I derive two general points from the essays in this section: first, a healthy self-consciousness about the “we” that writes (and teaches) and about the way gender quite literally makes a difference in the way we read; second, a sense that while it is impossible to separate the question of gender from questions of class, nationality, race, and religion, that does not make it a mere subcategory in a more “properly” political analysis. I am essentially in agreement with both these arguments.

I see a third assumption in play: that the inevitable focus for the reader of “Nausicaa” is Gerty MacDowell and Leopold Bloom—or rather, Gerty with Bloom, but I am interested here less in these two (and in the privileging of the couple that that implies) than in some of the other relationships “Nausicaa” is alert to. After all, this is the chapter in which a woman is positioned not just in relation to a man but also to two other women and to three little children. As the woman on the panel on “male feminisms” at the Symposium, I have tried to look at, and to make visible, the places in the text where the man is not.

My first questions come from the opening pages in “Nausicaa.” What is going on between the big sisters and the three male infants in their care? We watch and (not only here at the beginning but at various points in the chapter) we see the work of social reproduction, in particular the engendering of language, as Cissy Caffrey and Edy Boardman repeatedly lure the children into talk—or frame them into embarrassed silence. Ulysses provides a political context for this scene, since one of the stories unfolding in the background on June 16 is the debate over a forgotten, or never-learned, mother tongue. The Citizen’s demand for news makes the links clear (though his terms, unlike those of
"Nausicaa": For [Wo]men Only?

"Nausicaa," leave no space for women): "What did those tinkers in the city hall at their caucus meeting decide about the Irish language? . . . It's on the march. . . . To hell with the bloody brutal Sassenachs and their patois. . . . Tonguetied sons of bastards' ghosts" (U-GP 12:1180–1201). In general, too, the text is fascinated by verbal calisthenics, by the games we ask our tongues to play, mouthing nonsense sentences in order to master language. Thus, in "Scylla and Charybdis," "Peter Piper picked a peck of pick of peck of pickled peppers" (U-GP 9:276), or in "Eumaeus," "Roberto ruba roba sua" (U-GP 16:883), and in "Nausicaa," Bloom practicing Spanish: "Buenas noches, señorita. El hombre ama la muchacha hermosa" (U-GP 13:1208–9). The first words spoken in the chapter are the following:

—Now, baby, Cissy Caffrey said. Say out big, big. I want a drink of water.
And baby prattled after her:
—A jink a jink a jawbo.

The preceding narrative frames the interchange: Cissy Caffrey "cuddled the wee chap," "always with a laugh in her gipsylike eyes. . . . And Edy Boardman laughed too at the quaint language of little brother" (U-GP 13:29, 36–39). Note how the young child is being squeezed between two demands: that he is or should be a big man, and do big things; that he is a little, little boy. "O, he was a man already, was little Tommy Caffrey" (U-GP 13:249). The diminutive spreads like wildfire in this chapter, leaving all kinds of objects and people, but particularly women and children, be-littled in its wake; simultaneously condescended to and fondly caressed. And although Bloom also uses it, the word little functions as a particularly feminine way of negotiating the world, a way of "matronizing" it into place.

This opening scene goes on to suggest a certain affinity between learning the "mother tongue" and the child's position in a gendered world: we see how it is being teased into sexual difference. Or, put another way, it shows us how "it" is socialized into a little "he" by the older girls in charge. The lesson is overlaid on Jacky's need to pee and his inability to make his needs known. Like women, children lack a language by which to speak their bodies.

—Come here, Tommy, his sister called imperatively. At once! . . .
She put an arm round the little mariner and coaxedy winningly:
—What's your name? Butter and cream?
—Tell us who is your sweetheart, spoke Edy Boardman. Is Cissy your sweetheart?
—Nao, tearful Tommy said.
—Is Edy Boardman your sweetheart? Cissy queried.
—Nao, Tommy said.
—I know, Edy Boardman said. . . . I know who is Tommy's sweetheart. Gerty is Tommy's sweetheart.
—Nao, Tommy said on the verge of tears.

129
Cissy's quick motherwit guessed what was amiss and she whispered to Edy Boardman to take him there behind the pushcar where the gentleman couldn't see him and to mind he didn't wet his new tan shoes.

But who was Gerty? (U-GP 13:51, 64–78)

"Nausicaa" brings us to Gerty and to Bloom by first putting women and children on the map. Its initial move is to highlight both speaking and silence: what can be spoken; where, when, and by whom; and how language is formative in constructing gender. Bloom is also a language teacher, though not, as he ruefully admits, a very successful one. Still, having taken gender for granted, he goes on to the next lesson, in which learning language is equivalent to learning sex. "Girl in Meath Street that night [he remembers]. All the dirty things I made her say. All wrong of course. My arks she called it" (U-GP 13: 867–69).

Taking my cue from a recently published interview with Toni Morrison, I am interested also in what happens among Gerty, Cissy, and Edy: "the three friends." I quote Morrison: "The real healing is often women talking to women. Hester Prynne now or Madame Bovary: they needed a good girl friend to come along and say, 'Honey, you did what? With him?' . . . But these women were written by men, so they didn't have girlfriends to confess to, or laugh with. Laughter is a way of taking the reins into your own hands." There is surely some of this friendship in play between Miss Kennedy and Miss Douce, whose laughter in "Sirens" sets up self-protecting boundaries. "Watch out," it says, "we laugh: at you." (The "you" in "Sirens" is clearly gendered as male.) But Gerty, like Molly, is isolated, seemingly by her own hostility to other women. Much of her half of the narrative, as Philip Weinstein points out, is "saturated in a given culture's gender assumptions" that continually inscribe bitchiness in the place of friendship. Dick Pearce is right to say that this construction of "woman" hides behind the apparent shapelessness, or "naturalness," of the style, and since Ulysses is teaching us to be wary of such transparency elsewhere in the text we should not take it at face value here. Ergo: Ulysses itself (or even Joyce himself) is not complicit in the inscription. I think that, at some gut level, this is what a feminist who loves this book wants to hear. However, while I want to resist a reading that looks always for the woman in the text, that needs to find positive representations of female experience, it is important to acknowledge that Ulysses represents an intensely homosocial world where the primary bonds are between men. And yet, if Ulysses has so little to say about women's friendship, indeed, barely imagines it, it does insinuate how the lack of friendship operates in the construction of gender, in the female's setting herself aside, making herself available to the male. It may be that I am contorting myself into Joyce-saving knots. But I do not think so, because I do not believe that Ulysses, or any literary text, simply
contains feminist—or antifeminist—meanings. Instead, paraphrasing Lévi-Strauss on culture, I read Joyce's work as goods (and good) to think with.2

What then to make of Gerty's isolation—so ready to take offence at her girlfriends, and not just unengaged, but deeply irritated by the demands of children? The question offers a vantage point from which to read her engagement with Bloom and with romance. I will briefly outline how such a reading might go. It would, in the first place, be very much indebted to the work of Janice Radway on popular romance and, through her, to Nancy Chodorow's account of how the female subject negotiates the Oedipal stage to define herself, eventually, as a woman.3 It would also keep in mind Radway's useful distinction between the meaning of the act of reading (a demand, essentially, for a room of one's own, with no one else in it—particularly husbands and children), and the meaning of the romance as read (a search for the tender, nurturing figure who—because the world is constituted as heterosexual—must be male, must be, finally, a husband). That Gerty essentially says "leave me alone"; that she is fascinated by Bloom's apparent neediness and seems quite prepared to mother him; that she, in turn, wants to be taken in his "sheltering" arms, "comforted" with a long kiss; that she recodes the possibility of male violence into the signs of passionately fierce nurturing; that, for her, he is like no one else; that "he coloured like a girl," and that that is also part of the attraction; and that if we pick the story up again in "Circe" we see Gerty's manly man giving birth: all these elements cohere around a theory of reading the romance that understands this women's genre as a mechanism whereby the reader translates her search for the lost mother into the discovery of an ideal suitor: the manly man made perfect by his capacity to mother. All this is in shorthand, I know, but such an argument might go some way to explaining why female readers, on the whole, are so much less discomfited by Bloom than male ones. Even male feminists! (I am thinking here of Dick Pearce's rueful question as to why he would want to vindicate Bloom, or celebrate the new womanly man. Why not?)

And so I come at last to the question of male feminism, which I will pose in a more personal way. What am I doing here? I want to start, somewhat perversely, by sidestepping for the moment my status as the female feminist.

I am here in part, too, to represent national variety: and while I doubt that my argument today has been substantially not-American, let alone essentially Canadian, I take my position as a reminder of the various kinds of difference—of nation, race, class—that inflect questions of gender, and vice versa. Dick Pearce has already alerted us to this when he argues that the dominant discourses make "not only women but [also] colonized Irishmen and wandering Jews defective." This general point is also crucial for Pat McGee, who links
gender politics to the history of British imperialism. These are important issues. I want to respond here, though, to part of Pat McGee's reading. It is simply too neat to say that when Gerty constructs Bloom as her ideal man, seeing him as the matinee idol Martin Harvey, she projects onto him a masculine sexuality identical to British cultural power.

The allure of Martin Harvey is a complicated foreignness, not just Englishness. Molly has dreamed some of the same dreams as Gerty has and has chosen Bloom for similar reasons: to escape the binary oppositions (Irish/English, Catholic/Protestant, maybe even male/female) that construct her world. "I always thought I'd marry a lord or a rich gentleman coming with a private yacht... [she has confided, and Bloom asks back:] Why me? Because you were so foreign from the others" (U-GP 13:1207–10). And Gerty too: "she wanted him because she felt instinctively that he was like no-one else" (U-GP 13:429–30). I know, of course, that Gerty's dream of absolute originality is an absolutely mass-produced idea, but still, Martin Harvey is an interesting case. Yes, in 1910 Irish Nationalists did object to his mounting an English play about an English king on the Dublin stage. But for Gerty in 1904, and for theatre audiences long after, the actor would have been known for his role as Sidney Carton in an adaptation of A Tale of Two Cities: the other man, the uncanny double of a man who is himself already double—the Frenchman/Englishman, Jacques Darnay. In subsequent roles, too, Martin Harvey more often played the foreigner or at least the outsider than the Englishman. And in 1918, in a play by Maeterlinck, again he played the substitute, the man who puts himself, self-sacrificing, in the place of another. An 1888 portrait shows a dark-eyed, dark-haired man who looks more Black Irish, or more like a Welshman (which he was, on his mother's side), or even perhaps a Jew than like a representative son of Albion. It is not without irony, I think, that just after the identification with Martin Harvey Gerty adds that she "could not see whether he [Bloom] had an aquiline nose or a slightly retrousse from where he was sitting" (U-GP 13:420–21). In this episode obsessed with noses (and it is: neither Gerty nor Bloom can stop themselves from noticing) Gerty has missed the signifier par excellence, the one that might have marked Bloom's foreignness as beyond the pale. Or rather, too much within the Pale. Martin Harvey was married to and performed with an actress whose name was so flamboyantly not-English that it reiterates my sense of what his name is doing here. She was called Angelita Helena Margarita de Silva, recalling another wife, Lunita Laredo, and Molly's Spanish connection. I do not want to disagree entirely with Pat McGee's point about Martin Harvey because to a large extent the actor's foreignness is an effect of representation, and of representations sanctioned by British cultural power. I do, however, want to complicate, or show how complicated is the notion of the manly man in Ulysses. I do this because I also want to argue that the notion of woman must be kept similarly compli-
cated and various. In spite of his marked inclination to generalize about them, even Bloom has to acknowledge the question of difference: "But then why don't all women menstruate at the same time with the same moon, I mean? Depends on the time they were born I suppose. Or [and here is a mind-boggling possibility: perhaps they] all start [from] scratch then get out of step" (U-GP 13:783–85).

This brings me to say that, as a woman and a feminist, I do not represent some homogeneous, and therefore nonexistent, female feminism. A number of the questions that arise from the conjunction of "male" and "feminism" have already been explored in the preceding essays. I certainly am not here to play Cissy Caffrey, the big sister who already knows how to talk, whose job it is to teach the boys but who might very well, in the process, need to giggle at their "quaint language" and the "slight altercation" between them. Male feminists are not little feminists, though I think they are engaged in an enterprise that may not come as easily as it does to women. Why? Because, by its very nature, feminism entails a critique of structures that, to quote Pat McGee, still make it "profitable" to be a man.

Let me conclude by saying that what I especially value in these essays is their coming at the concerns of feminism in a particular way: by their authors' recognition that they live in the world as males. This seems to me a productive and honest starting point. The current move to read woman as a metaphor (as in "écriture feminine," "reading as a woman," or Jonathan Culler's hypothesis of a woman reader), has a certain heuristic value. It allows us to name an alternate possibility for reading and writing, beyond phallogocentric closure. But such notions are worth a closer and more skeptical look. They strike me sometimes as a kind of "genderfication," a refurbishing or dressing up in the metaphors of woman. I agree with Teresa de Lauretis when she says that "to make gender synonymous with discursive difference(s), differences that are effects of language or positions in discourse, and thus indeed independent of the reader's gender," means that we lose the category of the actual female reader (22). It also means that concrete political and historical differences are set aside, massaged away by the metaphor. Her critique of this tendency is incisive.

So it is that, by displacing the question of gender onto an ahistorical, purely textual figure of femininity (Derrida); or by shifting the sexual basis of gender quite beyond sexual difference, onto a body of diffuse pleasures (Foucault) and libidinally invested surfaces (Lyotard), or a body-site of undifferentiated affectivity, and hence a subject freed from (self-)representation and the constraints of identity (Deleuze); and finally by displacing the ideology, but also the reality—the historicity—of gender onto this diffuse, decentered, or deconstructed (but certainly not female) subject—so it is that, paradoxically again, these theories make their appeal to women, naming the process of such displacing with the term becoming woman (devenir-femme). (24)
"Male feminist" strikes me as a far more plausible conjunction than (what in this context might be called) "male female" or "male feminine." I am not convinced that we need figurative sex-change operations, particularly when the figures (both our metaphors and our bodies) are taken for granted. We do need to acknowledge who we are, and to listen to each other.

NOTES

2. For a general discussion, see "The Science of the Concrete," in Lévi-Strauss, 1-33.
3. See Radway's Reading the Romance, and Chodorow's The Reproduction of Mothering.

WORKS CITED