

The Fabric of Manliness:
Joyce, Masculinity and Narrative

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Dominik Wallerius
aus Dudweiler

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Referentin: Prof. Dr. Anja Müller-Wood

Korreferent: Prof. Dr. Rainer Emig

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Abbreviations

The text cites quotations from the following works using these abbreviations:

- D* Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. 1914. Edited by Margot Norris, Norton, 2006.
- P* Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1916. Edited by John Paul Riquelme, Norton, 2007.
- U* Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. 1922. Edited by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior, Random House, 1986.
- FW* Joyce, James. *Finnegans Wake*. 1939. Faber and Faber, 1975.
- SH* Joyce, James. *Stephen Hero*. 1944. Edited by Theodore Spencer, John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, rev. ed., Granada, 1977.
- SL* Ellmann, Richard, editor. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Viking, 1975.
- JJ* Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. new and rev. ed. Oxford UP, 1982.
- GT* Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1990. Routledge, 1999.
- BTM* Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Routledge, 1993.
- M* Connell, Raewyn. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed., U of California P, 2005.
- MD* Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Translated by Richard Nice, Polity, 2001.

1 Introduction

James Joyce and the fabric of manliness

1.1 “*When is a man not a man?*” (FW 170)

This deceptively simple question is raised by the character Shem in Joyce’s last and most complex work, *Finnegans Wake*. The question is not trivial, though, because instead of asking “when is a man a man”, it asks for a negative definition of masculinity. Through this, Shem acknowledges the difficulty to define what a man actually is and implies that this can only be approached through the notion of lack: a man is not a man, if he lacks certain qualities or features. This “first riddle of the universe” (FW 170) is indeed puzzling, since it is not clear what those features or traits are supposed to be. When *is* a man actually a man? Does it suffice to have a male body? Does he have to do specific things with that body? Is a man simply someone who can be clearly distinguished from other more fully defined individuals? Maybe a man is something completely different altogether?

The impossibility of an answer to these questions might be usefully illustrated with a short reference to Joyce’s story “Counterparts”. Towards the end of this story, the protagonist, Farrington, experiences an epiphany which makes him recapitulate his numerous failures of the day in terms of his failed masculinity. Waiting for a tram to take him home from a drinking rampage, this “very sullenfaced man” goes through an emotional crisis, leaving him “full of smouldering anger and revengefulness” (D 80). The origin of these feelings seems at first to relate to Farrington’s economic problems: his goal on this night out was to drown his social and economic miseries in alcohol, but what happened to him during this night left him more or less sober and his problems have become even exacerbated: he has squandered all his money for drink, pawned his wrist watch and created trouble that will have repercussions at his workplace, making his financial situation even more precarious. Summarising

Farrington's emotional state, the narrator asserts that "[h]e felt humiliated and discontented" (D 80). And yet, the humiliation is not economic alone: "He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said *Pardon!* his fury nearly choked him" (D 81). Rather than reducing Farrington's situation to the lack of economic means alone, Joyce overloads Farrington's humiliation with a narrative of "masculinity in crisis" (Whitehead 3). Farrington lost twice against a physically inferior man in arm wrestling, and as a result he has lost his reputation as a strong man. This loss of a gendered identity is further underlined by a failed encounter with an anonymous but exotically attractive woman, whom he desired but could not manage to speak to. Eventually, Farrington's humiliation is that the events of his night out confront him with Shem's unanswerable question "When is a man not a man". Employing narrative features like causation, conflict, emplotment, the fictional character Farrington fabricates a narrative which is capable of supporting his masculine identity (*I have out-wrestled numerous men in the past and this has proven me a strong man*) but which can also call it into question ("He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy" D 81). The masculinity-in-crisis narrative can therefore also be seen as a crisis of the narratives of masculinity. Farrington's masculinity is threatened exactly because his gendered identity has focused on the powerful but flexible medium narrative. Therefore, the answer to the question of masculinity might lie, and this is the main assumption of this study, in a reading of the narratives, plots and stories which construct it.

The concept of crisis, which Joyce uses as a motif in many of his texts, is a common trope in the research field of Masculinity Studies.¹ Stephen Whitehead, for instance, speaks of a "discourse of masculinity in crisis", which currently pervades Western societies, as "the idea that men are facing some nihilistic future, degraded, threatened and marginalized by a combination of women's 'successful' liberation and wider social and economic transformations [. . .]" (50-1; see also 45-59; cf. MacInnes 311-13). It is not possible, then, to pinpoint the origin of this crisis to a single factor like women's liberation or the dynamic transformation of the job market. The origins

¹ For an insightful discussion, see Horlacher (*Masculinities* 25-36).

of this purported crisis are indeed vague and mask an essential insecurity about masculinity. Equally drastic developments also shaped men's lives at beginning of the 20th century, the time when Joyce wrote his fiction. After all, conceived notions of masculinity were attacked from various angles, resulting in a situation in which

[t]he domestic ideology of separate spheres for men and women, and the notions of masculinity and femininity and of male and female sexuality that informed it, had been vigorously, publicly and spectacularly contested, and masculinity discredited. (Kent 262)

It was not masculinity as such that was directly challenged but the various institutions that were built on masculinity and filled with men, as Susan Kingsley Kent further writes:

By the end of July 1914, striking workers Irish rebels, Tory die-hards, and militant suffragists had brought liberal England to its knees. Virtually every principle and assumption of classical liberal thought had been called into question. Free trade, *laissez-faire*, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and a restricted male franchise – all came under fire from various groups ranging from union officials, Conservative and Unionist politicians, Irish protestants and Irish Catholics, and feminists from every quarter of the kingdom. (Kent 262)

As this list of male troubles suggests, the reasons why men could perceive themselves in crisis at the turn of the century were numerous, and the Great War with its mass slaughtering of young men gave a fitting end to a trajectory of masculinity in crisis.

While all of these factors certainly contributed to male insecurities, Joyce seemed sure that it was women's conquest of the public sphere and their claim to equal social and political rights which were the most direct and most profound threats to male privilege. Writing to his friend Arthur Power, Joyce called "the emancipation of women" the origin of "the greatest revolution in our time in the most important relationship there is—that between men and women; the revolt of women against the idea that they are the mere instruments of men" (qtd. in Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 47-48).² Yet, it is fair to say that a revolt against this *idea* is not the same as a full-scale revolution with the goal of achieving equal rights. Therefore, it is important to realise that the notion of men in crisis can also be seen as an ideological strategy intended to guard male privilege. As Stephen Whitehead writes, to speak of a crisis for white,

² These comments were made in the context of a discussion of Henrik Ibsen's feminism. For Joyce's generally ambivalent attitude towards feminism see Scott *Joyce and Feminism* and Johnson "Joyce and Feminism".

heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon men is in a way counter-intuitive, since in reality it is they who in “control, directly or indirectly, most of the world’s resources, capital, media, political parties and corporations.” Indeed, the notion of a crisis actually helps to maintain this control, “[f]or it posits them as victims, thus offering them a new form of validation and identity – as wounded and now under threat” (3-4).³ It is noteworthy in this respect that at the end of “Counterparts”, Farrington vents his anger about his loss of masculinity by beating up his young son. In doing so, he not only re-asserts his physical strength over a man in the making but also, despite his self-perception as a failure, he affirms his authority and privilege within his family.

As the example “Counterparts” indicates, Joyce invites us to question the ideological value of the ways in which such narrative structures are used. Narrative as such is often understood as a cognitive tool that shapes our understanding of the progression of time and makes sense of the events that form our lives (Abbott 11). As a mode of thinking about what is happening around us, it thereby provides us with “the shape of time” and “a frame or context for even the most static and uneventful scenes (Abbott 11). Thus, looking at terms like *crisis* and *revolution* as quasi-narratives helps to understand their ideological content. This is not to say that these are full-fledged narratives, but they certainly integrate narrative features like causation, character or emplotment. In “Counterparts” and other texts, Joyce tells the story of his male protagonist’s crises of masculinity by exposing the ideological undercurrents of masculinity their stories about themselves employ. When asking how Joyce’s works treat the topic of masculinity and its crises, we therefore need to start looking at these pseudo-narratives which his protagonists use to understand their world and at the way that Joyce’s forms narrative support or undermine them. Such an endeavour requires a sound theoretical basis, to which the next two chapters are devoted. Before we turn to these foundations, however, we will briefly look at how masculinity has been engaged with in Joyce studies so far and thereby situate this study within its critical context.

³ For an extensive discussion of the crises regarding gender and sexuality at end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, see Showalter *Sexual Anarchy*.

1.2 Masculinity in Joyce studies

While Masculinity Studies is a relatively new field of research, questions about masculinity and patriarchy have been part of Joyce studies for a long time. Yet, research on Joyce has not widely addressed the construction and constitution of masculinity beyond well-established psycho- or discourse-analytical models, nor has it paid sufficient attention to the connections between depictions of masculinity in his works and his narrative practice as such. So, while there is certainly no shortage of studies on gender in Joyce, there is still room for a discussion that combines an interest in gender, and masculinity in particular, with a focus on the form and structure of his texts. Because Joyce studies have become “[a]n industry without limits”, as Derek Attridge has written (*Joyce Effects* 168), it is not possible to give a comprehensive survey of studies and essays concerned with masculinity in Joyce. Instead, I will review more broadly the theoretical directions in which scholarship with a focus on gender has developed. I thereby hope to clarify where my own research is situated and how it distinguishes itself from others through a focus on the relationship between gender and narrative in Joyce’s texts.

The first critical engagement with masculinity in Joyce begins with scholars writing in the wake of second-wave feminism. Masculinity as such is not at the centre of attention in these studies, which, following Elaine Showalter’s “gynocriticism”, focus on the images of women and the representation of the social environment which these female characters inhabit. In general, this research looks at the abstract notion of patriarchy and intends to look “into the ways that Joyce’s women have been ‘framed’ and the possible ways they may be freed” (Gelfant 266).⁴ These contributions have highlighted the thoroughly patriarchal nature of Joyce’s fictional worlds, and they have thereby also shown the ways in which female characters are often marginalised by the myths surrounding male artist-figures like Stephen Dedalus and Gabriel Conroy. While these and other studies have referred to the misogyny inherent in Joyce’s male characters and society they inhabit, they are not interested in defining masculinity or discussing how it is produced in and through the texts. This is mainly

⁴ Important publications include Scott’s *Joyce and Feminism*, Henke’s and Unkeless’s edited volume *Women in Joyce* and French’s *The Book as World*.

due to the fact that, despite acknowledging Joyce's experimental style, they remain within the framework of literary representationalism: for them, a discussion of gender means the critical analysis of the *images* of women and men within a more or less realistically depicted fictional society.⁵

The following wave of post-structuralist readings, such as Colin McCabe's extremely influential *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word*, address this approach to gender and text in a radical way.⁶ The link in these studies to gender consists, broadly speaking, in the fact that post-structuralist thought deconstructs hierarchies and differences, among which sexual difference is central. In this way, many of these publications have found in Joyce a precursor to such thinking both with regard to style and sexual difference.⁷ What they show is that textuality and style in Joyce are neither apolitical nor ideologically neutral. Especially works like Vicki Mahaffey's *Reauthorizing Joyce* and Jean-Michel Rabaté's *James Joyce: Authorized Reader* engage with Joyce's refusal of textual, and by implication gendered, authority. While this summary does not do justice to these studies' highly sophisticated arguments, it is important for my purposes to highlight that post-structuralists first offered the notion that Joyce's stylistic innovations cannot be separated from questions of gender. This, in turn, is a preliminary condition for a reading of gender as a form of style or narrative construction, on which my approach to Joyce is based. To put the narrative construction of masculinity into focus can thus be seen as complementing post-structuralist readings of Joyce, which focus on sexual difference only as one trope of textuality among many more.

There is an overlapping of the post-structuralist readings I have just outlined with the rich tradition of psychoanalytical readings. These are discussed separately here because they exemplify two elements which my study aims to address.⁸ While it would be unfair to claim that all these readings are identical in outlook, aims and results, they all represent a general problem of psychoanalytical approaches: the findings

⁵ French's study is an exception, however, as she successfully integrates considerations of style and narrative discourse into her feminist framework.

⁶ See also Attridge's and Ferrer's *Post-structuralist Joyce*, McGee's *Paperspace* and van Boheemen-Saaf's *The Novel as Family Romance*.

⁷ In fact, these readings often celebrate Joyce as a kind of post-structuralist *avant la lettre*.

⁸ Important works in this area include Brivic's *Joyce between Freud and Jung*, Shechner's *Joyce in Nighttown*, Leonard's *Reading Dubliners Again*, Henke's *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire*, Restuccia's *Joyce and the Law of the Father* and Froula's *Modernism's Body*.

produced by such readings strongly support the theory rather than *vice versa*. In this way, the readings find predominantly narratives of psycho-social development in Joyce's works. However, to give one example, using the Oedipus complex to read the text means to analyse narrative by using another (implicit) narrative. And especially when the focus is on male characters, these readings often display a reductive discussion of masculinity that the present study intends to address.

The masculinity, or lack thereof, of Joyce's Leopold Bloom has played a central role in psychoanalytic and feminist readings of *Ulysses*. His assumed androgynous identity was already discussed earlier by the aforementioned Marilyn French (*Book as World* 139), but the theme becomes downright fashionable for a time in several other psychoanalytically-oriented readings. Bloom is viewed as "Beyond Sexual Possessiveness", as the title of an early essay by Suzette Henke has it, and his lack of a macho personality is heralded by many critics who stress the construction of his androgynous character.⁹ What unites these readings is that they take for granted the connection between Bloom's assumed androgyny and Joyce's pro-feminist and anti-patriarchal stance. Their readings are based on the contrast between Bloom and the macho culture surrounding him, and they are led by textual cues like Bloom's alleged sex-change into the so-called "new womanly man" in the "Circe" chapter. Many of these analyses are too easily led into heralding Bloom as a positive incarnation of a gender beyond clearly defined masculinity.¹⁰ While these studies have provided important insights into the patriarchal society in which Joyce's fiction is embedded, they cannot account for the ambivalent stances toward women that Bloom is capable of. Furthermore, by defining him simply as more feminine than the other male characters, they posit a conception of masculinity as monolithic rather than multiple and diverse.

The use of psychoanalytic approaches for the study of masculinity in Joyce is therefore ambivalent. They are strong when it comes to tracing motifs and their relation to sexual and gendered dynamics, and they have offered useful critiques of Dublin

⁹ Publications concerned with this image are Burgan "Androgynous Fatherhood in *Ulysses* and *Women in Love*", Henke *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* and Boone "A New Approach to Bloom as 'Womanly Man'", Unkeless "Leopold Bloom as Womanly Man"; Walkley "The Bloom of Motherhood", Rado's *The Modern Androgyny Imagination*. Compare, however, Gilbert "Costumes of the Mind" for a negative assessment of Bloom as "new womanly man".

¹⁰ These readings are largely based on Heilbrun's influential *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*. Compare, however, Rado's critical account of the trope.

patriarchal society. However, they also tend to subordinate the literary narrative to their theoretical one, thus producing rather formulaic readings.¹¹ Furthermore, operating within a narrative framework themselves, these approaches tend to be uncritical towards narratological questions about the textual practice. Notable exceptions offer ways in which psychoanalysis and narratological analysis can be fruitfully linked. Both Christine Froula and Frances Restuccia argue that Joyce's works appropriate psychoanalytical dynamics within the form and structure of his writing to engage with questions of masculinity and sexuality. Similarly, the essays in Susan Stanford Friedman's edited collection *Joyce: The Return of the Repressed* posit a textual unconscious, the deciphering of which yields insights about gender and sexuality in Joyce as well. In different ways, each of the three mentioned point to a way of viewing gender as the result of textual and narrative practice, and their focus on form and content as mutually influencing is an interesting direction for my own approach of reading masculinity alongside narrative.

While psychoanalytic readings can offer some interesting findings about masculinity in Joyce, more nuanced accounts of the constitution of masculinity are provided by discourse-analytical approaches.¹² In these approaches, masculinity is not the most central concern, but it is an important part of the individual discourses that shaped Joyce's writing. To give but two examples, Katherine Mullin analyses the engagement of Joyce's texts with the policing discourse of the social purity movement in Ireland. Among other aspects, this discourse shaped a prescriptive notion of "[t]rue manliness" (85) for male citizens, which intersects with the discourse of Catholicism in a "deeply subversive" way (83). In Mullin's words "*A Portrait* pointedly observes how diligently two ostensibly polarised discourses mutually reinforce each other to intensify Stephen's experience of paralysis" (83). Tracey Teets Schwarze, in contrast, covers a much broader spectrum of discourses when she writes that Joyce's fictions produce "a multifaceted, discursive narrative composed of a variety of rhetorics",

¹¹ Froula, for instance, predicates most of her discussions a single pattern: the male artist-hero discovering his repressed feminine side.

¹² Under this label I subsume Foucauldian, New Historicist and postcolonial approaches. Relevant contributions among these Brown's *Joyce and Sexuality*, Cheng's *Joyce, Race and Empire*, Mullin's *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity*, Herr's *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture*, Lowe-Evans' *Crimes Against Fecundity* and Tracey Teets Schwarze *Joyce and the Victorians*.

which may be “political, religious, [or] gendered” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 3). As a result, these fictions offer “characters whose subjectivities are surrounded and shaped by the force this discourse exerts” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 3). Like Mullin, Schwarze discusses masculinity as an element within other discourses, as chapter headings like “Victorian Manliness, Public Morality, and Leopold Bloom” or “New Women, Male Pests, and Gender in the Public Eye” indicate. These approaches produce intricate and nuanced readings that show the ways in which Joyce’s thinking was influenced (both explicitly and implicitly) by various discourses during his time of writing. However, like psychoanalytical approaches, they do not focus on the fluid and dynamic construction of masculine identities, nor do they pay enough attention to the role narrative structures and techniques play in this construction.

A pioneering volume, and therefore of special interest, is the collection *Masculinities in Joyce: Postcolonial Constructions*, which the editors Christine van Boheemen-Saaf and Colleen Lamos introduce as “the first volume to address the topic of masculinity in relation to Joyce’s writings” (7). The goal of this collection is to introduce masculinity as a field of research for Joyce studies, which so far had been largely preoccupied with feminist issues. Gathering an eclectic mix of “historical research and the intersecting insights of postcolonial, poststructuralist, feminist and queer theories”, these essays “examine the complexity, and the contradictions, of the construction of masculinity in Joyce’s work in close detail” (7). While the essays in this collection present interesting findings on gender in Joyce, they do not rigorously incorporate research from Masculinity Studies proper, and as a result, they often remain within the confines of the well-trodden paths of the disciplines listed above. Despite these missed opportunities, the volume ultimately points into new directions, by stating that “masculinity, as Joyce portrays it, is characterized by a remarkable degree of internal contradiction. Masculinity seems a continual dilemma rather than a definitive state, or a sexual or social identity [. . .]” (8).

It is this focus on masculinities as a plural concept which Joseph Valente’s recent *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922* successfully takes up and develops with a sophisticated theoretical basis. Valente’s work thereby encompasses psychoanalytic as well as discourse-analytical approaches to produce a comprehensive genealogy of masculinity as a discourse informing Irish culture and literature.

What sets his approach apart from the previously discussed is Valente's emphasis on the plurality of masculinities informing Joyce's works (and that of other Irish authors). According to Valente, Irish men found themselves in a discursive double-bind which made the development of a genuine Irish masculine identity impossible. Imperial British discourses of manliness framed Irish men as paradoxically both childish and effeminate as well savage and hypermasculine. Thus, Irish men were considered by the British as both not manly enough and at the same time too manly, which conveniently justified colonial rule over Ireland because its male citizens were both not sophisticated enough and too uncivilised to rule themselves.¹³ The most valuable achievement of Valente's argument is his historicising of masculinity in the context of Irish colonial subjectivity. Masculinity is here conceived as plural and contextual, when he distinguishes between an English hegemonic ideal, on the one hand, and an Irish counterpart, which fell short of it, on the other. This insight is new to Joyce studies, and it invites to venture further into the same direction by asking whether plural masculinities in Joyce could also be thinkable outside the English-Irish antagonism. When taking into account the theoretical developments of masculinities studies, which Valente and most other Joyceans largely ignore, the colonial masculinities of both British and Irish men should not be conceived of as homogenous entities but as plural and heterogeneous concepts themselves.

What most discourse-analytical readings have in common is their frequent neglect of formal structures and their disregard for the tools that narratology offers to make informed readings of literary texts on both the formal and thematic levels. Yet, there have been attempts at questioning the neutrality of narrative representation, especially from queer approaches. As an example can serve Colleen Lamos' *Deviant Modernism*, which asks, among other things, how narrative form itself may represent and co-construct discursive formations like sexuality and gender in the works of Eliot, Joyce and Proust. Focussing on "the gender anxieties and homosexual desires that pervade" (1) these texts and the ways in which they are written, Lamos combines questions about gender and sexuality with questions about narrative practice. She thus successfully shows how both can be seen as co-dependent by noting that the "errant

¹³ This is a very brief paraphrase of Valente's far more complex argument (1-25).

desires” of Modernist culture went along with various forms of “textual errancy” (124).¹⁴

Finally, some of the properly narratological approaches to Joyce show a similar interest in connection between (narrative) structure and content when it comes to topics like gender and sexuality. Already Marilyn French’s *The Book as World* combined a stylistic with a feminist orientation, and her later article “Missing Pieces in Joyce’s *Dubliners*” addresses gaps in the telling of these stories which she elegantly connects to a problematisation of gender in the texts. Later works such as Earl G. Ingersoll’s *En-Gendered Trope in Joyce’s Dubliners* and Gerald Doherty’s *Dubliners’ Dozen: The Games Narrator’s Play* similarly integrate narratological concepts and terminology into their readings of Joyce’s short stories to probe the ways in which gender influences textuality and vice versa.¹⁵ Yet, no other scholar has been as continually concerned with questions of narrativity and gender as Margot Norris. Especially her two books *Joyce’s Web: The Social Unraveling of Modernism* and *Suspicious Reading of Joyce’s Dubliners* put a focus on the dynamics of narrative strategies in perpetuating and criticising gender conceptions. In her *Suspicious Readings*, she proposes what narratologists have termed an “ethical” (7) reading of Joyce’s stories (cf. Phelan). Through this, her aim is to show how Joyce’s texts are constructed in ways that mute certain voices, points of view and ideologies, which the ethical reading must give voice to again. This approach is set to discover in the allegedly neutral narrative techniques hidden meanings and thus “alter our sense of the stories’ ‘modernism’ by politicizing its aesthetics” (*Suspicious Readings* 11). While not exclusively focussing on gender and masculinity, Norris’s ethical readings of Joyce’s texts can be considered an extremely valuable foundation for my aims in this study. My readings of Joyce’s fiction thereby can be seen as giving Norris’ interest in the political function of narrative structures a more specific focus and as extending her work to Joycean texts other than *Dubliners*.

¹⁴ See also Valente’s seminal collection *Quare Joyce* for approaches addressing the relationship between textuality and homosexuality in Joyce’s works.

¹⁵ See also Lawrence’s “Gender and Narrative Voice in Jacob’s Room and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”.

After this brief review of scholarship that focusses on masculinity in Joyce, it is now time to formulate the goals and preliminary theses of the present study and to give an outline of the method and structure of the study.

1.3 Goals and theses, methods, structure

The review of existing work on masculinity in Joyce has shown that the present study can draw on relevant approaches within Joyce studies. Yet, it also covers new ground by formulating a dedicated focus on the analysis of the intersection between masculinity and the author's narrative practice. What interests me in particular is how Joyce's innovative and experimental storytelling can be consolidated with what is a highly ambivalent attitude towards masculinity. That his fiction was revolutionary at the time it was published is undeniable, but the stance of this fiction towards questions of gender remains a matter of discussion because these attitudes are highly ambivalent. There is, on the one hand, a clear tendency to criticise male self-destructive behaviour like drinking, gambling, romantic-heroic pursuits and the exploitation of women in his works, and Joyce also exhibits a (self-)critical attitude towards male hypocrisy and arrogance. This is especially the case for the issues of biological fatherhood and spiritual/aesthetic paternity, which his texts negotiate with almost "fetishistic constancy" (Emig 7). As feminist critics have rightly argued, however, while Joyce surely criticises certain aspects of patriarchy, his texts cannot be labelled feminist either (see Johnson, "Joyce and Feminism"), and as a closer look at masculinity will show, Joyce indeed also shows a certain pride in all these forms of masculine bravado mentioned before. My focus on the connection between masculinity and the narrative structures of the texts will certainly not resolve these contradictions either. However, this analytic emphasis offers a new perspective on the interrelationship of both gender and storytelling in his works, and it can thereby enhance our understanding of these ambivalences regarding masculinity.

The underlying thesis informing this study is that masculinity is a signifying structure that can neither be reduced to single images of maleness nor to a mere reflection of historical discourses about gender or sexuality. Rather, my approach is to

view masculinity as a symbolic assembly that weaves numerous, otherwise unrelated, mini-narratives into a gendered textual fabric.¹⁶ This fabric is more than the sum of the individual texts: it has no beginning and no end, and it represents a sign system that constitutes manliness as an ideological category used to legitimise male privilege. As manliness, it suggests both naturalness and the norm, and by implying a direct connection to the male body, it closes off questions of the kind voiced at the beginning of this introduction about what masculinity actually is. The conceptual distinction between manliness and masculinity that will be used here is this: while masculinity refers to individual gendered practices, manliness is the ideologically loaded screen that covers the weaknesses of performances of gender and of the male body. By weaving a fabric of ideological narrative units, manliness thereby covers the inadequacies of masculinity, which would otherwise undermine male privilege within patriarchy.¹⁷ This strategic distinction should neither be seen as absolute nor as the formulation of a full-fledged theory. The metaphor of the fabric of manliness is rather a conceptual tool and its value lies in visualising the angle from which I intend to analyse the common term “masculinity” within narrative texts: by looking at the individual micro-narratives that construct the masculinity of the characters, but also by considering how masculinity is invested in the narrative construction of Joyce’s fictional texts themselves, the fabric of manliness becomes apparent as an ideological element of Joyce’s narrative in general which frequently challenges patriarchal privilege but frequently also celebrates itself. Manliness is thereby understood as neither the result of a predetermined psychological development nor as the effect of one or several historical discourses. Rather, my approach views it as the consequence of various individual narrative negotiations between characters and textual structures. One important presupposition for the conception of manliness as a textual fabric is that the act of storytelling and the narratives produced by it are themselves gendered structures, an aspect of narrative often ignored by other approaches to masculinity in Joyce. Because narrative structures are not gender-neutral, they make a significant contribution to the symbolic

¹⁶ The metaphor is inspired by Roland Barthes famous quote about the text as a tissue of intertexts: “The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (149).

¹⁷ See Valente *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture* for a different conceptual distinction between “manhood” and “masculinity” (2-3).

construction which result is commonly perceived simply as masculinity in the stories. A gender-conscious formalist approach, which takes seriously the narrative construction of masculinity and the gendered nature of narrative practice, can therefore add new insights to the discussion about the ways in which fiction and gender are co-constituting. Moreover, an approach that questions narrative practice regarding its investment in gender re-connects eventually with the feminist project that began the analysis of gender in Joyce in the first place.

After addressing the innovative potential of my approach to masculinity/manliness in Joyce, we can now formulate three central goals and individual theses that will guide my readings of his fictions:

1. A first goal will be to address masculinity in Joyce's texts beyond the discussion of fixed and static masculine images like the new womanly man, the male artist/son, the Phallic Father, the macho lover etc. These images have without a doubt their role in Joyce's fiction, but a critical discussion of masculinity must not stop there with their identification because this would mean to neglect the ways in which they are produced. Masculinity will be conceived of as constructed through the life-stories and plots that the characters create to achieve a sense of masculine self. Since these stories are dependent on individual situations, contexts and within institutional settings, they fabricate dynamic and plural masculinities rather than monolithic images.
2. Another central point of interest will be to query how the gendered category masculinity can be linked to Joyce's Modernist narrative practice. In other words, how does narrative practice produce masculinity? I will argue throughout that Joyce's experimental narrative practice constructs masculine images based on stories and plots which are, furthermore, embedded in larger equally gendered narrative structures.
3. The last goal addresses the question of the texts' stance towards this construct of manliness. In that process, my readings work on two levels: masculinity will be shown to be constructed individually through narrative means by characters. However, it is, then, also negotiated within the narrative framework of the texts. Framing narrative practice and the individual narrative constructions of masculinity have therefore to be seen as interwoven. Joyce's Modernist

approach to narrative is not per se critical of masculinity. As my readings will show, it sometimes serves to deconstruct those narratives and thereby expose the instability of his male character's masculinity, but equally it sometimes serves to support and naturalise it.

The goals formulated here necessitate an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach for the study, as they touch upon central questions of gender studies and narrative theory, and furthermore, they posit a connection between these two approaches, which are often seen as separate. The field from which methods for the close readings are being drawn is therefore comprehensive. It comprises, firstly, the groundwork which feminist, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, and postcolonial approaches to gender in Joyce have provided. However, it secondly also integrates two strands which have been under-represented so far in Joycean scholarship. The first is that of Masculinity Studies. From this rather heterogeneous discipline I will use several presuppositions, theories and concepts to inform my close readings of Joyce's text. Some of these concepts can be considered ahistorical and therefore seem out of place for a study of Irish masculinity at the beginning of the 20th century. However, this is a strategic choice because the concepts and theories used from Masculinity Studies are not supposed to give contextual insight and background for the readings. Instead, they function as external concepts to inform the analysis of the narrative structures. It is in this sense that the study is trans-disciplinary, because the readings of the texts transfer the concepts of Masculinity Studies to narrative theory in order to create a flexible approach to individual literary phenomena regarding gender and narrative. Narratology is, accordingly, the second area which is under-represented in Joyce studies. This is not to say that narratology has not had an important role in Joyce studies. As a survey of narratological approaches to Joyce by Margot Norris indicates, narratology has always been part of Joycean scholarship, partly so because it was his work that expanded the boundaries of narrativity (Miller, "Narrative Theory to Joyce" 4). However, with the exception of Norris's work, the central link between narrative practice and gender, which I intended to pursue, has generally not been part of this scholarship (cf. Norris, *Narratology and Ulysses* 43-44).

The present study is accordingly situated in three areas and can, therefore, offer a contribution to each of them:

1. To Joyce studies, my approach can offer the introduction of a culturally sensitive formalism, which is aware of the political implication of formal structures. Such an approach can complement psychoanalytic and discourse-oriented approaches, which have been dominant for quite some time in Joyce studies and which have privileged images of masculinity over their constitution through the narrative structures of his texts. Furthermore, following Masculinity Studies' emphasis on plural masculinities, the competition and negotiations between these images can be made more transparent.
2. My approach of combining an investigation of gender with one of narrative structure is also a contribution to feminist narratology. Not only has this strand so far successfully avoided discussions of Joyce to test its concepts and theories. It has also yet to come to terms with masculinity, queer and intersectionality-oriented approaches to formal structures. While it is not my goal to provide a conclusive solution to those problems or a new theory of masculinity and narratology, my close readings are intended to show a way for a more systematic approach concerning gender and sexuality in narrative in the future.
3. The study is, thereby, also a contribution to the wider area of studies of masculinity in fiction. The specific focus on narrative practice and its gendered implication can add to this flourishing field of literary studies by offering an approach that goes beyond the analysis of the masculine images represented by male characters and settings. As a complement to these studies, which have produced important results concerning the historicity of specific images of masculinity, it offers the parameters of form and structure as equally important factors for a more holistic understanding of masculinity in fiction.

It lies in the nature of such a heterogeneous approach that it is predicated on theoretical compromises. Neither die-hard narratologists nor Masculinity Studies scholars will be satisfied with a method that can be considered such a “mixed middling”, to use one of insults which the Dubliners in *Ulysses* hurl at Leopold Bloom's non-conformist masculinity (*U* 277). However, the underlying conviction of this approach is that

theoretical impurity is the key to achieving a more comprehensive understanding of masculinity in narrative texts – not least because it allows readings that are flexible enough to adapt to these two highly complex sign systems.

1.4 Selection of texts and structure of the study

After these preliminary thoughts on method and theory, the selection of texts for the study deserves an explanation because any selection is preliminary and cannot cover all aspects of the Joycean fabric of manliness with regard to Joyce. For the section of this fabric that is presented here, a number of paradigmatic texts have been selected and ordered around three areas which can be considered central to the analysis of masculinity. I conceive of all three as spaces in which masculinity is constructed in narrative form: the body as the visible space of masculinity, the school and educational setting as site of the formation of masculinity and, finally, the institutions of marriage and romantic partnership as spaces for the production of narratives and images of masculinity. As the readings will show, these sites are only orientations, and the concrete construction of masculinity within each site touches upon many more aspects which could equally have served as categories of the analysis. Each part is comprised of two chapters which will address different aspects of the site in question and will focus on different texts from Joyce's canon. Since masculinity is so elusive and cannot be limited to single definitions, the binary structure is only a means to reduce complexity and focus momentarily on individual aspects which should only be seen as starting points for a broader debate on masculinity and narrative in Joyce.

The first part of the study lays the theoretical basis for the close readings. In chapter 2, I discuss Masculinity Studies as a theoretical approach which has until now not been fully integrated into Joyce studies. The primary goal is thereby to introduce the most important frameworks and concepts of this field to a Joycean audience. Rather than giving a full survey of the field I will stress important questions and paradigms of this discipline. After that I then give an outline of the concepts developed by Judith Butler, Michael Kimmel, Raewyn Connell and Pierre Bourdieu, which I argue can be fruitfully used in a narrative analysis of masculinity because their modes of

conceptualisation of gender lend themselves to a transfer to narratological methods. Chapter 3 will then develop this theoretical approach in more detail. First, I discuss the concept of masculinity as a narrative practice, an approach that builds on the functions of narrative as a cognitive tool, a mode of creating one's life-story and as the carrier of ideological structures, but also on the role of cultural artefacts as constitutive of such narrative constructions of gender. After that, I will outline the necessity for a gendered narratological approach in order to critically discuss these narrative constructions of masculinity and highlight important elements of his approach. Finally, I will end the theoretical part of the study by developing my own methodology to read masculinity as a narrative construction of Joyce's fictional characters, on the one hand, and manliness as the investment of gender in his own narrative forms and techniques.

In chapter 4, I address the construction of masculinity through the institutional setting of the school. In chapter 4.2 I will look at the story "An Encounter", in which masculinity is constructed simultaneously on the narration's levels of story and narration. On the story level, we see the formative influences of school teaching and, adversely, the boys' bravado in escaping from school. These two modes of formation are dramatised in several competing plotlines, which are continuously played out against each other. Yet, the way of narrating these plot lines itself questions and undermines this battle of plots through specific techniques. So, the constitution of masculinity/manliness may be seen to take place on these two thematic and narrative levels which, create an ambivalent stance to the masculine bravado of the story. The following two chapters develop this pattern of competing constructions of masculinity/manliness on the narration and story levels further. Chapter 4.3 focusses on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, for which the two thematic levels of formation can be analytically separated more easily. Here, I discuss the formative power of school and teachers as working against the masculine values transmitted within the Stephen Dedalus' family. In the negotiation of these values against those prescribed by the priests of his school, Stephen develops an insecure and highly ambivalent mode of masculinity, which is, however, central for his development as an artist, who discards common masculine norms to live for his art. After this discussion, chapter 4.4 looks at the negotiation of masculinity among the schoolboys. The central currency with which this masculinity is being negotiated here among this peer group is that of sexual

knowledge. Similar to the former discussion, Stephen needs to come to terms with knowledge about sexuality for his development as an artist. Both parts complement and compete with each other to portray the role of the school as setting for the formation of Stephen's masculinity, creating thereby a highly ambivalent stance towards this formation.

Following the school setting, chapter 5 concentrates on male and female perspectives on marriage and romantic partnership. Chapter 5.2 reads "Eveline" and "The Dead" from *Dubliners* alongside each other. The focus is now on the female protagonists and their endeavours to narratively construe masculine images of their husbands. The goal of these female configurations of masculinity is to achieve recognition as married subjects within matrimony. The kinds of acknowledgement desired and achieved are different, however. "Eveline" constructs in the protagonist's lover Frank a husband who can guarantee social recognition as a subject, based on traditional and conformist patriarchal ideals of marriage. The story "The Dead" however dramatises various masculinities which offer (and deny) multiple forms of social and sexual recognition. Following the discussion of *Dubliners*, chapter 5.3 concentrates on the numerous fictions of masculinity imagined by Gerty MacDowell, the central character of the "Nausicaa" chapter in *Ulysses*. Gerty's yearning for a lover and husband moves through various types of masculinity and ends in a sexually fulfilling fantasy in which she embraces Leopold Bloom's image as a dark and sexually dangerous but exciting stranger. Narratives of husbands and lovers are shown in this part to differ in terms of the expectations that the female characters voice, and the texts frequently suggest that sexual fulfilment and social security are mutually contradictory expectations and realities.

The sixth and final chapter considers the relationship between masculinity and the male body. The central question is which role narratives play in the process in which male bodies are connected with masculinity. Do these narratives attempt to eclipse the material basis of the body or do they refer to the body to underline and legitimise masculine performances? The *Dubliners* stories in chapter 6.2 show a split between masculinity and the male body. In "A Mother", the narrative mode of the story separates the male body from their masculine performances in order to dramatise the female protagonist's futile attempts at resisting patriarchal structures. By using

masculine props and prosthetics which supplant the body and manifest male power symbolically, these otherwise unmanly male characters make their power quite literally untouchable, as it does not rely on physical superiority but on more elusive forms of authority. The following stories “Two Gallants” and “After the Race” develop this pattern of a narrative separation between body and gender further. Assuming the male perspective of power and hegemony, the stories suggest that the symbolic power which arises from separating body and gender is a screen behind which the body is often eclipsed. However, on the formal level – through motifs and references – the body returns in the narration of the texts to remind readers of the artificial and unstable nature of masculinity/manliness.

The final chapter 6.3 focuses on the ways in which Joyce dramatises the male body in *Ulysses*. By looking at “Cyclops”, “Circe” and “Penelope”, I will conclude the discussion of masculinity and the body and show the important role that the body plays in the negotiation of masculinity in his Modernist masterpiece. In “Cyclops”, the narration constructs the manliness of Irish nationalism through reference to physical maleness in contrast to Bloom’s exotic and effeminate Otherness. The act of narratively creating this body destabilises the distinction between masculinity and maleness, and the narrative constantly uses physical features to make statements about gender while, vice versa, masculine behaviours are equally used to create an image of the body. The result is a corporeal anarchy in which the narrative blurs boundaries between body and gender and thereby critiques the Othering processes depicted. In “Circe”, on the other hand, the radical theatrical performance of gender spectacularly questions any separation between body and gender. However, rather than showing that gender is a role inscribed on the body and celebrating an androgynous blurring of sex and gender, the chapter re-establishes manliness by stylistically restoring Bloom’s male body again. Thereby the narrative effectively undermines what initially looked like a liberatory critique of fixed a gender/sex regime. In my last reading, I address “Penelope” and its variable depictions of the male body in mini-narratives such as anecdotes, memories and speculative digressions. Through these, Molly’s monologue voices a critique of the way masculinity is legitimised by the male body and how, vice versa, the male body is ascribed superiority. Her numerous stories expose weaknesses, limitations and pretences of the male body, and thereby she undermines its role in the

construction of masculinity. Yet, her choice of Bloom as a partner at the end of the episode can be seen as an acceptance of the male body and its flaws, exactly because these exposed flaws enforce the realisation that manliness/masculinity is a mere symbolic illusion to maintain power relationships between men and women.

Chapter 2

Masculinities Studies: Concepts and theories

As the previous review of works on Joyce and masculinity has shown, Masculinity Studies has overall not enjoyed a prominent role in Joyce studies. The primary goal of the following chapter is therefore, first, to introduce the most important frameworks and concepts of this field to a Joycean audience, and, second, to pave the way for a transfer of these concepts in the next chapter to a narratological approach which can offer a new way of understanding masculinities in literary narratives. It is not my aim to give a full survey of theories and approaches to the study of masculinities. Instead, I would like to highlight a number of questions and paradigms of this discipline and then give an outline of the concepts developed by four influential theorists in the field of gender studies and masculinities, which comprise my conceptual tool box for my analysis in the close readings that are to follow.

2.1 Masculinities Studies

Originally conceived in the 1980s, studies of men and masculinities have generated a publishing output that is nowadays surely overwhelming. While this can surely be seen as a welcome extension of gender studies more generally, the downside of this proliferation is a theoretical landscape characterised by heterogeneity and a lack of consensus over theories and concepts.¹⁸ Accordingly, masculinity is a research paradigm that produces different results and meanings according to the questions one asks about it and which aspects one focuses on (Kahn 49-50). Various surveys have shown that, as an object of study, masculinity can only be grasped from individual vantage points,

¹⁸ For systematic surveys of the field see Horlacher “Überlegungen”, Kahn and Erhart.

yet never comprehensively. These problems begin already with the definition of what masculinity actually is. As Jack S. Kahn maintains in his recent introduction to the discipline, not only is there no general consensus about what the object of study actually is (3), but any definition is likely to produce more questions than answers (47). As an example shall serve the definition offered by Stephen Whitehead, who maintains that masculinity is

those practices and ways of being that serve to validate the masculine subject's sense of itself as male/boy/man. But what, precisely, is masculinity? How do we measure it? Can we measure it? Can some men have more of it than others? How does it correlate to class, ethnicity, sexuality? Where does it come from? Can one lose it? How does one know if one has it? As a man, how do I know when I'm performing it? Is it constant, unchanging? (4-5)

As this catalogue of questions indicates, any definition produces questions that themselves become part of the inquiry. And depending on which questions are asked and how they are addressed methodologically, heterogeneous results regarding very different masculinities are produced. To use Kahn's formulation, "[i]t seems that what masculinity means depends on what counts as masculine (and who gets to count it)" (50). The variety of definitions is due to the fact that masculinity is being studied by many different disciplines with differing theoretical assumptions and interests. Often, scholars with a background in sociology refer to a direction variously called *New Men's Studies* or *Critical Masculinity Studies*, yet many other disciplines have equally undertaken analyses of masculinity in culture and society, using heterogeneous (and sometimes incommensurate) approaches and tools (Kahn 47-50; Whitehead and Barrett 2). It is therefore unlikely that a single theory of masculinity will prevail in the future, and it is more justified to speak of the study of masculinity as a research paradigm, and not a comprehensive theory.

What all of these approaches have in common is that they have helped to make masculinity visible as category and to expose that for too long masculinity had hidden behind the category of the universal. Here, feminist scholarship had already made crucial interventions in most academic disciplines by showing that "masculinity, too, is a gender [. . .]" (Gardiner 11) and not just "unmarked by gender and hence normatively

human” (Brod 166). Building on these earlier feminist insights¹⁹, Masculinity Studies has successfully shown that masculinity is both invisible and at the same time ubiquitous. It has hidden under the umbrella of the “normal or self-evident which appears natural”, and therefore “tends to function as ‘unmarked’”, as Todd Reeser writes (8-9). And because of this unmarked nature, masculinity can be found everywhere – if we chose to look for it and thus overcome the “patriarchal paradigm in which men are seen as generically and normatively human [. . .]” (Brod 166).²⁰ Following this, it is therefore a central concern of any methodology or theoretical approach to make masculinity, as well as the power relations it maintains, visible.

Despite the common goal to conceptualise masculinity as a gender category, different approaches certainly produce different objects of study. One key consequence of the heterogeneity of approaches is the helpful acknowledgement of several forms of masculinity. In this way, Savran and Adams introduce their critical anthology by stating that research is necessarily “theoretically and methodologically diverse”, as “masculinity is the product of so many complex and shifting variables that to describe them in terms of any one additive identity would inevitably be reductive” (2). This proliferation of methods and approaches also produces an array of different masculinities rather than a single object of study, or in other words, the discipline is currently characterised by an “increasing differentiation of the field’s object of analysis” (Horlacher, “Charting” 11). This is the result, as Stephen Whitehead argues, of acknowledging “the multiplicity, historicity and dynamism of gender representations” as well as the fact that the boundaries to other factors of personal identity are easily blurred:

we can see that masculinities are plural and multiple; they differ over space, time and context, are rooted only in the cultural and social moment, and are, thus, inevitably entwined with other powerful and influential variables such as sexuality, class, age and ethnicity. (33-34)

Emphasising in this way the intersections of gender with many other factors that contribute to the construction of identity, researchers have widened the field of inquiry.

¹⁹ The relationship between feminism and masculinities studies has not always been an easy one. As Savran and Adams write “Does masculinity studies [sic] represent a beneficial extension of feminist analysis or does it represent a hijacking of feminism?” (7). A helpful overview of the debate is provided by Jardine’s and Smith’s edited collection *Men in Feminism*.

²⁰ This insight was already expressed by a contemporary of Joyce, the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel (Meuser 32-41).

Furthermore, this means also a more complex picture of the field as now “specific, typical ‘subaltern,’ masculinities” become visible and undermine “previous scholarly assumptions that masculinity is monolithic” (Horlacher “Charting” 11). In other words, the assumption of a single form of “masculinity” had helped to “misrepresented the singular as the universal, erasing from view the broad range of socially and culturally marginalized masculinities found in a wide variety of specific ethnicities and national locations” (Horlacher, “Charting” 11).²¹ Identifying these *other* masculinities and their relations to the norm must be a key direction in any research on masculinity, as Connell writes in her seminal study *Masculinities*:

To recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the *relations* between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. (M 37, Connell’s emphasis)

Yet, it is not only the intersectional factors that produce relations among masculine identities at any given time. As Whitehead maintains in the quotation referred to earlier, masculinities also “differ over space, time and context” (34) and are therefore subject to historical change. Thus, markers that are seen as prestigious at one historical point might lose this prestige and become markers of subordination or even ridicule at a different historical stage.²² In this way, these diachronic and synchronic perspectives have produced a wide spectrum of masculine subject positions and have significantly broadened the field of inquiry.

2.2 *Theories of masculinity and gender*

After this initial introduction to the field of masculinities studies, we will now briefly survey various influential theories with which masculinity has been researched before we will discuss the relationship of masculinity and narrative in the next chapter. The subsequent sections will give a brief outline of different influential theories of

²¹ For an application to the colonial context of Irish masculinity, see Valente’s *The Myth of Manliness*.

²² Examples can be found in the Elizabethan codpiece or the fashion for sideburns and whiskers during the Victorian period, which would both not be considered appropriate for hegemonic masculinities today.

masculinity. The selection is idiosyncratic: I chose Judith Butler, Michael Kimmel, Raewyn Connell and Pierre Bourdieu, but not because they represent the best or most influential theorists that have written about masculinity, but because I see in their work the greatest opportunity to make a connection to my approach of seeing masculinity as a narrative thread which is tied together by individual micro-narratives. Before I begin with this outline, I have to justify why I leave out distinctly psychoanalytical approaches. The perhaps first and certainly one of the most elaborate and influential theories of masculinity, psychoanalysis, will not be discussed here for two reasons. First, psychoanalysis is not a single theory with a clearly defined set of terms and concepts. From the Oedipus complex (Sigmund Freud), through the notion of male dread of femininity (Karen Horney) and male psychosocial development in relation to objects (Melanie Klein, Nancy Chodorow), to the *Non/nom du père* (Jacques Lacan), psychoanalysis has produced many versions masculinity and narratives which aim at explaining it. As Raewyn Connell maintains, “[p]sychoanalysis offers to modern thought on masculinity a uniquely rich method of investigation some illuminating general principles, and an immense variety of specific hypotheses and insights” (“Psychoanalysis on Masculinity” 33). But immediately afterwards she cautions that “[t]hese do not come without cost and risk” (33) Still, this set of theories “remains a vital resource for the understanding of masculinity [. . .]” (12). The second caveat about psychoanalysis is that, despite Joyce’s own reservations about and critical distance to it, this approach already has a long tradition in Joyce studies against which I would like to distance my approach.

The aim of this survey is therefore not to give a comprehensive overview of the fields in which masculinity has been studied and critiqued. My goal is rather to highlight the very different angles that have been used to address the study of masculinity in order to gain ideas which can be adapted to my approach. I will focus on aspects from the theories which are commensurate with a reading of masculinity as a narrative and that can be linked up with a narratological approach to gender in literary texts. This part will therefore also be a transition to the next chapter in which I will theorise the approach for my reading of masculinity in Joyce’s works. As will then be shown, an understanding of masculinity as narrative makes a number of presuppositions, which the theories outlined here put forth.

2.2.1 Judith Butler: Masculinity and performativity

While Judith Butler's writings do not specifically focus on men and masculine subjectivity, some of her theoretical concepts can nevertheless be fruitfully applied to the study of masculinity.²³ Despite the density of her style, her main ideas on gender and sexuality can be paraphrased as a set of four related propositions:

- 1) In Western societies, there are only two culturally accepted genders and sexed bodies.
- 2) These are constituted by various discourses constantly naming and signifying them on the basis of the tenet that sexual desire must be heterosexual.
- 3) This process naturalises the link between gender and sex, and it thereby becomes invisible.
- 4) It can be exposed as an artificial process again by focussing on those bodies and genders which do not meet the standards of the culturally accepted ones.

Butler develops these central claims by using a number of, sometimes metaphorical, concepts, which I will discuss in the following. My focus is on those concepts which lend themselves to a transfer to a narratological approach to masculinity, as I will indicate that Butler often employs metaphorical language derived from rhetoric and the literary realm.

At the core of Butler's thinking is the idea that the body is a reiterated stylisation which produces the notion of a stable sex and gender. In *Gender Trouble* she argues against gender as a coherent identity and instead proposes to understand gender as “*a corporeal style*, an ‘act’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative [. . .]” (177).²⁴ The word *style* refers to the actual doing of gender, that is, the daily acts of gendered behaviour, such as “bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds”, that are performed in a distinct way in order to create “the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (*GT* 179). In order to critique this illusion and expose gender as

²³ For commentary, see Salih and Jagger, as well as Salih's introductions in the *Judith Butler Reader*. Emig and Rowland furthermore offer a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary volume with critical applications of Butler's concepts to masculinity.

²⁴ All emphases in the following quotations are Butler's.

something artificial, it is therefore important to focus on this “stylisation” and the separate gendered acts that are performed on the body (*GT* 179). Furthermore, it is the constant repetition of these gendered acts which makes gender appear like a fixed and coherent identity, as Butler further argues. Rather than “a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow”, she writes, “gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (*GT* 179). Even more radically, Butler maintains that “[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results’ (*GT* 33). Since the subject is not free to choose how and what to act, the acting out of gender as such constitutes what it is thought of simply referring to: “gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed” (*GT* 33).²⁵ Butler then extends this argument to anatomical sex, which she claims is just as unstable as gender. Here she argues that “gender is a performance that *produces* the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core; it *produces* on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation), the illusion of an inner depth” (“Imitation” 134). The role of the body is thereby expanded as a stage on which “corporeal theatrics” perform and thereby produce the acts that constitute gender and sex. As a result of these arguments, male anatomy has to be seen as separate from the signifying practices of masculinity, and furthermore the elusive concept of masculinity is to be taken as the origin of the significance we give to the male body. As Butler maintains, “If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the spatial metaphor of a ‘ground’ will be displaced and revealed as a stylized configuration indeed, a gendered corporealization of time” (*GT* 179).

The consequence that arises from this emphasis on the repetitive character of gender is eventually the dissolution of the coherent subject. First, the subject (“I”) can never be fully materialised because it exists merely as repetition: “if the ‘I’ only

²⁵ In Salih’s words, “Gender is an act that brings into being what it names: in this context, a ‘masculine’ man or a ‘feminine’ woman. Gender identities are constructed and constituted by language, which means that there is no gender identity that precedes language” (*Judith Butler* 64).

achieves the semblance of identity through a certain repetition of itself, then the 'I' is always displaced by the very repetition that sustains it" ("Imitation" 125). The "I" vanishes, so to say, in an infinite regress of signification, and therefore these repetitions are compulsory. Yet, this compulsion has the drawback that it creates "an identity permanently at risk" in the sense that there is always the possibility that the repetitions are either disrupted or blocked, or it may be that they are being used to create very different forms of identity, which do not comply with heterosexual identity ("Imitation" 130-31). Thus, identity "requires to be instituted again and again", Butler argues, and this compulsory repetition creates "the risk of becoming *de*-instituted at every interval" ("Imitation" 131). Especially the possibility of failing to repeat is significant because these repetitions are always public acts referring to visible societal norms. Butler writes that the repetitive gendered performance "is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (*GT* 178). Ultimately, for Butler, this "public action" has the goal of "maintaining gender within its binary frame – an aim that cannot be attributed to a subject, but rather, must be understood to found and consolidate the subject" (*GT* 179). This is especially important because it is impossible and therefore unacceptable to be "without", "lacking" or "outside" a gendered identity in a society and culture which idealises heteronormativity (Salih, *Reader* 21).

Butler further develops her ideas about repetition through the concept of citation, which she claims offers ways to think about the disruption of gendered identity. She takes recourse to Jacques Derrida's argument that signs can be put into new and unexpected contexts, that is, they are re-cited. This new citation is also a re-appropriation of the sign, which destabilises its meaning and frees it from its original source or the speaker's intention (Salih, *Judith Butler* 90-91). In the context of sex and gender, this means that the repetitions of stylised acts mentioned earlier can be seen as citations of a compulsory heterosexual norm. It is this heterosexual framework that "compels a certain 'citation'" which is necessary for the construction of "a viable subject" (*BTM* 232). However, Butler argues, these citations can themselves be re-appropriated or mis-cited, for instance through parody and drag. These re-appropriations of gender norms can be used to destabilise gender through re- or mis-citation. "Drag", she

argues, “constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn, and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation” (“Imitation” 127).^s What this process exposes, according to Butler, is that heterosexuality and the binary gender regime are dependent on these acts, and in fact it only comes into being through them: “heterosexuality only constitutes itself as the original through a convincing act of repetition. The more the ‘act’ is expropriated, the more the heterosexual claim to originality is exposed as illusory” (“Imitation” 130). It is through mis-citations and unusual recontextualisations of gendered acts and signs that the arbitrariness of an otherwise seemingly natural gender becomes most apparent: “the naturalistic effects of heterosexualized genders are produced through imitative strategies; what they imitate is a phantasmatic ideal of heterosexual identity, one that is produced by the imitation as its effect” (“Imitation” 127-28).²⁶

Eventually, for Butler neither gender nor sex are coherent and reified entities but rather the result of “a heterosexual and sexist culture[, which] establishes the coherence of those categories in order to perpetuate and maintain what Adrienne Rich long before Butler called “compulsory heterosexuality” – the dominant order in which men and women are required or even forced to be heterosexual” (Salih, *Judith Butler* 49). Subjects that do not fall under this complementary subjectivity become abject- or non-identities (cf. Buchbinder 55-56). The role that Butler gives to heteronormativity provides a concrete basis to the vaguer notion of masculinity as a constant practice of surveillance to which I will turn next.

2.2.2 Michael Kimmel: *The fears of homosocial enactment*

In Judith Butler’s approach masculinity is a discursive achievement which is brought about by constant repetition of stylised acts that constitute masculinity and the male body. In the following, I will discuss an approach that complements the notion of masculinity as achievement by positing that masculinity is in constant need to prove

²⁶ In this passage I have synthesised Butler’s argument about the potentially subversive citationality of the sign in *Bodies that Matter* and her arguments about drag as exposing gender’s “imitative nature” (Salih, *Judith Butler* 120) in the article “Imitation and Gender Insubordination”.

itself in front of others. This necessity ultimately leads to an unceasing fear of failing the test and therefore also a fear of other men who passed it. From this perspective, the success of the achievement of masculinity is constantly monitored and evaluated by those who are engaged in this struggle themselves. Following this direction, Michael Kimmel writes that masculinity is “a relentless test by which we prove to other men, to women and ultimately to ourselves, that we have successfully mastered the part” (285). Similarly emphasising the need for repetition discussed earlier, this perspective stresses how enduring and natural masculinity appears to be, but how it also demands “constant work to be maintained” (Reeser 3). Kimmel also acknowledges that even excessively virile feats can never complete this process, because every proof soon loses its value, and therefore the act of proving has to be repeated over and over again (269). As this is a never-ending process, just as it is for Butler, masculinity turns out to be “a lifelong quest to demonstrate its achievement, as if to prove the unprovable to others [. . .]” (274). The individual is thus continuously tied to the necessity to construct and revise a form of self-fashioning that paradoxically demands both conformity to the masculine norm and personal individuality, which leads to the experience of constant crisis (cf. Horlacher, “Überlegungen” 29).

The audience for these tests has an important role in this process, too. As David Buchbinder writes, “[g]ender behaviour [. . .] needs to be witnessed”, and although we do not drop our gendered masks when alone, masculinity “cannot be performed in a vacuum of solitude” (56).²⁷ The acts of proving masculinity are performed to female audiences as well, but the primary audience is a rigid homosocial constellation, through the evaluation of the performances, establishes differences among men. The first step in this process is the distance from the feminine gender so that “being a man means ‘not being like women’” (Kimmel 273). Yet, as Kimmel maintains, this “flight from the feminine” (273), although intended to strengthen the constitution of masculinity, destabilises the masculine gender right from the beginning. By simply stating what it is not, it lacks a genuine essence and thereby becomes “tenuous and fragile” (274). Because of this distancing from the feminine, the judgement about

²⁷ Gilmore’s book *Manhood in the Making* has shown from an anthropological perspective that masculinity functions in this way across many different cultures and that the constant testing and proving of masculinity before an audience betrays its inherent instability.

successful masculinity is also only given by male peers, as some scholars argue (Schwenger 109; Buchbinder 79). This effects not only an exclusion of women from the group, but it also guarantees that the homosocial group is one that controls power relations between men. David Buchbinder writes that “women may *confirm* masculinity” but “an individual man must take his place [. . .] alongside other men, [and] it follows that his attempt to do so is both monitored and evaluated by other men, which in turn affords them considerable power over him” (79). This power is felt especially by those men whose performances in these tests is found wanting. They function as “negative examples” and are “held up scornfully to inspire conformity to the glorious ideal”, as Gilmore writes (17). It is important to note that they are not simply excluded, but in fact they are needed to uphold the overall ideology of the ideal (see also Kimmel 279-82 and Knights 5).

The idea of masculinity as the result of homosocial monitoring invites a comparison with Michel Foucault’s well-known notion of panopticism. From this perspective, the patriarchal gendered society functions like the panopticon by “keeping all males under observation in order to control their behavior to ensure that the criteria of masculinity are observed and maintained” (Buchbinder 81). A central point in this application of panopticism is that the inmates of the prison are themselves guards, so that prisoners monitor each other, which can be applied to patriarchy as well (Buchbinder 79-80). So, Buchbinder writes, “each man must perform his masculinity to the satisfaction of other men and in turn must function with other men, as the observer and judge of the gender performance of other males (81). Producing thus both products and agents of power, the panopticon creates distance among men, who constantly vie for recognition of their masculinity while fearing that their assessment is negative (Buchbinder 81). However, it ultimately guarantees the maintenance of patriarchy as a homosocial system and “reproduce[s] the current notion in the culture of what constitutes masculinity” (79, emphases removed).

Foucault’s panopticon is a powerful analogy to grasp the aspect of policing of men among each other, yet, Michael Kimmel’s concept of “homosocial enactment” can better convey the sense of fear that surrounds the homosocial sphere that also characterises the patriarchal panopticon:

We are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us,

rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval. It is other men who evaluate the performance. [. . .] Masculinity is a *homosocial* enactment. We test ourselves, perform heroic feats, take enormous risks, all because we want other men to grant us our manhood. (275, Kimmel's emphasis).

Significantly, Kimmel stresses that the fear of being seen "as feminine, as sissies" (278) is the primary force that fuels the policing, not the notion of meeting any specific masculine standards: always "fraught with danger, with the risk of failure, and with intense relentless competition" (276), homosocial enactment leaves men merely the choice between a full masculine identity and complete inadequacy.²⁸ Torn between these extremes, "masculinity seems to demand such anxious choices, existing at the threshold between fixity and annihilation, between identity and nonidentity" (Berger, Wallis and Watson 3). Homosexuality is one of those non-identities, and it is therefore fitting that Kimmel uses the term "homophobia" for the fear that the homosocial regime creates in individual men:

Homophobia is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear. Fear makes us ashamed, because the recognition of fear in ourselves is proof to ourselves that we are not as manly as we pretend [. . .] (277).

Pointing to this fear and the endless endeavours to mask it, Homi Bhabha writes of masculinity as a "prosthetic reality – a 'prefixing' of the rules of gender and sexuality, an appendix or addition that willy-nilly supplements and suspends a lack in being (57).²⁹

What Kimmel and Bhabha theorise about homosocial fear can certainly be connected to Judith Butler's thoughts on performative citation within compulsory heterosexuality. Rather than simply repeating Butler's admittedly more sophisticated ideas, the focus on fear as a motivating factor has a definite advantage. By pointing to the emotional level of doing gender, Kimmel and others are making Butler's theoretical and abstract concepts affectively comprehensible, focussing on the pride to be

²⁸ Or a choice between being "a man or a mouse", as Homi Bhabha puts it (58).

²⁹ The idea that masculinity depends on the constant fear of policing from the homosocial group has gained wide popularity and has informed various studies. See, for instance, Geertz's analysis of the Balinese cockfight, Barrett's discussion of the US navy, Lancaster's work on Latin American machismo and Leverenz's analysis of early North American capitalism.

validated as a manly man and the fear to fail to meet expectations. Yet, this emphasis on emotions and the focus on the homosocial group alone can also be misleading, as it undermines other factors that create masculine behaviour (Whitehead 218). And indeed, Kimmel's ideas seem to point again to a monolithic conception of masculinity, something that one either achieves or fails to achieve. The notion of homosocial enactment thereby helps to understand the endurance and effectiveness with which masculinity polices the members of the homosocial group. Through these affective processes traditional masculinity becomes a male identity that is inevitable and natural, or, "an obvious thing, something we can and do take for granted" (Reeser 1, cf. 1-10). This impression, however, as Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity suggests, is itself only the effect of a very specific mode of masculinity, which stands in relational negotiation with others. This different view helps to avoid the monolithic notion of masculinity and to explore an understanding of masculinities in the plural.

2.2.3 Raewyn Connell: *Relations between masculinities*

Raewyn Connell's book *Masculinities* is a milestone in the movement from a conceptualisation of masculinity as singular to an understanding of masculinities as plural and heterogeneous. For Connell, masculinity can only be adequately understood when seen as a relational structure of subject positions between men within a patriarchal society. In *Masculinities*, she acknowledges that while patriarchy suppresses women and generally elevates men, this constellation still does not give proper power to all men, and some are even explicitly left powerless. To conceptualise these differences between men, she proposes four categories into which male subject positions can be divided. These are measured in terms of their access to power and privilege and the social prestige that their doing of masculinity affords them (see *M* 76-81). Most powerful are only relatively few men in society, and they can be considered belonging to the category hegemonic masculinity. Connell maintains that while there are concrete examples like individual celebrities or business men, the concept exists primarily as an idealised image, which portrays the embodiment of the most desired and most powerful form of masculinity:

At any given time, one form of masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (*M* 77)

It is important to note that this image may change overtime and demand new ways of performing masculinity, which might have been less prestigious in the past, and *vice versa* acknowledged masculinities may also lose their status through social or technological changes (Meuser 106; cf. *M* 164-81). Whitehead thus argues that “what appears to be subordinated masculinity in one site always has the potential to be a hegemonic masculinity in another” (94).³⁰ The concept can thus be used as an adaptive focal point in different contexts, either in terms of historical periods or localised contexts, which might define their own version of hegemonic masculinity on the basis of the parameters of their cultural environment.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity also stresses the role that social institutions have in the maintenance of such gender roles and vice versa. Within a given patriarchal society, hegemonic masculinity manifests a “successful claim to authority [. . .]” (*M* 77), and it legitimises patriarchy because its image is “embedded in and sustained by (male-dominated) social institutions such as the state, education, corporations, and the family” (Whitehead 89). Rather than generically viewing men as a single privileged class, hegemonic masculinity shifts the attention to the masculine ideals within society and those institutions that maintain them. For Connell, masculinity is thus not an individual performance, but the concept is complemented by a wider emphasis on the way gender performances are realised within “power structures, production relations, emotional bonds, and the connected system of symbols” (Hochschild, “Charting” 7). These distinct areas of practice are determined by social institutions, which is an important insight because masculinity is not realised in gendered performances alone. These performances are rather enabled, sustained and enforced within institutions which are occupied by men, who inevitably view hegemonic masculinity as an ideal. It is therefore the interplay between individual and institution,

³⁰ An example might be seen in masculinity’s relationship to paid work. So the rise of the middle class in 18th-century Britain also produced new masculinities for whom earning money, through trade for instance, was a sign of prestige, whereas for the older landed elites, work was seen as ignoble. Cf. also Kimmel “The Birth of Self-Made Man”.

rather than the result of any single of the two, which defines and produces masculinity (Whitehead 89-91). The concept thereby also stresses the importance of idealised images of masculinity, which more often than not exist merely as fictions and popular images and which are not fulfilled by actual men (see *M* 212-16). Those images serve as points of reference and guarantee the efficacy of the whole gender order, especially because they are so elusive.³¹

The other three categories that Connell positions against hegemonic masculinity can be outlined very briefly. The institutions which help to maintain patriarchy are often not run by and filled with especially powerful men. Rather, these institutions recruit those who cannot meet the ideal but aspire to it, which is the majority of the male population. Connell calls this group complicit masculinities. As complicit, Connell sees those masculinities which are not part of the group that is most powerful and prestigious in society but which nevertheless benefit from the subordination of women. Filling those institutions which contribute to the formation of hegemonic masculinity, they benefit from the privileges over women that the small group of men who embody hegemonic masculinity guarantees (*M* 79). In this way, they are in “the relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project”, which enables them to earn what Connell calls the “patriarchal dividend” (*M* 79). The other two groups in Connell’s model concept are not able to benefit from this dividend, though. They do not hold power vis-à-vis hegemonic or complicit men, and they are regularly framed within the subordinated status of femininity, which then justifies their subordination within the homosocial group (*M* 78). Connell’s main example of this subject position is homosexuality, because, as she argues, in a patriarchal society heteronormativity is part of the hegemonic ideal:

Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidiousness taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity. (*M* 78)

As Others to hegemonic masculinity, embodying and signifying what hegemonic masculinity is not, these men are nevertheless an important part of the overall structure

³¹ As Whitehead points out, however, hegemonic masculinity can therefore only be grasped by looking at individual examples, while a precise general description remains difficult (93).

of hegemonic masculinity. Finally, in positing forms of “marginalized masculinities” (M 81), Connell devises a last category, which designates the group of men who are not directly subordinated because they symbolise abjectness (like gay men in heteronormative society) but who are nevertheless stereotyped and thereby pushed to the margins of power and privilege. For example, masculinities defined and stereotyped by their (minority) race, class or other factors, are often seen as marginalised: “Though the term is not ideal, I cannot improve on ‘marginalization’ to refer to the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups. Marginalization is always relative to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group” (M 80). The relational structure that Connell develops with these four categories can highlight the multiple ways in which masculine expression can exist within patriarchal societies. It does so by acknowledging both the exalted power position of hegemonic masculinity, but also the lesser authoritative position of complicit masculinity. But most importantly, the relational concept makes it also possible to acknowledge and discuss other masculinities, which do not have direct access to the highest forms of privilege and prestige, and it shows ways to understand their role in the perpetuation of this patriarchal structure. From this perspective, hegemonic masculinity is not a static but a structural model, which establishes the idealised framework within a given gender order for individual gender projects. It thereby guarantees the ultimate dominance of men over women by structuring individual performances as well as establishing competitive connections of homosocial groups and institutions (Meuser 105).

Although Connell’s concept has drawn criticism from several quarters,³² hegemonic masculinity is nevertheless a potent tool for the analysis of masculinity. Especially with a view to literary analysis it provides a useful instrument to account for the relationality of masculine positions against other masculinities and against femininities within a text. It is a welcome advancement over traditional feminist readings which assume a simple binary power structure between male and female characters and overlook the power relations among men. Whitehead writes that

³² Especially Connell’s terminology and the underlying concept of power have been criticised as unprecise. For a discussion and evaluation of Connell’s theory see Whitehead, Meuser and Horlacher (“Forschungsüberblick”).

[t]he concept of hegemonic masculinity achieves what patriarchy fails to achieve: it offers a nuanced account of the processes and relationalities of femininity-masculinity and male power while staying loyal to the notions of gender and sexual ideology, and male dominance. Hegemonic masculinity not only succeeds in signalling the multiple, contested character of male practices; it does so in the context of larger formations of gender structure. (90)

The relational structuration of masculinities in the gender order is more systematic than a simpler positing of male roles, and it also allows to conceptualised several positions in terms of recognition and prestige, which, in turn, yield access to positions of power, influence and wealth. At the same time this distinction acknowledges that not all men are powerful, as the concept of patriarchy posits, but even if powerless themselves vis-à-vis other men, they nevertheless benefit from the patriarchal dividend guaranteed by the ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Lacking manliness does thereby not automatically result in powerlessness, as attachment to the ideal still guarantees societal privileges over women. Whereas other theories thus emphasise that masculinity is something that has to be achieved, Connell implicitly argues that those achievements are eventually futile, as they follow an ideal that is inaccessible for many men. Yet, Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity is not in itself a full-fledged theory, and can be usefully complemented by Pierre Bourdieu's work on masculine domination in order to develop a more comprehensive framework for the analysis of masculine subject positions (Meuser 107-8; cf. Meuser and Scholz 212-26). Most importantly, by positing masculinity as a structuring principle for social practice, Bourdieu contributes a deeper understanding of the ways that institutions shape masculinity and are shaped by it.

2.2.4 Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus and masculine domination

Pierre Bourdieu's contribution to gender studies and research on masculinity is presented in his short book *Masculine Domination*, in which he follows the deceptively simple question which mechanisms of social practice make male domination of women both possible and so difficult to grasp (*MD* 1-2). The study is based on insights taken from his early ethnographic work in Kabyle society, and these insights are then

transferred to Western patriarchal societies in a move of transposition which, he hopes, may help to begin an “[a]namnesis of the hidden constants”, of what remains invisible (*MD* 54). There is no central theory that Bourdieu uses or develops in this process, but he makes use of a number of concepts which he has developed in other publications over the years, and it is these concepts that need to be elaborated on because they provide a very useful set of tools for the analysis of masculinity. The concepts in question are *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, and *symbolic violence*.

Centrally, Bourdieu’s thought over the years has been occupied with social practice and the conditions under which it takes place. To understand this and how it affects the construction of masculinity, the first concept we need to address is that of the social field. Using this spatial metaphor, Bourdieu theorises social action as taking place in “social space”, which is furthermore subdivided into several “fields” in which (inter)action occurs (Thomson 65).³³ Those fields are centred on specific practices and possibilities of action. The field provides rules, outspoken or implicit, which declare certain behaviour or action as appropriate for the field (Thomson 66-67). Thus, in the field of education, settings and procedures of learning and assessment regulate how an actor, understood as an individual who performs a social action, has to behave in order to “fit in” and be successful. There are numerous fields, connected to specific settings and specific practices, like the example of education mentioned before (Thomson 66). Although Bourdieu does not use field in this context, one could argue for the existence of a field of gender and sex as well. This field determines how to act as a man and as a woman in order to pass as a man or woman, because indeterminacy or not passing equal, as Butler also notes is not an option and results in abjection (*GT* 142; cf. Buchbinder 55-56). The rules and requirements of the field are in no field less clear and unspoken than in that of gender and sex, because what is seen as manly may change diachronically (cf. Reeser 83-84), and because the several fields in which each individual is situated mutually influence each other, which can lead to tensions or to changes (Thomson 68-9).

³³ This condensed elaboration of the concept of social fields is based on Thomson’s discussion of the concept (65-80).

The second concept that needs to be elaborated is the several kinds of capital which the actors can gain or lose in the respective fields.³⁴ Bourdieu distinguishes broadly between two types of capital: economic and symbolic capital, which can be subdivided into the more finely grained differences economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital.³⁵ In the context of gender, Bourdieu theorises conflicts over capital as part of what he refers to as the serious games of male domination (*MD* 75-76). Writing about honour, nobility and violence, Bourdieu posits that “investment in social games (*illusio*), which makes a man a real man [. . .] is the undisputed principle of all duties towards oneself [. . .]” (*MD* 48). Masculinity understood thus is a competitive performance, which is rewarded by confirming masculinity itself,³⁶ and it can be seen as a form of symbolic capital, too, which enables the acquisition of other (social, cultural, economic) capitals within patriarchy. These games are ambivalent, however, as they generate the need to dominate other men in order to survive, while at the same time creating a solidary community between men, which is the ground for the domination of women (see Meuser and Scholz 220). These games function as “structural drills/practices of structure” (222),³⁷ which serve to perpetuate male domination and – although risky, tiresome, potentially demeaning – men are conditioned to “love” the rules and restrictions of these games which stabilises the whole patriarchal structure (222). Capital is thus a central term for the application of Bourdieu’s thought to gender, as it can be viewed as both the prize and motivation of social competitive games among men.

Although the term habitus is not given a central place in *Masculine Domination* (cf. Meuser 114), this concept nevertheless structures his thoughts on how masculinity affects the way we perceive the world from a sexed and gendered perspective. For Bourdieu, habitus is a set of attitudes, inclinations and unwritten rules comprising a

³⁴ For a more detailed discussion, see Moore “Capital”.

³⁵ These distinctions are rather methodological. Eventually every form of symbolical capital can be connected, if not reduced, to economic capital (Moore 99). As an example, an individual born into a wealthy family is more likely to gain a university degree and thus acquire social capital, while the university degree itself can give access to a well-paid job and thus produce economic capital, etc. See Meuser for a critical commentary of Connell’s and Bourdieu’s theories and a proposal for a synthesis of both (121-34).

³⁶ Cf. Gilmore’s anthropological argument in *Manhood in the Making*: “real manhood is [. . .] a precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds”; it constitutes “a critical threshold that boys must pass through testing” (11).

³⁷ The German term Meuser and Scholz use is “Strukturübung”.

highly personal framework within which our social action is made possible (cf. Meuser 112-13). The way we act in social space is determined in this way by the habitus which we have acquired and which interacts also with our position in a given field (Maton 50). As Karl Maton writes, habitus is “a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices” (50), and it thereby determines “how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others” (51). It is a matrix that determines which actions and thoughts are possible and which are not. Regarding masculinity, the concept promises theoretical access to an understanding of “the way sexual binarism is constituted as a social fact” and “how ‘being a man’ is reproduced in distinct social practice” (Meuser 112). Ultimately, habitus is a way of seeing, or rather determining and limiting, what we can see and what remains invisible for us, especially in terms of social practice: “which of these choices are visible to us as which we do not see as possible is the result of our past journey, for our experiences have helped shaped our vision” (Maton 51). As Michael Meuser furthermore states, habitus produces within our perception of reality a gendered view of the social world and of the body, enabling us to act adequately in such a gendered world (114). Especially the body in its sexed form, which is structured around the binary pair male/female, is perceived through a vision that itself is shaped by gendered habitus (*MD* 14). Since habitus structures and predetermines the way we perceive social interactions, the resulting inequality of the sexes (understood as masculine domination) is a form of what Bourdieu calls “symbolic violence”:

The precedence universally accorded to men is affirmed in the objectivity of the social structures and the productive or reproductive activities, based on a sexual division of the labour of biological and social production and reproduction which gives the better part to men, and also in the schemes immanent in everyone’s habitus. These schemes, shaped by similar conditions, and therefore objectively harmonized, function as matrices of the perceptions, thoughts and actions of all members of the society – historical transcendentals which, being shared by all, impose themselves on each agent as transcendent. As a consequence, the androcentric representation of biological reproduction and social reproduction is invested with the objectivity of a common sense, a practical, doxic consensus on the sense of practices. (*MD* 33)

Masculine domination, according to Bourdieu, is a direct result of habitus which, whether we want it or not, shapes the way we perceive the world.

In Bourdieu's thinking, social practice for men is determined by the male habitus, which governs the way in which men engage in performances of masculinity in the social sphere. Similar to Michael Kimmel, Bourdieu stresses that "Like honour [. . .] manliness must be validated by other men, in its reality as actual or potential violence, and certified by recognition of membership of the group of 'real men'" (MD 52). He uses the metaphor of the serious game to illustrate the paradoxical nature of gender performances, which are, on the one hand, frequently quite trivial, but, on the other hand, are equally loaded with meaning because they are performed to prove one's masculinity. He writes that "the whole social order [. . .] lays the obligation [on men] to acquire the capacity and propensity, constitutive of the sense of honour, to take seriously all the games thus constituted as serious" (MD 47). The value of one's masculinity is therefore determined by the fervour with which a man engages in the social games of gender:

This primordial investment in the social games (*illusio*), which makes a man a real man – the sense of honour, virility, 'manliness' [...] – is the undisputed principle of all the duties towards oneself, the motor or motive of all that a man 'owes to himself', in other words what he must do in order to live up, in his own eyes, to a certain idea of manhood. (MD 48)

It helps to understand engagement with the serious games of masculinity by re-orienting this metaphor and seeing habitus itself as a rule-based game like football (Thomson 66-67). In this new metaphor, Bourdieu's *games* in the social sphere are the rules, techniques and tactics of the football game. Habitus, as a game, determines the players' actions but also the physical constitution of the field determines the way the game is to be played. As David Buchbinder writes: "Young males must learn the 'rules' of the game of masculinity, and must also understand their positions in that game, together with the conditions under which it is to be played, and what sorts of advantages and penalties might be involved" (155). Masculinity is thereby acquired through learning the rules of the game as well as the positions of each player, the techniques and tactics, etc. in order to compete for "phallic viability within the patriarchal order" (Buchbinder 156). That this goal is rarely achieved completely, just like hegemonic masculinity is only embodied by few, does not distract men from playing the game and abiding by its rules (Meuser 126-27). In fact, playing the game is both constitutive of masculinity and challenging it at the same time. While women's social games are deemed trivial

and not able to gain honour, Bourdieu writes that men are “socially instituted and instructed in such a way that they let themselves be caught up, like children, in all the games that are socially assigned to them, of which the form par excellence is war” (MD 75). Men are thus drawn to situations which prove their masculinity, but which are equally challenging, if not even dangerous to their lives, with war being the most extreme example. The division between access to these games and the possibility to gain honour through them is therefore a “double-edged privilege”, as Bourdieu argues: “it is because men are trained to recognize social games in which the stake is some form of domination and are designated very early, in particular by the rites of institution, as dominant, and thereby endowed with the *libido dominandi*, that they have the double-edged privilege of indulging in the games of domination” (MD 75).

Despite the ambivalence of habitus, being proficient in these games offers security and a sense of feeling at home within a specific field (Meuser 132-33; Buchbinder 156). More graphic than the football metaphor, the image of the fish in the sea illustrates this feeling at home best. The fish moves of course in water, which sustains it and enables it to move and act according to its skills and characteristics (Maton 59). The fish possesses fins and gills and other physical attributes which enable it to move freely in this specific field, the water. In other words, the field matches its skills and dispositions. But significantly, the fish is “unaware of the supporting, life affirming water” (Maton 59). In the social field, actors similarly do not realise the match between field and habitus which benefits them. They unconsciously “share the *doxa* of the field, the assumptions that ‘go without saying’ and which determine the limits of the doable and the unthinkable” (Maton 58). In contrast, if for some reason an agent’s habitus does not match their field, “the mechanisms and processes of the interacting elements of field, capital, and habitus become visible and are consequently denaturalized”, which eventually “intensifies the sense of marginalization felt by those subjects” (Buchbinder 156). With regard to masculinity, this means that men who have developed the ideal habitus fully accept and thrive on the precarious games they are compelled to play to achieve honour. The patriarchal domination of women and the worldview in which this is expressed, is the natural and normal state of how they perceive the world. Men who, like Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, do not fit into the stereotypically male world of domination of women perceive the machismo of other men

as unnatural. Yet, at the same time they become marginalised by those others because, like fish on land, they find themselves in the “wrong” field and will therefore not be able to thrive on behalf of this mismatch. Gendered habitus therefore brings into effect the perception of sexual difference within the social field by allocating to subjects a position within the gender order and thus creating patriarchal dominance as well as differences between men.

With this set of theories we have compiled a number of useful tools with which masculinity can be discussed from different angles. While heterogeneous and beginning from different premises and with different goals in mind, all four approaches offer methods and ways of reading and analysing masculinity. In order to apply them in a reading of masculinity as a gendered life-narrative, the next chapter will develop the notion of masculinity as narrative practice and clarify which analytical approaches are useful to read gender in narrative texts.

Chapter 3

Masculinity and/ as narrative

The previous chapter gave a brief introduction to critical Masculinity Studies and then discussed various paradigms and concepts of the study of masculinities. The current chapter will propose an analytical framework which integrates the concepts like gender performativity, hegemonic masculinity and masculine habitus into a reading of masculinity in narrative fiction. Underlying this framework is the assumption that masculinity itself can be viewed as a narrative system. Masculinity is in this process seen an ideological aspect of one's personal identity, which is conceived of as a narrated life-story that is often taking recourse to images of masculinity portrayed in literature and other cultural artefacts. Finally, I will suggest that feminist narratology can be a useful complement to the cultural studies theories outlined in the last chapter. A feminist, or gendered, narratology sets out to integrate these concepts for the analysis on the story level of the narrative. It also shows, however, that the discourse level, that is the narrative structures themselves, has an investment in gender, too, and should therefore be analysed critically as well. My central claim for the study is therefore that reading masculinity in fiction means to analyse the representation of the characters' life-stories in the text, as well as to deconstruct the masculinity which informs the act of narration and the narrative story-logic itself. Together, these two levels manifest the what I call the fabric of manliness Joyce's texts.

3.1 Functions of narrative

The term *narrative* has enjoyed a considerable popularity in public discourse over the last two decades, and given the almost inflationary use of the term as a concept, it is near impossible to provide a definition which most scholars or theorists will agree on

(Prince, "Revisiting" 44-45). For the application of narrative to the study of masculinity it is therefore more fruitful to consider the pragmatic functions that have been attributed to narrative. A closer look at these will lay the basis for the following attempt at connecting gender with narrative.

In the following, I will very briefly outline the arguments for what have been identified as three major functions of narrative: narrative as a cognitive tool, narrative as a form of creating personal identity and narrative as a manifestation and carrier of ideology. The ubiquity of narrative in our lives our constant desire for more stories (Miller 66-7) can be addressed by considering narrative as a subconscious cognitive tool that human beings use to make sense of the world. "While I think the term has been trivialized through overuse", writes Peter Brooks, "I believe that overuse responds to a recognition that narrative is one of the principal ways we organize our experience of the world – part of our cognitive tool kit that was long neglected by psychologists and philosophers" (qtd. in Ryan, "Toward" 22). From this perspective, "private storytelling" is an essential aspect of human interaction and the way we conceptualise experiences with our world (Ryan, "Toward" 28). Cognitive narratologist Mark Turner, one of the most prominent advocates of this view of narrative, puts it thus: "Narrative imaging – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought [. . .]. It is a literary capacity indispensable to human cognition generally" (4-5). This wide-ranging claim, which basically defines narrative as the basis of our cognitive being, is more persuasive when broken down into smaller units. "For Turner," Marie-Laure Ryan comments, "noticing objects in our perceptual environment amounts to constructing embryonic stories about them" ("Toward" 28). In a similar vein, Jerome Bruner sees human cognition as based on the two modes of storytelling and argumentation. While both are separate as methods of "ordering experience" and "constructing reality" (*Actual Minds* 11), Bruner describes both as sense-making tools, which employ a variety of shared cognitive processes such as "comparison, distinction, deduction, induction, sequencing (whether events or ideas), and seeking explanation through causal relations" (Ryan, "Toward" 27). These attempts to declare narrative the master tool of perception and cognition have certainly come under justified criticism (see Strawson), but when considering more concrete instances, narrative-like processes can indeed be found in many examples of mundane sense-making. Bruner, for example,

writes that “we organize our experience and memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on” (“Narrative Construction” 4). It suffices to recognise that “embryonic” or micro-narratives are part of at least some of our ways of orienting ourselves, especially when it comes to referring to our own biography, expressing our identity and in our endeavours to “claim or negotiate group membership [. . .]” through “life stories” (Linde 3).

A second function of narrative therefore concerns the construction of personal identity. Outlining the role of narrative in the construction of life stories, Monika Fludernik writes that in conversational narratives, we do not simply *refer* to an identity. Rather, a “natural narrative *creates* and *elaborates* an image of the self which the narrator wants others to *recognize* as his or her character or personhood” (260, my emphases). With the goal of gaining social recognition, this form of subjective self-constitution employs narrative as a shared cognitive mode of perception. As Fludernik further adds, in this process the stake for the individual is a self-image that is tied to one’s actions: “images of one’s self that one tries to live up to in one’s behaviour [. . .] are fictions/fantasies that the narrator is at pains to uphold narratively, self-images to emulate and realize” (261). To retain this connection between image and action, the self-narrative aims at coherence and is therefore in principle never-ending: one’s identity is never completed but exists only in the act of constant telling of stories about oneself to one’s social environment (Fludernik 261). Ultimately, this form of narrative identity constitution aims at a sense of coherence for ourselves but also for others, a process which has to be maintained “continuously”:

We do not merely tell stories about our recent experience in which we try to make ourselves look good; we also narrative and retell our lives to ourselves. In order to create continuity between past and present, in order to lend meaning to the experiences that we have undergone, we construct a story of our life. (Fludernik 262)³⁸

Because this “story of our life” is for our own understanding of ourselves but also to gain recognition as social subjects through others, it “is part of a general performative identity which we create inside our social roles [. . .]” (Fludernik 261): “natural

³⁸ Cf. Judith Butler’s assertion that “woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end” (GT 43).

narrative creates and elaborates an image of the self which the narrator wants others to recognize as his or her character or personhood” (Fludernik 260). It goes without saying that we thereby try to establish a certain amount of control over the images we embody, so that we can present more positive image to ourself and others and hide undesirable aspects of our character and behaviour (Fludernik 261). Identity is here a narrative performance in the social sphere, which employs basic tools of our human cognition.³⁹

The notion that identity is narrated through a communicative process which produces desirable images of the self needs to be further discussed in the context of ideology. Ideology is thereby the third function of narrative, which I will outline as a preliminary discussion of my proposal of masculinity as a narrative construction. Following Marx, Althusser and Gramsci, the narratologists Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck define ideology in this context “as a body of norms and ideas that appear natural as a result of their continuous and mostly tacit promotion by the dominant forces in society” (217). From this perspective, stories are instrumental in naturalising norms and ideas, thereby helping to create the seemingly innocent notion of the *normal*. As “the main form of cultural production” many stories and plots that circulated in mainstream culture “embody normality and establish or maintain what Gramsci termed *hegemony* – that is, the absolute and unquestioned dominance of a particular view or group” (218). As consumers of these narratives, we thereby accept the existing power structures and the norms, rules, and ideas that they verbalise and which help to retain the societal status quo. If narratives help to create our sense of the normal, of what is supposed to be taken as common sense in the Bourdieusian sense of a habitus, then an approach to masculinity and patriarchal structures from a narratological perspective is an especially powerful tool. As the notion of common sense is an effective means to naturalise genders and produce images, narratives shape the way we equally perceive and perform gender through the acting out the gendered myths that heteronormative culture offers us. Narratives therefore are, in Teresa de Lauretis’s sense, “technologies of gender” (19).

³⁹ For a comprehensive overview of the theories and concepts focusing on narrative and identity, see Polkinghorne.

Regarding the way fictional narratives function as normalising instruments of ideology, Herman and Vervaeck furthermore point out that we need to become aware of the importance of distinguishing between the concept of story logic as opposed to real world logic. With reference to Gerard Genette's notion, the ideological base of narratives can be conceptualised in terms of their relationship to "verisimilitude". According to Genette, verisimilitude is connected to how signs work within a text: as arbitrary signs, they constitute story elements "derive their meaning from the links with the other elements, and not from a connection with the logic of the real world – one that goes without saying" (218). Verisimilar narratives wilfully conflate their own artificial "arbitrary literary logic" as one that is valid in our own world, that is, as "real-world logic" (218). The result is a naturalisation of the values and norms of the artificial story world because readers accept the artificial logic. "The story logic is accepted as common-sensical logic and vice versa. This is the essence of the naturalization process central to ideology if the latter is regarded as the constant transformation of artificial constructs into natural givens" (218). An ideologically sensitive narratology therefore has the task to query and analyse the effects in the narrative structures themselves, and not just in the content of the stories.⁴⁰ These structures are especially important in the discussion of gender in literary texts, as we need to become aware of the ways through which arbitrary signs create an ideological story logic that normalises and naturalises gender.

3.2 Masculinity as a narrative practice

A look at the previously discussed concepts developed to approach masculinity shows that many of them employ terminology reminiscent of either literary figures and tropes or concepts used in the analysis of literary texts. For instance, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, understood as shaping the individual's view on the social world, can be related to narrative focalisation, as a way of seeing the world from a specific and

⁴⁰ This is a long way from the classical structuralist view on ideology as formulated in Rimmon-Kenan (82-84; 138-40).

therefore possibly ideological perspective.⁴¹ Another set of terms, Judith Butler's notion of performativity and performance, already uses literary and linguistic terminology in the first place, and these concepts centrally depend on the influential role that language has in the constitution of the subject. On the surface, these are only similarities and overlaps, but at least they indicate a point of connection between masculinity and narrative. These examples, therefore, justify a further probing of the nature of the relationship between the two areas, a relationship which, as the following sections will show, is close but also complex. The discussion of the approach to masculinity which claims that masculinity is a form of storytelling and a structure using narrative to create the surface of coherence was omitted from the preceding chapter. The reason why this concept, which grounds my own reading of masculinities in Joyce, is moved to the current chapter is that the approach touches upon questions concerning the connection between gender identity and literature. This connection has implications for the discussion of the status of masculinity in fiction and the more concrete question how gender affects narrative structure. In order to address these two aspects, which are necessary for the discussion of Joyce's masculinities, we first need the grounding concept of masculinity as narrative. But what does it actually mean that masculinity is constituted through narrative?

As the previous discussion of the functions of narrative has shown, personal identity is often conceived of as a life story that the subject narrates to project a desirable image of him or herself. Ethnographical research has similarly argued that masculinity is often a rite of passage, which entails a form of emplotment.⁴² David Gilmore for instance has shown that many cultures symbolically mark and celebrate the transition from boyhood to adult manhood as passage which is encapsulated in a story (220-24), and ethnographer Michael Herzfeld, who researched the performances of manhood on Crete, points to the ways in which "masculinity is enacted in the process of narrating a story" (Danahay 290), a process that he describes in his study as a "poetics of manhood" (see Herzfeld 3-50). As outlined in the previous discussion about

⁴¹ Cf. Bourdieu's reading of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*, in which he perceptively draws on literary point of view to illustrate his own theoretical points (MD 69-80).

⁴² The term derives from Hayden White's theory of metahistory and can be defined as "the transformation of a set of historical events (a chronicle) into a sequence endowed with the structure of the plot types of myths or literary genres" (White 137).

homosocial enactment, masculinity is often perceived as a test. This test will be narrated as the memory of a rite of passage, which is then potentially followed by many more narrative situations in which masculinity is proven and approved by others. From a literary perspective, critic Walter Erhart argues that the culturally ubiquitous rites of initiation into masculinity in literature and culture cast men into character roles within larger narrative units. For him, “masculinity consists in a passage through many places, a passage through which masculinity is constituted by transgressing boundaries and by initiations”, and he concludes that “Men appropriate masculinity by performing and being forced to perform a story, by performatively enacting a story” (Erhart 204).⁴³ It should be noted that these suggestions already employ what can be deemed mini-narratives in themselves. The passing of a test, a challenge that needs to be overcome, the willed transition from one state to another, all these images imply action and character and they can thereby be deemed to express a narrative quality.

Gendered emplotment of this kind also has a distinctly social quality. The masculine enactment is the result of the fact that any traditional culture demands from the subject a clear and unambiguous identification with one of two genders. Stephen Whitehead writes that

[i]n speaking of men and narrating my self as man, an attempt is being made to find a self-referential place that locates ‘me’ in time (Ricoeur 1980) and in so doing purports to form, simultaneously, a closure between and connection with my self and the rest of the social world. (147)

To exist in the social world as a recognised subject then means that the subject embeds itself in stories and narratives to situate itself and make itself intelligible. Following the premise that in the social world the subjectivity results from communicative practices (Knights 14), the gendered self takes recourse in this process to plots and events as well as character roles and constellations, such as hero and foe. The goal of this intertextual borrowing is ontological security within a social world which demands binary gender as a mandatory factor of subjectivity. For Ben Knights, narrative, seen as social

⁴³ Note that the German original does not clearly distinguish between the notions of performance and performativity: “Wie es die *rites de passage* zeigen, besteht Männlichkeit aus einer Wegstrecke, die durch viele Orte hindurchführt, einer Passage, durch die sich Männlichkeit in Form von Grenzüberschreitungen und Initiationen konstituiert. Männer eignen sich Männlichkeit an, indem sie *eine Geschichte darstellen*, indem sie in eine Geschichte gezwungen werden, indem sie *performativ eine Geschichte vollziehen*” (Erhart 204, my emphasis).

exchange, “establishes an environment for events, it names heroes and villains, typifies the modes of personality appropriate to the different actors in the tale, and designates certain kinds of actions, responsibilities and outcomes” (16). The communicative process from which the self emerges is, therefore, taking into account the reciprocal relationship between self and environment through narrative:

Subjects decipher the world, social situations, themselves, as well as texts in the narrow sense. Simultaneously these interpreting individuals, in making sense of the material which surrounds them, write plots for themselves to figure in, and script first themselves and then others as characters in the scenario. However, it must not be forgotten that these acts of self-script-writing necessarily involve using the language of others and that the scenarios are meant to be seen, transcoded by others. The construction of a subject may well be understood as an aesthetic act. (Still and Worton, qtd. in Knights 16)

From an analytical point of view, the term “aesthetic act” is both misleading and fitting at the same time. While it certainly captures the narrative qualities of gendered emplotment, it unduly emphasises the authority of the subject in these constructions, suggesting that one is the god-like author of one’s own life story. In reality, the narratives that constitute the subject’s selfhood are much more mundane, such as memories and anecdotes, and the subject is not always in control of them either. What is more, the narrated subject certainly plays major or minor roles in the plots of other subjects, too, which might or might not be commensurate with the stories the “I” tells about itself (Fludernik 261). The storytelling of subjectivity must therefore be seen as potentially competitive and affectively charged, which connects this view of masculinity to Michael Kimmel’s notion of masculinity as homophobia, suggesting that fear is the primary factor in the construction of masculinity, as outlined earlier.

While the description of the narrative construction of masculine subjectivity as “aesthetic act” is thus certainly problematic, it cannot be denied that other aesthetic productions play a major role in this self-plotment. The reception and consumption of literary or historical narratives has a central role in the personal construction of masculinity. The individual construction of masculinity involves an engagement with images of masculinity in the widest sense (including myths and literary fictions), which are traded among men and which negotiate between their individual gendered performances and official normative discourses of what masculinity is supposed to be

(Erhart 203).⁴⁴ For Walter Erhart, the literary text manifests a “reservoir of gendered narratives and imaginations” (231),⁴⁵ and Peter Schwenger further adds that the literary text as a gender archive “contains insights which, though unsystematized, are still valid; it provides words for perceptions which, until named, may not even be recognized” (101). Finally, Stefan Horlacher argues that “If it is true that gender is written ‘rhetorically’ then the literary text is a privileged space where this rhetorical writing is rendered readable [. . .]” (“Charting” 15). The literary text is therefore not influential in the construction of masculinity. Literary fiction is equally a space in which the stylistic construction of masculinity (and gender more generally) can be analysed. From this perspective, the literary text has a central role for the “creation, elaboration, and critical negotiation of differing concepts of masculinity relevant for the Lebenswelt, as well as for the ‘cultural imaginary’ and art in general [. . .]” (“Charting” 13, see also Erhart 179). It is useful avoid restricting the notion of this “cultural imaginary” to full-fledged narratives in the narrow sense of the word. For Erhart masculine self-fashioning through narrative involves “imaginary models”, which involve “metaphors, images and narratives” (203).⁴⁶ Since, as we have seen, masculinity is often constructed around passing the tests of manliness and proving oneself to the homosocial group, it is legitimate to think of images of masculinity as implicitly referring to such actions. Thus, even static and mute visual images can usually be said to *imply* narratives or at least actions underlying them (Abbott 6-11).⁴⁷ So, cultural artefacts of either proper narrative or visual nature can arguably be seen as representing narrative qualities that tie in with the notion of what Kimmel call “homosocial enactment”, and even with Butler’s notion of gender as performative stylisation.

⁴⁴ “Bei der Herstellung von Männlichkeit und von männlichen Identitäten, die sich zumeist über Nachahmung, über Performanz und Inszenierung vollzieht, sind dementsprechend imaginäre Leitbilder im Spiel – Modelle, Bilder, Erzählungen, die gleichsam zwischen den einzelnen Männern und den offiziellen Bildern der Männlichkeit zirkulieren und vermitteln” (Erhart 203).

⁴⁵ “ein Reservoir an geschlechtlich codierten Erzählungen und Imaginationen, die heute als konstruierte Geschlechtergeschichten sichtbar [. . .] sind” (Erhart 231).

⁴⁶ “Es sind solche Figuren des Imaginären, die mittels Metaphern, Bildern und Erzählungen die Verbindungslinien zwischen den Leitbildern und der empirisch erforschbaren Alltagsgeschichte herstellen und zugleich auch die Psychodramen der Männlichkeit mit ihren wechselnden historischen Formen verknüpfen” (Erhart 203).

⁴⁷ A famous example is the painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* by Jacques-Louis David (1801), which strongly idealises the masculine valour of the French military genius in action.

The “imaginary models” which inform the masculine self-stylisation are especially important in gender socialisation, and “first lessons about masculinity and femininity are conveyed through representations, which model for us the desired goals and limits of gender identification” (Savran and Adams 153). In order to reify gender and sex, these representations must be reiterated, however, as Knights suggests, when he writes that

masculine identities and (stereo)typically male ways of being and acting are constantly being reinforced and re-enacted through social practices of communication among which narratives both oral and written, in speech, in films and on paper, figure prominently. (17)

Indeed, scholars of masculinity in popular culture, for instance, have stressed that masculinity always needs these fictionalisations and the constant reference to popular myths and stories because masculinity’s inherent status is essentially elusive and always shifting (Easthope 166-68). As a result of this constant reiteration, gender is naturalised through the narratives which represent masculinity and femininity, especially as they become part of our consciousness as “modes of narrativity”, which influence the way we perceive gender (Erhart 216; see also Adams and Savran 153). To state, then, that gender can be seen as a “fictional construction” (Murphy 1), means nothing less than taking seriously the symbolic power of this mode of representation and the way in which literary and other texts make sexual difference graspable (cf. Bogdal 66).

This provocative formulation does not so much claim a radical constructivism, but it suggests the social efficacy of literature in the construction of a gendered self and “in reinforcing the assumptions about masculinity and, at times, helping to establish the norm of manhood” (Murphy 1). The function of art in connection with popular and dominant images and “Myths of masculinity” (Murphy 1) can, however, be found to be twofold: literary texts both utilise images and “dominant cultural assumptions about masculinity” while simultaneously questioning them and laying bare “the untenability of those assumptions” (Murphy 6). This double function of naturalising and critiquing gender is possible, finally, because those images are never strictly overwhelming but still leave agency to the individual (cf. Knights 17). Rather, their appropriation and potential dislocation is part of the individual process of formation that each individual has to undergo on his or her own terms (cf. King and Bosse 9). In any

case, the approach to view masculinity as a narrative which refers to other narratives is especially useful because it avoids reducing masculinity to images of virility or “male fantasies” alone (Erhart 204), and it can accommodate how individual men or male characters in fiction negotiate their gender performance as a narrative with the culturally prevalent normative images of masculinity (cf. Erhart 203-04).

3.3 Narratology and gender

Under the premise that masculinity is at least partly a narrative construction, we should consider the discipline of narratology as a viable approach for a critical analysis of these constructions. While classical structuralist narratology had assumed the universality of narrative form, so-called contextual and cultural narratologies have argued that narrative structures are far from neutral and unideological. They see narratives not as transhistorical and culturally neutral but argue that narrative structures are shaped by both by cultural parameters like gender or race and also by the historical contexts in which they are produced and received (V. Nünning 89).⁴⁸ Cultural narratology addresses the “reductive” formalist bias of structuralist narratology, and “posits a reciprocal relation between culture and narrative, and therefore connects the analysis of texts to that of cultures” (V. Nünning 89). Ultimately, such an approach becomes especially compelling if the analysis takes into account the ideological undercurrent of the concept of narrative as such, as discussed earlier. The shift thereby necessitated the realisation that narrative forms are “carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works” (V. Nünning 84). As a result of this argument, a narrative’s context, and the ideologies and inherent hierarchies that come along with it, can no longer be ignored:

Since narrative forms are shaped by cultural ways of sense-making, and since cultural norms as well as hierarchies of values are expressed in as well as formed by the narratives which at the same time serve to popularise them, it is necessary to relate the exploration of texts to that of their contexts. (V. Nünning 89)

⁴⁸ See Ansgar Nünning’s “Narratology or Narratologies” for an informative survey of this field.

One such context is certainly that of gender formation as part of individual subjectivity. And of course, there is no shortage of concepts and theories of how to conceptualise masculinity as a cultural formation, as my previous discussion has indicated. It is therefore important to emphasise that cultural narratology is not determined to replace such cultural theories but to align itself to them. Vera Nünning clarifies this by writing that cultural narratology is intended to establish connections and conceptual transfers between “narrative theory” and the well-established “key cultural concepts” (89), such as performativity or hegemonic masculinity.

The theoretical groundwork for the analysis of masculinity as a cultural context has been laid out by scholars working in the field of feminist narratology. Despite having lost “some of its exoticism” (Allrath 389), its current status within the field of narrative theory and beyond is uncertain: as Susan Lanser and Robyn Warhol argue in a recent volume, feminist narratology is still situated at the margins of narratological study rather than a fully acknowledged branch, and at the same time its feminist modifications of narratological terminology are not often received in traditional literary criticism concerned with gender and sexuality because even that kind of critical formalism seems suspicious (2; cf. Allrath 389-90). This status may partly result from the fact that feminist narratology is rather an “umbrella term” for a heterogeneous set of approaches than “a unified ‘school’ or ‘discipline’” (Page 189), and, furthermore, not all studies in this field have used the same terminology regarding gender, sex and sexuality (Page 190-91; Allrath 392-93). What studies conducted under the label feminist narratology do have in common, though, is that they address “the many different ways in which gender-related aspects of narratives and the models used to analyze them may be interrogated from a feminist point of view” (Page 189). This focus makes the approach relevant as well for an inquiry into the interrelationship between masculinity as a cultural concept and narrative (cf. Allrath and Gymnich, “Feministische Narratologie” 36).⁴⁹

Feminist narratology successfully combines the central insight of gender studies, that gender is by and large a cultural construction, with the systematic study of

⁴⁹ The following account is selective and adapted to my purposes. For comprehensive surveys of feminist/gendered narratology see Allrath, Allrath and Gymnich, Warhol, and Page. An assessment of the current status of feminist narratology is provided by Lanser and Warhol.

narrative structures.⁵⁰ Studies following this combination hold the position that “the telling as well as the analysis of narratives are human activities – activities that necessarily entail gendered assumptions and practices” (Page 189). In consequence, not only the study of actual texts is of interest for a feminist narratology but equally the basic tenets of structuralist narrative theory itself, which has thereby come under the suspicion of having been androcentric all along (Page 191). In this way, the approach combines a hermeneutic level that is interested in “clarifying the interpretation of narrative texts, especially where that interpretation is concerned with gender-related matters”, and a theoretical one which is “reflecting on and in some cases reformulating, narrative theory itself” (Page 191). After all, feminist narratology’s great achievement lies in showing that that “there is no aspect of narrative that can be conceived of as gender-neutral [. . .]” (Allrath and Gymnich, “Gender Studies” 194).

Creating an awareness of the interdependence of structure and gender is the most important aspect of feminist narratology for my approach. This direction helpfully puts the focus of analysis on both levels of narrative transmission, story *and* discourse, that is, the content of the narrative and the way in which this content is narrated. This is an aspect of literary analysis that has often been strongly neglected in more traditional gender criticism. Earlier feminist literary criticism had almost exclusively focused on the story level to analyse characters, settings and plots and saw itself as distinctly anti-formalist, because formalism was perceived as apolitical (Warhol “Guilty Cravings” 345; Allrath 389-90). In contrast, feminist narratology complements the study of these elements on the story level by also paying attention to aspects of discourse, that is to the study of narrators, focalisations, consciousness depictions, unreliability and time (Allrath 390-91). This is of course not to say that traditional feminist literary criticism was and is completely naïve with regard to the role of narrative transmission. The discussion of narrative structures tends to be implicit, though, and without the necessary theoretical rigour and precise terminology.⁵¹ For feminist

⁵⁰ Since the late 1990s the term “gendered narratology” has begun to replace “feminist narratology” (Allrath and Gymnich, “Gender Studies” 197).

⁵¹ At the beginning, both structuralist narratologists and feminist literary critics both attacked feminist narratology for its attempt to build bridges between the two. Narratologists feared that “the structural analysis of narrative” could become “a handmaiden to interpretation” (Herman, “Genealogy” 30) while feminists were “suspicious of narratology’s formalist priorities and binary frames”

narratologists, this discussion is of equally relevant because “gender is important not only for the ‘what’ but also for the ‘how’ of narration” (Allrath and Gymnich, “Gender Studies” 197). With such a comprehensive view of the narrative text, feminist narratologists are also aware that gender and narrative are mutually affecting sign structures. In this way, for instance, Lanser and Warhol’s recent volume *Narrative Theory Unbound* sets out to explore “the many ways in which narrative represents, structures, and constitutes gender and sexuality, as well as the ways these concepts inflect narrative itself” (3).

This approach of analysing the relationship between gender and narrative manifests the innovative potential of feminist (or gendered) narratology, which makes it a useful ground for my reading of James Joyce’s texts. The aim is to query how literary form is “not just representing but producing and reproducing the affective patterns associated with femininity and masculinity in this culture” (Warhol, “Guilty Cravings” 354). This approach thereby permits a connection between cultural studies with form-oriented narratology. The result of such a liaison is a clearer and more comprehensive analysis of how cultural phenomena employ narrative-like features and, vice versa, how cultural factors are always already ingrained in the production and reception of narratives. The structuralist toolbox for the study of Joyce’s narrative therefore requires being used with resistance to its universalising claims, because only through such a feminist narratological scrutiny can the equally universalising, and unmarked, structure of masculinity be exposed within the narrative structures which form and represent it.

I will in the following not propose a new critical masculinities narratology, but I will explain how a reading that is informed by both the concepts of Masculinity Studies and the approach of feminist, or gendered, narratology might work.⁵² The main objectives of this approach still mirror those of critical Masculinity Studies, namely to make masculinity visible as a gendered category affecting narrative (Falk 95), and to enable to comprehend how the various cultural factors like “race, class,

(Lanser and Warhol 2). See Allrath for a summary of the contemporary polemical debate between Nelly Diengott and Susan Lanser (395-96).

⁵² For a critical assessment of the possibilities of such a narratological branch, see the overview by Falk.

sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, age and other factors” produce not a single, “monolithic entity” of masculinity but various masculinities (Falk 95). The interest of my readings lies in the ways in which Joyce’s texts portray the construction of masculinity within the stories themselves. “As a cultural concept, the construction of masculinity is based on a narrative structure by which gender-specific practices and knowledges are coherently ordered” (Falk 98). Here the concepts of masculinities studies as well as the tools offered by structuralist narratology can be fruitfully applied, and the primary focus is on the ways that characters use micro-narratives to construct masculinity. To explain what I mean by this term, Joyce’s literary texts are of course narratives themselves, but on a lower level, they contain smaller units of storytelling, which I will refer to as micro-narratives (see Herman, “Introduction” 8-9). These micro-narratives can be such diverse “texts” as memories, dreams, anecdotes, references to historical events or literary intertexts, advertisements or images embedded in implicit plots and actions. Building on the insights of critical Masculinity Studies and the concepts of especially Butler and Bourdieu, I argue that it is through these micro-narratives that the masculinity of Joyce’s characters comes into being and is negotiated. This admittedly broad application of the term might be seen as stretching the word *narrative* to its limits. But in order for a narratological analysis to be useful, even the presence of some features of full-fledged narratives is sufficient. Regarding the micro-narratives I’m interested, four elements are recurring elements are especially of interest:

1. The existence (or implication) of an **event**, that is the change of one state to another, caused through human action.
2. The existence of a **human consciousness** that is either involved in the event or at least responding to the event.
3. The act of **telling the event** (explicitly or implicitly) by a narrator to a narratee, who in some cases can be identical.
4. The existence of a **conflict or problem**, which is the precondition for making the event tellable, that is making the telling relevant.

Given the premise that masculinity is by and large a narrative construction, Butler’s, Bourdieu’s Connell and Kimmel’s concepts are adapted to a narratological analysis of

the narrative constructions of masculinities based on these micro-narratives (see Falk 99).

On the second, level, however, I will take up the feminist narratological impulse to question the means of narration themselves with regard to their gendered instrumentality and bias. An underlying principle of the close readings in the following chapters will therefore be to investigate how the construction of masculinity of the characters is negotiated by the text, and whether the text supports this construction on the formal level or whether it criticises and deconstructs the characters' narration of masculinity. Accordingly, the focus is on the embeddedness of narrative (self)images of male characters within framing narrative structures of the text. The goal of such an approach would then be to test the coherence of the narrative construction of masculine identities and to query at which points the overall the narrative form of the text exposes these constructions *as* artificial narratives.

Chapter 4

From boy to man

4.1 Introduction

The school is an essential and highly complex space to regard in terms of the formation of masculinity. On the one hand, it is an institution which, through its curriculum can, potentially at least, take a great part in creating masculine habitus, thus forming predispositions for social action and a worldview which privileges men over women. On the other hand, it is also literally a space with its own masculine semantics, in which teachers embody the habitus that furthers masculine domination and in which students themselves negotiate the idea of masculinity among each other and in relation to the institution. It is also interesting because it is a transitory space, metaphorically and literally, between the female connoted domestic sphere and the male public sphere, in which emotional relations to teachers as embodiments of authority, which have displaced the primary parental authority, are contrasted with a constant push of boys towards integration into a society in which they are expected to employ their masculinity to conquer and occupy the public sphere.⁵³

The school also plays an important part in the creation of narratives of masculinity, because it is the site where the man is formed from the raw material of the boy which, which can be seen as a plot that offers the basis on which life-narratives can be formed. Those narratives will involve conflict, progress, initiations and transitions, and stock character types, as well as individual expression. A passage from the fourth chapter of *A Portrait* illustrates this form of emplotment when Stephen Dedalus reflects on his life as a schoolboy and the formative influence of his Jesuit masters. As

⁵³ For a detailed discussion of the role of the school in the formation of masculinity, see Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, ch. 9.

this passage exemplifies the approach of this part of my study so well, I quote it in full:

His masters, even when they had not attracted him, had seemed to him always intelligent and serious priests, athletic and highspirited prefects. He thought of them as men who washed their bodies briskly with cold water and wore clean cold linen. During all the years he had lived among them in Clongowes and in Belvedere he had received only two pandies and, though these had been dealt him in the wrong, he knew that he had often escaped punishment. During all those years he had never heard from any of his masters a flippant word: it was they who had taught him christian doctrine and urged him to live a good life and, when he had fallen into grievous sin, it was they who had led him back to grace. [. . .] He had never once disobeyed or allowed turbulent companions to seduce him from his habit of quiet obedience: and, even when he doubted some statement of a master, he had never presumed to doubt openly. Lately some of their judgments had sounded a little childish in his ears and had made him feel a regret and pity as though he were slowly passing out of an accustomed world and were hearing its language for the last time.

The placement of this contemplation of Stephen's school career within the overall narrative framework of *A Portrait* is highly relevant. Shortly after Stephen reflects on the story of his formation through the Jesuits, his master at Belvedere asks him whether he feels inside him a vocation for the priesthood himself. As readers of *A Portrait* know, even though Stephen is tempted by this question, he declines this offer from the priests in order to set out to become what he perceives as his vocation as a high priest of art. Without regard to how he decides, the vocation of either art or Jesuit priesthood would, in any case, be the culmination of a school career which is dramatized in the form of a life-narrative. This story contains a distinct plot of elements of formation ("had taught him christian doctrine and urged him to live a good life"), of obstacles that have to be overcome ("he had fallen into grievous sin", "never once disobeyed or allowed turbulent companions to seduce him"), of actual and implied dramatic events ("he had received only two pandies and, though these had been dealt him in the wrong, he knew that he had often escaped punishment"). Of course, Stephen himself is the protagonist of this narrative, and his teachers and fellow students are characters embodying different masculinities ("intelligent and serious priests, athletic and highspirited prefects", "turbulent companions"). The scene illustrates well the method I use in the close readings that are to follow: the passage dramatises Stephen's own narrativisation of his school career by using distinct story-like elements,

on the one hand, using plot, event and characters. This story of his self is then embedded, on the other hand, in the broader narrative structure of the novel, which creates an overarching masculine plot in his rejection of the celibate priesthood to embrace the sexually ambiguous priesthood of art.

To grasp better the way in which the school serves as an emplotment for the constitution of masculinity, I would like to introduce a helpful concept which clarifies the way in which this constitution is manifest on two separately graspable but interconnected levels. In a chapter called “Teaching the Boys” of his study *The Men and the Boys*, Raewyn Connell writes that

Though we will never have a simple way of measuring the relative influence of different institutions, there seems to be good warrant for considering schools one of the major sites of masculinity formation.

A ‘site’ can be understood in two ways. It can be examined as an institutional *agent* of the process. To understand this, we must explore the structures and practice by which the school forms masculinities among its pupils. Alternatively, we can examine the school as the *setting* in which other agencies are in play, especially the agency of the pupils themselves. (151-52)

The distinction that Connell here makes between “institutional *agent*” and “*setting* [. . . for] the agency of the pupils themselves” can help to understand how the formation of masculinity in school becomes a part of the life narrative of boys and men. From this perspective, the overall narrative of the formation of boy into man takes place on two levels. First, the construction of masculinity can be seen as a top-down process in which the school as an institution welcomes the students into a formative regime which teaches values and norms that ultimately lead to a normative form of masculinity. Institution and its metonymic embodiment through teachers stand thereby on one side, whereas students, as the raw material, stand on the other, waiting to be formed, whether obligingly or resisting (Connell, *The Men and the Boys* 155-61). On a second level, masculinity is also produced in the interaction of the students with each other and against the normative framework that the school wants them to accept. The peer group is thereby no less a formative motor for the construction of masculinity, which can be directly against the intentions of the institutions or alongside them (Connell, *The Men and the Boys* 161-64). Not only Connell’s choice of words, which reminds of narratological terminology (“site”, “agent”, “setting”), but also the example from *A Portrait* above indicate that both levels of the construction of masculinity through the

school offer ample opportunity for narrativisation. While both layers work simultaneously and never in isolation, it still makes sense to look at the narratives they create separately to grasp the efficacy of the two levels better.

The two chapters in this part will, therefore, investigate the ways in which Joyce makes use in his fiction of the two levels of the masculine formation in the school, and it will probe the attitudes towards masculinity as a narrative practice suggests. In the first text, “An Encounter” from *Dubliners*, Joyce constructs two narrative plots which dramatise each of the levels of formation. “An Encounter” progresses by playing out one plot against the other as the boys in the story escape the boredom of their school first by imitating literary texts and then by trying to find adventure outside school. What they do find, however, is another school setting in their encounter with another teacher in the queer old jossler, who embodies both authority but also a form of perverted knowledge. Both levels of formation are, therefore, brought together again in a perverse twist, which dramatises the inseparability of both levels of the formation of masculinity and the instability of young masculinity in between individual agency and the formative influence of institutions.

In Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the narrative dramatises this dynamic even more comprehensively. This text is, therefore, discussed in two separate chapters, each of which engages with one of the two levels of formation. Since the novel is intertextually linked to the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, Connell’s assumption that the school works as a “site” both in the sense that it forms the masculinity of the students as well as provides a platform where students may negotiate versions of masculinity themselves is relevant for an understanding of how the school contributes to work masculinity in the novel. In *Portrait* the two narrative strands of the formation of masculinity through both teachers and the peer group complement each other to show the path young Stephen Dedalus needs to take in order to identify and accept his artistic vocation at the end of the novel. Like in “An Encounter”, there are two strands of plot: the one that sees the school as forming the man, and that of seeing it as site one which shows the boys interact to negotiate masculinity. But, in contrast to the former story, rather than playing out one against the other, Joyce employs both strands to contribute to the final aim of developing Stephen into an artist. This first plot line contrasts with the second line, in which Stephen’s path to his artistic destiny

is influenced by the homosocial environment of the schoolyard. It is by surviving the challenges posed there and engaging with the mystic of sexual knowledge and hierarchies among the boys that he will be able to distance himself from the temptation that the offer of the priesthood had constituted to him. In this way, both texts highlight the strong role that the school setting has for masculine development and indicate Joyce's ambivalence towards this, as his investment as an artist is intricately connected to both formative levels.

Chapter 4.2

Queer teachings: Competitive plots and the formation of masculinity in “An Encounter”

In “An Encounter”, the second story in *Dubliners*, Joyce uses a schoolboy adventure to dramatise the formation of masculinity through institutional education. In this story, two boys who are bored by their Catholic upper-middle class school experience try to negotiate masculine values after school by imitating literary plots of their readings of the Wild West. These games become boring themselves, however, and the boys attempt to find real adventure one day on a trip through Dublin to the Pigeon House while the other boys go to school. Their endeavour is frustrated, however, because they actually never reach their destination. Instead, they arrive at a lonely field near the river Dodder where they meet a strange, old man who scares the narrator through his aggressive, moralistic discourse and by openly performing an indeterminate sex act. The boys’ adventure comes to an end when they manage to escape the attention of the man and return home. Various read in terms of gender, sexuality and textuality, this story exemplifies Joyce’s skilful management of the complex relationship between these three aspects. Rather than focussing exclusively on the actual encounter with the “queer old jossler”, I propose to read “An Encounter” in terms of the formation of masculinity through actual and metaphorical mentors and their teachings regarding a masculine habitus. My argument will demonstrate the ways in which “An Encounter” represents the two levels of school as a central “site” of the formation of masculinity (Connell, *The Men* 152). As outlined in the introduction to this part, Raewyn Connell suggests that the formation of masculinity through the school works on two distinct levels. The first of these happens through the school, and it constitutes a direct and normative promotion of masculine values which integrate the boy into a gendered society. On the second level, the interaction with the male peer group negotiates the values offered by the school or offers new ones and

alternatives. In “An Encounter”, both levels are dramatised by the main plot and a sub-plot. And by playing out those two narrative strands against one another, “An Encounter” demonstrates their intricate connection as well as their competition in the formation of masculine youth within the public and private spheres.

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The first sub-plot of “An Encounter” exemplifies the first level of the formation of masculinity in school. The school here works as a forming institution within which young boys are moulded into men, and education is implicitly always education towards masculine, i.e. patriarchal, values. In the story this formation is represented by the teacher Father Butler as a defender of masculinity and class. Through him, the narrative establishes what is a preliminary masculine norm. Early in the story, Father Butler finds out about his students’ reading of Wild West stories published in *The Halfpenny Marvel*, a magazine containing sensational literature aimed specifically at boys (Kershner, *Joyce* 32-35; see also 31-46). Since this reading is promoting masculine values that are not appropriate for the Humanist education intended to make them masculine subjects, the teacher gives his pupils a lecture about their class and its appropriate literature:

—What is this rubbish? he said. *The Apache Chief!* Is this what you read instead of studying your Roman History? Let me not find any more of this wretched stuff in this college. The man who wrote it, I suppose, was some wretched scribbler who writes these things for a drink. I’m surprised at boys like you, educated, reading such stuff. I could understand it if you were national school boys. (*D* 12-13)

Both the production of this text as well as its consumption are brought into connection with class, as the references to drinking and the national schools (as opposed to the prestigious Catholic school, see Gifford, *Joyce Annotated* 36-37) imply. Because it is his task to form masculinities for the social elite, Father Butler’s “stern patriarchal authority” (Brandabur 45) condemns and prohibits this type of reading. The narrative thereby sets the standard in the story for hegemonic masculinity as defined through class. Interestingly, even though he refers to Roman history as the more befitting type of reading for the future elite, Father Butler’s emphasis is more strongly on what the

boys *should not* read, thus defining hegemonic masculinity negatively and drawing attention to the inherent lack of substance in the definition of the masculine norm.

With a view to the postulation of hegemonic masculinity, there is, despite many critics' arguments to the contrary, a fundamental difference between the narratives of the Wild West, represented by the *Halfpenny Marvel*, and that of Roman history, as represented by Julius Caesar (cf. Senn, "An Encounter" 34; cf. Norris, "A Walk" 25; cf. Leonard, *Reading* 69). Father Butler "insists on recitations about imperial Rome" (Brandabur 45) and maintains that the narrative account of Julius Caesar's adventures in Gaul (another Wild West) are superior to the stories of the American Wild West. Earl G. Ingersoll has pointed to the fact, however, that these two narratives are more similar to each other than Father Butler wants to acknowledge: "these Wild West stories are a popular variant of Roman History, which has for centuries offered school-boys and their masters the 'thrills' of 'civilized' Rome's imperialistic 'hunger' for the 'Wild West' of Europe that Julius Caesar devoured" (38). However, as an author, Julius Caesar, manifests a splendid personification of hegemonic masculinity, representing the father of a nation, the founder of a dynasty and an invincible general. Thus he represents several imperial manifestations of hegemonic masculinity as represented through history and literature. In contrast, the *Apache Chief* is, in Father Butler's words, the outpouring of "some wretched scribbler that writes these things for a drink" (*D* 13), that is, he is an author who wastes his talent by doing hack jobs that finance his alcohol consumption (cf. Mullin 40). His counterpart, the eternalised Roman hero, is "the original example of what can be accomplished when a masculine subject channels his sexual drive in a civilized (sublimated) and goal-oriented manner" (Leonard, *Reading* 69). The evaluation of the author's assumed masculinity thereby reflects on the suitability of the work for boys, and the possession of the wrong kind of reading in turn reflects on its audience.

The importance of the audience of this literature for the normative notion of masculinity is manifest in Father Butler's explicit reference to class as well. The ellipsis in his admonition, "I could understand it if you were national school boys" (*D* 13), draws the focus to the distinction he makes between his own students and that of lower working-class background. As Gifford explains, boys attending a national school would be educated in matters of trade or vocational skills, which was perceived

as relating to English Protestantism rather than the classical education of Irish Catholicism (*Joyce Annotated* 36-7). The classics and the ideals that they represent are thereby opposed to the vocational, Protestant and lower middle-class aura of the stories related to the “rubbish” that such alcoholic writers might produce (*D* 12). This narrative devised by Father Butler about masculinity, as produced in the field of the school and through its normative discourse, can, therefore, be seen as predicated on social stratification in terms of class and creed. In Leonard’s words, “[h]is promise to them is that appropriate object(s) of desire will support the fantasy of themselves” (*Reading* 66). So, far from innocent, *The Apache Chief* and Caesar’s *Commentaries* represent ideological intertexts whose authority (and lack thereof) is the result of the gendered implications for both author and audience.

A further difference between the boys’ reading and that prescribed by the school can be seen in the metafictional element of both texts. From this viewpoint, the presence of the fictions of the Wild West is threatening Father Butler’s narrative example of hegemonic masculinity exactly because *The Apache Chief* asks serious questions about the (meta)fictional status of legitimate historiography. As Garry Leonard writes,

Caesar, unlike the Apache chief, is a warrior whose goals have been catalogued and approved by historians of Western culture. It is not, therefore, civilized war that Father Butler denigrates but the adventures of reluctant Indians who haunt the margins of Western culture like an unruly spirit that might call its fictional unity into doubt at any time. (*Reading* 68)

By implication, the fictional status of fantasised masculinity in the Wild West affects the perception of the hitherto unquestioned factual status of official Roman historiography, which is part of the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, “the dual presence of *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* and *The Apache Chief* exposes narratives of history as a social construct that, like patriarchal authority and gender, recounts experience with a coherency that is entirely mythical” (Leonard, *Reading* 69). The fact that the opposed texts have in common their emphasis on masculine adventurousness, as many critics have observed, only emphasises their distinction in the way they legitimise the adventure. Leonard is right to stress the difference in character of the two histories of Rome and the Wild West respectively: “The monocausal theory of history, which the *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* subscribes to, is being undermined by the presence

in the classroom of another text that represents a different myth [. . .]” (*Reading* 69). In other words, the history of ancient Rome is seen as more appropriate than the Wild West because Rome built an ordered, civilised Empire whereas the Wild West depicts uncontrollable, anarchic adventure – which eventually foreshadows the ending of “An Encounter” (cf. Doherty 39). By using the example of what his students should not follow (cf. Mullin 30), Father Butler thus constructs “a monolithic and seamless narrative of normal masculinity” (*Reading* 63) based on class distinctions and the legitimising power of narrative mythmaking of hegemonic masculinity.

After looking at the contents of the normative formation of masculinity through the field of education it is now time to consider the concrete field conditions through which masculinity is formed. The focus on this level lies on the role of the teacher as the embodiment of the institutions power. As Connell writes: “As with corporations, workplaces and the state, gender is embedded in the institutional arrangements through which a school system functions” (*The Men* 152). This is the “gender regime” of each setting, and in the school, the most important relationship is that of power relations between teacher and pupil (153). This power relationship becomes a factor in the constitution of masculinity because authority as such is posited as a masculine value that the teaching person embodies, which affects the whole educational setting as masculine (153). In “An Encounter”, the gender regime of authority patterns is embodied first and foremost by Father Butler (and only later on by the queer old jossler). As already mentioned, Father Butler puts a hold on the boys’ reading of Wild West pulp fiction. He thereby holds the authority concerning the aesthetic taste appropriate to their class. The classroom is, not surprisingly, characterised by strict and normative education and a static and hierarchical power relationship, and the narrative thereby positions Father Butler as “[t]he voice of clerical-academic authority” (Beck 81).

It would be inaccurate, however, to view the students merely as victims and their teacher as an oppressive superior. Rather, the students themselves contribute significantly to the oppressive power that characterises the formation of masculinity in the field of education. The boy narrator, for instance, admits that “[t]his rebuke during the sober hours of school paled much of the glory of the wild west for me, and the confused puffy face of Leo Dillon awakened one of my consciences” (*D* 13). That

his conscience had lain dormant during his infatuation with adventure tales testifies to the way in which the habitus of masculinity has been instilled in the boy through the school. Furthermore, he shows an awareness of the normative notions of masculinity with regard to the *Halfpenny Marvel*, by describing the magazine's status as a form of contraband among the boys: "Though there was nothing wrong in these stories and though their intention was sometimes literary, they were circulated secretly at school" (D 12). Thus, the boy has internalised the notion that there *could* be something wrong in stories and the general lack of the elusive quality of literariness contributes to their status as abject objects.⁵⁴ The passage thus illustrates a counter-narrative to that of the formation of masculinity in the public sphere in which the boundary between institution and individual is not a stable one, since both uphold the authority of the institution. The school does not simply form the male matter into a masculine one; the individual himself contributes to the formation by taking up the habitus offered by the institution and its embodiments. Normative notions of masculinity are thus created by the school and by its students as well.

The seductive power of the masculine habitus can be seen in the relief the narrator feels at the end of the story when he is rescued from the old man by the arrival of his lower-class friend Mahony, stating that "I was penitent for in my heart I had always despised him a little" (D 20). In this way admitting his feelings of superiority, the narrator exemplifies a central function of school in terms of masculinity, namely creating "differences between masculinities" in terms of "educational selection" (Connell, *The Men* 160). Connell argues that there is a distinct function in educational settings to select and differentiate among pupils, a "compulsory sorting-and-sifting" which corresponds to the social class affiliation of the pupils (*The Men* 160). He summarises that "[t]he academic and disciplinary hierarchy of school thus influences the making of masculinities, but by producing plural masculinities, in a structured gender order among boys, rather than a single pattern of masculinity" (*The Men* 161). Employing the contribution of the boys themselves, the school thus fulfils the function of differentiating between masculinities. As if trying to parody this role of the educational field, the most avid admirer of the Wild West among the boys

⁵⁴ Note the ambiguity in this passage about whose consciousness makes these judgements, that of the adult or that of the boy.

eventually changes sides and becomes a priest himself: “It was Joe Dillon who introduced the wild west to us. He had a little library made up of old numbers of *The Union Jack*, *Pluck* and *The Halfpenny Marvel*. [. . .] Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vocation for the priesthood. Nevertheless it was true” (D 11-12). This passage is part of a series of betrayals in the *Dubliners* stories, but it is also an example of how individual and institution blend into one another in the formation of masculinity.⁵⁵ Often Joe Dillon’s conversion is attributed to the influence of his pious Catholic household (Torchiana 37; Beck 80), but this reading does not grasp the structural significance of Dillon as part of the school hierarchy all along. After all, Joe Dillon’s status as the bearer of forbidden knowledge makes him a sort of teacher to the boys as well, and his later career as an actual teacher is therefore only consistent with this role within the peer group (Doherty 38). The first plot of the formation of masculinity is thus dramatized through the normative authority of Father Butler, which sets the standard of hegemonic masculinity but to which the protagonist and his peers are shown to contribute. The narrative thus questions the notion of “formation” as a mono-causal and indicates the contribution of the students to this ideal. A similar deconstruction of the concepts of formation occurs in the boys attempt to escape the boredom of school through their imitation of the Wild West in their games after school.

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Against the first sub-plot is set a second, which corresponds to the second level of the formation of masculinity through education, namely that of the individuation of the boys outside the school. Making a distinction between the school as a “site” of the formation of masculinities (*The Men* 151), Connell argues that the school is not only an “institutional *agent* of the process” but also, “we can examine the school as the *setting* in which other agencies are in play, especially the agency of the pupils themselves” (*The Men* 152). This agency is not only possible for the individual, as argued above, but especially for the peer group as a series of collectives, which function as

⁵⁵ Joyce develops this particular version of betrayal more extensively in chapter XVIII of his abandoned novel *Stephen Hero*.

“the bearers of gender definitions” (*The Men* 162). In this way, “An Encounter” develops from the first plot, that of the authority of Father Butler, a second plot, that of the adventures of the boys outside the school in which they actively cultivate their boyish virility.

This new sub-plot dramatises the formation of masculinity in opposition to the school’s values and hierarchy. As the boy narrator tells readers, “The adventures related in the literature of the wild west were remote from my nature but at least, they opened doors of escape” (*D* 12). And even after Father Butler has admonished the boys for reading such texts, the “restraining influence of the school” does not last long and soon he “began to hunger again for wild sensations, for the escape which those chronicles of disorder alone seemed to offer me” (*D* 13). The genuine freedom that the escapist consumption of literature offers is thus at this point opposed to the limiting and confining role of the school (cf. Senn, “An Encounter” 28). As Brandon Kershner has convincingly shown, *The Union Jack*, *Pluck* and *The Halfpenny Marvel* are all boys’ magazines that promote masculine endeavours: self-reliance, courage (pluck!), endurance, willingness to sacrifice and maintaining oneself against opposition. Therefore, the boy narrator “exists in a social context of his peers—a context structured though the ideologies of genres of popular literature, among other elements—and has come to define himself with respect to that context” (Kershner, *Joyce* 31). The boys’ “immersion in textuality” (Ingersoll 37) therefore has not only an escapist function, it contributes significantly to the negotiation of the codes of gender. While Father Butler thus defines the notion of hegemonic masculinity, which he deems appropriate for his students to follow, they themselves define alternative masculinities, based on similar values but within different contexts and through reference to different plots and texts.

Considering Judith Butler’s notion of the reiterative and citational nature of gender, we can read the boys’ enactment of Wild West-plots as a further engagement with the negotiation and formation of masculinity as opposed to the educational setting. For Butler gender “itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end” (*GT* 43). Later on, she argues that this reiterative enactment of gender needs to be complemented by the notion that the subject cites the law of sex in order to assume that sex as a subject (*Bodies that Matter*

14).⁵⁶ In this way, the “Wild West is introduced and translated, tamely enough, into the boys’ games” (Senn, “An Encounter” 29) by way of a constant repetition of gendered norms in those games: “Every evening after school we met in his back garden and arranged Indian battles” (*D* 11-12). Based on the fictionalisation of the Wild West the boys act out “imitable scripts for the ‘mimic warfare’ of juvenile play [. . .]” (Norris, “A Walk” 25) and thereby train masculine behaviour by “citing” the norms of accepted masculinity from the boys’ magazines in a highly ritualised manner. Such citation even involves reference to their games in military jargon, as when the formidable Dillon brothers “held the loft of the stable while we tried to carry it by storm; or we fought a pitched battle on the grass” (*D* 12). Not just limited to masculine discourse, these citations also feature authenticating (although makeshift) costumes, which make Joe Dillon appear “like some kind of an Indian when he capered round the garden, an old teacosy on his head, beating a tin with his fist and yelling: --- Ya! Yaka, yaka, yaka!” (12).

These performances conceive of masculinity as struggle and an anxious achievement made through constant testing and assessment, that is, as Michael Kimmel calls homosocial enactment. Rather than using this narrative mode to create masculinity in his fiction, Joyce subtly deconstructs the notion of masculinity as the struggle, as his text repeats and undermines several of its elements. Thus, on the surface, Joe Dillon is the epitome of what the boys consider hegemonic in terms of masculinity. Not only was he the one who provided the knowledge about the Wild West in the first place, but he is also the one who is most proficient in the enactment of it in the playground, as he “played too fiercely for us who were younger and more timid” (*D* 12). Joe excels the other boys and sets the standard of masculinity within the group, and he thereby mirrors the function that Father Butler held before. Upon closer scrutiny, however, his performance emerges as unstable, and the signs of masculinity that the narrative establishes are modified. First, ironically his performance of masculinity does not take place in the public sphere of men as opposed to the domestic, feminine sphere of women. His “Indian” props, teacosy and tin, are indeed actually domestic,

⁵⁶ “If ‘sex’ is assumed in the same way that a law is cited [. . .] then ‘the law of sex’ is repeatedly fortified and idealized as the law only to the extent that it is reiterated as the law, produced as the law, the anterior and inapproximable ideal, by the very citations it is said to command” (*BTM* 14).

and therefore feminine, utensils. Joe Dillon is unaware and, thus, not in control of the gendered signifying process, which discloses his lack of mastery of the authentically masculine. Furthermore, the qualifier “*old teacosy*” points to the fact that this particular domestic tool was discarded by his mother for use as a toy. What first seems to indicate the successful citation of masculine norms from texts like *The Apache Chief*, is thus deconstructed and framed as a mode of mock masculinity. His Wild-West prop is dependent and sanctioned by a powerful feminine figure, whose “peaceful odour” (*D* 12) pervades their home and thus undermines Joe’s attempt to prove his masculinity outside his home. Finally, Joe’s later assumption of the priestly role is a further indicator in the narrative that his games do not authenticate his masculinity but are childish attempts at imitation. Joyce here employs the effective device of prolepsis, thereby giving a glimpse of the future that lies outside the actual story time. Joe Dillon’s masculinity is thereby sabotaged on the formal level, and, furthermore, this narrative unit ends the dominance of Joe Dillon in the narrative. He will vanish thereafter from the narrative completely while the rest of the story focuses on the narrator’s real adventure to the Pigeon House. Functioning thus, rather as a foreshadowing in the sense of “a preparation of or a hinting at a future occurrence” (Rimmon-Kenan 48), the prolepsis formally dramatises Joyce’s deconstruction of the formation of masculinity within the educational setting.

For the boys, as the narrator reminisces, it is not enough to imitate the masculine allure of the Wild West, because he needs to find and prove masculinity in “real adventures”: “The mimic warfare of the evening became at last as wearisome to me as the routine of school in the morning because I wanted real adventures to happen to myself. But real adventures, I reflected, do not happen to people who remain at home: they must be sought abroad” (*D* 13). This model of masculinity achieved through adventurous struggle under the eyes, and in fear, of one’s peers is the second narrative in the construction of gender in the text. But rather than trying to show its stronger valence over the first one – the formation of masculinity through the school – “An Encounter” plays out one against the other. The actual encounter with the queer old jossler thereby becomes a gruelling parody of the first plot, and this effectively ends the attempt of the second plot to construct masculinity through an adventure where the boys can prove themselves.

As a consequence of seeking adventure “abroad”, the narrator, together with two friends, decides to “to break out of the weariness of school-life for one day at least. With Leo Dillon and a boy named Mahony I planned a day’s miching (*D* 13). Intended as the ultimate form of disobedience against the strictures of the school, the trip is gradually exposed as a failure however, which is manifest in several narrative deconstructions of the concept of adventure. First, the three make a pact of partnership in crime to evade exposure of their truancy, which is sealed by the colloquial exclamation “—Till tomorrow, mates” (*D* 14), stressing, as it does, homosocial group solidarity. As Kershner maintains, “[t]hey are also, of course, a degenerate version of the Three Musketeers. The protagonist will furnish pluck and inspiration, Mahony the warrior skills, and Leo Dillon comic relief” (*Joyce* 34). The degeneracy of this famous homosocial model is exemplified by the soon crumbling solidarity of the group. It is first undermined by Leo Dillon’s failure to arrive at the stipulated point of departure, and then by the other boy Mahony’s rude judgement of his absence: “I knew Fatty’d funk it” (*D* 14). Not only the homosocial morale is undermined in the course of the trip, but so is the enactment of masculinity as the seeking of adventures. The catapult that Mahony has brought with him “to have some gas with the birds” proves to be “unloaded” later on when “[h]e chase[s] a crowd of ragged girls [. . .]” (*D* 14). The sexual connotation of the word *bird* as slang for girls is played out when Mahony unsuccessfully pursues another symbol of femininity, a cat, which “escaped into a wide field” (*D* 16, 19). Even worse than his incompetence at proving his masculinity through such acts of violence against the symbolically feminine is his failure to follow the boyish code of honour when he wants to attack the “two ragged boys” who, “out of chivalry” hasten to defend the ragged girls Mahony attacked. Mahony’s failure here lies in not recognising that being “too small” (*D* 15), they are not equals and so their defeat would not confer prestige on the boys. Finally, not even their re-enactment of violent masculinity games is crowned with success. As the narrator ruefully relates, “[w]hen we came to the Smoothing Iron we arranged a siege but it was a failure because you must have at least three. We revenged ourselves on Leo Dillon by saying what a funk he was and guessing how many he would get a three o’clock from Mr Ryan” (*D* 15). Not only is the military re-enactment thus a failure, in their “revenge”

the boys also revert back to the disciplining power of the school, which eventually undermines their endeavour to escape it.

Indeed, the day's miching itself seems rather formulaic in its scripted adventures. As Fritz Senn remarks, "The whole enterprise requires a degree of conformity not markedly different from that which characterizes the daily routine [of school]" ("An Encounter" 27), and Kershner adds that "the 'imagination' they have invoked is as ordered, structured, and predictable as the 'reality' they are attempting to escape. What appear to be 'chronicles of disorder' are merely rituals of a different order, in which the savage Indian and the adventurous sailor must play their endless, assigned roles" (*Joyce* 38). However, unaware of their recitation of ordered and contained masculine role models, the boys feel that "[s]chool and home seemed to recede from us and their influences upon us seemed to wane" (*D* 15). This assessment is of course naïve, on the one hand, but, on the other, the word *seemed* also allows a reading in which both voice and focalisation are here that of the *adult* not the *boy* narrator, which would stress the acknowledgement that this freedom was a mere illusion. Still, the boys' truancy can ultimately be seen as a form of protest masculinity, that is, a rebellion against the strictures of their formal education. At this strategic point, about in the middle of the story, the reference to the freedom from school achieves a sardonic quality in hindsight and serves as a form of structural irony, which, like the prolepsis narrating Joe Dillon's later career as a priest, characterises the narrative in general. In any event, their boyish enactments of masculinity are mere trifles which contribute to their failure to reach their goal, the Pigeon House (Beck 84). And what is more, the old man whom they will meet at the end of their journey is uncannily answering the narrator's earlier longing of "real adventures to happen to myself" (*D* 13; Ingersoll 42). As Beck writes, the boy narrator "has set out with one scheme for adventure; the adventure that awaits him on the other side of the Liffey is of another order" (Beck 82).

* * *

On the surface, the queer old jossler is the ironic culmination of their boyish pursuits or “real adventures” that the boy sought. It is thus simply a variation of a fairy tale plot of wishes fulfilled in an unwelcome way. However, regarding how the story negotiates masculinity within the context of education, we should see the queer old jossler first and foremost as a teacher figure, who structurally functions as a perverse mirror image of Father Butler. Not simply “another shadow of the menacing patriarch who tries to lure an ingenious youth to religious or physical perversion” (Henke, *Politics* 19), the old man does not so much seduce the boys as he tries to instruct them. He thus mirrors Father Butler as a perverse double in functions concerning education: he creates a boundary across temperamental lines and imposes an arbitrary authority concerning knowledge. Like Father Butler, the old man labels the boys and thereby creates divisions among them. Testing the boys’ knowledge of literature, the man concludes: “—Ah, I can see you are a bookworm like myself. Now, he added, pointing to Mahony[,] who was regarding us with open eyes, he is different; he goes in for games” (*D* 17). Later on, the distinction is made even more explicit, when the old man says that Mahony “was a very rough boy and [he] asked did he get whipped often at school” (*D* 19). The litany on the benefits of whipping boys at school that follows this question is a doubling of Father Butler’s assertion of authority in the passage where he chastises the boys for reading *The Apache Chief*. Where the latter stops short of threatening the culprit with physical violence (“Now, Dillon, I advise you strongly, get at your work or” [*D* 13]), the old man develops a manic fascination with what was then known as “English methods” (Lamos, “English Vice” 20) of corporal chastisement in education.⁵⁷ Brandon Kershner writes that “[b]oth of the adults in the story – Father Butler and the old jossler – immediately invoke a culturally reified distinction between boys who are active, unthinking, and lower-class and those who are studious, responsible, and upper-middleclass” (*Joyce* 35). In this way, the narrative doubles the function of

⁵⁷ For the historical and discursive context of educational flogging and sexual flagellation at the time, see Colleen Lamos’ “English Vice” and Katherine Mullin’s *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity* respectively.

authority in the text, even if this perverse embodiment deconstructs the notion of authority as promoting hegemonic masculinity.

The old man's status as a teacher who distinguishes boys according to their learning becomes even more apparent in his attempts to control and limit the boundaries of knowledge on sexuality and literature. Thus, when asked by Mahony why "there were some of Lord Lytton's works which boys couldn't read", the teacher "only smiled" (*D* 17). Withholding the answer to this (reasonable) question, the teacher maintains his superiority over his students, thus wielding an authority over them similar to that of Father Butler when he disparaged them for reading pulp literature.⁵⁸ In this context, Margot Norris argues that "[t]he old man splits the canon in two, into moral and immoral versions across whose divide knowledge may be —culpably— carried" ("A Walk" 25). And Katherine Mullin maintains that the story "suggests through these structurally paralleled instances of a divide on reading that the respectable Father Butler and the perverse queer old jossler are underneath dangerously similar" (43). Eventually, this authority over knowledge is most drastically exemplified by the old man's suddenly changed attitudes toward sexuality. First, the narrator is baffled by the old man's open discussion of the number of the boys' "sweethearts" and his liberal attitude concerning boys' relations with girls: "His attitude on this point struck me as strangely liberal in a man of his age. In my heart I thought that what he said about boys and sweethearts was reasonable" (*D* 18). To the narrator's even greater bafflement, his teacher changes his views completely after the enigmatic break: "He seemed to have forgotten his recent liberalism. He said that if ever he found a boy talking to girls or having a girl for a sweetheart he would whip him and whip him: and that would teach him not to be talking to girls" (*D* 19). Katherine Mullin explains this turn as exemplifying the ambiguous policy of "vice crusaders" (54) of the social purity movement: while his fixation on corporal punishment clearly has "fetishistic qualities", it also strongly mirrors two central tenets of the social purity movement: the censure of books unsuitable for young readers, on the one hand, and the punishment for "rough boys' displaying signs of precocious sexuality", on the other (54). The paradox that the old man seems to subscribe to both a liberal and a restrictive attitude toward

⁵⁸ For the significance of Bulwer-Lytton's works as sexually ambiguous intertexts of "An Encounter", see both Kershner's and Mullin's discussions.

having sweethearts can be attributed to the social purity movement's "own sadistic desires behind their philanthropy" (54): "For if the queer old josser is Joyce's particularly savage burlesque of the child-protecting social purist, then as his monologue progresses, he reveals the extent of the pleasure he finds in prohibition" (48). By controlling the discourse on the boys' sexuality, the old man thus maintains a form of absolute and despotic authority, which even invokes a sexualised and homoerotic quality (Henke, *Politics* 19). The result is therefore that the boys do not know whether it is permissible to have sweethearts or not, which leaves them in a state of ambiguity about the sexual mores appropriate to masculinity.

That the strange man can be viewed as a teacher to the boys can be furthermore seen in his locution. The ambiguity about prohibition and pleasure which confuses the boys, is already discernible in his speech, as the narrator remarks twice that the man seems "magnetised" (*D* 18, 19) when talking about the contrary positions on the positive effects of sexual relations and their proscription (Mullin 48). Connell points out that various teaching styles of teachers follow emotional patterns, which influence masculine values that are being (re-)produced in students:

What the sociologist Hochschild (1983) has called the 'feeling rules' for occupations can be found in teaching, often associated with specific roles in a school: the tough deputy principal, the drama teacher etc. Among the most important feeling rules in schools are those concerned with sexuality, and the prohibition on homosexuality may be particularly important in definitions of masculinity (Frank 1993, Mac an Ghail 1994). (*The Men* 153)

As a closer look at the discourse of the queer old josser's shows, the narrative puts him in various often contradicting teaching roles, which appear in his manner of talking to them, and his style erratically varies between positions of friendliness, authority, confidentiality or brutality. At first, he tries to establish a rapport with the boy narrator when he maintains that the boy is "a bookworm like myself" and distinguishes him from his friend, who he speculates "goes in for games" (*D* 17). From the perspective of the feeling rules of teaching, this differentiation between the boys is not only an assertion of authority, as argued earlier, it also exploits the boy's own feelings of superiority in order to gain his trust. As a result, the narrator lies about reading all of the books the old man mentions and is "agitated and pained" by Mahony's question on the unsuitableness of Bulwer-Lytton's works: "because I [the narrator] was afraid the

man would think was as stupid as Mahony” (*D* 17). Kershner notes the overtones of seduction but also an echo of Father Butler’s authority about literature: “Certainly he is proud of the extent of his reading, and he also feels he must choose sides in the dichotomy both the old man and Father Butler have drawn. Rather than be identified with the simple Mahony he risks identification with the literary stranger” (*Joyce* 38; cf. Brandabur 47-48). As Margot Norris speculates, the reason for this identification might be the boy’s homosexual panic: “Does the boy wish to censor the question because he is agitated and pained for another reason: because he desires a reply whose forbidden content he knows might excite him?” (“A Walk” 26; cf. Beck 92). Whether the passage manifests the boy’s sexual anxiety or not seems to me only secondary because, first, the exchange with the queer old josser is a narrative repetition of the teacher-student relationship which is charged here with a strong emotional undercurrent.

Later on, the discourse alternates between confidentiality and secrecy, and thus it creates distance while attempting to retain emotional proximity: “At times he spoke as if he were simply alluding to some fact that everybody knew and at times he lowered his voice and spoke mysteriously as if he were telling us something secret which he did not wish others to overhear” (*D* 18). The boundary between teacher and student blurs as the old man’s veers between various emotional stances, an erratic movement which finally results in his assuming the role of a penitent in the confession box: “He described to me how he would whip such a boy as if he were unfolding some elaborate mystery. He would love that, he said, better than anything in this world: and his voice, as he led me monotonously through the mystery, grew almost affectionate and seemed to plead with me that I should understand him” (*D* 19). The reversal of the power relationship is accompanied by a shift from possessing secret knowledge to a confessional mode and the plea for understanding. This emotional anarchy in his teaching role undermines his particular position but also the more generally the authority of education in general. The real trauma for the boy narrator is not to have met a pervert; it lies in the deconstruction of the formation of masculinity through education (cf. Henke, *Politics* 19; cf. Senn “An Encounter” 30). Far from establishing an authoritative notion of hegemonic masculinity, like Father Butler, the queer old josser’s discourse undermines these values and queers the discourse on boyish sexuality through ever-

shifting notions of right and wrong, veering between the extreme opposites of perverse sexuality and prudish morality. The hierarchy between teacher and student is thereby eroded, and as Colleen Lamos writes, the perversion of the queer old josser is as much his as it is that of the narrator:

Although the narrative displaces the knowledge of homosexual and sadomasochistic lusts onto the “queer old josser,” the boy’s excitement and shame disclose his complicity with the older man’s perverse desires. Indeed, it is precisely at the moment that the older man elicits the boy’s knowledge and love [. . .] that the boy flees, confronted with his collusion in the sexual game. (25)

Again, the encounter of the queer old josser in the narrative marks a doubling of the teaching of Father Butler. However, whereas the latter establishes a firm hold over authority and the formation of hegemonic masculinity, the former’s intervention questions both the teacher/student distinction as well as heteronormative masculine identity as such. He thereby ultimately undermines the narrative of the formation of masculinity through school (cf. Doherty 44, 45).

* * *

In the final step of the argument in “An Encounter” about the formation of masculinity through education, the boys are shown to acquire the normative male socialisation that they had tried to avoid in the first place. As we have seen, masculinity is formed and promoted as a habitus in the boys neither through school or peer group alone but in a complex interplay between the two in the movement away from the former to the latter. But the formal school education, which the boys tried to escape, is only ostensibly evaded. While they do get their adventure and successfully avoid detection from Father Butler, they are utterly unsuccessful in reaching their goal, the Pigeon House, and instead they find another kind of teacher at the end of their trip. The functions supposed to be fulfilled by the school – the initiation into masculine habitus and the differentiation of plural masculinities – are accomplished nonetheless. Both functions are, however, achieved in a peripatetic movement, gesturing back and forth, towards a stable masculine framework and again away from it.

Just like the queer old josser is a perverse double of Father Butler, the ending of the story strangely mirrors the boyish solidarity from earlier. Alone with the old

man and desperate to get away from him, the narrator uses the false name Murphy to call for his friend – a “stratagem” (*D* 20) both had agreed on earlier in order to conceal their true identity. To his relief, Mahony arrives soon: “How my heart beat as he came running across the field to me! He ran as if to bring me aid. And I was penitent for in my heart I had always despised him a little” (*D* 20). Before, he had been happily discarding Mahony as “stupid” and was happy that the old man had made a distinction between the two boys on account of their reading. In a sense, then, the narrator revokes the differentiating function of both Father Butler’s and the queer old josser’s education. The first plot of masculinity produced as a result of formal authoritative education seems thereby defied by the second plot, that of masculinity as the result of a group endeavour and achieved through struggle and testing. However, the narrator’s masculinity is undermined by his lack of courage to deal with the old man alone, which in turn undercuts the notion of homosocial solidarity as well (cf. Norris, “A Walk” 32; cf. Kaye 92). Furthermore, as Bernard Benstock adds, the choice of names might even be another “paltry stratagem” (*D* 17) to establish the narrator’s own superiority: “Just as both Mahony and Murphy proclaim a profound Irishness, so Smith veers toward distinctly more *Anglo*-Irish posture. In one stroke the boy may be protecting himself from the “queer old josser” and bettering himself socially in contrast to Mahony” (*Narrative Con/Texts* 110-11). This destabilising of the homosocial group mirrors the boys’ imitation of the Wild West earlier. These games had enabled the narrator to fit in and generally worked to level difference among the boys. As he then considered, the games were a means to counter Father Butler’s attempts at separating them: “A spirit of unruliness diffused itself among us and, under its influence, differences of culture and constitution were waived” (*D* 12). However, already the attempt at leveling differences through peer group activity is exposed as dishonest. The boy, while playing along, is only one of the “reluctant Indians who were afraid to seem studious or lacking in robustness [. . .]” (*D* 12). In addition to his lack of commitment to these games, his preferred reading is not set in the Wild West at all but in the metropolitan underworld milieu of the turn of the century: “I liked better some American detective stories which were traversed from time to time by unkempt fierce and beautiful girls” (*D* 12). In this way, he not only betrays the proper source of peer group masculinity, he even voices a more adult preference for the feminine as sexualised but frightening

object (Ingersoll 37).⁵⁹ The group coherence that at first is strengthened by the leveling of social and cultural difference is undermined in both cases by these moments of instability. The second narrative strand therefore repeats the first one in the construction of masculinity rather than replacing it.

On a more general level, the narration complicates the formation of masculinity by playing out against each other the two main plots of the story. In the Wild West-plot, Father Butler puts an end to the boy's informal formation of masculinity, which took place through peer group interaction. In the "day's miching"-plot, on the other hand, the queer old jossler magnifies and thereby perverts the boy's desire for "real adventures" by introducing an overt sexuality into the adventure which the boys were not conscious of before (cf. Kershner, *Joyce* 33; cf. Mullin 47; cf. Lamos, "English Vice" 25; Cf. Norris, "A Walk" 30). Both plots thus use, in Greimasian terminology, an opponent function to thwart the fulfilment of the plots by the boys (cf. Hawkes 87-95). Rather than merely mirroring each other and thus emphasising the importance of the field of education for the formation of masculinity, both plots are intricately connected in a competition about the proper form of the boys' masculinity: the miching-plot, promoting real adventures outside in which masculinity has to be proven, is the result of a frustration on the narrator's part with the Wild West-plot, a mere citation of masculine norms and values, which, as we have seen remained ineffective and flawed. Both of them are in turn reactions to the strongly normative promotion of masculinity through their formal education, embodied by Father Butler, which not only bored them but presented them with values they did not want to follow. Both Wild West-plot and miching-plot move toward exactly this formal educational scenario again. The former is infiltrated by the narrative prolepsis, which made the main Western hero, Joe Dillon, a priest; in the latter, the queer old jossler replaces the goal of their truancy, the Pigeon house, and embodies the educational principle from which they had tried to run away. Providing, thus, yet another illustration of Joyce's paralysis theme, the two plots suggest that formal education cannot be escaped.

⁵⁹ As already discussed, this solidarity is undermined by other betrayals right from the beginning. The culprits are both Dillon brothers, Leo because he had not turned up for adventure at all, and Joe because he would later become a priest and thus change sides.

Furthermore, with a view to the formation of masculinity, both plots compete with each other about the valence of authority versus that of the homosocial group. Thus, the Wild West-plot is a respite from class boundaries, as it levelled the cultural and social differences between the boys, which made the peer group highly homogeneous and therefore the primary ground for the testing of masculinity. In the miching-plot, despite its aim to find freedom from school, boundaries between the boys and therefore plural masculinities are reinforced again. Otherness and difference permeate the miching-plot, which can be seen, for instance, in Mahony's attack on the ragged girls, which betrays not only a distinction between the narrator and Mahony, when he waves off the attack on the working-class boys as unchivalrous, but also between them and the "ragged" children. As Kershner writes, the boy

is thoroughly aware of the social distinction between himself and his friends on the one hand and children educated at public expense on the other. [. . .] Judging from the appearance of the narrator and Mahony, the "ragged" children identify them as better off, and thus Protestants. The narrator feels mingled pride and shame in the status to which his Jesuit education entitles him and the further status accrued from his personal identification with "culture". (*Joyce* 36)

While offering welcome distinction from the working-class boys, his affinity with culture provides an ambiguous locus of both identification with the queer old josser. Given the latter represents the ultimate embodiment of the Other, the boy is similarly drawn to but also afraid of and repelled by the old man. The processes of distinction and identification are thus running havoc on the boy's subjectivity. Further, in neither plot masculine performances can succeed through testing and proving masculinity. As was suggested earlier, the haunting return of the feminine principle undermines the Wild West-plot and the games of Indian warfare, which the narrator was less interested in than in the female protagonists of crime fiction. But in the miching-plot the boys fare no better to prove their masculinity, and they fail to do so ultimately because their performances consist of mere trifles and ineffective gestures, which furthermore strongly resemble Father Butler's values espoused in his prescribed reading of Caesar's adventures: structured like the latter's campaign in terms of order, structure and timetabling, the boys' adventure "reproduces exactly the kind of disciplined schema it desires to renounce" (Doherty 40). Yet, it eventually fails to do so because their trip is

“badly planned and disappointing, its failings only emphasised by the glamorised expectations of the protagonist’s imagination [. . .]” (Mullin 37-38). Finally, the goals towards which the plots drive are exposed as not offering the promised proof of masculinity either: The Wild West-plot aims at escaping the stricture of formal education in school and the formation of masculinity in an unofficial way through masculine performance under the eyes of the peer group. This aim is frustrated, however, because the narrator perceives it as empty and demands for real adventures to fulfil the aim. In these, as we have seen, they arrive full circle at a situation in which a new teacher prescribes contradictory masculine values and exposes to them an unspoken perversion which undermines any notion of hegemony.

In the overall view of the formation of masculinity through the field of education, the outcomes of this story are threefold. First, the narrator’s assumption that cultural difference could be “waived” (*D* 12) through performances of masculinity was unrealistic and naïve. Second, as the doubling of the pair Father Butler/queer old jossler shows, the boy cannot escape normative notions of masculinity and sexuality because they will haunt him even as he tries to evade them. And third, what the boy learns is that neither theory nor practice of masculinity guarantee ontological security for the subject. Masculinity is like femininity always “a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end” (*GT* 43), and the task to engage with shifting meanings and valuations is a burden that the subject has to carry. In a complex manner, “An Encounter” plays with difference in the formation of masculinities, while at the same time strengthening the general notion of masculinity which needs to be tested, fought for and proven. That these formations are produced by narrative means is ironically exemplified in the boys’ final assumption of the pseudonyms Smith and Murphy. Brandon Kershner writes that “even there he does not escape the round of fictions surrounding him, for he assigns Mahony, a lower-class, Irish name, ‘Murphy’, and chooses for himself the higher-status Anglo-Irish name of ‘Smith’. Both names, of course, are banal; but that merely emphasises the poverty of the imaginative resources available to him” (*Joyce* 45). Not only dependent on fictionalisation, these identities make the boys generic characters, and through this performative gesture, they become *Everyman* in both the universal but also gendered sense, which makes the formation of masculinity again both a private and a public

endeavour and furthermore blurs the lines between individual and the institutions of school and fiction.

Chapter 4.3

Painful lessons in

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Like “An Encounter”, Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* negotiates various ways in which the institution of the school forms and educates masculine identities. The school here functions as the formative and normative space in which notions of masculinity are displayed by teachers of the church, and against which the boys must develop their own understanding of masculinity and masculinities. In *A Portrait*, as in the previously discussed text, the relationship between narrative structure and masculinity is especially relevant to a discussion of these formations. Whereas in the former story, different plots competed against each other to express different forms of masculinity, in *A Portrait* I will focus on the gendered nature of the narrative dynamics of genre to show how masculinity is constructed and deconstructed in the text. In order to explicate why genre is relevant in a discussion of gender in fiction, I will look at Breon Mitchell’s definition of the *Bildungsroman*, which will provide a starting point for my discussion of masculinity and narrative:

The notion of the *Bildungsroman* is a simple one: the author treats the life of a young man through the important years of his spiritual development, usually from boyhood through adolescence. He is shown as being formed and changed by interaction with his milieu, and with the world. (62)

From a feminist narratological perspective, it is significant that Mitchell naturally assumes a male protagonist (“young man”) but that the “milieu” within which this young man is formed is rather generic, and he does not consider specific homosocial contexts that shape and inform masculine practices. A feminist narratological approach to the genre will, therefore, first question the assumed neutrality of formal structures regarding their gendered valence. *A Portrait* can, in this process, be read as a journey on which the young Stephen Dedalus is confronted with various specifically male

antagonists, whom he has to confront and leave behind him to become an artist (cf. Harkness 54-76). The goal of a gender narratological approach must, therefore, be to analyse Stephen's antagonists not just as gender-neutral opponents to his development but as representatives of individual forms of masculinity against which Stephen will develop his own interpretation of gender. Equally important are the settings of these male confrontations because these, too, must be queried as to their inherent gendered value and as to the question in how far their forms and structures benefit the development of specific masculinities and reject or deny others. As Mitchell further writes, the genre is also interested in the "relationship of the individual to society, the values and norms of that society, and the ease or difficulty with which a good man can enter into it" (62). From a feminist or gendered narratological perspective, a discussion of a *Bildungsroman* like *A Portrait*, necessitates to shed light on the gendered nature of those seemingly neutral and universal categories and settings. Often, this view will show that these novels depict specifically homosocial settings, a change of perspective that will yield more complex and interesting results than the assumption of a gender-neutral "society" as in the definition above. Taking specifically homosocial settings into account suggests also to critically query the gendered particulars of the passage from "boyhood to adolescence" that is so characteristic of the genre. Rather than a linear process which will result in a uniform and, for that matter, predictable form of identity, the possibility of various masculinities and modes of formation can be assumed from a critical cultural perspective.⁶⁰

The present chapter will, therefore, focus on the formative power of Stephen's father and teachers in the Clongowes Wood passages. The text establishes, through Stephen's father Simon, a form of masculinity that can be seen as hegemonic, expressing a code of masculine honour, which Stephen takes as the norm. As he enters Clongowes Wood, Stephen finds himself in a homosocial site whose function it is to form the boy into a man. In this process, he is integrated into a strictly hierarchical education system which establishes its own code of masculine behaviour. In the interaction with the priests, Stephen's sense of masculinity is both reinforced and

⁶⁰ For other genre-oriented readings focussing on *A Portrait* as a *Bildungsroman*, see Tindall, Beebe, Buckley and Parrinder. More recently, theoretically-informed readings have been offered by Castle (*Reading*), Valente ("Thrilled") and Froula ("Gender and the Law of Genre").

destabilised at the same time. This instability results from a constant renegotiation of the masculine values of homosocial solidarity with which his father had sent him to the school. In a number of painful lessons, the priests betray this solidarity various times, leaving Stephen with an acute sense of loss. Eventually, the two models clash and leave Stephen disoriented because he does not understand what masculinity is and which code he is supposed to follow. Finally, however, Stephen's own betrayal of this ideal of homosocial solidarity enables him to become accepted by the priests and become integrated into the hierarchical order of the Jesuits. Eventually, this acceptance of masculinity, defined as order and hierarchy, is the first necessary step to becoming an artist who transcends all such hierarchies and becomes independent. To dramatise this development of the artist as a young *man*, the text works with patterns and structures that establish masculine norms and rejects them again in order to dramatise the competition between heterogeneous masculinities in the school setting against which Stephen has to find his own way.

* * *

Clongowes Wood was a prestigious and expensive boarding school during Joyce's time, and it befits the aspirations of Simon Dedalus to desire the best possible education for his oldest son, Stephen. Indeed, in order to grasp the narrative dynamics with which Stephen's integration into the Jesuit order is developed, it is first necessary to emphasise the role of Stephen's father. Simon Dedalus instils in Stephen the desire to become integrated into the Jesuit system and provides him with a masculine code of honour, which serves as a role model of masculinity in the following plot. Right at the beginning of his time at the boarding school, Stephen says farewell to his parents, and Simon leaves him with his "pearls of paternal wisdom" (Scott, *James Joyce* 48): "And his father had given him two fiveshilling pieces for pocket money. And his father had told him if he wanted anything to write home to him and, whatever he did, never to peach on a fellow" (P 7). As Suzette Henke comments, "[a]rmed with ten shillings and his father's injunction toward a code of masculine loyalty, he enters the competitive joust of life at Clongowes determined to adopt an ethic of manly stoicism [. . .]" (*Politics of Desire* 54). But as a closer look at the further developments shows, the scene has far

greater importance. Simon offers an implicit narrative of masculinity here that stresses that betrayal of a peer is strictly prohibited. This central notion of masculine behaviour effectively defines and upholds a code of masculine honour, intended “[t]o facilitate Stephen’s male-bonding at school” (Scott, *James Joyce* 48). Eventually, this admonition establishes a crucial function for young Stephen’s school career, as Simon sets a standard of masculinity which corresponds to Connell’s form of hegemonic masculinity (cf. Mahaffey “Père-version” 124-25). Thus, the text establishes within its story-logic a prestigious ideal of masculine subjectivity against which all following standards will be measured.⁶¹ In the following interaction with his teachers, this standard of masculinity will develop into a narrative motif that constantly shifts in meaning and function, and which will eventually deconstruct the implied narrative of homosocial solidarity.

Within the logic of masculinity in the text, Father Arnall is the first teacher of masculinity against whom the standard that Simon Dedalus sets is measured. The motif of homosocial solidarity is underlined in his style of teaching when he creates a narrative of male competition. Thus, in Stephen’s sums class, Father Arnall attempts to promote his pupils’ competitiveness through a role-play which divides the class into the historical antagonists of York and Lancaster:

It was the hour for sums. Father Arnall wrote a hard sum on the board and then said:

—Now then, who will win? Go ahead, York! Go ahead, Lancaster!

Stephen tried his best but the sum was too hard and he felt confused. The little silk badge with the white rose on it that was pinned on the breast of his jacket began to flutter. He was no good at sums but he tried his best so that York might not lose. Father Arnall’s face looked very black but he was not in a wax: he was laughing. Then Jack Lawton cracked his fingers and Father Arnall looked at his copybook and said:

—Right. Bravo Lancaster! The red rose wins. Come on now, York! Forge ahead! (P 9-10)

The teaching method of “emulation”, as Bruce Bradley informs, is historical and was “recommended by the *Ratio Studiorum*” (41). It predicates learning on rivalry, which makes learning itself an activity that is predicated on the performance of masculine behaviours. It is, of course, not without irony that an Irish Jesuit resorts to English

⁶¹ See chapter 2.2 for a discussion of the ideological function of narrative. As theorised by Genette, narrative sets standard notions of norms and values, which its story-logic then helps to naturalise. Cf. Mahaffey, who argues that this ideology is both homophobic and misogynist (Mahaffey, “Père-version” 124-5).

military history for his education of Irish Catholic boys (Carens 304). However, this narrative embedding of the boys fulfils an important function for the formation of masculinity. It stresses the authority of the school and employs a military analogy to further the idea that education is a form of competition, which results in a differentiation of the boys regarding prestige or marginality. Furthermore, the historical analogy for this rivalry is militaristic, which embeds the scholastic competition in a historical framework which is itself a negotiation of masculinity in terms of the struggle for power and prowess. This mode of distinguishing between the better and less able boys also has a homosocial aspect which relates to the idea of solidarity. Since masculine prestige is at stake in this game, engagement in the game will strengthen the idea of masculinity as such. The passage can, therefore, be seen as ironically commenting on Bourdieu's assertion that the serious "games that are constitutive of social existence" are really ones in which "a man is also a child playing at being a man" (*MD* 75). Henke writes,

The Jesuit masters at Clongowes [. . .] introduce him to a system of male authority and discipline, to a pedagogical regimen that will ensure his correct training and proper socialization. Through examinations that put red roses against white, Yorks against Lancastrians, they make education an aggressive game of simulated warfare in which the students, like soldiers, are depersonalised through institutional surveillance. (*Politics of Desire* 56)

In this militarisation of the classroom, Stephen is, however, not marginalised because he loses at the game but because he refuses to take part in the competition in the first place. As Carens writes, "[e]ven on the intellectual level, where he does stand out, Stephen is not aggressive, surrendering to his rival [. . .]" (282). When Stephen at least attempts to compete and engage in the masculine role-play for the sake of his "House", he demonstrates that he has a basic understanding of the idea of masculinity and the code of homosocial honour: "Some weeks Jack Lawton got the card for first and some weeks he got the card for first" (*P* 10). However, his following reaction betrays an unconscious realisation of the absurdity of the game and its masculine values when he muses on the beauty of the colours rather than their military significance and asks about the possibility of a green rose: "He could not get out the answer for the sum but it did not matter. White roses and red roses: those were beautiful colours to think of. [. . .] But you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the

world you could” (P 10). The symbolic valence of the green rose has been read by Christine Froula as “foreshadow[ing] Stephen’s art, evoking a fantasy world ‘some-where’ that symbolically restores what Stephen’s real world of fathers, priests, and male schoolmates compels him to renounce” (*Modernism’s Body* 43).⁶² Thus, Stephen refuses to read the narrative of male competition, and through his solipsistic fantasy, he betrays the code of homosociality established by Father Arnall (cf. Fairhall, *Question of History* 114).

It should be noted that Stephen’s avoidance of competing in this way does not mean that he has defied the masculine code his father had established, but it means that he defies the expectations at Clongowes. This refusal to play the role the school intends him to play will be punished in the subsequent narrative, and in this punishment, Father Arnall has a central role which takes into question the motif of homosocial solidarity that his father had established earlier. In preparation for the infamous pandybat scene, the narrative further develops the motifs which Father Arnall’s York/Lancaster game initiated. When the pupil Jack Lawton is unable to decline the Latin word *mare*, Father Arnall berates his failure in the competition in front of the whole class: “—You should be ashamed of yourself, said Father Arnall sternly. You, the leader of the class!” (P 41). By referring to Jack Lawton’s prestigious position, the teacher emphasises the hierarchy among the boys which is a result of his masculinity game. That the strongest competitor in that game has disappointed him is thereby an insult to that game. When Father Arnall understands that none of the other pupils can give the correct answer, he is enraged by the insight that the collective failure of the boys to compete has made his game redundant:

Then he asked Fleming and Fleming said that that word had no plural. Father Arnall suddenly shut the book and shouted at him:
—Kneel out there in the middle of the class. You are one of the idlest boys I ever met. Copy out your themes again the rest of you.
Fleming moved heavily out of his place and knelt between the two last benches. The other boys bent over their themebooks and began to write. A silence filled the classroom and Stephen, glancing timidly at Father Arnall’s

⁶² Her further argument that the rose “is at once a secret elegy for his repressed feminine self and a prophecy of the art that [. . .] will symbolically resurrect the buried self” (43) is in, my opinion, too strongly fixated on an inflexible psychoanalytic paradigm and therefore difficult to support with the text. For diverse other interpretations of the green rose as symbol cf. Tindall (91), Carens (302), Cheng (72), Valente (“Thrilled” 52).

dark face, saw that it was a little red from the wax he was in. (P 41-2)

By thus singling out Fleming for individual punishment on behalf of his failure, Father Arnall attempts to re-establish the homosocial solidarity which underlies his competitive game by naming the clear loser of the game. This amounts to the paradoxical situation in which the narrative motifs of masculine solidarity and hierarchy are made co-dependent. This notion of hierarchy is not questioned by Stephen either, as Stephen's reaction exemplifies:

Was that a sin for Father Arnall to be in a wax or was he allowed to get into a wax when the boys were idle because that made them study better or was he only letting on to be in a wax? It was because he was allowed because a priest would know what a sin was and would not do it. But if he did it one time by mistake what would he do to go to confession? Perhaps he would go to confession to the minister. And if the minister did it he would go to the rector: and the rector to the provincial: and the provincial to the general of the jesuits. That was called the order [. . .]" (P 42).

Stephen thereby rationalises Father Arnall's behaviour, the "wax" he is in, as an element in the clear and stable hierarchy of the church. The boys themselves are therefore fully inculcated in this system and the belief in the authority that the Jesuit hierarchy guarantees. It is with this faith in the reliability of the institution that Stephen accepts his subordination and the violent authority that he is subjected to. Significantly, his acceptance is grounded in his father's advice as well: "That was called the order: and he had heard his father say that they were all clever men. They could all have become highup people in the world if they had not become jesuits" (P 42). Thus, the idea of male solidarity as motivated in the narrative by his father is developed into a concept of solidarity within a hierarchy as represented by the Jesuit order, which, even if Stephen tends to be marginalised in school, offers him, for the moment, a stable system of orientation.

This belief in the reliability of male solidarity-in-hierarchy is shattered in the following *pandybat* scene, however. Here, Father Arnall fails to support Stephen against the unjust punishment at the hands of the director of studies, which exemplifies his fallibility and his ambiguous status as a masculine role model (Carens 284-85; cf. Epstein 37). After Father Dolan has punished Stephen wrongly for not writing his theme, Father Arnall tries to make up for the severity of the punishment:

The hushed class continued to copy out the themes. Father Arnall rose from

his seat and went among them, helping the boys with gentle words and telling them the mistakes they had made. His voice was very gentle and soft. Then he returned to his seat and said to Fleming and Stephen:

—You may return to your places, you two. (P 45)

On the level of content, the passage emphasises Father Arnall's gentleness and his role as a father/friend, which contrasts with his earlier anger and the following cruel punishment through Father Dolan. This shifting role is underlined on the level of style, which similarly humanises and individualises the teacher. In this way, the passage constantly employs the active voice to refer to Father Arnall's actions ("rose", "went", "helping", "telling"), and the reference to his voice employs positive and pleasant adjectives ("very gentle and soft"). However, while these are Stephen's perceptions, we can also see that he blames Father Arnall for letting this injustice happen to him. As Stephen realises, his teacher tries to compensate for the severity of the punishment but not for its injustice:

It was cruel and unfair to make him kneel in the middle of the class then: and Father Arnall had told them both that they might return to their places without making any difference between them. He listened to Father Arnall's low and gentle voice as he corrected the themes. Perhaps he was sorry now and wanted to be decent. But it was unfair and cruel. The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair. (P 45-46)

Stephen primarily focuses on the insult to him resulting from the fact that Father Arnall did not distinguish between Fleming, who did do wrong, and Stephen himself, who did not. His anger therefore betrays his pride in being a diligent and obedient student and thus his belief in the masculinity game through which Father Arnall had structured his education of the boys. Stephen's choice of words underlines this further and attacks Father Arnall personally. When he thinks that Father Arnall "was sorry now and wanted to be decent", the expression *decent* assumes an ambiguous position. In earlier instances in the novel, the word was used to mean *friendly* or *forthcoming*, as in "Rody Kickham was a decent fellow but Nasty Roche was a stink" (P 6) or "Mr Harford was very decent and never got into a wax" (P 40).⁶³ But the usage here exceeds these connotations and looks forward to an instance in the second chapter of the novel where Stephen explicitly makes a connection between honourableness and

⁶³ See also the examples "Fleming was very decent to ask him" (P 11) and "He was very decent to say that. That was all to make him laugh" (P 19).

masculinity: “the voice of his school comrades urged him to be a decent fellow, to shield others from blame or to beg them off and to do his best to get free days for the school” (P 73). Here, the word *decent* refers to a notion of group solidarity and honour, embodied especially by Stephen’s rival Heron and his “spirit of quarrelsome comradeship” (P 73), which Stephen stage explicitly rejects at this later: “He mistrusted the turbulence and doubted the sincerity of such comradeship which seemed to him a *sorry anticipation of manhood*. The question of honour here raised was, like all such questions, trivial to him” (P 73, my emphasis). Decency and honour can therefore be seen as fundamental principles of the boyish code of masculinity at Belvedere, the school he will attend during his adolescence.

Significantly, this connotation of “decent” also resonates with Simon Dedalus’ injunction “never to peach on a fellow” (P 7), which exemplifies his fatherly instruction in masculine behaviour. The betrayal that many critics have seen in Father Arnall’s failure to defend Stephen against Father Dolan is therefore primarily a betrayal of the masculine norms that the narrative had established earlier in the text. This connection is supported by the fact that Stephen had indeed followed his father’s first well-intended order that “if he wanted anything to write home to him” (P 7): “It was unfair and cruel because the doctor had told him not to read without glasses and he had written home to his father that morning to send him a new pair” (P 45). The reiterated mentioning of “unfair and cruel” in connection with Father Arnall’s assumed decency is therefore ambiguous: on the one hand, both qualifiers attach to the act of Father Dolan pandying Stephen, which is substantiated by the reference to his status as a priest: “The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair” (P 46). On the other hand, “cruel and unfair” is also an evaluation of Father Arnall’s betrayal of the masculine values Stephen has learned from his father, when seen in the context of Stephen’s diligence in following his father’s advice (to write home).⁶⁴ Connecting thus widely dispersed gendered motifs and phrases, the narrative in this scene manifests “an ‘unconscious’ textual memory or series of repetitions [. . .]” (Parrinder 80) which proliferate masculinity through the narrative.

⁶⁴ Cf. Müller-Wood, who reads Stephen’s and the boys’ principal acceptance of the punishment and order at Clongowes as an instance of the text challenging readers’ “ability to distinguish between man-made, ‘conventional’ rules and a sense of what is morally ‘right’” (154).

* * *

The gruelling scene of Stephen's punishment through Father Dolan is a pivotal point for the negotiation of the masculine values that the text established earlier. Father Dolan himself is an ambiguous figure in that respect. He stands in between the father/Father figures Simon, Father Arnall and the rector Father Conmee, who are all individualised in the text and who negotiate the masculine values of male group solidarity that the narrative established through Simon at the beginning ("never peach on a fellow"). Father Dolan, however, embodies the notion that these values are unstable in the educational institution of Clongowes. This notion, as we will see, is made manifest through a highly ambiguous narrative technique, which vacillates between individualising and de-individualising Dolan in the scene of punishing Stephen.

Already through his introduction in the scene Father Dolan embodies the anonymous power of the teachers' absolute control over their students at Clongowes. This total authority is realised most drastically in the depiction of Stephen's punishment when Dolan hits him with a pandybat on both hands and in which the narrative de-individualises Father Dolan in order to stress the absoluteness of educational authority. This de-individualisation is already foreshadowed by the way Father Dolan enters the classroom, as the description here stresses Dolan's position within the Jesuit order while also reducing his individuality to a metonymic representation of his power: "The door opened quietly and closed. A quick whisper ran through the class: the prefect of studies. There was an instant of dead silence and then the loud crack of a pandybat on the last desk" (*P* 42). The anonymity of this entrance – sudden and ghost-like – highlights the sense of anonymous surveillance that the boys are subjected to, while the reference to his title, rather than to his name, stresses his abstract power over the classroom, including Father Arnall. Finally, the reference to the sound of the pandybat blurs his authoritative presence with the instrument of his power, and it furthermore represents the fear that his entry has produced in the boys. Thus, this technique of metonymic character construction emphasises the pervasiveness of the Jesuits' authority in Clongowes as well as the fact that Stephen is subjected to a system rather than to a single teacher.

The narrative further develops the technique of de-individualisation through the act of striking. The representation of this violent action merges the striker with his instrument, which de-emphasises human agency and stresses the systemic nature of his violence. The first strike focuses strongly on Stephen's perception of the pain. In the build-up to this sensation, his consciousness does not register that it is the priest who is striking him. Rather, his perception emphasises his feeling of the air that is moved by the priest's action and the touch of his fingers which prepare the strike: "Stephen closed his eyes and held out in the air his trembling hand with the palm upwards. He felt the prefect of studies touch it for a moment at the fingers to straighten it and then the swish of the sleeve of the soutane as the pandybat was lifted to strike" (P 44). In the second strike, the sensation of pain is realised furthermore by a synaesthetic experience, which attributes agency to the pandybat rather than the priest:

Stephen drew back his maimed and quivering right arm and held out his left hand. The soutane sleeve swished again as the pandybat was lifted and a loud crashing sound and a fierce maddening tingling burning pain made his hand shrink together with the palms and fingers in a livid quivering mass. (P 44)

Both Father Dolan and Stephen become disembodied in this passage: while Stephen's body is condensed to "a livid quivering mass", Father Dolan's is again reduced to "soutane sleeve" and "pandybat", and his de-individualisation is further underlined by the use of passive voice ("was lifted"). The scene thereby constitutes an abstract depiction of the power of the priest, as Dolan becomes a mere instrument of violence, whereas Stephen becomes the individualised victim of a nameless and faceless system of authority.

While the narrative, in this way, de-individualises Father Dolan in order to stress the absolute and arbitrary authority of the priests, other passages show him as an individual again when the narrative turns to a new negotiation of masculine values. Thus, Father Dolan re-appears as a person with distinguishing traits in the boys' outraged discussion after the incident. Here, the boys focus their anger on him when debating the injustice inherent in the relationship between teachers and students. For instance, contrasting Father Dolan with Father Arnall's almost penitent decency, Stephen asserts: "The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair" (P 46).

While acknowledging the order of the Jesuits, Stephen's reflection moves from the formal position of the priest in the Jesuit hierarchy to his negative character traits in highly individualised terms. His further reference to Dolan makes use of metonymic representation when he says that "his whitegrey face and the nocoloured eyes behind the steelrimmed spectacles were cruel looking because he had steadied the hand first with his firm soft fingers and that was to hit it better and louder" (P 46). However, these metonyms are attributed *personal* cruelty and intention, and the main emphasis in the sentence lies on Dolan's intentional act of making the punishment more cruel and painful ("he had steadied the hand first", my emphasis). In another example, the other boys' assessment of the injustice witnessed individualises Father Dolan as well, rather than stressing the anonymous power of the priests:

—It's a stinking mean thing, that's what it is, said Fleming in the corridor as the classes were passing out in file to the refectory, to pandy a fellow for what is not his fault.

—You really broke your glasses by accident, didn't you? Nasty Roche asked. Stephen felt his heart filled by Fleming's words and did not answer.

—Of course he did! said Fleming. I wouldn't stand it. I'd go up and tell the rector on him.

—Yes, said Cecil Thunder eagerly, and I saw him lift the pandybat over his shoulder and he's not allowed to do that.

—Did they hurt you much? Nasty Roche asked.

—Very much, Stephen said.

—I wouldn't stand it, Fleming repeated, from Baldyhead or any other Baldyhead. It's a stinking mean low trick, that's what it is. I'd go straight up to the rector and tell him about it after dinner. (P 46)

The boys' outrage is realised as a narrative re-enactment of the incident, which unambiguously identifies the roles of villain and suffering hero. As the hero, Stephen is attributed the label of innocence ("—You really broke your glasses by accident, didn't you?") and expected to exert retribution to seek justice ("I wouldn't stand it. I'd go up and tell the rector on him."). The villain, on the other hand, is also clearly outlined in the way they allege that Father Dolan wilfully misinterpreted Stephen's version of the story. When the boys are branding Father Dolan's reinterpretation of Stephen's words "a stinking mean low trick", they thus give the pandybat a cruel but human face, which contrasts with the narrative disembodiment during the scene of punishment as discussed earlier. Finally, this return of Father Dolan as an individual is underlined by the slang used to characterise his sadism ("—It's a stinking mean thing, that's what it is")

and by mockingly referring to him as “Baldyhead”, which, again, re-establishes him as a personalised character rather than stressing his anonymous authority.⁶⁵

This discussion of the narrative construction of Father Dolan sheds light on Joyce’s technique, which I argue is crucial for an understanding of his treatment of masculinity in the educational setting. In Stephen’s thoughts about the pandying, he is not only upset because of his unfair treatment but equally confused about his misreading of the signifiers of hegemonic masculinity. For example, at the moment which leads to the striking of the pandybat, Stephen confuses the Father’s act of humiliating him with a gesture of recognition as a masculine subject: “He felt the touch of the prefect’s fingers as they had steadied his hand and at first he had thought he was going to shake hands with him because the fingers were soft and firm: but then in an instant he had heard the swish of the soutane sleeve and the crash” (*P* 45). These thoughts primarily express his confusion by conceiving his master to own one benevolent hand and one that is cruel. Furthermore, this is highlighted by the oxymoron “soft and firm”, which indicates Stephen’s unconscious awareness that both belong together and dramatises his sense of confusion. Critics using queer theoretical approaches see here a manifestation of Stephen’s unacknowledged homoerotic excitement. Valente, for instance, writes: “Stephen’s trauma at the pandying fixates upon the master’s touch because that is where Stephen’s unconscious wishes insert themselves into both the smuggling scandal and the larger homosocial-sexual economy of Clongowes” (“Thrilled” 56). Stephen’s perceptions of Father Dolan’s body are seen as indicators of Stephen’s latent openness to homoeroticism. Colleen Lamos similarly speaks of a “libidinal preoccupation with ‘the touch of the prefect’s fingers,’ [. . .]” and maintains: “The sensual charge of the experience underscores the ways in which Stephen’s punishment repeats in another register the flagellant fantasy and the homoerotic desires that energize the smuggling incident and that underlie the sexual economy of Clongowes” (“English Vice” 24-25). From a queer perspective, Stephen’s fixation on Father Dolan’s hand can thus be read as suggesting Stephen’s “agonizing, masochistic delight” (Lamos, “English Vice” 24; cf. Valente, “Thrilled” 56). However, these

⁶⁵ Note that shortly before the pandying, Stephen’s consciousness registers Dolan through metonyms: “Father Dolan’s whitegrey not young face, his baldy whitegrey head with fluff at the sides of it, the steel rims of his spectacles and his nocoloured eyes looking through the glasses” (*P* 44).

readings overlook the most basic valence of Stephen's obsession with shaking hands as a ritual of recognition between masculine subjects. I would therefore contend that, more importantly, Stephen assumed that by shaking hands with Father Dolan, the prefect of studies would recognise and accept him as a masculine subject, whereas, in reality, Father Dolan denies him this recognition of masculinity and shames him instead through exemplary punishment.⁶⁶

The importance of masculine practice in Father Dolan's actions can be further corroborated by a closer look at the accusations that the priest makes against Stephen, which connect to the masculine instructions Simon gave Stephen before entering Clongowes. Regarding their failed academic performances both Fleming ("A born idler!" [P 43]) and Stephen ("Lazy little schemer" [P 44]) are accused of failing to meet the Jesuit's work ethic. They are guilty, in other words, of undermining Clongowes' claim to promote an intellectual and societal elite, which is the image of education that exemplifies Simon Dedalus's yearning for social capital. The Jesuits' insistence on academic performance is thereby in line with Simon's desire for social prestige, and Stephen's alleged laziness, therefore, defies Simon's value system of hegemonic masculinity which he intended to hand over to his son. Stephen, who knows that this accusation is wrong, must, therefore, interpret the punishment as a failure in the eyes of his father, too.

The relevance of the scene for Simon's claim to prestige is further underlined by the fact that Father Dolan's wrath coincides with his ignorance of Stephen's name. Seeing that Stephen does not write like the others, Dolan inquires brusquely: "You, boy, who are you?" (P 43). After Father Arnall explains to his colleague that Stephen is exempt from work, Dolan asks a second time for the name that he has apparently forgotten, but this time with even more disdain: "—Broke? What is this I hear? *What is this* your name is?" (P 43, my emphasis). This attack on Stephen's name and origin is a motif that the narrative reiterates to stress the importance of both for Stephen's prestige. Father Dolan's disrespect resonates, for instance, with Nasty Roche's earlier

⁶⁶ As Gregory Castle argues, "the homoerotic energies" of these and other scenes are part of the genre of the *Bildungsroman* as such ("Confessing Oneself" 157). Note also that the connection between punisher and punished, which these queer arguments rely on, was pointed out already a long time ago in Morris Beja's essay "The Wooden Sword".

inquiry about Stephen's name and his father's social position: "— What kind of a name is that? And when Stephen had not been able to answer Nasty Roche had asked: —What is your father? [. . .] —Is he a magistrate? (*P* 6-7). Another echo of this motif occurs when Father Arnall does not distinguish between him and Fleming after the pandying, and Father Dolan now shows equally "little respect" for Stephen's extraordinary name and "difference" from the other boys (Epstein 45). For the young boy from a household of high "social pretensions" (Parrinder 87), this "injustice" is seen as an assault on his father's claim to prestige and social capital. That Stephen had diligently tried to follow his father's wishes and advice is made clear by his humiliated reaction after returning to his seat again: "Stephen, scarlet with shame, opened a book quickly with one weak hand and bent down upon it, his face close to the page" (*P* 45). Stephen is somatically affected by the shame that accusation and punishment put on him, and he is at pains to compensate for it, thereby completely subjecting himself to the priestly authority. But later, when he contemplates his insurrection against the injustice, his indignity also suggests a wound of pride related to his father's class consciousness: "Then to be called a schemer before the class and to be pandied when he always got the card for first or second and was the leader of the Yorkists!" (*P* 45). This reaction marks a change in Stephen, who had earlier displayed no particular interest in being a leader. At this moment, his reaction betrays a sense of wounded pride as a leader and his full integration into the military school symbolism of the Houses of York and Lancaster discussed earlier.

The second accusation made by Father Dolan further complicates the gendered context of Stephen's punishment. By calling Stephen a "schemer" who tries to play "[a]n old schoolboy trick" (*P* 44), Dolan thus accuses him of dishonesty and deceptiveness. When Stephen explains to Father Dolan that he is not able to write because he broke his glasses, the priest's cry "I know that trick" indicates his assumption that boys regularly undermine the authority of their teachers through deception (*P* 44). This interpretation of Stephen's explanation can be construed to resonate negatively with Simon's Dedalus' injunction not to peach on a fellow, which is essentially a warning not to sacrifice masculine group solidarity in order to please superiors. Defending group solidarity at all costs would sooner or later necessitate lying to the priests, and indeed, Stephen does not blame the cycling student who pushed him into the

cinderpath but remains silent. However, Stephen's heeding his Father's masculine advice does not pay off for him in this situation because Father Dolan assumes absolute power over the interpretation of Stephen's confessional narrative. In this way, following Simon's advice has led Stephen to an aporia of masculinity which results from the fact that his *father's* norms and values collide with the reaction of his *Fathers*.

As a consequence to this attack on his masculinity and his father's aspirations, Stephen retaliates with the powers of art that he has at his disposal and creates a vision of Father Dolan which not only addresses his own wounded masculine pride but also attacks the masculinity of the other:

He thought of the baldy head of the prefect of studies with the cruel nocoloured eyes looking at him and he heard the voice of the prefect of studies asking him twice what his name was. Why could he not remember the name when he was told the first time? Was he not listening the first time or was it to make fun out of the name? The great men in the history had names like that and nobody made fun of them. It was his own name that he should have made fun of if he wanted to make fun. Dolan: it was like the name of a woman who washed clothes. (P 48)

Stephen first refers to Father Dolan through metonymic representation again, taking up the narrative motif used earlier in the pandybat scene. This time, however, the feeling of terror is no longer overpowering him, and he slowly begins to assert himself and assume a sense of superiority over the Father. Metonymically reducing Dolan to his bald head and cruel eyes, Stephen again de-individualises his master, but this time, the effect is a reduction of the teacher as a figure of authority. This is underlined by the insistent questioning with which Stephen tries to make sense of Dolan's intentions. What distinguishes this scene from the last ones is Stephen's sudden defiance, expressed by his irritation about Father Dolan not remembering his name. A newly acquired confidence can be perceived in the way Stephen questions the teacher's competence ("Why could he not remember the name when he was told the first time?") as well as his intentions and professionalism ("Was he not listening the first time or was it to make fun out of the name?"). The attack on Stephen's name is, after all, also an attack on the masculine credibility of his own father, who "presides over the symbolic realm of names, stories, and songs and prophesies the son's heroic future [. . .]

(Froula, *Modernism's Body* 42).⁶⁷ In reaction to this attack, Stephen is looking for support from “great men in the history” which his Clongowes education has taught him to idolise and with whom he now associates himself and his father. In revenge for the insult against his origin and thereby against his masculine identity, Stephen retaliates with an attack on the Father’s own name (“Dolan: it was like the name of a woman who washed clothes.”). Epstein writes that Stephen’s act of avenging himself can be seen as “the son-artist’s first attempt at counterattack”, which marks a crucial step towards his role as an artist since the passage constitutes the “the first appearance of the artist’s satirical weapon” (46). With a view of the overall structure of this *Bildungsroman*, this is an important insight. But it should be complemented by noting also the gendered nature of this attack. Stephen’s retaliation testifies to an attempt at virile self-assertion. But this is not simply an act of resistance with which he proves the test of masculine resilience. What makes this attack a “homosocial enactment” in Michael Kimmel’s sense (see chapter 1) is the fact that it is based on “male-biased values that allow him to feel superior to his punisher”, as Bonnie Kime Scott has remarked (*James Joyce* 20). The fear of being not masculine enough dictates the terms of this counterattack, which takes into question the other’s status, but even more than that, Stephen also employs a “satirical weapon” (Epstein 46) which is based on masculine superiority over the feminine. In Scott’s words, “Stephen has learned that women in domestic service deserve low regard; great men in history are respectable” (*James Joyce* 20). The androcentric worldview with which Stephen develops his artistic skills here to defend his masculine identity is, of course, a direct result of his education in Clongowes Wood’s strictly homosocial educational setting, and it shows Stephen’s full interpellation into the hierarchical thinking at his school. It is therefore only consequential that Stephen, looking up to his teachers as well as to the great men in history, sees as a solution to his problem to address the rector of Clongowes, Father Conmee from whom he hopes to regain the recognition among men that Father Dolan has forsaken him by forgetting his name and punishing him unjustly.

⁶⁷ See especially Froula’s detailed analysis of the Moocow story that Simon tells Stephen. This embedded micro-narrative early in the novel can be seen as laying the basis for the later artist’s gendered worldview (*Modernism's Body* 41-5).

* * *

It is with this consciousness of masculinity and hierarchy in mind that Stephen decides to see the rector of Clongowes, Father Conmee, for an interview about the incident. If, as I have argued, Simon Dedalus's advice to his son has established the standard of hegemonic masculinity in the narrative, it is especially against Father Conmee that this standard has to be measured. The interview, which ends the first chapter and provides a rehabilitating victory for Stephen, develops several issues raised earlier. First, Father Conmee holds the highest position in an institution that emphasises the idea of order and a clear hierarchy.⁶⁸ The fact that Stephen appeals to Father Conmee shows that he has acquired "a feel for the game" (Bourdieu qtd. in Maton 53) at Clongowes and that he begins to develop the educational habitus that the Jesuit institution produces. His reaction is, of course, also a moment of proud defiance against authority, but as an analysis of the passage shows, it is primarily a moment of reciprocal recognition for Stephen: the masculine authority recognises him as a masculine subject, and, in turn, this facilitates his acceptance of this authority.

As the highest-ranking priest at the school, Father Conmee primarily represents absolute authority within the character constellation of teachers and pupils in the narrative. Both Conmee and Father Dolan are "masculine embodiments of Church authority" as Gregory Castle notes (*Reading* 165), but in contrast to the pandybat scene, Father Conmee is not depicted as enforcing this authority physically. His style of teaching is instead characterised by a humane and charismatic representation of the institution he leads (cf. Castle, *Reading* 165). The structural contrast between the two men is discernible in the interview scene when Stephen summons up all his courage to complain about his mistreatment to the director of the school:

In the interview which follows, he [Father Conmee] is everything that Fr Dolan had not been in the parallel scene in Fr Arnall's classroom. There is a skull on the desk and the room is 'solemn', but the rector has a 'kindlooking face' (302). When Stephen hesitates, terrified at his own audacity in coming to the rector, Fr Conmee waits encouragingly. Unlike Dolan, who had had to ask it twice, Fr

⁶⁸ This hierarchy was hinted at earlier when Father Dolan, who is higher in the school hierarchy than Father Arnall, simply ignores the latter's explanation of Stephen's failure to participate in class work (*P* 43-44). Stephen also considers the school hierarchy when he ponders about his teachers going to confession (*P* 42).

Conmee knows Stephen's name without being told. He questions him patiently and follows his stumbling, tearful narrative until everything is clear and the small boy is satisfied. As Stephen withdraws, Don Jon Conmee bows courteously to him and Stephen returns the bow. (77-78)

Structurally, then, Father Conmee is a double of Father Dolan in terms of representing authority, and here, the former's benevolence contrasts with the brutality of the latter, qualifying Stephen's notion of the accepted teaching style at Clongowes Wood. It is equally important to bear in mind, however, that Father Conmee also represents hegemonic masculinity within the school context, understood here as the embodiment of masculine practice which holds the highest possible prestige within that social space. Structurally, Conmee is also implicitly measured by the standards that Simon Dedalus set at the beginning of Stephen's school career. A closer look at the passage reveals many correspondences and contrasts. Like Father Dolan before him, the narrative represents Father Conmee through an alternating and sometimes blending of humanising features and distancing depersonalisation. However, in contrast to most other teachers and Dolan especially, the rector's personal features are always genuinely benevolent, even regarding those elements that emphasise the power of the institution behind him (cf. Bradley 75, 77).

Since the scene is almost entirely written in dialogue, there is no occasion for the de-personalising metonymies used earlier, and Father Conmee's imposing authority is construed through his attitude towards Stephen during the conversation.⁶⁹ One example is Father Conmee's friendly but slightly patronising initial address to Stephen: "—Well, my little man, said the rector, what is it?" (P 49). Certainly belittling the young boy who has ventured to his office, the rector nevertheless takes his presence seriously and shows an openness to his query. Throughout the interview, Conmee is furthermore described as smiling and showing a forthcoming manner. In contrast to Father Dolan, Conmee lets Stephen finish his narrative about the accident and allows him to provide further details: in the former passage, Stephen tells Father Dolan that he had broken his glasses in an accident on the cinderpath. The latter reacts with sardonic suspiciousness, crying "—Hoho! The Cinderpath! [. . .] I know that trick" (P 44). In contrast, Father Conmee reacts in a controlled and benevolent way: "The rector

⁶⁹ Although the skull on the rector's desk is certainly ambivalent in this respect.

looked at him again in silence. Then he smiled and said: —O, well, it was a mistake; I am sure Father Dolan did not know” (*P* 50). In this way, this and Conmee’s further interactions with the young boy are structured “as a series of courteous responses which tacitly admit Stephen’s equality as a participant in the question-and-answer sequence”, as David Seed notes (56). By accepting Stephen’s version of the incident and rationalising Father Dolan’s severe reaction, Father Conmee attempts to allow both to save their faces while at the same time underlining his and the institution’s authority (cf. Harkness 93). Promising to settle the problem with Father Dolan personally and exempting Stephen from his studies for a couple of days, Father Conmee uses this authority to put closure to the incident. Stephen’s mission is, therefore, a success, and as a result, Conmee’s “willingness to accept his [Stephen’s] statements triggers off a wave of new respect in Stephen for the Clongowes authorities [. . .]” (Seed 57).

Stephen’s success at rectifying the injustice he suffered is thus ultimately underlining the principle of masculine authority and hierarchy at Clongowes, which, we must remember, was recommended by Stephen’s father, Simon, who wanted him to attend this school and integrate into its educational culture. From the viewpoint of masculine subjectivity, Conmee has succeeded in re-establishing the stability of the homosocial group. He has addressed an imbalance in the form of Stephen’s complaint, and he has thereby prevented unrest among the boys. More importantly, however, he has offered Stephen recognition as a masculine subject and thereby integrates him again into the homosocial order of the school.

This achievement is underlined thematically and structurally, as the handshake-scene thematically reiterates two motifs that had taken Stephen’s masculinity in question, and it contrasts structurally with the way Stephen was treated by Father Dolan. Whereas the latter’s cruelty was largely rendered through de-personalised representation (see above), it is Conmee’s individualised actions which acknowledge Stephen as a masculine subject. In this respect, Conmee’s acknowledging question “—Your name is Dedalus, isn’t it?” (*P* 50) contrasts with Dolan’s failure to recall Stephen’s name. And, furthermore, it is significant that this question is followed by his offer of a handshake to seal their meeting at the end of the scene (*P* 50). As we saw above, Father Dolan’s punishment was narratively de-personalised, stressing the swish of the soutane rather than his hand or face or even the *pandybat* as an extension of his body.

The narrative discourse thereby emphasised the anonymous power of the institution. Father Conmee's gestures, however, emphasise his individual benevolence, and they are therefore narrated as personal actions. The structural contrast thereby supports the closure that Stephen's success has gained regarding the question of his masculinity and integration into the homosocial group. Thematically, the question about his name and the handshake both reiterate earlier instances when Stephen's masculinity was critically scrutinised. So, with regard to his name, Stephen was denied acknowledgement by both his peers and teachers, leaving him lost as to where he belongs to and what his social status is. Punishment and acknowledgement do contrast on a corporeal as well. The infliction of pain de-individualises both the punisher and the punished, especially as the latter's bodily integrity is violated. The confirmation through the handshake not only leaves the bodily integrity intact, but also establishes a connection through a temporary contact. In a subtle way, the narrative discourse underlines this contrast by fleshing out the action (shaking hands) that was in the earlier scene implied to increase the pain: Conmee's handshake thereby resonates with Stephen's reflection of the pandying scene when he remembers that "at first he had thought he was going to shake hands with him because the fingers were soft and firm" (P 45). The narrative thus doubles in Father Conmee two central instances from before in which Stephen's masculinity was questioned and which led to his momentary exclusion from the homosocial group in the educational field. In this way, the narrative structures skilfully underline the theme of the passage, Stephen's reintegration into the peer group and educational setting, which is much more valuable for him than rectifying the injustice of the pandying incident.

* * *

The reinstatement of Stephen's boyish masculinity and his reintegration into the male group come at a price, however. We remember that Stephen's masculinity is reinstated through the authority of Father Conmee, who represents the most normative form of masculinity in the setting according to the story-logic of the text. Before that, however, Simon Dedalus had set the overall standard of masculinity for Stephen, and this standard, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, was predicated on a set of masculine values, among which was first and foremost the imperative to uphold homosocial solidarity and the taboo on backstabbing and betrayal. And yet, this is exactly what Stephen does when he goes to Father Conmee to get his masculinity reinstated. Acting contrary to his father's advice never to peach on a fellow, Stephen denounces Father Dolan personally in order to point to the iniquity of his punishment, thereby effectively undermining the Father's authority and taking his judgement into question: "— O, well, it was a mistake. I am sure Father Dolan did not know. —But I told him I broke them, sir, and he pandied me" (*P* 50). This act manifests Stephen's willingness to assert himself at the cost of others.⁷⁰ So, his recognition through his superior Father Conmee comes at the cost of neglecting his father's admonition and thereby he distances himself from the masculinity that his father offered him and instead embraces the hierarchy represented by the Jesuit order. He thus adapts to Clongowes rather than asserting the masculine subjectivity his father instructed him for. Effectively, then, Stephen sets the hierarchy of the school as higher than his father's credo not to betray male group solidarity, and thus the formation of masculinity, which began with his father's instruction, ends with the full integration of Stephen into the hierarchical system of the Jesuits.

This plotline can be easily followed and is certainly reasonable in the broader context of the novel as a *Bildungsroman* because Stephen, as a developing artist, needs these encounters as stepping stones of experience that lead him towards the path of his artistic destiny. When looked at from the angle of masculinity as a narrative

⁷⁰ This boyish ruthlessness is dramatised a second time when Stephen is prepared to lay the blame for the accident that destroyed his glasses on the other boy: "A fellow was coming out of the bicycle house and I fell and they got broken. I don't know the fellow's name" (*P* 50).

construction, we must admit that the narrative discourse of the chapter has created a problem, as at this point, two competing standards of masculinity exist side by side. The narrative discourse had first established Simon as the primary character embodying hegemonic masculinity and now Father Conmee equally is at the centre of the masculine norm, but his embodiment contradicts the one established before. Stephen's reaction after the success with Conmee betrays a sense of unease about this. And his reaction as to how to act now towards Father Dolan is highly ambivalent. "He was happy and free: but he would not be anyway proud with Father Dolan. He would be very quiet and obedient: and he wished that he could do something kind for him to show him that he was not proud" (P 51; cf. Mahaffey "Père-version" 126). It is as if Stephen's reaction tried to address both masculine standards at the same time but did not know how to do so. On the one hand, he intends to follow the authority that Father Conmee embodies, which has reinstated his masculine subjectivity. Stephen "would be very quiet and obedient", and therefore he consents to the homosocial hierarchy of the Jesuits education. On the other hand, he seems to remember that he had breached his father's code and to compensate for this, he feels the longing to "do something kind for him to show him that he was not proud" (P 51). It is as if Stephen tries to follow both codes of masculinity, hoping to be acknowledged as a masculine subject by both.

Finally, Stephen's search for normative ideals of masculinity, how to behave as a boy who wants to become a man, is dealt a violent blow as, much later in the novel, he learns that Father Conmee's benevolent authority, which Stephen had admired so much, and for which he had ignored his father's ideals, was a mere façade. In fact, it was Father Conmee who betrayed Stephen, as he had spoken to Dolan, and both belittled and joked about the punishment and Stephen's interview with him:

—By the bye, said Mr Dedalus at length, the rector, or provincial rather, was telling me that story about you and Father Dolan. [. . .] But he gave me a great account of the whole affair. [. . .] *Manly little chap!* he said. Mr Dedalus imitated the mincing nasal tone of the provincial.

—Father Dolan and I, when I told them all at dinner about it, Father Dolan and I had a great laugh over it. *You better mind yourself, Father Dolan,* said I, *or young Dedalus will send you up for twice nine.* We had a famous laugh together over it. Ha! Ha! Ha! [. . .] (P 63, Joyce's emphasis)

The scene is certainly significant as one of many betrayals that Stephen needs to deal with throughout the novel on his way to becoming an artist (Harkness 93). But for my angle in reading the novel, it is more important to note that the passage in which Conmee narrates an anecdote to Simon Dedalus, can be viewed as a dramatization of the narrative construction of masculinity in the novel as a whole. The meeting of the two father figures could mean that two masculine norms clash in the novel. But this is certainly not the case, but quite the opposite. The harmony and convivial character of the meeting can indeed be read as the text's argument that there is no hegemonic type of masculinity that gives orientation to the male characters. Norms are arbitrary and context-dependent, and thereby masculinity is subject to constant negotiation. The ambivalence that the narrative creates with regard to the norms of masculinity is mirrored in the attitude that Conmee shows toward Stephen. There is nothing left of the benevolent and solemn authority which characterised his discourse in the interview between teacher and student. His tone now is very colloquial and cheerful, which certainly undermines the image readers and Stephen had gained from the interview. Structurally, the character Conmee is thereby rendered highly ambiguous, losing his position as a role model and assuming a comic function now.

This functional ambiguity is matched by the ambiguity with which he assesses Stephen's act of masculine defiance. His tone is certainly slightly mocking and certainly patronising when he calls Stephen a "*Manly little chap!*", and yet there is also a sense of giving the young student credit for his courage. Stephen is not just a "feminized subject of wry patriarchal amusement" (Henke *Politics* 59) because this would allocate to him a marginalised position, but this does not correspond to Stephen's later career among the Jesuits which almost climaxes with a vocation. Furthermore, this assessment ignores the context in which Simon tells the family about his meeting with the priest: because they are no longer in an economically privileged situation, Simon needs the support of Conmee to get a placement for Stephen in another, less expensive school. His father's advice "stick with the Jesuits" because they "are the fellows that can get you a position" (*P* 62) certainly does not suggest that Stephen is permanently damaged and becomes a marginalised subject. Conmee's condescending tone can be seen as a form of male banter, which is a masculine practice that would normally not

be associated with a priest, but the ambiguity that characterises this practice is certainly part of this scene as well.

Eventually, it is also significant that the anecdote of Conmee joking with Father Dolan is itself an anecdote of Stephen's father meeting Conmee, which is narrated by Simon Dedalus himself. The assessment and evaluation of masculine behaviour and education thereby begins and ends with Stephen's father. As David Seed comments, Stephen's "dramatic encounter with the rector is reduced to a comic anecdote by being transferred to his father's voice. Now the adult perspective (the rector's as recounted to Simon Dedalus and then passed on to the family) reverses the child's and drains off the 'heroism' of Stephen actions" (Seed 57). The complex emplotment of this heroic act, going, as it does, through several narrative levels, suggests that heroism as a marker of masculinity is itself dependent on the stories that are told about it. And it shows that the same act can assume very different valences depending on who narrates it to whom. The short scene is therefore emblematic of the problem of masculine education through seniors in general, and in that respect, the passages discussed continue discussions begun with "An Encounter". Just like the queer old jossler and Father Butler have different teaching types that pupils need to adapt to or even understand. The contents of their teaching can equally be very contradictory, and this ambiguity is profoundly unsettling. Similarly, the various teachers at Clongowes and Stephen's father have different styles and methods, which achieve different effects on the boys, and especially Stephen's, understanding what masculinity is and what it demands.

As the discussion of Stephen's interaction with his teachers has shown, the narrative dramatises the formation of masculinity through the school by constantly negotiating a masculine core value, that of homosocial solidarity and loyalty. The value is established early by Stephen's father and his surrogate fathers in Clongowes are then measured in their value as role models against this first ideal. Stephen has to overcome this ideal eventually to make the essential step necessary to become a priest. By breaking the bond of solidarity, he both asserts himself against the injustice and abjection suffered at the hands of Father Dolan. It is through this ruthlessness that Stephen gains recognition as a masculine subject, and even if this means that he is integrated into a hierarchical system, the step is necessary to become independent later on in the

novel. The formation of masculinity through the school is thereby paradoxically a rebellion against and subjection to the masculine performances which it necessitates. This extended discussion of masculinity in education will be complemented in the next chapter by focusing on the negotiation of masculinity among the boys and independently from their teachers.

Chapter 4.4

A Portrait and the schoolyard currencies of masculinity

The last chapter has provided a reading of Stephen Dedalus's schooldays at Clongowes as the negotiation of masculine values between Stephen and his teachers. The perspective lay thereby on the primary level of the formation of masculinity through the school as outlined by Connell and discussed in the introduction to Part II. As outlined earlier, the *Bildungsroman* focusses on the notion that the young man "is shown as being formed and changed by interaction with his milieu, and with the world" (Mitchell 62), and we have seen how the priests and Stephen's father exemplify one important part of this milieu, as they present ideals and models that because they derive from the adult world, have the potential to provide orientation and guidance – if they do this in a coherent way. The school setting, as Connell suggests, features also the peer group of the individual as a second level of formation of masculinity. Within that group, and against the authority of the teachers, the boys negotiate masculine subject positions that are based on a value system that is independent from the one offered by the teachers. Again, homosocial solidarity is a key theme, but so is homosocial enactment, understood as the constant need to prove oneself, paired with the fear to be inadequate and therefore relegated to the margins of the group. The central question is in how far masculinity in the educational setting is not a result of the formation of the school itself but to what extent it is the boys themselves who negotiate meanings of masculinity in their interaction with each other and in contradistinction to the school. Within this homosocial environment, Stephen engages with various challenges to his masculinity through which the narrative contrasts his to that of the other boys. Stephen's difference is stressed right from the beginning, for instance through his weakness and smallness (as opposed to Joyce at Clongowes, who was younger but also athletic). Othering in terms of boyish prestige is, however, not a

formative force alone. As David Seed has pointed out, the first chapter of *A Portrait* consistently connects knowledge with power:

Throughout this chapter knowledge is tied to questions of authority [. . .]. Again and again Joyce renders the utterances of the prefects and boys at Clongowes as non-specific voices articulating collective points of view or collective authority, and Stephen's passages of thought use these voices as reference points. (47)

More than mere guideposts, these utterances are the basis of the negotiation of masculinity on the schoolyard, and the knowledge is the basic currency in this exchange of gendered capital. It is thereby especially sexual knowledge, which constructs the hierarchies among the boys and complements the confusion over masculine values that the first plotline, centring on the priests, made its centre. The acquisition of sexual knowledge is the complementary step for Stephen on his way to become an artist. Although he does not yet understand, he opens towards a vague sexual epistemology and aestheticises the queer and unknowable knowledge in basic artistic fantasies. To trace the formation of masculinity among the boys through their ranking based on knowledge I will focus in my analysis on the schoolyard, the passage in the infirmary with Athy and Brother Michael, the smuggling incident and the boy's reaction to the pandying and Father Conmee's redemption of Stephen.⁷¹

* * *

Initially, the narrative predicates the hierarchies among the boys at Clongowes on differences in physical prowess and social status. Here, Stephen is established as an outsider because he is younger, smaller and weaker than the others and because his father's social and economic capital seems to be wanting as well. On the playground, Stephen is thus faced with a mass of schoolboy physicality against which he is set off. The reader learns that the "playgrounds were swarming with boys", and the prefects and players are represented by their "shouting" and "strong cries" (*P* 6). Against this, the young artist "felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his eyes were weak and watery" (*P* 6). His reaction is evasive, and thus he is sidelined in the

⁷¹ Cf. Kiesling's analysis of rhetorical strategies to negotiate power positions in boys' fraternity meetings. Although ahistorical, Kiesling's emphasis on the dynamics among the boys and their use of strategies to defend their status inspires my reading of similar dynamics in *A Portrait*.

games, in which he only feigns to participate. The narrative dramatises his comparative weakness evoking an image in which Stephen is almost drowning in the floods of physical superiority:

He was caught in the whirl of a scrimmage and, fearful of the flashing eyes and muddy boots, bent down to look through the legs. The fellows were struggling and groaning and their legs were rubbing and kicking and stamping. Then Jack Lawton's yellow boots dodged out the ball and all the other boots and legs ran after. He ran after them a little way and then stopped. It was useless to run on. (*P* 7-8)

This anonymous mass of masculinity of “boots and legs” is later personified by two boys who act as antagonists to Stephen. Immediately, Stephen finds an embodiment of a masculine role model in another boy: “Rody Kickham was not like that: he would be captain of the third line all the fellows said” (*P* 6). But his situation as the youngest is more dramatically underlined by his antagonism to the schoolyard bully Wells, who threw him into a cesspool earlier (*P* 8). Eventually, Stephen gives up and resigns to the fact that he is smaller and weaker than the other boys: “He felt small and weak. When would he be like the fellows in poetry and rhetoric? They had big voices and big boots and they studied trigonometry” (*P* 14). Significantly, however, Stephen voices this concession in the context of knowledge that overwhelms Stephen: “It pained him that he did not know well what politics meant and that he did not know where the universe ended” (*P* 14). Instead of prowess and strength, Stephen's minority status is here predicated on the possession of adult knowledge, which indicates that the narrative discourse shifts markers and makes it impossible to pinpoint masculine subjectivity to individual factors.

Physical weakness is therefore not the only marker of Stephen's inferiority. Hierarchies in Clongowes, an expensive boarding school, are also predicated on social prestige. Stephen learns this in the interrogation by Nasty Roche, who asks him about his un-Irish sounding name and his father's social status: “—What is your father? [. . .] —Is he a magistrate?” (*P* 6-7). Impressed by this Stephen experiences not only his own inferiority but a general hierarchy among the schoolboys: “Nasty Roche and Saurin drank cocoa that their people sent them in tins. They said they could not drink the tea; that it was hogwash. Their fathers were magistrates, the fellows said” (*P* 10-11). On the surface, both instances of differentiation concern the social prestige of the

boys. Stephen's instinctive answer to the question about his father is that he is a "gentleman", which seems good enough because the reference suggests wealth, influence and social standing. However, within the unwritten hierarchy of the boys, a gentleman is below a magistrate, and therefore Stephen's standing is again confirmed as low which relegates him to the margins of the group. This emphasis on the right language is further underlined in the second example, where the focus is not simply on a material good which Roche's and Saurin's parents are able to afford but on the fact that the boys use slang to designate their superiority.⁷² In both cases, Stephen experiences inferiority again which is, however, not rendered anymore through male physicality but through the access and control over language.

The potentials to refer and distinguish inherent in language are central in the establishment of hierarchies among the boys at Clongowes. Daydreaming during the football match and pondering the connotations and contexts of the word *belt*, Stephen thinks about the boys' aggressive use of language; they are "rough boys", whom his mother has advised him not to associate with:

One day a fellow had said to Cantwell:
—I'd give you such a belt in a second.
Cantwell had answered:
—Go and fight your match. Give Cecil Thunder a belt. I'd like to see you. He'd give you a toe in the rump for yourself.
That was not a nice expression. (*P* 7)

For Stephen, the phrases used by the other boys are not "nice" because they employ language in mysterious, transgressive ways unfamiliar and threatening to him. The phrases are, however, important indicators of the boyish prestige within the academic context of the Jesuit school, which young Stephen only slowly begins to realise. The gendered undercurrent of such slang becomes even more significant in a passage which dramatises hierarchies among boys vis-à-vis their relationship to the teachers as well as their relationship to language. When a boy says to Simon Moonan: "—We all know why you speak. You are McGlade's suck", Stephen is confused by the usage of the word and repelled by its sonic quality: "Suck was a queer word. [. . .] But the sound was ugly" (*P* 9). The passage has been fruitfully discussed in terms of the homoerotic undercurrent of the homosocial environment in which Stephen is situated and how

⁷² For a general discussion of the use of slang in the Clongowes passages, see Seed (52-56).

the narrative itself both exposes and tries to disclose such multiple levels of meaning (Valente “Thrilled” 52-54; cf. Attridge, *Joyce Effects* 60-65). I would add that masculinity is not only at stake here in terms of heteronormative sexuality and its expression (or lack thereof) but also in Stephen’s confusion about the possible meaning of words and the value that the right usage confers on the speaker. The word, as Derek Attridge notes, “evokes a realm of taboo sexuality, a realm of which Stephen would be slowly becoming aware in the schoolboy milieu of Clongowes Wood College, with the usual mixture of excitement, ignorance, guilt, and fantasy” (*Joyce Effects* 61). As the further discussion will show, among boys, this “realm” is also space that is to be defended against outsiders, against the uninitiated to establish hierarchies among themselves.

Finally, this hierarchy is made apparent in Stephen’s notorious humiliation when the bully Wells asks him whether he kisses his mother before going to bed. The question poses a conundrum because regardless whether Stephen’s answer is yes or no, Wells uses it to ridicule him in front of the other boys. The reason for this handling of seemingly trivial knowledge is that, by keeping the secret from Stephen, “Wells experiences himself as the subject who knows. And what Wells knows, of course, is that there is no answer, that the secret is there is no secret” (Leonard, “Nothing Place” 94). This epistemic anxiety makes Stephen predictably uneasy: “They all laughed again. Stephen tried to laugh with them. He felt his whole body hot and confused in a moment” (*P* 12). But what is more, Stephen realises that the answer is the key to prestige among the boys: “What was the right answer to the question? He had given two and still Wells laughed. But Wells must know the right answer for he was in third of grammar. He tried to think of Wells’s mother but he did not dare to raise his eyes to Wells’s face” (*P* 12). Tracey Schwarzze’s postcolonial reading sees in Wells’ behaviour a “native appropriation of the colonial scene in which colonizers subdue indigenous populations by imposing behavioural patterns for the natives to emulate [. . .]”. And she furthermore asserts that “Stephen’s response reveals nothing so much as his own estrangement from his countrymen’s discourse and solidifies their position over him” (“Silencing Stephen” 250). While I agree concerning the mechanism of exclusion, I find the recourse to postcolonial discourse quite unnecessary and unhelpful since this reading ignores that Stephen’s serious pondering of the question indicates that he essentially accepts the schoolyard hierarchy which privileges boys who have a deeper

knowledge of these questions over boys like him who do not. Central to Stephen's consciousness as a narrated self in this and other encounters is "a concern for enacting the 'right' social role through a proper public expression of the self" (Mulrooney 169). And by furthermore making Stephen ponder about the meaning of kissing ("What did that mean, to kiss?" [P 12]), the narrative foreshadows the fact that it is sexual knowledge which is central among boys to establish hierarchies and negotiate power struggles (cf. Henke, *Politics* 56; cf. Froula, *Modernism's Body* 44).

* * *

This mode of establishing hierarchies at Clongowes is equally featured in Stephen's encounter with the boy Athy at the school's infirmary. More than any other, the scene is central in dramatising the importance of comprehension and knowledge for Stephen's place among the students and his position in the Clongowes hierarchy. The motif of epistemic insecurity, which represents the more abstract notion of knowledge in the passage, is introduced right at the beginning through the opposition between the questions about Stephen's sickness: "—Are you not well? [. . .] —He's sick. —Who is? [. . .] —Is he sick?" (P 18). This confusion about Stephen's health contrasts sharply with the security of knowledge about the fact that the bully Wells is to blame for Stephen's condition: "He heard the fellows talk among themselves about him as they dressed for mass. It was a mean thing to do, to shoulder him into the square ditch, they were saying" (P 18). Wells himself comes to Stephen's bed to apologise and assure him that he "didn't mean to, honour bright. It was only for cod" (P 18). This apology immediately triggers the memory of his father's formula of schoolboy honour in Stephen's consciousness (see previous chapter): "His father had told him, whatever he did, never to peach on a fellow. He shook his head and answered no [i.e. he will not tell the priests] and felt glad" (P 18). This narrative reference to his father's masculine values is punctured by the text's insistence on the security of knowledge as a higher good: "The face and the voice went away. Sorry because he was afraid. Afraid that it was some disease" (P 18). This rare instance of proper interior monologue in the novel highlights the importance of the motif of knowledge for Stephen's

development in the narrative, which thus creates a complementary relationship between epistemic insecurity and security.

The pattern is highlighted further in the status of Brother Michael and the boys' interaction with him, which also indicates the sense of hierarchy among teachers and the boys' growing understanding and exploitation of this hierarchy. In Stephen's perception, Brother Michael has an ambivalent position: on the one hand, he belongs to the other teachers, but, on the other, his inferior rank to the ordained priests seems "queer" to Stephen:

The prefect spoke to Brother Michael and Brother Michael answered and called the prefect sir. He had reddish hair mixed with grey and a queer look. It was queer that he would always be a brother. It was queer too that you could not call him sir because he was a brother and had a different kind of look. Was he not holy enough or why could he not catch up on the others? (P 19)

The status of Brother Michael puzzles Stephen because it is a source of insecurity about the hierarchy of the Jesuits (a "problem" which he later contemplates too when he wonders to whom a priest would go for confession [P 42]). His "queerness" makes Stephen feel insecure, and he cannot but refer to the naïve epistemic patterns available to him ("not holy enough"). Stephen's uncertainty contrasts with the knowledge of Athy, the other boy lying in the infirmary, who seems to have understood that due to his inferior position and apparently benevolent nature, Brother Michael is not to be feared like the other Jesuits. He therefore brashly asks him for "a round of buttered toast" and pretends to be too sick to leave the infirmary the next day, although he seems to be healthy enough to give smart answers to Brother Michael: "—Butter you up! said Brother Michael. You'll get your walking papers in the morning when the doctor comes. — Will I? the fellow said. I'm not well yet" (P 19). Structurally Athy functions as Stephen's foil in terms of comprehension; he understands the logic of the power that Brother Michael represents and exploits the latter's inferior rank to gain the maximum of privilege during his time in the infirmary. To an extent Stephen is perceptive about this hierarchy, too, when he observes that "Brother Michael answered and called the prefect sir" and that he "had a different kind of look", but he cannot but ambiguously conceptualise this difference as *queer*. Critics have numerous times discussed other passages in which the word occurs as a symptomatic of Stephen's homosexual panic and suggested that the semantic ambivalence of the word *queer* is

expressive of an ambivalence in Stephen's consciousness about the homoerotic (Valente, "Thrilled" 55). For the present passage, I would suggest that Stephen's use of the word is equally important as a discursive marker of his fascination with the unknown. While I do not wish to deny the homoerotic undercurrent present in the word, I would still suggest that Stephen's more immediate panic is about his inferior social status among the homosocial group of boys, among whom the possession of adult knowledge has already been established as an important capital.

Uncannily prefiguring its usage in the critical discourse of cultural theory, *queer* unsettles categories of difference and knowledge in Stephen's thought as well. Thus, the word leads to a final example in the passage which dramatises the power that a sexual epistemology can confer among boys. The difference between the two boys is first seemingly nullified when Athy finds commonalities between the two:

—Now it is all about politics in the papers, he said. Do your people talk about that too?

—Yes, Stephen said.

—Mine too, he said.

Then he thought for a moment and said:

—You have a queer name, Dedalus, and I have a queer name too, Athy. My name is the name of a town. Your name is like Latin. (P 21)

As the reader knows from Stephen's earlier contemplation of his family's reactions to the Parnell scandal, "[i]t pained him that he did not know well what politics man [. . .]", and this lack of knowledge is one of the reasons why "[h]e felt small and weak" (P 14). Athy, on the other hand, is eager to make Brother Michael give him "all the news in the paper", including "accidents, shipwrecks, sports and politics" (P 21). This difference in knowledge about the world of adults gives Athy power over Stephen, which he then plays out by presenting him with a riddle about his name: "Why is the county of Kildare like the leg of a fellow's breeches? [. . .] —Because there is a thigh in it, he said. Do you see the joke? Athy is the town in the county Kildare and a thigh is the other thigh" (P 21). Stephen, conceding to be bad at riddles, is only left to answer, "—Oh, I see". But Athy underlines his superiority further by making the riddle even more enigmatic:

After a moment he said:

—I say!

—What? asked Stephen.

—You know, he said, you can ask that riddle another way?

—Can you? said Stephen.
 —The same riddle, he said. Do you know the other way to ask it?
 —No, said Stephen.
 —Can you not think of the other way? he said.
 He looked at Stephen over the bedclothes as he spoke. Then he lay back on the pillow and said:
 —There is another way but I won't tell you what it is. (*P* 22)

I quote the passage in full, not because the context of the riddle is important but because its obscurity is. It is virtually impossible to decipher the riddle oneself without its context. As John Simpson, former Chief Editor of the *OED*, has helpfully elaborated that there were numerous variations of this riddle in Joyce's time, often with sexual content, like this one: "In what town can one enjoy a woman best? – In Athy (a thigh), for that's near the middle of the Queen's County (cuntie)" (n.p.). The sexual connotation of the riddle is "the other way to ask it", and it marks Athy's position vis-à-vis Stephen as one who has knowledge of matters which separate childhood from adulthood. In the text, the passage dramatises this liminality by obscuring the content of the riddle while simultaneously suggesting that the content is in some way taboo or dangerous.⁷³ In this way, the narrative reiterates the complementary motifs of knowing and not knowing and thereby establishes Stephen's insecurity about sexuality. Furthermore, Stephen himself connects his vulnerability to his position at Clongowes and the social prestige of his father, when he contemplates his difference to Athy:

Why did he not tell it? His father, who kept the racehorses, must be a magistrate too like Saurin's father and Nasty Roche's father. He thought of his own father, of how he sang songs while his mother played and of how he always gave him a shilling when he asked for sixpence and he felt sorry for him that he was not a magistrate like the other boys' fathers. Then why was he sent to that place with them? But his father had told him that he would be no stranger there because his granduncle had presented an address to the liberator there fifty years before. (*P* 22)

Stephen very clearly perceives the difference between himself and the other boys at Clongowes, and he reasonably questions his father's intentions in sending him there.⁷⁴ As Stephen realises, his father's personal prestige, which rests on his personal

⁷³ This is already indicated by Athy's slang phrase "I say", with which he introduces the passage. Cf. the occurrence of the same phrase in the climactic central scene in "An Encounter": "—I say! Look what he's doing! [. . .] —I say... He's a queer old josser!" (*D* 18).

⁷⁴ Stephen's focus on his father contrasts, however, with the fact that he imagines writing to his mother. Froula argues that his sickness is therefore a "symbolic, initiatory death", which marks his socialisation into the male world (*Modernism's Body* 45).

connection to an Irish political hero (the liberator, Daniel O’Connell) does apparently not count for much in Clongowes, even though Simon apparently believes it does. The reference to the liberator only occurs in this passage, and through the discourse of Simon Dedalus, which shows that this mark of prestige has not helped Stephen at all, and none of the other boys seem to understand his legitimacy at Clongowes, which again stresses the importance of knowledge for masculine prestige in *A Portrait*.

* * *

The most emblematic scene for the formation of masculinity among the schoolboys is the famous smuggling passage, which epitomises the power of secret knowledge within the homosocial group. Here Stephen’s status as an outsider is predicated on the lack of comprehension of the enigmas of sexual knowledge. In this scene, masculinity is formed through a negotiation of gendered prestige, which depends on the correct interpretation of the transgression and the punishment. These negotiations are presented in the form of various narratives that the boys trade among each other and which vie for the status of the most accurate and most spectacular version of the events (that none of them has actually taken part in). The hierarchy among the boys, which is the result of this fight for prestige, is established in two ways. On one level the hierarchy is ordered through the possession of knowledge and the way of talking about the “smuggling”, which “divides [the group] into an audience which expresses a desire for information and a number of individuals who satisfy that desire [. . .] (Seed 49). Like before, Athy has a privileged knowledge about the nature of the transgression, which he expresses through slang, while Stephen is again puzzled and therefore outside the group. Also, as in the previous scene, the narrative as such remains ambiguous and indeterminate, though, and its own queerness mirrors the transgression of the boys. The second level of the hierarchy of the boys is connected to their evaluation of the punishment that will await the culprits. Here again, an uneasy ambiguity excludes Stephen from the boys and their adult knowledge.

Already the beginning of the passage is characterised by insecurity about narrative information. Listening in to the secretive gossip of Clongowes’ schoolyard, readers are both included in the trading of boyish secrets, while they are equally

excluded by their specific discourse: “—They were caught near the Hill of Lyons” (*P* 34). Not knowing who “they” are and what the relevance of their running away is, readers are left in the dark about the content of the boys’ talk, which helps to increase the tension regarding the transgressive nature of the incident. A same function can be attributed to the boys’ heavy use of slang. For them the slang works as “cementing a group and promoting a common mentality” (Seed 55), but with regard to readers it works in the opposite direction, by excluding them from the discourse and thereby from the shared knowledge about the incident. Especially the explanations about the older boys’ alleged transgression are thus shrouded in mystery:

—But why did they run away, tell us?
—I know why, Cecil Thunder said. Because they had fecked cash out of the rec-
tor’s room.
—Who fecked it?
—Kickham’s brother. And they all went shares in it.
But that was stealing. How could they have done that?
—A fat lot you know about it, Thunder! Wells said. I know why they scut. [. . .]
(*P* 35).

Not only is the mystery around the transgression filled with ever “more adult and daring crime[s]”, as Bruce Bradley writes (23). Also, the discussion of this mystery further expresses the schoolyard hierarchy (“—A fellow in the higher line told me.” [*P* 34], “—Yes, that’s what I heard too from the fellow in the higher line.” [*P* 35]), and it determines the position of the boys by treating information as a valuable contra-
band: “—Tell us why. —I was told not to, Wells said. —O, go on, Wells, all said. You might tell us. We won’t let it out. Stephen bent forward his head to hear. Wells looked round to see if anyone was coming” (*P* 35). Seed notes the considerable amount of teasing from the boys who claim to have knowledge (49), and the knowledge they possess can thus be seen as a form of currency among them which is used to enhance their position in the group. The reader is equally distanced through that estrangement technique, which only further adds to the depiction of the homosocial as fixed and impenetrable from the outside for those who are not “in the know”.

The highest rank is finally awarded to Athy, who, as in the infirmary passage, seems to possess knowledge about sexuality which the others do not have:

Athy lowered his voice and said:
—Do you know why those fellows scut? I will tell you but you must not let on you know.

He paused for a moment and then said mysteriously:
 —They were caught with Simon Moonan and Tusker Boyle in the square one night
 The fellows looked at him and asked:
 —Caught?
 —What doing?
 Athy said:
 —Smuggling.
 All the fellows were silent: and Athy said:
 —And that’s why. (*P* 36-37)

This revelation, which Athy dramatises to maximum effect by talking in an allusive and taciturn manner, positions him at the top of the continuum of the boys’ claim for prestige, by assuming the “pose as the subject who knows” (Leonard, “Nothing Place” 94). Thus, writes Colleen Lamos, “Stephen is the naïf, while Athy knows the dirty secret of smuggling and Moonan is the guilty party” in what can be regarded as “the epistemological universe” of the school (“English Vice” 23).⁷⁵ The hierarchy among the boys along the lines of knowledge becomes all the more apparent in Stephen’s reaction, which echoes his sexual-epistemic difference from Athy from the previous passage (Carens 317):

Stephen looked at the faces of the fellows but they were all looking across the playground. He wanted to ask somebody about it. What did that mean about the smuggling in the square? Why did the five fellows out of the higher line run away for that? It was a joke, he thought. (*P* 37)

Again, slang plays a central role in the division of the boys.⁷⁶ Marguerite Harkness comments on the link between the use of slang in this reflection and the reader’s limitation through Stephen’s perception: “Stephen clearly knows the slang word ‘fucked’, and the narrative of the novel tells us both that the word means and that Stephen understands this discourse” (90). On the other hand, she asserts, “[w]e are never told what smuggling means partly because Stephen apparently does not know. But he intuits. His mental associations lead us to assume (correctly) that the boys have been engaged in some kind of homosexual activity” (91). We might add to this that our distance to Stephen is minimised at this point because, we, too, are left unknowing

⁷⁵ Lamos, furthermore, links Athy as the “bearer of homosexual knowledge” to Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses* (“English Vice” 23).

⁷⁶ Cf., however, Leonard, who maintains that “[m]uch earlier, he [Athy] does the same thing to Stephen, in an exchange *with no sexual overtones*.” (“The Nothing Place” 94, my emphasis).

of the discourse of the boys and thus their negotiation of masculinity through (sexual) knowledge. The word *smuggling* has often been read as referencing a homosexual panic or at least the allusion to a latent homoerotic desire (Lamos, “English Vice” 23; Mahaffey, “Père-version” 126) and many concur with Colleen Lamos that that “[t]he homosexual implication of ‘smuggling’ is unmistakable” (“English Vice” 23). Katherine Mullin, in contrast, reads the passage as representing a reference to the contemporary discourse of social purity, which expressed a “masturbation anxiety” and the policing of “true manliness” (92). Each of these readings is persuasive, but they also threaten to close off the text by reducing it to a unified meaning. And this attempt to finalise the meaning of the word prevents us to grasp its genuinely queer function in the narrative as a locus of semantic ambivalence: Because neither the boys nor readers know what it exactly means, the word *smuggling* exemplifies the power dynamic in the construction of masculine identity on the schoolyard. Masculinity is not graspable, yet it is ubiquitous and pervasive, which the narrative discourse of the chapter dramatises through linguistic means that hold a significant valence within the story-logic but which cannot be pinpointed either.⁷⁷

The second field in which the boys negotiate masculine prestige is concerned with their evaluation of the older boys involved in the smuggling, their punishment and the punishing teachers. Again the narrative provides a queered interpretation, which leaves the reader excluded from the boys’ struggle over meaning. Both Stephen and the other boys protest against the unfairness of collective punishment, but while the other boys’ reaction consists of a masculine mocking of the punishment, which expresses their defiant contempt for the authority of the priests, Stephen aestheticises the punishment and thereby avoids an engagement with power and focuses on artistic expression instead. So, soon after discussing the nature of the sin of smuggling, the boys react to the fact that they “are all to be punished for what other fellows did [. . .]” (P 38). The form of collective punished at the hands of the priests is the subject of a discussion in which the boys again negotiate masculine prestige by demonstrating taboo knowledge and by judging the appropriateness of masculine performance. In reaction to the impending collective punishment, the boys threaten to leave the school

⁷⁷ Bradley notes the recurrence of the word in the “Cyclops” chapter of *Ulysses*, in which it is part of the linguistic clutter to which no definite meaning can be attached either (157).

and voice their indignation about the unfairness and severity of the chastisement: “— I won’t come back, see if I do, Cecil Thunder said. Three days’ silence in the refectory and sending us up for six and eight every minute. —Yes, said Wells. And old Barrett has a new way of twisting the note so that you can’t open it and fold it again to see how many ferulae you are to get. I won’t come back too” (*P* 38). Eventually, someone decides that this is the right time to show defiance and proposes a revolt, which, however, does not meet with enthusiasm: “—Let us get up a rebellion, Fleming said. Will we? All the fellows were silent” (*P* 38). Despite aborting this rebellion even before its inception, the boys’ talk is characterised aggression and defiance, thereby rendering their reaction in classically masculine terms.

This display is arguably a logical reaction to the threatened punishment because the priests can be seen as attacking the boys’ masculinity as well. The designated form of punishment evokes fears about normative masculinity: “—What is going to be done to them? —Simon Moonan and Tusker are going to be flogged, Athy said, and the fellows in the higher line got their choice of flogging or being expelled” (*P* 38). Both flogging and expulsion from the school constitute a humiliation of the boys’ masculinity, which is predicated on bodily strength and social capital. This is something that the boys are vaguely aware of, and so one boy’s estimation that “a flogging wears off after a bit but a fellow that has been expelled from college is known all his life on account of it” (*P* 39), shows a realistic understanding of the social consequence of expulsion from school. Flogging may inflict severe physical pain and cause shame because the boys are violated in front of their peer group. But being expelled would be fatal for the boys’ formation of adult masculinity. As sons of magistrates and other influential men, it is the hegemonic type of masculinity which their fathers want them to aspire to, and for which they are paying substantial tuition fees at Clongowes Wood. Again, this knowledge is also a form of value according to which masculinity is being negotiated among the boys:

—All are taking expulsion except Corrigan, Athy answered. He’s going to be flogged by Mr Gleeson.

—Is it Corrigan that big fellow? said Fleming. Why, he’d be able for two of Gleeson!

—I know why, Cecil Thunder said. He is right and the other fellows are wrong because a flogging wears off after a bit but a fellow that has been expelled from college is known all his life on account of it.

Besides Gleeson won't flog him hard.
—It's best of his play not to, Fleming said. (*P* 39)

In this exchange, the boys negotiate positions by the way they comment through little narratives on the procedure and results of the punishment. Athy is the one who knows what the actual punishment is so he has a secure position. Cecil Thunder tries to improve his position among the boys by interpreting their choice and providing sexually ambiguous contextual knowledge about the relationship between one of the punishers and one of the boys. Finally, the boy Fleming elaborates on this relationship and the punishment by using a mysterious innuendo suggesting that there might be a reason why “Gleeson won't flog him hard”. Keeping this reason undisclosed, Fleming improves his position among the boys because he seems to have knowledge about the relationship which the others do not have, and this possession increases his prestige in the group. It should be stressed, however, that the negotiations of power rely centrally on the fact that there is no secure knowledge about the actual events and relations. Harkness comments that “[t]he position of Gleeson emerges for the reader: he is, or the boys suppose him to be, a pederast, interested in the boys with homosexual preferences, or perhaps interested in any boy at the school” (92). But for both, readers and the other boys including Stephen, there is no secure ground to arrive at a final position of knowledge. This queer situation arises precisely from the fact that no one really knows why “Gleeson won't flog him hard” and why “It's best of his play not to”. In this way, it is specifically the comment's ambiguity that serves to enhance Fleming's position among the boys.

Another such strategy is pursued immediately afterwards when the boys rationalise the consequences of the flogging and mock the actual punishment through banter:

—I wouldn't like to be Simon Moonan and Tusker, Cecil Thunder said. But I don't believe they will be flogged. Perhaps they will be sent up for twice nine.
—No, no, said Athy. They'll both get it on the vital spot.
Wells rubbed himself and said in a crying voice:
—Please, sir, let me off!
Athy grinned and turned up the sleeves of his jacket, saying:
It can't be helped;
It must be done.
So down with your breeches
And out with your bum. (*P* 39)

The boys compete in their knowledge and speculation about the punishment, and thereby they also negotiate their schoolyard capital of boyish masculinity. They do this, on the one hand, through a mixture of realistic assessment of the situation, and on the other, through the composition of a mockingly obscene rhyme which expresses their gleeful delight in the pain of the others. This aestheticising of the punishment shows a lack of solidarity with the others, and blaming them for the collective punishment that each of them has to suffer in consequence, which mirrors the lack of enthusiasm for the proposed revolt earlier. Their masculinity is of the subordinated type: being at the mercy of their masters, the boys are powerless and use creative banter and detailed knowledge about the means of discipline at Clongowes in order to defend their disempowered masculinity.

Stephen's reaction first seems to underline his status as an outsider, but a closer look reveals that through his interaction with the boys he begins to merge his own interpretation of masculinity with his early attempts at poetic art. First of all, despite not understanding their joking, Stephen sees that the banter is really meant to conceal their fear: "The fellows laughed; but he felt that they were a little afraid" (*P* 39). Equally, Stephen does not follow Fleming's call for a rebellion and is instead carried away by his perception of the surrounding sounds of cricket: "All the fellows were silent. The air was very silent and you could hear the cricketbats but more slowly than before: pick, pock" (*P* 38). Punctuating their ostentatious display of masculine defiance, this sense impression triggers a sexually ambiguous aestheticising of the punishment:

In the silence of the soft grey air he heard the cricketbats from here and from there: pock. That was a sound to hear but if you were hit then you would feel a pain. The pandybat made a sound too but not like that. The fellows said it was made of whalebone and leather with lead inside: and he wondered what was the pain like. There were different kinds of sounds. A long thin cane would have a high whistling sound and he wondered what was that pain like. It made him shivery to think of it and cold: and what Athy said too. But what was there to laugh at in it? It made him shivery: but that was because you always felt like a shiver when you let down your trousers. It was the same in the bath when you undressed yourself. He wondered who had to let them down, the master or the boy himself. O how could they laugh about it that way? (*P* 39)

Stephen's reaction is a synaesthetic experience in which both sound and the anticipation of pain are mingled to create a mildly masochistic sensation. He is distinguished

from Athy and the others by the way he handles experience and the anticipation of experience. While Athy employs mystery as a tool to gain power and the others sublimate their disempowerment through banter and doggerel rhymes, Stephen engages with his sensations to create artistic expression. This art also depends on a sexual ambiguity, which although here only in very immature form, will be the basis of his art later on. Valente argues that by contemplating the scene of undressing and questioning the agency of both master and pupil in it, Stephen exposes “the sexual energy animating the exemplary discipline”, which his following vision develops into “a sense of positive and implicitly homoerotic pleasure” (“Thrilled” 55). Stephen himself pursues this sexualised aesthetics further in his reflections on the punishment of the culprits, which differs from the banter of his schoolfellows:

He looked at Athy’s rolledup sleeves and knuckly inky hands. He had rolled up his sleeves to show how Mr Gleeson would roll up his sleeves. But Mr Gleeson had round shiny cuffs and clean white wrists and fattish white hands and the nails of them were long and pointed. Perhaps he pared them too like Lady Boyle. But they were terribly long and pointed nails. So long and cruel they were, though the white fattish hands were not cruel but gentle. And though he trembled with cold and fright to think of the cruel long nails and of the high whistling sound of the cane and of the chill you felt at the end of your shirt when you undressed yourself yet he felt a feeling of queer quiet pleasure inside him to think of the white fattish hands, clean and strong and gentle. (*P* 39-40)

Commenting on this passage, Valente writes that in Stephen’s reflection and fantasy we witness a multitude of “warring sensations” overpowering a future artist: “an outer chill and an inner glow, an anticipated pain and an experienced pleasure, an involuntary engagement but a voluntary imagining, a sexual affect at once savoured and denied” (“Thrilled” 55). The queer quality of the passage and the ambivalence of homoeroticism confusing Stephen are relevant for a reading of masculinity and sexuality in the narrative (cf. Carens 317-18). But Stephen’s attempts to distinguish himself from his peers by beginning to poeticise the sensations he experiences around him are of equal importance. Combining acoustic, tactile and visual sense impressions, Stephen creates another fantasy, which sublimates experiences that discomfort him in various ways. As James Carens writes, “Given the enigmas and the brutalities of school life, Stephen is attracted to psychic fantasy in which he can compensate for, or in some way escape from, those things that puzzle, threaten, or terrify him” (283; cf. Valente,

“Thrilled” 54).⁷⁸ This particular fantasy encapsulates the threat, contains it and similarly gives it an outlet, combining the cruelty and gentleness of the priest’s hand in a homoerotic work of art.

That Stephen does not simply try to escape the threats of Clongowes can be seen furthermore in his reflection on the other boys’ transgression. While also highlighting the unfairness of the collective punishment for something that only a few boys committed, Stephen focuses, unlike the other boys, on the religious status of the sin. Stephen considers two possibilities in terms of their sinfulness. The first, which betrays the extent of his subordination to the concept of sin, is that “they had stolen a monstrance to run away with it and sell it somewhere”, which Stephen considers “a terrible sin”: “it was a strange and a great sin even to touch it. He thought of it with deep awe; a terrible and strange sin: it thrilled him to think of it in the silence when the pens scraped lightly” (*P* 40-1). The ambiguous thrill can be seen as a vicarious excitement, mirroring the shiver he experienced earlier when thinking about the flogging and which had confused him a little. Then, in his second explanation of the sin, he considers that the boys “had drunk some of the altar wine out of the press in the sacristy and that it had been found out who had done it by the smell” (*P* 40), as reported by Wells. This second solution to the problem, however, does not manifest a terrible sin like the first one: “But to drink the altar wine out of the press and be found out by the smell was a sin too: but it was not terrible and strange. It only made you feel a little sickish on account of the smell of the wine” (*P* 41). The theft of the monstrance is considered worse in Stephen’s assessment because it has an artistic quality. The theft of the wine is rather mundane in comparison and provokes a bodily reaction, not a religious one. However, it is nevertheless the latter one which induces Stephen to create another fantasy, remembering the strange and ambivalent sensations he experienced during his first holy communion:

when the rector had stooped down to give him the holy communion he had smelt a faint winy smell off the rector’s breath after the wine of the mass. The word was beautiful: wine. It made you think of dark purple because the grapes were dark purple that grew in Greece outside houses like white temples. But the faint smell of the rector’s breath had made him feel a sick feeling on the morning of his first communion. The day of your first communion was the happiest day of your life.

⁷⁸ See Carens, who discusses various other such fantasies and gives an extended commentary on the way the narrative employs multiple sense perceptions (280-85).

(P 41)

Impressed by authority of the priests and Catholic rituals, but also fascinated by the word *wine* and the sensory associations it triggers, Stephen combines thoughts about the school hierarchy with artistic expression triggered by sense experiences. It is true that through this digression, Stephen evades thinking further about the smuggling and the dangerous, possibly sexual content of this sin. But, on the other hand, Stephen produces a fantasy which both aestheticises and incorporates the mundane ugliness life (the priest's smelling breath) together with beautiful images triggered by words (the dark purple colour of the wine grapes). He is deeply influenced by his Jesuit thinking and accepts the role of the holy communion. He transforms the repellent smell of Father Conmee's breath into an aesthetic consideration of the beauty of the word *wine*, the appeal of the colour and its exotic origin. Confused how things can be beautiful and ugly at the same time, Stephen calls up an authority he admires:

And once a lot of generals had asked Napoleon what was the happiest day of his life. They thought he would say the day he won some great battle or the day he was made an emperor. But he said:

— Gentlemen, the happiest day of my life was the day on which I made my first holy communion. (P 41)

Napoleon, who will become more important as Stephen's Romantic hero later on (see Carens 323-24), can be seen as an authority figure guaranteeing a "correct" answer to the problem of contradiction that Stephen faces. The scene thus foreshadows Stephen's search for new role models after his faith in the priests begins to wane, and it prefigures his later aesthetic programme of incorporating ugliness within the beauty of his art. The latter is exemplified by his famous assertion at the end of the second chapter: "— That is horse piss and rotted straw, he thought. It is a good odour to breathe. It will calm my heart. My heart is quite calm now" (P 76). In this way embracing the repulsive and "revolt[ing] against the hypocrisies around him", writes Richard M. Kain, "Stephen welcomes epiphanies of disgust" ("Epiphanies" 102).

* * *

The smuggling episode is an important step for Stephen's (artistic) development, and its central for Joyce's dramatization the school as a formative setting for the

masculinity of the boys. Masculinity is negotiated between the boys through their possession and assessment of knowledge about the enigmatic transgression. Athy seems to be the one boy who has the most dangerous knowledge, and he symbolises this position of power through the word smuggling. Stephen seems to be the outsider in this discussion, as he has the lowest status among the boys, which mirrors his exclusion earlier in the school class. However, Stephen himself makes a fundamental step to overcome the struggle for masculine prestige by first looking behind the boys' banter and by aestheticising his reflection in a sexually ambiguous way.⁷⁹

The passage does, however, also prefigure another scene which temporarily sets Stephen on a path of more conventional masculinity, when Stephen appeals to rector Conmee for setting the injustice of Father Dolan straight, which was discussed in the previous part. Stephen is urged by the other boys to appeal to rector Conmee after his undeserved punishment by Father Dolan: "—Yes, yes. Tell the rector, all said. And there were some fellows out of second of grammar listening and one of them said: —The senate and the Roman people declared that Dedalus had been wrongly punished" (P 46). This modest rebellion is tied in Stephen's reasoning to the logic of justice he has learnt from history books:

Yes, he would do what the fellows had told him. He would go up and tell the rector that he had been wrongly punished. A thing like that had been done before by somebody in history, by some great person whose head was in the books of history. And the rector would declare that he had been wrongly punished because the senate and the Roman people always declared the men who did that had been wrongly punished. (P 46-7)

The reference to history gives Stephen assurance of the success of his enterprise. Through this "[p]ersonal application of male historical paradigms" (Scott, *James Joyce* 20), he thinks that if he copies the action of "some great person" then the rector would recognise this as the adequate masculine reaction and exculpate him (cf. Lewis 86). But in the same passage Stephen does not only connect history with the approval of his master, he also connects it to a genuinely gendered ontology:

Those were the great men whose names were in Richmal Magnall's Questions. History was all about those men and what they did and that was what Peter Parley's Tales about Greece and Rome were all about. Peter Parley himself was on

⁷⁹ Cf. Castle's assertion that the mystery surrounding the smuggling incident foreshadows Stephen's temptation to become a priest as well as the androgyny of his art later in the novel ("Confessing Oneself" 172).

the first page in a picture. There was a road over a heath with grass at the side and little bushes: and Peter Parley had a broad hat like a protestant minister and a big stick and he was walking fast along the road to Greece and Rome. (P 47)

As would befit a curriculum that is highly indebted to the historicism of the 19th century, Stephen's micro-narrative conceives of history as the heroic stories of "great *men*" (emphasis added), written down by a male scholar, sporting all masculine props ("broad hat" and "big stick").⁸⁰ When Stephen returns successfully from his interview with rector Conmee, he is appropriately celebrated by his "senate", who lift him on their hands to carry him in celebration as if he were the hero of a battle in *Peter Parley's Tales about Ancient Rome* (P 51).⁸¹ But, equally, his way to the rector's office itself is adorned by the ideal of great men. Going through the "the narrow dark corridor" towards Conmee's office, Stephen faces "the portraits of the saints and great men of the order who were looking down on him silently as he passed" (P 48-9). Those great men both intimidate as well as encourage him; they embody the sense of justice for which the order of the priests stands and which he seeks from his interview with Father Conmee.⁸² The journey to Conmee is thus stylised as "a symbolic rite of passage through the primordial chambers of racial and ecclesiastical history (Henke, *Politics* 58), which also includes another Irish hero: "That was where Hamilton Rowan had passed and the marks of the soldiers' slugs were there. And it was there that the old servants had seen the ghost in the white cloak of a marshal" (P 49). Epstein comments that this decision to address the headmaster is the climax of Stephen's prestige at Clongowes:

Stephen, impelled by the double insult to his 'difference' and to his blame, goes up against the 'fathers' of Clongowes and reverses an injustice that they were ready to countenance in the name of order. No other boy in the school would do more than talk about 'a rebellion'; Stephen actually rebels. Moreover, his rebellion is accompanied by the apparitions of the wounded marshal, a symbol of tottering

⁸⁰ See Kershner's *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature* (216-21) for a discussion *Peter Parley's Tales* in historical context and as intertext to *A Portrait*.

⁸¹ However, as Bradley notes, "there is a distancing effect created by the absence of any individual names in this final episode. 'The fellows' have already begun to fade into anonymity [. . .]" (78). Although paying meticulous attention to detail, Valente's assertion that Stephen's discomfort at this "homosocial bonding ritual" is a sign of his "homosexual panic" ("Thrilled" 57), fails to convince because it plays down the importance of the homosocial rituals in Stephen's exchange with Conmee elaborated above.

⁸² Cf. Mullin's assertion that Stephen's passage under the eyes of those masculine role models exposes a "paranoid consciousness of potential surveillance" (96). This reading, however, does not acknowledge the positive support they give him.

paternity, and of Hamilton Rowan, a noble rebel. Both of these symbols add dignity and measure to Stephen's act. (49)

Despite the fact that Father Conmee and Simon Dedalus will subject his courage to a joke later on, Epstein is right to stress that Stephen here moves in the encouraging shadow of great men which underline his call for justice (cf. Cheng 73-74). However, Stephen and his "victory" exist in the context of a rather conventional masculinity of defiance, and, as I argued earlier, this defiance paradoxically results in Stephen's full integration into the hierarchical structure of the Jesuit order. This is a far cry from Stephen's artistic credo of "silence, exile and cunning" (*P* 218), which he will voice much later in the novel. Stephen's Clongowes experience thus ends with an embrace of conventional masculinity and masculine history. This conservative conclusion can in itself be seen as a necessary step for his artistic development, because, as Epstein and others have maintained, Stephen needs to let go of the voices of his father's and great men of history in order to become a new artist and differentiate himself from the boys of Clongowes (cf. Cheng 74).

This chapter has looked at masculinity as negotiated through the practices of the boys in the educational field. It complements thereby the previous chapter which discussed the formation of masculinity through the teachers at Clongowes. Both aspects can certainly not be completely separated from each other. For instance, an important element in the boys' rhetorical performance of masculinity are instances when they voice their attitudes towards the teachers. But it is helpful to grasp how the school functions as a formative space for masculinity by looking at the two levels separately. As I argued in this chapter, at the centre of concern for the narrative is Stephen's experience of formations of masculinity. The narrative first suggests that physical prowess and social capital are the measures according to which masculinity and the hierarchy between different masculinities is voiced, and Stephen here is clearly rendered the outsider. This pattern is, however, a false lead because the currency with which masculine prestige is traded among the boys is eventually knowledge and, more specifically, knowledge about taboo sexuality. In their negotiation of masculinity the boys use forms of narrative framing to grasp the reality of the school-life, for instance by formulating speculations, throwing in innuendoes, referring to anecdotes, and so on. Thereby they hope to increase their own position on the schoolyard among the

others boys. In these narrative negotiations of masculinity Stephen remains the outsider that he was physically on the playground, but the narrative imaginations used by the other boys provides him with a model he can imitate for his own needs. Thus, eventually he also employs narratives to find orientation in this world where he is smaller and lacking knowledge; he embraces the heroism of history which testifies to his momentary allegiance of a conventional masculinity. As he will learn later in the novel, and as he can see also here in the interaction between the boys, narrative as a means to grasp reality and as a means to construct identity has only an ephemeral power. The competition for increased prestige among the boys is endless because their narratives are in constant competition with each other. At this point Stephen does not understand this yet, but in the interaction with the boys and their narratives, he finds moments of aesthetic experience which are beyond embracing heroic masculinity but leading towards an acceptance of queerness and discomfort as important elements to grasp life authentically. Discarding narrative and the masculine role models such the priests or great men from history points toward his future as an artist. His schoolyard experience is therefore an important step enabling him to leave behind the narratives of nation, church and family in order to “forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (*P* 224).

Chapter 5

Husbands and lovers

5.1 Introduction

In a well-known letter to his brother Stanislaus, Joyce decries the “lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever” (*SL* 129). In what follows, it becomes clear, however, that his anger is less directed at the notion of purity but at the concept of marriage as institutionalised, and therefore confining, heterosexuality. His argumentation first posits an idiosyncratic theory of sexual difference in terms of what Freudians would call object cathexis: Joyce opposes an “always maternal and egoistic” female conception of love to a male conception characterised by “genuine affection” but also by an “extraordinary cerebral sexualism and bodily fervour (from which women are normally free)” (*SL* 129-30). Following this dichotomy, Joyce then construes an argument about the relationship between the family, as a social setting, and the production of specific masculinities: “I am no friend of tyranny, as you know, but if many husbands are brutal the atmosphere in which they live (vide Counterparts) is brutal and few wives and homes can satisfy the desire for happiness” (*SL* 129-30). In this conceptualisation of the squalid nature of homes, Joyce implies a direct connection between “tyranny” of husbands, on the one hand, and the “brutal” and lacking “atmosphere” of home, on the other. The emotional, physical and symbolic violence of many husbands and fathers is thereby the direct result of a specific familial context which misses something that he vaguely terms “happiness”. This notion of the interdependence and interrelationship of familial structures and patterns of masculinity is also mirrored in current research on masculinity in the family. As David Morgan argues, not only do “family interactions take place between gendered individuals”, equally significant is the fact “that gender is itself partially shaped within family contexts and that family relationships are to be understood and constituted

through [. . .] the prism of gender” (223). It is this interrelationship between gender, on the one hand, and institution and social context, on the other, which interests me in the texts that are discussed in the next two chapters. As these texts show, Joyce’s works frequently suggest the mutual ways in which social settings and individual characters influence each other, which is symbolised, and sometimes motivated, by the construction of life-stories.

In the two chapters in this part, I do not, however, focus on the male artist or the numerous brutal and failed fathers and husbands that Joyce’s fiction is notorious for. Instead, I choose a different perspective to discuss instances in which female characters construct images of the family, home and, most importantly, their husbands and lovers. These constructions are realised through micro-narratives and plot units used by these female characters, and in each text, the narrativisation takes place within a specific social context that influences the contours of the images of husband or lover. In “Eveline”, the protagonist fantasises about the image of a lover to help her escape her troubled home, and she embeds his image as a saviour in a plot of elopement accordingly. Gretta Conroy and the Morkan sisters in “The Dead” see in Gabriel Conroy a patriarch who offers security and stability during specific dramatic events, but this construction is undermined later by the emerging narrative of youthful passion which promises a sexual bliss that the daily routine of the patriarchal marriage as an institution has stifled. In “Nausicaa”, finally, Gerty MacDowell is both motivated by her domestic situation, which resembles that of Eveline, but also by her disadvantaged position in the marriage market, where she faces fierce competition because of a physical handicap and the aggressiveness of her friends. This situatedness causes her to narrate a series of plots in which varying images of masculinity first emerge and are then deconstructed. The evocation of masculinity and family as mutually influencing through narrative means and embedded in plots and stories is common to all three texts.

The texts I chose for the discussion in this part show female characters who construct images of masculinity within marriage and the family that are embedded in explicit or implicit plots and narrative structures. In reaction to their contexts, these fantasies are motivated by the expectations, hopes and desires of the female characters. The images of husbands and lovers are therefore embedded in plots that

formulate an indirect promise which addresses the specific contexts of each female character. A central question in the discussion is how the texts engage with these constructions: are they supported as a form of storytelling? Or are they undermined or even mocked as forms of escapism and wishful thinking through narrative means? A short scene from Joyce's abandoned artist novel, *Stephen Hero*, illustrates the stakes underlying these constructions. During a discussion about Ibsen, the young artist Stephen Daedalus [sic] clashes with his mother about their contrary conceptions of art: For Mrs Daedalus, literature and art are means of escape from the hardships of her life as a married woman and mother: "sometimes I feel that I want to leave this actual life and enter another — for a time" (*SH* 80). Stephen rebukes her for both this wish and her pragmatic understanding of literature, and he offers a Romantic definition of art as "the very central expression of life" instead (*SH* 80). From his perspective, the artist's role is, therefore, this: "An artist is not a fellow who dangles a mechanical heaven before the public. The priest does that. The artist affirms out of the fulness of his own life, he creates ... Do you understand?" (*SH* 80). These two contrary conceptions of art inform the question about the success of the narratives about masculinity in the texts I discuss in the following. The underlying problem that these readings address is: are those female storytellers of masculinity genuinely creative artists, and are they therefore in control of their narratives to create from the fullness of their lives, as Stephen puts it? Or do they fabricate lovers and husbands merely as a means of escape from their reality?

To address these questions, the analysis works therefore on two levels. First, I will focus on the construction of images of husbands and lovers through narrative means *by the female protagonists* of the texts. On a second level, the readings will simultaneously query how these constructions function *within* the story logic of the texts themselves and how the *texts* engage with these creative processes. The selection of the examples for this analysis is based on the chronology of their publication, the first chapter dealing with two stories from *Dubliners*, the second with one episode from *Ulysses*. But there is also a logical reason for the selection, as "Nausicaa", the episode from *Ulysses*, can be seen as recycling and developing several elements from the *Dubliners* stories "Eveline" and "The Dead". All three texts, however, equally show the creative power of narrative in the fabrication of masculinities, and they show diverse

ways in which those images of husbands and lovers are embedded in narrative structures and plots that reflect social contexts.

Chapter 5.2

Recognition and desire: Unwelcome stories in “Eveline” and “The Dead”

* * *

“Eveline” is the classic story of exile, which was so important for Joyce as a theme. A young woman has met a young man who promises to go away with her from Dublin to Argentina so that she can escape her drab life, which includes bullying at work, a violent and drinking father and the responsibility she has for her family since her mother passed away under the burdens of the Irish family life. In this story, then, masculinity in marriage is projected as a means to escape but also to gain recognition which the subject cannot get at home in Dublin. This construction of masculinity takes place in fantasies which voice hopes and dreams, and as fantasies, these micro-narratives expose the arbitrariness of these constructions through masculine performance. The story negotiates the prospect of marriage in a narrative in which the protagonist considers and weighs what Mrs Kearney in the story “A Mother” calls her husband’s “abstract value as a male” (D 121). “Eveline” creates a variation of this idea by having its protagonist formulate an image of her future husband that implies a plot of escape. However, the narrative undermines this plot on a formal level, where it shows how Eveline’s fantasy stories suppress the more concrete and material aspects of marriage within patriarchal culture. Instead of exposing her as naïve, the narrative rather criticises masculinity as the narrative construction of a promise of social recognition that is already belied by the inequality between husband and wife.

Already on the primary level of her plot, Eveline Hill’s narrative of escape is constructed as problematic and contradictory. Bullied at work and burdened with the task as a homemaker struggling with an alcoholic and violent father, Eveline sees in her lover Frank the opportunity to escape Dublin and leave her troubled past behind

and “explore another life with Frank” (D 29). The verb “explore”, while befitting Frank’s occupation as a sailor, is an interesting but surprising choice for a nineteen year old Dublin girl to use. Margot Norris writes in this context that “the notion of *difference* between her present known life and her future unknown life, is what Eveline’s ruminations attempt to dilate—expressed by the narrative in the open-ended trope of exploration” [. . .] (*Suspicious Readings* 63). While the term captures the sense of the new, which contrasts with the dull routine of housework in Eveline’s old life, the word also contains a worrying sense of the unknown, that which has yet to be perceived and comprehended. While explorers are not least soldiers of fortune, Eveline, in contrast, seeks stability and security, which she does not possess at her current home. The narrative thus highlights the protagonist’s ambivalent diction and thereby surrounds her choice with a sense of uneasiness – which Eveline of course does not yet see. This internal contradiction concerning the goals of her actions also underlies her narrative of Frank, which, as I will show, represents the emplotment of an escapist dream which, because of its internal ambivalence, foreshadows its own failure.

On a broader level, the contradiction inherent in the word *exploration* is mirrored in Eveline’s perspective on the two structuring concepts of “home” and “life”. Eveline connects her decision to leave with Frank or remain in Dublin with both concepts. Both terms are overdetermined within the design of the narrative, but, most importantly, Eveline’s indecision about her future stems from her inability to see how both concepts are deeply rooted in patriarchal power relationships. The first of those, “home”, is for Eveline above all associated with “familiar objects” (D 27) and “those [people] whom she had known all her life” (D 28). The notion of familiarity invoked through those depictions suggests positive connotations, but soon the familiar turns out to be rather discomfoting. Both the picture of a priest who left Dublin for Melbourne and the broken harmonium in her flat are material objects of her home that indicate decay and unwelcome change. But more significantly, they both are part of her routine of household chores (“wondering where on earth all the dust came from” [D 27]). Similarly, the people she is attached to are ambiguous signifiers of the concept of home. They include her young siblings for whom she acts as a surrogate mother while her alcoholic and violent father makes her life miserable through his outbursts and the endless arguments over money. Eveline’s home therefore fulfils a dual and

contradictory role in that it is presented as spending comfort while at the same time producing those signifiers of a life that she would like to escape from with her lover Frank. Eveline's notion of home is thereby characterised by forces that push her away while simultaneously pulling her back (cf. Mullin 61-62, 81-82).

Her ambiguous concept of home equally plays a role in Eveline's anxiety when "weigh[ing] each side of the question" (*D* 28) whether to leave with Frank or not. The solipsistic mental balancing of reasons draws her into several directions at once, and again her notion of home features as a contradictory element. Her primary focus concerning the benefits of staying is on her home as a space that provides her with "shelter and food" (*D* 28). As Norris states, this reasoning constitutes "an absolutely prosaic acknowledgement that in her present circumstance she is assured the fundamentals for survival [. . .]", and while this does not seem to be much that her home can give her, the statement also "implies her awareness that these necessities cannot be taken for granted once she leaves home" (*Suspicious Readings* 60). But these basic essentials come at a certain price, and Eveline has to endure an "edgy and deprecating supervisor" at work and a "menacing and deprecating father [. . .] who makes her beg for her own wages back so she can feed his younger children and clean his dusty house" (*Suspicious Readings* 60). Norris accurately describes the costs of Eveline's notion of comfort at home, but by looking more closely at the concepts Eveline uses, we can see that these are inherently flawed in the first place, as Eveline's everyday reality consists of the exact opposite of what they signify. The definition of "shelter" as "[s]omething which affords a refuge from danger, attack, pursuit, or observation; a place of safety" (*OED*) is belied by the fact that "she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. [. . .] And now she had nobody to protect her" (*D* 28). It is thus not just the violence that emerges from within her home, but Eveline also has to admit that protection is nowhere to be found within that home. Shelter therefore has to be seen as simply referring to "refuge from the weather", an even less than "prosaic" function (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 60). The notion of providing "food", which Eveline also associates with her home, furthermore deconstructs itself in a similar manner, as she is forced to both earn the money to buy food and obtain it from the control of her father:

She always gave her entire wages—seven shillings—and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said

she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard earned money to throw about the streets and much more for he was usually fairly bad of a Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. (*D* 29)

As this micro-narrative shows, the food that her home provides is in reality bought from her own hard-earned money, which the presiding patriarch tries to withhold from her “in a manner that transforms her into the undeserving recipient of his largesse” (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 104). Her home does not provide food *for* Eveline, but it is she who is forced to provide food for others. In a cynical way, her father's unquestioned privilege makes her blind to the fact that he is effectively withholding from her what she wants and needs, as Garry Leonard suggests: “[h]er father's calculated delay in handing over money for food guarantees that her experience in the marketplace will be that of a servant who is tardy in performing the will of her master rather than a consumer indulging her own desire [. . .]” (*Reading Dubliners* 105). Both “food and shelter” are depicted as domestic attributes that Eveline wants her home to symbolise, but which are already shown to be fraudulent in her own images and micro-narratives. And because the concept of the patriarchal family hides this recognition from her, it is her body that unconsciously expresses her desperateness about her family life: while her fear of her father's abuse “had given her the palpitations”, she also admits that “the inevitable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably” (*D* 28). Eveline's conception of home is therefore a deeply patriarchal one, built on the exploitation of female work. In Katherine Mullin's words, this space “signals an oppressive and overwhelming force she is powerless to resist” (82). One of the bitter ironies of the story thus consists in the fact that she sees this home simultaneously as something beneficial while she is unable to see that it is also what she longs to flee from (cf. Mullin 76).

Eveline is not completely blind to this connection, and the narrative's ambiguous engagement with the broader implications of home is further expanded through Eveline's incoherent evaluation of the second structuring concept, *life*. About her life in Dublin she says: “It was hard work—a hard life—but now that she was about to

leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life” (*D* 29). Eveline’s assertion is baffling at first because it is incomprehensible that her current life should be anything but “wholly undesirable”. Similar to her idea of her *home*, Eveline’s view of *life* is exposed as a signifier to which the narrative attaches several incommensurate signifieds. Like several other words in the story that work on many different levels, *life* occurs in innocuous environments that establish subtle connections to other more explicit meanings, leading the reader towards a holistic understanding of Eveline’s paralysis (cf. Hart 51-2). In this way, *life* and its variants are shifting in significance, which indicates Eveline’s confused notion of what marriage to Frank would offer her. For example, the word is used by Eveline’s boss at the stores, who berates her in front of customers, saying “Look lively, Miss Hill, please” (*D* 28). This admonition of course can be read as reflecting Eveline’s weariness mentioned earlier, and thereby the bullying at work mirrors the bullying at home. Her conception of life is eventually overshadowed by the possibility that she will relive her mother’s fate, which ended in total exhaustion and death: “As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother’s life laid its spell on the very quick of her being—that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness” (*D* 31). In this way, the term “life” assumes numerous contradictory implications: staying in Dublin will confine her to a life of metaphorical anaemia (cf. Lowe-Evans 45-46), and in order to become alive and “lively”, as her boss demands, she must choose a path away from her home and grasp the opportunity “to explore another life with Frank”. So, on the stylistic level the narrative thus creates Eveline’s insecurity by deconstructing the central concepts with which she weighs her decision to leave or stay.

I suggested earlier that the notion of exploration in Eveline’s vision of her escape with Frank hints at the unknown, which seems to contrast with the ostensible stability of her current life. A further problematisation in her personal utopia lies in the fact that the inherent instability of her current home will inevitably catch up with Eveline again in this new life: “She was to go away with him by the night boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her” (*D* 29). Even if we leave aside the various theories about Frank’s real intentions (cf. Kenner 20-21; cf. Mullin 69-70), it is safe to assume that Eveline will become a housewife again. The new setting, far away from Ireland, does thereby not offer an

alternative model of cohabitation, even if it looks like a means to escape the control of the Irish Catholic Church, the guarantor of patriarchal marriage (cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 290). As Earl G. Ingersoll persuasively argues, however Eveline decides, she will remain framed by patriarchal power:

Perhaps, because the narrative has temporarily lent her the prospect of enfranchisement—whether Frank was “frank” is a moot point—Eveline comes to embody the essence of the “feminine” in patriarchy. She has seen the possibility of “travel,” but she evades its opportunities because she can associate it only with the very vulnerability and loss to which she ironically commits herself. Even if she leaves her room at the end of the story, *especially* if she does not, Eveline has passed a life sentence on herself as a “housekeeper,” a servant of details. (63)

Frank may very well be able to provide her with the “food and shelter” that Eveline’s old home does not. But that her married life “in a distant unknown country” (*D* 28) would be any different, as she reasons, is fairly unlikely. Both terms “life” and “home” structure Eveline’s fantasy of escape, but both are equally responsible for exposing this fantasy as inherently unstable because they deconstruct the values she projects onto it.

Eveline’s inability to see that both life and home are both fixated within a patriarchal set of relations is emblematised by her view on the status that marriage confer to her. The analysis of a seemingly peripheral passage reiterates not only Eveline’s inconsistent reasoning and blindness to the patriarchal relations, it also demonstrates that she attaches her self-worth to the institution of marriage: Reasoning what her colleagues at work in the stores would say about her elopement with Frank, Eveline is assured that the reaction would be either gossip (“Say she was a fool, perhaps” [*D* 28]) or relief (“Miss Gavan would be glad.” [*D* 28]). In any case, Eveline is sure that “in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then” (*D* 28). The hard work, which makes life unhappy, is located in geographic terms, namely “in the house and at business” (*D* 28). The focus of her dream to escape these places is however not the “distant unknown country” itself, but her status as Frank’s wife, which would bestow the respect of other people on her. So while physical distance, especially from her father, seems a necessary requirement for a happier life, it is the changed legal status on which Eveline projects her hopes for a better future. In

contrast, she estimates the act of elopement as such in rather sober terms, because she knows that she is both expendable and will become the object of ridicule after her departure. For Margot Norris, these “tacit proleptic denunciations of her coworkers who would think her a fool for running away with a sailor” indicate that Eveline has a realistic rather than an overly romanticised outlook on future (*Suspicious Readings* 293; cf. Hart 51). Eveline’s line of thought is, however, not as straightforward as it seems. First, the insertion of the qualifying word *perhaps* demonstrates Joyce’s masterful use of syntax to produce his protagonist’s uncertainty. Her redemption through marriage is thus rendered a mere potential and not a certainty (contrasting with her assumption about the reactions). Second, Eveline’s thoughts explicitly formulate a remarkable line of causation which connects the positive development of her life in Argentina (“it would not be like that”) to her prospective marriage (“*Then* she would be married”, my emphasis) and the resulting respect this status would bestow on her (“People would treat her with respect *then*”, my emphasis). As a discourse marker, the repeated “then” implies a logical consequence which it, however, cannot guarantee. (The very designation of Argentina as a “distant unknown country” earlier foreshadows this slippage.) In any case, Eveline constructs her prospective husband Frank as a knight in shining armour, or rather with a “face of bronze” (*D* 29), who will perform his masculinity as a benevolent patriarch to rescue her.

The fantastic projection of escape is thus tightly framed in the institution of marriage, which offers Eveline a deceptively secure sense of selfhood. Norris writes that “[b]efore we receive any description of Frank, he is mediated as the invisible vehicle for bestowing respectful treatment on her, giving her the kind of Hegelian recognition that would constitute her as a person, a subject in her own eyes” (*Suspicious Readings* 62-63). And as we have seen, recognition, or the lack thereof, is a central element in both Eveline’s unhappiness and the narrative she constructs in order to overcome it. Within the story, the importance of respect for Eveline’s selfhood is stressed, as Wolfgang Wicht suggests, by the fact that her name is mentioned here for the first time. Her name as a signifier of identity is, however, rendered unstable through the sentence construction: “Eveline *would* be Eveline only when and *if* married. Thus, this signifier has no signified. It is a name without the identity imagined. It is the sign for an absence. It indicates a meaning that is not fulfilled” (Wicht 125).

Eveline's lack of control over these signs is mirrored by the fact that marriage would dissolve her identity anyway according to law. It is therefore highly ironic in this context that her name occurs here, whereas her identity would be subsumed under that of her husband, of whom we do not even know the last name. The passage further illuminates that the desire for identity through recognition and respect is blinding Eveline to the implications of her future role in that marriage. Leonard reads the story as posing Eveline's subjectivity as always being "elsewhere" in the narrative: "Only elsewhere can she represent her 'self' from a perspective other than a patriarchal point of view" (*Reading Dubliners* 102). While marriage as such "is precisely what caused the mother to be treated as she was", as Leonard rightly states (*Reading Dubliners* 102), it is still giving her the recognition through her husband that she longs for, which must not be underestimated as a motif in her construction of his masculinity.

This aspect of marriage is highlighted in several innocuous instances that show Eveline's longing for recognition. Reflecting on her earliest memories of their liaison, she admits that "[f]irst of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him" (*D* 29). The phrase "to have a fellow" sounds more like the town talk about someone else than her own self-description.⁸³ Indeed, she had used the same term when imagining the gossip of her co-workers ("What would they say of her in the stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow" [*D* 28]). Eveline's thoughts, as Norris writes, make the appearance of "thoughtful calculation and consideration": "She proceeds as through the explicit warnings of her father, and the tacit proleptic denunciations of her coworkers who would think he a fool for running away with a sailor, were not without effect on her deliberations" (*Suspicious Readings* 63). While most of the narrative of "Eveline" uses Eveline as a focaliser, here she changes the focalisation of her narrative of Frank by implicitly taking in an external perspective. Through this external perspective, Eveline paradoxically partakes in the granting of recognition the narrative would give her.

The narrative construction of Frank's masculinity emphasises both the status and visibility of her affair as well. A further memory of visits to the theatre highlights both motifs again: "He took her to see the *Bohemian Girl* and she felt elated as she sat

⁸³ Note that the version of the story in the *Irish Homestead* used "young man" instead.

in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him” (*D* 29). Whether the “unaccustomed part of the theatre” was chosen for privacy or because the seats were more expensive than what Eveline could normally afford is not known. It is clear, however, that Eveline is not only there to see the play, but also because this act of courting makes her relationship to Frank visible, which she apparently enjoys because it seems to offer her a sense of being acknowledged.⁸⁴ This impression is underlined by Eveline’s stresses on the fact that “[p]eople knew that they were courting and when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor she always felt pleasantly confused” (*D* 29). As Katherine Mullin suggests, this song is one instance of many others in the text where Eveline is shown to be “trapped by the alternative fictions which compete to predict her future [. . .]” (80). But also her vision of what people say about her and Frank is such a fictionalisation with which she tries to comprehend her situation. Eveline’s vague phrasing here matches her confusion: the referent “People” is the vaguest possible signifier for those Others who are capable of granting Eveline recognition and respect, which underlines the vagueness of her longing for status, even more so as she knows that at least one person, her father, outspokenly disapproves of the liaison. Furthermore, the passage connects with the phrase analysed earlier in which she asserts that “People would treat her with respect then” (*D* 28). The reiterative aspect of the narrative creates the impression of coherence, but this is undermined by the vagueness and ambiguity of Eveline’s longing for recognition. Finally, the sentence also underlines her confused notion about her feelings for Frank. While he affords her the status of recognition, the emotional reaction that his attentions provoke in her is ambivalently referred to as “pleasantly confused” (*D* 29), a phrase which neatly describes the whole narrative as well as her feelings (cf. Attridge, “Reading Joyce” 7).

Eveline’s hope for status through her marriage to Frank is mirrored by her determination to avoid the fate of her mother, but the troubling possibility that her lover will equally mirror her abusive father remains a constant spectre that haunts her narrative. The assumption that “People would treat her with respect” after her

⁸⁴ The fact that this Bohemian girl, Arlene, is able “to live happily ever after with the both worlds” of gypsies and noblemen (Gifford, *Joyce Annotated* 50), is an irony certainly not lost on Joyce, who forces Eveline to choose between two similarly dissatisfying alternatives. Kershner, offers a detailed discussion of the opera as an intertext to “Eveline” (*Joyce, Bakhtin* 63-67).

marriage is followed by the defiant assertion that “[s]he would not be treated as her mother had been” (*D* 28). Initially, the juxtaposition of both propositions suggests that the second sentence refers to the first. This would imply that her mother’s life had been miserable because she had been suffering from the disrespect from other people. This form of emplotment through causation is fraudulent, however. Eveline directly moves on to thoughts about her father’s abusiveness, as “[e]ven now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father’s violence” (*D* 28). This sequence of sentences, moving from “people” to her mother and then to her father, creates an ambiguity with regard to the question who was responsible for Mrs Hill’s suffering. First, the theme of respect is initiated as a social issue, but it quickly modulates to attach itself to her father rather than other people and thus becomes a domestic problem. So, although it seems that it was “people” who did not treat her mother respectfully, in reality it was her father who denied this to her. Eveline’s blindness to the possibility of Frank’s ill intentions is thus expressed through her incoherent narrative, which represses the fact that the concept of home determines the wife’s subordination under patriarchal rule. Eveline’s reassurance that Frank “had a home waiting for her” (*D* 29) in Buenos Ayres thereby acquires a threatening connotation: Eveline might envision a place where she will be respected, but from another perspective, this home, like that of her mother, “is the real locus of Eveline’s exploitation” (Mullin 76) because it remains the space of patriarchal rule par excellence.

The narrative of Frank’s promise as a saviour has so far been undermined by constant deconstruction of essential narrative units of this fantasy. At the end of the story, the motif of vision is dramatised on a formal level through the way the narrative employs focalisation. The contrast between vision and blindness thereby underlies the sense of what Eveline envisions and hopes for, on the one hand, and the notion of what she comprehends, on the other. This is finally evoked in Eveline’s panicked reaction to the memory of her mother’s last moments:

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her. (*D* 31)

Eveline recognises that she must leave Dublin because as a surrogate mother and bullied worker she will meet the same fate as her mother. She is thus indeed capable of clearly recognising, that is seeing, the patriarchal pattern of exploitation which she would fall victim to. But at the same time, she is blinded by her own narrative regarding a possible marriage to Frank, which, as we have suggested, will most likely not solve her problems and give her a better life. Eveline's self-deception is even indicated in her own diction: Frank will save her from her father and from her work, but he will also "*fold* her in his arms" (my emphasis), which ambivalently connotes security but also confinement. The recognition that he may smother her, just like her mother had been smothered, overcomes Eveline eventually before she is supposed to board the ship: "he would drown her" (*D* 31). As Brandon Kershner writes, this phrase is similar "to the language that resolves a popular melodrama", which exemplifies the fictionalisation of her situation and leaves her merely with "a choice between languages of fiction" (*Joyce, Bakhtin* 62). Abandoning Frank thus, Eveline frames her lover as a potential domestic tyrant in an implicit narrative that reiterates her mother's biography (cf. Mullin 81). The narrative which she is a part of, frames and folds her through the man's gaze: "She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (*D* 32). The final shift in focalisation makes the reader gaze through Frank's eyes at Eveline. The pervasive ambiguity of the story is thereby reiterated with a variation: Frank views her similarly as an animal and still hopes to see her affection for him in her eyes, and both descriptions are at the same time humiliating and evoking sympathy. While thus the story level of the text remains ambiguous, the shift to Frank's perspective re-instates patriarchy on the level of narrative perspective, which realises the folding that Eveline ambivalently both hoped for and was afraid of (cf. Johnson, "Joyce and Feminism" 204).

"Eveline" dramatises the way in which a young girl employs narrative to give voice to her desires and hopes. Her social context is one that necessitates escape for her. However, in the narratives with which she conceptualises this escape, Eveline increasingly loses control over the signification of its elements. The text of "Eveline" shows the fissures in its protagonist's fabrication of masculinity by including double meanings and ambiguities in concepts like "home" or "life", which Eveline is not aware of. Brandon Kershner provides a similar argument, but he focuses on a wider

array of popular fiction as intertexts to “Eveline”. For him, Eveline’s “choices have already been written and, whether or not she is consciously aware of the fact, they provide her with highly structured allegories of the experience she refuses to contemplate” (*Joyce, Bakhtin* 71). While I agree with Kershner that Eveline employs plots that are beyond her control, I would contend, however, that Eveline’s attempt to comprehend her life-choices through plots and stories is not the actual problem. Narrative’s power to help understand reality is not undermined by taking recourse to other plots. Eveline is, however, blind to the implications of the plot units she tries to employ for her story of escape: she confuses the potential roles of her rescuer, whom she first conceptualises as lover but then realises that he will be a husband who might become like her father. Paradoxically, her primary motivation to construct this plot was the social prestige that a husband can give her, which emblematises, however, the patriarchal family constellation she tries to escape from in the first place. By thus demonstrating the power of art to create and sustain ambiguities and contradictions, the text “Eveline” criticises its protagonist for seeing narrative merely as a means to write an escapist fantasy, which is, however, beyond her control.

* * *

The discussion of “Eveline” has shown that in this story the subject position of husband within the family is based on a fantasy narrative that is undermined by self-deconstructing tropes and false dichotomies. These expose how the hope for a better future blinds the protagonist to the fact that she conflates the plots of lover-as-saviour and husband-as-patriarch. In “The Dead”, similar patterns can be discerned, but the emphasis is on a more open contest between the narrative of the husband and that of the lover. In this text, Gabriel Conroy, the central male character, is confronted with numerous challenges to his hegemony as patriarch of his family. His attempts to counter those challenges are superficially successful, but, under scrutiny, they prove to be backfiring and undermining his authority. Partly this is the result of his reluctance to fulfil the role of the patriarch in a narrative frame that his wife, mother and aunts have written for him. In other instances, Gabriel is simply overwhelmed with the contradictory demands from the mode of hegemonic masculinity he needs to fulfil as

husband and father. The text extends this critique of family constructions further by suggesting that married life as such is a static plot which overrides the narrative dynamics of passionate love. Refusing patriarchal authority, Gabriel Conroy therefore attempts to write for himself the story of the youthful lover, which is based on his memories of courtship when he and Gretta shared a secret unmarried life of passionate desire. In the text, this lover's narrative is, however, already claimed by Gretta's former love, Michael Furey, who died for her as her romantic martyr. Haunted by this spectre of the passionate lover, Gabriel is left with no role at all because both narratives of masculinity which he could write himself into are either confining or unachievable. Thus he comes to understand that the narrativisation of social roles in this way confines the subject to meanings and narrative frames which cannot be mastered or controlled.

Like "Eveline", "The Dead" centres its discussion of masculinity within the family around a play of tropes. The husband is above all defined by the prestige which underlines his authority as the head of the household. In this way, Gabriel Conroy's masculinity is predicated on a narrative that involves him playing the part of a prestigious patriarch at his aunt's famous parties. Ideal and reality clash repeatedly, though, as his performance is numerous times challenged by female characters, as many critics have noted (Bauerle 115, Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 289-90), but most importantly, because Gabriel himself is rather reluctant to fulfil this role. For both Gretta and Gabriel Conroy, prestige is a central term that defines their subject positions within their marriage. Solidly middle-class, Gabriel embodies financial security and both social and cultural capital, and their marriage offered Gretta the opportunity to move upward the social ladder. Marjorie Howes notes that Gretta's marriage to Gabriel can be seen as a movement from her poorer origin in the rural West of Ireland to metropolitan wealth and security in Dublin (165). This movement, however, is furthermore embedded in a wider narrative of female migration after the Great Famine, which had profoundly affected women's lives in Ireland. As a result "the major personal and cultural meanings of female migration were organized around woman's sexuality, women's labor, and upward economic mobility" (Howes 159). In contrast to Eveline Hill, Gretta fulfilled her plot of escape, and her courage was rewarded by marriage to a husband whose possession of economic and social capital could give her the prestige

of the middle classes, exemplified by commodities, Music Hall visits and domestic servants. Her personal narrative of escape is thus embedded in the narrative of the patriarch in which her femininity and the masculinity of her husband are inscribed.

This success story of the family is, however, inherently problematic. Gretta gains social capital and therefore prestige by making the courageous move from the West to Dublin and marrying a man who can transfer this capital onto her. But the trope changes its valence in the course of the story, as it is indicated that the husband's social standing had paradoxically been an obstacle to their marriage in the first place. Looking at the picture of his mother in his aunts' house, Gabriel "remembered her sullen opposition to his marriage. Some slighting phrases she had used still rankled in his memory. She had once spoken of Gretta as being country cute and that was not true of Gretta at all" (*D* 162). So, while a husband signified the guarantee of wealth and social recognition for Gretta, her origin in the West had meant that Gabriel's mother saw their liaison as a mismatch and therefore opposed the marriage in order to secure the prestige of her family. Ironically, Gabriel does not transcend this classist bias by marrying the "country cute" against his mother's opposition. He rather simply refuses and ignores the label bestowed on Gretta in order to avoid the question of class. (His own classist bias is hinted at the end of the story when he refers to himself speaking to the party guests as "orating to vulgarians" [*D* 191].) This dichotomy of the rural West and metropolitan Dublin, embodied by mother and daughter in law, is established here as a motif which slightly disturbs the patriarchal narrative, and it will later come to haunt Gabriel again in the role of Michael Furey, his rival for masculine prestige. For the moment, it suffices to note that prestige is a marker of marriage which pits two perspectives against each other, and this polyphonic quality of the story is further continued in a series of challenges to Gabriel's masculine authority within his narrative of the patriarch.

Gabriel's performance at the party is characterised by the contrast between the expectations that others have of him and what he is actually able to deliver. Long awaited as the most important guest at the party and much acclaimed throughout ("Where on earth is Gabriel?" [*D* 170]), Gabriel is expected to guarantee the success of the festivity through his presence and his acts as patriarch. In this performance, Gabriel acts in many ways as a parody of the "model paterfamilias" (Norris, *Suspicious*

Readings 223). As Norris notes, he “is the antipode to the shiftless, ineffective, and sometimes brutal family men who people Joyce’s texts [. . .]” (*Suspicious Readings* 223). Above all, Gabriel’s hegemonic position at the gathering focuses on this effectiveness. To the great relief of his aunts, he makes sure that the anxiously observed alcoholic Freddy Malins does not cause any trouble. He also gallantly takes care of the neglected Mrs Malins, Freddy’s mother, and patiently endures her monotonous conversation in order to keep up the good spirit of hospitality. Finally, he performs two symbolic acts of authority which underline his masculine prestige, when he presides over the dinner table to carve the Christmas goose and later when he gives a laudatory speech on his aged aunts. However, this plot of the patriarch-as-host, who saves the festivity through his controlled male authority, is constantly challenged and undermined.

Freddy’s imminent appearance at the party is anxiously awaited by Julia, Kate and Mary Jane, who need Gabriel’s authority to “manage” this potential trouble-maker: “Besides they were dreadfully afraid that Freddy Malins might turn up screwed. They would not wish for worlds that any of Mary Jane’s pupils should see him under the influence; and when he was like that it was sometimes very hard to manage him” (*D* 153). Freddy’s alcoholism and unreliability (“Freddy Malins always came late [. . .]” [*D* 153]) are commonplace among the hosts, and he is more tolerated than warmly welcomed at the party. However, this plot unit is undermined by the fact that it is not Gabriel who checks the drunkard but the painfully facetious Mr Browne. By engaging in several petty skirmishes with the inebriated Freddy, Browne undermines the claim to authority which the aunts’ narrative had envisioned for Gabriel. Gabriel’s agency is thus reduced to “piloting” Freddy into the room, handing him over to Browne and lying to aunt Kate that his intoxication is “hardly noticeable” (*D* 160). Indeed, Mr Browne, as a Protestant an outsider at the party, uses Freddy as a foil to bolster his own standing among the guests. For example, addressing Freddy as “Teddy” repeatedly, Browne belittles the latter in front of other guests. While the management of Freddy was transferred to Gabriel, it is Mr Browne who actually takes over this role and uses every opportunity to enhance his own masculine self: after leaving the room with Gabriel, aunt Kate silently indicates to Mr Browne that he should not let Freddy drink more liquor “by frowning and shaking her forefinger in warning to and fro. Mr Browne nodded in answer and, when she had gone, said to Freddy Malins: —Now,

then, Teddy, I'm going to fill you out a good glass of lemonade just to buck you up" (*D* 160). So, Mr Browne forces a lemonade on Freddy while pouring himself another whiskey. Patronizing Freddy thus, Mr Browne embarrasses him further by pointing his "attention to a disarray in his dress", presumably an open fly. In this way, Mr Browne is able to maintain his status by eclipsing Freddy, but more significantly he eclipses Gabriel too. The latter is supposed to be the centre of masculine authority, but, in effect, Mr Browne has silently undermined this plotline to bolster his own ego. The patriarchal narrative, into which Gabriel is forced, is not only challenged in his handling of Freddy, but also in two classic acts of masculine performance: first when he carves the festive goose and then when he gives a speech to celebrate his aunts. These plot units were part of the festivity and intended to fortify his prestige and authority among the guests, but both are eventually challenged, which leaves him more insecure than before. The gendered nature that Gabriel's carving of the goose is based on two aspects. First, as many critics have stated, carving the goose is a gendered act that achieves its significance through its positioning in the narrative. It occurs directly after the new womanly character Molly Ivors challenges Gabriel's masculine self-assertion by interrogating his nationalist credentials:

It is notable that after this final sally, Gabriel grasps at any available means to restore to himself some semblance of masculine authority [. . .] [I]t is the only moment of the evening where he finds himself entirely at ease, for it is the only occasion during which his masculine place and symbolic phallus (represented here by the carving utensils) are secured from feminine incursion and appropriation. (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 176)

When we thus read that Gabriel "plunged his fork firmly into the goose" (*D* 171), the action sublimates the aggression against Miss Ivors and the need to overpower her. On its own, the image is almost too blunt in its potential meaning as a sexualised revenge. However, the bluntness of both the action and sexual implications are toned down by the focus on Gabriel's relief and soothing, rather than anger and violence, in the following sentence: "He felt quite at ease now for he was an expert carver and liked nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well laden table" (*D* 171). On the textual level, Gabriel's elevated position as the carver of the goose is undermined, however, by the fact that Gretta's commentary on his role highlights its performative nature and thus exposes the authority underlying it as artificial: "—Gabriel,

aunt Kate wants to know won't you carve the goose as usual. Miss Daly will carve the ham and I'll do the pudding" (*D* 166). Not only does Gretta thus expose the fact that the carving is part of a ritual enactment in which Gabriel merely plays a role. Furthermore, by reiterating the textual marker "carving" in two different contexts, the narrative empties Gabriel's action of masculine meaning. Bourdieu argues that masculinity confers nobility to forms of work depending who is doing it: "the same tasks may be noble and difficult, when performed by men, or insignificant and imperceptible, easy and futile, when performed by women" (*MD* 60). In this passage, however, the narrative deflates this notion by conferring to Miss Daly and Gretta very similar tasks as the one on which Gabriel predicates his superiority. In this way Gabriel's patriarchal performance is undermined through a textual repetition of a gendered act, which is recontextualised and thereby shown to be not inherently gendered.

Gabriel's long awaited dinner speech is a second plot unit in his aunts' patriarchal narrative for him, and it is similarly flawed in its effectiveness to strengthen Gabriel's masculine prestige. Symbolically the speech marks the patriarch's privilege to master the discourse of the festivity, and on the surface level, this act intends to celebrate the "hospitality of certain good ladies," who exemplify "the tradition of genuine warmhearted courteous Irish hospitality which our forefathers have handed down to us [. . .]" (*D* 176). This result is indeed achieved, as "[t]he table burst into applause and laughter", and, moreover, Gabriel perceives a "large smile on Aunt Julia's face and the tears which had risen to Aunt Kate's eyes [. . .]" (*D* 178). However, as critics have also pointed out, the result and the speech's stress on hospitality are undermined by the fact that Gabriel takes the opportunity to have his revenge on Molly Ivors. More precisely, Gabriel retaliates for her attack on his hegemony and his self-stylisation as an intellectual. As Brandabur notes, the young woman "disturbs him in the one area where he might feel secure, his intellectual superiority to the others" (117). It is thus appropriate that Gabriel addresses this challenge publicly, and therefore he spontaneously devises a way to include Miss Ivors in an unfavourable way in his speech:

An idea came into his mind and gave him courage. He would say, alluding to aunt Kate and aunt Julia: Ladies and gentlemen, the generation which is now on the wane among us may have had its faults but for my part I think it had certain qualities of hospitality, of humour, of humanity, which the new and very serious and hypereducated generation that is growing up around us seems

to me to lack. Very good: that was one for Miss Ivors. What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old women? (*D* 167)

First, the speech is a successful dig at Miss Ivors because it takes place in her absence and because it is, as a public event, an oratory performance of his masculine intellectuality (cf. Brown, "Literature, Mourning" 77-78). In the public sphere, Molly Ivors is Gabriel's equal, as he had to acknowledge during their earlier quarrel about his review in a loyalist newspaper: "they were friends of many years' standing and their careers had been parallel, first at the University and then as teachers: he could not risk a grandiose phrase with her" (*D* 163). Therefore, her public intervention is all the more threatening because she is a woman (cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 175-76). However, it is only in her absence that he dares to throw this "grandiose phrase" at her. Thus, he tries to undermine the value of her education when he argues that the "hypereducated generation" is in need of more positive values like "hospitality", "humour" and "humanity", which are embodied by the older generation.

Through this counter-attack, Gabriel also punishes Molly Ivors for her implicit attempt to challenge the narrative of his masculinity. In contrast to Gabriel's obedient aunts, Molly is not submissive and does not admire him in the way he is used to from women, which undermines the role she is supposed to fulfil within the heterosexual matrix. As Garry Leonard puts it, "[s]he is the most disconcerting person at the party because she maintains, publicly, an ironic distance from her own social performance" (*Reading Dubliners* 301). This distance from the role which Gabriel's narrative of hegemonic masculinity prescribed for her threatens this narrative by highlighting its artificial status. To counter this attack, Gabriel reverts to a ruse. He simply avoids the gender trouble that Molly Ivors created by transferring his attack from the level of gender to that of age. In his public defence of his masculine authority, he therefore does not voice concern at the intrusion of young women into the sphere of men. Rather, he metonymically includes Molly in the "new and very serious and hypereducated generation" that he attacks instead. His revenge is thus doubly successful, because he manages to re-establish the binary gender hierarchy by putting Molly Ivors in her place, and he also strengthens the patriarchal narrative by re-establishing his hegemony vis-à-vis the other men at the table. This status is underlined both by his privilege to control the spoken word and, more importantly, also by the actual choice

of his words: including a quotation from the Victorian poet Robert Browning in his speech, Gabriel can display his status as the “braincarrier” (*D* 162) at the party, and he thereby re-asserts his masculine authority by distinguishing himself from the other, supposedly uncultured, men at the table.⁸⁵ This form of “cultural snobbery” as Vincent Cheng remarks, “is an authoritarian tendency to marginalize others by making value-charged distinctions about difference” (139; cf. Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 299). Thus emphasising his difference from Molly, his aunts and the other guests, Gabriel employs a narrative unit from a field in which he feels confident in order to write himself again into the patriarchal narrative of his hegemony at the party.

This strategy backfires, however, and eventually undermines his role in the narrative of his authority. As many critics have stated, the thrust of his speech proves Gabriel’s own hypocrisy more than anything else. The attack on Miss Ivors is a spontaneous means he conceives of to take revenge “by inserting into his speech an intentional jab at her” (Cheng 139). However, this impulsive modification of the speech also betrays his disdain for his aunts when he highlights their cultural inferiority and thinks of them as “only two ignorant old women” (*D* 167). The sincerity of his emphasis on “hospitality, of humour, of humanity”, which he attributes to the older generation of his aunts, is thereby revealed as a coldly executed ploy to gain the high ground over Molly Ivors. Furthermore, Gabriel’s attack on “the new and very serious and hypereducated generation” implicates himself as well, since he stressed earlier that Molly and he have been friends for several years that that their careers have taken similar paths. Having proven his own elite education by quoting Browning, Gabriel further lends credibility to his concern over the seriousness of his generation by disproportionately inflating Molly’s flirtatious digs at him. If there is a member of his generation who is lacking humour, it is Gabriel himself. Finally, as Ruth Bauerle observes, his speech echoes an earlier incident in which male speech is exposed as lacking substance and, indeed, even inverts the notion of patriarchal gallantry:

Gabriel’s speech in fact refers to an earlier incident, for it is just the kind of false “palaver” of which Lily earlier complained (178). Under a pretense of gallantly praising hospitality, Gabriel, as his aunts’ spokesman, ungallantly attacks one of their guests. Remembering that Joyce intended “The Dead” as

⁸⁵ The term was originally used for Gabriel’s mother, whose legacy of intellectual superiority in the family he carries on (Brown, “Literature, Mourning” 77-78).

praise of Irish hospitality, we must note Gabriel's inhospitable speech as not merely rapacious toward Molly Ivors, in its insistence on prevailing even in her absence. It is also rapacious toward his aunts by taking advantage, for his own purposes, of the hospitality they offer to all guests. (116-17)

Gabriel's role in the narrative of the patriarch at the party is thus undermined by the performative violence that his speech produces against several women at once. What began as a counter-attack against Molly Ivors' threat to his masculinity thereby ends as the self-deconstruction of the narrative of his masculinity.

Eventually, the implied violence of his speech contrasts with Gabriel's assumed role as the benevolent patriarch at the party and markedly contradicts his own appraisal of his aunts' hospitality. But this contradiction is also symptomatic of his failure to maintain the patriarchal narrative during the evening. More generally, the party is characterised by a host of subdued noises, altercations and arguments, which Gabriel similarly fails to mediate or subdue (cf. Winston 122-23). Among these are, more generally, Freddy Malins's disorderly and noisy behaviour, but also the dispute over aunt Julia's anger at the Pope's responsibility for stalling her musical career, and the stifled aggression in the argument about modern and classic masters of the opera. Similarly, Miss Ivors's taking leave from the party early marks a disruption of the hospitality, which Gabriel is also unable to prevent, and which negates the claim to hospitality that he praises in his speech. All in all, the narrative of Gabriel's patriarchal presidency over the dinner is flawed, and at several points he even undermines it himself, which indicates the reluctance with which he engages in these kinds of masculine performances.

It is this reluctance as a pervasive motif which gradually helps to establish a second narrative construction of masculinity, namely that of authentic passion outside the patriarchal confines of marriage. This narrative of the lover finds its culmination in the memory of Michael Furey with which Gretta surprises and alienates her husband. However, the contours of this narrative construction begin earlier. During the evening, Gabriel fails not so much because of the various obstacles put in front of him but because he does not want to fulfil the role patriarchy has assigned to him as a middle-class man. In a classical Freudian slip of the tongue he thus praises the dinner guests, including himself, as the "victims—of the hospitality of certain good ladies"

(D 176). The motif of the male victim of overpowering femininity already points forward to the masculinity of Michael Furey, a spectre of romantic martyrdom, which itself threatens to overpower Gabriel. Indeed, the binary opposition between the two can be seen as a gendered fabulation by both Gabriel and Gretta. In this narrative of the lover, Gabriel uses “Michael Furey, the man of romantic ‘fury’ from whom Gabriel will feel a challenge to his maleness” (Cheng 137), as a foil that interrogates his marriage and his masculinity.

Gabriel’s status as reluctant patriarch is not only established in his contestations with other characters, but through specific gendered metonymies which expose him as benevolent but unexciting masculine subject. In marked contrast to Eveline Hill and her mother, Gretta Conroy has no worries about money and is neither exhausted with household chores. On the contrary, the Conroys seem to be comparably well-off and surrounded in the text by an “aura of well-being that [. . .] attests to solid economic stability”, which enables them to afford, for instance, a house with servants or a stay in the expensive Gresham hotel (Benstock, *Narrative Con/Texts in Dubliners* 99). But this comparable wealth does not only function to underline Gabriel’s assumption of hegemonic masculinity. Especially the infamous pair of goloshes,⁸⁶ which Gabriel makes his wife wear to save her from the snow, mockingly undermines his hegemony and furthermore helps to create the binary opposition to Michael Furey as an alternative, more desirable masculinity. Earl G. Ingersoll writes that these goloshes function as synecdochic “representations of Gabriel’s desire, paternalistic or not, to protect those he loves from sickness and even untimely death” (147; cf. Brandabur 118-19). Even though Gretta successfully resists his paternalism by not wearing those commodities (cf. Howes 163-64), they are part of the financially secure life that he has offered her (they are a commodity after all), and his protectiveness is therefore a form of patriarchal possessiveness. Material security is a quality that characterises this marriage in general, and it will provide the dramatic contrast with the passionate and free masculinity of Michael Furey (cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 226; cf. Boyd and Boyd 205).

⁸⁶ This is Joyce’s spelling, which will be used here instead of the more common “galoshes”.

The construction of this dichotomy is a direct result of Gabriel realising that his marriage has become a passionless contract between two partners who are looking for stability. This can be seen by comparing the Conroys' marriage with Gretta's former infatuation with her lover. The contrast becomes apparent in the passage in the hotel room when Gabriel's desire for his wife is aroused, while she is brooding over the song "The Lass of Aughrim", which she heard before and which reminds her of Michael Furey:

He was in such a fever of rage and desire that he did not hear her come from the window. She stood before him for an instant, looking at him strangely. Then, suddenly raising herself on tiptoe and resting her hands lightly on his shoulders, she kissed him.

—You are a very generous person, Gabriel, she said. (*D* 189).

Gabriel's generosity cannot compete, however, with the aesthetic artifice of the music that touches her so intensely. What Gabriel realises is that before their marriage, Gretta was infatuated by a very different image of love than the one of financial and social security which he embodies. Margot Norris summarises the dualism of secure and passionate love, which underlies the narrative of the lover, thus:

Gretta presumably 'loves' her husband as a 'generous person,' that is, she is grateful to him for his nurturance, but she reserves her desire, her recognition, for the virginal male, Michael Furey, the idealist who achieves metaphysical mastery over her by his willingness to risk life. (Norris *Suspicious Readings* 225-26)

This opposition between nurturance and passion, embodied by Gabriel and Michael, is one that plays a central role in Gabriel's own perception of his current life with Gretta. The opposition between lover and husband that she voices, underlies Gabriel's own recognition of what his marriage has become. This is ironically voiced in his misreading of her emotional states, when he thinks that "[p]erhaps her thoughts had been running with his. Perhaps she had felt the impetuous desire that was in him and then the yielding mood had come upon her. Now that she had fallen to him so easily he wondered why he had been so diffident" (*D* 189). Although this misrecognition assumes almost farcical proportions, it is an important narrative element for the overall construction of the narrative of the lover, as opposed to that of the patriarch.

This clash of two narratives is based on Gabriel's own realisation that his married life has become secure but unexciting, and he eventually blames marriage as an

institution for this lack of passion when he contrasts matrimony to the trope of “their secret life together” before (cf. Benstock *Narrative Con/texts* 26). Shocked by Gretta’s emotional distance, Gabriel himself creates a distance to their present relationship when he remembers their life before they were married: “While he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another” (*D* 191; cf. Chambers 112). Joyce’s syntax is again ambiguous, pointing to both Gabriel’s present state of emotions and to their life as an unmarried couple. The inserted clause “full of tenderness and joy and desire” obviously qualifies his pondering of the memories just moments before. It may be seen, however, also as a comment on what he calls “their secret life together”, the memory of which triggers these emotions that seem to be absent from married life. The mysterious phrase conceptualises the dualism of past and present, and it thereby becomes a new life-story in which Gabriel is lover and not husband, and with which he narratively frames his realisation that his marriage has lost its passion. Before this point in the text, Gabriel refers to his mother’s opposition to Gretta, which lends credibility to the notion that prior to marriage they shared a clandestine life as a romantic, unmarried couple. On their way to the hotel and therefore before Gretta’s revelation, Gabriel also mentions this secret life and contrasts it explicitly with the comfortable boredom of everyday life that the Conroy household has apparently settled in: seeing her walking before him at a distance, Gabriel

longed to run after her noiselessly, catch her by the shoulders and say something foolish and affectionate into her ear. She seemed to him so frail that he longed to defend her against something and then to be alone with her. Moments of their secret life together burst like stars upon his memory. (*D* 185)

The otherwise careful and sound patriarch is overcome by a momentary flow of tender emotions. He expresses these emotions through a story of himself as a knight in shining armour who rescues his maiden, and eventually takes possession of her being. But more important than this immediate narrativisation of his emotional state is the fact that this almost comic chivalric performance is a plot unit that connects with the story formed by the memories of their early courtship, in which he was a lover and not yet a husband.

This lover's narrative is an abstraction that the text constructs through various plot elements and narrative units. It is neither Gabriel's nor Michael Furey's tale, even though both embody this lover alternately, and it is similarly not "told" by anyone but remains an abstract narrative conceptualisation of wishes and desires. In that function, the lover's narrative assumes a quality of romantic superiority over Gabriel's current life-story. This can be seen in Gabriel's next reference to the past as well:

A wave of yet more tender joy escaped from his heart and went coursing in warm flood along his arteries. Like the tender fire of stars moments of their life together, that no one knew of or would ever know of, broke upon and illumined his memory. He longed to recall to her those moments, to make her forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy. For the years, he felt, had not quenched his soul or hers. Their children, his writing, her household cares had not quenched all their souls' tender fire. (*D* 186)

In this lyrical passage, Gabriel elaborates on the story of their courtship, as he voices its superiority over his present life in marriage and by naming the reasons for this superiority. The basic binary opposition which structures the two life-stories is that of "their dull existence together" in contrast to "their moments of ecstasy". The fact that those two poles are extreme opposites and perhaps largely exaggerated, expresses Gabriel's emotional state in which he loses perspective, but the clarity of this dualism also helps to structure the story which underlies it. To voice his desire for Gretta in this moment, Gabriel structures his emotion in this story of himself as a youthful lover, who is yet unaffected by age, routine and experience. The reasons Gabriel lists for the dullness of their marriage are "the years" and "[t]heir children, his writing, her household cares". They form a plotline that conceptualises the passage of time and the ways in which various events have shaped the present self as opposed to the past self. Incidentally, these reasons match Joyce's own anxieties concerning his partner, Nora. In a letter to his lover sent almost two years after he had written "The Dead", Joyce expresses sentiments that match that of his protagonist: "Our children (much as I love them) must not come between us. If they are good and noble-natured it is because of *us*, dear, We met and joined our bodies and souls freely and nobly and our children are the fruit of our bodies" (*SL* 165-66, Joyce's emphases). Joyce's explicit emphasis on the physical passion that connects Nora and him is muted in Gabriel's reminiscence, but the basic idea that the passion of lover's can be challenged by family

life is a fear that Joyce and Gabriel share. Finally, the contrast between legally sanctioned and illegitimate heterosexuality is expressed in Gabriel's emphasis of the aspect of secrecy. Remembering his mother's "sullen opposition to his marriage", it is likely that Gabriel and Gretta had an ongoing affair before. So, Gabriel poses their early disclosed relationship, which he associates with passion and freedom, against the confining life inside the institutionalised form of living together as a couple, which stifles "all their souls' tender fire" (*D* 186). The element of secrecy gives Gabriel's memory of his past a distinguishing characteristic which opposes it to his married present, and, moreover it also symbolises the excitement which is implicit in the forbidden.

In this narrative of the past, Gabriel's perception of himself and Gretta are at stake, and the contrast between her as wife and as lover exemplifies the emotional pull of this narrative further. On the way to the hotel after the party, a tactile sense impression triggers in Gabriel a line of thought which becomes an element in his narrative of unmarried passion:

She leaned lightly on his arm, as lightly as when she had danced with him a few hours before. He had felt proud and happy then, happy that she was his, proud of her grace and wifely carriage. But now, after the kindling again of so many memories, the first touch of her body, musical and strange and perfumed, sent through him a keen pang of lust. Under cover of her silence he pressed her arm closely to his side; and, as they stood at the hotel door, he felt that they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a new adventure. (*D* 187)

The binary opposition between married life and unmarried passion is expressed in this passage through the way Gabriel views Gretta. On one side, Gretta's married self is associated with the pride "of her grace and wifely carriage" during their dance. The dance is a stereotypical performance of ritualised and therefore contained heterosexuality, and it is therefore emblematic of Gabriel's life in marriage, which emphasises social prestige as expressed in the gracefulness with which she embodies her role in this patriarchal narrative. On the other side, the conventionality of his feelings, which refer to a ritual that is meant to tame and contain sexuality, is strongly contrasted with the "keen pang of lust" caused by "the kindling again of so many memories". These are the plot units of his life-story of the past, in which desire was not yet contained and smothered by the routines of everyday life. Ironically, the reference to these older

selves, figuratively embodied by their “wild and radiant hearts”, triggers the longing for “a new adventure”, to run away from a life that is determined by “duties”, “home” and “friends”. It is in this context of Gabriel’s wish to relive the life-story with Gretta outside marriage that the ensuing dichotomy between Gabriel and Michael, and the life-stories they imply, needs to be seen.

The abstract construction in the text of the lover’s narrative, as opposed to that of the patriarch, is embodied by both Gabriel’s former self and by his romantic antagonist Michael Furey. In the fantastic way that Michael Furey takes over that role in that narrative of unmarried passion, the text dramatises Gabriel’s final defeat. One of the central and most bathetic elements of the dichotomy between Gabriel and Michael Furey is the fact that Gabriel employs a device like galoshes in order to keep Gretta safe, while her youthful but weakly lover romantically sings in the rain for her to express his love and farewell. Margot Norris notes that “Joyce beautifully draws the parallel between the husband who aborts the very endangerment from which he fantasizes heroically rescuing his wife, by making her, and himself, wear galoshes, while her tubercular lover stood in the rain mourning the loss of his love—‘I think he died for me’ (220)” (*Suspicious Readings* 226). With this irony, however, the text lures the reader into a pattern of apparently strict dichotomies of two masculinities, both enriched and defined by certain sets of ideas:

Gabriel/Michael
husband/lover
old/young
middle-class/working class
reasonable/unreasonable
timorous/adventurous
cosmopolitan/West of Ireland, etc. (cf. Boyd and Boyd 205)

In a completely different context, which is, however, applicable here as well, Hélène Cixous argues that our perception and cognition of the world is organised “[b]y dual, *hierarchized*, oppositions. Superior/Inferior. Myths, legends, books. Philosophical systems. Wherever an ordering intervenes, a law organizes the thinkable by (dual, irreconcilable; or mitigable, dialectical) oppositions” (264, Cixous’s emphases; cf. Bourdieu, *MD* 6-22, 56-63). Applied to Gabriel and Michael, and in line with Gretta’s unresponsiveness to her husband’s romantic enthusiasm, the terms associated with

Michael are prioritised, whereas Gabriel's characteristics are subdued. The whole constellation reminds of the courtly love paradigm, a fantastic narrative against which threatens to challenge Gabriel:

This Irish suitor who died for love acted the melodramatic role of a legendary knight who, in good chivalric fashion, laid at the feet of his courtly lady the ultimate gift of his life. By sacrificing all for Gretta, he took permanent possession of her heart. Symbolically, the martyred Furey became a contemporary Christ figure, a mythic hero whose death makes Gretta into an eternal replica of the Virgin Mary as *Peitã*. She is forever an emblem of the magna mater, the mother/lover bearing a transfigured godhead in bereft maternal arms. (Henke, *Politics of Desire* 45)

Against these various authoritative intertexts, Gabriel has no means to defend his position as Gretta's lover that he evoked from his memories, and thus he has no other choice than to concede that he has been "cuckolded by a dead man" (*Politics of Desire* 68).

These intertexts, which flesh out the narrative of the youthful lover, are originating from the storytelling of both Gretta and her husband. Together they write this imaginative tale of passion, which conceptualises what got lost in their marriage (cf. Spoo 106). That Gretta helps to create this allegorically loaded artifice can be seen in various details of her past. Thus, for instance, there is arguably nothing romantically tragic in Michael Furey's death. In a different context, Ingersoll remarks that Gabriel's acceptance of "this romantic tale of dying for love, whose subject is an unprepossessing boy of poor health who would have probably died anyway" should not be confused with "his acceptance of such tragic love as 'the real thing' [. . .]" (153). Still, this "romantic tale of dying for love" is persuasive, because it invites comparison with the scenario of courtly love. It is indeed the courtly Lady herself who is the storyteller of the aesthetisation of Michael's death, but she invites her husband to complete the narrative and thus make Michael Furey an insuperable enemy. In her own self-stylisation, Gretta assumes the role as Lady who is radical Other to the lover. In Slavoj Žižek's words, the Lady "functions as an inhuman partner in sense of radical Otherness which is wholly incommensurable with our needs and desires; as such, she is simultaneously a kind of automaton, a machine which utters meaningless demands at random" (151). The text suggests that this is a version of herself that Gretta wants to perform and which integrates Michael Furey as the innocent victim of her cold cruelty.

Overpowered with a guilty conscience she insists that “—I think he died for me” (D 191), which undermines Gabriel’s more realistic interpretation of the events: “Consumption, was it?” (D 191). In this way, Gretta “successfully revitalises the revolutionary and subversive world of love and violence domesticated by her aunts and puritanically refrigerated by her prurient spouse” (Henke, *Politics of Desire* 48). So, if any one is the hapless knight in this story, it is Gabriel himself, as his almost Gothic reaction suggests: “A vague terror seized Gabriel at this answer, as if, at that hour when he had hoped to triumph, some impalpable and vindictive being was coming against him, gathering forces against him in its vague world” (D 191). Eager to please this insatiable Lady, Gabriel thus contributes to the narrative of Michael Furey as the hapless lover who died for love. Brandon Kershner voices a similar view, when he writes that “Michael is, after all, Gretta’s creation, and in doing this Gabriel places himself within the domain of her imagination, becomes her creature” (*Joyce, Bakhtin* 147, cf. 148). What initially haunts Gabriel is an “impalpable and vindictive being” from a “vague world”, but he soon rewrites this ambiguous spectre into the role of the adoring knight who is willing to sacrifice his life for his Lady.

That Gabriel takes over the writing of the narrative of the hapless knight/lover from Gretta becomes apparent in his questions to her with which he tries to learn more about his idealised antagonist. This interrogation is characterised both by Gabriel’s anxious insecurity and aggressive anger, and therefore he first tries to minimise Michael’s status but then elevates him to masculine heights that cannot be reached by himself: “Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of this figure from the dead, a boy in the gasworks” (D 191). Gabriel’s strategy for creating Furey’s alterity here relies on the intersection of gender and age. He conceptualises the assumed humiliation to his masculinity in terms of the dual inferiority of his competitor. The exact thrust of this attack remains thereby difficult to pinpoint, as Michael is similarly denigrated for being younger than Gabriel (“a boy”) and for being lower-class (“working in the gasworks”). But both these characteristics similarly function to conceptualise his own inferiority and the fantastic, unreachable status of his antagonist. The creation of this imaginary character lets Gabriel realise that he is brought back into his narrative of the reluctant patriarch – the middle-aged and middle-class counterpart to his own former self as lover – while the role of the passionate

lover is now embodied by Michael Furey. Eventually, since Gabriel is not young anymore and cannot assume a romanticised lower-class masculinity, he cannot but fail in the eyes of Gretta's plot of the lover.

Finally, Gabriel brings the lover's narrative to a conclusion by elevating that lover to unachievable heights, and he concedes his defeat by rewriting his own role as one of complete dejection. First, Gabriel dramatises the unachievable nature of the lover's role by imagining his dead rival in a rhetoric resembling the Wagnerian *Liebestod*: "So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake" (*D* 193; cf. Kershner, *Joyce, Bakhtin* 148). Significantly, Michael Furey's masculinity has changed through this intertextual reference, as the "boy in the gasworks" has become "a man [who] had died for her sake" (my emphases). This narrative transformation of the lover's masculinity indicates that Gabriel concedes his failure as a man, and he equally sees that, reluctant or not, he is framed in the narrative of the middle-class patriarch. Michael Furey, however, maintains his role in the courtly love plot, which becomes for Gretta "that romance", the only relevant one in her life (my emphasis). As Michael Furey has now permanently occupied the role of the youthful lover, Gabriel is forced into the narrative of the patriarch again. In order to avoid this role, however, he stylises his defeat through a total dejection of his masculinity:

A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous, wellmeaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. (*D* 191)

To render his defeat complete, Gabriel constructs a masculine self-image characterised by denigrating attributes like "ludicrous", "nervous, wellmeaning" and "clownish". Significantly, Gabriel focuses on the image of himself in the mirror. Filled with the "shame that burned upon his forehead" (*D* 191), he distances himself from his own self and assumes numerous roles which symbolise his submission to Michael Furey. He may see another self for himself in that mirror, but the Other who actually gazes at him is the imaginative construction of Michael Furey that he and Gretta have created.

* * *

Both “Eveline” and “The Dead” dramatise the expectations, hopes, and desires of both sexes connected with the roles of both husband and lover. These potentials of masculinity find their form in narratives which the characters write for themselves and for others. These stories are never narrated explicitly as stories, but rather they exist as abstractions of the wishes connected to certain masculine subject positions within heteronormative society. In this way, they employ images and also more concrete narrative micro-units referring to events, memories, actions and the like. The way both stories produce the masculinity of husband and lover is similar but there are also differences. The narrative in “Eveline” features a protagonist who constructs the narrative role of her lover as a saviour who rescues her from the patriarchal family constellation under which she suffers. Eveline fails, however, to write herself into that plot of escape because she realises that in her fabulation of masculinity she confuses the roles of lover and patriarchal husband. Her own narrative thus deconstructs itself, which Joyce’s text has suggested throughout by destabilising the meaning of the concepts which Eveline uses for her narrative vision of a new life.

“The Dead” is similarly concerned with the roles of husband as opposed to lover, and it further develops the dramatisation of those roles begun in “Eveline”. In this text, the protagonist Gabriel is written unwillingly into the narrative of the paterfamilias, the well-meaning and socially secure husband and father. He reluctantly fulfils this role, but in the second half of the text he is confronted with the fact that this role, while it had given him Gretta as his wife, has stifled the passion that defined their earlier life together as lovers. He conceptualises this longing for his youthful love through the lover’s narrative, but in the shocking revelation of Gretta’s mourning for Michael Furey, he understands that the leading role in this narrative is already occupied, which results in his complete rejection of both narratives. Gabriel refuses to perform the role of patriarch that his environment expects from a well-situated married man, but he falls prey to the demands of another stereotype, that of the passionate and free lover. This image is however predicated on a youthfulness that makes this narrative role unachievable for him. As in “Eveline”, although in a more complex manner, the construction of narratives of husband and lover are shown to be

frustrating in “The Dead”. Joyce himself was ambivalent about the conflict between lover and husband as well. On the one hand, he famously refused to marry Nora Barnacle in order to keep alive both their freedom, and in his personal views he strictly attacked the idea of institutionalised marriage, for which he used the term “feudalism” (Ehrlich 86-87). On the other hand, concerned about his artistic estate and his children’s legal status, he finally did marry her (*JJ* 637-39). Reflecting this ambivalence, both “Eveline” and “The Dead” show that while narrative can give a voice to wishes and desires, it similarly confines those who become thus fictionalised in roles and frameworks that they have no control over.

Chapter 5.3

Flexible storytelling: “Nausicaa” and the deconstruction of the ideal husband

After looking at “Eveline” and “The Dead”, my discussion of the narrative construction of lovers and husbands will now turn to the first part of Joyce’s “Nausicaa” chapter in *Ulysses*. A text, which has aptly been called a form of “novelette”, depicting, as it does, the romantic discourses that shape the mind of its protagonist Gerty MacDowell (Senn, “Nausicaa” 309). In this first part of “Nausicaa”, Joyce recycles structural patterns and motifs that we have seen in the two stories from *Dubliners* already. All the three texts centre on female characters whose romantic desire and longing is pitted against the disillusionment of their lived reality. Like Eveline, Gerty MacDowell envisions masculine identities framed within marriage as a way to gain social prestige, and like the Conroys in “The Dead”, Gerty voices sexual passion as an important element in these constructions. More emphatically than the other stories, “Nausicaa” stresses the artificiality of these narrative patterns, and thereby she underlines the patriarchal investment in these narratives of marriage and passion. Critics have variously discussed how Gerty’s consciousness determined by the discourses of advertising, women’s magazines and sentimental literature, and in their largely negative readings, they have shown that these intertexts not only determine the tone of her style but also shape her way of thinking about the world.⁸⁷ These readings have helped to understand the style of “Nausicaa” and how Gerty, like everyone else, is a product of her consumption of external discourses. However, all these critics see in Gerty merely a victim of patriarchy, and they tend to ignore or play down moments of female empowerment. In contrast, I see Gerty as a successful storyteller in her own right, who

⁸⁷ See, for instance, Henke (“Gerty”), Senn (“Nausicaa”), Lawrence (*Odyssey of Style*, ch. 5), French (*Book as World*, ch. 5), McGee (ch. 3), Bishop, Schwarze (*Joyce and the Victorians*, ch. 5). For more positive assessment of Gerty, cf. Devline (“Romance Heroine”) and Castle (*Reading*).

wrestles the discourses that seem to dominate her, and who creatively controls them for her confident expression as a subject. I argue that rather than being infatuated by mere images of masculinity she has consumed through her reading, Gerty actively constructs male fantasies through narrative for her own pleasure. In these constructions, Gerty shifts from a conventional hegemonic model based on marriage, which promises her romantic love and financial security, to a more unconventional one outside of marriage which offers recognition as a sexual subject.

* * *

A central element in Gerty's narrative construction of masculinity is her hope for upward mobility through marriage, and the protagonist of her first masculine construction, her youthful admirer Reggy Wylie, promises to fulfil this desire. Similar to Eveline's construction of Frank, Gerty uses this imagination to give voice to her hope for social recognition and prestige. As Garry Leonard puts it, "her financial future is completely determined by the effectiveness of her marketing strategy" ("Virgin Mary" 8), and Gerty is indeed very keen on attracting in Reggy a subject resembling hegemonic masculinity because this is her way to gain economic security. However, as we will see, Gerty is prepared to modify this construction when the circumstances require it. After realising that he is not interested in her, Gerty thus devalues the same masculine traits which had admired before, and in the course of the chapter it thereby becomes clear that she is able to skilfully construct and deconstruct narratives of hegemony when it suits her interests.

Initially, Gerty develops an image of Reggy through anecdotal mini-narratives which employ a diverse array of gendered markers that create a romantic master plot in which she is playing the main role. Gerty's technique indeed exemplifies Judith Butler's argument that gender is actualised through the reiteration of gendered acts, and her employment of these shows her understanding of the gendered nature of narrative. So, her anecdotes first focus on physical features as expressions of masculinity. Gerty judges that Reggy "was undeniably handsome with an exquisite nose" (*U* 287), and by stressing that "they were both of a size too he and she" (*U* 287), she implies an ideal physical basis for their match. This is not an especially sexualised physique,

however, and Reggy's appearance is rather marked by individuality, as when she admires "the shape of his head too [. . .] that she would know anywhere something off the common" (*U* 287). Gerty indeed makes a point of translating physical markers of her lover into cultural ones, thereby creating a causal relationship between them. This becomes apparent for example in her interpretation of Reggy's acts of courtship, as when Gerty is impressed by "the way he turned the bicycle at the lamp with his hands off the bars" (*U* 287). Through her infatuated perspective this act signifies masculine prowess, skill and recklessness, but for the reader this masculine performance reads more like an ironic parody of such traits. In between the lines it becomes indeed clear that her lover is first and foremost a guarantor of symbolic capital: "he was what he looked, every inch a gentleman" (*U* 287). Stylised as such, Reggie's gentlemanly attributes are being carefully selected and listed by Gerty to form an image which promises hegemonic masculinity (and therefore social privilege) rather than any romance or passion. Eventually, Reggy's masculine contours are not so much defined by what he does in terms of action, but what belongs to him in terms of material goods, such as "the nice perfume of those good cigarettes" (*U* 287), which suggest the promise of a wealthy lifestyle for the future couple. Dissected into such individual parts, Reggy's masculinity becomes a catalogue of gendered markers, curated by Gerty's taste in gentlemanly attributes. In this context, Mark Osteen notes: "Reggie [sic] has modeled himself after the images of bicycling gentlemen in ads. His attractiveness depends upon the commodities in which his identity is invested; he too is a mass product she hopes to consume" (302). Yet, it is rather Gerty who does the modelling here, when she selects and arranges details that serve a narrative design in which she is "as fair a specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see" (*U* 285-86), and he is the Prince Charming wooing her.

As the following passages suggest, the motivation behind Gerty's fantasy of a romantic fairy tale plot is her need for social recognition. At the core of her consumerist discourse is the need to fill a perceived lack or loss (Leonard, "Virgin Mary" 6), and the narrative of Reggy wooing her is motivated by her need of recognition. Echoing the same theme from "Eveline", this recognition can be provided by marriage, and thus Gerty loses herself in the narrative image of "weddingbells ringing for Mrs Reggy Wylie T. C. D. [. . .]" (*U* 288). In this context, the initial harmony among the

three girlfriends at the beach is soon exposed as cover for a strongly competitive constellation on the marriage market (Devlin, *Romance Heroine* 390-91): “Edy Boardman thought she was so frightfully clever because he didn’t go and ride up and down in front of her bit of a garden” (*U* 287). Gerty thus embellishes her narrative of her Prince by introducing a plotline in which he has elected her from among many others, which confirms her recognition as a subject and which elevates her economically over her friend Edy (metonymically represented by “her bit of a garden”). Gerty’s longing for recognition by the male Other is therefore strongly tied to a material aspect, in which her Prince promises both social prestige and economic capital. In a tragic turn, it is his own pursuit of social prestige which ends his courtship, as she realises:

now his father kept him in in the evenings studying hard to get an exhibition in the intermediate that was on and he was going to go to Trinity college to study for a doctor when he left the high school like his brother W. E. Wylie who was racing in the bicycle races in Trinity college university (*U* 287).

Ironically, to become the hegemonic male subject and gentlemen whom she desires, Reggy needs to study and can no longer “rid[e] up and down in front of her window”. Thus, his pursuit of gentlemanliness ultimately prevents him from playing the part in the narrative that she constructed for him.

The lack at the heart of her narrative construction is nevertheless still existent, and in order to save face in front of her competition, Gerty now simply modifies her image of Reggy’s masculinity through mini narratives that cast a doubt over his adequacy. Her first modification creates the image of a childish and insensitive boy rather than the cultivated gentleman she had hoped to marry before: “Little recked he perhaps for what she felt, that dull aching void in her heart sometimes, piercing to the core. Yet, he was young and perchance he might learn to love her in time” (*U* 287). This possibility is soon negated, however, and instead she is sure that “[h]e was too young to understand. He would not believe in love, a woman’s birthright” (*U* 288). By stressing his youth Gerty implies that admiring him before was sort of misunderstanding or misjudgement on her part, which enables her to take control over the situation. And because she is ultimately annoyed that Reggy does not intend to play the part in her fairy tale that she devised for him, she asserts her narrative agency to take his gentlemanliness, and therefore his gender capital, into question.

Now that she realises his lack of interest, other images and roles emerge, which contrast her admiration of him as her Prince Charming. In one of her memories, she evokes a very different masculinity which she views through an action counteracting her previous image of him:

The night of the party long ago in Stoer's (he was still in short trousers) when they were alone and he stole an arm round her waist she went white to the very lips. He called her little one in a strangely husky voice and snatched a half kiss (the first!) but it was only the end of her nose and then he hastened from the room with a remark about refreshments. (*U* 288)

In this anecdote, Reggy's acts, as focalised and interpreted through Gerty's vision, make him a silly parody of a rakish Don Juan: he attempts to play the role of seducer (referring to Gerty as "little one" and speaking "in a strangely husky voice"), even tries to exploit her sexually ("snatched a half kiss"), and he leaves her without committing himself to her as her Prince Charming ("he hastened from the room"). Yet, these markers of the familiar trope of the seducer are destabilised already in the same passage: first, Reggy is not a villainous and self-determined rake but a mere boy ("was still in short trousers"), and, second, his exploits are both only sorry imitations and for that matter not even successful ("but it was only the end of her nose"). In recasting his masculine identity, Gerty asserts control over the gendered storytelling and takes revenge on him by degrading his masculinity through the parody of familiar masculine images. While claiming earlier that "he was what he looked, every inch a gentleman", Gerty now disparagingly assesses that "[s]trength of character had never been Reggy Wylie's strong point [. . .]" (*U* 288). Rather than the gentleman or Prince charming that she had sought earlier, Reggy is merely an "[i]mpetuous fellow!" (*U* 288) and a "[l]ighthearted deceiver" (*U* 297). In Gerty's narrative adapting to the situation, even his gentlemanly capital (economic and social) is taken into question:

As for Mr Reggy with his swank and his bit of money she could just chuck him aside as if he was so much filth and never again would she cast as much as a second thought on him and tear his silly postcard into a dozen pieces. And if ever after he dared to presume she could give him one look of measured scorn that would make him shrivel up on the spot. (*U* 297)

Even if these judgements occur much later in the text, when Gerty is already enraptured by Bloom's image, we can see that they belong to a radical altering of the terms in Reggy's gender construction. Gerty now writes a text that devalues his former

excellence and transforms Reggy's handsome look into "filth", his prowess into "swank" and his alleged wealth into a "bit of money". Thereby, she also puts herself into a position of power by asserting the superiority of the female "death gaze" over his phallic masquerade, and the resulting "detumescence" exposes him as a fraud (Sicker 119). As a storyteller, Gerty is "not a one to be lightly trifled with [. . .]" (*U* 297), and she can be skilful and ruthless when it comes to construing masculinity and exposing it as a mere show.⁸⁸

* * *

In reaction to her modified image of the disgraced Reggy Wylie, Gerty spins a new narrative thread which focuses on an idealisation of "a man among men" as her future husband. In this new image, Gerty uses gendered signifiers from her former Prince Charming narrative and develops them further into a superior form of hegemonic masculinity. Right from the beginning, she makes this contrast explicit, when she says that "[n]o prince charming is her beau ideal to lay a rare and wondrous love at her feet but rather a manly man with a strong quiet face [. . .]" (*U* 288). Her explicit use of the term "prince charming" links now spells out the cultural stereotypes of heteronormative courtship underlying her former notion of Reggy. This direct reference can be seen as an ironic commentary on the artificiality of masculinity in narratives, which her new narrative however also employs. First, her "manly man" is markedly older than youthful Reggy and herself, as she imagines "perhaps his hair slightly flecked with grey" (*U* 288; cf. Henke, "Gerty" 134). More importantly, she fleshes out his masculinity by imagining that "[h]e would be tall with broad shoulders (she had always admired tall men for a husband) with glistening white teeth under his carefully trimmed sweeping moustache [. . .]" (*U* 289). Gerty thereby develops an ideal of quite a different male physicality, as it clearly contrasts with her earlier satisfaction that Reggy and she are of the same height. Even stronger is the opposition between the two male images in a narrated vision of her husband as a man who "would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature

⁸⁸ In the Gilbert schema, the "technique" of "Nausicaa" is labelled tumescence/detumescence. For discussions, refer for instance to Senn ("Nausicaa") and French (*Book as World*).

and comfort her with a long long kiss” (*U* 288). In this mini narrative Gerty recycles Reggy’s lack of understanding what “a woman’s birthright” (*U* 288) is and, more importantly shows the former what she considers a proper masculine performance of sexual conquest rather than the sorry “half kiss” with which Reggy made a fool of himself at the party, as mentioned earlier.

While developing this contrast between Reggy and her dream husband, Gerty also increasingly employs a stricter notion of sexual difference, focussing on the concept of the “happy hearth” (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 136). To complement her “man among men” Gerty evokes a “sentimental vision of domesticity” in which she performs the role of “the domestic angel, presiding over her own idealized hearth” (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 137, 131). This Victorian setting symbolises “the emotional sustenance that shelters its [the family’s] members from the cold misery of the outside world”, as Schwarze argues (*Joyce and the Victorians*, 137). Having internalised this model, Gerty develops this into a newly designed narrative vision of family life: “She would care for him with creature comforts too for Gerty was womanly wise and knew that a mere man liked that feeling of hominess” (*U* 289). Steeped in heterosexual complementarity down to the word level (“womanly wise” and “mere man”), Gerty develops masculinity as a narrative identity which has modulated from the image of a boy riding a bicycle into a Victorian cliché that stresses her future husband’s hegemonic status as a strong but gentle patriarch.

This image of her idealised marriage is riddled with fissures and internal contradictions, however, which call attention to its own status as an artifice. In general, there is a clear contrast between Gerty’s fantasy ideal and the material necessities of life. Thus, she prides herself for being a domestic angel who had earned “golden opinions from all [. . .]” for “[h]er griddlecakes done to a goldenbrown hue and queen Ann’s pudding of delightful creaminess [. . .]” (*U* 289). But then this celebration of her feminine domestic skills contrasts strongly with the fact that “she didn’t like the eating part when there were any people that made her shy [. . .]” (*U* 289). This contradiction between food processed and food consumed betrays an aversion against physicality that is also apparent in other aspects of her dream vision. Unsurprisingly, most of these concern taboo functions of the body, which a proper Victorian lady is not supposed to name. In Gerty’s diction, the toilet thus becomes “that place” to which

one goes “for a certain purpose” (*U* 291), and the onset of her period is expressed as “that thing must be coming on” (*U* 296; French, *Book as World* 159-60).⁸⁹ Taken together, these instances exemplify the notion of the Victorian/Edwardian domestic angel, as they create a “sugared over and romanticized” fantasy (French, *Book as World* 160), which avoids taboos in order to “suppress ‘crude real life’ in favour of sweetness and light” (Osteen 297), or in Gerty’s own words, a world where you could “eat something poetical like violets or roses [. . .]” (*U* 289; cf. French, *Book as World* 158; cf. Senn, “Nausicaa” 306).

In the context of Gerty’s thoughts about her envisioned home and future, these suppressions also point to uncomfortable social aspects of family life. One example of this dynamic can be found in Gerty’s visualisation of her “happy hearth”: “a beautifully appointed drawingroom with pictures and engravings and the photograph of grandpapa Giltrap’s lovely dog Garryowen that almost talked it was so human and chintz covers for the chairs and that silver toastrack in Clery’s summer jumble sales like they have in rich houses” (*U* 289). Superficially, this kitschy ensemble comprises a coherent setting for her future life-story to unfold. But this is a picture that has cracks in its surface. As Schwarze mentions, for instance, “grandpapa Giltrap’s lovely dog Garryowen” is in reality the Citizen’s querulous and aggressive dog, which threatens to bite Leopold Bloom in the “Cyclops” chapter (*Joyce and the Victorians* 139). Furthermore, several of the interior items she mentions rather belong to her own social sphere, and not to the luxurious furniture “they have in rich houses”, as she assumes. Marking her “insecurity and naïveté” (Osteen 302), this particular incongruity in her narrative shows furthermore that “she is pathetically unaware that rich people do not buy their furniture at jumble sales” (303). Apart from voicing her hope for upward mobility through marriage, these fictions help Gerty to ignore unpalatable aspects of reality and provide a counter-narrative in which she and her husband “would go on the continent for their honeymoon (three wonderful weeks!)” (*U* 289).⁹⁰ Ultimately,

⁸⁹ Cf. the textual echoes of this circumlocution: “that other thing coming on the way it did” (*U* 300) and “Devils they are when that’s coming on them. Dark devilish” (*U* 302).

⁹⁰ Note the echo of Joyce’s “A Mother”: “Every year in the month of July Mrs Kearney found occasion to say to some friend: -- My good man is packing us off to Skerries for a few weeks.” (*D* 117). On a broader level, more ironic contrasts can be found to the domestic life and routines of the Blooms, see Schwarze (*Joyce and the Victorians* 138-40) and French (*Book as World* 159).

this method of glossing over unwelcome physical and social aspects therefore betrays “an unrecognized darkness at the center of Gerty’s tale” (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 131), which might be taken as the motivation to tell this tale in the first place (cf. Osteen 303), just like the imaginary eating of roses sublimated the fear of the effects of shyness on her.

The compensatory function of her fiction becomes both clearer but also more problematic when compared to Gerty’s own home. Imagining the daily marital routine with her husband, she imagines mundane anecdotal scenes of their future life:

when they settled down in a nice snug and cosy little homely house, every morning they would both have brekky, simple but perfectly served, for their own two selves and before he went out to business he would give his dear little wifey a good hearty hug and gaze for a moment deep down into her eyes. (*U* 289)

As we soon learn, however, this vision of an idealised atmosphere of domestic delightfulness contrasts sharply with Gerty’s own home, which is haunted by alcohol abuse and physical violence. Just like her avoidance of the unpleasantness of physicality earlier, she euphemises these domestic problems: “But that vile decoction which has ruined so many hearths and homes had cast its shadow over her childhood days. Nay, she had even witnessed in the home circle deeds of violence caused by intemperance [. . .] (*U* 290). Her vision of “brekky” with her husband thus functions primarily to create a utopian home, a fictional escape from the reality her actual family is suffering from (Osteen 303). Part of this narration can be seen as Joyce’s critique of the ways in which patriarchal thinking frames the style of young women: Gerty, writes Marilyn French, “is so busy saying what she ought to say and feeling what she ought to feel that she is able to conceal from herself truths that might be unpleasant” (*Book as World* 159; McGee 87). When viewed from this angle, however, her actual and her envisioned home are not so different. Similarities can be seen, for instance in her stylisation of her own role in the household: whereas in the utopian narrative she performs her role as “dear little wifey” for her husband, in her family home she is “[a] sterling good daughter” and “a second mother in the house, a ministering angel too with a little heart worth its weight in gold” (*U* 291). As Gregory Castle writes:

[h]er idealization of marriage reveals the patently subordinate and instrumental nature of a woman’s role with respect to her husband. Her fantasies generally

are part of a discourse that prepares women for the marriage market, which Andrew Miles claims was the dominant option in the nineteenth century for young women who sought social mobility. (*Reading* 207)

In a way, then, her narrative of a life with a husband with broad shoulders and a passionate gaze is both an escape from her current situation at home, but, at the same time, it re-emphasises the patriarchal framework which enables this situation in the first place.

This paradox becomes clearer when we take an even closer look at her language and the ideological positions underlying it. Often ridiculed, Gerty's style has the troubling effect of producing a domestic narrative in which harmony is the result of a strictly hierarchical gender structure. This hierarchy is expressed by the hegemony and privilege of masculinity ("he went out to business") over femininity ("dear little wifey"). Garry Leonard remarks that the passage envisions a necessary and essentialised complementarity of two genders: "the primary assumption of the fantasy is that she must be intensely 'feminine' in order to attract someone intensely 'masculine'" ("Virgin Mary" 10). The resulting "myth of absolute heterosexual gender complementarity" (12), produces a constellation in which "'perfect femininity' and 'perfect masculinity' come together to form a bond of permanent bliss [. . .]" (11). However, not only does the fantasy as such produce this heteronormative constellation, but the style itself functions to cement it. In this way, the words Gerty uses to construe the ideal of a clichéd Victorian domesticity are performative. By either substituting sugared versions of ordinary words like *breakey* for breakfast or embellishing words with quotations from sentimental fictions like *dear little wifey* and *good hearty bug*, Gerty's style lifts these elements of domesticity from the level of the ideal to that of the normative. As Schwarze suggests, Gerty is a "replacement figure", who performatively creates the fiction of her home as modelled on the typical Victorian family (*Joyce and the Victorians* 137), and, furthermore, her vision repeats this constellation and thus brings it into being.

When looking at the way this style operates in the memories of her home, we can see that Gerty is paradoxically both victim *and* guardian of this binary gender structure. As Schwarze argues, "Gerty thrills to the discourse of domesticity, and she [. . .] attempts either to alter or to obscure any details of life or character that fail to

conform to its indoctrinating image of perfection” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 131). Thus, her father becomes an unfairly subdued victim whereas her mother is denigrated for her moral flaws. In Gerty’s reasoning, her father is not responsible for drinking too much, rather he is victimised as “a prey to the fumes of intoxication” and thus unable to evade “the clutches of the demon drink” (*U* 290; cf. Leonard, “Virgin Mary” 13). These “pulp fiction formulae” have the function to “universalize and distance her from the suffering” (303), as Osteen writes. However, the sexual injustice at work in these fictions is equally important. Just as she has produced narrative identities of her Prince Charming and Man among Men before, she now casts her father in the role of a heroic victim: “Poor father! With all his faults she loved him still (*U* 354). By transferring thus the responsibility of her father’s alcoholism from him to the alcohol itself, “her diction effectively renders him the scene’s most visible victim” (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 138). In contrast, Gerty readily chides her mother for “taking pinches of snuff” (*U* 291), which Gerty views as a sign of her mother’s weak will-power and which forces Gerty to become “a second mother in the house” (*U* 291). Paradoxically, thus, Gerty’s domestic narrative perpetuates a gender matrix in which her father, although clearly responsible for the dire domestic situation, emerges in a more positive light than her mother, and this reversal of responsibility and agency effectively makes her complicit with this injustice (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 138). The victim narrative of with regard to her father underlines the hegemony of men over women within the nuclear family, and this dynamic is arguably also at the heart of her “brekky fantasy”, as we have seen earlier. I would argue therefore that the contrast between the two scenes does not show that Gerty’s fictions “lose all meaning when challenged by the mundaneness of everyday life”, as Mahaffey writes (*Reauthorizing Joyce* 153). Rather, through her stylisation of a harmonious life of “brekky” with her husband, Gerty provides an escape from her own home and a reformulation of her understanding of hierarchized gender complementarity with which she sees that home.

Mirroring the theme of recognition from “Eveline” discussed earlier, Gerty’s breakfast vision is finally important as a means to gain recognition as a gendered subject. Leonard for example reads the passage as showing that Gerty protects her sense of femininity through the complementary constellation with her “beau ideal”, whose masculinity is equally “authenticated” through Gerty’s gaze (“Virgin Mary” 11; cf.

Castle, *Reading* 208). This moment of gendered recognition is encapsulated especially in the phrase “he would [. . .] gaze for a moment deep down into her eyes” (*U* 289), which puts the abstract notion of recognition in a narrative framework. From this perspective the gaze has the ability to function “as the final signifier of significance, as that which fulfills the self’s desire to be acknowledged and recognized, to be a somebody rather than a nobody” (Devlin, ““See ourselves”” 891). This recognition by the Other is so relevant for Gerty because of her inherent disadvantages on the marriage market, relating to both her own unhappy home and, more importantly, to her physical handicap, which at that point is still concealed from the reader. Concerning her family, she asserts that if it was not for her father’s alcoholism “she might now be rolling in her carriage, second to none” (*U* 290). This elevation of her own self, as expressed in the phrase “second to none”, is vital for her in order to avoid acknowledging the fact that her handicap, a lame leg, constitutes a decisive disadvantage on the marriage market to attract a man such as the one she fantasises about in her breakfast vision (Henke, “Gerty” 134). She reasons that “but for that one *shortcoming* she knew she need fear no competition [. . .] and she always tried to conceal it [. . .]” (*U* 298, my emphasis), realising that her society will classify her lame leg as a blemish on her femininity that she therefore needs to hide (French, *Book as World* 163; cf. Henke, “Gerty” 134). Obsessed as Gerty is with the enhancement of her physical appearance, this is the one feature of her body that she cannot alter with the powders and pills that her women’s magazines advertise. Gerty’s idealised vision of marriage, which she constructs around narrative scenes of heterosexual complementarity, is therefore an important tool for her to acquire recognition as a gendered subject through the gaze of the Other. With Bloom finally entering the scene, this conservative narrative takes a new turn, and, modifying the object of her desire from an ideal husband to a sexually dangerous dark stranger, Gerty breaks free from her idealisation of gender complementarity to meet the Other as an equal subject.

* * *

Gerty’s final, and most important image of masculinity focuses on Leopold Bloom, around whom she constructs a narrative that leaves aside the themes of her other

narratives and looks forward to a form of momentary sexual liberation. Initially, Bloom is referred to as a “gentleman in black”, whom she first notices when he “gallantly” returns a football to her group at the beach. Devlin points to girls’ awareness of Bloom’s presence and that his gaze motivates them to show their femininity in the best possible light (“Romance Heroine” 390-91). As Osteen adds, Bloom’s “gallantry” is a logical result of her precarious situation on the sexual market: for Gerty his trivial act of returning the ball becomes necessarily an act of masculine prestige because of her insecurity with regard to her handicap (Osteen 305). Indeed, Bloom’s presence in the chapter from now on increases the girls’ eagerness to grasp his attention and functions thereby as a reminder that they are competitors on the sexual market. As a potential admirer of their femininity he holds control over their sexual value, as Devlin writes, and “the prospect of this signifying gaze sparks the jealousy and catty competitiveness that emerge as the episode devaelops” (“See ourselves” 891).⁹¹ Thus, Gerty maintains that her friends are acting out of “[p]ure jealousy” and are displaying themselves “to draw attention on account of the gentleman opposite looking” (*U* 292, cf. Sicker 121-22). She herself is also excited by this male presence, as suggested by “the warm flush [. . .] surging and flaming into her cheeks” (*U* 292). This sexual excitation prefigures the role Bloom will play in Gerty’s following narrative, as she constructs the masculinity of a dark stranger, which itself modifies elements of her earlier images but which introduces a sexual aspect that was noticeably absent from the other two (cf. Osteen 305).⁹²

The motif of the dark and mysterious stranger frames Bloom within a plotline that contains distinctly sexual overtones. Meeting his eye, Gerty remarks that his face is “wan and strangely drawn, [and it] seemed to her the saddest she had ever seen” (*U* 292). Like all of Gerty’s conceptualisations of the reality surrounding her, the sadness and strangeness that she sees in his face have a distinctly literary quality, but here she also implies that they belong to a yet undiscovered life-story. She contemplates that “[h]e was in deep mourning, she could see that, and the story of a haunting sorrow

⁹¹ The effect of Bloom’s gaze on the three young women has been discussed numerously. Most notably, Margot Norris reads it as a rewriting of the Trial of Paris (“Modernism, Myth, and Desire in Nausicaa”), cf. Devlin (“Romance Heroine” 390-91) and Leonard (“Virgin Mary” 4, 15).

⁹² Gerty’s embrace of sexual desire is often ignored by critics because Bloom’s part emphasises desire more overtly, cf. however Bishop (192).

was written on his face. She would have given worlds to know what it was” (*U* 293; cf. French, *Book as World* 162). While Reggy and her manly man before where blank pages to be written on, Bloom’s mystery poses an exotic challenge to her as a reader, which thereby puts him “outside the everyday marketplace” (Osteen 305). The mystery story behind his “haunting sorrow” is complemented by more direct hints at an exoticism which embeds Bloom’s darkness in an Orientalist framework (cf. Henke, “Gerty” 139). So, she admires Bloom’s moustache and is fascinated by the shape of his nose (“an aquiline nose or a slightly *retroussé*” [*U* 293]). These markers distinguish Bloom from both Reggy’s youthfulness and the faceless manly man, thereby manifesting his attraction through otherness: “She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale intellectual face that he was a foreigner [. . .]” (*U* 293; cf. Senn 279).⁹³ In the following, however, Bloom’s dark and foreign eyes become a focal point of Gerty’s story which exceeds a merely Orientalist image and focuses on his masculine potential: “Yes, it was her he was looking at, and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul. Wonderful eyes they were, superbly expressive, but could you trust them? People were so queer” (*U* 293). This passage transgresses the boundary between metaphor and metonymy. On the one hand, she attributes to Bloom’s eyes the metaphorical power to both bear a secret of their own and discover one of hers (“read her soul”). Metonymically, on the other hand, Bloom’s gaze is also powerful because his eyes literally select her among her friends (“there was meaning in his look”; Devlin, “See ourselves” 891). The relationship between male and female gaze, between storyteller and reader, is, however, reciprocal, and rather than simply being selected and subordinate to his gaze, she simultaneously selects him through her story: “Here was that of which she had so often dreamed. [. . .] The very heart of the girlwoman went out to him, her dreamhusband, because she knew on the instant it was him” (*U* 293). The roles between teller and reader are thus reversed, and she thereby deconstructs the fairy-tale subtext which was underlying her previous narratives in order to gain control over the storytelling (cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 135).

⁹³ Cf. Gerty drawing connections between physical appearance and character earlier: “he was what he looked, every inch a gentleman” (*U* 287). Furthermore, her fascination with Bloom’s foreignness will be echoed by Molly Bloom in “Penelope” (French, *Book as World* 162; Henke, “Gerty” 146).

In the way Gerty cites and modifies elements of her former lovers, it becomes apparent that this dark stranger and “dreamhusband” represents a more ambivalent, less conventional masculinity than the former two. A central element in this construction is that of sexualised danger:

If he had suffered, more sinned against than sinning, or even, even, if he had been himself a sinner, a wicked man, she cared not. Even if he was a protestant or methodist she could convert him easily if he truly loved her. There were wounds that wanted healing with heartbalm. (*U* 293)

Gregory Castle comments that “[b]eneath the conventional expectation of a bourgeois marriage, however, lies the temptation of a potentially dangerous attraction to an unknown man on the beach [. . .]. the ‘manly man’ who earlier called to mind the image of a consoling father becomes a ‘foreigner’ [. . .]” (*Reading* 207-08). It should be noted, therefore, that the notion of sin and danger is also a departure from her earlier “man among men”, who was rather associated with impeccable morality than with danger, and it certainly contrasts with Reggy’s narrative whose bicycling skills now seem puny. The danger associated with Bloom is also a modulation of his sadness and foreignness: both, Gerty assures herself, can be contained through her true love and her “heartbalm”, which would be able to check any excessive eroticism of his masculinity.⁹⁴ This is a significant step away from her style of “concealment” (French, *Book as World* 158), as she now assumes agency and the ability to reform her “dreamhusband”. Finally, Gerty takes recourse to and modifies the earlier notion of the “manly man”: “She was a womanly woman [. . .] to forgive all if she could make him fall in love with her, make him forget the memory of the past. Then mayhap he would embrace her gently, like a real man, crushing her soft body to him, and love her, his ownest girlie, for herself alone” (*U* 293). The motif of physical contact resonates with Reggy “st[ea]ling an arm round her waist” (*U* 288), but instead of a boy-lover like Reggy, Bloom is “a real man” who is equally capable of “embrac[ing] her gently” and “crushing her soft body” (*U* 293). Similarly, she asserts her subordinate status to Bloom, and while she was outraged by Reggy calling her “little one”, she now conceives of herself as Bloom’s “ownest girlie”. Bloom as dark stranger thus integrates elements from the two former

⁹⁴ As critics have shown, these dynamics and the gendered traits are based on Gertrude Flint and Philip Amory, characters in Maria Cummins’s novel *The Lamplighter*. For discussions of this intertext, see Henke (“Gerty”), Devlin (“Romance Heroine”) and Castle (*Reading*).

masculinities (cf. Henke, “Gerty” 141). It does so, however, by further integrating the new element of sexual dangerousness, while de-emphasising the previously so important emphasis on economic status.

The sexual attraction that this new image represents is highlighted when Gerty describes Bloom’s gaze as comparable to that of a predatory animal: “He was eying her as a snake eyes its prey. Her woman’s instinct told her that she had raised the devil in him and at the thought a burning scarlet swept from throat to brow till the lovely colour of her face became a glorious rose” (*U* 295). Her imagery indeed suggests the ways in which “gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies” (*GT* 174), but more concretely this means that the gaze is attributed a notion of dangerous masculinity (cf. Devlin, “Romance Heroine” 390). Gerty’s descriptions also betray a growing awareness of Bloom’s sexual excitement, even though in a palatable fictionalised form (French, *Book as World* 160). Thus, terms like “snake” and “raised the devil in him” work primarily on the level of Gerty’s image of Bloom, but, on another level, they adequately describe Bloom’s erection, which Gerty may or may not be aware of. Castle succinctly comments that

Gerty relishes Bloom’s [gaze], molding its raw, palpable force into the romanticism of her expectations. In the process, his onanistic attentiveness is misread as the sign of a secret affinity. His gaze is imperious and imperializing but Gerty takes hold of the orientalisising discourse of the ‘dark stranger’ and exploits its sexual charge as part of her own self-representation. (*Reading* 208)

The complementary image of Bloom is ambiguous in that it is both overtly sexual and controlled. Instead of openly affirming the sexual nature of Bloom’s gaze, Gerty contains his voyeurism within a new, ambiguous narrative which stresses Bloom’s violent deep passion and calm, controlling power. In this way, her rationalisation of his behaviour evokes particularly prestigious notions of masculinity:

Passionate nature though he was Gerty could see that he had enormous control over himself. One moment he had been there, fascinated by a loveliness that made him gaze, and the next moment it was the quiet gravefaced gentleman, selfcontrol expressed in every line of his distinguishedlooking figure. (*U* 296)

Bloom is attributed an overwhelming passion that directs his action (“fascinated by a loveliness that made him gaze”), while retaining absolute control over that passion and thus avoiding sexual excessiveness, which would diminish his status (cf. Valente,

Myth of Manliness 1-8). Through a dynamic that has become familiar by now, Gerty assumes that Bloom's masculinity inscribes itself on the surface of his body: "His dark eyes fixed themselves on her again drinking in her every contour, literally worshipping at her shrine. If ever there was undisguised admiration in a man's passionate gaze it was there plain to be seen on that man's face. It is for you, Gertrude MacDowell, and you know it" (*U* 296). Moving away from the motif of self-control, which she attributed to him before, there is now a sexual excess in Bloom's masculinity, represented metonymically by Bloom's exotic "dark eyes", which greedily consume her feminine appeal. To contain this excess, Gerty is required to adapt the narrative underlying Bloom's image. Gerty uses metaphor to express the visual relationship between Bloom and her, making him a pious worshipper, whereas she assumes the role of the sexually pure Virgin Mary (Henke, "Gerty" 141; cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 132-36). However, this narrative ruse deconstructs itself by blurring the boundary between metaphor and metonymy, because her "shrine" can also be understood to refer to her genitalia or underwear (French, *Book as World* 167). Bloom looking at her body in this way transposes pure metaphor into dirty-minded metonymy, which itself euphemises a blatant act of voyeurism. With a slightly different emphasis, Mark Osteen comes to a similar conclusion when he writes that Gerty's consciousness "aims to transform the real into a collection of surfaces, objects and commodities—static entities that she can manipulate and control, unlike the threatening and unstable world of unsatisfied desire in which she really lives" (297). These rhetorical acts are attempts to both acknowledge Bloom's sexual energy and attention and to contain them at the same time in language. Each trope she uses betrays a simultaneous awareness and reticence about the sexuality which is central to her narrative of the dark stranger. Ultimately, they show Gerty's desire to be acknowledged as a sexual subject rather than a mere object.

Eventually, Gerty's containment and simultaneous desire for sexual passion are expressed in the narrative account of a possible marriage to Bloom:

If she saw that magic lure in his eyes there would be no holding back for her. Love laughs at locksmiths. She would make the great sacrifice. Her every effort would be to share his thoughts. Dearer than the whole world would she be to him and gild his days with happiness. There was the allimportant question and she was dying to know was he a married man or a widower who had lost his

wife or some tragedy like the nobleman with the foreign name from the land of song had to have her put into a madhouse, cruel only to be kind. (U 298)

What is interesting in this passage is the way in which Gerty uses anecdotal speculation to weigh the question of Bloom's marital status. Thus, she first quickly discards the possibility that he could be married, and she constructs a plot around the alleged loss of his wife. She rationalises the sad expression she noted earlier, but she is simultaneously fascinated by his dangerousness when she speculates that he might have "put her [his wife] in a madhouse, cruel only to be kind" (U 298). The latter reference even vaguely resonates with literary plots like that of *Jane Eyre*, and in any case Gerty certainly ignores the patriarchal violence against women that these fictions contain.

Finally, Gerty then leaves these narratives behind to focus more openly on the question of sexuality. Already her expression to "make the great sacrifice" implies sexual intercourse, but then this semantic level is quickly set aside by suggesting that she meant taking the marriage oath in order to coyly "gild his days with happiness" (U 298). Now, she focuses on the question of Bloom being married and her status as a possible adulteress:

But even if—what then? Would it make a very great difference? From everything in the least indelicate her finebred nature instinctively recoiled. She loathed that sort of person, the fallen women off the accommodation walk beside the Dodder that went with the soldiers and coarse men with no respect for a girl's honour, degrading the sex and being taken up to the police station. No, no: not that. They would be just good friends like a big brother and sister without all that other in spite of the conventions of Society with a big ess. (U 298-99)

Gifford and Seidman see here a reference to adultery: "Adultery was (from a lower-middle-class point of view) conventional in 'high society' if 'he' was married but separated by some 'tragedy' (394). Given that Gerty sees in Bloom a foreign aristocrat, she would contemplate becoming his "legitimate" mistress in so far as he had locked away his wife ("tragedy"). This interpretation is supported by Gerty's indifference to the fate of other women, notably that of her mother. However, this passage also negotiates Gerty's insecure attitude about sexuality *within* and *outside of* marriage. To her, the "Fallen women" she refers to degrade "the sex" in terms of "female sex" but also as "sexual intercourse", because their sexual practices are extra-marital: from this "indelicate" business "her finebred nature" *must* "instinctively recoil[. . .]". Gerty thus

seems to uphold the notion that sexuality must be contained and civilised in the institution of marriage. However, her attitude towards this topic is confused, which is suggested by a logical impasse in the remainder of the passage: if the phrase “all that other” refers to sexual intercourse, then her notion of being “just good friends like a big brother and sister” can hardly be said to defy “the conventions of Society with a big ess” (cf. French, *Book as World* 163). However, separated from the rest of the sentence, the two phrases “without all that other in spite of the conventions of Society with a big ess” could also refer to sexuality outside the containing institution of marriage, which would certainly constitute a defiance of conventional sexual mores. While this reading of the passage is speculative, it resonates with the affirmation of the brief sexual encounter with Bloom which informs the final rewriting of his narrated image (cf. Henke, “Gerty” 142; cf. Devlin, “Romance Heroine” 392).

In her final contemplation of Bloom, Gerty’s narrative acts conclusively move away from the goal of social mobility through marriage to an image of masculinity that expresses sexual longing and mutual recognition as sexually conscious subjects. Thus, her storytelling undergoes a final revision to modify the narrative of the dark stranger, because she begins to acknowledge and accept the sexual excitement resulting from Bloom’s voyeurism. After her friends have left to watch the fireworks, Gerty’s perception of Bloom’s gaze intensifies to “a potent sexual charge” (Sicker 118) expressed in her bodily reactions (“And while she gazed her heart went pitapat” [*U* 293]), followed by a moment of mutual recognition:

The eyes that were fastened upon her set her pulses tingling. She looked at him a moment, meeting his glance, and a light broke in upon her. Whitehot passion was in that face, passion silent as the grave, and it had made her his. At last they were left alone without the others to pry and pass remarks and she knew he could be trusted to the death, steadfast, a sterling man, a man of inflexible honour to his fingertips. (*U* 299)

In this exchange both sexual excitement and recognition are interdependent. Through this visual encounter Gerty recognises Bloom’s desire for her, and, in turn, this desire excites her so that she recognises herself as a sexual subject (“a light broke in upon her”). This recognition is enabled by Gerty’s rewriting of his image into a narrative that legitimises this desire, and this brings into existence her being as a sexual subject of her own. In the process, she recycles and transforms earlier elements she used in

narratives of masculinity. A notable motif is again that of eyes: earlier, they were threatening because they were enigmatic, but now this uncertainty is modified to become definite trustworthiness (“she knew he could be trusted to the death”). Furthermore, where earlier sexuality was concealed or rhetorically contained, it is now actualised and accommodated into her vision of Bloom. His “Whitehot passion” is thus integrated into her narrative and embedded in a number of contrasts to motifs from her previous narratives: the word *steadfast*, for instance, contrasts with the term *fickle* (U 297) that characterised Reggy.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the important word *honour* addresses the question of sexuality raised by girls walking with coarse men (U 299), and, finally, the phrase *a sterling man* refers back to her self-image as a *sterling daughter* (U 291) in her home. These echoes help to legitimise the sexual passion that she can thereby confront, and Gerty thus modifies the narrative of Bloom’s sexualised masculinity into one that allows for the sexual tension that excites her, too.⁹⁶ Moreover, this tension exists notably outside the institution of marriage, as it is Bloom’s “passion [. . . that] had made her his” (U 299) and not the “great sacrifice” (U 298) of matrimony. This is made possible through an irony that plays on Bloom’s actual masturbation and Gerty’s use of a phrase like “a man of inflexible honour to his fingertips” (French, *Book as World* 167). The ambiguity of this passage makes it impossible to decide whether readers are supposed to believe that Gerty consciously ignores his act and constructs in him this gentlemanly image or whether the implied meaning is that the text of “Nausicaa” mocks her naivety.

Despite this ruse of the text, Gerty’s discourse unambiguously shows a growing awareness and acceptance of sexual excitement. Like Molly Bloom, Gerty possesses anecdotal knowledge about male sexuality, which is represented in a further narrative:

she seemed to hear the panting of his heart, his hoarse breathing, because she knew too about the passion of men like that, hotblooded, because Bertha Suple told her once in dead secret and made her swear she’d never about the gentleman lodger that was staying with them out of the Congested Districts Board that had pictures cut out of papers of those skirt dancers and highkickers

⁹⁵ To avoid confusion, it should be noted that Reggy’s final dismissal, which I discussed earlier, is positioned at this point in “Nausicaa”, when Gerty has realised Bloom’s “passionate gaze” (U 296).

⁹⁶ This development in her attitude towards sexuality is lost in readings like Castle’s, who sees Gerty “as the principle of pure addition”, simply collecting the subsequent identities of Bloom in her mind (*Reading* 209).

and she said he used to do something not very nice that you could imagine sometimes in the bed. (*U* 299-300)

While Gerty does not approve of masturbation, let alone referring to it directly (“something not very nice”; [Sicker 118]), the passage indicates that she still “understands male arousal with surprising acuity” (Sicker 110) and displays her apparent knowledge about forms of autoeroticism (cf. French, *Book as World* 160, 163). This secret narrative “about the gentleman lodger” can therefore be seen as an intertext informing her own acceptance of Bloom’s “hotblooded” passion, expressed in her perception of “the panting of his heart, his hoarse breathing”. Admitting this passion to her consciousness provokes a physical reaction in her as well:

His hands and face were working and a tremour went over her. She leaned back far to look up where the fireworks were and she caught her knee in her hands so as not to fall back looking up and there was no-one to see only him and her when she revealed all her graceful beautifully shaped legs like that, supply soft and delicately rounded [. . .]. (*U* 299)⁹⁷

As Philip Sicker comments, when Gerty realises Bloom’s masturbation she “is particularly aroused by the object’s bodily ‘confession’ of excitation”, which gives her a “doubly empowered pleasure as controlling subject and as mastering spectacle” (118; cf. Devlin, “Romance Heroine” 392-93; cf. Castle, *Reading* 208-09). Since she is subject and object at the same time (with both positions entailing different attitudes toward sexuality), Gerty seems to give voice to an internal dialogue about contrasting stances regarding the admission of sexual pleasure.

Gerty’s storytelling consistently follows a clear goal, however, in that it adapts to an acknowledgement of sexuality outside marriage. Following this strategy, she rationalises her exhibitionism, and avoids seeing herself as one of the “fallen women” she denigrated earlier, nor does she consider Bloom as doing “something not very nice” (*U* 300). Instead, she reasons that “this was altogether different from a thing like that because there was all the difference because she could almost feel him draw her face to his and the first quick hot touch of his handsome lips” (*U* 300). Gerty’s reasoning is certainly dubious, but she is once again skilful in adapting her narrative persona in order to make her narrative acceptable. The difference she claims for this

⁹⁷ Note that in contrast to my order of discussion, this last passage is followed in the text by the reference Bertha Supple’s secret voyeurism.

narrative and her anecdote of morally questionable conduct is manifested in the metonymic transposition to his “quick hot touch of his handsome lips”, which resonates with the “long long kiss” she envisioned in her earlier “brekky” fantasy (*U* 288). This stress on physical attraction together with her desire to be elected by Bloom (“feel him draw her face to his”) helps Gerty to legitimise Bloom’s conduct vis-à-vis Bertha Supple’s anecdote. Rather than simply indulging in “romance as a scented, sweatless, rickless version of sex [. . .]” (French, *Book as World* 161), her modulation in this narrative incorporates Bloom’s passion into the image she creates of him (cf. Henke, “Gerty” 142; cf. Leonard 16-19). In contrast to earlier fantasies, however, Gerty ceases to contemplate Bloom as a potential husband, even though marriage ironically does play a role in her logic. When she states that “there was absolution so long as you didn’t do the other thing before being married [. . .]” (*U* 300), she shows an understanding of Irish Catholic sexual ideology, in which only full sexual intercourse is sinful while absolution can be granted for minor instances of impurity, and thereby she legitimises his voyeuristic sexual passion and the sexual excitement she gains from it (cf. Henke, “Gerty” 142; cf. French, *Book as World* 163). Gerty’s logic thus avoids the necessity of marrying her dark stranger while, at the same time, it makes possible her erotically curious interest in him on behalf of his sexual passion. In a way, thus, Gerty’s narrative legitimises Bloom’s masturbation. An emergent feature of this modulation is the fact that she achieves a moment of recognition as a true subject, a status that the narratives confining her as “Mrs Reggy Wylie T.C.D.” or “little wifey” could not offer. Taking into account Gerty’s physical handicap and her sordid family home, which, as seen earlier, constitute considerable disadvantages for her on the marriage market, this narrative revision marks a victory over her competitive friends that she could not have achieved otherwise.

It is in this narrative conception of sexuality outside marriage that recognition also means a temporary sublation of the hierarchy in gender relations. When Gerty exposes her underwear to Bloom so that “he had a full view high up above her knee [. . .]” (*U* 300), Gerty is conscious of her power to arouse Bloom, despite (or perhaps because of) her knowledge of transgressing Catholic sexual mores: “she wasn’t ashamed and he wasn’t either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn’t resist the sight of the wondrous revealment half offered like those

skirt dancers behaving so immodest before gentlemen looking and he kept on looking, looking” (*U* 300; Henke, “Gerty” 142). In this constellation, the exhibitiv act dissolves the difference between sexual subject and object, as both derive pleasure from the mutual gaze: “she let him and she saw that he saw” (*U* 300; Devlin, “Romance Heroine” 393; Sicker 102). As Devlin argues, in the secret told by Bertha Supple the female viewer (Bertha) is different from the dancing girls who are gazed at. Now, however, “Gerty reenact[s] the roles of both the spying Bertha and the women in the kinetic pictures, ‘those skirt dances and highkickers” (Devlin, “Female Eye” 136). In this way, Gerty participates in both excitement and pleasure, so that the pornographic constellation, in which the male is exploiting the female spectacle, is disrupted and a form of equality is achieved between looking subject and looked-at object (cf. Leonard, “Virgin Mary” 10, 12; cf. Henke, “Gerty” 145). Her victory of recognition lies in Gerty’s control over the power of the gaze:

Gerty’s ultimate desire is to transcend the “subject/object dichotomy” through an open exchange of looks that would recognize the desiring subjectivity of both parties. She longs for a man who will “gaze . . . deep down into her eyes” (13.242) in a moment of reciprocal ardor, and she seeks to crown her encounter with Bloom with looks of mutual recognition. (Sicker 116)

In addition, despite the importance of the gaze in this visual chapter, it is also Gerty’s rhetorical and narrative skills, which significantly level the hierarchies in the specular constellation. For instance, Gerty employs the same expressions for the act of watching as for the exposure itself (“she wasn’t ashamed and he wasn’t either”). Also, coupling her description of Bloom “look[ing] in that immodest way” with the phrase “those skirt dancers behaving so immodest”, creates a chiasmus of gaze and performer, thereby turning around the notion of immodesty, so that the sexual transgression is not clearly attributable to either. Through both her appropriation of the gaze but also, and perhaps more importantly, by narratively equalising hierarchies through rhetoric, Gerty can achieve a form of recognition as subject. Even if it is merely for a brief moment, Gerty is “a somebody rather than a nobody” (Devlin, “See ourselves” 891), and thereby her construction of masculinity achieves what neither Eveline Hill nor Gretta and Gabriel Conroy could in their fictions of lovers and husbands.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ This reading, which sees Gerty in a positive, empowered light, contrasts with most other readings of the episode. As an example, cf. Bishop’s, who criticises that: “in the absence of any real contact

Joyce brings closure to Gerty's part of the chapter, and thus her narratives of masculinity, with a short passage that "temporarily blends Bloom and Gerty" and provides a "gliding transition" (Senn, "Nausicaa" 303) to Bloom's part. Here, the mutual recognition of both Gerty and Bloom is repeated again on a stylistic level. Leaving Gerty's consciousness, the narrative voice nevertheless uses her style and diction to express Bloom's guilt-ridden conscience:

What a brute he had been! At it again? A fair unsullied soul had called to him and, wretch that he was, how had he answered? An utter cad he had been! He of all men! But there was an infinite store of mercy in those eyes, for him too a word of pardon even though he had erred and sinned and wandered. (*U* 300; Henke, Gerty" 146; Senn, "Nausicaa" 303-04, cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 136)

Relying on a narrative technique that Gerty has used several times throughout, the voice recycles several of the tropes that Gerty employed before to construct Bloom's masculinity. His remorse, for instance, is expressed by terms like "brute", which refers back to the "coarse men" that Gerty dreaded. It also contrasts with the self-control that she saw in her dark stranger, and which Bloom here feels guilty about not being able to muster up when tempted. Furthermore, the words *wretch* and *utter cad* constitute antitheses to the *sterling man* that Gerty saw in him earlier. And finally, the appellation "He of all men!" suggests an ironic inversion of Gerty's phrase "a man among men". The mutual recognition between Gerty and Bloom is thereby also ironically expressed in the way the narrative voice recycles her tropes of masculinity and re-contextualises them in Bloom's own self-conceptions.

Finally, this last correspondence is another Joycean irony, which sums up my argument in this chapter. The phrase "a man among men" is ambivalent because it refers to both "one who is the *equal of or an example to* all others" (*OED*, my emphasis), thus claiming both uniqueness and normality at the same time (cf. Gifford and Seidman 387). Interestingly, the *OED* mentions one usage of the phrase under the, otherwise unrelated, term "humbug".⁹⁹ A humbug, however, is defined as "A person that

with Bloom (or other potential mates), she daws her romantic and sexual speculations about men from literary and pictorial idealizations; the romanticizing style of her monologue, complementarily presents her not as she is, but as she would like to see herself and as she would like Bloom to see her" (188-89).

⁹⁹ "He is at least a man among men, and not a humbug among humbugs."

practises deception; an impostor, a ‘fraud’.” So, when the narrative refers to Bloom as “He of all men!”, the semantic itinerary suggests the notion that Bloom has been exposed as a fraud. This image of Bloom emblematises the notion that masculinity is a textual fabric woven with narrative threads, and it also ironically comments on Gerty’s fabrications of masculinity throughout. Seen in this way, her idealisations are narratives that she carefully weaves together with threads of knowledge about gender and through which Gerty constructs masculinities that address her social and sexual needs and desires.

* * *

“Nausicaa” is Joyce’s most powerful but also most ambiguous version of the fictionalisation of masculinity by a female storyteller. Gerty is able to adapt her fictionalisations of masculinity to address specific situations from which she suffers. Her disadvantaged position on the sexual market, the mockery of her friends and competitors, her unhappy domestic situation and the fickleness of her youthful admirer are all contexts shaping the narrative structures which she constructs around images of masculinity. The power of this version of the female storyteller lies in the fact that Gerty is not simply a dreamer who avoids reality by idealising mere images. Instead, she is “a subject reconstituting traditional narratives of development in order to speak for herself [. . .]” (Castle, *Reading* 200) by actively addressing issues that threaten her and by adapting her narratives of masculinity. In these modifications, she even moves from a more conservative framework of sexual hierarchy to one of mutuality, in which she achieves recognition as a sexual subject: “Gerty is an artist who adorns and fictionalizes her world not only by shopping and consuming but by painting a man to who she can give herself without guilt or blood” (Osteen 308, cf. Mahaffey, *Reauthorizing Joyce* 153). By actively creating her “dreamhusband” as one of conscious sexuality, Gerty ironically finds a way to escape the confines of the institution of marriage, and “challenge[s] the sexual economy of her culture by inverting specular power relations, by

savoring erotic subjectivity and, most remarkably, by briefly meeting Bloom's gaze" (Sicker 128).¹⁰⁰

Yet, the ambiguities of the chapter qualify these achievements to a certain degree again. On the level of content, Gerty's "brief moment of agency" (Castle, *Reading* 209) is eventually only a temporary refuge from a social situation that will not change for her. In her moment with Bloom she can "be wild, untrammelled, free" (*U* 299), but as soon as this moment passes, reality catches up with her again. On the level of discourse, her fictionalisations are also problematic. Not only is her part of the chapter complemented by Bloom's sobering and often cynical "post-orgasmic reflections" (Sicker 118) about topics she had idealised earlier in the chapter, as many critics have observed. Stylistically her own narrative constructions are often riddled with contradictions and underlying meanings that she cannot control. It is thereby the dual nature of the narrative construction of masculinity that qualifies Gerty's agency. Her deconstruction of the ideal husband may be empowering and successful for a moment, in the greater scheme of the chapter those fabrications are frequently qualified, however. Within this context, the text also of course limits the choices that Gerty has for her constructions. While the text suggests that she can have a moment of sexual freedom, it also limits her to the "institutionalized fantasy of absolute gender complementarity", that is, to a strictly heteronormative framework (Leonard, "Virgin Mary" 19). In this way, the text confines her alleged form of sexual freedom within the boundaries of compulsory heterosexuality, which dictate the content and form her narratives can assume.

¹⁰⁰ Whether her narratives are "self-authored" or heavily relying on external references and intertexts, as Mahaffey criticises (*Reauthorizing Joyce* 153), is therefore not overly important.

Chapter 6

Masculinity and male bodies

6.1 Introduction

There is perhaps no aspect more central to Joyce's works than the functions, uses, properties and symbolic power of the human body. It is a motif, a symbol, a narrative element of super-realism, and in his last work, *Finnegans Wake*, it even becomes part of the narration, as bodily description and philosophical and historiographic inquiry merge to weave a dense body of textuality. The body, and especially its less polite functions, sometimes becomes an obsession in Joyce's works, as when the young Stephen Dedalus's fear of hell is embodied by his fantasy about horrible demons featuring "long swishing tails besmeared with stale shite" (P 120) or when in *Ulysses* Leopold Bloom's artistic nature is first suggested in a scene that depicts him considering writing a sketch for the magazine *Tidbits* while pondering over the workings of his bowels. It is partly this obsession with the body as a powerful signifying part that made Joyce's works notorious for some of his earliest critics. H. G. Wells, referring to his reading of *A Portrait*, bluntly stated, "Mr. Joyce has a cloacal obsession" and elaborated that Joyce "would bring back into the general picture of life aspects which modern drainage and modern decorum have taken out of ordinary intercourse and conversation" (qtd. in Deming 86). In the twenty-first century, Joyce's work has evidently lost most of its shock value because audiences are certainly used to much more drastic depictions than those of *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. Moreover, the reactions of commentators on the body in Joyce have equally assumed a very different focus. In her recent essay "*Ulysses*: The Epic of the Body", Maud Ellmann writes that "[b]y uniting language with the body" Joyce's works "reincorporate the human body in the text" (*Ulysses* 54), with which he suggests that "language and the body" work together in these texts "as interpenetrating systems of exchange and circulation" (*Ulysses* 55). As this new

appreciation of Joyce's emphasis on the body suggests, the body in his works can be read as a text, and as such, it has the capability to signify and symbolise like language.

This shifted interest in the body in Joyce also mirrors recent trends in the theorisation of the (gendered) body. Todd Reeser, reflecting poststructuralist ideas about textuality, discusses the body as a surface on which gendered symbolism can be written through cultural forces, social institutions, and historical discourses. According to Reeser, "[t]he male body functions as a kind of tabula rasa or inscriptive surface for masculinity and for culture", and it therefore constitutes a surface on which various cultural discourses develop their influence by way of "inscription and reinscription" (91). At the same time, however, the body is equally a signifying text open to interpretation: "the male body is also predicated on the idea that individual perception of masculinity determines what it is, and that we can never move outside the constraints of gendered perception" (91). This perspective amounts to the paradoxical situation in which perception is shaped by the body it sees, and the body itself is shaped by the perception that is informed by discourse. Pierre Bourdieu is similarly concerned with the question of perception when he writes:

For the paradox is that it is the visible differences between the female body and the male body which, being perceived and constructed according to the practical schemes of the androcentric worldview, become the most perfectly indisputable guarantee of meanings and values that are in harmony with the principles of that worldview: it is not the phallus (or its absence) which is the basis of that worldview, rather it is that worldview which, being organized according to the division into *relational genders*, male and female, can institute the phallus, constituted as the symbol of virility [. . .] (*Masculine Domination* 22)

In these accounts the body does not simply exist as a natural given, but it functions and achieves meaning in social interaction and through cultural processes. Masculinity as a cultural practice is thereby tied to the body, as Raewyn Connell writes: "True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body. Either the body drives and directs action [...], or the body sets limits to action [...]" (*Masculinities* 45). Therefore, she concludes, an understanding of the male body must be preliminary to an understanding of masculinity.

Joyce's texts arguably engage with these paradoxes of gender and body as well. An example of the textuality of the body and its interchange with discourses and social

process can be glimpsed in the “Lotus Eaters” chapter of *Ulysses*. At the end of this chapter we witness a *tableau* of Bloom taking a bath and contemplating his body:

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower. (U 70)

“Lotus Eaters” focuses throughout on the various methods to soothe and drug both body and mind, and at the end Leopold Bloom makes most natural discovery when he says “This is my body” (U 70), followed by a detailed description of his nakedness, ending with a symbolic attribution inscribed on the surface on his nakedness (“the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower”). The level of narrative perspective and focalisation is ambiguous, though. Are the metaphors which are used to refer to his penis Bloom’s genuine inventions or those of an external narrative voice? Bloom as a flower is, of course, Henry Flower, the pseudonym he uses in his correspondence with his flirtatious pen pal Martha Clifford. Still, it seems that whoever speaks here is not in full control over the language to refer to the body. The limpness of his penis contrasts markedly both with the flower imagery and more blatantly with the phrase “father of thousands”. The male body is thus invested with meaning and embedded into an image that could become a story of generations. Through this inscription the phrase ambiguously vacillates between self-consciousness and grandiloquent self-assertion. As the reader has learned already, throughout the novel Bloom has an acute sense of loss due to the memories of both his dead father and son, and therefore he is, among many other things, often occupied with his sense of his self and with his heritage. Having lost both son and father is a subtext to the phrase “limp father of thousands” that is buried deep in his unconscious, a sting that “pricks” him during the whole day and which makes his wife’s adultery unbearable. In this way, the corporeal potentials or limitations that are thus fictionalised are partly Bloom’s creation but also partly creations of the narrative embedding in a wider web of associations which gain relevance in the course of the novel.

In the two chapters that form the final part of my study, I will discuss Joyce’s fixation on the, especially male, body, and I will look further at the ways in which his

narrative practice connects masculinity to the male body through reciprocal modes of inscription. What interests me is, first, how the texts use micro-plots and other narrative emplotments to create the bodies of characters as male and, second, how these male bodies conversely create masculinity as an ideologically loaded signification in the texts. A further focus will be on the question how and why bodies are either idealised or denigrated. Finally, the discussions will query whether the texts attempt to separate masculinity from the male body, how these separations are achieved and to which uses they are brought within the story-logic of the texts (cf. Reeser 102-03). Underlying all those questions is the connection between the body and its attempt to signify a stable masculine identity:

The very diversity, multiplicity and contingency of bodies precludes closure of any sort. Bodies change within lifetimes, are changing as we live in them and are unique to the subject; bodies do not exist in some given, unchanging system. Yet, while we cannot achieve closure over the body, we can come to some appreciation of how dominant discourses act upon bodies in a performative yet material manner. (Whitehead 185)

The first chapter, “Masculinities without bodies” will look at three stories from *Dubliners*, “After the Race”, “A Mother” and “Two Gallants”, which dramatise the distinction and separation between masculinity and the male body, although in two opposing ways. In all three texts, the male body exists in a specific social field which formulates a framework within which masculinity can be constructed. In “A Mother”, the male body is shown to vanish behind a masculine power that is achieved through narrative “prosthetics” (cf. Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 271), which replace the body and thereby make masculinity quite literally untouchable. As a result, sexual hierarchy becomes a symbol which does not need the male body for its efficacy. In the two other texts, this dynamic is first repeated, but ultimately, the texts undermine the separation that was so successful in “A Mother”. The male protagonists in “After the Race” and “Two Gallants” attempt to construct a stable masculinity by foregrounding gender and symbolism. Yet, the narrative subtly reinserts their bodies into the text to remind readers that the construction of a bodiless masculinity as symbolism is inherently flawed.

The second chapter, called “Corporeal anarchies”, is concerned with texts that equally “incorporate” the body into their textual fabric. Their methods are less subtle,

however, and they portray and utilise the male body as an exorbitant signifying system which cannot control its modes of signification. In “Cyclops”, the male body is an excessive signifier, which is used to create an ideal of masculinity that contrasts with and devalues other bodies and masculinities through the processes of othering. The discussion of the “Circe” chapter shows that despite its obvious attempts to suggest forms of androgyny, which transcend the sexual binary, chapter repositions the male body to function as the guarantor of heteronormative sexuality. Bloom’s maleness is only temporarily masqueraded as androgynous, and especially his masochist fantasies let it re-emerge as a stable entity. In the final part, “Penelope” dramatises numerous ways of constructing masculinities and male bodies. Molly imagines and narrates masculinities that constantly blur the boundaries between gendered practice and male physical essence. Through this weaving of signifiers, the text critiques masculinity as a way to mask inequality and male privilege.

Chapter 6.2

Masculinities without bodies:

“A Mother”, “Two Gallants” and “After the Race”

* * *

Joyce’s “A Mother” belongs to the stories of public life in *Dubliners*, and it refers to the field of cultural and aesthetic production to dramatise the misogyny and narrow-mindedness of Dublin’s patriarchal society. The protagonist, Mrs Kearney, faces an insurmountable obstacle of homosocial solidarity in her attempt to achieve justice for her daughter Kathleen and herself. Kathleen Kearney is supposed to sing at a series of concerts organised by a society that promotes Irish culture in the wake of the Irish cultural revival. Since the first concert is a financial failure, the society wants to reduce the series to avoid further losses, but Mrs Kearney, whose managing skills had helped to make the series possible in the first place, insists on her daughter’s contract. She ultimately fails because she overestimates her own authority and because the Dublin males find her insistence illegitimate. Their solidarity against this recalcitrant woman proves to be the ultimate guarantee that no woman in Dublin can defy a patriarchal ruling. The story’s thematic preoccupation with misogyny primarily relies on the motif of sexual difference and the power structure that it produces. In my reading of the text, I will suggest that this hierarchy is realised not simply by opposing female and male characters in the narrative. Rather, the text dissociates masculinity from maleness, that is, gender from the body, on the discourse level. This narrative disembodiment results in the fact that it is masculinity as a symbolic structure, and not the actual sexual difference, which is responsible for Mrs Kearney’s failure to succeed against her male opponents. Masculinity functions as a “prosthetic Phallus” (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 271) for male bodies which because of their weakness and inadequacy cannot themselves guarantee male superiority. Masculinity works as an illusion which

projects power to make forget that anatomical difference cannot in itself legitimise sexual inequality. The narrative of “A Mother”, as I will show, renders the patriarchal resistance absolute by ironically making the difference between sex and gender transparent and by showing the power of gender to overshadow the deficiencies of the body. The text puts at the centre what Bourdieu calls “masculine domination” (*MD* 1), and through this focus it exposes the vulgarity and arbitrary character of patriarchal privilege.

The male character Mr Holohan is the main antagonist of Mrs Kearney in the story. He is the “assistant secretary of the *Eire Abu* Society” (*D* 116), a fictional society in the context of the Irish Literary Revival (Fagnoli and Gillespie 153). In this function, he is responsible for dealing with Mrs Kearney when the society’s organisation committee decides that her daughter Kathleen’s contract is altered. Therefore, it is also he who is at the receiving end of Mrs Kearney’s wrath and her defiance against the society. That the narrative makes him Mrs Kearney’s antagonist is not without irony because his male body is very different from the “muscular Gaelic body” (Nugent 603) celebrated by the Gaelic Athletic Association which was, like the (fictional) cultural society that he represents, part of the wider context of the emerging Celtic Revival: “Hoppy” Holohan, as his friends call him, walks with a limp, and the narrative constantly emphasises his physical deviance from the ideal male body. We see him “limping out quickly with a glass of lemonade for a young lady [. . .]”, then he “limped into the dressingroom”; in another instance, Mr Kearney’s “eyes followed Mr Holohan in his limping and devious courses” (*D* 120, 123). Writing in another context, Gerald Doherty comments on Joyce’s use “quasi-bodily externalizations” whereby “a single idiosyncratic physical trait” is used to represent his or her inner life: “In cinematic close-ups, bodies reveal at once what the characters conceal from themselves and from one another” (140). What the narrative indeed reveals in this respect is that Mr Holohan, while he literally embodies Irish nationalism in the story, his male body surely does not. And what is more, the text ascribes a character trait to Mr Holohan’s body, which represents Mrs Kearney’s negative view of him and, by association, of Irish cultural nationalism as well.

Critics have indeed discussed the link between Holohan’s physical properties and his male sexual capital. Sherrill E. Grace, for instance, refers to him as a “weak,

ineffectual, limping (therefore symbolically gelded) male” (277). And Mrs Kearney herself looks down on him in that respect, too, when she asserts herself before him to tell him that her daughter will not perform on stage until she is paid her stipulated wage: “After a swift struggle of tongues Mr Holohan hobbled out in haste” (*D* 125). This combination of internal focalisation and adaptation of a character’s voice marks her provisional victory; stylistically his limping gait becomes a hobbling, which stresses Mrs Kearney’s disdain for him after she ostensibly has gained the upper hand. Finally, it is not only Mrs Kearney’s perception which shapes the physical appearance of Mr Holohan and thus comments on his masculinity, but the narrative voice itself prepares the reduction of Mr Holohan to his physical impairment in the very beginning of the story by using a style that mirrors his limping movements:

Mr Holohan, assistant secretary of the *Eire Abu* Society, had been walking up and down Dublin for nearly a month, with his hands and pockets full of dirty pieces of paper, arranging about the series of concerts. He had a game leg and for this his friends called him Hoppy Holohan. He walked up and down constantly, stood by the hour at street corners arguing the point and made notes; but in the end it was Mrs Kearney who arranged everything. (*D* 116)

Mr Holohan’s impaired movement and the metaphorical lameness of his inefficient management of the concert are formally expressed through the long and rambling discourse describing his activities, which are contrasted by a single clause asserting Mrs Kearney’s proficiency. Furthermore, the phrase “walking up and down Dublin”, understood literally, prepares for the information about his “game leg”, whereas figuratively it shows his inefficient work in contrast to Mrs Kearney’s competence, expressed in a single, conclusive sentence. The existence of these techniques challenges the views of those critics who posit that *the narrator* of the story is prejudiced against Mrs Kearney (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 189-90; cf. Beck 261) or those who assert that here, as in other *Dubliners* stories, “women and, particularly, the mother, cannot be allowed to speak for themselves, they must be subdued in language” (MacCabe 55). Instead, I would argue that right from the beginning, it rather is Mr Holohan and his masculinity/maleness that have to bear the scorn of the narrative. However, as I will show, the inadequacy of male bodies is compensated for by the characters’ masculine authority, and the narrative separation of one from the other is a central narrative experiment which the story explores.

One example where this becomes apparent is the committee for the organisation of the series of concerts, which eventually dominates Mrs Kearney and thwarts her ambitious plans for her daughter's musical career. As an institution of authority, the committee represents its mostly male members in an abstract way. It is administratively speaking a body, but it is also the extension of their male bodies, and through its authority, it represents the ungraspable, untouchable authority and power of masculinity in a patriarchal society. Ironically, as Garry Leonard points out, "[t]here is no indication in the story that the committee has ever met in a full body; instead, one needs to see the idea of the committee as the men's abstract belief in their own full bodies", that is, as "an abstraction that represents the value of masculinity [. . .]" (*Reading Dubliners* 267). No actual concrete feature of maleness makes the committee powerful and supports its hegemony, though. So, when Mr Holohan threatens Mrs Kearney with the authority of the committee, her irritation speaks for the elusiveness of this power "—I haven't seen any committee [. . .]" (*D* 127). She is insofar correct as the committee has no actual material, male substance: it is an "'invisible' body" that "has its very solidity in not being tangible" (Benstock, *Narrative Con/Texts* 53, 54). Masculinity's abstract power and symbolic manifestation thereby guarantee sexual inequality.

Yet, Mrs Kearney does not see this distinction which the narrative makes between male superiority and masculine domination, and for her both are the same. She senses that sexual difference is at the centre of her unjust treatment: "They thought they had only a girl to deal with and that, therefore, they could ride roughshod over her. But she would show them their mistake. They wouldn't have dared to have treated her like that if she had been a man" (*D* 126-27). However, the men's power over Mrs Kearney is not based on their physical superiority nor does their male body in any way justify a gendered superiority. Their victory is indeed not founded on the difference in terms of gender but on that of sex. It is noteworthy the mood among the other characters turns against Mrs Kearney exactly at that moment when she behaves in what they see as an unladylike way. Assuming what Judith Halberstam has theorised as "female masculinity" (355),¹⁰¹ Mrs Kearney at this point embodies exactly the

¹⁰¹ Halberstam argues that "masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects" (355). Focusing on masculinity in subjects who are not male, she claims "that

determination and fierceness of the Irish nationalist masculinity which her antagonists lack: “Her face was inundated with an angry colour and she looked as if she would attack someone with her hands” (*D* 127, cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 185). During the éclat between her and Mr Holohan, this embodiment of brute force becomes her undoing because her gender does not match her sex. First, Holohan accuses her of lacking a “sense of decency” (*D* 127), an accusation which she justifies by mocking his demeanour: “She tossed her head and assumed a haughty voice: —You must speak to the secretary. It’s not my business. I’m a great fellow fol-the-diddle-I-do” (*D* 127). Holohan is indeed merely a “fellow” and no imposing male, but by highlighting this, she defies the decency that her gender requires her to assume in patriarchal thinking, and therefore Holohan levels his ultimate accusation at her: “—I thought you were a lady, said Mr Holohan, walking away from her abruptly” (*D* 127). Mrs Kearney problem is expressed fittingly by Valente, who writes: “He is saying, in effect, ‘I thought you understood and worked within the gender divisions, taking those advantages reserved to you and accepting with grace the (greater) constraints placed upon you’” (“Sexual Differend” 436, cf. 435-36). It is only after this gendered interpretation of her behaviour that “Mrs Kearney’s conduct was condemned on all hands: everyone approved of what the committee had done” (*D* 127). The reason for her un-ladylike behaviour, Garry Leonard suspects, is that “her high regard for masculinity gives her no option except to view all of them as pathetic examples of what she imagines it should be” (*Reading Dubliners* 266, cf. 267-68). What she does not see is that it is their masculinity as such, not their being male, which gives the men of the committee their power over her. Eventually, this is underlined not by stating she behaves inappropriately for a woman, but by asserting that she is not a lady. Or, as Margot Norris writes: “The story poignantly represents the moral opprobrium heaped on women who forego feminine tactics [. . .] and who instead risk condemnation when they marshal contracts and laws on behalf of their rights” (*Suspicious Readings* 195).¹⁰²

far from being an imitation of maleness, female masculinity actually affords us a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity. In other words, female masculinities are framed as the rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing. But what we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced by and across both male and female bodies” (355).

¹⁰² Cf. with the more negative assessments of Mrs Kearney by Hayman (124), Henke (*Politics of Desire* 40) and Cheng (127).

The story's logic in which the narrative separates masculinity from the male body to establish sexual inequality is furthermore exposed in the role of the journalist Mr Hendrick and his sponging friend Mr O'Madden Burke. Both characters are central to understanding the way in which the narrative disassociates masculinity from maleness. Mr Hendrick, who is supposed to write a review of the concert, is first introduced merely as "the *Freeman* man" (*D* 123-24). This reference points to his position and thus stresses his power as the writer of a review in which the committee is very interested. The narrative uses this superior status, which his job confers to him in relation to the event, to further highlight the theme of sexual difference and inequality. Despite being bored by the cultural performance he is supposed to review and on the verge of leaving the concert, he remains for a moment longer to enjoy the flirtatious attention he receives from one of the singers, Miss Healy:

He was old enough to suspect one reason for her politeness, but young enough in spirit to turn the moment to account. The warmth, fragrance and colour of her body appealed to his senses. He was pleasantly conscious that the bosom which he saw rise and fall slowly beneath him rose and fell at that moment for him, that the laughter and fragrance and wilful glances were his tribute. (*D* 124)

Leonard points to the performance character of Miss Healy's attention to Mr Hendrick, stating that "[t]he real signification of Miss Healy's talking and laughing does not reside in anything she is saying but in the fact that the effort of saying it is causing her bosom to 'rise and fall slowly' under Mr. Hendrick's watchful and appreciative eye" (*Reading Dubliners* 265). As it were, the narrative creates a constellation in which the male body vanishes in the exertion of male power at exactly the moment when the female body is foregrounded delivering a "tribute" to her sexual oppressor.¹⁰³ Satisfied with such celebration of his masculinity, Hendrick delegates the writing of a favourable review to his companion: "—Mr O'Madden Burke will write the notice, he explained to Mr Holohan, and I'll see it in" (*D* 124). The arrogance of his assertion of power and influence contrasts with the fact that his masculine power is doubly disembodied and therefore invisible. First, it is disembodied because he does not attend the performance himself, he merely lends his name and position to the evaluation of the concert performance. Second, the power with which he judges is disembodied because

¹⁰³ See Leonard for a discussion of the term in its original military context (*Reading Dubliners* 266).

it is not exerted through physical force but through a medium of culture (cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 188-89).

The other character involved, Mr O'Madden Burke, equally exemplifies the disembodiment of masculinity: "He was a suave elderly man who balanced his imposing body, when at rest, upon a large silk umbrella. His magniloquent western name was the moral umbrella upon which he balanced the fine problem of his finances. He was widely respected" (*D* 124). Just as in Holohan and his limping, the description of Burke as a "suave, elderly man" with an "imposing body" does obviously not meet the ideal of the muscular body of Irish nationalism. His prestige is rather based on his authentically Irish sounding name, which also covers his financial problems, and which affords him influence in the context of his newly acquired role as a reviewer of Irish culture (cf. Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 270).¹⁰⁴ For Earl Ingersoll, Burke makes strategic use of his Irish-sounding name but, also of his two gentlemanly props, his umbrella and cigar, which for Ingersoll symbolise the "real cultural authority" of the London literary scene (Ingersoll 142). As a proper "Anglified Irish 'gentleman,'" (Ingersoll 142) he can distract from the fact that his body does not meet the ideal of Irish nationalism, as the two signifiers of this form of masculinity give him an authority that eclipses his ageing and obese body.¹⁰⁵ Masculinity and its performances thereby become a means to make the power of men over women invisible. Both Burke's name and umbrella therefore function as prime examples of what Jean-Michel Rabaté has called "parodic phallic substitutes" in *Dubliners* (54), and in this capacity they highlight the ways in which Joyce's narrative dissociate his gender from his body.

The pervasiveness of the disembodied masculinity of Holohan, the committee, Hendrick and Burke explains why it is impossible for Mrs Kearney to tackle the men of the society promoting Irish culture, and the text confirms this through its linguistic

¹⁰⁴ For the historical context of this name, see Torchiana (193-6). Leonard furthermore points to the irony that "Burke deliberately exploits his Irish name to garner public respect for his masculine gender in the same way that Mrs. Kearney planned to use her daughter's Irish name to garner public approval for her feminine gender" (*Reading Dubliners* 271). Cf. also the use of the motif in *A Portrait*: "he would be no stranger there [at Clongowes Wood College] because his granduncle had presented an address to the liberator there fifty years before" (*P* 22).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Valente's influential reading of the story ("Joyce's Sexual Differend"), in which he focuses on the transgression of the boundaries between male public and female artistic/private spaces and discourses.

playfulness.¹⁰⁶ At one point early during their dispute Mrs Kearney tries to stop Holohan to confront him with a question. The narrative voice puts this situation this way: “She buttonholed him as he was limping out quickly with a glass of lemonade for a young lady and asked him was it true” (*D* 120). Ironically, Mrs Kearney cannot exactly “buttonhole” any of them, because their superiority is symbolically legitimated and not based on concrete physical features like a loud voice or an imposing stature. Their power is not graspable since it operates on the level of habitus, and they know and follow the rules of the game they are playing, whereas she does not. This insight dawns on her earlier in the story, but she does not fully grasp the implications. Informing Mr Fitzpatrick that she insists on payment for four concerts even if the society chose to cancel any of them, she meets with a mixture of incompetence and male power:

Mr Fitzpatrick, who did not catch the point at issue very quickly, seemed unable to resolve the difficulty and said that he would bring the matter before the committee. Mrs Kearney’s anger began to flutter in her cheek and she had all she could do to keep from asking:

—And who is the *Cometty*, pray?

But she knew that it would not be ladylike to do that: so she was silent. (*D* 120-21)

Mr Fitzpatrick’s flat accent and his lower-class habitus do not contradict his position of power, because as a representative of Irish nationalism he “embodies” the field in which she saw as an opportunity to gain social capital: “When the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs Kearney determined to take advantage of her daughter’s name and brought an Irish teacher to the house” (*D* 117). However, there exists certainly a symmetry between the hypocrisy of her lack of real interest in the cultural revival and the *Eire Abu* Society’s lack of interest in musical talent or the management of a professional musical event. Both instances exemplify the motif of chasing an illusion that has no real substance, so that masculinity is paradoxically powerful and ungraspable.

As Margot Norris and others have argued, there is a sense in which the narrative blames Mrs Kearney for her own maltreatment (*Suspicious Readings* 191). This blame, I would add, is centrally tied to her miscomprehension of the power of

¹⁰⁶ “She buttonholed him as he was limping out quickly with a glass of lemonade for a young lady and asked him was it true” (*D* 120).

masculinity over the inadequacy of maleness, which is exemplified best in her view of her husband:

Mrs Kearney was somewhat reassured but she thought well to tell her husband part of her suspicions. He listened carefully and said that perhaps it would be better if he went with her on Saturday night. She agreed. She respected her husband in the same way as she respected the General Post Office, as something large, secure and fixed; and though she knew the small number of his talents she appreciated his abstract value as a male. She was glad that he had suggested coming with her. (*D* 121)

Her respect for her husband seems to be predicated on physical attributes, as the reference to the building, a material object, also suggests. However, the adjectives “large, secure and fixed” rather refer to the values which his status as a male guarantee in a society in which masculinity as such is always superior. This sense is also exemplified in her phrase which stresses “his abstract value as a male”, which suggests that masculinity does not need physical, or any other, proof because the inferiority of women to men is unquestioned in the abstractness of gender. It is this confusion of gender and sex which prevents Mrs Kearney from seeing why she cannot win against the abstract body of the committee.

Mrs Kearney’s miscomprehension of the superior status of masculinity over any anatomical ground is eventually dramatised in Mr Kearney’s lack of action during the altercation. Joseph Valente argues that Mr Kearney’s “one meaningful action is to ask his wife to lower her voice in yet another attempt to keep the dispute as private as possible”, which relegates her away from the public to the private sphere and thereby atones for her transgression of entering the public sphere of cultural production (“Sexual Differend” 435). And it is certainly right to assert that the mail/male pun, which is implied in his reference to the Post Office, “clearly establishes Mr Kearney as the phallic signifier conceived in terms of the classical ideal of public discourse [. . .]” (Valente, “Sexual Differend” 435). However, there is another significant action that Mr Kearney performs that night, namely, repeatedly “stroking his beard” (*D* 125), which is of course a reference to his male body. The irony of what Doherty calls “quasi-bodily externalizations” in the story (140) lies in the fact that the narrative emphasises his male body, but in doing so shows his ineffectiveness and lack of authority when contrasted to his own wife and to the men of the committee. Not only does he

not support his wife and, but he “fails to make the decisive intervention that might have prevented his wife from making such a fool of herself” (Williams 100). In the end, the text suggests through this metonymy citing his maleness that Mrs Kearney’s notion that a male can have an abstract value *because* of his maleness is an untenable illusion in the situation she finds herself in. Mr Kearney’s ineffectiveness either to keep harm away from her or to fight for her rights resides in the fact that he has no power as a male and certainly not through his masculinity (see Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 260).¹⁰⁷

Holohan’s physical inadequacy, on the other hand, is easily glossed over in his final triumph. Before, his limping was constantly a part of his characterisation, but at the moment when he silences Mrs Kearney by questioning her status as a lady, the narrative refers to his “*walking* away from her abruptly” (*D* 127, my emphasis). The semantic change, which seems to ignore Holohan’s physical impairment by using a more neutral verb for his movement, serves as a reminder that his maleness is of no importance because his masculinity is located in a level that is not ungraspable for Mrs Kearney. She has no chance against this masculine abstraction because the field of cultural production within which she attempts to move socially upward emphasises a habitus of decency which clashes with her haughtiness and naïve sense of superiority. This is further underlined in the final scene of the story:

Kathleen followed her mother meekly. Mr Holohan began to pace up and down the room, in order to cool himself for he felt his skin on fire.
—That’s a nice lady! he said. O, she’s a nice lady!
—You did the proper thing, Holohan, said Mr O’Madden Burke, poised upon his umbrella in approval. (*D* 128)

As critics have pointed out, Holohan pushes Mrs Kearney’s gender rather than her sex into focus (“lady”), whereas Mrs Kearney herself had earlier remarked on quite the opposite when she says, “They wouldn’t have dared to have treated her like that if she had been a man” (*D* 127).¹⁰⁸ Valente points to a gendered aporia in this exchange, a Lyotardian “differend” of two clashing discourses in which she can only

¹⁰⁷ Norris provides an interesting explanation for his inefficiency when she asserts that the stories in *Dubliners* often feature remnants of “a Romantic ideology that codes masculinity as temperamentally excessive, self-indulgent, and profligate” (*Suspicious Readings* 191).

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of the term “lady”, refer to Grace (277-79) and Leonard (*Reading Dubliners* 264, 270).

lose: “If Mrs. Kearney were a lady, she would not voice her charges in public and so could be taken to have not serious grievance; if Mrs. Kearney voices her charges in public then she is not a lady and so her grievance need not be taken seriously” (“Sexual Differend” 435). This reading contrasts markedly with Leonard’s, which sees the ending as an ironic comment on the unstable power of masculinity: “Masculine order has been resoundingly reaffirmed by the conclusion of the story, yet Joyce’s final images suggest that when a woman such as Mrs. Kearney mounts a successful attack against the existence of the committee, the Law of the Father is left with only one shaky leg and prosthetic Phallus to balance upon” (*Reading Dubliners* 271). However, as the preceding discussion of Joyce’s dissociation of masculinity and the male body has indicated, what Leonard discards as “prosthetic Phallus” *is* the actual power of masculinity, and its illusionary character manifests itself in its ungraspable character. It is, therefore, no wonder that Holohan’s movements are finally not depicted as limping but as a determined “pace” (*D* 142) in the closing scene of the story (Ingersoll 142). It is eventually masculinity as symbolic system and habitus which constitutes the abstract value of maleness which she herself recognises in her husband but fails to see in her dealings with the public sphere of the Dublin music scene, and which the narrative stresses by disembodiment of masculinity from physical maleness.

The story “A Mother” indicates that Joyce’s narrative experiments are aware and interested in the separation between sex and gender, and on a textual level, the former is shown to be eclipsed by the latter to achieve the effect of misogyny in the story. This practice of narrative disembodiment in “A Mother” serves as a foil for my reading of the next two stories: in “A Mother”, masculinity is indeed solid and fixed because it relies on unified concrete images, such as the phallic props like Burke’s umbrella, to stabilise the inadequacies of the male body. In “Two Gallants” and “After the Race”, the same logic of stabilisation is in place, but it ultimately fails: in these stories, masculinity is constructed through similar images and symbols as in the former story. However, these are complemented by a form of narrative practice which proves to be unstable with regard to these images, which results in the inadvertent reappearance of the body in the texts.

* * *

“Two Gallants” was Joyce’s thirteenth story for *Dubliners* and the one that would prove most troublesome for the collection’s publication. The reason for this, as Joyce speculated, was “the code of honour which the go gallants live” and which the printer refused to associate his name with, let alone accept any legal liability for it (*JJ* 219-22). The story is, like “A Mother”, one of misogyny and male exploitation of women. The “code of honour” Joyce refers to is a form of male prostitution in which one of the gallants provides sexual favours for working-class girls in exchange for money and material goods (sometime stolen from their masters). Through its narrative structure, the story is equally concerned with the dissociation of gender from the male body. It is through the way they are depicted as performing their masculinity through stories that the men seem imposing and powerful, and these narrative performances underlie the success of their sexual exploits. However, as I will argue, the narrative practice of the story as such reminds them and the reader of their bodies’ needs and weaknesses. The material quality of the body returns at points when their life-stories become unreliable and are pitted against other stories that are not in their hands. Countering the contrasting practice in “A Mother”, the narrative in “Two Gallants” exposes the holes in the fabric of manliness by again highlighting the materiality of the male body.

Corley and Lenehan are spongers as well as exploiters of women, other men, and each other. Because they lack the economic and social capital to be successful in life, they construct narrative masculine identities for themselves through that compensate for their other shortcomings. Both in terms of physical stature and with regards to their social contexts, they are far from embodying the hegemonic ideal. Initially, the narrative introduces both gallants only as anonymous males and thus reduces them to their bodies: “Two young men came down the hill of Rutland Square” (*D* 38; Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 82). Even after the reader begins to listen to their conversation, the narration emphasises their unattractive physical appearance, exaggerating the nature of their maleness and showing its distance from any ideal of the male body. Corley, for instance, is described as rather unathletic:

His head was large, globular, and oily, it sweated in all weathers and his large round hat, set upon it sideways, looked like a bulb which had grown out of

another. He always stared straight before him as if he were on parade and when he wished to gaze after someone in the street it was necessary for him to move his body from the hips. (*D* 40)

Far from exhibiting an exemplary physicality, Corley resembles “a grotesque repulsive automaton” (Beck 135), which is marked by his swaggering and imposing attitude and conduct. The way he uses his body in walking is a performance of masculinity which overrides the body’s lack, which itself paradoxically feeds back into his performance of masculinity: as Garry Leonard asserts, it is eventually “the fact that he is dauntingly obtuse” which enables “a belligerent certitude” in his attitude, and the grotesque mismatch undermines his masculine self-importance and makes it “absurd” (*Reading Dubliners* 120).

In addition to lacking good looks, Corley is unemployed, and his masculinity can therefore not rely on economic capital. The text euphemistically renders this as being “about town” (*D* 40), and Corley’s main mode of income is his suggested role as an informer for the police (*D* 41), which gives him a shady aura of duplicity and moral exploitation (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 120). As Pierre Bourdieu writes, “[t]he body is in the social world but the social world is also in the body” (*In Other Words* 190). And in this way, both Corley’s body and his social existence connect on a stylistic level: Corley’s oily head thereby matches the fact that he makes his living by “extracting slippery secrets” and selling them (Doherty 62). Furthermore, Vincent Cheng adds that “[i]n his macho aggressiveness and his police connections, there is a brutishly militaristic air, a conqueror’s attitude” (112; cf. Litz 65 and Williams 111-12). In this way, his “bulky frame and burly gait” can be viewed as matching a form of “imperial self” (Cheng 112, cf. 111), which the text suggests when we are told that, “His bulk, his easy pace, and the solid sound of his boots had something of the conqueror in them” (*D* 44). Body and gender are thus in a relationship in which masculinity becomes self-important through unusual and rather grotesque stylisations of the body. Material and cultural signifiers thus blend into and complement one another, and the perception of the body within the text is shaped by the social context and the performance of its bearer.

His companion, Lenehan, is equally distant from hegemonic masculinity both through depictions of his body and his performance of masculinity. In terms of his

physical appearance, he represents a poor, because ragged, example of “romantic heroism” (Williams 112), and in addition to lacking in attractiveness (“He was squat and ruddy” [D 39]), his body is depicted as exhibiting a curious mixture of youthfulness and premature ageing: “His breeches, his white rubber shoes and his jauntily slung waterproof expressed youth. But his figure fell into rotundity at the waist, his hair was scant and grey and his face, when the waves of expression had passed over it, had a ravaged look” (D 39). He is thus a caricature, “a flabby oldish young man” (Beck 138), and his premature ageing suggests a more sinister undercurrent in his physicality which Bernard Benstock sees as a reflection of Lenehan being “seriously divided against himself” (*Narrative Con/Texts* 123). In contrast to Corley, Lenehan is not capable of eclipsing his bodily inadequacy through an imposing masculine performance. Indeed, Lenehan is in permanent contention with Corley, and like a torero he is dodging his fellow gallant in his bullish behaviour as expressed in his gait (Benstock, *Narrative Con/Texts* 123): “The swing of his burly body made his friend execute a few light skips from the path to the roadway and back again” (D 40).¹⁰⁹ This micro-narrative is only hinted at, but the idea of emplotment is used again in the depiction of his social position, which is, like Corley’s, precarious. Whereas Corley plays the role of a masculine bull, Lenehan now plays that of a parasite or scavenging animal:

Most people considered Lenehan a leech but in spite of this reputation his adroitness and eloquence had always prevented his friends from forming any general policy against him. He had a brave manner of coming up to a party of them in a bar and of holding himself nimbly at the borders of the company until he was included in a round. [. . .] No-one knew how he achieved the stern task of living but his name was vaguely associated with racing tissues. (D 39)

This sponge therefore has to put on performances to live off what others have left for him.

As Lenehan’s introduction has already suggested, it is through a discursive construction (“adroitness and eloquence”) of masculinity that both are successful in overcoming what they lack in proper masculinity. In this regard, both complement each other: of Corley, we hear that “[h]e spoke without listening to the speech of his companions. His conversation was mainly about himself: what he had said to such a person

¹⁰⁹ Benstock takes his cue from one of Lenehan’s descriptions “Once or twice he rearranged the light waterproof which he had slung over one shoulder in toreador fashion” (D 39).

and what such a person had said to him and what he had said to settle the matter” (*D* 41). By speaking about himself, Corley thus creates his own self-importance, a sense of “his indomitable masculinity” (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 121), which eventually turns out as nothing more than “an illusion based on the systematic manipulation of needy people” (122). But inevitably such a person “requires a jester to cheer him as well as a bard to verbalize his triumphs” (Beck 136-37), and Lenehan, accordingly, plays the grateful audience to such self-importance, perhaps in order to cadge a drink (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 120):

the narrative to which he listened made constant waves of expression break forth over his face from the corners of his nose and eyes and mouth. Little jets of wheezing laughter followed one another out of his convulsed body. His eyes, twinkling with cunning enjoyment, glanced at every moment towards his companion’s face. [. . .]

When he was quite sure that the narrative had ended he laughed noiselessly for fully half a minute. (*D* 39)

The one as an impostor, the other as a sponge,¹¹⁰ Corley and Lenehan thus manage to find their way through Dublin and keep their heads above the water line: “Corley sells information about other people’s lives, whereas Lenehan’s service to his fellow Dubliners is to make a living off their need to talk in order to live with themselves” (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 120).

Both manage to survive through their sponging and exploits, as Corley’s theatrical display of the gold coin at the end of the story illustrates. But both characters are far from embodying hegemonic masculinity, and they can best be categorised as what Raewyn Connell terms “subordinated”. More concretely, Corley and Lenehan manage to exploit women without ever being close to gaining hegemonic status in Dublin, and they are clearly also not part of the institutions of patriarchy but rather exist on the lower strata of the homosocial group. As the remainder of this section will show, their assumed successes like gaining the gold coin are an illusion. Leonard correctly writes that “[b]oth of the gallants move through the crowd with a studied nonchalance that is intended to mask the fact that they are creatures of a grim necessity

¹¹⁰ As several critics have observed, Lenehan’s sponging furthermore feminizes him in contrast to Corley: “This down-and-out disciple has been feminized by Corley and plays, with tinges of irony and self indulgent mockery, the role of sexual other, the fictive mirror demanded by his friend’s bloated ego” (Henke, *Politics of Desire* 26).

and not at all in command of their surroundings [. . .] (*Reading Dubliners* 120). And, as I would argue, this lack of command includes the control about the illusion of their masculinity which attempts to eclipse the inadequacy of their bodies and their social situations. This illusion is shattered as the narrative begins to insert into the text the return of their bodies.

In this way the dynamic in which performance overrides their corporeality is deceptive as various references to the body, its functions and weaknesses return in their narratives. Some of these references concern the tactile properties of the body. When Lenehan suggests to Corley that the slavey might consider him a future husband, the other brushes off this idea and reveals that he has kept himself anonymous in his dealings with her: “She doesn’t know my name. I was too hairy to tell her that. But she thinks I’m a bit of class, you know” (*D* 40). Besides the fact that the trope used to express his shrewdness contradicts his actual “globular” and “oily” head (Reizbaum and Ellmann 134), he figuratively hides behind his bodily properties to conceal his identity. At other times, the emphasis is put on avoiding contact, like when Corley expresses that he considers her to be emotionally dependent on him: “—She’s all right, said Corley. I know the way to get around her, man. She’s a bit gone on me” (*D* 41). The whole affair, however, is very much concerned with touch, and thus he figuratively refers to the exploitation of the slavey as a matter of skin contact: “—There’s nothing to touch a good slavey, he affirmed. Take my tip for it” (*D* 41). While the word *touch* can also signify sexual intercourse, it also signifies on a literal level, as he is equally aware of the fact that it is “a ticklish job” to extract money from her because “They’re damned close on that point. Eh? . . . What?” (*D* 42). By thus introducing the body into their discourse, these references remind the reader of their bodies as opposed to their masculinity in terms of their gendered performance.

As already indicated, another moment of the body returning into the discourse is the creation of sexual innuendo. Especially the last two examples suggest that the “ticklish job” on which slavey’s are “damned close” is to “touch” them sexually. The dialogue thereby seems to revolve around the topic of how Corley will seduce the slavey. The “joke played on the reader” at the end of the story reveals that this was not central to Corley’s plot and that his main goal was to extract money from her (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 123). Critics have pointed out that Corley, who

pronounces his name in a way that makes it sound like Whoreley (*D* 41, Gifford 57), is the real prostitute in the story, as he exchanges sexual favours with the slavey for money. In Margot Norris' words, "Corley has effected a *reverse* courtship, a *reverse* gallantry, and a *reverse* prostitution" (*Suspicious Readings* 84, Norris' emphases; cf. Williams 114). This suggestion can be supported by further moments in the text in which the body returns again, as for instance in the stories Corley tells Lenehan about his former exploits. When he tells Lenehan about how "—First I used to go with girls [. . .] off the South Circular", the verb used to refer to the telling is "unbosoming" (*D* 41), which casts Corley in a sexualised feminine position and thus undermines the masculine prowess suggested in those exploits. Another slang phrase similarly inverts gendered positions, as both characters repeatedly refer to the hoped-for success of Corley's meeting with the slavey as "pulling it off":

“—Well, . . . tell me, Corley, I suppose you'll be able to pull it off all right, eh? [. . .]” (*D* 41)

“—But tell me, said Lenehan again, Are you sure you can bring it off all right? [. . .]” (*D* 42)

“—I'll pull it off, he said. Leave it to me, can't you?” (*D* 42)

The primary meaning of the phrase, according to the *OED*, is "To succeed in accomplishing, achieving, or producing (something); to carry off". This is the main contextual meaning here as well, as Lenehan is anxious to tease Corley about his masculine prowess in seducing the girl for money. But another connotation of the phrase is also used to refer to manual sexual stimulation,¹¹¹ which testifies to the sexual ambiguity of the gallants' discourse: Corley is cast as the one who offers sexual favours and not the one receiving them.¹¹² The unspeakability of sex and the return of the body in this discourse are performatively enacted by Corley's silent answers to Lenehan's bantering inquisition. So, he repeatedly "moistened his upper lip by running his tongue along it" (*D* 42, cf. 40) or "closed one eye expressively as an answer" (*D* 41). Those modes of

¹¹¹ Two examples that the *OED* lists for this usage are incidentally from other texts by Joyce: One from "Penelope" and one from Joyce's letters to Nora Barnacle.

¹¹² In another example, however, Corley assumes again the position of macho conqueror: "—And damn the thing I ever got out of it, said Corley. [. . .] —Only off of one of them, said Corley" (*D* 42). For discussions of the sexual ambiguity in these passages, see Ingersoll (92), Doherty (62-63) and Reizbaum and Ellmann (136).

“unnarration” do not only point to the obvious sexual content of the storytelling of the two characters, but they also make ambiguous Corley’s sexual position and thus undermine his pretentious claim to hegemonic masculinity.¹¹³ Considering that the story eventually ends with a *tableau* of the golden coin in Corley’s hand, and not with any proof of sexual virility, the corporeal references in the gallants’ discourse appear like red-herrings. Thus, when Corley earlier relates that he “squeezed her a bit that night” (D 40), the reader now realises that he meant to squeeze her out economically (cf. Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 126-27).¹¹⁴

The economic relevance of these exploits becomes clear in Lenehan’s discourse as well, and focussing on his stories brings us back to the narrative dissociation of masculinity from the male body. In his tales that constitute his self Lenehan’s body is not sexualised or sexually active, rather it is tired and hungry. Lenehan is described in detail as lifeless and tired even during the banter with Corley. Thus, his “voice seemed winnowed of vigour” (D 39) when listening and responding to Corley’s tale, which is underlined by the fact that “he laughed noiselessly for fully half a minute” (D 39). After responding to Corley, “He became serious and silent when he had said this. His tongue was tired for he had been talking all the afternoon in a publichouse in Dorset Street” (D 39). And when alone and weary after the latter has left to meet the slavey, “his face looked older” (D 45): “He knew that he would have to speak a great deal, to invent and to amuse, and his brain and throat were too dry for such a task” (D 45). It is his social performance that is tiring him, but his mental weariness is also strongly connected to his very concrete hunger: “He was hungry for, except some biscuits which he had asked two grudging curates to bring him, he had eaten nothing since breakfast time” (D 45-46). Later on, he orders something to eat in a small bar, where he devours “his food greedily and found it so good that he made a note of the shop mentally” (D 46). There he thinks of Corley’s adventure and the girl involved, and he experiences an epiphany which makes him realise his own social abjection:

This vision made him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit. He was

¹¹³ For a general discussion of forms of narrating the unnarratable, refer to Leona Toker’s *Eloquent Reticence* and Robyn Warhol “Narrating the Unnarratable: Gender and Metonymy in the Victorian Novel”. Readings of Joyce’s *Dubliners* that use the concept are Harold Mosher’s “The Narrated and Its Negatives” and my “The Unnarratable in Joyce’s ‘The Boarding House’”.

¹¹⁴ With regard to these red herrings and the narrator’s reticence, Norris argues that “he” is the second of the two gallants of the title (91).

tired of knocking about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and intrigues. He would be thirty-one in November. Would he never get a good job? Would he never have a home of his own? He thought how pleasant it would be to have a warm fire to sit by and a good dinner to sit down to. He had walked the streets long enough with friends and with girls. He knew what those friends were worth: he knew the girls too. Experience had embittered his heart against the world. But all hope had not left him. He felt better after having eaten than he had felt before, less weary of his life, less vanquished in spirit. He might yet be able to settle down in some snug corner and live happily if he could only come across some good simpleminded girl with a little of the ready. (D 46)

This vision is a mini-narrative in itself with which he conceptualises his current situation and his hopes for a future that involves “the balm of domesticity” (Fairhall, *Question of History* 77) and a woman as the “anonymous servant of his desires” (Ingersoll 91). The story thus merges notions of the body, masculine performance and discourse.¹¹⁵ His hunger is the result of his lack of economic capital, whereas his actual masculine performance, his means of survival, tires him. Ironically, his leeching drains himself of life, and his masculine lifestyle of surviving by entertaining others through “a vast stock of stories, limericks, and riddles” (D 39) cannot cover that.¹¹⁶

It is in this context that the discourse of sexual banter between Lenehan and Corley needs to be reviewed because, here too, the corporeal returns in unexpected ways to undermine their locker-room talk. The two men’s literal hunger creeps into their discourse, masking itself as sexual appetite. In this category falls, for instance, Lenehan’s twice-repeated idiom with which he expresses his servile acknowledgement of Corley’s story:

“—Well! ... That takes the biscuit!” (D 39)

“—That takes the solitary, unique, and, if I may so call it, *recherché* biscuit!” (D 39)

“—Of all the good ones I ever heard, he said, that emphatically takes the biscuit.” (D 40)

¹¹⁵ Note also the curious combination of economic capital and a lack of sex, as Fairhall suggests: “The absence of sex from this vision is balanced by the presence of cash that, presumably, will finance his pub crawls while his wife keeps their snug corner warm until he lurches home” (*Question of History* 77).

¹¹⁶ Corley’s future, as glimpsed in *Ulysses*, is even more sordid. For a discussion see Benstock (*Narrative Con/Texts* 90, 105-6).

The phrase foremost serves to characterise Lenehan in a “marvellous parody of pseudo-sophistication” (Ingersoll 89) and thus gives authenticity to Lenehan’s slang and the machismo of their way of talking about the girl.¹¹⁷ But it is also part of the textual unconscious of his discourse, especially if we remember that “[h]e was hungry, for, except some biscuits [. . .] he had eaten nothing since breakfast time” (*D* 45-46). But also when we consider Corley’s boasting about the material goods his slavey provides him with, we find in his evaluation a curious mixture of slang and an unusual reference to food: “—O, the real cheese, you know [. . .]” (*D* 40). The phrase is sometimes more completely “the real cheese and cake”, and this idiom leads us semantically to the final example, his name for the slavey: “—She’s a fine decent tart, he said, with appreciation, that’s what she is” (*D* 43). Especially the latter expression has led critics to argue that their “locker-room language” casts the slavey as an object “intended for male sexual gratification” (Cheng 114).¹¹⁸ Leonard writes that “This anonymous woman, picked by Corley with the same sort of discerning eye any shopper might employ in selecting pastry in a bakery, becomes an object of exchange that validates their (spurious) phallic economy” (*Reading Dubliners* 123). But taken together with the rest of the descriptions, all these words and phrases, innocuous in themselves, manifest in sum a large web of meaning in which body, sexuality and masculinity are associated and dissociated at the same time.

In this context, the description of the girl must be re-contextualised as well. Her critical reception has been diverse, and since her outward appearance is the only aspect of her that the narrative shares with the reader, critics have focused in their assessment on her body and clothing. Often these remarks have been very negative, as when Brandabur sees in the girl “a combination of pig and Nausicaa wearing sailor’s clothing”, an almost non-human being that embodies a “brutal, lower-class female sexuality” (98-99). For Henke, she is “buxom and ingenious to the point of ridiculous caricature” and her “porcine nostrils and ‘contented leer’ suggest simple-mindedness, if not retardation” (*Politics of Desire* 25). While some have called her clothing

¹¹⁷ Brandabur suggests that Lenehan partakes of Corley’s sexual adventure through his discourse, in which the biscuit symbolises the female genitalia (89).

¹¹⁸ Cheng (114) and Leonard (*Reading Dubliners* 128) furthermore emphasise the use of dehumanising animal imagery in Corley’s and Lenehan’s references to women.

“outlandish” (Fairhall, *Question of History* 77), others pointed out that it represents the colours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which ironically contrasts with the girl’s status as “a debased version of female purity and Irish womanhood” (Cheng 113). But those critics ignore the fact that her description is focalised through Lenehan and neither he nor the narrative voice comment on her. Apart from appreciating her apparent sartorial style, “Lenehan’s eyes noted approvingly her stout short muscular body. Frank rude health glowed in her face, on her fat red cheeks and in her unabashed blue eyes. Her features were blunt. She had broad nostrils, a straggling mouth which lay open in a contented leer, and two projecting front teeth” (D 44). Evidently, the girl does not represent classical beauty standards, but in Lenehan’s perception of her there is a certain odd appreciation, which shines through in the words *unabashed*, *glowed* and *contented*.

These qualifiers sharply contrast with Lenehan’s own mood when he is walking away. Alone, his mood is described as “sombre”, and his movements are qualified by the adverbs “listlessly” and “morosely” (D 45).¹¹⁹ As Norris writes, in the first part of the story, he “was ‘playing’ at being a cad’s audience and toady [. . .]”, but when the imposing body is gone, and Lenehan has space and air to breath, “the solitary Lenehan is described as unmasked, his performer’s backstage life revealed as lonely, empty, and squalid” (*Suspicious Readings* 85). And in a final twist, Lenehan’s emotional and physical emptiness is perceived by him as a form of emasculation, manifest in his feeling of being penetrated: Coming into view of Corley and the girl at the end of the story, he tries “to read the result in their walk” but is unable to hear what they are saying. Therefore he feels “[a]n intimation of the result prick [. . .] him like the point of a sharp instrument. He knew Corley would fail: he knew it was no go” (D 48). Recently, Reizbaum and Ellmann have commented that “Lenehan is placed in the same position as the slavey, metaphorically ‘pricked’ by Corley” (137). Instead of focussing on a “homeroetic desire encoded in the double entendres and frictional rhythms of the prose” (137) of the story, I would contend that the image of Lenehan being pricked by Corley exemplifies his painful awareness of his own body, which no masculine performance can cover. In contrast, to this tired and hungry gallant, the slavey is healthy and self-

¹¹⁹ Cf. Lacanian readings of the passage, which stress the slavey’s role as an object of homosocial exchange (Ingersoll 90; Leonard *Reading* Dubliners 124-25, 129).

confident, and her opened mouth symbolises this vitality because it is not needy in terms of nutrition but actively sexually desiring (Doherty 63).

“Two Gallants” is a story about (sexual) exploitation, but as the return of the body in the discourse of these two gallants illustrates, it is their masculinity which exploits them as much as they exploit the slavey. Margot Norris has suggested reading the story as “a tale of the production of prostitutes”, literally a “porno-graphy”, which focuses on the sexual only “to peripheralize and occlude economic motives, forces and transactions” (*Suspicious Readings* 81). I would add that part of this writing about prostitutes is also a form of corpo-graphy: By “incorporating” the body into the text again, the narrative illustrates that their lifestyle of sponging and lounging is an expression of their lack of social and economic capital, which affects the body through hunger, tiredness and vague and unfulfilled desires. Eventually, the stories with which they attempt to construct a stable and coherent masculinity are beyond their control. Realising that these stories cannot cover the materiality of their existence, the two gallants begin to realise their subordinated masculinity within patriarchal society.

* * *

Like no other of Joyce’s texts, “After the Race” depicts an isolated homosocial setting, where female characters neither contribute to the plot nor is there, but for one example, any mention of women at all. In this male universe, the plot is built around the display of various homosocial practices, which produce and maintain masculinity as a narrative that promises power and prestige. Jimmy Doyle, the son of a rich Dublin merchant, is excited to meet the continental drivers and car-owners participating in the international Gordon Bennett Cup race, which takes place in Dublin on that day. Intoxicated by the symbolic power of the automobile, Jimmy embarks with his new foreign friends on a night of drinking, dancing and singing, which ends in Jimmy losing large amounts of money at cards. At the break of dawn, Jimmy is very drunk and remorseful, and he realises his failure and possible deception by the others, who he realises are not his real friends. Jimmy Doyle’s exciting but ultimately disappointing day with these foreign racing car enthusiasts and professed gamblers dramatises the way in which masculinity is constituted through narratives that tell stories about

homosocial practices, luxurious commodities and expensive objects. These micro-stories combine to create a magnificent illusion of masculinity as a powerful symbol which ultimately transcends the male body. Jimmy is slow to realise that this masculinity is something he will not be able to acquire through the male bonding with his friends, though, and thus he is ultimately betrayed by his own pursuit of a coherent and unified masculine self. Margot Norris neatly summarises the gendered logic of the story:

The plot of “After the Race” is precisely the pursuit of male entitlement through intense male bonding, and although what Jimmy experiences is homosocial betrayal rather than homosexual panic, its outcome produces a similar lesson about the arbitrary and manipulable symbolic ground on which masculinity is constituted as a vulnerability. (*Suspicious Readings* 77)

In this comment, Norris outlines the dynamic in which “After the Race” dramatises the mismatch between a desire for coherence and its ultimate instability. My reading complements this insight by arguing that masculinity in this text is narratively constituted in such a way as to eclipse the male body, and the text is thereby in a constant negotiation about the relationship between body and gender. Similar to “Two Gallants”, Joyce’s critique of the illusion of masculine splendour is based on a narrative strategy in which the body is first dissociated from gender and then reincorporated again, which exposes the protagonist’s false belief in the desirability of masculinity as a form of intoxication.

Initially, “After the Race” seems especially interesting for a discussion of the difference between sex and gender because the male body is practically absent, and it is instead the practices of gender that are foregrounded. Distinct from other stories in *Dubliners*, it portrays the more affluent parts of society, and it predicates masculinity on a curious mixture of what Bourdieu conceptualises as economic, social and symbolic capitals.¹²⁰ As Jimmy and his father exemplify, the habitus of the affluent predicates masculinity on a wealthy lifestyle and the acquisition of economic capital. Masculine practice is central to this lifestyle because, as Mr Doyle suggests, wealth is acquired by investing in a prestigious education which opens the gate to making the right business connections. Despite its central status, however, the car is relegated to the

¹²⁰ Refer to the discussion of Bourdieu in chapter 2.2.4.

fringes in the course of the narrative, and the main part is devoted to the illustration of an array of masculine practices, which serve to establish a homosocial connection between Jimmy and his so-called “friends”:

It was a serene summer night; the harbour lay like a darkened mirror at their feet. They proceeded towards it with linked arms, singing *Cadet Roussel* in chorus, stamping their feet at every:

—*Ho! Ho! Hobé, vraiment!*

They got into a rowboat at the slip and made out for the American’s yacht. There was to be supper, music, cards. Villona said with conviction:

—It is beautiful! (*D* 37)

The depiction of these practices has an unreal quality, and it can be seen that “Joyce allows the narration, reflecting Jimmy’s attitude, to overextend itself, so that it assumes an almost childish storybook atmosphere” (Bowen 59). This stylisation helps, however, to cover the fact that these masculine practices construct a homosocial space that generates privileges which are based on the subjugation of others and an “exclusion of the feminine and the effeminate [. . .]” (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 77). Passages like this show that, the narrative structure of the text is not neutral or objectively portraying masculinity, but rather is contributes to the ideological content of what it seems merely to depict.

Despite the fact that the narrative often emphasises these classical masculine actions to discuss gender in the story, it is the racing car and the race that ultimately symbolise this masculinity. As a form of symbolic capital, the racing car condenses meanings and claims to masculinity by representing enormous wealth, skill, knowledge and social connections. The spirit of this interrelationship is expressed by Jimmy’s excitement during the ride in one of the cars. Being “too excited to be genuinely happy” (*D* 33), Jimmy floats along, while the speed of the car symbolises his inebriation with wealth and technological progress: “Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money. These were three good reasons for Jimmy’s excitement” (*D* 34). Later on, the link between cars, connections and wealth is crystallised in the almost vulgar direct representation of his thoughts: “money to be made in the motor business, *pots of money*” (*D* 34, my emphasis). As James Fairhall points out, these cars “combine in one package glamour, prestige, and physical and financial power – qualities normally absent from public scenes in Ireland [. . .]” (“Big-

power Politics” 392). At times, these “prime material icons” (392) assume an anthropomorphised *Gestalt* when they are presented as “trimly built”, “career[ing] home-ward” (*D* 32) or running “on merrily with its cargo of hilarious youth” (*D* 34). And occasionally, these anthropomorphic images even assume a sexual significance, as in the phrase “The cars came scudding in towards Dublin, running evenly like pellets in the groove of the Naas Road” (*D* 32), or they raise colonial implications: “through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry” (*D* 32; Fairhall, “Big-power Politics” 392). The scene thus takes on a sexual symbolism which feminises Ireland on behalf of its “awe of [the] masculine prowess” of the Continent, whose “wealth and industry” races through, and thus penetrates, the Irish capital (Brandabur 84). The signifiers of the car are not homogenous, however, and thereby become ambiguous: “How smoothly it ran! In what style they had come careering along the country roads! The journey laid a magical finger on the genuine pulse of life and gallantly the machinery of human nerves strove to answer the bounding courses of the swift blue animal” (*D* 35). Whereas the car here becomes animalistic, it is the human body and consciousness which assume mechanical attributes (cf. Ingersoll 95), and the two synthesise in a form of gallant intercourse. Regardless whether Jimmy is conscious of these undercurrents or not, for him, the car becomes “something superhuman” (Bowen 58).

As this short discussion demonstrates, the racing car mediates the meaning and possession of various forms of capital in the story, and thereby condenses the way masculinity is materialised and acquired. For the characters, and foremost for the hapless protagonist Jimmy, it does so first and foremost because it can be shown off in front of an audience. Upon closer scrutiny, this motif occurs surprisingly often in the course of the plot, and the narrative almost starts with a constellation of Irish admiration for continental wealth and progress, as we read that “[e]ach blue car [. . .] received a double round of welcome as it topped the crest of the hill and each cheer of welcome was acknowledged with smiles and nods by those in the car” (*D* 32). To Jimmy, this admiration comes along with a form of denigration of the audience, depicted condescendingly as “clumps of people” (*D* 32) or “[a] little knot of people” who gathered at the course “pay homage to the snorting motor” (*D* 35). On one level, these anonymous and de-individualising descriptions can be discussed as participating in the

allegorical depiction of Ireland as affirming its own subjection through colonial power (Cheng 104-05). But for Jimmy, these little scenes fulfil an important function for his of people admiring the car, and by proxy himself, are part of his personal narrative of masculinity achieved through prestige, with which he sets himself above his dull compatriots: “He had been seen by many of his friends that day in the company of these continentals” (*D* 34). The distinction between the “continentals” and the Irish in terms of prestige becomes even more apparent in Jimmy’s sensations after he is introduced to one of the successful drivers: “It was pleasant after that honour to return to the profane world of spectators amid nudges and significant looks” (*D* 34). Association with the racing car and its drivers confers on Jimmy a form of masculine nobility, which the text expresses rather literally with language normally reserved for aristocratic entries: “That night the city wore the mask of a capital. The five young men strolled along Stephen’s Green in a faint cloud of aromatic smoke. They talk loudly and gaily and their cloaks dangled from their shoulders. The people made way for them” (*D* 36). The word *mask* at the beginning already points to the artificiality of this gendered performance, and Leonard is therefore right to stress the element of masquerade in this scene in which the association with the continentals allows Jimmy to “authenticate the fiction of himself”, which allows him feel superior to his fellow Irishmen (*Reading Dubliners* 115).

This feeling of dizziness and elation is structurally necessary for preparing Jimmy’s downfall in the second part of the story. Masculinity is, after all, not acquirable in the way Jimmy thinks, and the idea of masculinity as a form of purchasable selfhood is exposed in the end as an illusion. A sense of disillusionment already begins to pervade the story during the men’s splendid dinner. As they become more enthusiastic and spurred on by the “generous influences” of alcohol their conversation about politics brings about the “danger of personal spite” (*D* 36). Jimmy discovers his Irish nationalist tendency in by antagonising the Englishman Routh, who has recently arrived at the party. The car race and its masculine splendour can only temporarily cover up national differences and especially the colonial context in Ireland. Ségouin, the host and owner of the car and thereby the clearest example of hegemonic masculinity, manages to ease the atmosphere with a banal toast “to humanity” (*D* 36; cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 74). But the disillusionment of masculine practices continues on a

yacht, where the men perform the whole gamut of homosocial rituals such as drinking, debating, dancing and playing cards. Instead of reinforcing Jimmy's masculinity or celebrating the homosocial unit, these gestures are rather lacklustre performances. Either they are shown to be inherently flawed or they are simply performed with not much enthusiasm: while the first dance features a light-hearted inversion of gender roles with "Farley acting as cavalier and Rivière as lady" the next dance is already only a careless improvisation of "original figures", and soon everyone has lost either interest or stamina so that this entertainment is quickly abandoned (cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 75). Despite Jimmy finding that the drinking is "bohemian" (*D* 37), this classic bonding ritual does not produce any more solidarity or prestige among them. The renewed toasting is devoted to every nation involved, thereby trying to gloss over their differences. The performance ends with Jimmy giving a long and probably drunken speech, of which we only learn that it was well received (but not what he says). The following applause and recognition of the others for his speech lead Jimmy to think "What jovial fellows! What good company they were!" (*D* 37). But it must be assumed that the alcohol makes him misjudge the applause, and his general intoxication through the exciting events of the day makes him fail to see that the homosocial bonding is flawed (cf. Mosher 411). In fact, as Leonard argues, Jimmy humiliates himself in the pursuit of masculine recognition from a world which he is clearly an outsider to: "He is playing the hero of his father's un-lived story, even as he plays the fool for the French musketeers who need him to provide a foil for their own dubious sophistication" (*Reading Dubliners* 116, cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 70). All the male bonding thus does not bring him prestige as a masculine subject but rather lowers his position vis-à-vis the others.

Another classic masculine performance, the card game, finally ends in a disaster for Jimmy and amounts to the ultimate deflation of the masculinity he yearned for. In the ensuing rounds of gambling, he loses both a huge undisclosed sum of money as well as his prestige in the eyes of the others. The most telling line for this deflation of masculinity refers back to his longing for both recognition and his hubristic self-elevation above his fellow countrymen: "Jimmy felt obscurely the lack of an audience: the wit was flashing" (*D* 37). This need for recognition by the admiring eyes of the audience makes sure that he "is driven to greater and greater folly by his pursuit of an

ideal image that he imagines is reflect in the gaze and recognition of others”, as Leonard rightly remarks (*Reading Dubliners* 116). He further elaborates that this form of approval through the eyes of others can never be satisfied and therefore the subject needs to carry on lying to himself, not realising that the real consequences of his homosocial games, such as losing huge amounts of money, are working against the “conscious fiction” which he pursued all along. (*Reading Dubliners* 116; cf. Ingersoll 96-97). In this way, the vanished sensation of the cars and their power to impress has left a void, which now becomes apparent and truly graspable for Jimmy as he realises his defeat. As Marilyn French puts it, “Jimmy can find pleasure only in the *idea* of being part of his world, not in the reality” (“Missing Pieces” 454). For Jimmy, the car functioned to stabilise masculinity by giving it solid, graspable and powerful form which is admired by both his peers and those he looks up to. Now that the car is outside of his reach, the remaining rituals of proving masculinity cannot fulfil this imaginary function and are exposed as empty gestures with no substance.

A look at the field in which Jimmy is situated makes clear that he is simply not able to see what is coming for him because his perception is shaped by the masculine illusion, his gendered habitus, that his field necessitates.¹²¹ The social context within which the characters exist and which moves the plot forward can be broadly described as based on social advancement in the public sphere. Already the brief sketch of Jimmy’s education points to a worldview which is guided by the search for economic opportunity. We learn, for instance, that Mr Doyle senior, although making his money in the “vulgar” (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 68) trade of butchering, has become a “merchant prince” in Dublin due to his skilful management and pragmatic opportunism (cf. Beck 129; cf. Cheng 105; cf. Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 68). He thereby shifted his earlier allegiances as “an advanced Nationalist” to the Anglo-Irish establishment when the opportunity arose “to secure some of the police contracts” (*D* 33). This opportunism had paid off, but it also indicates that his perception is shaped by the aim to progress socially through the accumulation of economic capital. This outlook matches his intentions to first send “his son to England to be educated in a big Catholic college”, then later on “to Dublin University to study law” and, finally, “for a term to

¹²¹ For a discussion of field and habitus, see chapter 2.2.4.

Cambridge to see a little life” (*D* 33). What Jimmy sees is, however, not “life” by any abstract standards but a highly connected homosocial environment where he meets people “well worth knowing” (*D* 34).¹²²

The question of economic value is equally manifest in the way Jimmy views money and people. This can be seen for instance when he contemplates the economic value of the racing car and begins “to translate into days’ work that lordly car on which he sat” (*D* 34-35). Paradoxically, Jimmy is blinded by the ungraspable force of this symbol while still able to see the money it represents. With regard to money in general he is described as “at heart the inheritor of solid instincts” who is conscious of the “difficulty [with which] it had been got together” and “the labour latent in money” (*D* 34). Margot Norris is correct when she writes that “[f]or all his bedazzlement by wealth and glamour, he understands its material base in the substance of the body’s labour” (*Suspicious Readings* 76). The logic is a different one, however, as the bedazzlement is the result of his viewing the world in terms of economic value, which is supported by looking at the way Jimmy views people. As previously mentioned, to the Doyle’s, people are essentially connections which can produce social and economic advancement. This pattern becomes most apparent in the way Jimmy views his friends Ségouin and Villona respectively:

It was at Cambridge that he had met Ségouin. They were not much more than acquaintances as yet but Jimmy found great pleasure in the society of one who had seen so much of the world and was reputed to own some of the biggest hotels in France. Such a person (as his father agreed) was well worth knowing, even if he had not been the charming companion he was. Villona was entertaining also—a brilliant pianist—but, unfortunately, very poor. (*D* 33-34)

Villona’s value as a “friend”, a term that is used throughout for him, is tied to his lack of economic surplus value, which contrasts with Ségouin, whose “charming” qualities are rather the result of “the unmistakable air of wealth” (*D* 34) he represents. These descriptions indicate the way in which Jimmy’s perception is filtered through an economic lens, which is finally the basis of his misperception of the situation in which he will lose all his money. He considers the investment into the racing business “serious”, not least because he sees his wealth as part of his being: “he was about to stake the

¹²² As Ingersoll observes, “these ‘foreigners’ have offered him an expensive lesson at their own ‘finishing school’ by demonstrating that he cannot win in their world” (98).

greater part of his substance!” (*D* 34). Apart from preparing the reader for his huge losses during the card game later on (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 76), this phrase also merges body (“his substance”) and economic capital in a trope that conflates labour, wealth and corporeal materiality.

The construction of masculinity through symbols, implied narratives and homosocial practices embedded in a masculine worldview is the central element in the story, whose plot ultimately leads towards the deconstruction of the great illusion of masculine self-importance. The rest of my discussion will show, however, that the narrative has conducted this deconstruction all along. By reintroducing the body in the discourse the text gives a reminder that masculinity itself is, like the racing car, nothing but a narrative extension of the male body. In between the display of meaningless and flawed rituals of masculinity and a perception of the world in terms of social and economic value, the text strategically inserts references to the body, which remind the reader of the illusions with which masculinity tries to transcend it.

These reminders show cracks in the façade of masculinity’s edifice, which can be witnessed for instance during the intoxicating car ride discussed earlier. Here, Jimmy is profoundly impressed, but he is also left vaguely estranged, as he cannot participate in the conversation due to two loud noises:

Decidedly Villona was in excellent spirits; he kept up a deep bass hum of melody for miles of the road. The Frenchmen flung their laughter and light words over their shoulders and often Jimmy had to strain forward to catch the quick phrase. This was not altogether pleasant for him as he had nearly always to make a deft guess at the meaning and shout back a suitable answer in the teeth of a high wind. Besides, Villona’s humming would confuse anybody: the noise of the car, too. (*D* 34)

This scene, in which Jimmy literally does not understand, is, of course, a symbolic expression of his general lack of comprehension concerning a world of international wealth he does not belong to (Beck 129). This world is desirable, however, because it seems to offer him the possibility “to authenticate the fiction of himself” (Leonard, *Reading Dubliners* 115). But the disruption of his understanding also indicates a return of the body into the narrative. Although Villona is less valuable to Jimmy than Ségouin in terms of money, it is his humming which merges with the car. The unpleasantness of this experience foreshadows the fact that Jimmy is not really part of the elite, but

he is still too impressed by the symbolic power surrounding the racing car to realise this. Jimmy's worldview is similarly pierced by references to Villona's low economic status. At the beginning, the Hungarian is contrasted with the other men because he is less interested in the excitement of the race but more so in the mundane fact that "he had had a very satisfactory luncheon [. . .]" (*D* 33).¹²³ What here simply seems an eccentric character trait is later exposed as part of Villona's economic necessity, which is sharply contrasted with the Doyles's financial aspirations:

In Jimmy's house this dinner had been pronounced an occasion. A certain pride mingled with his parents' trepidation, a certain eagerness, also, to play fast and loose for the names of great foreign cities have at least this virtue. [. . .] His father, therefore, was unusually friendly with Villona and his manner expressed a real respect for foreign accomplishments, but this subtlety of his host was probably lost upon the Hungarian who was beginning to have a sharp desire for his dinner. (*D* 35)

The exoticism of "foreign accomplishments" is equated by Jimmy's father with the economic opportunity that Ségouin and a college education in England promise. These wishes are cause for excitement and the occasion to dress up. But this display of wealth, expressing a "nebulous aim of social prestige", clashes with "Villona's more basic attitudes towards food and survival", that is, his simple wish of having enough to eat (Bowen 60).¹²⁴

The most drastic of these corporeal reminders refer to vision, and they make possible the allegorical reading of the story in which the Doyle's are merely blinded by the body extensions of masculinity and the promises and illusions they create. Jimmy's drunkenness is of course also a form of blindness, but significantly the text indicates that he loses his games because he does not see clearly anymore and therefore "frequently mistook his cards" (*D* 37).¹²⁵ This blindness is also apparent in the investment the Doyles intend to make. Here, Jimmy relies on his "father's shrewdness in business matters" (*D* 34), but the text suggests that ultimately the investment is more favourable to Ségouin: "Of course, the investment was a good one, and Ségouin

¹²³ Whether the acoustic similarity of "hungry" and "Hungary" is a conscious Joycean pun, as Gillespie and Weir intimate (117), remains doubtful.

¹²⁴ Similarly, when the men later begin to play cards, Villona, who cannot afford such profligacy, simply vanishes from the scene to provide them with accompanying music.

¹²⁵ A blindness that was foreshadowed in the scene in the car when he had trouble understanding what was said (Leonard, *Reading* *Dubliners* 116; cf. Mosher 411).

had managed to give the impression that it was by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included in the capital of the concern” (*D* 34). This evaluation has to be seen as focalised externally, that is, as a judging intervention by an external narrative voice, in a story that is otherwise strongly tied to Jimmy’s intoxicated perception. It remains the task of the narrator to point out what Jimmy does not see, that his Cambridge acquaintance sees him as an economic opportunity rather than a friend.

Finally, the last scene of the text dramatises Jimmy’s blindness regarding his pursuit of masculine prestige by emphasising the physical effects of this disastrous night on his body:

He knew that he would regret in the morning, but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples. The cabin door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey light:

—Daybreak, gentlemen! (*D* 38)

After being blinded by masculine icons and rituals, Jimmy does finally feel his body, if only in a moment of complete exhaustion and in the realisation that his game is over. This realisation is again illustrated on the formal level through focalisation. As the narrative follows his view, the reader and Jimmy are literally blinded by the sight of Villona standing in front of the open window letting in the first sunrays.¹²⁶ This contrast of vision and blindness assumes its power also because it contrasts sharply with Jimmy’s earlier hope that a “dark stupor [. . .] would cover up his folly”, and would subdue any “images of loss, betrayal, or self-reproach, by counting only the raw life that remains, ‘the beats of his temples’ (48)” (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 76). It is this experience of his living body, represented by the painful sensation of light suddenly stinging his eyes, which exposes the illusions of his masculine pursuit of prestige. Furthermore, as Zack Bowen has pointed out, “the light frames the figure of Villona” (60), which puts at the centre of attention the character who was associated earlier with the material needs of the body. Surrounded by the light, Villona becomes an

¹²⁶ Warren Beck sees in Villona a resemblance to the author of *Dubliners*: “the role of the detached man and artist, letting in light on a Dubliner who has a headache of his own making, and yet one classifiable also as a national product” (132). More recently Gillespie and Weir have suggested that Villona is an ironic counterpart to the image of Hungary that Sinn Féin founder Arthur Griffith had painted as a role model for Irish independence (123).

emblem of Jimmy's all too late realisation of his follies. Through him the text reminds readers of "Villona's concern with the basic essentials as opposed to the Doyles' foolish pursuit of social distinction [. . .]" (Bowen 55), and thereby closes with a resurfacing of the corporeal that criticises the masculine illusions which led to Jimmy's downfall. By reintroducing the body with all its senses and its limitations the text critiques the games and symbols with which masculinity tries to transcend its corporeal basis in order to naturalise its claim to power. It is fitting that at the end of the story the racing car, the ultimate token of disembodied masculinity, is already long forgotten, as Jimmy's intoxication with the economic and symbolic potentials that it promised has given way to a realisation that these fictions of masculinity as a pursuit of prestige and grandeur have failed him.¹²⁷

* * *

The three stories from *Dubliners* are centrally concerned with the relationship between the male body and masculinity. They form this chapter because they are so intensely focused on the doings of gender, the efficacy of a category of identity that is impressive and that most of the time goes unquestioned. It is a central element of the plots of the three stories that they posit masculinity as external and therefore separated from the body. In all three, the body is extended through gender in ways that construct identities that legitimise power relationships between men and women. "A Mother" is the most blatant example of masculinity as a means to justify male privilege. The narrative repeatedly uses changing props which emphasise masculinity over the male body. These are not interpretations or significations of the body, but, like a prosthetic, they compensate functions of the body. In that way, the cultural significations of gender enhance what their maleness alone cannot offer. The two other stories, "Two Gallants" and "After the Race", contrast with "A Mother" in the way they address the alleged split between masculinity and maleness. In both stories, the body is equally extended through masculinity, but by re-introducing the body into the narrative they offer a more subtle critique of the fabric of manliness. If narratives have an

¹²⁷ Cf. Margot Norris' very different conclusion that the narrator is ultimately complicit in a masculinist agenda that takes advantage of Jimmy's naive belief in the "game of masculinity" (*Suspicious Readings* 78).

unconscious, as psychoanalysis suggests, it is on this level that the bodies' limitations and weaknesses are re-instated through unusual phrases, ambiguities and suggestive echoes and resonances.¹²⁸ Whereas in "A Mother" the division between body and gender is used to dramatise the narrative of masculine domination, "Two Gallants" and "After the Race" suggest that this neat division does not hold in the first place, which ultimately fits Joyce's goal in *Dubliners* to show how Irish paralysis affects body as well as mind.

¹²⁸ See *Joyce: The Return of the Repressed*, edited by Susan Stanford Friedman, for an elaboration of the concept and readings of the textual unconscious in Joyce's works.

Chapter 6.3

Corporeal anarchies: The narrated body in “Cyclops”, “Circe” and “Penelope”

* * *

Any discussion of masculinity in Joyce must inevitably deal with the exorbitant theatrics of manliness in the “Cyclops” chapter of *Ulysses*. At the centre of the discussion is, as many critics have discussed, Leopold Bloom, who becomes the ultimate gendered Other to the barflies, as they dissect and critique his masculinity from various angles. As Schwarze puts it, “Bloom is transformed by the men of this episode into the racial and feminine Other on which these discourses—and their own masculine identities—depend” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 89). In the rather straight forward plot, the first-person narrator of the episode, called the Nameless One, enters Barney Kiernan’s pub where he meets with his cronies, among them a legendary Irish athlete, the Citizen. They drink and trade stories of Dublin gossip, nationalist politics and various other cultural topics. Bloom arrives at the bar on an errand, and because he declines to drink or buy drinks, the others see him as a provocation to their homosocial group. In the conversation, Bloom holds fundamentally different positions to the other men and especially to the narrow-minded and anti-Semitic Citizen, who frequently antagonises him on behalf of Bloom’s Jewishness. But Bloom’s idiosyncratic opinions and manner of speaking puzzle and irritate the other barflies as well, so that they begin denigrating him behind his back as unmanly and racially alien to their Irish masculinity. After an altercation with the Citizen about the Jewishness of Jesus Christ, Bloom flees from the bar because the Citizen threatens him with physical violence and throws a biscuit can after him.

As this brief summary indicates, Bloom essentially becomes the sexual and racial Other against which Irish masculinity is formed and idealised by the inebriated

Dublin males. This process has been at the heart of feminist, postcolonial and New Historicist readings of the episode, which have fruitfully added to our understanding of the masculinism critiqued in “Cyclops” and its origin in colonial and racial discursive formations (See French *The Book as World*; Valente “Neither fish nor flesh”; Schwarze *Joyce and the Victorians*). I would like to add to these arguments by discussing the narrative structure of this Othering process in terms of the way the male body is narrated. I argue that the Othering process can be better understood by looking at the way in which the narrative creates imaginations of bodies through stories, anecdotes and interpretations surrounding them. More specifically, the body as a fixed and assumedly solid entity is thereby an achievement made through the intertextual citation of hero images, sports events, anecdotes, historical incidents, gossip and narrated stereotypes. The result of this narrative construction is the amalgamation of an idealised Irish male body, which literally *incorporates* features that are supposed to contrast with Bloom’s thereby marginalised masculinity. The process of citation and Othering through these micro-narratives vacillates between exaggerated gendered and sexual signifiers, and thereby the text suggests a destabilisation of the boundary between the two, which renders the thus idealised male body a caricature of actual the male sex. This deflation is further underlined by the fact that none of the barflies actually meet this physical ideal, as in reality they are all either alcoholics, spongers, weak or sick. Furthermore, a closer look at the stories and citations with which they construct the ideal body shows that these are often flawed and unstable. In “Cyclops”, the male body is ridiculed for its attempts to become colossal, exuberant and overly significant, whereas Bloom silently transcends the materiality of the body through his association with Jesus Christ, and in the process the chapter puts into question the status of the male body as the essential basis of masculinity.

The idealised Irish maleness primarily modelled on the characterisation of the Citizen, Bloom’s main antagonist in the episode, whose real-life model, Michael Cusack, was a famed Irish athlete in the wake of the Gaelic sports revival.¹²⁹ That this model is an idealisation is made clear through the way this body is narratively

¹²⁹ For discussions of context and function of the Gaelic Athletic Association and Michael Cusack in “Cyclops”, see Ledden’s “Bloom, Lawn Tennis, and the Gaelic Athletic Association” and Culleton’s “The Gaelic Athletic Association, Joyce, and the Primitive Body”.

constructed. Maleness, as the Citizen embodies it, is a stereotype of the Irish strongman and his introduction is marked by an aura of muscular and heroic athleticism. In the first of many parodic lists, with which a second (third-person) narrator comments on the events and characters in the episode, the Citizen's maleness is produced as the body of a superhuman hero of Gaelic mythology: "The figure seated on a large boulder at the foot of a round tower was that of a broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed frankeyed redhaired freelyfreckled shaggybearded widemouthed largenosed longheaded deepvoiced barekneed brawnyhanded hairylegged ruddyfaced sinewyarmed hero" (*U* 243). The Citizen thereby emerges as larger than life, embodying a "manliness [that] epitomizes the new national body [. . .]" (Schwarze 91). The unreality of this body is rendered through the humour that this list of gross exaggeration and stereotypical male features generates: attributes like broad shoulders, a deep voice and others are heaped upon one another, which amounts to "farcical extravagance" which creates an image of the Citizen as "gigantic in stature" (Blamires 120), and it becomes clear that this list is not intended to represent a real body but an ideal one.¹³⁰ Leaving the path of mimetic representation, the lists parody images of male body parts through exaggeration and inflation. Osteen extends the function of parody, however, when he writes that "[t]hese gargantuan series move the discourse of the episode toward the nonsensical, sometimes appearing to comment on the extravagances of the characters [. . .], but more often overshadowing any parodic effect and calling attention to themselves as sheer excess" (272). Thus, not simply a parody of sexual markers and thus sexual difference, this image of the Irish nationalist body deconstructs specific male features as stable signifiers of masculinity. Osteen furthermore adds that these catalogues "create value where none exists; like the tall tales of the characters, they lend the appearance of worth and abundance to an impoverished and idle environment, even as they themselves seem filled with excess or excrement" (273).

¹³⁰ The list continues with a long enumeration of mythological and contemporary "heroes", which further lift the Citizen into superhuman spheres: "His nationalistic fanaticism is laughed at in a riotous list of 'Irish' heroes and heroines that eventually incorporates Charlemagne, Napoleon, and William Tell along with Buddha, Lady Godiva, and Dick Turpin. The one-eyed fanatic knows no restraint in the claims he makes for his cause" (Blamires 120; cf. Scott, *James Joyce* 55).

This notion of excess value can be usefully linked to Judith Butler's conceptualisation of the way in which gender creates sex. For Butler, "compulsory heterosexual identities, those ontologically consolidated phantasms of 'man' and 'woman', are theatrically produced effects that posture as grounds, origins, the normative measure of the real" ("Imitation" 128).¹³¹ This theatrical production is centrally connected to the principle of repetition, and for Butler in this need for constant repetition lies the possibility to expose the origin of sex as an illusion:

That heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that is, that it 'knows' its own possibility of becoming undone: hence, its compulsion to repeat which is at once a foreclosure of that which threatens its coherence. [. . .] [This predicament of heterosexuality] can become an occasion for a subversive and proliferating parody of gender norms in which the very claim to originality and to the real is shown to be the effect of a certain kind of naturalized gender mime. ("Imitation" 129)

In this way, the idealism of the Citizen's body is destabilised right from the beginning of the narrative. The long asyndeton which introduces the Citizen's archetypal Irish male body in fact mocks the notion of authenticity through its use of several portmanteau words, which are selected to create the idea of stereotypical Irishness ("frankeyed redhaired freelyfreckled") and muscular manliness ("broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed").¹³² Like the discourses that for Butler construct compulsory heterosexual subjectivity, the narrative practice in "Cyclops" creates through language the subjectivity which it centres on. Butler's concept of citationality offers another fruitful way to discuss the artificiality of the Irish male body. From this perspective, the words used in the lists are also citations of an idealised male norm.¹³³ Rather than creating authenticity, these lists destabilise the bodily description, especially when the elements that are meant to create coherence through repetition become recontextualised in settings that render them absurd. This effect is achieved when the Citizen's body becomes subject to unlikely and grotesque similes, as when his nostrils are described as "of such capaciousness that within their cavernous obscurity the fieldlark

¹³¹ For further discussion, see chapter 2 "Masculinity studies: Theories and concepts".

¹³² In the hallucinatory world of the "Circe" chapter, Bloom remembers the Citizen in a similar way: "Might have lost my life too with that mangongwheeltrackrolleyglarejuggernaut only for presence of mind (*U* 369).

¹³³ Note the thematic echo from *A Portrait*, where Stephen's nationalist friend Davin embodies a similar Irish nationalist muscularity: "The hand freckled and strong and shapely and caressing was Davin's hand" (*P* 201).

might easily have lodged her nest” or when his eyes are said to be “of the dimensions of a goodsized cauliflower” and other absurd comparisons (*U* 243). These examples connect aspects of maleness with other elements which are intelligible only in a specific geographic or botanical context, and thereby the markers of sex, which are cited to create the ideal Irish body, become unstable signifiers because their immediate context distorts their intended corporeal meaning.¹³⁴

This instability of sexual signification is continued in the Othering processes which draw on Bloom’s masculine inadequacy. While here there is not a recontextualisation that creates problems of meaning, the continual blurring of the lines between gender and sex poses the question what it is that the barflies actually criticise about Bloom. The first example of this lifting of the boundary between anatomy and performance concerns the barflies’ mocking of Bloom’s alleged softness. When the discussion in the bar moves to the current outbreak of the foot and mouth disease in Ireland, the nameless narrator mocks Bloom’s contribution as meek because Bloom takes the animals’ suffering into consideration: “Ay. Humane methods. Because the poor animals suffer and experts say and the best known remedy that doesn’t cause pain to the animal and on the sore spot administer gently. Gob, he’d have a soft hand under a hen” (*U* 259). Bloom’s softness is figural here, describing his attitude towards animals, but in the trope that the narrator uses, body and psyche merge into a single image of gentleness, his “soft hand under a hen”, which of course contrasts strongly with attributes like “stronglimbed” and “brawnyhanded” that were used to describe the image of the Citizen. Through the narrative method, however, Bloom’s unmanly performance of showing empathy with animals is expressed through a reference to the softness of his body part (cf. Schwarze 125-26). To state that he has a soft body could be seen as direct attack on his masculinity, but by conflating the two levels, the attack becomes indeterminate and therefore unstable. The same principle applies to a further corporeal reference to the performance of gender. During the discussion, the men in the bar spot the alleged lunatic Denis Breen outside. Breen is Bloom’s double

¹³⁴ Scott adds that “[t]he lists are undermined by their frequency, exaggerated length and the insertion of unlikely entries. Humour and improbability are achieved by the occasional citation of a female name” (Scott, *James Joyce* 55). The nature and the source of those lists is subject to scholarly debate, see for instance French (*Book as World* 149-52), Cheng (199-200), Nolan (107-09) and Osteen (256-59, 275).

in so far as the barflies similarly mock him for his failure to meet their standards of masculinity. The Citizen therefore refers to him as “—Half and half I mean, says the citizen. A fellow that’s neither fish nor flesh” (*U* 263). Denis Breen is ridiculed because of his obsession with an anonymous prank on him, he is endlessly wandering around Dublin to file a complaint. He is neither able to take the banter as a form of homosocial bonding nor is he effective enough as a man to avenge himself against the prankster. Yet, the attack on him is made through a metaphor using corporeal imagery. Vincent Cheng comments that the barflies “have limited vision and only see the binary poles, see everything in stark categories of black and white, English or Irish [. . .]” (207). This observation is correct in terms of the topics they discuss, but their construction of Breen’s and Bloom’s Otherness does exactly not employ not those binaries. Here as in the previous instance, references to gender and sex merge and can no longer be separated from another, and therefore the attack becomes ineffectual.

Conceptualising the contrast between Bloom and the Citizen, Joseph Valente draws on two contemporary discourses of masculinity, when he writes that the Citizen represents “spurious hypermasculine bravado”, that is, an attempt to define masculinity through gendered traits like courage, whereas Bloom’s inadequate masculinity is the embodiment of “an effeminate *hypomasculine* attitude of circumspection” (“Neither fish nor flesh” 109) because Bloom is more careful in his discourse about topics and his attitudes towards the issues discussed (cf. Valente, “Neither fish nor flesh” 108-10). This distinction is useful on a thematic level, but it ultimately also illustrates my point about the narrative technique: for instance, Bloom’s circumspection is referred to in the text through the term “the prudent member” (*U* 249), which he is called as he declines a drink because he has an important errand to finish. Bloom’s manner of prioritising task over alcoholic pleasure is mockingly rendered “prudent” and thereby less masculine as it betrays the homosocial solidarity. However, as Valente comments, the phrase “prudent *member*” is of course also a pun on male anatomy: the term “member” produces “a punning phallic connotation that qualifies Bloom’s disposition as the opposite of, say, raging virility” (Valente, “Neither fish nor flesh” 109), which appears to be the masculine standard in the pub.¹³⁵ The

¹³⁵ Cf. Valente, who notes that this produces the paradoxical situation in which “the very mark of elite metropolitan *manhood*, unaffected self-restraint, counts as a lack of deficiency in lower-class subaltern

same dynamic is discernible in the anti-Semitic attacks on Bloom's virility. Referring to the contemporary stereotype of Jewish men as effeminate,¹³⁶ the barflies attack Bloom behind his back:

—O, by God, says Ned, you should have seen Bloom before that son of his that died was born. I met him one day in the south city markets buying a tin of Neave's food six weeks before the wife was delivered.

—*En ventre sa mère*, says J. J.

—Do you call that a man? says the citizen.

—I wonder did he ever put it out of sight, says Joe.

—Well, there were two children born anyhow, says Jack Power.

—And who does he suspect? says the citizen. (*U* 277)

Bloom's caring attitude towards his then-pregnant wife is used to denigrate him and question his masculinity. This refusal to accept him in the homosocial circle is, however, conceptualised through the banter about his assumed inability to father children, that is his male body's alleged impotence (cf. French, *Book as World* 147-48; cf. Rosenfeld 222-23). The central ambiguity about the relationship between sex and gender lies in the Citizen's "Do you call that a man?" because it is the pivotal point from which gendered performance is taken to question the "correct" sex. The nameless narrator also comments on Bloom, by presenting an anecdote which exemplifies this logic:

Gob, there's many a true word spoken in jest. One of those mixed middlings he is. Lying up in the hotel Pisser was telling me once a month with headache like a totty with her courses. Do you know what I'm telling you? Then sloping off with his five quid without putting up a pint of stuff like a man. (*U* 277)

Vincent Cheng comments that Bloom is a "mixed middling" because he "doesn't fit into the static categories of maleness and masculinity which they can understand" (208). But it is also important to note that the narrator moves from questioning Bloom's ambivalent sexual status, the alleged menstruation ("like a totty with her courses."), to his irritation about Bloom not buying a round of drinks for everyone with the money that they think he has won from betting ("Then sloping off with his five quid without putting up a pint of stuff like a man."). The argument moves thereby

masculinity" ("Neither fish nor flesh" 109, Valente's emphases). This reading perceptively distinguishes between different masculinities, but it also overcomplicates the constellation through a fixation on discursive labels.

¹³⁶ For an extended discussion of the image of the "degenerate Jew" see Byrnes's "Bloom's Sexual Tropes". A more comprehensive discussion of Jewishness and gender in Joyce is offered by Rosenfeld's "James Joyce's Womanly Wandering Jew".

from attacking his anatomy to the failure of his gender performance. In all these instances, the narrative practice once again transgresses the boundary between gender and sex in the creation of Bloom as Other to the Irish males in Barney Kiernan's pub.

In another example where the text merges sexual and gendered markers in the narratives which construct masculinity the pub crowd debates the topic of capital punishment. The men hear about a hangman's letter of application, by one H. Rumbold, an English barber from Liverpool, and in the reaction to the letter, Bloom is once again at the centre of attention concerning his manliness:

So they started talking about capital punishment and of course Bloom comes out with the why and the wherefore and all the codology of the business and the old dog smelling him all the time I'm told those jewies does have a sort of a queer odour coming off them for dogs about I don't know what all deterrent effect and so forth and so on. (*U* 250)

Primarily, Bloom is the target of ridicule here because he weighs an unwanted debate about the pros and cons, "the why and the wherefore", of capital punishment (cf. Nolan 97). However, his behaviour motivates an attack on Bloom's racial otherness in terms of his body. The nameless narrator focuses in his reference to Bloom on the latter's alleged bodily odour, which the Citizen's dog apparently responds to.¹³⁷ The narrator's anti-Semitic resentment expresses his antipathy toward Bloom, but it implicitly also construes in Bloom an exotic, non-Irish body. From this racial construction focusing on Bloom's body, the narrative moves on to a reference to another anecdotal embodiment of the Irishness. Initiated by the by the term "deterrent effect", the discussion now proceeds with the topic of Irish nationalism. First, this phrase seems to refer to Bloom's body odour and its rumoured effect on dogs, but then it actually connects to Bloom's "codology" of explaining the potential benefits of capital punishment. In this function it triggers the discourse to move on to the anecdote of another Irish body, that of Joe Brady, "the invincible":

—There's one thing it hasn't a deterrent effect on, says Alf.

—What's that? says Joe.

—The poor bugger's tool that's being hanged, says Alf.

—That so? says Joe.

—God's truth, says Alf. I heard that from the head warder that was in Kilmainham when they hanged Joe Brady, the invincible. He told me when they cut him down after the drop it was standing up in their faces like a poker.

¹³⁷ Cf. the expression "Jewman's melt!" in "Circe" (*U* 366).

—Ruling passion strong in death, says Joe, as someone said. (*U* 250)

The invincible's erection after his death by hanging is explained as a sign of his nationalist "passion".¹³⁸ The Irish rebel is thereby implicitly characterised by a supernatural sexual prowess, which leaves his English persecutors puzzled and amazed. Because Joe Brady is a nationalist hero and as the Citizen is cast in a similar role, this corporeal reference contributes to the narrative's construction of an idealised Irish male body, which contrasts with Bloom's racial and gendered Otherness. This further addition to the Irish body, however, makes it even more grotesque in appearance, and the "bugger's tool" is thus another signifier to contribute to the excess of signification which characterises the Citizen's maleness as well. Bloom's otherness to this body is realised, again, on the level of his behaviour and not his body. Thus he attempts to provide a rational explanation for the post-mortem erection, which undermines the heroic sexuality of the "invincible": "—That can be explained by science, says Bloom. It's only a natural phenomenon, don't you see, because on account of the ... And then he starts with his jawbreakers about phenomenon and science and this phenomenon and the other phenomenon" (*U* 250). While this debunking of heroism offends the barflies, the narrative eventually takes Bloom's sides. Although his pseudo-scientism is mocked in an aside which calls him the "distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft" (*U* 250), the nameless narrator himself turns on the Citizen and his rambling discourse about the past glories of Irish nationalism's fight against British occupation:

So of course the citizen was only waiting for the wink of the word and he starts gassing out of him about the invincibles and the old guard and the men of sixtyseven and who fears to speak of ninetyeight and Joe with him about all the fellows that were hanged, drawn and transported for the cause by drum-head courtmartial and a new Ireland and new this, that and the other. Talking about new Ireland he ought to go and get a new dog so he ought. (*U* 250-51)

While the sexual power of Joe Brady makes him truly invincible and indicate eternal life and youth, the Citizen's "Fenian litany of failed Irish risings" (Valente, "Neither fish nor flesh" 115), exposes him as living in the past and even his animal side, his fierce dog, is shown to be of the "old guard". Moreover, as Valente suggests, the story

¹³⁸ As Gifford and Seidman inform, the phrase is actually a quotation from Alexander Pope (*Ulysses Annotated* 332).

paradoxically “comes to emblemize not only the eroticization of political violence as a desperate assertion of colonial virility, but also the eroticization of political violence *suffered*, at the hands of a mightier foe” (“Neither fish nor flesh” 115). This double layered sexualisation of heroic death creates both a masculinisation of the Irish body as hypermasculine, but at the same time, it feminises this body by suggesting that its heroics is rather “a feminized cult of (self-)sacrificial loss [. . .]” (“Neither fish nor flesh” 115). In this way the body comes to signify a contradictory masculinity, which undermines the Othering processes against Bloom.

Corporeal and gendered motifs are furthermore blended in Bloom’s relationship to Irish sports. Here, his lack of enthusiasm for this crucial nationalist issue is taken to question his masculinity once again. By thereby deconstructing the construction of masculinity through the body, the episode makes its final comment on the male body of Irish nationalism. In the course of the conversation between the barflies someone mentions the prohibition of Irish games in public made by the police, which is followed by a general discussion of the Gaelic sports revival, in which the Citizen played a central role:

—There’s the man, says Joe, that made the Gaelic sports revival. There he is sitting there. The man that got away James Stephens. The champion of all Ireland at putting the sixteen pound shot. What was your best throw, citizen?

—*Na bacleis*, says the citizen, letting on to be modest. There was a time I was as good as the next fellow anyhow.

—Put it there, citizen, says Joe. You were and a bloody sight better.

—Is that really a fact? says Alf.

—Yes, says Bloom. That’s well known. Did you not know that? (*U* 259-60)

The citizen is figured in this passage as both the originator of Gaelic sports and as the embodiment of its highest achievements. The scene thus provides actual cultural context for the inflationary use of brawny attributes in the introduction of the Citizen earlier. This athlete combines muscular masculinity (“The champion of all Ireland at putting the sixteen pound shot”) with Gaelic culture, as when he answers in Irish to the question about his muscular achievements. The fact that the real Michael Cusack can only be considered the “Irish spokesman for athletics” rather than “the great Irish athlete of his time” (Gifford and Seidman 342), is probably less a slip on Joyce’s part rather than an element of the bar-room lore which surrounds the Citizen. The contrast to Bloom is established not because the latter is in any way physically inferior; it is

Bloom's betrayal of the Irish culture underlying the Citizen's athleticism which makes Bloom the sexual Other again. Ironically, Bloom, who throughout the day is also thinking about how to build up muscle (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 80-81), at first praises the Citizen and acknowledges his muscular feats ("That's well known. Did you not know that?").¹³⁹ However, he then makes the mistake to praise sportive activity in general, whereas the Irish athlete steels his body only in Irish games. Accordingly, it is Bloom's participation in the following discussion of "Irish sports and shoneen games" for which he is antagonised by the nameless narrator again:

So off they started about Irish sports and shoneen games the like of lawn tennis and about hurley and putting the stone and racy of the soil and building up a nation once again and all to that. And of course Bloom had to have his say too about if a fellow had a rower's heart violent exercise was bad. [. . .] (*U* 260)

Bloom makes the vital mistake to avoid praising Irish games over English ("shoneen") sport like tennis. Although he sees himself as an Irishman (*U* 272), he equally does not see sportive engagement as a national duty, as the Citizen does. Bloom is thus again "the prudent member" (*U* 249) and not the manly athlete because he pedagogically advises against "violent exercise" in case "a fellow had a rower's heart".¹⁴⁰ Moreover, he is also not enthusiastic about the other patriots' insistence on the nation-building function of sports ("racy of the soil and building up a nation once again and all to that" [Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 77-78; Cheng 206-08; Valente "Neither fish nor flesh" 113-15]). Following the logic established earlier, Bloom is not the sexual Other because he is inadequate in terms of physicality (even though he actually is), but the reason why his manhood is questioned is because he does not contribute to the nationalist effort central to the construction of Irish masculinity.

The narrative's method of conflating discourse and anatomy is finally brought to a conclusion in the men's discussion of the boxing match between "Dublin's pet lamb" Myler Keogh and "The welterweight seargeantmajor" Percy Bennett (*U* 261). On a thematic level this contest in a combative sport between an Irishman and an Englishman is first and foremost a variation of the colonial allegory. As Vincent Cheng

¹³⁹ For extended discussions of the role of Germanic strongman Eugen Sandow and his manual *Strength and How to Obtain It* in *Ulysses*, refer to Kershner's "The World's Strongest Man" and Plock's *Joyce, Medicine and Modernity*.

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Ledden for an extended discussion.

puts it, the match is “an emblematic representation of those very dynamics involved in a closed, binary, polarized England-Ireland dialectic, with its resultant and systemic violence, a microcosm of warfare” (Cheng 207). Interest in the sport and the support for the Irish boxer is, therefore, a nationalist duty for the barflies. The nationalist enthusiasm can be perceived in the glee and appetite for violence with which Alf Bergan reports the match:

—Myler dusted the floor with him, says Alf. Heenan and Sayers was only a bloody fool to it. Handed him the father and mother of a beating. See the little kipper not up to his navel and the big fellow swiping. God, he gave him one last puck in the wind, Queensberry rules and all, made him puke what he never ate. (U 261)

Bloom, who does not show any interest in the sport, is once again an outsider both to the conversation generally and the homosocial activity of celebrating a national hero in a contest that can be viewed as the epitome of archaic masculine action. Instead, he constantly argues for the health benefits of lawn tennis, a distinctly English sport: “—What I meant about tennis, for example, is the agility and training the eye. [. . .] And Bloom cuts in again about lawn tennis and the circulation of the blood, asking Alf: —Now, don’t you think, Bergan?” (U 261). Bergan’s lack of an answer and the vulgar language in which he narrates the violence of the match estrange Bloom’s role within the narrative. Thereby the report of the boxing match further develops the antagonism between the Irish muscular, and in this case colonially defiant, body and Bloom, who “argu[es] for particular sports according to their individual and humanitarian use-value” (Cheng 206), not noticing that the support of the Irish against the English boxer is an eminently important gendered practice of Irish masculinity in this setting. Therefore, “Bloom’s questioning of the sports revival is seen to betray the nationalist cause in and through a failure of personal virility” (Valente “Neither fish nor flesh” 114). Vincent Cheng argues that Bloom “deplores violent sports, such as boxing, that just breed more violence and brutality” (207), which makes him in the eyes of the others metaphorically and literally soft, as has been argued above. In the end, it is Bloom’s support of the wrong body, which takes his own masculinity in question. He becomes the unmanly Other for the barflies, first, because he refuses to support physical violence, which they value as masculine, and, second, because he betrays the idolisation of *Irish* masculinity, as he supports an English sport. In a final twist, the passage

is also interspersed with references to Blazes Boylan, whose sexual prowess the barflies contrast with Bloom's cuckoldry. Yet, this example shows the complexity of the othering process, because Boylan is at the same time denigrated by the Citizen as "the traitor's son. We know what put English gold in his pocket" (*U* 261). Although not part of the textual construction of the body of Irish nationalism, Boylan in this process serves the barflies to question Bloom's virility further: "Hoho begob says I to myself says I. That explains the milk in the cocoanut and absence of hair on the animal's chest. Blazes doing the tootle on the flute. Concert tour. [. . .] That's the bucko that'll organise her [Molly], take my tip" (*U* 262).

As the examples in this discussion have shown, the narrative method in "Cyclops" makes no distinction between male body and masculine performance in the construction of Bloom's Otherness. Instead, the references, motifs and stories around the body constantly switch between the levels of sex and gender. The narrative's critique of masculinity focuses on the barflies' vain attempt to construct a "manliness [that] epitomizes the new national body purged of its racial impurity and its feminization" (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 91). This amalgamation of an idealised body, to which the Jewish Bloom serves as Other, uses various texts and stories referring to Gaelic culture, sports and national resistance. This construction is unstable, however, because it seeks to gain contour by variously distinguishing itself from either Bloom's masculine performance or his body. However, this conflation of levels of signification undermines its force and amounts to an anarchic proliferation of signs without clear context. This chaotic reiteration of signifiers functions both as a means to make this amalgamated body grotesque and to undermine its authenticity, because the only thing holding it together is its flawed antagonism to Bloom. Finally, by embedding these body parts in anecdotes and micro-narratives in the boozers' pub conversation, the narrative performatively undermines this idealised body, as, despite their endless discourse about sports and violence, all the barflies do is talk and drink: "then lifted he his rude great brawny strengthly hands the medher of dark strong foamy ale and, uttering his tribal slogan *Lamb Dearg Abu*, he drank to the undoing of his foes [. . .]" (*U* 267). Essentially, these barflies are static bodies paralysed by their fixation on drink, empty speech and stories about masculine bravado, and so it is a fitting ending of the

chapter that the tin box which the enraged Cyclops/Citizen throws at an escaping Bloom misses its mark (Valente “Neither fish nor flesh” 122).

* * *

While “Cyclops” is concerned with the opposition between an ideal heterosexual male body of Irish nationalism and the inadequate Jewish body of Leopold Bloom, “Circe” develops the problem of Bloom’s marginalised masculinity further by discussing the concept of sexual dimorphism as performative and theatrical. What initially looks like a subversive critique, when Bloom undergoes a sex-change to become the “new womanly man” (*U* 403), is actually an affirmation of this dimorphism because the staging of the sex-change is part of a greater narrative that constitutes an extended male masochist fantasy. In a counter-intuitive move Joyce predicates Bloom’s masochist desire on his male body, because it is only as a male that Bloom can he view himself as an inadequate and therefore worthy of punishment. From this perspective, all the talk of Bloom’s new womanliness, which the episode suggests, are red herrings to lead away from Bloom’s rather conservative, if perverse, view of the male body. I propose that “Circe” is predestined to demonstrate how masculinity and conceptions of the male body are produced through the stories we tell about them and through their embeddedness in stories from other contexts. The sex-change that Bloom ostensibly undergoes affirms rather than undermines the male body and Bloom’s maleness. The transformation itself is based on props which performatively construct his antagonist Bello, whereas the props of femininity with which Bloom is characterised actually mark his humiliation as a male subject rather than constituting his femaleness or a third sexual position. Both constructions are also conspicuously exposed as based on props, which need to be reiterated in order to be effective, but throughout this reiteration is flawed, as glimpses of Bloom’s male body frequently return to undermine the coherence of the sex-change.

First, I would like to have a closer look at the actual moment when Bloom and Bella Cohen seem to change sexes. In my reading, the actual transformation the two characters go through can paradoxically be construed as underlining the relevance of Bloom’s male body. This can be seen in the way the narrative highlights the

performativity of the stylised acts that constitute him as feminine. It should be noted in this context that the actual transformation is only discernible in the stage directions and not in any spectacular event in the plot. In a remarkably inconspicuous manner the stage directions suddenly refer to Bloom as female whereas his counterpart's name changes from Bella to Bello:

BELLO: Down! (*he taps her on the shoulder with his fan*) Incline feet forward! Slide left foot one pace back. You will fall. You are falling. On the hands down!

BLOOM: (*her eyes upturned in the sign of admiration, closing, yaps*) Truffles!
(*With a piercing epileptic cry she sinks on all fours, grunting, snuffling, rooting at his feet: then lies shamming dead with eyes shut tight, trembling eyelids, bowed upon the ground in the attitude of most excellent master.*) (U 433)¹⁴¹

The actual sex-change is “done” simply by referring to Bloom and Bello in a different way, which is a model example of performativity. The unobtrusive achievement of such a spectacular twist is furthermore covered by the fact that the reference to Bloom as a pig establishes an intertextual link to the Homeric model. (In the corresponding chapter of the *Odyssey*, Circe similarly transforms Odysseus's men into pigs.) The focus at this moment, therefore, lies on the motif of transformation in general. Looking at Bloom's antagonist, Bello, we can see that his new role, in turn, does not stress the characterisation of a male sex specifically. Bello's scant description rather emphasises a general otherness, as he now appears in the stage direction as wearing a kind of extravagant costume: “with bobbed hair, purple gills, fit moustache rings round his shaven mouth, in mountaineer's puttees, green silverbuttoned coat, sport skirt and alpine hat with moorcock's feather, his hands stuck deep in his breeches pockets, places his heel on her neck and grinds it in” (U 433). Marjorie Garber comments that this depiction “is not so much the portrait of a man, despite the male pronouns that now describe ‘him’, as it is the caricature of a mannish lesbian” (231). Indeed the stage directions hardly refer to the male sex in physical terms but rather to masculine props that stylise his body as male. This performance includes devouring a manly “breakfast of Matterson's fat hamrashers and a bottle of Guinness's porter”, puffing a “thumping good Stock Exchange cigar” and reading the newspaper for news of the stock

¹⁴¹ Stage directions in “Circe” are printed in italics throughout. I remove these for in-text citations to improve readability.

exchange and sports bets (*U* 434-35). Especially the latter two “images of capitalism” (Brivic 190)¹⁴² make it possible envision Bello as a male pimp terrorising Bloom. However, by listing the images in this unsubtle manner exposes them as what they are: fantastic props that refer to cultural ways of imagining sex and gender, which readers are meant to complete in their reading of the scene (cf. Herr, *Anatomy of Culture* 152). The violence that Bello levels at Bloom can be read in this way as well. Thus, Bello (“he”) slaps “her” on the face, twists “her” arms, and quenches “his” cigar on “her” ear. It is through repetition that these torturous acts generate the coherence of Bello’s image as pimp, which evokes a scene in which the female prostitute is performatively *manhandled* by her pimp.

As Judith Butler argues, however, in the repetition of those acts that aim at the constitution of a unified gender lies a potential for their failure to do so. Heterosexual identity, “requires to be instituted again and again, which is to say that it runs the risk of becoming *de*-instituted at every interval” (“Imitation” 131). In consequence, it is “an identity permanently at risk, for what if it fails to repeat, or if the very exercise of repetition is redeployed for a very different performative purpose?” (“Imitation” 103-31). This failure of repetition can be viewed in “Circe” on the narrative level as well, but the mode is employed for different purposes. Whereas for Butler this failure enables the possibility to redeploy signifiers for a queering of identities, in Joyce’s “Circe” the failure of repetition re-instates the heterosexual norm of two differentiated bodies by making the mere performativity of the sex-change transparent. At numerous points, therefore, the text loosens the grip of the performance and re-inserts Bloom’s male body into the action. This process can be seen, for instance, when Bello “squats with a grunt on Bloom’s upturned face, puffing cigarsmoke, nursing a fat leg” (*U* 434-5) and intends to ride him like a horse: “(he throws a leg astride and, pressing with horseman’s knees, calls in a hard voice) Gee up! A cockhorse to Banbury cross. I’ll ride him for the Eclipse stakes. (he bends sideways and squeezes his mount’s testicles roughly, shouting) Ho! Off we pop! [. . .]” (*U* 436). In this case, it is Bloom’s male testicles that return to the text to be squeezed in an act that highlight his humiliation

¹⁴² Osteen’s argument goes even further when he writes that “the whoremistress becomes both phallic mother and Jewish financial father; both personae illustrate the stereotypically ‘feminized’ sexuality and mercenary attitudes attributed to Jews at the time” (331). See also Garber (231-32).

as a male.¹⁴³ In a further example, it is Bloom himself who breaks the illusion of a true sex reversal, while Bello explicitly renders the role change a performative act:

BELLO: Well, I'm not. Wait. (*he holds in his breath*) Curse it. Here. This bung's about burst. (*he uncorks himself behind: then, contorting his features, farts stoutly*) Take that! (*he recorks himself*) Yes, by Jingo, sixteen three quarters.

BLOOM: (*a sweat breaking out over him*) Not man. (*he sniffs*) Woman.

BELLO: (*stands up*) No more blow hot and cold. What you longed for has come to pass. Henceforth you are unmanned and mine in earnest, a thing under the yoke. Now for your punishment frock. You will shed your male garments, you understand, Ruby Cohen? and don the shot silk luxuriously rustling over head and shoulders. And quickly too! (*U 436*)

For a brief moment, thus, Bloom has become male again (“him”) and identifies the smell of the other as unambiguously female. Furthermore, this breaking of the illusion of a sex-change is complemented by the explicitly performative character of the role reversal when Bello announces “Henceforth you are unmanned [. . .]” and punishes Bloom by making him change his clothes from “male garments” to a “shot silk”. Finally, when Bloom becomes one of Bello’s whores, the effeminising stylisation is again broken up by a male trait. First, Bello indicates with a gesture that Bloom is about to stylise his body in a feminine way to look as attractive as his other (female) whores: “As they are now so will you be, wigged, singed, perfumesprayed, ricepowdered, with smoothshaven armpits. [. . .]” (*U 437*). But then, the following stage direction presents Bloom as “charming soubrette with dauby cheeks, mustard hair and large male hands and nose, leering mouth” (*U 437*), and he confesses that he tried on his wife’s clothes before as well. This stylised performative makes Bloom one of Bello’s whores, including all the “theatrical props” (Herr, *Anatomy of Culture* 152) deemed necessary, and it “emphasize[s] the ‘bondage’ implicit in the social construction of femininity” (Rado 54). However, despite all this Bloom’s hands remain “large male hands”, thus reasserting his male sex, and he explains the earlier theatrical misdemeanour of wearing his wife’s clothes, which had seemed to take his masculinity in question, with his thriftiness as a husband in the face of economic necessity. As Joseph Allen Boone writes, “[r]ather than a complete change of sex, the change is actually one of pronouns and

¹⁴³ Cf. Osteen, who argues that “[p]ossessing the organs of both sexes, Bloom is less a transvestite than a hermaphrodite” (334).

costumes, of sexual roles” (“New Approach” 76), and Cheryl Herr goes even further when she writes that

In *Ulysses*, there is no spontaneous or separate ‘humanity’, no “fully human” androgyny; there is only a perpetual rising to textual consciousness of gender traits that became rigidly entrapping labels, packages, and norms reflecting the culture’s characteristic mechanism of binary encoding (male vs. female). *Ulysses* argues that sexuality is sheer theatre, at least on the social stage on which we dramatically construct the selves we play. (*Anatomy of Culture* 154; cf. Norris, “Disenchanting” 229; cf. Boone, “Staging Sexuality” 205)

These statements suggest that Joyce seems to prefigure Butler’s argument that gender constructs sex, yet these critics ignore the textual and narrative nature of these constructions. The citation of sexual markers has to be seen not just as a single event in the text but as, according to Butler, a continuous reiterative process of citation. It is in the citation of Bloom’s “large male hands” (*U* 437) that the process of repeated stylisation of the body is eventually broken up, which manifests a re-emphasis of the maleness of Bloom’s body.

The indication of Bloom’s body as male can equally be discerned in Bello’s constant berating of Bloom for his lack of masculine behaviour, which in turn performatively constitutes his body as male. Thus, for instance, Bloom is accused of sitting (rather than standing) while urinating, and when he defends himself against the charge that this behaviour is effeminate, he alleges that this action was part of a scientific experiment he was conducting. In reaction to this insufficient excuse, Bello challenges Bloom to behave in a more manly way: “(sternly) No insubordination! The sawdust is there in the corner for you. I gave you strict instructions, didn’t I? Do it standing, sir! I’ll teach you to behave like a jinkleman! If I catch a trace on your swaddles. [. . .]” (*U* 438, cf. Rado 50). Within a psychoanalytical framework that analyses merely the content of the episode we might say that through Bello Bloom’s “subconscious exacts its revenge, masochistically whipping him for his supposed failures [. . .]” as a Dublin male (Boone, “Staging Sexuality” 197). But this means to neglect the narrative subtleties of the passage: the pun on gentleman/jinkleman highlights the performative nature of gender and the fact that the repeated stylised acts which constitute the body are really ruses of symbolisation. As Gifford and Seidman note, the

word *jinkleman* can be translated as *trickster* or *cheater* (504), and in this way, *jinkleman* also points to the fact that Bloom's reversal itself is only a trick or a kind of cheating.

Furthermore, when in the following Bloom's "Sins Of The Past" are evoked and allowed to speak, they provide a series of sexual micro-narratives which are supposed to prove his perversity. Shechner writes that all these "are perverse sexual offenses, incomplete and furtive acts of infantile sexuality [. . .]" (Shechner 114), but he forgets to mention that they are also all strictly heterosexual:

THE SINS OF THE PAST: (in a medley of voices) He went through a form of clandestine marriage with at least one woman in the shadow of the Black church. Unspeakable messages he telephoned mentally to Miss Dunn at an address in D'Olier street while he presented himself indecently to the instrument in the callbox. By word and deed he frankly encouraged a nocturnal strumpet to deposit fecal and other matter in an unsanitary outhouse attached to empty premises. In five public conveniences he wrote pencilled messages offering his nuptial partner to all strongmembered males. And by the offensively smelling vitriol works did he not pass night after night by loving courting couples to see if and what and how much he could see? Did he not lie in bed, the gross boar, gloating over a nauseous fragment of wellused toilet paper presented to him by a nasty harlot, stimulated by gingerbread and a postal order? (U 438)

These sins of the past are actually performative in that the telling of those sexual secrets is itself a form of sexual practice combining confessional and pornographic narrative (Lamos, *Deviant Modernism* 151). Furthermore, many of Bloom's depravations include an explicitly anal focus, but as Colleen Lamos argues, they are never brought into the realm of sodomy but are embedded in a heterosexual framework: "The discourse that pretends to show all, and that tells it as horribly and delightfully unspeakable, nonetheless discreetly veils the scene of Bloom's sodomy" (Lamos, *Deviant Modernism* 152).¹⁴⁴ It is this homosexual gap in the texture of his tribulations which, finally, enables Bello to blackmail Bloom and force him to become one of his whores, as otherwise he will make Bloom's sins public.¹⁴⁵ This threat emasculates Bloom again in gross terms, but it also conversely casts Bello/Bella in the role of "mistress", who

¹⁴⁴ We should be wary of closing off passages in "Circe" by reducing them to a single discourse, though, as Brown notes (*Joyce and Sexuality* 88).

¹⁴⁵ It thereby echoes the trials of Oscar Wilde, in which blackmail played a central role as well. See chapter 3 of Arata's *Fictions of Loss* and chapter 9 of Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy* for discussions of the Wilde trials.

is now set to “own” Bloom after a mock wedding to make him a domestic slave for the degrading chores in the brothel:

BELLO: (*satirically*) By day you will souse and bat our smelling underclothes also when we ladies are unwell, and swab out our latrines with dress pinned up and a dishclout tied to your tail. Won't that be nice? (he places a ruby ring on her finger) And there now! With this ring I thee own. Say, thank you, mistress.

BLOOM: Thank you, mistress. (U 439)

The marriage declaration is a classic instance of a performative in that it linguistically enacts that which it refers to. Similarly, Bloom's alleged femaleness is equally shown to be merely a performative enactment.¹⁴⁶

In what follows this mock wedding, Bloom's markers of sex seem to change completely as he acquires a vulva, which Bello penetrates with his fist to display his domination of Bloom. But even this most drastic example of Bloom's seeming change of sex has a performative quality, as it is embedded in a narrative framework which points to its own textuality. First, Bello again refers to degrading chores that Bloom will have to do in his new role at the brothel as “Miss Ruby”: he will have to “make the beds, get my tub ready, empty the pisspots in the different rooms, including old Mrs Keogh's the cook's, a sandy one. Ay, and rinse the seven of them well, mind, or lap it up like champagne. Drink me piping hot. Hop!” (U 439). These chores are meant, however, to remind Bloom of his failure as a man, not to make him literally a woman: “You will dance attendance or I'll lecture you on your misdeeds, Miss Ruby, and spank your bare bot right well, miss, with the hairbrush. You'll be taught the error of your ways” (U 439). These sentences unambiguously point to Bloom's misdeeds as a man. Therefore, the following most radical change, in which Bloom is sold on the market before being penetrated by Bello, should be read in this mode as well:

At night your wellcreamed braceletted hands will wear fortythreebutton gloves newpowdered with talc and having delicately scented fingertips. For such favours knights of old laid down their lives. (he chuckles) My boys will be no end charmed to see you so ladylike, the colonel, above all, when they come here the night before the wedding to fondle my new attraction in gilded heels. First I'll have a go at you myself. A man I know on the turf named Charles Alberta Marsh (I was in bed with him just now and another gentleman out of the Hanaper and Petty Bag office) is on the lookout for a maid of all work at

¹⁴⁶ For discussions of Bello taking possession of Bloom through this mock marriage, see Osteen (332), Lamos (*Deviant Modernism* 111) and Black (75-6).

a short knock. Swell the bust. Smile. Droop shoulders. What offers? (he points)
For that lot. Trained by owner to fetch and carry, basket in mouth. (he bares
his arm and plunges it elbowdeep in Bloom's vulva) There's fine depth for you!
What, boys? That give you a hardon? (he shoves his arm in a bidder's face)
Here wet the deck and wipe it round! (U 439-40)

First, it has to be noted that Bloom becomes both woman and animal at the same time. The implication is, of course, that in a patriarchal setting like the brothel, which can be seen to stand in emblematic relation to patriarchy as such, women are dehumanised and treated as if they were cattle with no rights of their own to their bodies or will.¹⁴⁷ Margot Norris comments that “[e]voking Circe’s animal transformations, the Bello section pornographically glosses other cruel or degrading systems of human domination, including slavery, but particularly animal domestication: breaking in riding horses, slaughtering pig, milking cows, and the like” (“Disenchanted” 233). This palimpsest of several discourses is important for the dynamics of the passage, but by undervaluing the narrative aspects of this “gloss[ing]”, we cannot properly understand how the fantasy works.

The imaginations in which Bloom becomes animal and woman have a narrative quality, in which the body assumes forms within a dramatic plot. For instance, the reference to his feminine attire, the “wellcreamed braceleted hands will wear fortythreebutton gloves newpowdered with talc and having delicately scented fingertips”, are used to enhance his value in the brothel as a newly arrived prostitute. This subjection is embedded in a fairy tale-like heterosexual mini-plot, when Bello adds that “[f]or such favours knights of old laid down their lives”. This plot is set to humiliate Bloom further, because he is not manly like those knights, as Bello thereby implies. Later in the same passage, Bloom’s acquisition of the female genital, is embedded in the auctioning plot in which Bloom is “sold” to male bidders. But already Bello’s instructions to Bloom to “Swell the bust. Smile. Droop shoulders” all highlight the performative character of his alleged female sex, as those instructions are intended to emphasise and therefore naturalise the body through gendered behaviour, a process which Pierre Bourdieu calls “*hexis*” (MD 64, cf. 7-17, 22-30). Within this auctioning plot, the

¹⁴⁷ Cf. also the subsequent rendering of Bloom as cattle: “Rockbottom figure and cheap at the price. Fourteen hands high. Touch and examine shis points. Handle hrim. This downy skin, these soft muscles, this tender flesh. If I had only my gold piercer here! And quite easy to milk. Three newlaid gallons a day. A pure stockgetter, due to lay within the hour. [. . .]” (U 440).

fantastic sex change in which Bello violates Bloom's "vulva" is merely an intensification of the signifiers of his humiliation: first, the reversal indicates "Bloom's anxiety about being feminized", on a larger scale, however, it exposes "the source of those anxieties in a system of values that associates being feminine with being a slave—sexual and otherwise" (Rado 54).¹⁴⁸ All in all, the narrative around which the sex-change of Bloom and Bello is ordered, highlights the performative character of this change, while it maintains Bloom's male sex to humiliate him in a gender reversal. Effectively, Bloom thus becomes a male transgender prostitute, a special attraction in the ensemble of Bella Cohen's brothel.

The notion that the alleged change of sexes is rather a performative fantasy which actually underlines the solidness of the male body, as I argued so far, can be supported with a series of narrative instances in the episode which are related to the Bella/Bello scene and which further stress the return of sexual dimorphism. Noting the episode's estranging repetition of motifs from earlier in the novel, Daniel Ferrer has argued that "Circe" works like "a distorting mirror, one of those disquieting contraptions which introduce difference in the very place where one is seeking confirmation of one's identity", which may be taken to explain the constant "fusion, within each image, of the strange and the familiar" (129). With a look at the episode's discussion of sex and gender, the reverse is true as well: the stranger the image in one place, the more mundane and less subversive its supplement at another point in the chapter. In this way, the pseudo-transsexual passage, which was discussed so far, is prepared earlier in two passages which more clearly uphold sexual dimorphism. I discuss these together with the fantasy in which Bloom watches Boylan and Molly to demonstrate that the performative transsexual passage is embedded in a narrative web of signification which firmly and unambiguously upholds a heteronormative framework.

For instance, the scene in which Bloom is declared "the new womanly man" (*U* 403) and gives birth to eight children, can be taken as primary evidence of Bloom's androgyny (cf. Reizbaum 232), but a closer look reveals that this scene rather upholds male power. Just before that fantasy, Bloom becomes "the world's greatest reformer" (*U* 392) and the ruler of a utopian society called "new Bloomusalem" (*U* 395). In this

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Lamos, who argues that "Circe" generally avoids portraying Bloom as a sodomite, here specifically by giving him female genitals when penetrated by phallic Bello (*Deviant Modernism* 143).

passage, he performs all kinds of improvements on contemporary society and various feats of heroism. After that, however, his rule is overshadowed by scandals, which provoke his citizens to turn against him. In order to redeem himself, Bloom evokes “my old friend, Dr Malachi Mulligan, sex specialist, to give medical testimony on my behalf” (U 402). Employing the language and theories of popular sexologists like Richard von Krafft-Ebing (Brown, *Joyce and Sexuality* 86-88; Rado 44; Lamos, *Deviant Modernism* 154), Dr Mulligan diagnoses that “Dr Bloom is bisexually abnormal” (U 402), and a colleague, Dr Dixon, further declares:

Professor Bloom is a finished example of the new womanly man. His moral nature is simple and lovable. Many have found him a dear man, a dear person. He is a rather quaint fellow on the whole, coy though not feeble-minded in the medical sense. [. . .] I appeal for clemency in the name of the most sacred word our vocal organs have ever been called upon to speak. He is about to have a baby. (U 403)

The diagnosis produces the “new womanly man”, but it equally establishes Bloom’s status as a male prostitute. The language used here comprises various different sexual and other discourses, but two of them are most relevant for this discussion. As Tracey Schwarze suggests, the diagnosis represents a mixture of the jargon of “the brothel keeper’s medical cohort” with that of “government-sponsored public health examinations of the prostitute” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 109). This ironic blurring of discourses, however, results in a “collapse of these two examinations onto one another”: the production of prostitution in the one is shown to be the “ironic counterpart” of that discourse that wants to regulate it (*Joyce and the Victorians* 109). This irony itself destabilises the diagnosis of Bloom’s womanliness while, at the same time, it furthermore shows the investment of the whole episode to establish Bloom’s status as a transgender prostitute, which eventually retains his maleness even if his gender is feminine.

The farcical rendering of Bloom’s giving birth to “eight male yellow and white children” (U 403) completes the scene and rehabilitates Bloom provisionally after his citizens have turned against him. The boys’ imagined careers indicate a claim to hegemonic masculinity: not only are they “handsome, with valuable metallic faces, wellmade, respectably dressed and wellconducted, speaking five modern languages fluently and interested in various arts and sciences”, they also aspire to the higher

strata of society, occupying “positions of high public trust in several different countries as managing directors of banks, traffic managers of railways, chairmen of limited liability companies, vicechairmen of hotel syndicates” (U 403).¹⁴⁹ The fact that Bloom produces only boys indicates an investment in the structure of patriarchy (Black 72), which ties in with the fact that Bloom is left not as a happy mother, but as an enigmatic patriarch of the Old Testament:

A VOICE: Bloom, are you the Messiah ben Joseph or ben David?

BLOOM: (*Darkly.*) You have said it. (U 403-04)

This transformation from an expecting mother to a mysterious patriarch, thus continues the “phallogocentric utopian desire” (McGee 122) that had characterised his fantasy of a New Bloomusalem in the first place, and, thus, puts the claim of Bloom’s androgyny into a doubtful perspective (Black 72; cf. Rado 44-45).

As we have seen in the scene of submission to Bello, the narrative still maintains Bloom’s male sex, and the signifying movements to the female sex are strategically chosen to trigger specific effects. Here, in the context of Bloom’s fantasy of omnipotence as the ruler of his New Bloomusalem, his alleged medical androgyny plot-wise serves to testify to his harmlessness while his pseudo-motherhood paradoxically makes him the patriarch in a line of successful male successors. More importantly even, the scene can be read as celebrating the male authority of medical discourse. When considered together as institutions that produce Bloom’s alleged sexual transformation, the link between Bella/o and Dr Mulligan/Dixon establishes an analogy between the “representative[s] of a male medical establishment” and Homeric Circe as “the traditional threatening aspect of the goddess” (Scott, *James Joyce* 93). While it is true that Mulligan, Dixon and the other medical students are not seen in a particularly positive light throughout the novel, their pseudo-scientific explanations are very much in line with Bloom’s own scientific mind, which he has been flaunting throughout the day. Mulligan lectures about Bloom’s medical history in pseudo-scientific jargon, which mixes rational explanation with grotesque interpretation:

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Walkley’s reading of this passage in the context of the anthropological concept of the “couvade”, the male ritual assumption of childbearing. Brown speculates that the number eight is an echo of Bloom’s thoughts in “Hades” about John O’Connell, another Irish patriarch, who fathered eight children as well (*Joyce and Sexuality* 104).

Born out of bedlock hereditary epilepsy is present, the consequence of unbridled lust. Traces of elephantiasis have been discovered among his ascendants. There are marked symptoms of chronic exhibitionism. Ambidexterity is also latent. He is prematurely bald from selfabuse, perversely idealistic in consequence, a reformed rake, and has metal teeth. In consequence of a family complex he has temporarily lost his memory and I believe him to be more sinned against than sinning. (*U* 402)

This discourse sounds very similar to Bloom's scientific reasoning earlier, especially when he considers the mysteries of human sexuality, and the last line, "more sinned against than sinning", is actually a textual echo from Gerty MacDowell's thoughts about Bloom in "Nausicaa" (*U* 293). In the latter episode Bloom rationalises sexual attraction and his wife's adultery in a style very echoing the one of Dr Mulligan above:

Back of everything magnetism. Earth for instance pulling this and being pulled. That causes movement. [. . .] Magnetic needle tells you what's going on in the sun, the stars. Little piece of steel iron. When you hold out the fork. Come. Come. Tip. Woman and man that is. Fork and steel. Molly, he. Dress up and look and suggest and let you see and see more and defy you if you're a man to see that and, like a sneeze coming, legs, look, look and if you have any guts in you. (*U* 306)

By establishing thus a textual echo, the possession and flaunting of medical knowledge becomes a male matter with positive connotations. Although Bloom's speculations often serve to make fun of him, they equally contribute to the quirkiness of his character, which sets him apart from other male characters in the novel. Furthermore, phrases like "He is prematurely bald from selfabuse, perversely idealistic in consequence" stress an unusual and comic version of masculinity exactly by employing modes of stylisation of the body through gender.

A second preparatory scene for Bloom's transformation can be found in the occurrence of Bloom's grandfather Lipoti Virag. Virag structurally serves both as a double of Bello (McGee 129, Osteen 330) and of Bloom (Shechner 110-11; Osteen 329), but he is even more important here because he represents the possession of sexual knowledge, which stresses male power on the basis of sexual dimorphism. Thus, he is figured as a variation of the male gaze that ogles and judges the female body. His entry is both serious and vulgar: "My name is Virag Lipoti, of Szombathely. (He coughs thoughtfully, drily) Promiscuous nakedness is much in evidence hereabouts, eh?" (*U* 417). He continues to assess the whores Zoe, Kitty and Florry in terms

of their attractiveness, especially with regard to Bloom's kinks: "Inadvertently her backview revealed the fact that she is not wearing those rather intimate garments of which you are a particular devotee. The injection mark on the thigh I hope you perceived? Good" (U 417). His discourse in these judgements is objectifying and views the whores as "commodities" (Osteen 329; cf. Norris, "Disenchanting" 236-37): "Well then, permit me to draw your attention to item number three" (U 418). More important than this sexual-materialistic talk is that Virag's style is covered in the guise of pseudo-scientific objectivity:

Obviously mammal in weight of bosom you remark that she has in front well to the fore two protuberances of very respectable dimensions, inclined to fall in the noonday soupplate, while on her rere lower down are two additional protuberances, suggestive of potent rectum and tumescent for palpation, which leave nothing to be desired save compactness. (U 418)

This objectivity is furthermore given the coat of medical authority, as he refers in his lectures to "the seventeenth book of my Fundamentals of Sexology or the Love Passion which Doctor L.B. says is the book sensation of the year" (U 420). In this capacity as an eminent sexologist, Virag resembles Bloom with both his pseudo-scientific sexual theories and literary ambitions (Shechner 111), but, more importantly, he also comically dramatizes heteronormative dimorphism (cf. Lamos, *Deviant Modernism* 155). Hearing from the whore Zoe that two nights ago one of her customers was revealed to be a priest, Virag begins a lecture on the naturalness of the priest's sexual desire, citing literature as evidence and provides a crude allegorical narrative which illustrates what he lays out as the basic principles of heterosexual attraction:

VIRAG: Perfectly logical from his standpoint. Fall of man. (harshly, his pupils waxing) To hell with the pope! Nothing new under the sun. I am the Virag who disclosed the Sex Secrets of Monks and Maidens. Why I left the church of Rome. Read the Priest, the Woman and the Confessional. Penrose. Flipperty Jippert. (he wriggles) Woman, undoing with sweet pudor her belt of rushrope, offers her allmoist yoni to man's lingam. Short time after man presents woman with pieces of jungle meat. Woman shows joy and covers herself with feather-skins. Man loves her yoni fiercely with big lingam, the stiff one. (he cries) *Co-actus volui*. Then giddy woman will run about. Strong man grasps woman's wrist. Woman squeals, bites, spucks. Man, now fierce angry, strikes woman's fat yadgana. [. . .] (U 423-24)

As the possessor of sexual knowledge, Patrick McGee writes, Virag knows "the secret of sexual difference – the secret that there is no secret [. . .]" (127). The enigmatic

nature of sexual knowledge is based on its constitution through narrative as a sense-making tool.¹⁵⁰ This narrative celebration of the male phallus and its power over the female sex therefore effectively claims the inevitability of heteronormative sexuality and the complementarity of male and female bodies. And, indeed, “[i]t is difficult”, as Patrick McGee comments, “to say whether these words are merely obscene or the uneuphemized truth of sexuality, of a sexual economy founded on domination, on force and power, on material dependency” (127). Within the overall framework of “Circe” this bizarre tale naturalises heterosexuality and thereby supports my claim that Bloom’s sex-change actually maintains his male sex. Ironically, it does so, too, by being embedded in Zoe’s anecdote of the priest. Thus, the natural male body is also exposed as naturally limited and frail:

LYNCH: I hope you gave the good father a penance. Nine glorias for shooting a bishop.

ZOE: (*Spouts walrus smoke through her nostrils.*) He couldn’t get a connection. Only, you know, sensation. A dry rush. (U 424)

The priest’s lack of sexual power, his failure to achieve an erection (“connection”), results in “[a] dry rush”, that is, “sexual intercourse without emission (or, as in this case, without intromission)” (Gifford and Seidman 497). In this way, Virag’s archetypal heterosexual narrative is undermined by the mundane limitations of the male body.¹⁵¹ Heteronormative morphology is, however, reinstated, and thus the bizarre passage manifests another counter-narrative against Bloom’s so-called androgynous transformation.

Finally, Bloom’s masochist fantasy focussing on Blazes Boylan and Bloom’s wife Molly acts as yet another such counter-narrative. Here, the male body is celebrated through the masochistically admiring gaze of Bloom, who uses Boylan’s sexualised and powerful body as a surrogate for his own inadequacy. Its status as a narrative is corroborated by the fact that, as Frances Restuccia has shown, many of the details are intertextually related to another famous narrative of submission, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus im Pelz* (*Law of the Father* 134; cf. Rado 47-59). Initially, the

¹⁵⁰ See chapter 3.1 for a discussion of narrative’s properties as a sense-making tool. Cf. also the role of narrative in the smuggling incident in *A Portrait*, see chapter 4.4.

¹⁵¹ Cf. more generally his sexually ambiguous name Virag and his status as a patriarch of writing, a “basilicogrammate” (McGee 125; Herr, *Anatomy of Culture* 138; Osteen 329).

passage already introduces references to male and female sexual anatomy: in the bawdy introductory dialogue between Boylan and Lenehan, the latter's earlier remark "Haw haw have you the horn?" (U 460) refers to Boylan's sexual prowess, as does the question "Were you brushing the cobwebs off a few quims?" (U 460). In the ensuing masochist fantasy, Bloom shows himself as a distinctly submissive male. In this role, he dons a "flunkey's prune plush coat and kneebreeches, buff stockings and powdered wig" (U 461), and furthermore he buttresses Boylan's endeavour to have sex with Molly:

BOYLAN: (*tosses him sixpence*) Here, to buy yourself a gin and splash. (he hangs his hat smartly on a peg of Bloom's antlered head) Show me in. I have a little private business with your wife, you understand?

BLOOM: Thank you, sir. Yes, sir. Madam Tweedy is in her bath, sir. (U 461)

Bloom thus remains male, and he actually has to be male to fulfil his role as a cuckold, even though he casts himself in a submissive position vis-à-vis his nemesis Blazes Boylan. His status is that of the voyeur, to which his wife Molly herself condemns him and which is verbalised by both Boylan and Bloom:

MARION: Let him look, the pishogue! Pimp! And scourge himself! [. . .]

BOYLAN: (*to Bloom, over his shoulder*) You can apply your eye to the keyhole and play with yourself while I just go through her a few times.

BLOOM: Thank you, sir. I will, sir. May I bring two men chums to witness the deed and take a snapshot? (*he holds out an ointment jar*) Vaseline, sir? Orange-flower...? Lukewarm water...? (U 461-62)

The male body is equally emphasised in Boylan's virility as sexual predator. The adulterer is thereby reduced to his sexual organs: "BOYLAN: (clasps himself) Here, I can't hold this little lot much longer. (he strides off on stiff cavalry legs)" (U 461). Finally, Bloom's viewing position enables him to participate vicariously and surreptitiously in the act: "BLOOM: (his eyes wildly dilated, clasps himself) Show! Hide! Show! Plough her! More! Shoot!" (U 462). On the level of content, Bloom's imagining of his own sexual betrayal helps him to compensate for his "own lack of prowess" and punish himself "by reducing pleasure to vicarious participation", which can be seen to present him as "a victim of the demands and limitations of the prescribed male role" (Boone, "New Approach" 78). On the level of discourse, the narrative implication of the scene

is a more fundamental one, as Boone acknowledges in a later article where he elaborates that the episode stages desire in such a way that the sexual becomes textual and exists only in narrative form (“Staging Sexuality” 200). In this way, this counter-narrative produces Bloom as “Peeping Tom cuckold to the nocturnal escapades of Blazes and Molly” (Rado 55), and, rather than developing and maintaining the fantasy of an androgynous hero, it shows “how much Bloom does *not* change” (Rado 54, my emphasis).

“Circe”, writes Daniel Ferrer, “is both a magic lantern, producing phantasies whose function is to consolidate the Self, by concealing reality or filling in its flaws, without ever mingling with it, and an infernal machine which destroys identities and shatters reality” (130). The passages relevant for the discussion of Bloom’s sex-change therefore fittingly end with Bloom’s identification with the fantastic image of Shakespeare in a mirror: “(Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.)” (*U* 463). Cuckolded, but distinctly male, Bloom’s masochism finally ends with his identification with Shakespeare as a compensation for the (sexual) impotence he suffers through Molly’s adultery.¹⁵² This identification finally consolidates, rather than “shatters”, the “reality” of Bloom’s male sex, which concludes the arguments made so far. Spectacular as it is, “Circe” takes the discussion of the relationship between the male body and masculinity in *Ulysses* one step further. Written in dramatic form, the episode dramatises first and foremost the performative character of gender in the construction of sex. But rather than subverting the seeming naturalness and coherence of the male body, “Circe” conserves its unity by leaving Bloom’s maleness intact throughout, even in the seemingly most subversive passages. Paradoxically, it is “Circe’s” sex-change scene which solidifies the male body in the episode. By highlighting the performative character of the narrative techniques with which this sex-change is brought about, “Circe” undermines the subversive potential of that scene. My argument is not that Bloom’s temporary transformation is only a masquerade. It is rather the distinction between performativity and performance which is relevant for understanding how Bloom’s male body is never at

¹⁵² For more detailed discussions of this scene refer to French (*Book as World* 191), MacCabe (87), Osteen (343-45) and Ferrer (129-30).

risk of being undone, as it is reintroduced exactly at those points when the sex-change seems most pervasive, whereas Bello's transformation is shown to be relying on gendered props for its assumed coherence. Finally, sexual dimorphism is further stressed in three micro-narratives which further elaborate on the previous arguments by developing his masochism as a form of heterosexual performance that necessitates his maleness. "Circe" is a radical discussion of gender and sex in dramatic form, which often employs mini-narratives to achieve various theatrical effects. A closer look at those discussions and the narrative means they employ reveals, however, that the chapter presents a rather conventional gendered power structure and assessment of the body. Rather than performing sex reversals, the chapter shows the transformation to be a spectacularly parodic re-citation of gender and sex. In the end, it can be speculated that the chapter foregrounds Joyce's "own literary prowess" and his "fascination with the mechanisms of textual mastery" (Boone, "Staging Sexuality" 202, 204), rather than a genuinely radical assessment of the production of the male body through gender.

* * *

With reference to the Homeric parallel, Molly's monologue has frequently been viewed as a textual thread that she spins for her Odysseus, her husband Leopold Bloom, who will thereby be able to return home from his voyages. Because of the sexually explicit nature of Molly's frank and uncensored thought process, her textual thread has often been put into the context of discussions about sexuality and gender. In this way, Margaret Mills Harper for instance argues that "[i]n 'Penelope' the gendered nature of narrative and the artificiality of gender are put on show, in a performance that reveals actors and spectators alike" (256). Since my own approach in this study similarly views masculinity/manliness as a narrative fabric, I would like to end my discussion of masculinity in Joyce by looking at "Penelope" and Molly's engagement with narratives of masculinity as they pertain to various aspects of the male body. As Christine van Boheemen argues, the episode, "characterized by its unpunctuated flow of feminine speech, is the *locus* of the invention of what we now call 'gender', the understanding of sexual difference as inscription and style, rather than an ontological

essence” (“Molly’s Heavenly Body” 268). To complement my discussion of the male body so far, I will therefore conclude by looking at these inscriptions and styles, not least because Joyce’s use of the stream of consciousness method in “Penelope” promises new insights into the fluidity with which masculinity is constructed through narrative threads. Molly’s thoughts move quickly and without clear reference from topic to topic and, similarly, from male character to male character. Sometimes this fluidity creates unclear references, sometimes it makes definite statements about one male character, only to apply this to another one in the following. At the centre of her thoughts is the dichotomy between her husband, Bloom, and her lover, Boylan, and her judgements and assessments of these males, and their bodies, change radically during her monologue, creating a form of narrative instability. These variable imaginations have been read as either the indication of Joyce’s derogatory view of women’s way of thinking (Unkeless 155) or, more positively, as Molly’s “ability to strike varying poses of womanliness and to parrot varying attitudes toward social myths and institutions” (Devlin, “Pretending” 83). In her consideration of these male characters, Molly focuses mostly on sexuality or sexual performance, but these thoughts and internal negotiations are also founded on a complex and ambiguous image of the male body, which has not been addressed yet in criticism. I will argue that in Molly’s deliberations about what can be done with and performed by the male body, she produces an image of the male sex that shifts uneasily between a sexually powerful and imposing image, on the one hand, and a frail and lacking one, on the other hand. As “a daring display and an unsettling exposé of gender construction” (Harper 246), the chapter suggests ways in which notions about masculinity produce perception and evaluation of the male body by embedding it in narratives about the embodied self. Her method of imagining the male body through narrative is finally exemplified at the end of the episode when her memory of Bloom’s and her falling in love during a picnic on the Hill of Howth induces her to embrace the fallibility of the male body in Bloom.¹⁵³ The changes in her imagination of the male body are therefore not expressions of Molly’s

¹⁵³ Cf. Devlin’s reading, which points to Molly’s way of viewing “human behaviour as dramaturgical performance, dictated by putative gender ‘traits’” (“Pretending” 81). Devlin focuses on the “[t]heatricity” which dominates Molly’s perception of herself and others and which “undermines the notion of womanliness as it displays it” (“Pretending” 81, 82). In contrast, my reading concentrates on the performative nature of the narrative itself with regard to the male body and masculinity.

incoherence, but by creating the illusion of an incoherent mind, the text highlights the performative and arbitrary nature of the gendered stylisation of the male body.

A discussion of the male body in “Penelope” must first of all acknowledge that Molly’s thoughts that night are directly influenced by the sexual encounters with Blazes Boylan on that afternoon on 16 June 1904. The body is therefore primarily a sexual body in Molly’s imagination, and it is furthermore first and foremost Boylan’s body that represents this sexual body. However, her considerations of Boylan’s hypermasculine corporeality also trigger comparisons to other bodies and more generalised views about male sexuality and sexual dimorphism. As Richard Brown writes, Molly’s judgments about gender occur “in the context of heterosexual activity where such gendered constructions might usually be thought to be at their most unproblematical and ‘natural’” (“When in doubt” 152). The first angle from which she views Boylan’s body is, accordingly, that of his sexual prowess. Already before, in the “Circe” chapter, the reader’s awareness is prepared for Boylan’s highly sexual physicality:

BELLO: (*sarcastically*) I wouldn’t hurt your feelings for the world but there’s a man of brawn in possession there. The tables are turned, my gay young fellow! He is something like a fullgrown outdoor man. [. . .] He shot his bolt, I can tell you! Foot to foot, knee to knee, belly to belly, bubs to breast! He’s no eunuch.” (U 441)

The vulgar and excessive virility with which Bloom’s antagonist is characterised by the brothel owner Bello’s is certainly an overly exaggerated style intended to humiliate Bloom and to dramatise his masochist fantasy, as discussed in the last chapter. However, there are echoes of this description in “Penelope” as well, which are developed, however, in a more subtle manner. A textual resonance occurs for instance in Molly’s narrative memory of an early flirtation with Boylan that suddenly comes up in her mind. Dwelling on a single detail, she remembers noting Boylan’s body for the first time: “the night Boylan gave my hand a great squeeze going along by the Tolka in my hand there steals another I just pressed the back of his like that with my thumb to squeeze back singing the young May moon shes beaming love because he has an idea about him and me hes not such a fool [. . .]” (U 609-10). The obvious contrast between the two scenes is of course the style, as Bello’s vulgarity starkly contrasts with Molly’s colloquial but ultimately innocent way of relating the anecdote. Connected to the

different styles, a contrast also exists because Bello uses the shocking revelation about the affair to humiliate Bloom, while Molly implies that he already knows and even credits him for sensing it (“hes not such a fool”). Similarly, the explicit description of Boylan as a “man of brawn” and sexual invader of Bloom’s house in Bello’s discourse is significantly toned down in Molly’s reminiscence about Boylan’s “great squeeze” of her hand.¹⁵⁴ And yet, this innocuousness gesture can be seen as an attempted conquest, too, as Boylan is eager to take momentary “possession” of Molly’s body, which echoes Bello’s gleeful announcement that this “man of brawn” has invaded and permanently occupied his house and bed.¹⁵⁵ The narrative of “Penelope” thus creates repetitions and echoes of short narrative units which complement each other to elaborate and qualify the image of the sexualised male body in practice.

This echo of the scene from “Circe” is only preparatory, however, for Molly’s less subtle considerations of Boylan as a “fullgrown outdoor man” (*U* 441). Thinking about her sexual engagements with Boylan, Molly contemplates his anatomy, which she makes responsible for her sexual satisfaction, and which she embeds in various smaller narrative units:

he must have come 3 or 4 times with that tremendous big red brute of a thing he has I thought the vein or whatever the dickens they call it was going to burst though his nose is not so big after I took off all my things with the blinds down after my hours dressing and perfuming and combing it like iron or some kind of a thick crowbar standing all the time he must have eaten oysters I think a few dozen he was in great singing voice no I never in all my life felt anyone had one the size of that to make you feel full up he must have eaten a whole sheep after [. . .] (*U* 611)

Boylan’s sexualised body takes centre stage in this excerpt which renders his conquest¹⁵⁶ of Molly’s body in explicit terms. While the narrative primarily emphasises the enormousness of Boylan’s anatomy, it would be too reductive to simply characterise this as only a “language of pornographic fantasy” (Henke, *Politics of Desire* 127). Molly’s

¹⁵⁴ The sexual connotation of “squeezed” was already noted in my discussion of “Two Gallants” in chapter 6.2; cf. also a later reference to “squeeze” in “Penelope” (*U* 627).

¹⁵⁵ This conquest is further suggested by the intrusion of the two love songs, in which the word *steals* effectively prefigures the adultery. See Bazargan’s discussion of Molly’s recontextualisation of music, for which Bazargan uses different examples (132).

¹⁵⁶ van Boheemen points to the fact that in Joyce’s notesheets for the chapter we find indications of his own colonialist conception of Molly’s body: “her cunt, darkest Africa” (qtd. in Boheemen, “Molly’s Heavenly Body” 269).

descriptions of Boylan's penis can be seen as pornographic, but they are also imaginative fantasies that have actions attached to them ("standing all the time", "the vein or whatever the dickens they call it was going to burst") which help to illustrate and come to terms with Boylan's anatomy through basic forms of emplotment (cf. Shechner 222; cf. Nolan 179). The impression of a celebration of his enormous sexual potency is achieved by using narrative elements which are attempts to make sense of his excessive prowess. Conspicuous is, for instance, the relationship Molly establishes between Boylan's eating habits and his potency: eating oysters, she speculates, must be the reason for his virility and, reversing cause and effect of that mini narrative, she speculates that his prodigious sexual activity has in turn made him even more hungry ("he must have eaten a whole sheep after"). A further story-like element concerns her circumscriptions for the word *penis*. In later parts of her discourse, there is no taboo on referring to the word *cock* (U 638), but here the word *thing* is used instead, which suggests a form of semantic censoring. This notion is immediately revoked, however, by attaching actions to it, which transform his organ into a "tremendous big red brute of a thing he has" and "some kind of a thick crowbar standing all the time". Both phrases imply Boylan's action, attitude and endurance during intercourse with her, and while they do not form proper narratives, they point to the narrative memory of their sexual encounter. Thereby, these narrative imaginations are no moments of circumventing censorship, but to the contrary their narrative suggestiveness is even more explicit and offensive than the slang word *cock* later on.¹⁵⁷ So, rather than exemplifying Molly's evasions of a taboo word, those phrases function to begin a web of narrative signifiers which fabricates Boylan's image as the "man of brawn" that was begun earlier with the reference to Boylan squeezing her hand (cf. Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 172-73).

Inevitably, Molly compares Boylan to Bloom, who, unsurprisingly, is depicted as less brawny. She first contrasts Bloom's frustrating sexual deviance with the satisfaction she gained from the encounter with Boylan. She focuses thereby on Bloom's alleged softness and his lack of youthful virility. For example, early in her monologue, Molly speculates about her husband's doings during the day. She considers the

¹⁵⁷ Note also that, with typical Joycean playfulness, the word *dick* has inconspicuously entered the discourse already as well: "I thought the vein or whatever the *dickens* they call it was going to burst" (U 611, my emphasis).

possibility that he has an affair, too, and suspects that the woman tries to exploit him financially:

so very probably that was it to somebody who thinks she has a softy in him because all men get a bit like that at his age especially getting on to forty he is now so as to wheedle any money she can out of him no fool like an old fool and then the usual kissing my bottom was to hide it not that I care two straws now who he does it with [. . .] (*U* 609)

Bloom's alleged softness, which echoes the notions voiced by the barflies in "Cyclops" discussed earlier (*U* 259), but also his deviant sexual preference noted here contrast him with Boylan's hardened hypermasculinity. Furthermore, there is a notion of defiance in Molly's thoughts when she wants Bloom to know about the affair and Boylan's superiority as a lover, and she (correctly) assumes that Bloom would achieve masochistic pleasure from this information: "Ill let him know if thats what he wanted that his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too up to my neck nearly not by him 5 or 6 times handrunning theres the mark of his spunk on the clean sheet I wouldnt bother to even iron it out that ought to satisfy him" (*U* 641). As if repeating the constellation depicted in the Bloom's masochist fantasy in "Circe", Molly's thoughts position her inferior husband as a foil to her more virile lover Boylan.

This opposition of Boylan's normative and Bloom's deviant sexuality is even overshadowed by her consideration of sexual potency as the ability to father a child. Thus, between the celebrations of her sexual activities with Boylan, there is a serious undertone of regret about the premature death of her son Rudy, for which she indirectly blames her husband's lack of virility: "I suppose well its a poor case that those that have a fine son like that theyre not satisfied and I none was he not able to make one" (*U* 640), which contrasts markedly with her assumption with regard to Boylan that "sure hed have a fine strong child [. . .]" (*U* 611). It is therefore not merely Boylan's potency to provide the sexual pleasure which Bloom does not provide that influences her perception of the male body. Rather, the narrative trauma of their son's death also influences the way in which Molly perceives the male body and its actions and potentials. This contrast is, however, reversed as Boylan's anatomy is eventually seen to make bigger promises than it can keep: "still he hasnt such a tremendous amount of spunk in him when I made him pull out and do it on me considering how big it is" (*U* 611). Molly thus seems to be disappointed by the mismatch between the

size of Boylan's penis and the amount of semen it can produce. When she further on realises the onset of her period, she is ambiguously commenting with a combination of relief and disillusionment that "anyhow he didnt make me pregnant as big as he is" (*U* 633). In contrast, despite criticising Bloom's frustrating sexual preferences, she almost voices a sense of pride when she considers her husband in this respect: "but I dont know Poldy has more spunk in him yes" (*U* 611). The text makes Molly in this way both "Bloom's betrayer and his avenger" (Shechner 207), and thus the narrative undermines Boylan's prowess by having Molly expose the contradictions and limitations of his anatomy. It is, however, important to note that this contrast and its deconstruction are precipitated by a narrative surrounding Molly's lost child, and her deliberations of Boylan's body thereby mingle with her regret over losing her son. That Bloom eventually emerges as superior to Boylan is to a certain extent surprising, but it can be seen as the result of her changing between levels of considering sex as either pleasurable or procreative.

The immediate drawback of sexual potency is the insatiability that Molly associates with the male body and men's irresponsible and egotistic pursuit of pleasure and heritage. Thinking of Mina Purefoy, whom Bloom visited in the maternity hospital earlier, Molly considers how "Mina Purefoys husband give us a swing out of your whiskers filling her up with a child or twins once a year as regular as the clock always with a smell of children off her [. . .] not satisfied till they have us swollen out like elephants or I dont know what [. . .]" (*U* 611). The coincidence of humour and seriousness in this passage arises from the combination of image and narrative. The burden of childbirth and child-rearing, which is handed to women, is seen as the result of men's desire to "have us swollen out like elephants". This grotesque image is, however, complemented by a narrative imagination which comically renders the act of conception as the man's "swing out of your whiskers". This constitutes a hilarious displacement of the actual reproductive function of the male body by a different male sexual marker, namely Mr Purefoy's whiskers, which is of course absolutely unrelated to the reproductive mechanism. Effectively, this narrative image thus combines her rightful allegation of men's egotism with a function of their bodies, and through the use of the comic reference, the assumed potency of the male body is ridiculed.

Molly criticises male egotism in the Purefoy's family planning, but she sees it as underlying Boylan's sexual energy, which she seemed to admire earlier. More concretely, she criticises his sexual performance and the performativity of his masculinity for their implicit violence and egotism. For instance, during intercourse he left a "mark of his teeth still where he tried to bite the nipple I had to scream out arent they fearful trying to hurt you [. . .]" (*U* 620). And in another example, Molly is similarly annoyed by Boylan's habit of slapping her on her bottom and occupying the space of her domestic rooms with his body: "I wonder was he satisfied with me one thing I didnt like his slapping me behind going away so familiarly in the hall though I laughed Im not a horse or an ass am I [. . .]" (*U* 610). The same accusation is repeated more directly at another point:

no thats no way for him has he no manners nor no refinement nor no nothing in his nature slapping us behind like that on my bottom because I didnt call him Hugh the ignoramus that doesnt know poetry from a cabbage thats what you get for not keeping them in their proper place pulling off his shoes and trousers there on the chair before me so barefacedwithout even asking permission and standing out that vulgar way in the half of a shirt they wear to be admired like a priest or a butcher or those old hypocrites in the time of Julius Caesar [. . .] (*U* 638)

In both instances, Molly conceptualises Boylan's violent sexual vigour in terms of the way he takes possession of space. Space here primarily means her body, which he takes liberties with by biting and slapping her. But space equally refers to Boylan moving through her house as if it was his possession, which the masochist passage from "Circe" discussed at the beginning had already suggested. Boylan's reckless attitude is thereby tied to the way he uses his body in a gendered manner. At another point, she further imagines the exploitative character of Boylan's potent sexuality through a reversal of the animal imagery she used earlier to express her frustration at being objectified: "like a Stallion driving it up into you because thats all they want out of you with that determined vicious look in his eye I had to halfshut my eyes [. . .] nice invention they made for women for him to get all the pleasure [. . .]" (*U* 611). First, Molly conceptualises his violent sexual egotism by dehumanising Boylan herself when she compares him to a stallion. That this simile is not meant to express admiration is made immediately clear by her accusation that "thats all they want out of you". Furthermore, it is through his body, here represented by his "vicious" eye, that this egotism and

violence are made manifest. Finally, Molly's dismay at Boylan's egotism and lack of cultivation are expressed in her suggestion that men can be reduced to their sexual urges: "where does their great intelligence come in Id like to know grey matter they have it all in their tail if you ask me [. . .]" (*U* 623). In all those considerations the balance between sex and gender is destabilised, and through Molly's micro-narratives, the text blurs the relationship between using the body in a gendered way and explaining gendered behaviours by referring to the body.

As these thoughts about Boylan's reckless behaviour indicate, Molly often focuses on the inequality between the sexes, and several examples show how she conceptualises this sense of injustice by referring to male bodies. Thus, for example, when thinking of her former lover Lieutenant Gardner, Molly considers that he had "just the right height over me" (*U* 616), and at another point, she thinks that "I dont like a man you have to climb up to to get at" (*U* 629). These textual echoes are minor details, but they resonate with other elements that address gendered social inequality more concretely, as when her thoughts move on to consider men's social and cultural privileges, which makes her desire having a male body herself:

its well for men all the amount of pleasure they get off a womans body were so round and white for them always I wished I was one myself for a change just to try with that thing they have swelling up on you so hard and at the same time so soft when you touch it [. . .] men again all over they can pick and choose what they please a married woman or a fast widow or a girl for their different tastes like those houses round behind Irish street no but were to be always chained up theyre not going to be chaining me up [. . .] (*U* 638-39)

For Molly, being a man and enjoying a man's privilege over women is tied to male anatomy. But a closer look at the passage indicates that this essentialism is rather Molly's way of conceptualising the social level through the physical one. Her paradoxical impression of the penis' simultaneous hardness and softness suggests its unreality and points to its symbolic quality as Phallus. From this perspective, the text functionalises the penis as "a sexual prop, a detachable object, a part of the costume of male-ness" (Devlin, "Pretending" 99), which enables the male privilege through the force of its signification. And yet, part of this privilege is again purely physical as in the enjoyment of the female body, which Molly admires herself, as when she admits that her breasts "plump and tempting" breasts "excite myself sometimes" and when she

thinks that “God I wouldnt mind being a man and get up on a lovely woman” (*U* 633). This sexual micro-narrative reflects both, her understanding of the fact that male privilege is sexual, but it also “becomes a reflection of her narcissism, which is conventionally feminine” (Unkeless 159; cf. Henke, *Politics of Desire* 141).

Molly’s attitude to the male body and its sexual anatomy is overall ambivalent. As the former example indicates, she is aware of its signifying power and the material privileging its signification affords. In other examples, she interprets it in very different terms. Molly’s veers between admiration and denigration of male anatomy, and, as Kimberly Devlin has argued, despite “her well-known moments of penis worship” there are also passages in which she produces “idiosyncratic and deflationary assessments” of the male organ “that figuratively domesticate the phallus through comparisons to household items” (“Pretending” 97-98). While domestication might be one of its results, I would argue that those instances of re-contextualisation of the phallus primarily expose its basic grotesqueness. In one instance, for example, Molly summarises the quality of the male body in her assertion “theyre all Buttons men” (*U* 626), which Richard Brown describes as a comparison that “objectifies and offers a gendered definition of men from the perspective of a female ‘other’ [. . .]” (“When in doubt” 153). This image of the button has several connotations, which are dispersed throughout the textual web of the chapter (152-59), but I would contend that in this example here the narrative of “Penelope” actively deflates the signifying power of the phallus to reduce it to a mundane and harmless object.

This mismatch between excessively powerful and trivial significations constitutes the grotesqueness of the phallus in Molly’s discourse. In another instance, Molly highlights this when she again compares and contrasts male and female anatomy. Thinking about her breasts, Molly finds that they compare favourably with a man’s sexual organs:

theyre supposed to represent beauty placed up there like those statues in the museum one of them pretending to hide it with her hand are they so beautiful of course compared with what a man looks like with his two bags full and his other thing hanging down out of him or sticking up at you like a hatrack no wonder they hide it with a cabbageleaf the woman is beauty of course [. . .] (*U* 620)

The comparison reduces the penis's symbolic power, which makes it less a phallus rather than a hideous baggage to carry around and hide because of its aesthetic lack. This generalising judgement of male anatomy is made concrete in an anecdote about Ben Dollard, powerful singer and in possession of an imposing physique. In the "Sirens" episode, Bloom thinks:

Ben Dollard's famous. Night he ran round to us to borrow a dress suit for that concert. Trousers tight as a drum on him. Musical porkers. Molly did laugh when he went out. Threw herself back across the bed, screaming, kicking. With all his belongings on show. O saints above, I'm drenched! O, the women in the front row! O, I never laughed so many! Well, of course, that's what gives him the base barreltone. For instance eunuchs. (U 222)

Molly's amusement about Ben Dollard's "belongings on show" is complemented by Bloom's deliberations that Dollard's large sexual organs are the reason for his impressive voice. So, while her husband draws a direct connection between Dollard's fame as a singer and his imposing maleness, Molly, herself a semi-professional singer, is simply amused by the grotesque image that Dollard represents when he wears trousers that fit too tightly. In "Penelope", Molly's reminiscence of the same episode is much less sexual:

and Ben Dollard base barreltone the night he borrowed the swallowtail to sing out of in Holles street squeezed and squashed into them and grinning all over his big Dolly face like a wellwhipped child's botty didnt he look a balmy ballocks sure enough that must have been a spectacle on the stage imagine paying 5/- in the preserved seats for that to see him trotting off in his trowlers [. . .] (U 636)

The sexual prowess that Bloom is impressed by goes almost unnoticed in Molly's account of the same scene, and only by comparing the two perspectives, we can see in Molly's version a comment on men and their anatomy. Instead of dwelling on Dollard's "belongings on show", Molly focuses on the singer's self-complacent reaction to his involuntary exhibitionism when she stresses his "grinning all over his big Dolly face like a wellwhipped child's botty". One might discern an innuendo in her phrases "balmy ballocks" and the "spectacle on the stage", but this becomes visible only when complemented by Bloom's more explicit reference to Dollard's anatomy. Thus, the text domesticates the grotesqueness of the image and deprives it of its signifying power by rendering it less spectacular. The focus on Dollard's attitude, rather than the actual image he represents, is also in line with Molly's impression that men generally

love to flaunt their masculinity and anatomical difference: “when I was passing pretending he was pissing standing out for me to see it with his babyclothes up to one side [. . .] theyre always trying to show it to you every time [. . .]” (*U* 620). Compared to the similar motif of Ben Dollard’s unintentional display of his manhood, the second example shows that this exhibitionism is not only a performance of sexual difference but part of masculinity’s endeavours “to procure/secure the space against women” (Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 185), which resonates with Molly’s criticism of Boylan discussed earlier. The narrative thus reiterates the motif of male anatomy and conquest and recontextualises it in another of Molly’s anecdotes.

Apart from exposing the grotesqueness of the male body, Molly also understands that masculinity is a performance which naturalises the body and sexual difference. This can be seen, for instance, in the way she favourably compares herself to other women: “let them get a husband first thats fit to be looked at and a daughter like mine or see if they can excite a swell with money that can pick and choose whoever he wants like Boylan to do it 4 or 5 times locked in each others arms [. . .]” (*U* 628). For Molly, a husband needs to be respectable (“fit to be looked at”), which is underlined by her disrespectful consideration of Josie Breen’s “dotty husband” (*U* 613), Denis, whom she refers to as “that forlornlooking spectacle you couldnt call him a husband” (*U* 636). But the lover she imagines in Boylan is also signified as sexually and financially potent (“to do it 4 or 5 times”; “swell with money” [*U* 628]). Masculine performance and prestige are thus conceptualised in a merging of economic and sexual capitals, which is also supported by a reminiscence about her attraction to Boylan smelling of an expensive drink: “he smelt of some kind of drink not whisky or stout or perhaps the sweet kind of paste they stick their bills up with some liqueur Id like to sip those richlooking green and yellow expensive drinks those stagedoor johnnies drink with the opera hats I tasted once [. . .]” (*U* 610-11). The result of this blurring between monetary and sexual signifiers is that the male body equally blurs with the cultural signs that constitute its maleness. Yet, despite the fascination he elicits in her, Molly also sees through Boylan’s use of props as a way of faking power through masculine performance: she is clearly impressed by the “lovely stuff in that blue suit he had on and stylish tie and socks with the skyblue silk things on them”, and she deduces from “the cut his clothes have and his heavy watch” that “hes certainly well off” (*U*

617). Economic capital does, however, not correspond to adequate social behaviour, as Molly also realises: “but he was like a perfect devil for a few minutes after he came back with the stoppress tearing up the tickets and swearing blazes because he lost 20 quid he said [. . .] and half he put on for me on account of Lenehans tip cursing him to the lowest pits [. . .]” (*U* 617). As Boylan’s case shows, the props with which masculinity is performatively enacted are sometimes simply the unsuccessful attempts to cover a specific lack in character.

Her insight about the performative nature of masculinity extends to her husband as well. Remembering a time when Bloom was ill and lying in bed, Molly thinks that “he looked more like a man with his beard a bit grown in the bed” (*U* 608), and another performative signifier of masculinity is named when she thinks: “I wish hed even smoke a pipe like father to get the smell of a man” (*U* 619). These props seem to have the power to make a man of him, that is, to constitute a masculinity that he is otherwise lacking. Eventually, however, there is a limit for the success of imitation and the reiteration of signs. As Molly suggests, her husband’s masculinity simply seems to miss something: “he was very handsome at that time trying to look like lord Byron I said I liked though he was too beautiful for a man [. . .]” (*U* 612). As Schwarze’s aptly remarks, “Bloom’s Byronic self-construction is again undercut by an unmanly softness, a Shelleyan Other” (*Joyce and the Victorians* 80). Not only too beautiful, Bloom is also lacking in bodily performance: “the night he kissed my heart at Dolphins barn I couldnt describe it simply it makes you feel like nothing on earth but he never knew how to embrace well like Gardner [. . .]” (*U* 615). The text suggests thereby that the production of masculinity through specific ways of using the male body has limits, which Molly intuits in her thoughts about both her husband and her lover respectively.

That does not mean, however, that she is entirely above those constructions. In other instances, Molly is herself influenced by the way masculine props are able to aggrandise the male body. One example is Simon Dedalus, whom she dislikes for being “such a criticiser with his glasses up with his tall hat on him at the cricket match and a great big hole in his sock one thing laughing at the other [. . .]” (*U* 632). Yet, his manners and economic failure are compensated for by “a delicious glorious voice” (*U* 636). This prestigious performance of masculinity through his musical talent even overshadows the fact that “he was always turning up half screwed singing the second

verse first [. . .]”, and he seems to have impressed her so much that she tolerated his flirting with her (“he was always on for flirtyfying too” [U 636]). The lack of economic capital can thus be compensated for with a material performance of masculinity through the highly eroticised performance of singing. And in contrast to Boylan, Molly seems to accept these props as generating a certain attractiveness in Simon.

A more complex example is her infatuation with the masculinity which militarism produces. Molly is critical of politics and of war, but, as the daughter of a major in the British army in Gibraltar, she is also a victim of the masculine glamour that militarism is able to produce (cf. Bazargan 120-25). This is put into narrative form in a memory of viewing army drills back on Gibraltar, where she was born:

I love to see a regiment pass in review the first time I saw the Spanish cavalry at La Roque it was lovely [. . .] or those sham battles on the 15 acres the Black Watch with their kilts in time at the march past the 10th hussars the prince of Wales own or the lancers O the lancers theyre grand or the Dublins that won Tugela [. . .] (U 617)

The passage distinctly voices her admiration for the masculine prestige that the military gives those young men through uniforms and practical stylisations of the body. The military glamour that fascinates her thereby suggests that her disdain for war and politics is not based on humanitarian reasons but on the fact that war kills “any finelooking men there were with their fever” (U 617; Henke, *Politics of Desire* 139). Despite that, Molly is still also attracted to the idea of military heroism (cf. Brown, “When in doubt” 156). So, she regrets that her lover Lieutenant Gardner, “a lovely fellow in khaki and just the right height over me”, was killed by fever instead of dying in action. She is “sure he was brave too” (U 616), but finds that “if he was even decently shot it wouldnt have been so bad” (U 617). In an episode “suffused with the presence of death (Boheemen, “Molly’s Heavenly Body” 274), the motif of a heroic masculine death in combat is further developed through the contrast with the bleak funeral of Paddy Dignam: “yes they were all in great style at the grand funeral in the paper Boylan brought in if they saw a real officers funeral thatd be something reversed arms muffled drums the poor horse walking behind in black” (U 636).¹⁵⁸ Finally, Molly also adds a sexual level to military death, when she regretfully remembers that her

¹⁵⁸ The funeral, which is attended by her husband as well, takes place during the “Hades” episode.

sexual encounter with Mulvey, another lover on Gibraltar, was not fully consummated: “and I promised him yes faithfully Id let him block me now flying perhaps hes dead or killed or a captain or admiral its nearly 20 years” (*U* 626).¹⁵⁹ Using Mulvey as an example, she narratively conceptualises that soldiers’ dangerous profession justifies sexual their possessiveness: “he went to India he was to write the voyages those men have to make to the ends of the world and back its the least they might get a squeeze or two at a woman while they can going out to be drowned or blown up somewhere [. . .]” (*U* 627).¹⁶⁰

Despite her narrative glorifications of the military’s ways to stylise the body to construct masculinity, Molly has a clear notion that performances like these are intended to cover up an essential instability. Thus her monologue gives several examples of men’s essential dependence on women. This motif is a constant thread in Molly’s monologue, and examples include minor anecdotes as when she sets Mulvey’s cap straight for him (“he didnt know what to make of me with his peak cap on that he always wore crooked as often as I settled it straight” [*U* 626]) or when she imagines managing Bloom’s career (“he could have been in Mr Cuffes still only for what he did then sending me to try and patch it up I could have got him promoted there to be the manager [. . .]” [*U* 619]). But the dependence features also in more profound examples, as for instance when she considers Bloom’s sadness after his father died: “of course hed never turn or let on still his eyes were red when his father died theyre lost for a woman of course must be terrible when a man cries [. . .]” (*U* 610). When asking herself “what do they ask us to marry them for if were so bad”, her answer is disarmingly simple: “yes because they cant get on without us” (*U* 613). As a consequence of this insight into men’s dependency Molly tends to infantilise men like Boylan or Stephen Dedalus. For instance, she compares Boylan to a child when he was sucking her breasts, and she asserts that “theyre all mad to get in there where they come out of youd think they could never go far enough up and then they done with you in a way

¹⁵⁹ “Block” is slang for sexual intercourse, as Gifford and Seidman explain (*Ulysses Annotated* 622). Shaffer makes the interesting point that Molly’s sexual fantasies in these instances are modes of evading her own colonial situation (142).

¹⁶⁰ All these examples make it difficult to accept Bazargan’s generalising view that “Molly defuses the myth of the epic romance energizing many male concepts of heroism, adventure, and conquest. Heroes, even the real Ulysses in her story, are hardly glamorized” (128).

till the next time [. . .]” (U 626, Maddox 217-18). Surprisingly, sexual prowess represented by the body’s performance thus is thus undermined and taken into question, as it no longer constitutes a marker of masculinity but of infantility. And furthermore, as she realises, this infantility is eventually another facet of men’s egotism and thus a mask to cover the male claim to privilege (“and then theyre done with you in a way till the next time”).

For Molly, masculinity is therefore a way to overcome an essential dependency, but she also understands the paradoxical connection between this masquerade which empowers the male body and the self-destructiveness of these performances. This paradox is exemplified by her husband’s wonderings during the day, which she interprets as an attempt to stage a form of youthful masculinity:

I hope hes not going to get in with those medicals leading him astray to imagine hes young again coming in at 4 in the morning it must be if not more still he had the manners not to wake me what do they find to gabber about all night squandering money and getting drunker and drunker couldnt they drink water [. . .]. (U 628)

Similarly, Molly has no illusions about the bogus nature of the display of friendship at Paddy Dignam’s funeral, a friendship that is part of a reckless performance of self-destructive masculinity:

and they call that friendship killing and then burying one another and they all with their wives and families at home more [. . .] theyre a nice lot all of them well theyre not going to get my husband again into their clutches if I can help it making fun of him then behind his back I know well when he goes on with his idiotics because he has sense enough not to squander every penny piece he earns down their gullets and looks after his wife and family goodfornothings poor Paddy Dignam. (U 636)

Men are thus not only dependent on women, but masculinity is essentially self-destructive and thereby also ruining those around these husbands: “theres always something wrong with them disease or they have to go under an operation or if its not that its drink and he beats her [. . .]” (U 632). Not even sex can compensate for this, especially not when the man, like her husband, is not so young anymore: “he ought to give it up now at this age of his life simply ruination for any woman and no satisfaction in it pretending to like it till he comes and then finish it off myself anyway [. . .]” (U 610).

“Penelope” thus gives voice to many criticisms of complex and fluid connection between masculinity and the male body, but eventually they are overcome in

Molly's final "yes" as her affirmation of Bloom. Two alternatives are possible in order to come to terms with masculinity and the male body: either masculinity is idealised in a male image that ignores the negative sides of masculinity, or the limitations of the male body are accepted and celebrated as a way out of the self-destructive behaviour that masculinity generates. The first route is exemplified by her imaginary infatuation with Stephen Dedalus, whose status as an intellectual and poet attracts her in contrast to the brutishness of Boylan and the antics of her husband. Realising that Bloom has tried to befriend Stephen, Molly hopes that from this friendship will arise the possibility of a form of intellectual and sexual intercourse with Stephen: "itll be grand if I can only get in with a handsome young poet at my age [. . .] and I can teach him the other part Ill make him feel all over him till he half faints under me [. . .]" (U 638). As Devlin notes, this "envisioned seduction of him is a private melodramatic tableau, with Stephen suggestively cast in the stereotypical female role [. . .]" ("Pretending" 88). However, this gender confusion is only preliminary, and it becomes apparent that Molly imagines Stephen as an idealised young god, whose body merges with that of the statue of Narcissus, a present from her husband:

Im sure hes very distinguished Id like to meet a man like that God not those other ruck besides hes young those fine young men I could see down in Margate strand bathingplace from the side of the rock standing up in the sun naked like a God or something and then plunging into the sea with them why arent all men like that thered be some consolation for a woman like that lovely little statue he bought I could look at him all day long curly head and his shoulders his finger up for you to listen theres real beauty and poetry for you I often felt I wanted to kiss him all over also his lovely young cock there so simple I wouldnt mind taking him in my mouth if nobody was looking as if it was asking you to suck it so clean and white he looks with his boyish face I would too in 1/2 a minute even if some of it went down what its only like gruel or the dew theres no danger besides hed be so clean compared with those pigs of men I suppose never dream of washing it from 1 years end to the other the most of them [. . .] (U 638)

Molly's notoriously ambiguous use of male pronoun serves here to foster the notion that Stephen's image is one that blends with other idealised images (cf. Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 172-73). Thus, it is not entirely clear on whom she imagines performing fellatio, on Stephen or the statue. However, the difference is not relevant at all because, eventually, Stephen *becomes* this statue as an ideal of the male body which "all men"

should aspire to.¹⁶¹ It is not surprising that this ideal is an illusion and therefore yet another way in which masculinity produces a façade to cover the fragility of the male body. The cracks in this façade create some of the funniest parts of the episode, as when Molly compares Stephen to “those pigs of men” in terms of personal hygiene. Mark Osteen comments that “she entertains erotic fantasies involving a Stephen who has little in common with the unwashed bard we know [. . .]” (434). In the “Telemachus” chapter, for instance, we hear from Buck Mulligan that “—The unclean bard makes a point of washing once a month” (*U* 13), and the omniscient narrative voice in “Ithaca” elaborates, “he was hydrophobe, hating partial contact by immersion or total by submersion in cold water, (his last bath having taken place in the month of October of the preceding year) [. . .]” (*U* 550). The image which she constructs of Stephen/Narcissus is therefore simply a sexual fantasy, an implied narrative with which she gives voice to desires, frustrations and hopes. This textual irony in which the narrative works against its protagonist’s stories, is emblematic of the whole chapter, in which Molly’s male stories are constantly commented on through contrasts and echoes of other stories.

In the end, Molly discards all such narratives, and by affirming her attachment to Bloom, she also accepts his embodiment of the flaws and the limitations of the male body and masculinity. Her admission, “and I thought well as well him as another” (*U* 643-44), is neither romantic nor an expression of Molly’s confidence, but by accepting Bloom she writes herself into a narrative of masculinity which exposes itself as performance. Because she sees through such narratives, she is willing to play her role as Molly, the “flower of the mountain”, who has found her complement in Bloom/Henry Flower:

he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes [. . .]” (*U* 643)

It is by being imperfect and in possession of a “transsexual knowledge of the Other” (Devlin, “Pretending” 98) that Bloom overcomes all pretences of masculinity, all

¹⁶¹ She also merges Stephen’s image with that of her own dead son Rudy, which has led some critics to imply an incestuous desire. See, for instance, Maddox (218).

performances which imply the male body as the guarantor of masculinity. Molly, who constantly shifts in her monologue between images and signifiers of the male body, settles on Bloom as the ambiguous and imperfect signifier.

In these narratives about the male body and masculine performances, “Penelope” deconstructs the fabric of manliness more profoundly than any other of the texts discussed. Molly’s stories suggest the textual illusion of an incoherently digressing mind, but “Penelope” thereby actually highlights the narrative status of masculinity through Molly’s veering deliberations and the text’s continuous commentary through echoes and parallels to other stories. This double layer, of stories that the characters are shown to fabricate and their underlying patterns and arrangements, pertains to the whole novel. Vicki Mahaffey argues that rather than “epic heroes”, we encounter in *Ulysses* “thinking, caring men who are – like most people – prone to self-deception and error”, which unsettles our expectations of the gender of fictional heroes (“End of Gender” 147). Equally, Molly’s affirmation of Bloom constitutes a tolerance and acceptance of the less-than-perfect (Pearce 49), which in itself is the text’s strategy to deconstruct the fabric of manliness. It is despite or perhaps exactly because of “her own involvement in (and sometimes complicity with) those signifying systems themselves” (Devlin, “Pretending” 91-92) that Molly can disrupt what Richard Pearce refers to as the “male gaze” of the novel *Ulysses* (45-46; cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 185). On the whole, the novel is ambiguous about this gaze. Even when making quirky Bloom its hero, the text has throughout also implied the possibility that we view him and Stephen “not as peeping Toms, as they pee beneath Molly’s window, but as the modern Virgil and Dante trying to outdo each other while looking up at the beatific vision” (Pearce 45; cf. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* 182-88). In contrast, Molly’s monologue exposes masculinity as a narrative which needs to be seen as such. Christine van Boheemen has therefore suggested that “Penelope” fulfils the task of “reducing to silence the castration fear generated by the act of ending” (“Molly’s Heavenly Body” 272). In the telling of finished stories, narrative itself is such an attempt to provide finality. “Penelope” itself is a textual web which, by constantly undermining the signs of sexual difference, takes a critical view of such final narratives of the male body and masculinity (cf. Henke, *Politics of Desire* 160). Boheemen is correct in stating that the chapter “favors style over message, textuality and code over a

referent, the sign over the body, the masquerade of gender over the ontological difference of sexuality” (“Molly’s Heavenly Body” 277). However, I would caution against reducing Molly’s monologue to such an image of poststructuralism *avant la lettre*. This view underestimates that this seeming chaos is still very much manifest in, and can therefore be broken down into, the stories and narratives that Molly uses in her thought process and with which her monologue deconstructs the relationship between masculinity and the male body.

Conclusion

Masculinity has, in a way, always been a topic in discussions of Joyce and his works. Biographically, his relationships to father, brother, son and grandson have been of immense interest, and thematically, criticism has produced myriads of studies into the male artist, who needs to overcome rivals, fatherly antagonists and the great masculine ghosts of history in order to prove their own masculine identity and to produce art free of social convention. With Leopold Bloom, a variation of this artist figure has fascinated even more studies. Bloom seems to be a solution to the problem of masculinity, as he rejects the machismo of the men around him, tolerates his wife's free sexual expression and shows empathy for those around him while also enjoying life to the fullest. Yet, to content oneself with these memorable images of masculinity does not do justice to Joyce progressive, if ambivalent, thinking with regard to gender relations and masculinity in particular nor do these images alone offer a key to understanding how his texts express and carry his ideas about how men become what they are. My study proposed therefore to look beyond the images of male characters and archetypes and focus on Joyce's textual modernist practice instead. At the centre of interest was the question how narrative structures help to create masculinities and how these masculinities necessitate specific structures and techniques. The concept that I used to grasp this interconnection between gender and textuality is that of manliness as a textual fabric. This trope, indebted to Roland Barthes' thought on intertextuality, posits that masculinity is nothing graspable or definable *per se*, but a symbolic structure that exists in the narratives we tell about it and in which we embed individual masculine subjectivities. As a narrative signifying system, masculinity becomes the intangible notion of manliness, which legitimises male privilege over women. This trope moves the discussion of masculinity from a macro to a micro level and proposes that since manliness cannot be grasped fully, it is a viable strategy to approach it through the individual micro-narratives that constitute and stabilise it. The metaphor also avoids

fixating masculinity in the form of an image of masculinity, and it thereby offers the necessary flexibility to account for multiple masculinities. Conceiving of masculinity as a narrative practice, the study engaged with various constructions of masculinities in Joyce's texts, which are situated in specific contexts that are relevant to these constructions. To conclude this study, I recapitulate in the following, first, the approaches and readings in the different parts of the study, and, after that, I address, in a more general way, the results that the study has yielded with regard to the goals formulated in the introduction.

The first part of the study laid the theoretical and methodical foundation for the close readings in the subsequent sections. Here, I discussed the necessity of a broad definition of narrative and the functions that narratives have in human cognition, for the fabrication of self-identity and in terms of the perpetuation of ideology. After that, I discussed several theories and concepts of Masculinity Studies, which provided the theoretical basis for my own approach. The following chapter, then, established a model for the analysis of masculinity as a narrative structure. I argued that an approach to the analysis of masculinity in narrative fiction must take into account the narrativity of those texts and that it must avoid eclipsing feminist achievements in the study of fiction. As a consequence, the chapter outlined cultural and feminist narratological approaches as the basic method for my reading of masculinity in Joyce. Because a systematic narratological theory for masculinity is neither currently available and because there are also good reasons against such a systematic approach, I proposed a transfer of cultural studies concepts of masculinity to structural narratology. This approach is both flexible and adaptable to specific texts and the masculinities they represent and construct. I argued in particular for a two-level analysis. Narrative negotiations of individual characters take place on the first level, that is the way the texts portray them as trying to establish their gendered identities by using memories, anecdotes and other micro-narratives. On the second level, these constructions are themselves narrated and can thereby be criticised. These preliminary theoretical and methodological discussions set the basis on which the following three parts engaged in close readings with three distinct sites of the narrative construction of masculinity in Joyce's work.

The next part addressed the formation of masculinity in and through the school as a site in which the masculinity of boys is achieved. This takes place through the direct instruction of teachers but also in negotiations among the boys. In three chapters I discussed how this dual construction of masculinity is represented through the narrative structures of the texts selected for this purpose. The binary pattern of formation is ideally suited for narrative texts that employ several plot lines, which is the angle I used for my analyses. The examples were “An Encounter” and the first chapter from *A Portrait of the Artist*, which I chose because they are complementary in the way they treat the subject. In “An Encounter”, both levels of formation are dramatised in the story’s several plotlines. These plot strands can be seen as competing with each other in the way they structure the initiation of the boys into the masculine adult world. By intertwining the instruction sequences based on their official teaching and their attempt to escape it with their adventure plot, the story dramatises the competing forces in the fabrication of masculinity as they work against each other but lead to similar results. The story further suggests that the boys can attempt to evade their teachers, but they cannot escape them, because external shaping forces will always limit their agency. The text heavily relies on the mirroring of motifs and characters, especially the character of the male mentor. Through those techniques of repetition, the story dramatises the inescapability of teaching and the forced initiation of the boys into the masculine world.

The more extensive discussion of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was then developed in the two following chapters, each engaging with one of the levels of formation as they affect young Stephen Dedalus. Both strands are dramatised in the classroom and the schoolyard respectively, and they complement each other as they enact different elements in Stephen’s growth into an artist. In the first of those chapters, Stephen’s development is predicated on the negotiation of the masculine values of solidarity that his father has sent him to school with. These values are then constantly tested and challenged through interaction with his teachers. Only by finally breaking with the demands of masculine loyalty Stephen is recognised as a subject by Father Conmee and becomes a subject within the hierarchy of Clongowes. This is a necessary step towards his role as an artist later in the novel. The text thereby constantly modulates the motif of solidarity in the engagement with Stephen’s teachers,

while the teachers' role in this modulation is expressed variously through metaphorical and metonymical means. This first plotline is complemented by the negotiation of boyhood masculinities in the schoolyard, which the third chapter in this part addresses. Generally, Stephen is the outsider at the school, first regarding physical inequality and status, but then this motif is developed into a more powerful form of establishing hierarchies. These are created through the possession of knowledge, and sexual knowledge awards the highest prestige. While Stephen never acquires this knowledge, he begins to engage with the puzzling events in the schoolyard by aestheticizing what is unknown to him. This first step towards art lets him transcend the hierarchies among the boys, and by embracing an aesthetics of the unpalatable or painful, Stephen makes a significant step toward his later art. The two chapters discussing *A Portrait* take up the themes of initiation in "An Encounter" and develop them further. *A Portrait* is formally more complex in its engagement with the topic by using various means to produce the masculinities teachers and Stephen's schoolfellows and counteract the plots that Stephen and they employ to construct masculine identities.

The following part discussed the construction of both lover and husband as subject positions within both the private and public space. The perspective is that of female characters who construct the identities of past lovers and future husbands. The narratives that result from these constructs dramatise masculinity as coupled with the heteronormative institution of marriage, but these constructions compete with each other in terms of the various expectations that are connected to the masculinities thus evoked. The central motif which motivates these plots is that of recognition. Whereas Eveline Hill in "Eveline" constructs the identity of her lover Frank around her hope for social prestige, Gretta Conroy, in "The Dead", negotiates masculine subject positions regarding the social and sexual recognition they can give her. The most skilful and complex storyteller, however, is Gerty MacDowell, with whom the second chapter of this part is concerned. Gerty's trajectory of narratives of masculine subjectivity continuously voices concerns, hopes and desires. What distinguishes her stories from those of Gretta and Eveline, is that Gerty remains in control of her plots. Eveline's ending at the railway is the result of having lost control over the signifiers that voice her hopes, which the story has indicated all along. In "The Dead" Gretta and Gabriel

are both attracted to and pushed away from the two narratives of lover and patriarch they develop, which leaves them both with neither and thereby unfulfilled. Gerty, in contrast, adapts her plots to circumstances and modifies them to stay in control. In Bloom's persona of the dark stranger, finally, she finds a flexible narrative in which she can achieve an ephemeral moment of sexual agency and fulfilment. In all three texts, the narratives of lover and husband are in constant dialogue and competition, which destabilises them in "Eveline" and "The Dead". In "Nausicaa" however, this instability is reformulated as the possibility to take control through the storyteller, and the competition of stories becomes thereby an adaptability to desire.

The last part engaged with the male body and its narrative manifestations in selected texts from *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*. The discussion was centred on the narrative split between male sex and masculine gender. In the first chapter on *Dubliners*, I conceptualised this division as masculinities without bodies. This motif informs the narratives fabricated by the characters and their attempt, thereby, to create images of the male body. In these stories, the body is relegated to the background by stories about the self which the male characters tell. This attempt at eclipsing maleness in favour of the symbolic power of masculinity is the basis of the story "A Mother". Here, the homosocial setting successfully builds up a symbolic screen of masculinity to deflect from the inadequacy of the male body, attempting to make patriarchal privilege literally untouchable. In contrast, in the stories "Two Gallants" and "After the Race" the texts work against this dissociation of gender from sex by reintroducing the body into the narrative to expose the power of masculinity as both artificial and self-destructive. While in the first story masculinity without the body is criticised as a patriarchal ploy, the latter two stories undermine this strategy through a form of narrative re-incorporation of maleness. On the formal level, the dissociation of maleness from masculinity occurs in "A Mother" through narrative prosthetics that produce masculinity as symbolic, in "Two Gallants" and "After the Race" the body returns in the discourse of the characters, which betrays their bodies' needs and corporeal desires.

Finally, the last chapter of the study engages with the proliferation of male signifiers in *Ulysses*. In these corporeal anarchies, the division between body and gender is abandoned in favour of an excess of narrative signification of both gender and sex. "Cyclops" focuses on the generation of a body as Other. Creating a division

between the barflies and Leopold Bloom, the narrative weaves a web of male signifiers that function to contrast with Bloom's otherness in order to create an amalgamated body that symbolises Irish nationalism. While this othering process attempts to achieve a stable image of the Irish body, the narrative is destabilised, however, because it constantly conflates gendered signifiers with those of the body proper. The heroic body of male Irish nationalism thereby deconstructs itself. The following part on "Circe" shows an equal but contrary investment in the male body. While ostensibly celebrating a sex-change in which Bloom becomes the new womanly man, the narrative of the episode attempts to reinforce the stability of the male body. Bloom's maleness underlies an extended masochist fantasy which necessitates his humiliation as a man through markers of femininity. The culmination of this can be seen in the ambiguous celebration of Blazes Boylan's brawny and sexualised body at the end of the episode which produces for Bloom a form of cathartic pleasure. Finally, "Penelope" thematises the construction of various masculinities in relation to male anatomy. Discussing idealised and inadequate bodies and their performativity, Molly Bloom dissects these narratives of the male body. Her deliberations expose the shortcomings of the idealised male body in various anecdotes and memories, and she thereby criticises attempts by masculinity to legitimise male privilege. The text finally deconstructs all these narratives by having Molly accept in Bloom the imperfect embodiment of masculinity, who does not pretend to conquer nor hide behind a symbolic structure. The episode is thereby a synthesis of the former two texts. In "Cyclops" male signifiers were proliferated to expose Bloom's Othering as flawed, and in "Circe" they stabilised his maleness. "Penelope" engages with the narratives in which these signifiers perform maleness and masculinity, and by exposing them as narratives, the chapter challenges their efficacy to idealise the male body as a patriarchal symbol.

After this summary of the close readings, it remains to address the results of this study on a more general level with regard to the goals formulated at the beginning. It was one of my primary goals to offer a mode of investigating masculinity in fictional texts that does not result in the description and analysis of specific masculine images. Such an approach produces static concepts, like the image of Bloom as the new womanly man or the male, father-defying artist-hero, both of which limit the discussion of masculinity and thereby reduce its complexity. There is no doubt that Joyce's texts use

these images frequently and weave them into their plots and aesthetic structures. However, as the discussion in the individual chapters has shown, masculinity in fiction cannot be understood through these images alone. Masculinity affects more aspects and levels than the imagined identity of male characters; it is enacted and embodied in the stories and plots the characters are shown to create for themselves and in those in which they are embedded. The plurality of masculinities is thereby the result of the fact that these stories are written individually and in specific social contexts, like the pub or the schoolyard. These life-stories are also strongly influenced by the institutional settings in which they originate. The family, the school or the public sphere are all sites which set the framework for the individual writing of life-stories. The heterogeneity of these stories results also from their reliance on the smallest personal anecdotes, like Reggy driving his bicycle in front of Gerty MacDowell's window, or faint memories, as when Molly remembers the squeeze of Boylan's hand. Both the institutional setting and individual narrative practice produce masculinity in the texts, and heterogeneity of these contexts results necessarily in a set of dynamic and plural masculinities rather than a monolithic image of masculinity.

The engagement with the individual masculine life-stories of male (and female) characters concerns, however, only the primary level of the fabric of manliness in Joyce. The second level is addressed by the goal of the study to analyse how this textual fabric is related to, and resulting from, Joyce's Modernist narrative practice. The focus on the individual micro-narratives has to be complemented by the question of how the formal structures of the texts significantly contribute to the fabrication of masculinity as well. As the discussion has shown, these structures are not gender-neutral, but they actively participate in the genderisation of narrative and therefore need to be taken into account as well in the study of masculinity in fiction. Concerning *Ulysses*, Colleen Lamos writes that "[i]nstead of searching for a consistent theme regarding gender identity and sexual desire, readers of this heterogeneous text might better look for its interior fissures" (*Deviant Modernism* 125). These fissures, it should be noted, occur on the level of "theme" as well as textual structures themselves. A primary result of the discussions of Joyce's texts is, therefore, that the relationship between narrative and masculinity within his fiction is highly complex and not uniform, and the result is a heterogeneous set of techniques and modes of expressing masculinity on the level

of form. This also means that only by “politicizing its aesthetics” (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 11) can we fully comprehend the individual text’s engagement and investment in the production of masculinity. Accordingly, I have shown that neither individual narrative negotiations of masculinity nor the overall constructions of masculinity in the texts follow a clear pattern or system which underlies these constructions. Whereas structuralist narratologists will be disappointed by this lack of clarity, cultural narratologists interested in masculinity will acknowledge that this incoherence is a necessary outcome of investigating the ways in which narrative and masculinity are interdependent. Exactly because masculinity is so elusive and polymorphous, a narrative approach to masculinity in fiction needs to be flexible and adaptive as well.

In connection with this issue, a final goal was to address the question of Joyce’s stance concerning the fabrication of manliness. While masculinity is created in the individual stories of the characters, it is, then, also subject to the overall narrative framework of Joyce’s text. Both levels, I have argued, are interwoven and must be seen in conjunction. Joyce’s narratives can be shown to be neither unanimously critical nor ideologically supportive of these individual fabrications of masculinity. In some instances, the text deconstructs those tales by exposing their internal fissures or contradictions. In others, it re-emphasises and supports, even naturalises them. An example from *Ulysses*’ engagement with the body will illustrate this ambivalence. In “Cyclops”, as we have seen, the engagement with the male body is critical. The text shows how the barflies attempt to create the body of the Other, in order to fabricate the new body of Irish masculinity which is exemplifying the discourses of Irish cultural nationalism. The narrative of “Cyclops” exposes this fabrication as both artificial and flawed, however, because the construction of this body veers between bodily markers and gendered performances, which undermines any claim to a naturally strong body. Thus, the text criticises the image of this body by exposing the internal faultlines of the stories with which it is created. In contrast, “Circe” moves in the directly opposite direction. In this text, the male body is shown to persist, even if the narrative techniques spectacularly attempt to construct a kind of sex-change or androgyny. The male body remains male, and, furthermore, it is shown to be the underlying base for a masochist fantasy that Bloom draws a form of cathartic satisfaction. A speculative explanation for this veering stance between anti-patriarchal attitude and conservative

hailing of sexual binarism could refer to the aesthetic level. Given the fact that Bloom's masochist fantasy is a form of narrative and, therefore, a form of art, Joyce's might be more inclined to support this elaborate and complex aestheticisation rather than the fabrication of a crude image of muscularity. There is, however, no clear answer to the question of Joyce's stance towards masculinity. Ambivalent masculinities are recurring features in his fiction, and, arguably, they are the logical outcome of his radical aesthetics: as they are situated in his deconstructive Modernist narrative practice, the resulting masculinities will necessarily be dynamic, complex and difficult to grasp as well.

Being situated in three formally distinct but, in reality, overlapping fields of research, the study of the textual construction of masculinity in Joyce's is able to contribute to each of them. My findings offer Joyce studies the insight that a focus on the formal structures of narrative does not necessarily have to result in an ahistorical and apolitical formalism. The politicised re-introduction of a structural approach, which I have followed in this study, shows that the investigation of ideologies in the texts can be fruitfully conducted on the formal level as well. This politicisation of poetics can complement the dominant psychoanalytic and discourse-oriented approaches in Joyce studies and indicate a different perspective on his complex and multi-layered work. The images of masculinity, which these other approaches have regularly privileged in their analyses, are thereby shown to be intricately tied to Joyce's formal skills on the narrative level. The recognition of this interrelationship of form and content can, therefore, also better account for the plurality of masculinities in the texts and how their construction is based on the gender of textual structures. Since the study was necessarily based on a limited selection of texts, this approach may invite further research on other texts by Joyce. Especially *Finnegans Wake* is promising in this respect because it blurs the boundary between image and plot, and all of its characters are embedded in numerous intertextual narratives. Moreover, different sites or spaces than the three that I structured this study with could be used to continue and further develop the approach outlined here. The larger areas of labour and work, for instance, can be fruitfully used for an analysis of how narratives of the self compete within institutions and social settings. Two interesting examples can be found in Bloom's constant failings to keep up a job and thereby failing in his role as breadwinner and Stephen's conscious decision to avoid continuous paid work and reject the role as

breadwinner. Similarly, male friendship and romantic competition could also form a focus of interest. Here, the notorious Joycean triangles of two males and one woman, as in Bertha, Richard and Robert in *Exiles* or Molly, Bloom and Stephen in *Ulysses* would be examples worthwhile pursuing with regard to self-stylisation of friendship and rivalry in stories and narrative frameworks.

In its engagement with the interrelationship of formal structures and gender, the study contributes, second, also to the field feminist narratology. By engaging with Joyce's text, the analysis has filled a gap in the feminist narratological engagement with gender, which has, until now, focused on other authors and periods and avoided an in-depth discussion of Joyce. By focusing on masculinity in narrative, the study has also provided an application for an emerging field of cultural narratology. Instead of attempting to formulate a new theory of a masculinity-studies oriented narratology, I have argued, and exemplified in my close readings, that masculinity should not be analysed according to a formula or a fixed set of tools. My approach was to suggest a flexible formal engagement with the narrative structures that constitute the fabric of manliness in the texts because this does justice to the context-situatedness of the micro-narratives within institutional settings and plot situations. If a more systematic and more rigorous theory or method will emerge in the future, this will be a welcome addition to the narratological toolset, but any such approach needs to remain flexible enough to accommodate the plurality of masculinities in narrative texts. Finally, the study offers literary Masculinity Studies a perspective which puts form and structure on the agenda of textual analysis again. The significant results of Masculinity Studies in historicising masculine identities in fiction are thereby not made redundant. On the contrary, as the study has shown, the focus on narrative practice needs to be historical, as the interconnection between Modernist practice and masculine ambivalence in Joyce suggests.

To conclude, I return, once again, to the question from *Finnegans Wake*, with which I began. To view masculinity as the fabric of manliness is the attempt to come to terms with masculinity's slipperiness concerning any definitions. It is an effort to make it not only visible but graspable as well through the textual units that produce it. Regarding the readings of James Joyce's texts presented here, we can, therefore, say that "a man is not a man" when the stories in which he is embedded begin to lose

coherence and stability. It does not follow, however, that masculinity becomes, thereby, any less real. Its textuality *is*, paradoxically, its materiality. It becomes only visible and understandable in the form of stories and narratives. Consequently, the discussion of the texts has shown that the destabilisation of individual stories occurs on the formal level of the texts themselves. As a result, the status of narrative is paradoxical. To posit that it is the basis for the construction of a category as ungraspable as manliness means to accept its efficacy in creating powerful symbolic systems. At the same time, however, such constructions are inherently unstable and liable to de-constructions or appropriations. As Joyce's texts continuously dramatise, these textual self-stylisations have to be accepted by others since narrative practice is only successful when it is received and valued by audiences. More importantly, however, his texts show that no storyteller can ever have full control over his or her plots and stories.

This paradox of the power and instability of narrative is emblematic of masculinity as well. Continuously trying to appear coherent and natural to legitimise itself and the privileges it affords, masculinity seems to be always in crisis. Joyce's art sometimes leans, especially in *Dubliners*, towards such myths of crisis. However, even in the stories that I selected from *Dubliners*, and more so in his mature work, he generally avoids dramatisations of male crisis and suffering, and he shows an understanding of these crises as narratives themselves. His fiction exposes these self-complacent myths as perpetuating social oppressiveness, intended to uphold the "lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever" (*SL* 129), which he rejected in personal life by eloping with Nora Barnacle into exile. "Joyce understands perfectly [. . .], writes Margot Norris, "that art is produced by and reproduces ideological and social relations" (Norris, *Suspicious Readings* 235). In the fabric of manliness Joyce inscribes the instabilities of masculinity into the forms of his fiction. By understanding masculinity as a narrative construct, he found a mode of celebrating it through his art, while, at the same time, criticising its claim of patriarchal privilege.

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Dominik Wallerius

Abstract der Dissertation:

The Fabric of Manliness: Joyce, Masculinity and Narrative

Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht das Thema Männlichkeit im Werk des modernistischen Autors James Joyce. Anders als bisherige Ansätze zum Thema Geschlecht legt die Arbeit dabei die Erkenntnisse der Männlichkeitsforschung und der feministischen Narratologie zu Grunde, um so neue Erkenntnisse zu der Ambivalenz des Autors in Bezug auf Männlichkeitsbilder und -erzählungen zu gewinnen. Bisherige Lesarten von Männlichkeit in Joyces Werken argumentieren oft, dass Joyces Texte entweder patriarchale Denkmuster hinterfragen oder aber in ihnen verhaftet sind. Nur selten können sie aber beides gleichzeitig denken und reduzieren damit die Komplexität Einstellung des Autors zu Männlichkeit. Der Fokus der vorliegenden Arbeit hingegen liegt auf Inhalt und Form des Erzählten und bietet somit eine beide Aspekte des Narrativen umfassende These. Männlichkeit in James Joyce Werken wird gelesen als eine Geschlechtsidentität, die innerhalb der Werke von den Charakteren durch das Erzählen von Minigeschichten erzeugt wird, welche diese Männlichkeit hervorbringen, betonen oder auch verteidigen. Männlichkeit ist dabei eine narrative Konstruktion, die in den (Lebens-)Geschichten durch Sprache entsteht und behauptet bzw. verhandelt wird. Gleichzeitig ist Männlichkeit aber auch ein strukturgebendes Element in den Erzählformen Joyces selbst. Durch die Art und Weise, wie Joyce erzählt, werden die narrativen Selbstgeschichte der Charaktere beeinflusst, unterwandert oder auch bestärkt. Die Männlichkeit in Joyces Werken ist daher zu unterteilen in die narrativen Konstrukte der Charaktere selbst und das textuelle Gewebe der Geschichten, die diese Charaktere erschaffen. Diese ideologiekritische aber gleichzeitig auch formalistische Herangehensweise verspricht der Ambivalenz in Bezug auf Geschlecht und Patriarchat gerecht zu werden, die häufig in Joyces Werken festgestellt worden ist. Zwar kritisieren Joyces Texte häufig

patriarchale Strukturen, aber gleichzeitig werden männlich-konnotierte Motive und Themen auch häufig zelebriert und verteidigt. Diesen scheinbaren Widerspruch kann eine Herangehensweise auflösen, die formale und thematische Ebenen als zusammengehörig denkt und aus narratologischer Perspektive kritisch hinterfragt. Die Arbeit versucht dabei eine eigene Methode für die doppelte Lesart von Männlichkeit in den Werken Joyces anzubieten, die beiden Ebenen gerecht wird. Sie bedient sich dabei sowohl der feministischen Narratologie als auch der kritischen Männlichkeitsstudien, die beide als Methoden in der Forschung zu Joyce bis jetzt unterrepräsentiert waren. Nach einer entsprechenden Diskussion von Theorie und Methode, vollzieht die Arbeit dann ihre Lesart von Männlichkeit in Joyces Werken anhand von drei thematisch orientierten Analyseteilen. Diese kritischen Diskussionen umspannen die Hauptwerke Joyces, die Geschichtensammlung *Dubliners*, den Bildungsroman *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* und das modernistische Hauptwerk *Ulysses*. Die Teile behandeln dabei so unterschiedliche Themen wie Narrationen der männlichen Bildung, konkurrierende Erzählungen von Familie, Liebhaber und Ehegatte aus weiblicher Sicht, und die Rolle des männlichen Körpers in den unterschiedlichen Narrationen männlicher Herrschaft. Wie diese Analysen nahelegen, muss die modernistische Erzählweise des Autors ebenso auf geschlechtlichen Gehalt geprüft werden, wie die Inhalte der Geschichten selbst, um seiner Ambivalenz in Bezug auf Männlichkeit gerecht zu werden. Im Ergebnis argumentiert die Arbeit damit, dass eine kritische Behandlung des Themas Männlichkeit in Joyces Werken nur durch das Zusammendenken der Ebenen des Erzählten und des Erzählenden möglich ist.