generated finished example
to finish the example by giving birth to eight male children. It so
happens that the number eight is also that of Molly Bloom's
"sentences" in her chapter, eight verbal units generated by the
book's representative woman: there may be a numerical correspon-
dence. Bloom's children are "respectably dressed and wellconducted"
(15.1824): both epithets are in the middle voice, in particular
"wellconducted": it can be construed as active or medio-passive.

Androgynous features animate *Finnegans Wake* and extend
across genders or religions to appellations like:
In the name of Annah the Almaziful, the Everliving, the Bringer of Plurabilities, haloed be her eve, her singtime sung, her rill be run, unhemmed as it is uneven (FW 104.1) in which august divinities are feminized and brought into line with Eve, or in which Moslem and Christian prayer become assimilated to the beginning of Finnegans Wake itself, with “rill be run” echoing “riverrun.” The equation of Annah, ALP, Eve, with Allah and the Lord looks like a cosmogenetic middle voice. All of this ties in with the observation that in Latin grammar verbs as well as nouns have genus, gender. Active, passive, and medium, are “genera.”

Medial Monologue
The interior monologue once seemed the most striking feature of Ulysses, the one that once attracted most of the serious attention. It is a kind of speech not addressed to an outside object; the subject, as it were, is talking to and often about itself. In a very loose and yet coincidentally precise sense, Bloom, Stephen, and Molly become reflexive verbs. They mirror the outside world but also, and at times exclusively, their own selves, “bend back” (re-flect) on themselves. In Homeric diction “thinking” is often expressed by a person addressing his (her) heart, or breast, or mind: “I think” is “I said to myself.” By a definition that is almost grammatical and, again, tautological, everything thus expressed is “subjective.” What is perceived is subjected to the perceivers nature. One of the narrative advantages is the economy of such characterization that is two-directed: towards the world without and within: “She understands all she wants to. Vindictive too. Cruel. Her nature. Curious mice never squeal. Seem to like it” (4.27). This tells us something about cats, and mice, but even more about Bloom (at a later stage we may find, moreover, that some of Bloom’s attitude towards his wife is already caught in this observation). We can move, in other words, towards the thing said (thought) and towards the sayer (thinker). We generally recognize the reflector, can tell Bloom from Stephen or, by extrapolation, deduce the author himself who, biographically, is all to all, Bloom and Stephen and Molly and Lenehan. All the works are, truistically, pièce de Joyce.

The internal middle voice appears in a very brief flash on the first page: “Chrysostomos.” Insofar as it is a naming (see above), it characterizes the person named as well as the namer, indicates
something about his erudition as well as his state of mind. The interior monologue's official initiation takes place fittingly at the moment when, looking at the mirror held out to him, Stephen begins internally to speak to himself: "As he and others see me" (1.136). At this point perspective, pronouns, tenses, all have changed. The reflexion is optical, psychological and grammatical. The self seen in the mirror reflects back: "Who chose this face for me?...It asks me too": the face that is being addressed reciprocally asks back. Interestingly enough, Stephen sees himself when he "bent forward"; bending forward is the mirror reflexion of bending (flectere) backward.

Gerty MacDowell, whose thoughts are presented more indirectly, also "bent forward quickly," after "being bent so far back" (13.742,728); but her physical action is described more as leaning: "she leaned back" we read several times (13.695,715, "ever so far," 717,941), or she "had to lean back" (744). We know that this enables her, medio-passively, to be seen in a particular way. Reciprocally, however, Bloom in his turn "was leaning back," he "coloured like a girl," also reciprocally (13.743). All these bendings and leanings are not connected with the thinking that goes on but with the chapter's activities which are more solitary (or "ipsoerelative") than other-directed (or "aliorelative," as in 17.1350).

Physically, the associations of the middle voice can be extended to masturbation. Whether through necessity or fastidiousness, the subject also becomes its own object. In the "Nausicaa" chapter, the arena for such economy or auto-reciprocity, Gerty and Bloom are not so much transitive verbs with each other as objects, at least not each other's direct objects, except visually. Something as erotic and tactile as "the quick hot touch of his handsome lips" occurs only in Gerty's imagination (13.708). Bloom wets and stains himself. Even his watch has stopped. In Greek such intransitive stopping would be in the middle voice (pauesthai as against an active pauein, to stop): "Funny my watch stopped at half past four" (13.846); the watch, clearly, ceased its activity, it "stopped itself": what Bloom considers "funny" seems to be that whatever went on at home had some enigmatic influence and, actively, stopped it. In this view or superstition, the watch, like Bloom, acts and is acted on.

Both Gerty and Bloom, reflect, often in reciprocal convergences. Nothing is passed across but looks, and "a kind of language between them." Gerty MacDowell, "lost in thought" or "wrapped in thought," as the medial phrases have it, acts, in terms of the
grammatical descriptions indicated before, mainly "on herself or for herself." She is conscious of her effects on others, admiration that turns back on her. With the rest of humanity she shares the delight in the "lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her" (13.162). Her circumambient style shows her as the victim of forces that have shaped her. They range from society's conventions and imperatives to the injunctions of advertising and the illusions of compensatory literature. But she is also their subject and, in her own conditioned turn, now regenerates the same attitudes in cosmetic circularity. She reshapes life in the style that shaped her. Lest this sound too condescending, let me add that I believe such medial conditioning holds true for most of us in all culture contexts. Stephen, for example, is similarly co-determined by the catholicism he projects in his very efforts of rejection. I can't answer for any of you out there, but for me, Gerty MacDowell "c'est moi.''

The chapter's events are set off against the "voice of prayer" emanating from the nearby church, and the refrain of the litany, "pray for us," is woven into the foreground. Prayer is a model for the middle voice; in practice it often amounts to wishing something for oneself: ora pro nobis. The Greek verb was naturally medial: *euchesthai*, both in Homer and in the New Testament. Bloom notes the repetition of "Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us" and links it to his profession: "Same things with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us" (13.1122). Advertisements proclaim themselves; what Catesby's Cork Lino or Plumtree's Potted Meat spell out is, above all, "Buy me!"

**Middler the Holy Ghost**

The economy of heaven, androgyny, and a masturbatory Everyman Immorality Play are combined with gusto by Bullocky Mulligan at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis." But we have never been far from the consubstantial intricacies that obsess Stephen. His silent creed looks like a travesty of a Divine Middle Voice

He Who Himself begot middler the Holy Ghost and Himself sent Himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others...sitteth on the right hand of his Own Self...(9.493)

("on the right hand of His Own Self" has come true of the synoptic text of *Ulysses*). All of the middling has been transposed to patristic, Sabellian absurdity and incestuous economy. Unmistakable are the mocking reflexivity and the trailing, echoing Selves. "Middler the
Holy Ghost”—in one sweeping generalization one might yoke the third person of the Holy Trinity to my grammatical analogy in the conjugation of an all-powerful Verb. But in cosmogonic reticence I refrain from such comprehensive usurpation and merely indicate possible directions for research.

Even so, the heretical bending back on itself exaggerates ideas of creation. The world, as some of our myths have it, came into being by the emanating voice of a god, by his speaking. In the Greek transformation of Genesis (whose original Hebrew phrasing would demand separate, corrective attention) the Creator’s voice was, inevitably, a middle one. The first word ever uttered is

\textit{Genetheto} (medium imperative)

and it is followed (and followed, it would seem, in most languages) by the noun: \textit{genetheto phos-fiat lux}—let there be light! The verb, preceding, brings the noun into existence. In a partial imitation Stephen begins one of his verbal creations (the one that recalls Joyce’s first prose work and may also represent some of \textit{Ulysses}) with an echo of Genesis: “Dubliners...Let there be life” (7.922,930).

The effect of the imperative expresses itself in a change of the verb form: “\textit{kai egeneto phos: et facta est lux}—And there was light.” The verb used, “\textit{genetheto-egeneto},” is the paradigmatic type of the medium, \textit{genesthai}, the verb of becoming; it has no other voice (the Latin equivalent, \textit{factum esse}, looks passive). This is not some odd coincidence, but the nature of the concept. Genesis, by definition and by its own essence, is medial becoming. The author of the world, it implies, also put himself into the oral work and participates in it. The naming processes immediately following have already been mentioned: words create the world, and within this new world, words have to be created to distinguish things and doings in genetic reciprocity.

In the rereading of the original account by Christianity—which of course projected itself into the reading—the aspect of becoming is circumstated. St. John puts it like this: “All things were made by him [the word, \textit{logos}].” Again the passive English construction does duty for a medial “\textit{panta di’ autou egeneto}” (John 1.3). St. John’s memorable opening is as full as it must be of variations of \textit{gignesthai} or \textit{genesis} (in fact the first gospel begins as the book of \textit{“genesis”}: “Biblos geneseos Iesou Christou” (\textit{Liber generationis Jesu Christi}, “the book of the generation,” Matt. 1.1). The term “only-
begotten," which reverberated down patristic controversies and is taken up in *Ulysses*, belongs to the same cluster, *mono-genēs* (John 1.14, 18, 3.16, 18, etc.). "Begetter" and "begotten" are recalled by Stephen Dedalus. Less known is that an approximation of the consequential term *mono-genēs* also appears in *Finnegans Wake*, with just one letter changed that makes all the genetic difference—a Y for an E—the last chapter personifies: "if Monogynes his is or hers Diander" (613.33). This refers ostensibly to botanical generation ("monogynia" and "diandria" are the first two classes in a sexual system); genders are mixed, "his or hers," and "Monogynes" changes a theological "his," a divine male "monogenēs" to a female shape, *gynē* (or *gune*), woman. The theological inversion is matched by one of the usual Wakean constellations of one central male facing two girls: we now find one woman, "mono"-"gynē" and two ("di") men ("anēr, andro-").

Creating, begetting, giving birth, changing across categories make up the economy of *Finnegans Wake*. There is no middle voice in Anglo-Irish, but countless muddled phrasings, like "Creator he has created for his creature ones a creation" (29.14). The sentence echoes and elaborates on its own subject, or its verb; again we have reciprocity and mirroring self-perpetuation; or semantic masturbation. In "understanding" such sentences we move forward and backward: this is just what Latin *reciprocare* meant, going backward (*re*) and forward (*pro*). So is the recirculatory technique of reading the *Wake*, "preprocession and proprecession" (156.8), or a "rotary processus and its reestablishment of reciprocities" (304 L3). This essay too is an exercise in reciprocity.

At the opening of the learned, studious tenth chapter we seem to be looking for our place: we haply return...to be finding ourself and we find ourselves (or in German "*betinden uns*") once more reflectively on either side of the verb:

when old is said in one and maker mates with made (261.5)

The incestuous mating leads, in more echoing self-perpetuation ("having conned the cones..."), to the Seven Wonders of the World. More narrowly, in the mythography of *Finnegans Wake*, the creator sinned himself into the world by an original act of medial self-pollution, as James S. Atherton long ago pointed out. This creator is
the first old wugger of himself in the flesh'' (79.2)

The "old wugger" incarnates "himself in the flesh." The reflexive duplication of "wuggering"—offsetting the rather sterile act of buggery implied—is similar to the *Wake's* first clearly medial verb, the "rocks" that "exaggerated themself" and went "doublin their mumper" (3.7). Part of the activity of exaggerating is directed towards others ("'-else'"), part bends back on the subject ("themself[ves]").

laughing-like to himself

I have wuggered myself into a hyper-emphasis of a grammatical ploy, what the Greek called the middle *diathesis*, the Romans the *genus medium*. The whole point could have been made, more briefly, by focusing on Joyce's first and last work. In "The Sisters" a declining priest wants to reshape an impressionable boy in his own likeness; perhaps he obliquely tries to continue himself through the disciple. Professionally he listens to the confession of others, yet in the boy's dream and a reversal of roles, the priest seems to be confessing. In confession we say something to someone about ourselves; appropriately the Latin word for it is a deponent again, a medio-passive *confiteor* (the word is repeated in the partly auto-confessional *Portrait*: 78.9, 82.17, 143.31). *Confieri* (infinitive form) is derived from *fari* (to speak) of which it is a special, retroactive, variant. "The Sisters" is a story in which the same boy later retells the events. Our last glimpse is of Father Flynn "sitting up by himself in the dark of his confessionbox, wide-awake and laughing-like softly to himself" (D 18). The distortive confession is repeated, as if for emphasis: "Wide-awake and laughing-like to himself" towards the end, and we know that "there was something wrong with him"

Sitting, laughing to himself—that is one of Nora's reports of her husband composing *Finnegans Wake*, which has also been considered a twisted confession where much has gone wrong. It contains a "convulsion box," a "confisieur" and "confussion" (261.F3, 531.2, 353.25). It is a work that repeatedly speaks about itself, to itself, or tangentially admits that it is "a letter selfpenned to one's other" (489.33). This also ties in with the dream analogy of the *Wake* (which, to some of its commentators, who seem to know what a dream is, achieves axiomatic status). Most interpreters of dreams agree that whatever they contain, the dreamer is also
voicing him/herself in intricate guises and that dreams are a tortuous kind of confession.

Revoicings
With considerable metaphorical latitude I have been applying a grammatical analogy in free and easy dispersion. Analogy is what Joyce works with. On a small scale his Revoicings take the form of all those evocations of prior phrasings, often the most memorable ones of literature, sometimes the tritest of ready-made stereotypes. They may be formulas, clearly marked "quotations," or the most evanescent of "allusions." There is a medial sense in them, insofar as only a portion of their semantic energies are directed toward external actuality. The rest bends back, or retroflects, on their origin or the fashion of their articulation. The ghosts of former texts are called up, called up for readers in proportion to their familiarity with them. Some attention then turns back on the source, literary or otherwise. In *Ulysses* the method is heralded by Buck Mulligan who exhibits, from the start, remarkable mimetic and recitative skills. One reason why some of our initial effort is required to figure out the external setting is that most of Mulligan's second (perhaps golden-) mouthed pronouncements deflect our attention away from what referential direction they have. A ceremoniously intoned "*introibo ad altare Dei*" tells us less about what is really going on than about the history and proper context of the words quoted. A tension is set up between the two.

Quotations brought to bear upon "reality" also detract from it. This is in the nature of the title "*Ulysses,*" or of an entire chapter like "*Oxen of the Sun,*" where indeed the literary parading so far has engaged most of our critical endeavors. Each Revoicing (which here subsumes all evocations of prior texts) contains a feature of the middle voice, standing midway between what is being pointed out and its own peculiar manner of pointing. Each quotation in part epiphanizes itself. "*Thalatta! Thalatta!*" (*U* 1.80) refers to the visible sea, but also to a speaker who flaunts classical knowledge: it looks forward to an object, and backwards towards a secondary quoter (Mulligan) and beyond to a primary author (Xenophon), and, from another angle, to one more adventurous journey with a return, analogous to the one of Odysseus. When Bloom enters his back garden in the morning and we read
No sound. Perhaps hanging clothes out to dry. The maid was in the garden. Fine morning. (4.472),

he is taking stock of what he sees and hears. But "The maid was in the garden" does not belong to this order. At least to a majority of those initiated (having a nursery rhyme in their ears), this is not a comment on a maid’s presence. The maid leads a mere fictional, evocative existence "in the garden," she is in another grammatical mood, a subjunctive wish-fulfillment. The quotation—if recognized—displays itself as a medium. It refers back to a cultural thesaurus and applies one of its items to an analogous occasion. If we do not know the sentence as an echo we may misread the situation. "The maid was in the garden" means, if anything, its own opposite: a conspicuous, frustrating absence. The quotation fills the vacuum of "No sound." It utters mainly its existence as language re-used.

In this allusive function, language still transitively refers to something outside: there is a possible transition to an actual situation. In its self-expressive, autophanic, effects, however, it moves closer to the middle voice. Semantic energies are divided as well as multiplied. Language itself, and by extension Literature, can be said to have a middle voice, mediating between an external objective, and a preening self-consciousness. Joyce, as usual, carries both functions—referential potency and the retroflection of utterance—to extremes.

**Nominal Shorthand**

In my confession I have said nothing that might not have been known before. Do not write this statement off as modesty—the same claim could be made about *Finnegans Wake*. I just tried to use a point of view (taken from classical languages) to subsume a variety of Joycean features that might otherwise have little in common. The terminology chosen tried to do more justice to Joyce’s kinetics than what nominal stability might describe. There are, naturally, excellent reasons for still resorting to the fixation that nouns tend to indicate. Certain situations require classification or a provisional foothold. We need reassuring support as we need the solidity of a verifiable city of Dublin of 1904 to get our bearings and as a backdrop for the elusive narrative processes in *Ulysses*. The format of Notes or Annotations, of brief glosses, allows for little else. Nominal shorthand saves time and space. The discursive articulation of verbal motion is laborious and hardly ever completed: a Protean sense of not-quite-thereness always remains.
As long as we know about the necessity for convenient simplification, the danger is minimal. Take the practical requirement for a concise commentary on *Finnegans Wake*. As an example we hold up for inspection the first word in the text that is clearly not English:

by a commodius vicus of recirculation (3.2)

*Annotations* says (and must say, reductively): “‘Vico.’” We have a right to expect this sort of information, not to give it would be wrong. But the abbreviated near-truth is less justified when we deal with credulous novices. In a first learning process such premature labeling (nothing but the name “‘Vico’”) is unhelpful or even impedimental. For “‘vicus’” (lower case) should be treated in its own right, or else brought back into the contextual currency (the English language) from which it sets itself off. In its *prima facie* inassimilability it acts as an imperative for transformation: translate me! (or else, it leads us to different environs). A Latin dictionary would offer several interconnected meanings: “district of a town, village, neighborhood, street, hamlet.” Out of this spectrum, “street” or “road” seems to fit best, for we are casting about for something to move in (“brings us back”). But even so, we have to discard—or hold in suspense—all the other possible meanings: this is already semantic work in progress. A diachronic view of language as growth through time (remember “past Eve and Adam’s”) would assemble cognates like English “‘wick’” (in the sense of hamlet, village, mostly in place names) and, in particular, Greek “‘oikos’” (house), and it would lead us back to an original root, deduced from existing words, which in this case would sound, of all things, like WEIK—very close to how we pronounce (*Finnegans*) *Wake*. Such a phonetic coincidence need not be belabored as part of an intended meaning, but some readers might be intrigued that an early non-normative word can recirculate to an element of the book's title. What an etymological excursion into history reveals is that development, becoming, time, are involved. That oddity “‘vicus’” acts like a signpost and takes us elsewhere (and perhaps back to the context).

Going along the road of wakeful meanings, we will, in the course of further input, also arrive at Giambattista Vico, eighteenth-century Italian philosopher estimated by Joyce. For the initiated the click may set in as early as “‘recirculation.’” At some stage and time, recognition turns “‘vicus’” into “‘vico’” as a plausible matching. Once this has occurred, supportive hindsight evidence then may become
overwhelming (with the stress again on becoming): It was words of the type and ending like "vic-us" that tended to turn into Italian words like "vic-o" (though this one does not exist, Latin commodus, on the other hand, became comodo). We may recall that the philosopher of temporal patternings used Roman history and Latin etymologies to illustrate recurrencies and changes. Finnegans Wake anachronistically inverts the process. We can retranslate, by a similar leap across languages, "riverrun" into a favorite Viconian term, ricorso (the flowing back, run, of a river, with the phoneme ri—as an external common link). Many additional roads can be traveled towards the particular goal. One is Vico road in Dalkey, obligingly incurvated, a parochial accident to be exploited by Joyce on further occasions. An instrumental preposition like "by a commodius vicus" would properly take the ablative case in Latin and change to "vico"—but this would be our doing. "Vico" in fact originates through our cooperation: the textual irritations prompt us into hermeneutic activity.

If you insist that, all right, many semantic manipulations may be necessary to construe an Italian name out of a Latin noun, but once that is done, on all recirculatory readings there will be an instant identification, and no further quibblings, then you simply neglect how much "vicus" on all occasions also visibly protests against such violation. Wakean vital gestures towards dissociation are disregarded a trifle too complacently. "Vicus," in other words, may well strive to collide with "Vico," but with equal validity it aims to escape from the restriction. Neither turn should be ignored in our scope, nor the awareness that it is a matter of turning, of conversion. Vico, as a reductive name, is a valid and poor interpretation of "vicus" (among other things simply because it leaves out "us"), but it is an excellent verb to conjugate the Wake.

Nothing new has been said, nothing for which external sources, protographs, archetypes had to be called in, not even a smattering of little Latin and less Greek: other catalysts would have done just as well. Nothing has been put forward that might not have been noticed from immediate observation, unaided, by verbal communication with the text.

The most programmatically pertinent verb of them all may be reading. We know from experience it is both transitive and self-
reflexive. What we gather, select, recognize, rearrange, construe, from the alphabetical configurations, we remake in our own likeness. It is no secret that some likenesses are more rewarding and conveyable than others, and, for better or worse, at a Symposium most likenesses are speaking, are our vocal confessions, with a fair proportion of self-display. Leopold Bloom exemplifies one of the pitfalls when he hastily projects his own name into a word that for a few letters looks alike:

Bloo...Me? No.
Blood of the Lamb.

(U 8.8)

In his zeal and inclination—misreading the throwaway of himself—he has forestalled us all. It is to his credit that he corrects himself in time. We don't always. That is one reason why we depend on each other's self-pennings. And one reason why I have argued in favor of interactions, at our conferences, against long, monologous, medial, "major" addresses, with all the tedium between active oral pontification and passive auditive suffering.

In the beginning, we have learned, was the joy. The enjoyment that makes life, perhaps, almost worth reading. It is a reading, also, of ourselves; but the selves may become a bit more aware, or refined, or sensitive, in the process, in all those processes that, when old is said in one, have gathered us here together and will continue to bring us back to Joyce—the Verb.

NOTES

2. "Usurper" (as in U 1.744) derives from a verb usurpare, one of whose meanings is "to call names."
3. One of the abbreviations used in the footnotes "STET" in the old code of the typesetters is an injunction "Let it stand!"
4. Such documents are called "witnesses," not just passive products of writing or printing, but live persons actively making statements that have to hold up to cross-examination.
5. The conditional nature of the text that has been established is well in evidence in Richard Ellmann's wording: "What Gabler aims at is an ideal text, such as Joyce would have constructed in ideal conditions." "Preface" to Ulysses: The Corrected Text (see next note), p.x.
7. The verb "to suffer," active in form, is medio-passive. "Stephen suffered [Mulligan] to pull out and hold up on show by its corner a dirty crumpled
hankerchief' (U 1.70). The transitivity is deceptive and reciprocal: something is done to Stephen and he suffers from it, he also suffers it. But there is self-involvement in the action. The Latin for suffering, *pater, patior*, is naturally a deponent; its derivatives are *passio* and our "passive," the name for the genus which translated Greek "pathetikos," from *pathos* or a verb *paschein*, in whose system active and medio-passive forms intermingle.
