Between *Inventio* and *Memoria*: Locations of “Aeolus”

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“Imagination is memory”
—Joyce to Frank Budgen

The first part of my title might seem to be applicable to the event of the panel at the 1992 symposium rather than to “Aeolus.” As Derek Attridge has pointed out, this was a commemorative panel: not only, like the whole Symposium, a commemoration of Joyce a hundred and ten years after his birth—in what happens to be, moreover, the very room where the funnel/tundish scene of the *Portrait* is supposed to have taken place—but also a commemoration of a panel that took place in Dublin ten years before, in 1982.

For reasons that are not immediately clear but that “Aeolus” may help us to understand later, coming back to a particular place is usually considered an appropriate occasion for taking stock of elapsed time. Accordingly, we decided to use the opportunity to reexamine the work done in 1982 and measure the changes in the critical landscape that occurred since then. Some may consider this an alarming symptom of the increasing reflexivity of recent Joyce studies. I am surprised myself and slightly worried when I am told that the published form of the 1982 panel is used as course material in some American universities. I wonder what may remain, in such a setting, of the tongue-in-cheek attitude that underlay the whole enterprise at that time. After all, it started with a joking title (“S without M”) as a kind of challenge between friends: would it be possible to devote a whole panel to the “Sirens” while eschewing the musical question? It now seems rather odd that this playful tour de force should be considered a critical standard of the early eighties, against which present critical endeavours should be measured. But, after all, there is no reason why this new game shouldn’t be as much fun as the old one.

Old and new, commemoration and fashion: the result of the exercise seems
fairly predictable. It looks as if it was already inscribed in the composition of our panel: we supplemented a fair proportion of the original members of the “Sirens” panel with a suitable admixture of “new blood.” Since we decided to commemorate what was the “new Joyce” of ten years before, we could hardly repudiate that Joyce completely. On the other hand, it would be difficult to acknowledge that nothing changed in ten years, that we had not moved at all. And yet we could hardly pretend that we invented anything new, anything that had not already been there ten years previously—we could hardly pretend that whatever we found has not been there all the time, at least since the publication of *Ulysses.*

I reread the published version of “Sirens without Music” for the preparation of this essay, and I do find that I would sign it again, except perhaps for a few mannerisms, a few quotations, which no longer seem to me necessary in this context. (Were they the wind that we decided to do without for the new panel?) Altogether, I would sign with pleasure, not just my own piece, but the whole 1982 panel. There is nothing to repudiate. But there would certainly be things to add. Incompleteness was inevitable: it was already announced in the exclusive title of the panel (i.e., *without* music). Jennifer Levine has pointed out some of the things that are now felt to be lacking. I will start by discussing a procedure: something I would *do* differently today.

The phrase “miss Douce’s wet lips said, laughing in the sun” is the first passage from “Sirens” that is quoted in the published version of the 1982 panel (it subsequently recurs several times). It was used to illustrate the autonomy of the parts of the body and the disappearance or dissolution of the speaking subject. This is based on an implicit comparison with a “normal” sentence. The whole problem of a linguistic norm is such a difficult one, however, that I would prefer now, in order to make the same point, to compare the sentence with its earlier version in the Rosenbach manuscript, which was “miss Douce said, her wet lips laughing in the sun.”

This is not just an easy way around a tricky corner. It is a matter of attitude toward the whole genetic dimension of the text: it was almost entirely absent from our field of investigation, in a silent exclusion that paralleled the deliberate avoidance of music. The reasons for this exclusion of the writing process are ambiguous. Was this absolute privilege awarded to one particular stage (the ultimate published version of the text) based on social sanction or on author’s intention? Paradoxically, one of the reasons why some of us were suspicious of the genetic point of view in those days was precisely the fear of a naïve conception of intentionality associated with it, but I now feel that the exclusive concentration on the finished object is precisely based upon such a conception.

I will not attempt today a real genetic study of “Aeolus.” This is partly for reasons of opportunity: a genetic study requires a precise analysis of documents much beyond the scope of this short paper, and partly because much of
the work has already been magnificently done in Michael Groden’s “Ulysses” in Progress, which includes a detailed chapter on “Aeolus.” It is also for reasons of principle, which will be made clear later. But you will see that my remarks imply a genetic perspective, and even imply acceptance of the idea that the final text includes its earlier versions in its very structure, that it stands for what “Aeolus” would call the akasic records of its genesis.

We decided that each one of us was free to interpret the title of the 1992 panel in his or her own way. It seems to me that it contains implicitly two rhetorical figures (a metaphor and a parallelism) pointing toward the paradoxical meaning: “Aeolus” without rhetoric. But it is not possible to leave rhetoric entirely aside in this chapter in the same way that we left music aside in examining “Sirens.” (It is impossible to leave rhetoric aside in any of the episodes—and saying that rhetoric is everywhere in Ulysses is just another way of saying that it cannot be the specificity of “Aeolus.”) So I will restrict the restriction and simply attempt a displacement of emphasis within the realm of rhetoric.

Of the five traditional parts of rhetoric (inventio, elocutio, dispositio, actio, and memoria), two or three (certainly elocutio and dispositio, and perhaps actio) have been overemphasized in the study of “Aeolus.” I will take these to be the wind of rhetoric. While the two remaining parts, inventio and memoria (the bag from which the wind is issued and into which it is stored again) seem much more promising. One could even go as far as suggesting that the central question of the chapter is the impossibility of making a distinction between the two.

A few quick reminders before going ahead. Inventio (from invenire, to find) should not be translated as “invention”: it can be re-discovery as well as absolute discovery. Rhetoric organized a series of places (the “topics”) where ideas could be found at hand. On the other hand, memoria is not a passive, natural faculty of reception, but an “artificial memory.” The Greek, Roman, and Renaissance “arts of memory” were sophisticated processes of storage and retrieval of information, also based on the setting up of places (loqui memoriae). Although memoria is traditionally the last part of rhetoric (because the memorization of the speech by the orator necessarily takes place after its elaboration?), it could very well take precedence. For the mode of extraction is clearly dependent on the mode of accumulation. In many respects, inventio and memoria can be considered two sides of a single system, two faces of the same grid.

To come back, for a moment, to the intermediary stages, the final organization (dispositio) cannot be independent of this dual preorganization: when Joyce said that the Jesuits had taught him “how to gather, how to order and how to present a given material,” he clearly did not have three different operations in mind (but there would be much to say about the status of the “gift” here). Even elocutio, the ever growing list of rhetorical figures that features so prominently in most studies of this chapter can be shown to be related to this
problem. Joycean critics have been contaminated by the “taxonomic frenzy” of rhetoric, its rage for naming and classifying thousands of figures, which Barthes explains as the result of “a true mirage,” the attempt “to code speech [parole] and no longer language [langue], i.e., the very space where, in principle, the code ceases” (85). Whether or not the irrepressible spontaneity of speech will always remain “unmasterable,” the rhetorical project opens the possibility that every turn of speech, however unpredictable, will find its assigned place, the ideal inventiveness of discourse exhausting itself in the discovery that it is always prelocated in the rhetorical grid.

In “Aeolus” the systematic relation of inventio and memoria surfaces very concretely through questions of placing. Within the limits of this essay, however, we can only examine a few crude examples.

The first one seems to be easily explainable in terms of the simplest associative psychology. The remembering of a smell is immediately located, pinned down to an effect of spatial contiguity: “Heavy greasy smell there always is in those works. Lukewarm glue in Thom’s next door when I was there” (U-GP 7:225). But the momentum of the metonymical process results in an immediate displacement (“next door”) and to a new spatial reference. It is not, of course, a matter of indifference that this reference should be to Thom’s, the place of origin of the directory that maps Dublin with the greatest precision—a book that can be considered as a kind of paper reduplication of Dublin and that Joyce’s work reduplicates in several respects.2

The next example is openly a matter of memoria artificialis. In order to recall the telephone number of Keyes, Bloom uses a mnemotechnic system of his own, connecting it with a street number: “Number? Yes. Same as Citron’s house. Twentyeight” (U-GP 7:220). To make the connections necessary to his trade, Bloom stores his telephone numbers on a map of Dublin, just as Ignatius Gallaher, to accomplish his feat of telecommunication, superimposed a map of Dublin on a newspaper advertisement—or just as Joyce himself, to write Ulysses, superimposed a map of Dublin on Homer’s Odyssey (or superimposed the Odyssey on a map of Dublin), using the one as a locus memoriae to inscribe the other.

Now, if we start from the other end, from “literary creation,” the same correlations are manifest. Stephen’s stanza, written in “Proteus,” is called up into this chapter (its first full appearance in the book) through its surface of inscription, the bottom of Deasy’s letter, or rather through the absence of that surface, missing in its place:

Stephen handed over the typed sheets, pointing to the title and signature.  
—Who? the editor asked.  
Bit torn off.  
—Mr Garret Deasy, Stephen said.  
—That old pelters, the editor said. Who tore it? Was he short taken?  

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On swift sail flaming
From storm and south
He comes, pale vampire
Mouth to my mouth.

—Good day, Stephen, the professor said, coming to peer over their shoulders. Foot and mouth? Are you turned . . . ?
Bullockbefriending bard. [. . .]

—Good day, sir, Stephen answered blushing. The letter is not mine. Mr Garrett Deasy asked me to . . . (U-GP 7:521–25)

We may note here in passing the suggestion of an excremental model of writing ("Was he short taken?") as an evacuation of preprocessed, predigested, and a fortiori pre-existing matter, as opposed to an engendering or an organic growth. More important, however, is the close relationship that is established between the poem and the letter. When he tore the bottom of the sheet, Stephen seemed to be simply taking something away, a dishonest subtraction from someone else's property, perpetrated and presumably absolved in the name of art. Appropriating a piece of Deasy's letter is equivalent in that respect to the appropriation of library slips for similar purposes. But we discover that writing in the margin of his employer's epistle is not a neutral gesture—no more than writing on the back (endorsing?) or in the blanks of a library form. It confirms a relation of subordination to "Dominie Deasy," taking the exact form of the indenture, the written contract binding an apprentice to his master, which (like the symbolon) used to be divided in two so that each of the parties could prove the authenticity of the contract by a comparison of the torn edges.

The binding is so strong that it even leads to a relation of identification. The poem has been written on the bottom of the sheet, just after the formal ending (which happens to be dealing with the obligations entailed by insertion), that is to say in the place reserved for the signature: the poem becomes a virtual cosignature of the letter, and by writing it the poet becomes, in spite of his repeated disavowals, the "bullockbefriending bard."

This relation of implication, of mutual inference between the poem and its locus of inscription sheds an interesting light on the so-called enthymemic technique of the episode. The enthymeme is a syllogism with implicit premises, an oratorical device lengthily analysed by Aristotle, but Voloshinov-Bakhtin has generalized the notion and shown that every utterance can be considered as an "objective and social enthymeme," because it is necessarily dependent on an implicit context that conditions its effectiveness. On the other hand, the "iterability" of any trace implies that it can be severed from its original context and intention—you will have recognized one of Derrida's most important themes. The whole of Joyce's writing (this becomes apparent with "Circe" and Finnegans Wake) is based on the complementary aspect of that
principle: any text displaced, grafted in a foreign context, retains something of its origin and influences its new context accordingly.

It follows naturally that the earlier versions of the published text, the topology of its inscription on the successive layers of the “avant-texte,” are active forces within the text. What we have just said about the relationship of Stephen's poem to the material circumstances of its composition exemplifies this in a small way—but the investigation must be pursued from the genesis of the poem as represented in the book to its genesis as we can reconstruct it from Joyce's manuscript. A study of the draft of “Proteus” and more specifically of page 15 of Buffalo MS. V. A. 3 is more rewarding than an internal study of that mediocre piece of verse. It is particularly illuminating to study the marginal inscription of the onomatopoeic variations on moon and womb in conjunction with Stephen's reflections about rhymes and paronomasia in “Aeolus” (U-GP 7:714–24). Seeing this page, it becomes obvious that the storage, the material location is not neutral: the spatial disposition of the writing on the page is a crucial factor for the interrelationships of its various elements. And even if these elements disappear from the surface of the printed page (moomb, the provisional choice, later became moomb and was then, perhaps mistakenly, replaced in the text by the simple womb), they remain active, and we can say that this womb is big with all the variations that preceded it.

But we are straying again from “Aeolus”—or are we? It is now becoming apparent why a genetic study of our episode is not only practically but even theoretically impossible within the limits of a separate paper; it cannot be isolated from the history of the whole book.

The same thing could be said of any chapter of Ulysses, even if it is truer of “Aeolus”: Michael Groden has called it a miniature model of the composition of Ulysses, reflecting the various stages in the evolution of the whole book, with the late addition of the newspaper titles conspicuously changing the nature of the text, its fictional and enunciative structure, in relation with the development of the late chapters. But one could radicalize the assertion and suggest that the method of composition of Ulysses turns the whole text into a matrix of its own creation.

Again, we have to restrict ourselves to two rudimentary examples. Just after having recognized the smell of the printing works and compared them to the smell of Thom's, Bloom dabs his nose with his handkerchief and is surprised by another smell that he cannot “place” immediately: “Citronlemon?” (U-GP 7:226). The coinage (the invention of the portmanteau word) is connected with the earlier reminiscence, the use of Citron's house as a mnemonic aid, two paragraphs earlier. But there is also an interchapter connection: the word is first introduced in “Calypso” (“almonds or citrons” [U-GP 4:196]), where the link is soon established with Citron and his location (“Wonder is poor Citron still in Saint Kevin's Parade” [U-GP 4:205]). This becomes more
interesting when we find that the “Aeolus” passage first read “Almonds” instead of “Citronlemon”: the passage from “Calypso” has become a sort of dactyloscopium, or script for the writing of “Aeolus”; the alternative that was “quoted” or “mentioned” within fiction, at best a parasitic status at the second remove according to speech act theorists, acquires a full performative value as an injunction to write.

The illocutionary force of the text proves to be even more powerful in our second example. The general problematization of memory in this chapter touches two extremes: the evanescence of oral speech (“scattered to the four winds”) on the one hand and the parasitic inertia of print on the other. In relation with this, Bloom fantasizes about the presses getting out of hand: “Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew how to stop them they’d clank on and on the same, print it over and over and up and back. Monkeydoodle the whole thing” (U-GP 7:102–4).

Three years after this had been written, the sentence which had remained for a long time the first of the chapter, “Grossbooted draymen rolled barrels dullthudding out of Prince’s stores and bumped them up on the brewery float” (U-GP 7:21–23), was supplemented by an inverted repetition (“On the brewery float bumped dullthudding barrels rolled by grossbooted draymen out of Prince’s stores”), inserted as a holograph addition on the typescript. This seems to be derived directly from a typographical error in the publication of the episode, where the sentence is repeated twice, verbatim (see Groden 70 n). The chiasmic structure was simply superimposed on the mechanic echo, compounding one kind of stereotyping with another.

Can we say that Joyce’s text has generated the printer’s mistake? Or that it had predicted it? We know, at least, that it contained it as one of the potentialities that it was ready to develop. The important point is the demonstration of the part played by the internal dynamics of successive places of inscription (whether or not they are materialized on paper)—of the constant interaction of inventio and memoria.

NOTES

1. Concerning, at least, the “Sirens” episode: most of us had already felt its necessity for the study of Finnegans Wake.

2. See Hart and Knuth; see also Kenner on the modern city and the printed book as analogous finding systems, “the deep congruity on which [Joyce’s] whole art turned” (76).

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**WORKS CITED**


