

Stephen's Strategy in *Ulysses*

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In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus says to his friend Cranly, 'I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning' (268–69). In defiance of Cranly's premonition of his eventual total isolation, Stephen leaves Dublin for Paris. At the beginning of *Ulysses*, however, he is back in Dublin, living with Mulligan and Haines, an English friend of Mulligan's, in the Martello tower in Sandycove. According to Hugh Kenner's cogent argument, Stephen leaves Dublin on 28 April 1903, forty days after the diary excerpts of *A Portrait* start, but he in all likelihood receives a telegram informing him of his mother's critical condition about five weeks later in Paris and comes back to Dublin (162). The description in *Ulysses* of May Dedalus's burial taking place on 26 June 1903 (17. 951) means that, on the day on which *Ulysses* is set, nearly a year has passed since Stephen's return from Paris. (Oddly enough, he is still in black, mourning for his mother, and this strange behaviour will be discussed later.) Stephen refused to kneel down and pray at the moment of his mother's death in spite of her urgent request and he ran away from the squalid home where he felt ill at ease; he is now living in the Martello tower and working as a part-time teacher at a school in Dalkey.

Is the Stephen in *Ulysses* different from the Stephen in *A Portrait*? Although he daringly declared to Cranly that he would not serve anyone or anything in which he no longer believed, the present conditions of his life are not free from servitude. The Martello tower is a place which epitomizes the conditions of Ireland suppressed under British rule. As Vincent J. Cheng points out, it is 'a figure and parable for Ireland' (151). Haines, an Englishman, is an Oxford student from an affluent family; his father apparently made his fortune by selling merchandise to African colonies. Haines

is now interested in Irish folk culture on the verge of extinction under the British cultural invasion. Mulligan, who brought him from Oxford to Ireland, is aware of Haines's hypocrisy and, when alone with Stephen, speaks mockingly of him, but Mulligan never shows a contemptuous attitude in Haines's presence; Mulligan is scheming to obtain some money from Haines by flattery and sycophancy. In the first episode of *Ulysses*, Haines often disappears from sight and his presence is indicated only by his voice. It is obviously a reflection of Stephen's irrepressible desire to forget Haines's existence, but, as Mark Osteen convincingly argues, the very invisibility of Haines illustrates the insidiousness of the workings of British power (48). Within the Martello tower, Mulligan, an Irishman, flatters Haines, an Englishman with political and economic power, and Stephen, another Irishman, serves both of them.

Mulligan is a medical student much richer than Stephen. Stephen not only owes as much as nine pounds to Mulligan but also borrows ties, socks, and shoes from him. Mulligan's gold tooth makes Stephen acutely aware of the economic disparity between them. If, as most critics assume, Stephen paid the quarterly rent of twelve pounds, Stephen should be the master of the tower, but we can presume that the greater affluence of Mulligan and the spendthrift proclivity of Stephen have gradually changed the latter's position into a subordinate one. The Martello tower reflects the power relationships in Ireland, which consist of the ruling English, the flattering rich Irish and the exploited poor Irish. In that epitomic place, Stephen is resigned to involuntary servitude. Bernard Benstock states that, in the first episode, Stephen recognizes Mulligan as real enemy (1974, 9). It is because Mulligan invited Haines to Ireland that the tower becomes a place of political and economic frictions and as a result Stephen definitely recognizes Mulligan's 'shoneen' aspect.

Mulligan is the character who first appears on the scene in *Ulysses*. He ascends to the top of the tower and prepares for shaving as if he were holding a mass. Mulligan's mockery of the religious rite indicates that he is sceptical about Catholicism like Stephen. Observing the lather in the bowl, Mulligan shouts to Stephen, 'Switch off the current, will you?' (1. 28-29); he likens the mutations of lather to consecration and attributes the cause of the holy transmutation to electricity. Later in the same episode, Mulligan sings to Stephen and Haines 'The ballad of joking Jesus', a song which makes fun of Christ. In both scenes, Stephen's reactions are hardly described. After hearing out Mulligan's bawdy song, Haines asks Stephen whether he is a

believer. Stephen just says with grim displeasure, 'You behold in me ... a horrible example of free thought' (1. 625–26). Inciting this grim attitude are the qualms of conscience he has been feeling for his refusal to pray at his mother's deathbed. The apostate Stephen obeyed his principles and refused to pray, but nevertheless, he repents not having granted his mother's last request. What makes matters difficult for him is that, if he had knelt down and prayed for his mother, he would regret not obeying his principles. His mind would surely reproach his heart for submitting to the love of his mother against his anti-religious beliefs.

Stephen is trapped in a double-bind as Patrick McGee points out (16). Before he left for Paris, his mother hoped that he would learn what the heart is and what it feels. It is quite ambiguous whether May Dedalus wanted her son just to learn what the heart is or she wanted him to act in obedience to it. This ambiguity has put Stephen into a double-bind situation. The fact that he is still in mourning even though nearly a year has passed since his mother's death shows that he has not extricated himself from the double bind. Stephen has abandoned his Catholic faith, but he is tormented by a guilty conscience about his behaviour towards his mother. It is quite natural that he should still feel himself dominated by Catholicism. After all, he remains a servant of two masters: the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Mulligan performs a parody of the Catholic mass, he presently blames Stephen for not praying at the moment of his mother's death. According to Mulligan's logic, Stephen should have just taken religion easy and pretended to pray. Stephen, therefore, is to blame for not having pretended. When Mulligan calls Stephen a mummer, he means to say that Stephen is a poor actor. Because a mummer also means a pantomimist, Mulligan's sarcasm is interpreted as aiming at Stephen's failure to utter a prayer. Everything is performance for Mulligan; he is 'all outside' (Kenner 45). In Vicki Mahaffey's words, life for Mulligan is 'an everchanging panoply of difference that is humorous because it is meaningless' (172). His words are always a makeshift and he utters them just to suit the occasion; he forgets what he said before without feeling any embarrassment. Mulligan thinks that living is playacting. He takes nothing seriously and makes a joke of everything.

Stephen did not perform the act of praying. Slavoj Žižek states that 'a mask is never simply "just a mask" since it determines the actual place we occupy in the intersubjective symbolic network; what is effectively false and null is our "inner

distance" from the mask we wear (the "social role" we play), our "true self" hidden beneath it' (34). It is because Stephen realised the inescapable effects of mask-wearing and playacting that he could not kneel down and pray. By refusing to play a social role even at his mother's deathbed, he tried to avoid being involved in the symbolic network. When Stephen declines to wear Mulligan's grey trousers, Mulligan sarcastically says, 'He kills his mother but he can't wear grey trousers' (1. 122). Stephen insists on wearing black. The act of mourning may have less religious meaning than the act of praying, but it still is religious conduct. That is to say, Stephen's behaviours are inconsistent. Later in the episode, he says to himself, 'I want puce gloves and green boots. Contradiction. Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself' (1. 516-17). He realises his own contradictions but he does not try to resolve them. By contradicting himself, Stephen aims at extricating himself from the social role imposed upon him. McGee draws attention to Stephen's peculiar way of speaking: 'by speaking in riddles, he speaks without saying anything, without committing himself to a message that can be decoded' (16). Declan Kiberd points out that Stephen in *Ulysses* either says too little or too much all day (43). 'It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked looking-glass of a servant' (1. 146) and 'History ... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (2. 377): these words of Stephen's are certainly equivocal and almost impossible to interpret definitively. Such ambiguous words make it very difficult to assign to Stephen a fixed place in the symbolic network. The young James Joyce wrote in a letter to Nora Barnacle: 'I cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond' (*Letters II* 48). By accepting self-contradictions, Stephen secures a more ambiguous and unidentifiable position than a vagabond in the social order.

Then what should we make of Stephen's job as a primary-school teacher? It is evidently a social role. When he makes his pupils recite Milton's 'Lycidas', however, he overlooks their surreptitious glances at the textbook. To a sneaky pupil, he says, 'I don't see anything' (2. 80); his statement means a refusal of the role of a teacher. Deasy, the principal of the school, says to Stephen, 'I foresee ... that you will not remain here very long at this work. You were not born to be a teacher, I think' (2. 401-02), and in answer to that, Stephen just says, 'A learner rather' (2. 403). In this scene again, he tries to place himself in an ambiguous position.

The problem is that there were hardly any places in Ireland for those who

outspokenly defied British colonial rule and the Catholic Church. Supposedly, Stephen can teach at Deasy's school because Deasy is a Protestant. Stephen is unusually obedient to Deasy and never denounces the British Empire in explicit terms. When Deasy gives Shakespeare's words '*Put but money in thy purse*' (2. 239) as a stale advice, however, Stephen points out that these are the words of the villainous Iago. In addition, to the pompous remark Deasy makes from an Anglo-Irish viewpoint, 'We are a generous people but we must also be just' (2. 262–63), Stephen doubtfully says in reply, 'I fear those big words ... which make us so unhappy' (2. 264). 'History is a nightmare' can also be interpreted as an indirect criticism of Deasy's anti-Semitism. However, none of these remarks of Stephen's are direct attacks on Deasy's self-righteous position. To take an ambiguous attitude while keeping inner defiance, or in other words, to play a social role imperfectly all the time—this is Stephen's tricky strategy. Of course, he is still politically and economically subject to Haines and Deasy, but he manages to secure some free space in the symbolic network of the colonized country. In addition, this space is essential for the free play of his imagination.

'When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.' This is what Stephen said to his friend Davin in *A Portrait* (220). In the beginning of *Ulysses*, nevertheless, he is not still free from 'those nets'. However, he now seems to have little interest in nationality, language, and religion; his current main concern is history. We can say that while he lived confined in the present in *A Portrait*, he lives confined in the past in *Ulysses*. The main cause of this change is his guilty conscience. A sense of indebtedness binds people to the past. As Mark Osteen writes, 'Incurring and acknowledging debts, one accepts the existence of an identity that remains consistent over time' (54). A sense of guilt, a sense of moral debt Stephen feels towards his mother, connects his present self to his past self. 'Incurring and acknowledging debts', Stephen recognizes the impossibility of escaping from the past.

Stephen is not only morally in debt; he also owes a lot of money to many people. According to his interior monologue in the second episode, he owes about thirty-five pounds to ten people including Mulligan (2. 255–59). As he himself thinks, he is so heavily indebted that the monthly salary of three pounds and twelve shillings he earns

in Deasy's school is useless. Being in such pecuniary difficulties also prevents his present self from escaping from the past. It is quite natural that Stephen should long to get out of the fetters of the past.

Stephen teaches history at Deasy's school. As I pointed out before, he plays the teacher's part perfunctorily; he does not concentrate on teaching but thinks about other things. First, with his mind on William Blake, he imagines the collapse of the real world in a Blakean vision, but he soon wonders what is left after the collapse. After all, Stephen cannot doubt the reality of historical events and people. Moreover, he tries to think about the possibility of another history: how would history have developed if Pyrrhus had not been killed by a bedlam in Argos or if Julius Caesar had not been knifed to death? However, he thinks again: 'But can those have been possible seeing that they were never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass?' (2. 51-52). In the end, he concludes that another history is just an empty theory. In the ninth episode, Stephen even comes up with the preposterous idea that he is not what he used to be five months ago when he borrowed money from George Russell because molecules have all changed in the meantime (9. 205). His wish to be free from the constraints of the past and history is strong.

Stephen's remark 'History ... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' can also be interpreted as an expression of his desire to escape from the yoke of history, but it is not so easy to understand its true meaning. He intentionally uses ambiguous words. The remark means on the one hand that the history of Ireland is a series of nightmarish events; on the other hand, it can also mean that Stephen's life is a nightmare with the miscarriage of studying abroad, the miserable death of his mother and the heavy debt. Rainer Emig is right in arguing that Stephen tends to equate the macrocosmic level of history with the microcosmic level of his personal life (7). It is also part of Stephen's strategy of making his words ambiguous and contradictory. In any event, it is almost impossible to determine the meaning of this famous line. Obviously everyone can awaken from a nightmare, but is it possible to wake from a nightmarish history? In Michael Tratner's words, the opening scenes of *Ulysses* show that the awakening is 'always followed by being recreated by the social system into the same person with the same past he was when we went to sleep' (194). We cannot deny the validity of this sober view. Because Tratner uses the term 'the social system', he only takes into consideration the public aspects of history and points out the

impossibility of awakening from objective history. Surely Stephen should also be conscious of the impossibility.

It is Haines who first mentions history in *Ulysses*. In the first episode, hearing Stephen say that he is a servant of two masters, the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church, Haines answers that an Irishman must think like that. Then he says in a casual way, 'It seems history is to blame' (1. 649). In the second episode, Stephen remembers Haines's 'seacold eyes' (2. 246) and his remark on history while listening to Deasy's condescending sermon about the importance of money. Deasy afterwards expresses his self-justifying view on history: 'All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God' (2. 380-81). As Cheng points out (161), Haines's words are tantamount to saying that only history is to blame for Britain's brutal rule over Ireland and that contemporary English people, including Haines himself, are not responsible for it at all. Likewise in Deasy's historical view, the British colonization of Ireland is justified as a necessary step in history's movement 'towards one great goal'. How should Stephen react to those views of history biased by the dominant ideology? If he asserts a subaltern view different from the ruling one, he will only be assigned the position of a typical wayward Irishman in the symbolic network. That is why Stephen chooses to take an ambivalent attitude. It is the only way to avoid being classified by the dominant ideology. In response to Deasy's remark that history moves towards the manifestation of God, Stephen points to a window through which the shouts of children playing hockey can be heard and says that that is God. When Deasy asks him what, Stephen says in answer, 'A shout in the street' (2. 386). Robert Spoo argues that Stephen tries to maintain the random, insignificant events like the goals of a hockey game as 'the real data of history' (70). Spoo writes: 'So thickly encrusted with ideology and insincere language has the concept of history become, so burdened by accumulated definitions, that only the unsorted material of the actual, the not-yet-history, can be thought as uncontaminated' (70). It is not clear, however, what Stephen really refers to by 'A shout in the street'. There is no positive connection between Stephen's curt answer to Deasy and the shouts of the children playing hockey. In this conversation, too, Stephen intentionally conceals his true intention. We cannot say that he distinctly expresses his own historical view in opposition to Deasy's.

Stephen's remark that history is a nightmare is charged with a personal meaning. In

fact, he had a nightmare about his mother:

In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wetted ashes.

Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone. The ghostcandle to light her agony. Ghostly light on the tortured face. Her hoarse loud breath rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. Her eyes on me to strike me down. (1. 270–76)

When he remembers this dream on top of the Martello tower, he shouts to himself, 'No, mother! Let me be and let me live' (1. 279). What his mother wanted with him is a mystery to him; he cannot be sure whether she wanted him to pray or not. The double-bind situation in which he is trapped remains unresolved in the dream. Because he does not know what his mother wanted, he cannot free himself from the qualms of conscience. It is impossible to determine which was right, praying or not praying. The inextricable dilemma in this dream scene makes it come back again and again to Stephen's mind. Even when he is awake, he is often tormented by the nightmare. He is also trying to awaken from such a personal nightmare, but it is extremely difficult to be free from this personal nightmare as well as from history, debts, and a guilty conscience. Of course, Stephen is well aware of this difficulty when he talks about awakening from history.

Stephen takes a decisive if small action to change the situation. Although he paid the rent for the tower, he grants Mulligan's demand and hands the key to him before going to Deasy's school. By so doing, he makes clear to Mulligan and himself his position of serving Mulligan, who flatteringly serves Haines. It is partly in order to persuade himself of what Mulligan really is that Stephen murmurs 'Usurper' at the end of the first episode. To recognize his relationship to Mulligan and Haines, to accept his subaltern position as it is, is the starting point to changing things. Stephen has a promise to meet Mulligan et al at twelve thirty at the Ship (a pub in Lower Abbey Street), but he breaks it and instead sends Mulligan a telegram saying, '*The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done*' (9. 550). I have argued before that this telegram puzzles Mulligan just because it is quite ambiguous whether the sentimentalist refers to Mulligan or Stephen himself

(Tanji 346). Mulligan cannot understand the meaning of Stephen's message, as a result of which he cannot ridicule Stephen. As in the conversation with Deasy, Stephen does not directly oppose Mulligan. Using ambiguous and opaque words, he refuses to be fitted into a fool's part by Mulligan.

Here, we need to remember Stephen speaking of 'the cracked looking-glass of a servant' (1. 146) as a symbol of Irish art. This is another enigmatic remark. What is evident is that Irish art as a cracked looking-glass cannot reflect reality accurately. As regards literature, Stephen's words mean that English, the colonizer's language imposed upon the Irish, cannot represent reality in Ireland without distorting it. We should look closely at the context in which this statement is made. First, Stephen is forced by Mulligan to stare at himself in the cracked looking-glass and says to himself, 'Who chose this face for me?' (1. 136-37). Stephen's sense of discomfort with his own face stems from the dissociation of mind and heart inside him. After telling Stephen that the looking-glass belongs to a servant of his household, Mulligan quotes the words of Oscar Wilde: 'The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in the mirror' (1. 143). Caliban's anger at his ugly face's not being reflected accurately in the mirror symbolizes the realistic criticism against the romantic dissimulation of reality. Mulligan, however, does not see Stephen as a realist here; he only points out Stephen's divided self. In Wilde's aphorism, the mirror is not cracked and the idealization or distortion of the face in the mirror is caused by the romantic subjectivity of the viewer. Mulligan's looking-glass is cracked, however. Then the distorted image of Stephen's face in the glass is due not to his romantic gaze but to the defect of the glass as medium. Mulligan tries to make Stephen look in the mirror and recognize his divided self and inconsistent behaviour, but Stephen takes the opportunity and asserts that the cracked looking-glass, that is, the language and styles of the ruler, cannot represent the reality of Ireland accurately. Of course, Stephen is indirectly criticizing both Haines, who is absorbed in the study of Irish folk culture, and Mulligan, who cooperates with him with an eye on money.

The 'verbal sparring' (Benstock 1991, 39) between Stephen and Mulligan on the ring-like top of the Martello tower is unusually tense. Because the workings of Mulligan's mind are not depicted, we cannot understand how he interprets Stephen's words about the cracked looking-glass. Mulligan might just think that Stephen is suggesting the shabbiness of Irish art. When he thinks that Stephen's remark is a kind

of self-mockery, Mulligan tries to sell it to Haines as a typical Irish witticism. Drawn in by Mulligan's slick talk, Haines says that he intends to make a collection of Stephen's sayings, but, on hearing that, Stephen tactlessly asks, 'Would I make any money by it?' (1. 490) and discourages Haines. Haines feels deflated because he thinks that his interest in Ireland is genuine and has nothing to do with money. Mulligan understands Haines's naïve belief, and he does not mention money from the beginning. By introducing the topic of money first, Stephen makes it clear that Irish people are economically dependent on English people. His indiscreet behaviour is also a rebellion against Mulligan's deception in maintaining the false appearance of equality between the Irish and the English. On Thursday, 6 June 1904, Stephen is compelled by Haines's presence in the Martello tower to realise the situation in which he is placed and begins a subtle defiance.

We also need to think about Stephen's heavy drinking. It too is a kind of insubordination. In the morning, Stephen received from Deasy three pounds and twelve shillings as salary. At that time Deasy told Stephen that money is power (2. 237). In the fourteenth episode, however, Stephen has only two pounds and nineteen shillings (14. 286–87). Since Stephen should have had some money before getting his salary, he has spent at least thirteen shillings, mostly on drinking. The amount Mulligan asks Stephen for a pint of beer in the first episode is only two pence, which means that thirteen shillings would buy seventy-eight pints. Even if we suppose that Stephen bought others drinks, he must have drunk rather excessively. As Osteen writes, Stephen's extraordinary waste of money by drinking heavily 'announces a defiance of economic norms designed further to separate him from bourgeois characters like Deasy' (54). Deasy advises Stephen to save money, but, if he follows Deasy's counsel, he will only contribute to the maintenance of the status quo. In it he will permanently remain in a subaltern position. Stephen, therefore, follows norms totally different from Deasy's. He wastes money without caring about paying debts back or incurring new ones. Deasy's belief that history moves towards one goal has a strong affinity with the idea of accumulating a fortune for the future. Stephen refuses Deasy's bourgeois view of history by extravagant wasting and tries to live in the indeterminate present free from the past and the future.

Certainly, Stephen continues to live in the present moment almost haphazardly throughout this day. When he declines Bloom's offer for an overnight stay and goes

out by himself into town well after midnight, Stephen is wholly free with his future totally indeterminate. Of course, as Osteen cautiously points out, Stephen's dissipation does not liberate him from his heavy debts (55). He has to find a measure to accept debts without being a slave to them. Osteen reads a productive acceptance of debts in the vampire poem Stephen creates in the third episode. We need to trace Stephen's inner changes, which lead him to write that poem, and then discuss the poem itself.

To use ambiguous speech and attitudes to avoid the role imposed on him by a master is Stephen's strategy in the first and second episodes. Placing himself on the borderline between the inside and the outside of society, Stephen aims at finding a new literary style to represent the reality of Ireland. When he leaves Deasy's school, he seems to be firmly determined not to serve anyone or anything. However, for some unknown reason, Stephen gets off the tram on the way from Dalkey to the city centre and wanders about Sandymount by himself. In the second episode, he realised the irrevocable progress of time and the solid reality of historical events and wondered whether there were any means to escape from them. Getting off the tram, which reminds him of the linear movement of history, and wandering on the beach without any purpose or goal can be Stephen's resistance to time. As Arnold Goldman says, Stephen seems to be opposed to temporal ideas like history and the past which curb his freedom and instead to be attracted by space (147). It explains why Stephen goes to a wide-open space of Sandymount.

As I pointed out before, for Stephen, time is deeply related to his guilty conscience, his sense of indebtedness to his mother. Now he is in an open space and what he thinks about is fatherhood. He has a strong wish to break with his father. He therefore denies that fatherhood is handed down from generation to generation through time and adheres to the concept that fatherhood is replaceable in space. Richie Goulding, his uncle, and Kevin Egan, a political exile he got acquainted with in Paris, appear in his mind as a possible substitute father, but they are both helpless men who always look back on their good old days due to their present miserable circumstances. For Stephen, who aspires to live in the present severed from the past, neither of them are suitable as a father figure.

Stephen tries to break a connection with the past by resorting to the idea of spatially replaceable fatherhood. Seeing a living dog sniffing at a dead one on the

beach, Stephen feels as if the living dog were moving towards one great goal just as Deasy asserts about history (3. 351). At the same time, he remembers being called 'poor dogsbody' (1. 112) by Mulligan and identifies himself with the dead dog. The dead dog sniffed at by the living dog strikes him as an image of himself incapable of escaping from history moving towards one goal. Stephen then recalls the dream he had the previous night. Haines had a nightmare about a panther, gave a frightening shout, and woke up Stephen. A little afterwards, Stephen fell back to sleep and had a strange dream. He was in some street of harlots, and then Haroun al Raschid with a melon in his hands led him through the hallway to where someone was waiting. Before he knew whom he was supposed to meet, he woke up. It is a baffling dream the meaning of which is almost impossible to establish, but the important thing is that Stephen was not afraid when he had this dream. In contrast, Haines's dream about a panther and Stephen's dream about his mother both derive from a sense of guilt (on Haines's part, about the British colonization of Ireland) and frighten the dreamer. The dream of Haroun al Raschid shows to Stephen that there is a possibility of creating a free pleasurable fantasy inside his mind, which seems to be hedged about by the past. In fact, he writes a piece of poetry a little later.

In the third episode, Stephen writes a poem on a paper torn from Deasy's letter he was asked to deliver to a newspaper office, but the whole of the poem is not revealed there. We can only see its fragments coming into his mind: 'He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss' (3. 397-98). The complete poem appears in his interior monologue in the seventh episode.

*On swift sail flaming
From storm and south
He comes, pale vampire,
Mouth to my mouth. (7. 522-25)*

Although there is no mention in his monologue, the poem is an adaptation of Douglas Hyde's English translation of a Gaelic folk song. What should we make of this unoriginal and rather mediocre creation? Kenner just discards it as 'a poetic defeat' (57). The poem shows the deadlock of Stephen's self. According to Kenner's

interpretation, as Stephen's introverted subjectivity becomes pervasive in the third episode, the book is beginning to be 'claustral' (41). At that point, a new character, Leopold Bloom, is introduced to break the stalemate. Kenner's reading reflects Joyce's view of Stephen as having 'a shape that can't be changed' (Budgen 107). Osteen argues that the experience of writing a vampire poem teaches Stephen that the creation of a literary work is always influenced by other literary works of the past. In other words, he learns a productive way of incurring debts (67). Since Stephen's poem is an adaptation of a translation, Osteen's argument is fairly persuasive. Still, the poem, an adaptation quite simple in style and content, indicates a mere possibility of making a productive use of past literary works. Stephen still has a long way to create a mature work with a new and original style.

Marilyn French regards Stephen in the third episode as not being free from a way of thinking which opposes subjective identity against objective reality, but she also points out that 'the tension between these poles are diminished' (81). Stephen is accepting the interaction between the internal and the external world and stepping out of his paralysis. Enda Duffy says that Stephen 'begins to search for significance in the figures about him' (52). On Sandymount, he certainly becomes aware of the 'Ineluctable modality' (3. 1) of the world about him and begins to break the mould of his closed self. In Duffy's view, this change of Stephen's perspective leads up to an 'inclusive and open-ended' community envisioned in the whole of *Ulysses*. Both Mark Osteen and Declan Kiberd assert that Stephen is opening his self-sufficient mind to the external world (Osteen 67–68, Kiberd 73–74). The odds are against Kenner, who considers Stephen's introversion to bring the novel to a deadlock.

At the end of the third episode, Stephen watches a ship approaching Dublin Port.

He turned his face over a shoulder, rere regardant. Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship. (3. 503–05)

In the quotation above, Stephen's figure is depicted in the terms of heraldry ('rere regardant'). We should remember that, at the end of the second episode, the lions on the pillars of the school gate were depicted as 'couchant' in the terms of heraldry too. When he passed through the gate, Stephen thought of those lions as 'toothless terrors'

(2. 429–30). In the third episode, he recalls Mulligan's words, 'Toothless Kinch and I, the supermen' (3. 496) and thinks about their meaning. The heraldic terms and the word 'toothless' connect the lion statues with Stephen. Just as the lions lying prostrate are 'toothless terrors', Stephen, who sits still on the beach, may be 'toothless' or helpless. But now 'a threemaster' is clearly in his vision. He has already recognized his subaltern position under such masters as the British Empire, the Catholic Church, Haines, Mulligan, or Deasy and started a small act of defiance. Although he looks impotent here, Stephen sets his eyes on securing an insecure position in society, which enables him to be at least free. Mulligan called Stephen and himself the supermen as a self-mockery, but Stephen now tries to turn his 'toothless' state into an advantage.

The strategy Stephen chooses to be free under the rule of the British Empire and the Catholic Church is to make his position obscure and avoid the stereotypical role assigned by society. He keeps an ambiguous position between the inside and the outside of society. Such ambiguity only makes it possible for him to maintain freedom and isolation. In this free and isolated position, he tries to create a work of art for the uncreated conscience of his race.

Note

All references to *Ulysses* are to the edition listed in Works Cited. References are made by the juxtaposition of the episode number and the line number.

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