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Neither/Nor: The Birth of the Text-as-Subject in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

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Abstract

Contemporary literary criticism can be divided into two modes of reading. One mode looks for unity in a text, the other looks for disunity. These modes can be referred to as the modernist mode of reading versus the postmodernist mode of reading. Roughly, the first mode claims that a text has a unified meaning, while the latter celebrates the lack of resolution and claims a text can have an infinite number of meanings. These opposing views are commonly held to be incompatible.

This study will argue that neither the modernist tradition, nor the postmodernist tradition are adequate ways of doing justice to a text. Instead, this study focuses on Roland Barthes' concept of the "Text-as-Subject" and uses his "Step-by-Step Method" to read James Joyce's *Ulysses* from a synthesised viewpoint. In doing so, this study will illustrate how unity and disunity, are, in fact, compatible.

Development in James Joyce Studies is often held to mirror literary criticism in general. This is primarily due to *Ulysses'* uniqueness and complexity. In that regard, even though this study's conclusions do not go beyond James Joyce's *Ulysses*, its implications might reap more results in future research which consider other novels.

Keywords: Meta-Meaning, Neither/Nor, Step-by-Step Method, Text-as-Subject, *Ulysses*

Contents

Introduction

The title of this study might, at first sight, not be very revealing. The title, in fact, comprises three essential aspects, or issues, that this study will attempt to address. Those three aspects are, (1) Neither/Nor, (2) The Birth of the Text-as-Subject, and (3) James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The first of these three aspects, "neither/nor", refers to the general aim of this study, i.e. this study will attempt to argue that a certain incompatible opposition in literary criticism actually is compatible. "A certain incompatible opposition" still sounds very vague. In short, the opposition at hand is that between two different ways of reading literature. The first, which I will call the modernist tradition, holds the idea that, through close-reading, a certain univocal meaning can be distilled from the text. The second, which, in turn, will be referred to as the postmodernist tradition, maintains that a text can have numerous different interpretations and, in effect, a plurality of different meanings. The reason why this study's main title is "Neither/Nor" is because this study will *neither* follow the modernist tradition *nor* the postmodernist tradition, but, instead, it will look at the case-study from a synthesised viewpoint.

The second aspect of the title, "The Birth of the Text-as-Subject", specifies the same point as the first aspect. The easiest way to distinguish the two modes of reading is by looking where the emphasis lies. In the modernist mode of reading, the emphasis lies on the author. One text has one author; hence, the text has one meaning. Contrastingly, the postmodernist mode of reading puts emphasis on the reader. One text has, potentially, infinite readers; hence, the text has infinite meanings. As has been discussed, neither of these modes will be taken on in this study, therefore, neither emphases, i.e. *neither* the reader *nor* the author, will have all the authority in this reading. Instead, in this study, the emphasis will lie on the text itself. An obvious objection might be that a text is an object and therefore not an autonomous force that can generate meaning. This is precisely the view that will be argued against in this

study. In *S/Z*, Roland Barthes shortly discusses the "text-as-subject [*texte-sujet*]" (8). This is to understand the text as the centre of its own system of connotations. What this means in detail will be discussed in the next section. For now, it suffices to say that a text authoritatively guides its reader towards a specific area of meanings during the process of reading and does so independently from the author. This shift in emphasis will, thus, announce the birth of the text-as-subject.

The third aspect is about the case-study, James Joyce's *Ulysses*. This novel is not an arbitrary choice. Alan Roughley, in his overview on Joyce studies, wrote that "the history of Joyce studies can in some ways be seen as a microcosm of the historical development of critical theory and its application to literary texts (x). In other words, *Ulysses* has been thoroughly studied from both the modernist and postmodernist viewpoints. In effect, the text has been claimed to be the epitome of modernist literature, as well as postmodernist literature. Accordingly, its uniqueness lies in its adaptability to theory. This makes it the perfect case-study for the present purpose. The reason why *Ulysses*, more than most other novels, is adaptable to theory will be expounded upon in the next section. In a way, actually, this will turn out to be the main question of this study. The very fact that there is something in *Ulysses* which allows for multiple readings already foreshadows that there is some authority in the text itself that is beyond either the reader or the author. *Ulysses'* authority is what makes it a text-as-subject. To ask what this means is to ask in what ways *Ulysses* allows for a certain leeway within which the reader can generate meaning. In other words, how does James Joyce's *Ulysses* engage or guide the reader into a certain type of meaning building, thereby creating a univocal meaning that is transcendent to the plurality of interpretations, or *writerly* productions?

In short, as the research question above states, *Ulysses* will be said to have a univocal meaning *transcendent* to the plurality of meanings. Roland Barthes calls this plurality of

meanings the main characteristic of a "plural text", because it allows for an infinite number of *writerly* productions. Again, these terms will be outlined in detail in the following section. Some new terminology might also be needed to address this new compatibility. The text(-as-subject) will be said to have its own unique "leeway" or "meta-meaning". Looking for a text's "meta-meaning", in Barthesian terms, means looking for the *readerly* [*lisible*] in the *writerly*, or the unity in the disunity. Again, the detailed elaboration of this issue will occur later on.

Literature Review

Now that the study's subject has been thoroughly explored through an explication of the title, I move on to situate this study within other research in Joyce studies. Firstly, this study's attempt to look beyond both the modernist mode of reading and the postmodernist mode of reading (the "Neither/Nor" approach) has been an aim of multiple other academics before. Daniel R. Schwarz's *Reading Joyce's Ulysses* sets out "to provide a bridge" (1) between what Schwarz calls "humanistic formalism" (5) and cultural theory. This work is especially interesting because it, too, looks at how "*Ulysses* teaches us how to read itself" (2). In other words, it takes a practical approach towards the text and aims to answer a very similar research question. What this text lacks, however, is an in-depth theoretical explanation of *Ulysses* as a text-as-subject. The reason for this is that Schwarz is building his bridge from the humanist formalist shore and even though he aims to enter "into a fruitful dialogue with structuralism, deconstruction, and semiotics" (6), he lacks many of the theoretical tools to analyse the text thoroughly in this way.

Attridge and Ferrer's *Post-Structuralist Joyce* is relevant for precisely the opposite reasons. This bundle of essays, too, aims to synthesise both modes of reading, which they refer to as "the new readings" (postmodernist) and "the more orthodox approaches" (modernist) (11). These texts, however, start out from the theoretical point of view (the

opposite shore) and allows me to combine the theory about *Ulysses*-as-subject with the close-reading data on *Ulysses* from Schwarz.

The third source which is relevant for this study is Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader*. This study is largely concerned with the role of the reader, but defines its role largely by contrasting it to the role of the text. He looks closely at the uniqueness of Joyce's *Ulysses* as a text which has a very distinct way of engaging the reader. This engagement will have to be defined in this study and will make the role of the text more explicit.

Karen Lawrence's book, *The Odyssey of Styles in Ulysses*, is exceptionally relevant as it, too, distinguishes between readings that focus on unity and those that focus on disunity. Here, she explicitly links the latter of these readings to the many different styles that occur in the novel. That is to say, the plurality of meanings follows from the plurality of the text itself, in this case the plurality of its styles. She says that *Ulysses* is "deliberately antirevelatory" (7). This is relevant because it allows me to look at how the different styles confront the reader's expectations.

The most important source, however, is Roland Barthes' *S/Z*. The theoretical relevance of this text has been discussed in the second paragraph above, and its detailed framework will be expounded upon in the next section. Here, I only want to emphasise that this study attempts to reread Barthes' work in the light of James Joyce, rather than critique it. This way, important elements of both modes of reading will be retained and the incompatibility of the modernist tradition and postmodernist tradition will be made compatible.

Outline

Finally, in a way, the first section of this study will retrace the steps taken in this introduction. Firstly, it will sketch both the modernist and postmodernist modes of reading and its synthesised form. Subsequently, section I explores all three different emphases that are

put either on the author, the reader, or the text. Thirdly, section I will place James Joyce's *Ulysses* within this framework and poses the problem of the incompatibility between plural texts and univocal meanings, or classic texts. Section I will end with a short explication of how Barthes' step-by-step method that will be utilised in this study must be read. Section II is devoted to the step-by-step method of the "hermeneutic code" and looks at the ways the first enigma in *Ulysses* engages the reader to find the answer, or, in other words, how the text "educates" the reader how to read itself. The third section, then, argues for the primacy of the text-as-subject which allows for the compatibility between plurality and unity of meaning. This section will comment on the findings and draws this study's final conclusion.

Section I: Theoretical Background

Part 1: Neither/Nor

This first section will be largely concerned with the first two aspects of this study's title, (1) "Neither/Nor", and (2) "The Birth of the Text-as-Subject". In the introduction, I already made an attempt to explain roughly what is meant by these phrases. The first aspect, "Neither/Nor", is perhaps the most fundamental, because its underlying framework largely informs this entire study. This framework is the dialectical method. The dialectical method is simply the idea that two opposing theses work towards a synthesis. In this case, two different modes of reading that are seemingly contradictory, will be shown to be compatible. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who is best known for this dialectical method, says that it is wrong to view two opposing systems as being either true or false (65). In fact, he says that people tend to see "contradiction" where there is "diversity" (66). Hegel's philosophy is far too complex to be the main point of this study and his name will not come up again, but his dialectical method does scurry through this study's main argument, that is, the idea that two opposing views can be united.

The two seemingly opposing views or theses that are discussed in this study are the modernist and postmodernist traditions, or modes of reading. In the introduction, I have taken on these terms without much justification. Here, I will try to make clear why these labels are useful. Firstly, the opposition between the two is both historical and geographical. Historically, the modernist tradition of reading developed in the 1920s and 1930s, while the postmodernist tradition only took off in the 1960s. Geographically, the modernist tradition is for the most part Anglo-American, while the postmodernist tradition largely stems from France. The modernist tradition has been called many things. Schwarz calls it "Humanistic Formalism", Peter Barry, in *Beginning Theory*, refers to it as "Liberal Humanism" (11), but also as "Practical Criticism" (25), or "New Criticism" (29). This strand of criticism is largely

concerned with close-reading and holds the idea that one text has one ultimate meaning. The postmodernist tradition, on the other hand, has most often been referred to simply as "Theory". This strand of criticism is very diverse and has very diverse methodologies, but one underlying theme is that a text has a plethora of meanings, or perhaps no meaning at all. The differences between both modes of reading is infinitely more complex, but for the current purposes, these two modes of reading represent either the believe in a univocal meaning or a plurality of meanings. In fact, the historical and geographical background is merely background indeed. In this study only the views on either a unity of meaning or a plurality of meaning are truly relevant. Thus, coming back to the first aspect of the title, "Neither/Nor", the text will be said to have *neither* only a univocal meaning, *nor* only a plurality of meanings. Instead, it will be said to have both.

Part 2: The Birth of the Text-as-Subject

The next step is to connect the "Neither/Nor" dialectic to the emphasis on either the reader, the text, or the author. In order to make this connection, I need to move on to the second aspect of this study's title, "The Birth of the Text-as-Subject". This aspect takes the opposition between univocal meaning and plurality of meaning and applies them to the notions of the reader, the text, and the author. This is where Roland Barthes comes in. In order to explain this aspect, I will discuss three of Barthes' seminal texts, (i) his short essay "The Death of the Author" (1967), (ii) his structuralist explication of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, *S/Z* (1970), and (iii) the post-structuralist theoretical essay, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973). These three texts signal a transition in Barthes' criticism from structuralism to poststructuralism from which I will distil the role of the text. Contrary to the distinction that is often made between structuralism and post-structuralism, this exploration will primarily focus on the continuity of these works with regard to the three dimensions of literature: the author, the text,

and the reader. In a broader sense, Barthes writes about the transition between the traditional mode of reading (the one I call modernist), and the postmodernist mode of reading.

Firstly, the first essay's title, "The Death of the Author", can be considered the backbone of this transition. Though often misread, the death of the author – as an authority or institution, is easily understood: to limit oneself to whatever associations the author has intended, reduces the range of a text's potential meaning. The misunderstanding, I claim, rises from a misuse of the word "infinity". Admittedly, post-structuralist thinkers, like Barthes, claim that any signifiers can refer to an infinite amount of signifieds. This, however, does not mean *all* signifieds. Surely, the word "blue", in theory, can refer to an infinite diversity of shades of blue, but this means that it still excludes an infinite amount of shades of red and yellow, too. The same goes for literature, and especially, modern literature. Even though any text has as many interpretations as it has readers, and potentially, thus, an infinite amount of readings, this still does not mean *all* readings. If this were the case, it would be possible to imagine two readers, one having read *Alice in Wonderland*, the other the *Oxford English Dictionary*, having had the exact same reading experience. Surely, this is a caricature of post-structuralism, but this is the conclusion that is to be drawn once the idea of "the birth of the reader" is fully carried through. In that sense, the death of the author's momentum needs to be diverted to initiate "the birth of the text". This is to treat the text as a subject, and to subvert the idea that meaning is applied, solely, through the reader's projective force. Instead, the text resists the reader, and "pushes back". This type of resistance is already delineated by Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*. He writes:

> If you hammer a nail into a piece of wood, the wood has a different resistance according to the place you attack it: we say that wood is not isotropic. Neither is the text: the edges, the seam, are unpredictable. Just as (today's) physics must accommodate the non-

isotropic character of certain environments, certain universes, so structural analysis

(semiology) must recognize the slightest resistances in the text, the irregular pattern of its

veins. (36-37)

Recognising these resistances in the text means paying attention to the codes of the text.

Connotation, Barthes says in *S/Z*, is the instrument with which to analyse "the differential

value of the texts" (6-7). Barthes maintains that this instrument can only be used on

"moderately plural texts", and that it is "too poor to be applied to multivalent texts, which are

reversible and frankly indeterminable" (6). If we compare the definition of the instrument of

connotation, however, to his idea of the non-isotropy of texts, then we must consider that not

even the most plural texts are completely plural. Any text would at least be "moderately

classic", including *Ulysses*. This leads me to what I described in the introduction as "looking

for the *readerly* in the *writerly*". The readerly of a text is what makes the reader read. So, in

other words, a forceful set of meanings that are given to the reader to understand. The

writerly, on the other hand, is the narrative the reader creates from the text. This narrative

resides solely within the reader's mind. The writerly text is the unique interpretation of a text.

This is why Barthes says that "the writerly text is not a thing" and that "we would have a hard

time finding it in a bookstore" (*S/Z* 5). The writerly is often explained to be entirely dependent

on the reader, which leads to the same problem as in the example about *Alice in Wonderland*

above, because if the writerly text is only a certain unique interpretation of a text, the reader,

as an authority, can choose to interpret a text in any which way he or she pleases. Here,

however, the full authority of the reader is argued against and some authority is transposed to

the reader. Barthes' definition of "connotation" already shows an aspect of this argument by

introducing the term "text-as-subject":

What is a connotation? Definitionally, it is a determination, a relation, an anaphora, a feature which has the power to relate itself to anterior, ulterior, or exterior mentions, to other sites of the text (or of another text): [1] we must in no way restrain this relating, which can be given various names (*function* or *index*, for example), except that [2] we must not confuse connotation with association of ideas: the latter refers to the system of a subject; [3] connotation is a correlation immanent in the text, in the texts; or again, one may say that it is an association made by the text-as-subject within its own system (*S/Z* 8).

In this excerpt of *S/Z*, Roland Barthes makes a distinction between "connotation" and "association". Both terms refer to a form of "relating" to something that is elsewhere in the text or beyond the text itself. In the case of "connotation", it is entirely *passive*; subject to the underlying structures of, for instance, language and culture. In segment [1], from the passage above, Barthes wants to make clear that the term "connotation" is diverse and "must in no way [be] restrain[ed]", because "connotation is the way into the polysemy of the classic text" (8). "Polysemy" is by definition unrestrained, and, therefore, the network of connotations that constitute it must similarly remain unrestrained.

In segment [2], Barthes disassociates "connotation" from "association" because "the latter refers to the system of a subject". Contrary to "connotation", thus, "association" is in principle *active*. Associations are connections made by the author of a text (or by reader as author of a writerly text) where the centre of intertextuality is the text itself; an intertextual centre actively provided by the author/reader. This "system of a subject", according to Barthes, is "singular" and "reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, [and] the infinity of language" (5). The author's system of association is therefore restrained, or

limited. This is precisely the reason why Barthes performatively asserted that *the author is dead*, as its "intention" only provides a shimmer of the texts actual plurality.

The third segment, paradoxically, re-establishes a form of association back into the definition of "connotation", and says that "it is an association made by the text-as-subject within its own system". This study's focus on this *active* element of the "text-as-subject" is where it deviates most from other studies that consider Barthes or post-structuralism in general. This is the case because it is commonly claimed that "the corollary of the death of the author is the birth of the reader" (Barry 64). In other words, full agency is transported from the author to the reader, but, as Barthes himself already explained, part of the agency belongs to the text-as-subject.

A similar claim was made by Wolfgang Iser in his essay on the phenomenology of reading in *The Implied Reader*. He writes:

> The written text imposes certain limits on its unwritten implications in order to prevent these from becoming too blurred and hazy, but at the same time these implications, worked out by the reader's imagination, set the given situation against a background which endows it with far greater significance than it might have seemed to possess on its own. (276)

These "unwritten implications" are similar to Barthes' notion of "connotation", but here they are more explicitly placed on the side of the text's limiting framework, rather than the reader's full agency. Indeed, "the reader's imagination", too, is given weight by Iser, but he clearly states that the realisation of a text is fully dependent on "the convergence of text and reader" (275). This "convergence" is the synthesis which Barthes calls the "writerly text". They are the result of the dialectics between two opposing forces. Philosophically, thus, the

text *must* be considered a subject, otherwise there could be no synthesis. A tennis player, for example, needs another tennis player to play tennis. Similarly, a reader needs an "opponent", i.e. the text, to create a "convergence" or "writerly text". Furthermore, within this realm of the "unwritten" also resides the "already-written" (*S/Z* 20): all the codes or functions that are applicable to a text through the instrument of connotation. The unity of the connotations throughout a literary work says something about its framework. There is a progression throughout a text and the sequences of connotative codes that constitute this progression lay bare the text's limits on the reader's imagination. The codes "guide" the reader into a certain direction of meaning-building that is unique to that specific convergence of text and reader. The reader's journey through a text, therefore, is not set on, as Daniel Schwarz writes, "the novel's end" (3), but, as Iser claims, "the end product of the interaction between text and reader" (276). This end product is the "writerly text", the text that is produced, written, and rewritten by the reader. "The writerly text", Barthes says, "is *ourselves writing*" (5).

In a very abstract way, this subsection on "The Birth of the Text-as-Subject" has already set out the main argument of this study. That is, how can a text be seen as a subject, rather than an object? In highlighting a specific passage in Barthes' *S/Z*, this subsection has shown that, in other to speak of a dialectics between the reader and the text, the text *must* be considered, in some way, a subject. Now, however, it is still required to explain *how* the text can be seen as a subject. This will be explored in the next subsection which takes a closer look at the case-study, *Ulysses*.

Part 3: James Joyce's *Ulysses* (as Subject)

Presently, I will locate *Ulysses* within the framework set out in the previous subsections. The starting point for this study is what Daniel Schwartz also set out to do in *Reading Joyce's Ulysses*. In the introduction of his study he wrote:

Ulysses teaches us how to read itself. Put another way, we should think of our experience of reading it as the reader's odyssey. We shall stress what the novel does to us as we read it and how the ventriloquy of its various styles establishes an unusually complex relationship between text and reader. (...) As odyssean readers turning the pages of the novel and progressing through the one crystallizing day in the lives of the major figures, we must overcome the difficulties of style and the opacity of content – just as the modern Ulysses must resist temptations which threaten to deflect him from his journey home (2).

In this passage, Schwarz sets out to describe *Ulysses* as a text-as-subject. He says, "*Ulysses* teaches us how to read itself". This formulation establishes a specific relationship between reader and text, that is, the text becomes an authority (again) that *resists* the reader's projection. Simultaneously, the reader is an agent in that it has to "overcome" the difficulties, and the text is an agent in that it poses these difficulties to the reader. But what are these difficulties? Schwarz writes that the text undermines "the reader's quest for unity", through "a plethora of catalogues, barely relevant details, marginalia, false clues, linguistic games, and playful attempts" (4). Similarly, Wolfgang Iser maintains that the reader of *Ulysses* is confronted with *disunity*. The reader of *Ulysses*, Iser says "will search for a 'complete picture' of everyday life, and this is precisely what the novel withholds from him[/her]" (232). The absence of unity, causes the reader to be,

compelled [by the text] to try and find the frame of reference for him[/her]self, and the more intensively [s]he searches, the more inescapably [s]he becomes entangled in the modern situation, which is not explained for him[/her] but is offered to him[/her] as a personal experience. (183)

This personal experience is the end product, the writerly production, that follows from the convergence of text and reader. As described above, the dialectics between reader and text, from which the convergence is attained, can only be a dialectic if the text has the power to resist the reader. This resistance, as Iser describes it, encourages the reader to search harder. It "is not explained" to the reader, but without the reader knowing it, he or she has become "odyssean", just the same. In other words, the text's framework forces the reader to read it in a certain way, sometimes without the reader knowing it. "This form of reading", Iser says, "is predetermined by the novel itself, with its network of superimposed patterns that evoke constantly changing 'pictures' of everyday life" (232). These changing pictures are what set *Ulysses* apart from many other texts. But what constitutes these "pictures"? According to Geoffrey H. Hartman, "literary language displays a polysemy, or an excess of the signifier over the signified" (386). This excess broadens the limited scope of denotation to that of connotation. The resistance of *Ulysses* to be read as a unity, thus, lies in connotation: what do the pictures mean beyond their denotational content? One specific connotative system of the already-written is especially concerned with the text's resistance: the hermeneutic system. In *S/Z*, Roland Barthes writes that:

> the connotative signified occupies a special place: it brings into being an insufficient half truth, powerless to name itself: it is the incompleteness, the insufficiency, the powerlessness of truth, and this partial deficiency has a qualifying value; this birth defect is a coded factor, a hermeneutic morpheme, whose function is to thicken the enigma by outlining it: a powerful enigma is a dense one, so that provided certain precautions are taken, the more signs there are, the more the truth will be obscured, the harder one will try to figure it out (62).

Barthes aims to show here that the enigmas posed by the text always provide more information than is needed to solve it, and simultaneously withholds the most crucial information that is needed. In other words, there is a lack and an abundance at the same time. The larger the abundance of connotation, the harder the reader will try to solve the text's enigma, that is, the text's true meaning. The lack, on the other hand, makes it hard on the reader. The changing pictures, or disjointed fragments of *Ulysses* "resist the odyssean reader's efforts to understand *Ulysses* in terms of organic unity" (Schwarz 4). This resistance of the text puts it in a dialectical relationship with the reader, one that will lead to a convergence, or writerly production that is unique, and the number of which is, in theory, infinite. Like discussed in the previous subsections, however, the infinity of readings does not mean *all* readings. The reason for this is precisely that "resistance"; the text is a subject. In order to analyse this resistance, this study will therefore follow the sequence of hermeneutic morphemes that are bound to the text's "changing pictures".

James Joyce refers to these pictures as "epiphanies" (S. Joyce 134). According to Hélène Cixous, in order for these epiphanies to be disclosed "some conjunction must be operative between subject and object" (599); or reader and text. This "conjunction", which, again, closely resembles Iser's "convergence" and Barthes' "writerly", evokes a temporal unity, or immediate transparency of meaning between the text and the reader. This leads to a "vision" (600) that aligns separate ontologies (i.e. the reader's ontology and the text's), or, in other words, some vision that was first disclosed in the text found its way through language to the mind of the reader. At the end of the first hermeneutic sequence, the disclosure, *Ulysses* reveals such a "vision", namely, that the reader has become Odysseus. This sequence of codes, from its formulation (the title), through its delays and snares, to the disclosure, is the framework of *Ulysses*. This framework is what I will call the text's "meta-meaning" or "the leeway of the text".

Aside from introducing James Joyce's *Ulysses* as this study's case-study and delineating much of the relevant secondary literature that deals with *Ulysses* as a text-as-subject, I have touched upon this study's concrete method of analysing the text. This is the step-by-step method developed by Roland Barthes in *S/Z*. This method will be explained presently.

Step-by-Step Method

Up to now, I have discussed this study's three main subjects, (1) Neither/Nor, (2) The Birth of the Text-as-Subject, and (3) James Joyce's *Ulysses*. These subjects turned out to be three different aspects of the same issue, that is, how can *Ulysses* be considered a subject? This question will be answered in the next section. Firstly, however, I will give concrete directions to how the analysis below must be understood by explaining the step-by-step method.

To recall the first aspect of this study's subject, the main tension, Schwarz claims, in *Ulysses* studies is between the more recent postmodern criticisms that have "stressed dissonance, contradictions, and", most importantly, "lack of resolution" (xi), on the one hand, and the more traditional teleological readings on the other. These two modes of criticism are precisely the opposition discussed above. The latter form of these criticisms has generally interpreted the text as a coherent whole, while the former has deconstructed its singular structure. Barthes wrote that "if we want to remain attentive to the plural of a text (…), we must renounce structuring this text in large masses, as was done by classical rhetoric" (11). He argues in favour of the "*step-by-step* method" (12), where the text is chopped up into "*lexias*" of varying length. By ascribing different codes to these lexias, Barthes charts the numerous structures that lie beneath the text's denotational reading. As has been thoroughly explored above, this study will argue *neither* for the traditional reading, *nor* the postmodernist

reading, but instead follow the thread, or sequence, of the hermeneutic code in *Ulysses*, through the step-by-step method, and find a resolution beyond the "lack of resolution".

The five codes that can be attributed to the lexias are, (i) the hermeneutic code (HER), (ii) the semic code (SEM), (iii) the symbolic code (SYM), (iv) the proairetic code (ACT), and (v) the cultural code (REF). The semic code is used for thematisation. They are used to create characters and situations. The symbolic code is similar, but deals directly with hierarchical oppositions. The proairetic code refers to sequences of action. The cultural code is about references to places outside the text. The *hermeneutic code*, however, is the fundamental tool for this enquiry. This code is present in the text whenever it poses a question or enigma to the reader. Starting, as Barthes does in *S/Z*, with the enigma of the title, this study will focus entirely on the "sequence" from the first enigma, "*through a certain number of delays*" (32), to the final disclosure: *who is Ulysses?* This study, then, entails a new level of meaning in a plural, or modern text. By analysing its structural framework, the text's "meta-meaning" becomes apparent.

Each lexia, that is, a small portion of the text, is numbered between parentheses. The square brackets indicate the page-numbers in the novel. The lexias themselves are italicised to make them easier to distinguish from the codes. Following each lexia are the codes that are attributed to that specific section of the text. The first code is introduced by means of an "*". The second code by "**", etc. At the end of each code a short summary is given of the sequence between parentheses. In *S/Z*, Barthes sometimes interrupts his series of lexias to comment on a more general theme in the novel. This study only does so once between lexia 7 and 8 in order to comment on the role of "style". Moreover, the lexias are more centred at the beginning of the text because this is where most of the thematisation of the enigma and the characters takes place. Finally, this study uses the original, unabridged version of *Ulysses* as it was published by Shakespeare and Company in Paris in 1922. This means that there are no

chapter headings, which, in turn, means that the reader has to try harder to solve the enigma without much guidance. In the end, however, the sequence will largely be the same.

Section II: Analysis

(1) *ULYSSES* [title] * HER. One basic assumptions must be made about the reader's
cultural repertoire when describing the text's first enigma: the title presumes that the reader
knows, or is at least connotatively drawn to, the ancient Greek epic of Odysseus, Homer's
Odyssey. This way, the reader cannot start reading the text from a neutral standpoint. One
immediately forms an expectation and a question: *who is Ulysses*? Thus, as Barthes started his
study of *Sarrasine*, "the title initiates the first step in a sequence" (*S/Z* 17) (HER. Enigma 1:
question). ** REF. This first instance of the hermeneutic code is accompanied by a cultural
code, namely, the reference to the *Odyssey*. This reference connotes to the issues of "epic
poetry", and "heroism" which set the stage for either a sincere re-enactment, a parody, or both
(REF. Literary history: Homer). *** SEM. But the reader will likewise be confronted with the
fact that this is the Latinised, or at least deviating form of the Greek name. Contrary to the
Greek variant, "Ulysses" has a much more antagonistic connotation, as it is often used
derogatory in Virgil's *Aeneid* (SEM. Antagonism). **** SYM. Symbolically, however, the
opposition between the Greek and the Latin goes further: whereas Greek is the language of
philosophy and poetry, Latin is the language of science and scholasticism. This opposition
links them together and creates a symbolic grouping where the one always connotes the other
(SYM. Antithesis AB).

Not all sequences above will be traced down, but they all influence the structure of the
first enigma: *who is Ulysses*? They add questions such as, is it a character in the text? Is it a
hero or a thief? Is it a sincere reference, or an ironic one, symbolic or literal? "The more signs
there are, the more the truth will be obscured," Barthes writes, "the harder one will try to
figure it out" (*S/Z* 62). Thus, the enigma of the title already evokes a clear formulation of what
the reader is supposed to look for, but simultaneously conceals and delays its resolution.

***** SYM. One final code needs to be applied to the title that is closely connected to the symbolic code above. The fact that the title uses the Latin name, rather than the Greek, stresses the difference, while they actually refer to the same individual. "The title itself", David Lodge writes, "is of course metaphoric, pointing to a similarity between dissimilars". This metaphor, Lodge continues, "*exerts control over the development of the narrative*" (136). Similarly, Wolfgang Iser says that, through the dissimilarities, "greater emphasis is thrown on those features which do not coincide with Homer, and in this way the individuality is given its visible outline" (183). What Lodge and Iser aim to show here is that readers will continuously compare the *Odyssey* to *Ulysses*, that is, it creates a strong sense of expectation. This will become especially important from lexia 7 onward (SYM. Antithesis AB).

(2) *Stephen Dedalus, displeased and sleepy, leaned his arms on the top of the staircase and looked coldly at the shaking gurgling face that blessed him.* [3] * SEM. Stephen Dedalus is the first main character that is introduced in the novel. He is described in quite specific terms throughout the first chapter. These terms, in the step-by-step method are called "semes". "A character is created," Barthes writes, "when identical semes traverse the same proper name" (67). In this case, Stephen Dedalus is created through the semes, "displeased", "sleepy", and "coldly". Similar semes settle on the character throughout this chapter and thereby thematise Stephen's disposition, which is: gloomy. He is particularly defined in this way in contrast to Buck Mulligan who "shakes" and "gurgles" and whose energetic enthusiasm annoys Stephen (SEM. Thematisation: Gloominess). ** REF. This gloominess has to be understood in another way, too. If, as Barthes states, "the character is a product of combinations" (67), that is, if Stephen is defined by the specific semes that are applied to him, then similar semes might refer to similar characters. In this case, the thematisation of Stephen Dedalus, in the first chapter, is indeed very similar to that of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.

Odysseus is introduced as "sitting on the shore (…) looking out (…) across the watery wilderness" (66-7). Similarly, Stephen, leaning on the "jagged granite", gazes "seaward" at "the ring of bay and skyline [which] held a dull green mass of liquid" (6). The semic code therefore also functions on the level of the cultural code as they refer to something outside of the text itself, namely, the *Odyssey* (REF. Literary history: Homer).

    *** HER. These two codes, the cultural and the semic, combined, strongly thematise the first enigma: "*Who is Ulysses?*" Rather than a "disclosure" (*S/Z* 85), however, Stephen functions as a "delay" (91). Barthes says that between the question and the answer is an "abundance of dilatory morphemes" (75). That is, the sequence of the enigma is interspersed with codes that fool and engage the reader. Stephen, here, functions as a specific kind of delay, an "equivocation" (75). An equivocation is a mixture of truth and snare. Here, the truth lies in the fact that Stephen, like Odysseus, is looking for a way out of his stagnant situation, and will therefore turn out to be a sort of pseudo-odysseus. It is also a snare, however, in that, as will become apparent in the following lexias, Stephen is not the odyssean figure the first enigma is looking for. In other words, the similarities between Odysseus and Stephen leads the reader to believe that Stephen might in fact be Ulysses, while in reality he is not (HER. Enigma 1: Equivocation).

    (3) *I'm not a hero, however. If he stays on here I am off.* [4] * HER. This line is a fragment of a conversation Stephen has with Buck Mulligan about their visitor, Haines, whom Stephen finds increasingly insufferable. What becomes apparent in this fragment is that Stephen is (i) very unhappy with his current situation, and (ii) is looking for ways out. This might be indicative of an ensuing coming-of-age story where the young protagonist sets out on a journey (i.e. odyssey). Stephen, thus, is further thematised as an odyssean character. Again, however, Stephen is sharply defined in contrast to Buck Mulligan. Mulligan proposes

to "go to Athens" (4), but while Mulligan is standing heroically on the gun rest of the military tower in the bay of Dublin, Stephen leans against the wall, silently. Stephen clearly says, "I'm not a hero". If anything, then, Stephen's journey is rather a cowardly desertion. The hermeneutic code becomes "jammed", as Stephen turns out to be, in many ways, nothing like Odysseus (HER. Enigma 1: Jammed answer).

(4) *Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death* [5] * HER. The female character that pervades Stephen's thoughts is his deceased mother. While he gazes at the sea, his mind is primarily occupied by the past: his dead mother. This is a further delay on the enigma. Both Stephen and Odysseus live in the past and mourn their present situation. Their pasts are both characters' ultimate motivation to set out on their journey. Odysseus will literally regain his past, while Stephen has to find parental guidance elsewhere (HER. Enigma 1: Equivocation).

(5) *The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in the mirror, he said. If Wilde were only alive to see you.* [6] * REF. Another cultural code, the relevance of which will become apparent later on, is the cultural reference in thematising Stephen as "Caliban". This is both a reference to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Oscar Wilde's preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In comparing Stephen to Caliban, Buck Mulligan points towards the issue of self-knowledge. Like Caliban in *The Tempest*, Stephen feels there is a discrepancy between the way he sees himself and the way others see him. The moment he looks into a mirror he sees himself as he thinks others see him. This code is important for two reasons. Firstly, this reference sets the stage for Stephen's theory of fatherhood in the chapter known as "Scylla and Charybdis", which will be fundamental in his own understanding of who Odysseus is. Secondly, like the reader, Stephen, too, is unsure about his identity. He looks at himself in the

mirror because he does not know himself. Stephen is also wondering whether he is Odysseus; he is trying to solve the same enigma as the reader (REF. Literary History: Shakespeare and Wilde).

** HER. This second aspect posits another snare in the enigma's sequence. After having proclaimed that he is not a hero, Stephen comes to the preliminary conclusion that he is "a servant too. A server of a servant" (11). In his own experience, thus, Stephen has become an unimportant side-character, not the protagonist, not Odysseus (HER. Enigma 1: Snare).

(6) *Is that then the divine substance wherein Father and Son are consubstantial?* [38] * HER. This is one of the questions that pervade Stephen's mind throughout the third chapter. He wants to know who he is by looking at what part of his father he can find in himself. In this chapter, he is walking about on Sandymount Strand, a beach south of the Dublin Bay. The first chapter had set the stage for a journey, complemented by Stephen's conversation in the second chapter with the headmaster of the secondary school he works at who pushes him to spread his wings into other regions. Instead, in this chapter, Stephen wanders about the shore, aimlessly. Rather than Odysseus, Stephen starts to take shape as a typical modernist character. In T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, Prufrock says, "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; / Am an attendant lord" (4). Here, too, the main character proclaims not to be a hero and instead, a servant or attendant lord. The reader, thus, is confronted with what will be a frequent theme in *Ulysses*: there is nothing heroic about its characters. Therefore, the enigma thickens, it becomes a joke. Maybe there is no such thing as a hero, only mundane paralysis of the ordinary. What becomes clear, from this passage in particular, is that Stephen is also trying to solve the enigma, "*who is Ulysses?*" In a sense, thus, he has actually set out on a journey, the same journey as the reader. The question is

reformulated: in asking who Odysseus is, Stephen, and the reader, are also asking who they are themselves. (HER. Enigma 1: Formulation).

    ** HER. As the project, or journey, of Stephen and the reader are aligned, a new enigma surfaces, *what is Stephen missing or lacking?* What becomes apparent from the passage above is that Stephen is looking for his father. Not his material father, Simon, that is, his physical existence, but his father that is within him; the part of him that is his father. Stephen has turned the question around and by looking for his father, he is looking for himself. This might finally confront the reader with another delay on the first enigma: maybe Stephen is the son of Odysseus, Telemachos. The reader, at this point, however, has become wary of simply linking characters together. Stephen has already been shown to be, to some extent, an odyssean figure and these codes, that have been assigned to him, cannot simply be neglected. In fact, the complex of contradictory semes, Barthes says, create the personality of a character and this "symbolic structure is completely reversible" (68), that is to say, Stephen is both Telemachos and Odysseus, both son and father. In other words, Stephen is looking for the hero within him. This revelation will only come to Stephen himself much later, but it foreshadows exactly where "Father and Son are consubstantial" (HER. Enigma 2: formulation and partial answer).

    (7) *Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls* (53) * SEM. Thus, the fourth chapter famously begins. Leopold Bloom is the second main character of the novel. The semic code is here applied to "with relish". He is thereby strongly thematised against the gloomy and melancholic Stephen of the first three chapters (SEM. Gluttonous). ** SYM. This contrast, however, is not the main point. Daniel Schwarz notes that the tone of the fourth chapter is also different due to an important shift in style. "What replaces the legends and myths of the first three chapters", Schwarz writes, "is actual experience" (104). Bloom is therefore not simply thematised by the semes that are applied to him, but rather by his stance

towards time. That is to say, while Stephen's thoughts were situated in the past, or the past in the future, Bloom is very much concerned with the here and now. Much throughout the fourth and fifth chapter, Bloom is continuously interpreting life directly: "Nice kind of evening feeling" (76), he thinks, and "Cup of tea now" (63). In this way, the present becomes an antithesis of the future and the past (not the present). In other words, Stephen's melancholy becomes antithesis A: living in the past, while Bloom's direct experience becomes antithesis B: living in the present. These antitheses form an opposition in the symbolic structure. This is a classic idea in poststructuralist theory. The opposition between "present" and "past" is part of a symbolic order and are linked to other oppositions, to, for instance, the opposition between heroism and cowardice. Why this is relevant for the sequence of the hermeneutic code is that Odysseus clearly belongs to the order of antithesis A. In other words, the reader is confronted with a character that in no way resembles an odyssean figure. In fact, Bloom is thematised as Odysseus' antithesis (SYM. Antithesis: B: present).

** HER. This is what Barthes calls the "suspended answer" (85), which is "an aphasic stoppage of the disclosure" (75). In other words, the very fact that the text does not address the enigma, confuses the reader, which, in turn, makes him or her search harder for the answer. This is where I claim the reader becomes "lost". The "character" who resembles the odyssean figure most is the reader him or herself. The first three chapters seem to function as a sort of false start where the reader is led to believe that this is an ordinary novel. From the fourth chapter onwards, however, the reader is thrown in at the deep end. The reader is entirely unprepared to deal with the different styles that he or she is confronted with. This is where the text starts "educating" the reader. The following sub-section will be largely concerned with the different styles the text takes on in order to confuse, but simultaneously engage or educate the reader (HER. Enigma: Suspended Answer).

Sub-section: The Odyssey of Styles

Ulysses is famous for its focus on style. The text shifts from using the form of epic poetry

to experimental interior monologue, but it also draws from Irish songs, newspaper jargon,

theatre, and even deliberately badly translated Latin. Analysing each and every different

literary style in *Ulysses* is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, at this point, I will

describe the effects the different styles have on the reader and what role they play in the text's

main enigma. Thus far, it has become apparent how the two main protagonists, Stephen

Dedalus and Leopold Bloom are roughly thematised as each other's antitheses. Already,

Leopold Bloom ruined the expectations of the reader by being very unheroic in a traditional

sense. From chapter four onwards, however, plot and style diverge, and the thematisation of

the characters disappears to the background. Joyce's *Ulysses*, famously, goes from style to

style like a ship that goes from island to island. Every new style, every new island, breaks the

expectations of the reader. In the aptly titled book*, The Odyssey of Styles*, Karen Lawrence

discusses this very point:

> The reader of Ulysses comes to each chapter with expectations that are contingent upon
>
> what he has experienced not only in other novels but also in the preceding chapters of this
>
> one. These expectations are frustrated and altered as the book progresses. The narrative
>
> contract we form at the beginning of the book—the implicit agreement between the writer
>
> and the reader about the way the book is to be read—is broken. (6)

This "broken agreement" can be understood as a continuation of the "jammed" and

"suspended" answer of the hermeneutic code. Time and again, the reader tries to make sense

of the narrative, tries to rearrange itself within the text, but every time the expectations are

crushed by a shift in style. The reader, thus, is rewriting the story for itself. That is to say, the

reader distils certain elements from the text which it strings together into a coherent narrative. Schwarz refers to this as the way in which *Ulysses* educates the reader how to read itself. He writes:

> The reader is weaving and unweaving only to reweave his or her own image of both the novel and – to the extent that the novel is a significant event in his or her life – to himself or herself. (65)

This reweaving of the reader's own narrative is the result of the dialectics between the reader and the text. This is what Barthes calls the *writerly* of the plural text; it is the synthesis that surfaces between two antitheses, the reader and the text. From a post-structuralist perspective, with its strong emphasis on the reader, this means that the writerly text is dependent on the creative force of the reader. In other words, this means that the reader might, in theory, be free to "pick and choose" its own meaning of what *Ulysses* is about. But *Ulysses* does not allow for this sort of freedom. Every time the reader gets close to solving the enigma, the text changes. *Ulysses* violently disrupts the writerly text the reader was construing for him or herself and forces him or her to *re*write, or '*re*weave' the writerly. This is the reason why Lawrence calls it a "broken agreement", and, indeed why the hermeneutic code is continuously "jammed" and "suspended". In other words, even though plot and style diverge immensely after chapter four, they are always connected. That is, the styles are still stepping stones in the quest for the first enigma. Here, this study follows Schwarz who takes issue with Lawrence's claim that "[*Ulysses*] ceases to be primarily a psychological novel and becomes an encyclopaedia of narrative possibilities" (14). Instead, Schwarz claims that the different styles always serve the plot's development (59). In a way, then, the text does become "an

encyclopaedia of narrative possibilities", but it never ceases to be about the psychology of its characters, and, indeed, the psychology of the reader.

Interspersed throughout the different styles are still instances of partial answers to the enigma to be found, albeit in lesser quantity. The following lexias deal with these occurrences.

(8) *No one is anything* [157] * HER. Bloom becomes more and more contemplative as the narrative progresses. This exclamation puts a strong delay on the hermeneutic sequence. In a moment of reflection, as Bloom looks at the people who go about their business in Dublin, he comes to this conclusion: "no one is anything". It jams the answer to the enigma and poses the answer that "no one is Ulysses" (HER. Enigma: Jammed answer: *No one is Ulysses*).

(9) *I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I? Twentyeight I was. She twentythree when we left Lombard street west something changed. Could never like it again after Rudy* [160] * SYM. This is the first instance where Bloom is thematised as a melancholy individual. His son, Rudy, has died a few years back and he wonders whether he is still the person he was when his son was alive. This reverses the symbolic order of the past/present opposition delineated in lexia 7. Bloom is now more in line with Stephen, and thereby Odysseus (SYM Antithesis: A: past). ** HER. Moreover, Stephen and Bloom are thematised characters that need each other: Stephen is looking for a father and Bloom is looking for a son. Lexia 6 has thematised Stephen as Telemachos. In effect, this strongly emphasises the idea that Bloom might be Odysseus indeed. That is, both characters lack something that the other can fill: Bloom is the father, Stephen the son. (HER. Enigma: Equivocation, partial answer: *Bloom is Ulysses*).

(10) *He is the ghost in the prince. He is all in all* [204] * HER. Stephen has a theory on the role of patriarchy in Hamlet. He discusses this theory with some people in the National Library. At this stage, Stephen concludes that everyone is "all in all in all of us" (204). That is to say, everyone is connected in some way or another and an individual is the sum of their parents, teachers, friends, etc. For Stephen, this partly answers his own enigma. He had wondered who he is: "Am I a father?" (204). He had been looking at the fragment of his father that is within him, and in effect asked the question who he was himself. Now, he knows he is consubstantial with his father. As a result, Stephen, as Telemachos, also becomes Odysseus (HER. Enigma: Equivocation, partial answer: *Stephen is Ulysses*).

(11) *Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves* [204] * REF. This segment is the clearest reference to Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, too, meets robbers, ghosts, and giants, but, in the end, primarily himself. This cultural reference is used as a metaphor for "every life". All of a sudden, everyone becomes an odyssean figure: every life is an odyssey (REF. Literary History: Homer). ** HER. This code entirely reverses the jammed answer from lexia 8. First, *no one* was Odysseus and now *everyone* is (HER. Preliminary disclosure: *everyone is Ulysses*).

(12) *Do you believe your own theory?*

– No, Stephen said promptly [205] * HER. Lexias 8 to 11 display an unusual pattern. Through a series of delays, the reader has gone from believing that no one was Ulysses to believing that everyone was. Now, all of a sudden, Stephen admits that he does not even believe in his own theory. The reader, again, is thrown back into uncertainty and is forced to

rewrite, or reweave its writerly text. It turns out that the sequence above led to a "snare". There is no thematisation or suspension, only a jammed answer. This, of course, is precisely the point. This is where the seemingly divergent style and plot, form and content, are aligned to each other. Every "snare", every let-down underscores the similarity between the reader and Ulysses (HER. Snare, jammed answer).

(13) *A concave mirror at the side presents to him lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom* [413] * SEM. After the largest part of the Odyssey of Styles, the final chapter of Part II introduces Bloom as "lovelorn" and "longlost". This semic code defines him as strongly odyssean, (i) he is bereft of love. This does not refer immediately to his wife Molly, but perhaps more to the general lack of sympathy he has received that day, and perhaps most of all, he misses his lost son, Rudy. (ii) Even more obvious is the connotation of "longlost". This terminology aligns him strongly to both Odysseus and Stephen, particularly the gloominess of lexia 2 (SEM. Thematisation: Gloominess). ** SYM. This also reverses the symbolic structure similar to lexia 9. Bloom is most outspokenly melancholic in this chapter. Contrary to all previous chapters, Bloom falls back on his own past. Instead of being opened up towards the present world, he retreats to his own thoughts of the past (SYM. Antithesis: A: Past). *** HER. From the viewpoint of the Hermeneutic code, only now does Bloom start to really disclose his identity. He does so, however, in close connection to lexia 9, that is, through the question whether he is the man he is now, or the man he was then. First, however, "then" only referred to a time when his son was alive. In this chapter, he dwells through different ages and different situations. In fact, he *becomes* all of them. He appears as a young boy, "in youth's smart blue Oxford suit with white vestslips" (417), being scolded at by his father; "in dinner jacket with watered silkfacings" (423), being hit on by his old flame Mrs Breen; "in an oatmeal sporting suit" (425), "red fez, cadi's dress coat with broad green sash"

(432), and "in housejacket of ripplecloth flannel trousers" (436). All these guises take place in his own mind and Bloom goes back and forth from the real present to the fictional past. The third enigma, corresponding to the other two, emerges: *who is Bloom?* He asks this question himself, but he tries to find himself in himself. That is to say, in all these guises, he sees a plethora of different Blooms, none of which resemble who he is now (HER. Enigma 3: formulation). **** REF. Combined with the codes above, the reader construes a strong expectation that Stephen and Bloom will meet in this chapter. In reference to the *Odyssey*, this is the chapter when Odysseus returns to Ithaca, to come home after twenty years of absence (REF. Literary History: Homer).

(14) *Hearing a male voice in talk with the whores on the doorstep, pricks his ears.* [493] * HER. In this lexia Bloom is looking for Stephen and hears him for the first time. This is part of the longest chapter in the novel, but which reads the fastest due to its literary style. It is written as the script for a play and consists solely of stage directions and direct speech, which leaves a lot of blank space. The reader's experience thereby accelerates strongly as the two poles, Stephen and Bloom are quickly moving towards each other. Throughout the chapter Stephen and Bloom are slowly merging. That is, the chapter begins by following Stephen and then follows Bloom. Later on, Stephen returns, but is more quickly exchanged for Bloom again. The intervals become increasingly shorter until every other page the narrative either follows Bloom or Stephen. This continues right up until this moment, when Bloom can hear Stephen's voice. The text's form and content are aligning again and seem to work towards climax. The fact that the text's longest chapter reads the fastest, thus, corroborates the text's content. Schwarz, too, observed that "in the final four chapters, the form – no matter how innovative – is in the service of meaning" (207). With regard to the hermeneutic code, this is where the reader becomes very attentive for a disclosure, a recognition. That is, in the

Odyssey Odysseus and Telemachos look each other in the eye and in a moment, a flicker, do they recognise each other. The reader is looking for this moment, the moment Leopold and Stephen look at each other and recognise that they need one another. This moment would be the final disclosure of the enigma, the moment Bloom, like Odysseus, throws off his old, dirty rags and yells: "It is I, Odysseus!" (HER. Enigma 1: promise of answer).

(15) *(To Stephen) Come home* [550] * ACT. Bloom invites Stephen to his house after he has finally tracked Stephen down and tries to help him. What is striking of course is that Bloom does not propose in a conventional way. He does not say something like "come to my place", but "come home". He does not even say "my home", but sort of awkwardly implies that this is also Stephen's home. The words "come home" are something a parent says to their child, not what a stranger says to you on the street. As a sequence of the proairetic code (ACT), this invitation pushes the narrative onwards. That is, it is the next step after the reconciliation. The whole chapter has been a build-up to Stephen and Bloom finally meeting after more than five hundred pages (or, symbolically, twenty years). This next step, however, is already an anti-climax, because they have not yet had any meaningful interaction. That is, the "moment of recognition" has not occurred yet. Instead, the narrative simply continues: a new proairetic sequence is initiated, without having provided the presumed disclosure of the enigma (ACT. Invitation). ** HER. The wording of the invitation, on the other hand, so strongly implies a father/son connection, that the reader is led on and postpones the enigma's disclosure (HER. Enigma 1: Equivocation).

(16) *Were their views on some time divergent?* [620] HER. When Bloom and Stephen are finally opposite each other at the dinner table in Bloom's house, the anti-climax is undeniable. Bloom feels a distance between himself and Stephen. He had expected to find a soul-mate, but

is confronted with the fact that they hold divergent opinions. To Bloom, this confrontation is a violent affront, but even more so to the reader. The two forces, Bloom and Stephen, have collided and nothing has happened. The reader is thrown back out of the novel and needs to "reweave" his or her entire writerly text. Everything the reader was led to believe has proven to be false: there is no reconciliation. All the expectations simply led to a snare (HER. Enigma 1: Snare).

(17) *Alone, what did Bloom feel?*

The cold of interstellar space [657] HER. Finally, Stephen leaves and Bloom is more alone than ever. The novel, in the hands of the reader, had all these names written on it: Stephen, Bloom, Odysseus, Icarus, Hamlet; all incarnations of possible odyssean figures. Each and every name has been erased: they all turned out to be snares. Now, it turns out that behind these names is a mirror and all the reader can see is his or her own face. That is to say, the reader is thrown out of the text because he or she is confronted with the fact that whatever the answer to the enigma is, it cannot be found *in* the text. The reader has read countless impenetrable passages, dealt with numerous different literary styles, and narratives of dozens of different characters, but, in the end, "always meeting ourselves" (*Ulysses* 204) (HER. Enigma 1: The novel backfires at the reader).

What has become apparent is that the reader, in the process of reading, has become odyssean, more so than any other character in the novel. Much like Odysseus, the reader has been looking for stability, in this case a coherent writerly text, or interpretation. The formulations and equivocations of the enigma can be understood as the different islands Odysseus comes across in his ten-year journey home. The reader has moved from one snare to the other, and every time it got close to the resolution, it was send back to open sea. The constant rejection from the text is upsetting and it requires, what Schwarz calls, a "heroic

reader" to keep on reading. Schwarz writes that the reader is an "odyssean figure" who is continually faced with "the possibility of being caught in the entangled web of half-sense and nonsense" (66). This final lexia has shown how the "heroic reader" finally ends up with a novel that lacks any resolution, and therefore finds the resolution within him or herself.

To bring this analysis to a close, recall the observations in lexia 1, made by David Lodge and Wolfgang Iser. Lodge stated that the title "*exerts control over the development of the narrative*" (136). The anti-climax, thus, is only a true anti-climax because it is dissimilar to its intertext, the *Odyssey*. The reader's expectation, his or her whole writerly text was shaped by the title's metaphor. Wolfgang Iser, too, said that "greater emphasis is thrown on those features which do not coincide with Homer, and in this way the individuality is given its visible outline" (183). These observations have proved to be fundamental in the reader's process of reading and the subsequent conclusion the reader drew from the text.

Section III: The Primacy of the Text

It is time to combine all the different strands of thought and theories proposed in the first section to the findings of the previous section. Firstly, let us recall the two modes of reading, the modernist and the postmodernist. These two modes of reading both represent an idea, that is, the first of these focuses on the associations of the author, while the latter is concerned with the productive ability of the reader. The primacy of the author's intentions, Roland Barthes showed, reduced many of the text's possible meanings. The subsequent primacy of the reader, however, led to an ultimate textual relativism where one text could not be distinguished from the other since only the reader's interpretation of the text mattered. In order to do justice to a text's plurality and its uniqueness, it is necessary to say that a text has its own framework. This framework must be understood in two ways. Firstly, when we talk about the framework of the text, it is regarded as a subject, rather than an object. Treating a text as a subject means recognising its resistance. Secondly, this framework becomes what I will call "the text's meta-meaning" or "the leeway of the text". The leeway of *Ulysses* is, in short, what has been shown in the previous section. The previous section has followed the reading process of *Ulysses* from the first enigma stated by the title, "*who is Ulysses?*", to its final snare, the anti-climax. Traditionally, a text's enigmas lead to a final disclosure within the text. This study has shown that *Ulysses*' "lack of resolution" forces the reader to find the resolution within him or herself. That is, the very moment that the reader finds out that the text will not provide the answer, the reader has, what Joyce called an "epiphany", namely: *I am Ulysses*.

This final resolution, however, is often more schematic. The final "epiphany" can take countless, and indeed infinite, different forms. That is why *Ulysses* turns out to be able to cope with the "infinity of language" and still provide a univocal meaning. Every reader sets out on an entirely unique journey, or, indeed, an odyssey, that will lead to what Cixous calls a

"conjunction" between the reader and the text; what Iser calls a "convergence", and what Roland Barthes calls the "writerly text". The very fact, however, that "every reader" does this, unites them and makes them odyssean figures. Not only, then, does Joyce's *Ulysses* have its own framework or leeway, but rather, the novel is *about* this phenomenon. That is to say, *Ulysses* is not only confusing the reader, but it is *about* confusing the reader.

Thus, we have come to the primacy of the text-as-subject. Or, to come back to the title: Neither the emphasis on the author, nor the emphasis on the reader are adequate. Instead, this study has seen a birth of the text-as-subject through James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The text functions as an autonomous force that guides, or educates, the reader. This synthesis between a postmodernist and modernist mode of reading has shown that it becomes possible to read the text wrongly again. This is the leeway of the text: it allows for an infinite number of meanings, or, in this case, an infinite number of resolutions to the main enigma, but it is still possible to make mistakes. Schwarz refers to this by means of another metaphor in the text. He writes that the myth of Daedalus and Icarus plays a fundamental role in the way the reader looks for meaning (66). Like Icarus, who is free to fly around as he pleases, the reader can read the text from any perspective he or she wants. "But" Schwarz writes, "the reader is also faced with an example of an unsuccessful escape from the labyrinth in the form of Icarus's flying too high" (66). According to Schwarz, this is the "homophonic overreading" (66), or, indeed, the modernist mode of reading. Likewise, however, Icarus cannot fly too low either. Schwarz does not mention this other end of the leeway, but it has become clear that a focus on the text's plurality, i.e. the postmodernist mode of reading, is resisted by the text itself, too. Schwarz's "homophonic overreading", thus, is accompanied by something we might call a "heterophonic overreading". *Neither* the modernist reading, *nor* the postmodernist reading are sufficient to understand *Ulysses*' "meta-meaning". In other words, the reader, like Odysseus avoiding Scylla and Charybdis or Icarus avoiding the sun and the water, must steer clear of

both unity and disunity. The modernist reader is too *sincere* because he or she tries too hard to find that one meaning, while the postmodernist reader is too *ironical* because it accepts the lack of resolution, or rather, presumes it. If a reader already assumes the lack of resolution, he or she will never arrive at the final disclosure within him or herself. Instead, the reader must oscillate between irony and sincerity in order to do justice to the unity *and* disunity that is in *Ulysses*.

In a way, by describing *Ulysses'* leeway, I have extracted from the text its model. According to Barthes this is "ultimately undesirable, for the text thereby loses its difference" (*S/Z* 3), but as I have aimed to show here, this is not the case. The leeway, or model, operates on a meta-level which transcends the plurality of meanings the text can have. This is why I propose to call this leeway the text's "meta-meaning". Coincidentally, this new constitution of the "convergence" or "writerly text" can be explained by means of a metaphor Joyce suggests in *Ulysses*. He writes that the author exists as a ghost in the text. He writes that,

> [The author] goes back, weary of the creation he has piled up to hide him from himself, an old dog licking a sore. But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed. His beaver is up. He is a ghost, a shadow now, the wind by Elsinore's rocks or what you will, the sea's voice, a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of his shadow, the son consubstantial with the father. (189)

James Joyce imagines himself, and the author in general, to be simultaneously a force of empowerment and subservience. "Ravisher and ravished" (189), he speaks through Stephen Daedalus in the chapter "Scylla and Charybdis". The passage above is part of Stephen's description of the writing process of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare. According to Stephen,

Shakespeare's "beaver is up",[1] which is to say that his face is shown, through *Hamlet*. "To suggest his own biographical relationship to *Ulysses*" Schwarz writes, "Joyce has Stephen propose his expressive theory of the relationship between Shakespeare's art and life" (138). Likewise, Hélène Cixous writes that in these passages "Joyce is but half hidden" (xiii), and that "to Joyce life and art are consubstantial" (xii).

In the passage above, Stephen says that Shakespeare, or the artist in general, is "untaught by the wisdom he has written or the laws he has revealed". This seems to mean that there is meaning in a text that lies beyond the imagination of the artist. This is an indication in the text that shows, paradoxically, that Joyce predicts his own authoritative death: "He is a ghost, a shadow now (…), a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of his shadow". In other words, Joyce is present in his absence and only exists in "the substance of his shadow": the text. The text, as substance, becomes the father, while Joyce is the "ghostly presence in *Ulysses*" (Schwarz 147). By extending this metaphor, it can be argued that the son is the reader. This may sound like a mistake. The reader is said, in a plural text, to become a *producer* of the text, but this reduces the text to the same kind of "offspring", constituted status it has had in post-structuralism until now. The text, instead, "educates" the reader. Even though Joyce is reduced to a ghost, the authority of the text remains intact and dictates to a large degree what types of interpretations it allows. Surely, this number is still infinite, and there will be as many different readings of *Ulysses* as there are readers, and within it the potential of an infinite number of further readings is possible. However, and this is the leeway of the text, there are limitations set by the text. An infinite number of writerly productions does not mean *all* writerly productions. Likewise, an infinite number of different shades of blue, still excludes (an infinite number of shades of) red and yellow. The text, therefore, is not

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[1] "The 'beaver' is the front part of a helmet, which could be raised to reveal the face. In *Hamlet*, Horatio informs Hamlet of what he has seen and describes the Ghost as armed from head to foot. 'Hamlet: Then saw you not his face? Horatio: O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up' (I.ii.229-30)" (Gifford 224).

completely subject to the authority of the reader, but the reader is consubstantial with its writerly production, which is itself an effect, or result of the text. In fact, the reader, as an author of the writerly text, dies too. There is only text.

Conclusion

In short, what this study has aimed to show is what is typically taken for a truism. That is, the idea that James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a very unique text, or, in fact, that every text is unique in one way or another. It became apparent, namely, that post-structuralist theory was not able to explain *how* and *why* this is the case. When post-structuralist theory is taken to the extreme, the whole notion of "uniqueness" disappears. Every text becomes any text, because there is only interpretation. The infinity of possible interpretations made it impossible to distinguish one text from another. Yet, *Ulysses* is still said to be unique. This study has tried to solve these problems by arguing for a compatibility between plurality and univocity, and has done so, hopefully, convincingly.

Lastly, future research might position this study's synthesised viewpoint within contemporary cultural and literary studies. The 2010 article by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, "Notes on Metamodernism", for instance, stated that a new type of modernism has surfaced which "is characterized by the oscillation between a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment" (Vermeulen and van den Akker). Contemporary artists, thus, seem to show the same type of commitment to their art as has been described in this study. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into the further similarities between this study and the resurgence of a new modernism, but it might very well be meaningful to suggest that the outset of this study, that is, to look at *Ulysses* from a synthesized viewpoint, might be called metamodernist.

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