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I take this occasion to reflect on what has been happening in Joyce studies in the last fifteen to twenty years and on the shifting allegiances we have forged with theory. Inevitably I am reminded of my own history as well, as measured by just a few of these Symposia. I remember hearing about the Paris conference in 1975, when the barricades between French Joyce and Anglo-American Joyce were so clearly set up. I had been a graduate student in England in the early 1970s and was much engaged with those structuralist and post-structuralist theories of narrative that had by then crossed the Channel. So although I had not actually been in Paris, I felt I knew which side of the barricade I was on. The first Joyce conference I attended was in Provincetown in 1983. Capital T theory was there, but only at the edges, whereas by the 1988 Symposium, in Venice, the polarization of interests and languages was obvious. By then, theoretical discourse had staked its legitimate claim. Yet I did not see much traffic between the old and the new. Last year in Vancouver seemed different. I was struck by how much real conversation was possible among readers coming to Joyce from very different perspectives. There are many reasons for this. The most obvious has been the recognition (and it has been inescapable) that full and detailed understanding of these texts can never belong to one person or to one mode of interpretation. We are necessarily engaged in a joint reading. I would argue that the place where we meet most productively, where all participants in the interchange can become temporary experts, is in the localized "close reading." That is essentially what I offer here.

I have been speaking about theory as if it were a single thing, whereas in fact it is a shifting terrain of questions and interests. If we rethink theory
along a chronological axis, its heterogeneous nature is even more obvious. I want to read a particular moment in "Aeolus" in order to represent a few key moments in the last two decades. First, I will briefly develop a linguistic and semiotic approach, informed by Saussure and the interest in arbitrary or shifting signifiers; then, I will move to a wider focus on language as a social interaction—reminding Bakhtin's heteroglossia, or other-voicedness; and finally, and very briefly (via feminism's taking gender and heterosexuality as starting points for analysis, not as answers), I will examine the work with an interest in homosocial relations—both as distinct from and as continuous with homosexual relations.¹ My serial reading implies that where we are now depends on where we have been. We do not renew ourselves, snakelike, by neatly shedding each old skin.

I must preface my comments by acknowledging a special affection for "Aeolus." It marked the place of my defeat when I first tried, as a teenager, to read Ulysses on my own. I got stuck there and left the book behind for at least two years. What I had discovered without knowing it was that Ulysses was changing the rules it had set up in the first six chapters: tracking the voices of Bloom or Stephen had brought me to a dead end. When I eventually came back to Ulysses and to "Aeolus," I was able to stand back from my expectations about character and point of view, about their centrality and consistency, and to shift my allegiance to the play of language itself. I had become more self-conscious, more interested in theorizing the text's resistance than in resolving it. This, in turn, allowed me to go forward.

I have chosen to look at a rather unobtrusive bit: the story about the Phoenix Park murders, or rather the one about how that story got told—Ignatius Gallaher's journalistic scoop, recounted by Myles Crawford. It comes just after Crawford, the editor, asks Stephen to write something for him. What Crawford has in mind is something that will "paralyse Europe," as Gallaher (a Dublin hack who had gone off to work for Harmondsworth in London) was fond of saying. Indeed, Gallaher is presented as a model for Stephen. "That was a pressman for you," Crawford urges, "That was a pen" (U-GP 11:630). It is perfectly obvious that we are to take this with a grain of salt. Even Lenehan and O'Madden Burke are less than impressed. And, of course, after Dubliners "paralyse" is not an innocent word. Yet the story of the scoop, banal though it may seem, is worth considering.

The narrative moment is complex, for there is not merely the narration of a story, there is also narration in the story, and more than once, so that in effect we have three major narrative levels, each embedded within another. You might imagine a set of Chinese boxes, the innermost one being the story of the Phoenix Park murders, as reported to New York on 6 May 1881, the day they
occurred, by Ignatius Gallaher. The story of his telling is subsequently boxed, or told, by Myles Crawford to the assembled gentlemen of the press on 16 June 1904. And Crawford's telling, as told in "Aeolus," is available to the readers of *Ulysses* whenever they take up the novel. Although the narratives are cunningly interlinked, I will separate them for the moment.

Gallaher in Dublin manages to cable an American newspaper, the *New York World*, with a description of the crime. But it is a rather particular account: not who, when, how, or why, but where. "Where it took place. . . . Where Skin the Goat drove the car. Whole route." (*U-GP* 11:639-40). Gallaher's telling is privileged because it gets through first, preempting all the other messages that are sent. In doing so he manages to speak or write what needs to be "seen"—to translate (as all acts of representation must do) one thing into another. More specifically, in this case he must translate a map into language, turning a set of static and spatial relationships into an inherently sequential code in which words follow each other in time. Of course a vocabulary of description already exists to do just that: cardinal points, angle, circumference, measurement, and so on. But Gallaher has to get his message through as quickly as possible, and the map he has in mind does not easily conform to Euclidian geometry. Why translate it into numbers or geometric relationships when he already "sees" it quite clearly? If he can just get the New York caller to "see" the same thing, he can jump ahead of the pack. As we know, he will find a text (the ad for Bransome's coffee) that his New York counterpart has access to as well and that he can then transcode so it takes on an entirely different meaning. Or, put another way, he treats the original ad ("buy Bransome's coffee") as though it were a coded message, meaning that he has pried the signifiers loose and, by announcing a different context, has grafted them onto an entirely new signified. Or, put yet another way (in terms that would at least make sense to Gallaher), he reads parts of words as though they were marks on a geometrized landscape. The B in *Bransome* becomes a signpost for the Parkgate; T, C, and K are each transformed into points on a Dublin map; and the route taken by Skin-the-Goat (Inchicore, Roundtown, Windy Arbour, Palmerston Park, Ranelagh) is perfectly described by a line joining a certain cluster of letters. As he cables New York, he translates a graphic image (the map of Dublin) into a linguistic message. He does so by way of an entirely unconnected message (the ad for coffee), treated in turn as if it were only a graphic image. And so, as Myles Crawford puts it, Gallaher serves the story to the New York paper "on a hot plate . . . the whole bloody history . . . out of an advertisement. . . . That's press. That's talent" (*U-GP* 11:676-77, 685-88). It is certainly astute, and a clever recognition of the signifier's potential to be transvalued, exploiting the fact that it can, and will, attach itself to whatever signified a teller and a listener agree to. Gallaher is a born semiotician. Clearly, the contract between teller and listener, which I shall return to, is central to the entire scene.
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I want to pause for a moment to look at the new technology Gallaher is using. When he sends his trans-Atlantic cable, his own text, too, and not just the Bransome ad, is dismantled. Dismantled in this sense: that the sound image and the graphic image, the two aspects of the signifier that seem naturally fused together and simultaneously present, are split apart. The process of cabling takes in the written message, which the sender would write on an official form, translates it into electrical impulses, which are heard as long or short tones. This alternation of silence and sound is emitted at the other end and eventually reconstituted as marks on a page—Morse code initially, which in turn is decoded into words at a later stage. The emitted message is literally disseminated and dispersed. The message received is, materially, entirely altered. We may read the story about Gallaher, then, as a narrative of transcoding text and "voice" as they play between eye and ear. At various points and in a number of ways, Ulysses replays the distinction between speech and writing. It does so most humorously, perhaps, in "Sirens," when Bloom responds to Martha Clifford, and, just as in Gallaher's scenario, one text (Bloom's letter back to her) is literally laid over and held within another (the newspaper whose ad Bloom pretends to answer). He speaks one letter but writes another. Bloom, however, unlike Gallaher, cannot get one of them to shut up. We read them jostling each other. "Bloom dipped, Bloo mur: dear sir. Dear Henry wrote: Dear Mady" (U-GP 11:860-61). "Bloom mur: best references. But Henry wrote: it will excite me" (U-GP 11:888).

I turn now to Crawford's telling of the story. The narrative framework here is much more obvious, for Crawford, the teller, does not hesitate to point it out. "I'll tell you..." he says, "I'll show you... I'll tell you" (U-GP 7:631, 633, 651). He claims the teller's privilege—control—and is furious when he does not get it. "Never mind Gumley" he snaps at Stephen, who breaks in with a question (U-GP 7:649). And a few minutes later, when Bloom telephones, "Tell him to go to hell, the editor said promptly. X is Davy's public-house, see?" (U-GP 7:672-73). Like Gallaher, Crawford is determined to get his story through, despite the odds. But in his case there are different pressures on the transmission of the message. It is not the nature of the contact linking addresser and addressee that makes it difficult. (For Gallaher the distance is vast, and cabling imposes certain limits.) Nor is it the inevitable mediation of two codes, verbal and graphic. Rather it is the fact that other tellers and other stories also want their say. After all, Crawford's audience is right in front of him. This has its advantages. He can rely on the immediacy of his voice and gestures to represent Gallaher's original voice and gesture. And unlike the cabled message, what Crawford emits is what his audience receives, however they might choose to interpret it. Nevertheless, this im-
mediacy is not without difficulties. Gallaher was able to superimpose his story of Skin-the-Goat on an ad for coffee that could not talk back, and he had a listener whose job it was to understand. If his triumph depends on and exploits a totally unequal relationship between sender and receiver, as between languages (in the sense that it shows one code colonizing and in effect erasing another), the story of Crawford’s telling is exuberantly democratic. It allows listeners to become tellers. It does not resolve the clamor of competing discourses into a hierarchy. When Lenehan, for example, hears Crawford name Dick Adams, he merely takes that as his cue, bowing to a shape of air: “Madam, I’m Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba” (U-GP 683). For the reader, who has access to inner voices Crawford himself cannot hear, Stephen’s interruption is just as discomposing. “The whole bloody history” that Gallaher serves up “on a hot plate” is transformed into the “nightmare from which you will never awake” (U-GP 678)—not quite what Crawford has in mind. His fate as storyteller is similar to Stephen’s later in the episode, when the latter’s parable of the plums is met not so much by blank incomprehension as by the eager substitution of other stories, conforming to the private agendas of his listeners. What fascinates Joyce in both scenes is the sea of language into which any single speech act falls and by which it is inevitably transformed. If the narration of Crawford’s story is rambunctiously democratic, as I have just suggested, it is not because Crawford wants it that way. But Joyce does. He arranges things so that at exactly the right and the wrong moment the phone call coming into the newspaper office on 16 June 1904 cuts into the cabling transaction of 1881 that Crawford is struggling to recount. Right: because the rush to get the phone recreates the atmosphere of the original scene. Wrong in two ways: because it breaks Crawford’s concentration and because it confuses our tidy sense of narrative levels.

Gallaher’s story is framed by Crawford’s, and Crawford’s by Joyce’s—the narratives are not only contained but also compromised. I have separated them out in order to show more clearly what Ulysses tells us about both the linguistic and the novelistic contracts. What I have had to say about Crawford’s inability to impose himself and his discourse onto all the other languages clamoring for attention, and what I have winkled out of Gallaher’s brief moment in the sun, could also be said of other moments in Ulysses. It seems to me, though, that the negotiation between languages that “Aeolus” places at the very center of its represented action (by showing us characters struggling for the floor and getting it but never being taken seriously or holding it for long) is subsequently internalized—most obviously in chapters like “Cyclops” and “Oxen of the Sun”—into an organizing principle of narration. What Ulysses stages, with increasing complexity, is the scene of novelistic writing, understood, as in Bakhtin, as the recognition that no language is privileged. This moment in “Aeolus” illustrates why readers of Joyce have
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found Bakhtin's account of the genre so compelling. We have been primed for notions like dialogism and heteroglossia.

However, since the Chinese-box effect is so clearly at play in this scene, why stop here? Why not reposition it in the most obvious intertextual frame, the *Dubliners* story, in which Ignatius Gallaher himself appears? The scoop that got him out of Dublin is never mentioned. Instead, there is a muffled sense of "some shady affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his flight" (72). Like "Aeolus," "A Little Cloud" situates itself in an exclusively masculine circuit of journalistic hackwork, literary aspirations, and pub life. But the earlier narrative inflects its homosocial context in a more specific way. It brings the homosocial into painful collision with the domestic context of wife and child. More pointedly, it spirals around an unresolved and certainly repressed homosexual attachment.

Little Chandler's joy at seeing Gallaher again is intense, eroticized, in stark contrast to the sorry blankness of his married life. In this story the terrain of "for men only" relations—so central to Joyce's work—is complicated in all kinds of ways but particularly by a protagonist who invokes Atalanta and whose own attachments to gender and to sexuality are similarly troubled. Atalanta is the female child abandoned at birth precisely because she is not the longed-for boy but who nevertheless grows up to be as aggressively courageous and as adept at manly pursuits as any man. Although she is eventually matched by a suitor, with whom she has a son, her instinct is to flee from, and often to kill, any man who desires her. For Little Chandler she codes women as frighteningly unattainable and dangerous, but for the reader she is a reminder of Little Chandler’s own ambiguous and frightened identity. The narrative says “he gave one the idea of being a little man” (70). It goes on to code him as both feminine and childlike, a combination common enough in the construction of “woman” but here disturbingly directed at a male protagonist. “His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half-moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of child­ish white teeth” (70). Like a Victorian heroine, “he emerged from under the feudal arch of the King's Inns, a neat modest little figure” (71). Yet in spite of Little Chandler's blushes (72, 78, 79, 85), “immorality,” “corruption,” “vice” (77–78), and “other things, too” (75), are the subjects to which his conversation constantly returns. He longs for passion, for the agitation that threatens to overmaster him (74), but he is unable or unwilling to discover its true object. He hides himself from himself, just as he hides the poetry that contains and feeds his sadness. And so his self-disgust is projected onto “A horde of
grimy children . . . [that] crawled . . . or squatted like mice . . . all that minute vermin-like life” (71). At the end, in a bitter reversal, he will be superseded and mirrored by his own infant. We come to see the child’s pain, its wails and fear, as really belonging to the father. He is helpless before the pain because he cannot acknowledge it. He cannot mind it as his own. I say this not because I think “A Little Cloud” is “about” the punishment of its protagonist. It is about his pain—however compromised that may be by his sentimentality or his self-indulgence.

It is fascinating to watch Little Chandler watching Gallaher, taking him in as a physical presence, mesmerized in particular by his lips and mouth, and then to notice how Gallaher himself speaks of relationships with women, figuratively mouthing his contempt. (The story quite literally asks us to read its lips and to mark the contrasts among Annie’s lips, “thin [and] tight” (82), Chandler’s embarrassed gesture, “bit[ing] his lower lip with three childishly white front teeth” (79), and Gallaher’s mouth, “very long and shapeless and colourless,” (75) yet still somehow compelling to Little Chandler. Perhaps this last description translates to a sexualized plane what the story suggests in other ways: that to the disengaged reader there is nothing very attractive about the returning Dubliner.) “But tell me something about yourself” Gallaher says to Little Chandler. “Hogan told me you had . . . tasted the joys of connubial bliss” (78). For Gallaher himself marriage would mean putting his “head in the sack” (81); he would be like a tethered horse, no longer free to graze at will. The only women to consider are “rich Germans and Jews [like overripe fruit, perhaps], rotten with money” (81). As for tying himself up with one woman:

He imitated with his mouth the act of tasting and made a wry face.
—Must get a bit stale, I should think, he said. (82)

The misogyny is obvious, but that Joyce chooses not to motivate it in any explicit way allows us to see how continuous is the line between a possibly homosexual distaste and the socially sanctioned but exclusive solidarity of male bonding. Gallaher may be read as obliviously heterosexual, and as heterosexually oblivious to Little Chandler—or not. He turns down the invitation to a domestic evening with Chandler’s wife and infant son in favor of “a little card party” with “another fellow, clever young chap” with whom he is traveling (79). In either case, “A Little Cloud” invites us to realign the scene in “Aeolus,” to bring other things into focus—not just the exclusiveness of its homosocial relations (from which Bloom—Jew, cuckold, nondrinker—is deftly marginalized) but also the way in which, for example, in the Wildean subtext that runs through Ulysses, or later, more concentratedly in “Eumaeus,” the homoerotic shades anxiously into view.3 What I sense in Ulysses is both a flashing on and an enormous anxiety around this issue.

Indeed, reading backward from A Portrait and Ulysses it is difficult not to hear a reverse echo effect, not to notice how Stephen Dedalus is another, now
self-conscious Little Chandler, and also perhaps how “James Joyce: literary persona” is constituted between these lines as well. “There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin. . . . He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. . . . Could he write something original? . . . He would never be popular: he saw that. . . . but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. . . . besides that, he would put in allusions” (73–74). If the overlaps between Little Chandler and his author have any force, they do suggest that the double question what does it mean to be an artist? and what does it mean to be a man? involves, for Joyce, an irresistible concern with (homo)sexuality.

I began by saying that at a certain point thinking in terms of character and point of view had become a dead end for me. And yet I have been struck by the fact that the more I reread Ulysses the more I come back, and want to come back, to the human figures in the textual landscape. Certainly, I have just done so here. Crawford’s hero is not entirely discontinuous with Little Chandler’s, and Little Chandler’s dreams gloss Stephen’s. To think of them only as language-machines, or as sites for the investigation of language, is not enough. If I insist on their “life” as characters, have I merely come full circle? My answer today would be: not exactly, because history, as Ulysses tells us, repeats itself “with a difference” (U-GP 16:1525–26). Marxism and feminism in particular have changed our way of theorizing the personal with the political. That identity is socially and historically constructed (a polemical point not so long ago) now seems almost self-evident. This means, for example, that the categories of identity are not fixed. When we do think about figures like Gal lahers and Little Chandler we are less likely to take for granted certain heterosexual and masculinist paradigms. I do so here not in order to find skeletons in Joyce’s personal closet, but to shed some light on our own, collective closet: an ideological space that has so long excluded homosexual desire from the realm of what may be spoken, and done, between men.

NOTES

1. My general debt to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Between Men, should be acknowledged here.
2. My discussion leaves out the political implications of the new media. I regret that I have only just learned about the important new research being done at the University of Dublin that establishes nineteenth-century Ireland as the first country to have been “covered” by national systems of communications, transportation, and policing: no one could get on or off a train anywhere in the country, for example, without hav-
ing his/her identity recorded. This conjunction of systems, of course, speaks to Ireland's subject (and potentially subversive) status. It also makes Ireland, in spite of its rural and nonindustrialized economy, a prototypically modern society. This in turn leads to further considerations of colonialism, combined and uneven development, and so on. Certainly, the relations among mass media, surveillance, and social control are ones that we are increasingly learning to understand, and about which Joyce may teach us a great deal.

3. On this issue I am indebted to two papers: Zack Bowen, “Wilde over Joyce” (at the Vancouver Joyce conference, 1991), showing how Stephen (surprisingly) plays Posey Douglas rather than Oscar Wilde to Mulligan; and Jean-Michel Rabaté’s paper for a panel on Joyce and homosexuality at the 1992 Symposium. Through the letters, Rabaté traces Joyce’s significantly shifting attitude to the homosexual artist, with whom—Rabaté suggests—Joyce came to see himself as complicit. For developments in “Eumaeus,” see my “James Joyce, Tattoo Artist,” in the special issue of the James Joyce Quarterly, “Joyce and Homosexuality,” a volume that makes a very strong case for its subject.

WORKS CITED


