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"By Contraries" ("Ulysses" 15.3928): James Joyce's Rendering of Drama in "Exiles" and "Circe"

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"BY CONTRARIES" (ULYSSES 15.3928): JAMES JOYCE'S
RENDERING OF DRAMA IN EXILES AND "CIRCE"

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

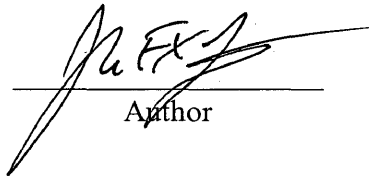
John FX Flynn

2000

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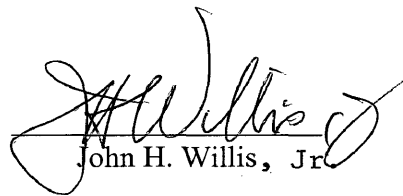
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iv
INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER I	5
CHAPTER II	11
CHAPTER III	22
CHAPTER IV	36
NOTES	40
LIST OF WORKS CITED	44

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers James Joyce's development and application of an aesthetic which emphasized and utilized the principles of drama. Joyce's early essays established his views on drama and he applied that aesthetic to two of his works, Exiles and the "Circe" episode of Ulysses. In both texts, Joyce relies on dualistic technique to create what he felt was a necessary level of drama. This method, which involves pairs of opposed characters and ideas, suggests that, amongst his many influences, he found particular inspiration in the work of the philosopher Giordano Bruno.

A close reading of each text reveals that the effect of Bruno's ideas is particularly evident in the dialogue of Exiles and "Circe". Joyce uses the exchanges between characters in each text to establish contrasts, or "contraries," with which he creates meaning via a method that maintains a dramatic structure.

This use of dualities and application of Bruno's ideas allow Joyce to experiment with eliminating the traditional narrative framework of a novel. They also provide a way for him to render his novels dramatic by incorporating the structures of drama. Thus, this study also testifies to the overall development and transmutation of Joyce's dramatic aesthetic.

“BY CONTRARIES” (ULYSSES 15.3928): JAMES JOYCE’S
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INTRODUCTION

Despite establishing himself as one of the most innovative and influential novelists of the twentieth century, James Joyce yearned instead to excel as a dramatist. Joyce especially admired the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, and did not consider novels the chief end of his art because he came to believe that drama represented the purest form of artistic expression.¹ From his earliest essays, Joyce maintained that only the methods of drama could create a work so perfectly constructed and balanced as to be independent of its creator.

Joyce tried to emulate Ibsen, but experienced only failure as a stage dramatist. Exiles, Joyce's one complete play, never managed to “create the sensation he had hoped for” (Ellmann 569),² ultimately leading Joyce to abandon writing directly for the stage. Yet, Joyce maintained his early belief in the superiority of drama and continued to base his aesthetic on dramatic principles. All of Joyce's work, from Dubliners to Finnegans Wake, thus became what Ellmann calls an “exaltation of drama” (73), but his two most openly dramatic pieces—Exiles and the “Circe” episode of Ulysses—illustrate the fullest extent of Joyce's fascination.

Both texts display the sort of “interplay of passions” and “strife” (Joyce, “Ecce Homo” 32) which Joyce saw as both the essence of drama and the source of its power. In all of his texts, he relies to some extent on dualistic patterns which create interplay and strife by relying on oppositions among characters, ideologies, and genders. Exiles and “Circe” exhibit this method and, by virtue of their dramatic format, also provide examples of Joyce's most successful technique for creating texts patterned on the precepts of drama: his use of dialogue. Both works are built around meticulously structured, largely dualistic conversations which Joyce uses to communicate his dramatic aesthetic.

The pattern of the conversations in Exiles and “Circe” exemplifies the way Joyce employed dialogue to render “all his novels dramatic” (Ellmann 73). While his aesthetic developed throughout his career, his initial understanding of conflict as the mechanism of drama led to a determination that dialogue, properly constructed and counterbalanced, could imbue any artistic work with dramatic quality. He organizes the dialogue in Exiles and “Circe” into sequences of questions which generate dramatic oppositions; the drama of each work thus springs from its actual structure. The most dramatically productive of these questions remain unanswerable, allowing Joyce, who characterizes the whole enterprise of “naked drama” as the “opening up of a great question” (“Ibsen’s New Drama,” 63), to maintain the dramatic energy in each text. The questions become the “dialectical principle” (Weir 180) by which Joyce creates and sustains dramatic conflict between the characters, who press each other with questions they cannot or will not answer. This use of deliberate, oppositional dialogue as a structural element becomes Joyce’s means of putting his principles about drama into action.

While both Exiles and “Circe” illustrate how Joyce’s dramatic aesthetic informed his use of dialogue and transformed it into an important dramatic mechanism, only “Circe” utilizes the technique effectively. On stage, Exiles has repeatedly failed with audiences, suggesting that Joyce’s ability to use this “dramatic” style was not fully formed in the earlier work. Exiles, despite its flaws, does preserve Joyce’s early experiments with this dialectical technique; “Circe,” however, demonstrates a far superior ability to generate effective drama, partially because it reflects the later transmutation of Joyce’s earliest visions of his aesthetic. “Circe’s” more balanced and productive dialogues indicate the lessons Joyce drew from Exiles and, since it uses the dualities perpetuated by its questions much more effectively than Exiles, “Circe” clearly establishes how Joyce’s ability to render his ideas in dramatic terms had developed. Joyce’s belief in the superiority of drama underlies both Exiles and “Circe,” but the successful embodiment of those ideas in “Circe” allows us to trace the way Joyce perfected a style for creating according to his aesthetic beliefs. Indeed, the text allows us to see both the new shape of his aesthetic as well

as the persistent influence of the earlier dramatic theories which shape Exiles. While Exiles remains useful in tracing Joyce's development in style and method, "Circe" not only improves on Joyce's early experiments with drama but actually develops a method of dualism which enables Joyce to write in dramatic style without sacrificing the larger artistic purposes of his texts.

I

The roots of Joyce's aesthetic preference for drama lie in his affinity for both the plays of Ibsen and the philosophy of Giordano Bruno. Joyce's exposure to the work of these two men influenced both his desire and ability to cast his art in dramatic terms. More importantly, what Joyce admired in each reveals his inner beliefs about dramatic success. Ibsen's plays gave Joyce a model of craftsmanship in the form of Naturalistic drama and examples of themes which most interested him: the conflicts of domestic, commonplace lives. Bruno's ideas, on the other hand, offered Joyce the intellectual framework he needed to mimic Ibsen.

Joyce encountered Ibsen first, and the plays he read "convinced [him] of the importance of drama" at a fairly young age (Ellmann 54). Joyce was initially drawn to the similarities between himself and Ibsen: both men were from small, post-colonial countries removed from the European mainstream, both were raised in financially troubled households, and, in Joyce's view, both were engaged in creating and defending art in a hostile culture. Yet, Joyce's admiration quickly moved beyond these biographical parallels as he began to appreciate Ibsen's skill as a dramatist. B. J. Tysdahl's study Joyce and Ibsen astutely notes that Ibsen was less an influence on Joyce and more of a "confirmer" (36) of Joyce's pre-existing notions; indeed, according to Tysdahl, Ibsen's plays were "a shock [to Joyce], but in the main a shock of recognition rather than of revelation" (40), because they ratified many of Joyce's own ideas on drama. In particular, Joyce respected Ibsen's ability to create dramatic art directly out of life through his use of "suggestive" dialogue (Tysdahl 34), his willingness to write about what Joyce called "the most commonplace" events of life ("Drama and Life," 45), and his ability to convey a sense of the underlying impulses governing interactions between characters on a stage. After studying Ibsen, Joyce advanced the same three ideas in his own writing.

In several essays, Joyce emphasized the idea of drama as an “interplay of passions,” defining drama as the art of using “strife” and conflict to “portray truth” (“Drama,” 46). Ibsen's work confirmed this idea by concentrating on the strife of underlying passions rather than on the external action of the play. Joyce believed that Ibsen's plays did “not depend for their interest on the action or on the incidents [. . . or] even the characters” (“Ibsen's,” 63). This left Ibsen's plays free to “concern [themselves] with the underlying laws [of human society] first, in all their nakedness and divine severity, and only secondarily with the motley agents who bear them out” (“Drama,” 40). Joyce believed that this allowed drama to “rise” with “no perceptible effort [. . . and develop] with a methodical natural ease” in Ibsen's work (“Ibsen's,” 55), thus proving Joyce's contention that “naked drama” leads to “the perception of a great truth, or the opening up of a great question, or a great conflict which is almost independent of the conflicting actors” (“Ibsen's” 63).

That Ibsen could create such drama by focusing on “average lives” (“Ibsen's,” 63) strengthened Joyce's convictions about the role of the commonplace in drama. Ibsen also shaped Joyce's belief in the importance of strife: many of Ibsen's plays deal with the struggle between a character's innate desire for freedom, as symbolized by nature in the texts, and what James T. Farrell characterizes as the “lack of happiness [in a] life subject to laws of determination” (109). Joyce's own dramatic texts contain similar tensions, especially the irreconcilable positions and antithetical situations found in Exiles and “Circe.” Such situations became one way to facilitate the “opening up of a great question” (“Ibsen's,” 63) that Joyce saw as a key to true drama.

Both Farrell and Tysdahl point out the many ways in which Joyce's texts draw directly from Ibsen, but Ibsen's work primarily influenced the shape of Joyce's early aesthetic priorities. His plays helped Joyce determine the vital ideas and themes needed to create dramatic art, and Ibsen also provided Joyce with working examples of his own theories. Ibsen was not, of course, Joyce's only exposure to theater and drama. Indeed, according to Cheryl Herr, Joyce steeped himself in the popular culture of his day, including the “demotic” forms of drama available in

Dublin's music halls (5).³ Those experiences also play a large role in his conceptions of drama, especially later in his career when he writes "Circe," but Ibsen himself remains a powerful early influence. The young Joyce embraced Ibsen as a rebel, who provided radical positions to argue. He saw in Ibsen the fearlessly innovative artist he wished to become and "found [him] a justification of his attempts to write without concern for conventions, literary or otherwise" (Tysdahl 36). Though Joyce eventually outgrew the need he had as a young man to differentiate himself, the initial attachment created by that youthful impulse helps explain the Ibsen's enduring influence in Joyce's work and aesthetic thinking.

As Joyce was reading Ibsen's plays, he also read Bruno's philosophy for the first time. Joyce, who discovered Bruno while studying Italian at University College with Rev. Charles Ghezzi, S. J., found him "an unexpected master" (Ellmann 59). Joyce became fascinated by the heretical philosopher's ideas on the natural divisions of unity into "contraries" (Ellmann 60) because it suggested to him "a kind of dualism" (Selected Letters 305-6)⁴ that seemed inherently dramatic. Joyce's ideas about "interplay" and "strife" in drama had already been confirmed by Ibsen, but what Joyce saw in Bruno's work on oppositions promised more: a method for constructing dramas like Ibsen's. Bruno's principle of contraries, with its emphasis on underlying conflicts and tensions, suited Joyce's dramatic aesthetic perfectly, allowing Joyce to use Bruno both to justify his beliefs and to create according to them.

Joyce's ideas on Ibsen stemmed from years of study and devotion: by 1903, Joyce had read most of Ibsen's work, along with G. B. Shaw's commentary The Quintessence of Ibsenism, and had even begun learning Norwegian (Tysdahl 26). With Bruno, however, Joyce possessed only an inkling of his ideas. His familiarity was limited to a single work: the set of Dialogues Bruno published in 1584.⁵ This treatise, entitled Concerning the Cause, Principle, and One, seeks to establish that the ultimate state of being as one of unity. In the course of the treatise, however, Bruno describes the reconciliation of "contrary" states as one method of attaining the ideal of

unity. This section, on a doctrine Bruno called the “Coincidence of Contraries,” is the only one Joyce seems to have employed in his own writing.

Joyce focused on that particular doctrine because it connected so easily to his own thinking. In that section, Bruno posits the necessity of opposition by stating that “no contrary exists except in relation to its opposite; the opposite is its limit and term . . .” (trans. Greenberg 72). Bruno thus argues dualistically: unity results from the reconciliation of opposites and, thus, can only be found through antithetical contraries. Bruno's insistence on oppositions, that “all things are made of contraries” (qtd. in Paterson 136), appealed directly to Joyce's notion of drama as “interplay.”

Joyce began writing about his dramatic theory in 1899, the same year Ghezzi introduced him to Bruno's work. In the course of two essays, “Ecce Homo” (1899) and “Drama and Life” (1900), Joyce drew on his knowledge of both Ibsen and Bruno to emphasize the importance of “strife” and an “interplay of passions” in drama (“Ecce Homo,” 32), which he was now understanding in terms of Bruno's “contraries.” For Joyce, these ideas suggested not merely a means of understanding the nature of existence, but also a viable method of creating art which faithfully reproduced the divided nature of reality. Embracing this proof of the oppositions he perceived in life and in the dramatic art of Ibsen, Joyce saw how contrary characters and conflicting ideas might allow him to reproduce the dramatic tensions of human experience. Joyce's earliest essays reflect this dualistic understanding of reality and art, including one which purported to quote Bruno—the “Nolan”—himself. This essay, “The Day of the Rabblement,” begins by asserting:

No man, saith the Nolan, can be a lover of the true or the good
unless he abhors the multitude; and the artist, though he may
employ the crowd, is very careful to isolate himself. (69)

This idea of the artist as defined and completed only in isolation and by abhorring others springs from Bruno's notion that each contrary is delimited by a discreet opposite. Joyce's thinking in "Rabblement" suggests that he had already embraced Bruno's notions by 1900-1.

Joyce's dramatic aesthetic emerges from this formative period influenced by both Ibsen's plays and the possibilities of Bruno's "contraries." Yet, at this point, Joyce had difficulty transforming his ideas into art because his theories did not provide a practical artistic method.⁶ It took a number of failed attempts before Joyce's work effectively conveyed its underlying dramatic oppositions. He remained convinced, however, that the principles of drama could apply to different types of art: from 1899 onward, his essays argue for a range of subjects suitable for dramatic treatment. In "Ecce Homo," he "reads" a painting by praising its *dramatic* qualities, concluding that "it is a mistake to limit drama to the stage" (33). This idea, that dramatic properties could shape even texts not written for the stage, helps us understand how Joyce creates "dramatic" fiction (Ellmann 73). This belief gave both his aesthetic and its debt to the encounters with Ibsen and Bruno an impact on his canon far beyond his limited attempts to write for the stage.

When Joyce turned to fiction, after finding himself unable to write a drama which satisfied him, he began to seek ways to imbue his prose with dramatic principles because he had viewed non-dramatic literature as "a comparatively low form of art" ("Drama," 41). Having realized "that his esthetics [sic] could have no independent publication" in a play, Joyce realized "that it must justify itself by helping to shape his [other] work" (Ellmann 127), and learned to separate form from intention in his aesthetic. One of Joyce's earliest successes with innovative prose forms, the epiphany, enabled him to add dramatic intent to the stories in Dubliners.

Epiphanies excited Joyce because they provided the "distance" he had learned to admire in Ibsen's dramas: the "distancing that all drama creates . . . simply by being drama" (Tysdahl 45). The epiphanies allowed him to use a dramatist's aloofness at the climax of his stories by seeking "a presentation so sharp that any comment by the author would be an interference" (Ellmann 84).

Now a “commonplace [technique] of modern fiction” (Ellmann 84), epiphanies were successful on many levels, but they were most important to Joyce because they used the banality of life to imbue his prose with dramatic power.

Yet, the epiphanies, despite their artistry as “most delicate and evanescent of moments” (Joyce, Stephen Hero 216), proved ill-suited for Joyce's longer works, particularly Exiles and Ulysses. In more elaborate narratives, epiphanic moments carry little weight; they proved less successful in Portrait than Dubliners, and Joyce abandons them altogether in Exiles and Ulysses. In their place, Joyce creates new means of incorporating dramatic revelation, relying on an increasingly dualistic approach in place of epiphanies. In Exiles and Ulysses, Joyce employs systems of Brunoesque “contraries” to create meaning through tension and, while these dualisms take many forms, dialogue quickly becomes Joyce's most successful means of creating dramatic interplay.

The dialogue and questions in these texts allow Joyce to create dramatic fiction which transcends traditional prose structures of narrator or authorial voice. Instead, Exiles and Ulysses rely on tensions between contrary characters and ideas, maintaining sets of internal structural balances which permit Joyce to move away from conventional narrative authority towards these more open narrative strategies. Once he had eliminated the necessity for narration in the conventional sense, Joyce's prose could now approach the autonomy he initially admired in drama, wherein the artist becomes “invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” (Joyce, Portrait 233). Joyce's innovations in Exiles proved that oppositions could sustain drama without artistic intervention, pushing his aesthetic closer to an effective means of informing his work.

II

Exiles demonstrates Joyce's first serious attempt to apply his ideas about drama to a full-length play. With its strict "application of the theories Joyce expounds in his early essays" (Tysdahl 27), Exiles became the first mature test of those beliefs. Though at best "a bad play, opaque to both reader and viewer" (MacNicholas, "Stage" 9), Exiles can also be seen as "a highly useful dead end" (Voelker 499) because it contains the beliefs about the mechanics of drama which Joyce later uses to create "Circe." As a result, we can study Exiles as a fruitful, if not successful, experiment which allowed Joyce to test the workability of his aesthetic.

The play focuses on Richard Rowan, an Irish writer returning from self-imposed exile in Italy with his common-law wife, Bertha, and their son, Archie. Rowan shares much in common with Stephen Dedalus of A Portrait, but, as a middle-aged artist, he faces very different obstacles. Instead of Stephen's "nets" of "nationality, language, [and] religion" (Portrait 220), Rowan's dilemma involves his obsessive desire to free himself from domesticity and to give Bertha a similar freedom.

Another immediate difference is that Joyce, now attempting to portray artistic and domestic struggles externally on stage, abandons many of the novelistic devices used in Portrait. Instead, Joyce decides to use dialogue and opposition to establish the themes of the play, bringing Rowan's desires into focus by introducing two other oppositional characters in the opening scenes of Act I: Beatrice Justice and Robert Hand. Joyce, who saw dialogue as the key element in Ibsen's drama, allowing the playwright to present "his men and women passing through different soul-crises" ("Ibsen's," 49-50), constructs Exiles almost entirely out of such one-on-one interactions, many of which he had sketched out in his working notes. He thus explores the complex interrelationships and conflicting passions between Richard, his wife, and their visitors

through conversations in which the contrary motive of each character ensures that the dialogues generate strife.

Beatrice Justice, the lover and muse Rowan abandoned for Bertha nine years before, represents his wish to rid himself of domestic responsibilities. Though their love is cold and unconsummated, he confesses in the opening scene that he writes for her, suggesting an intellectual bond he does not share with his wife, Bertha. In turn, Robert Hand, Rowan's oldest friend in Ireland, symbolizes the bonds of family and past history which Rowan would escape. Hand wants Rowan to stay in Ireland, arranging for him a chair in romance languages at the University. Yet he also represents a past in which he and Rowan fought for Bertha and, in Act I, he announces his intention to win Bertha away from Rowan. His overtures present Rowan an opportunity: by telling her to go to Hand, Rowan can grant Bertha the same liberty he seeks for himself.

Act I, which takes place entirely in the Rowan's home outside Dublin, culminates when Rowan and Bertha confront each other and struggle to reconcile the opposing desires embodied by Justice and Hand. Rowan wants Bertha to wound him as punishment for how he has wronged her, embracing the idea of Bertha's adultery to relieve his own guilt. Yet Bertha's reluctance to betray Rowan complicates the solution he has invented. Their love compels her to do what Rowan wants, but her lingering desire for him makes Hand unacceptable to her. The advances flatter her, because Rowan often ignores her to be alone in his study, but she finds that she cannot do as Rowan wishes. Their pointed conflict precludes resolution, and the end of the act leaves them growing further apart.

In Act II, the oppositions continue to clash as Rowan and Bertha pay separate visits to Hand's cottage in Ranelagh. Rowan goes to confront Hand with his knowledge of the proposed affair, but leaves with neither a capitulation nor an apology from Hand. The reasons behind Bertha's reasons are less clear: while not committed to sleeping with Hand, she does see him as her only refuge from isolation. The act ends with Bertha staying on at the cottage, but Joyce

leaves the oppositions unresolved by deliberately making it difficult to ascertain whether the affair is consummated.

Act III returns to the Rowan's home and concerns itself with the repercussions of the previous act. While Bertha has been with Hand in the interim, Rowan has spent the night writing, yet neither he nor his wife seems fulfilled by the chance to embrace opposition and pursue their own path. Their conversations take up most of the act, but fail to resolve their contrary feelings because Richard remains determined to let her go even as Bertha tries to return. Since neither can breach this impasse, their conversation becomes a series of unanswered, and unanswerable, questions. The play, lacking closure, ends on an ambiguous note of doubt and isolation, without suggesting any hope for unity between Rowan and Bertha.

In each act, Joyce composes a series of confrontations between contrary concepts and incompatible characters, a method which creates dramatic “strife” by drawing on Bruno's work. Bruno's assertion that each contrary state of being exists only “in relation to its opposite” (trans. Greenberg 72) generates the peculiarly oppositional nature of the quadrangle of intimacies in Exiles. Joyce, who initially interpreted Bruno's philosophy as dualistic, sought to incorporate a similarly binaristic approach that would permit the characters to define each other through opposition. His notes, which refer to the play as “three cat and mouse acts” (Poems and Exiles 351), suggest that he envisioned the entire structure of the play as a set of binary oppositions. Within the text, he then uses these dualisms to control meaning, exploiting the counter-balanced oppositions between the “representative positions” (Brivic 29) of the four main characters.⁷ Joyce hoped that the disparity and discord between those positions would allow the text to create its own meanings through the interplay of its internal oppositions, much like Ibsen's dramas.⁸

Joyce emphasizes the interaction of these oppositions by focusing on exchanges between pairs of contrasting, yet interdependent, characters in the text. As Krause notes, Joyce's “carefully constructed dialogue is often playfully counterpointed” (263), becoming an expository device which clarifies the defining contraries between the personalities on stage. Every exchange

becomes a “counterposition of modes of insincerity” between the characters' irreconcilable agendas (Kenner 70), reinforcing the divisions in the text by unveiling “counterposition[s]” in every line, even as the characters ostensibly try to talk their way towards unity. The sequence of these dialogues is also very deliberate: in fact, the structure of Act I emphasizes the oppositional dialectic at the core of the play between Rowan and Bertha. Joyce creates this focus by moving through every other possible pairing first, saving the Rowan-Bertha combination until the end of the act. He directs the audience to see them as the center of the drama, by defining and isolating them through the oppositions introduced in the preceding dialogues. By the time they are left to face each other, at the end of Act I, each has been fully explored and the audience has a clear sense of their contrary positions.

The primary way Joyce keeps these divisions alive in the dialogue involves the use of questions. The open questions he uses to construct the dialectic of the play prevent true discussion and comprehension between the principals by forcing them to speak at each other without listening or understanding. Joyce introduces this technique in the opening scene, when Rowan confronts Beatrice Justice about his lingering feelings for her. When he demands, “Have you thought over what I told you when you were last here?” (118), her reply, “Very much” (118), evades the force of the query and provides little information. This exchange establishes the mode of the whole play: just as these two converse almost entirely in questions and evasions, dancing around desires they will not name to each other or the audience, the play follows a similar pattern. Since all conversation remains in this mode, the characters remain separate, unable to connect.

The way that Joyce uses questions in that scene to expose interpersonal rifts permeates the entire text. Because such questions confront characters unwilling or unable to answer, they generate a sequence of frustrated conversations which illustrate the conflicts of the play. The state of constant opposition created by the way these questions present “jarring juxtapositions of different sensibilities” (Maher 462) allows Joyce to use each character as a means of defining

others through contrast. Each stunted conversation thus keeps the text's contraries both explicit and dramatically productive.

Joyce also blocks each scene to underscore the sense of opposition, particularly when the primary oppositional pair, Rowan and Bertha, confront each other. Joyce conspires throughout the script with a “workmanlike tidiness” (Tindall 107) to leave only two of the characters on stage at a time.⁹ While mechanical and calculated almost to the point of stifling the drama, Joyce's elaborate choreography creates binary situations for each confrontational dialogue, ensuring that “an opposition between two points of view is readily established” in each scene (Wright 52). Rowan and Bertha's scenes exemplify this technique; in their first scene at the end of Act I, for instance, Joyce keeps them physically separate from the beginning by sending Bertha to the table at center stage before she speaks. While Rowan interrogates her, she remains standing apart, next to the roses Hand has given her, “*fingering the petals*” and answering “*absently*” (165). Joyce's stage directions force us to recall the emotional distance of every male-female pairing in the text, while also emphasizing Bertha's lack of intimacy with her husband. This method works in concert with their dialogue's unanswered questions to establish opposition. In fact, even when the stage directions permit physical proximity, as in the scenes between Robert Hand and Bertha, any sense of intimacy remains undercut by the answerless pauses.

Gender differences play a role as foils, but the questions remain the one device that functions at all times. Rowan and Bertha's differences are exposed by the questions which dominate their exchange. The technique works especially well for Joyce since neither Rowan nor Bertha seems willing to accept the answers the other gives. Rowan, for example, shows little interest in Bertha's replies, ignoring her feelings and desiring only the details about Robert Hand's solicitation. He limits his questions to the facts, asking “What did he say” (165) in the note he wrote and “Since when did he say he liked you? (165), yet his disinterest actually reveals how deeply Hand's pursuit of Bertha has already divided him from his wife. Rowan cannot connect

with Bertha because even the truth, that she was “not much” excited by Hand's kisses (169), inflames his jealousy and doubt.

While these questions prevent any sense of intimacy, they do not allow the questioner to control the discourse as they do in other scenes. When Rowan speaks with Beatrice Justice early in Act I, he dominates her with rhetorical questions. He lacks the same control with Bertha because his questions, however divisive, now depend on the other's replies. When he wants to know “Were you excited?” (169), he desperately needs an answer from Bertha, giving her more power in the discourse. She exerts that control by teasing Rowan with brief replies, such as “Well, you can imagine” (169). She provides little information and thus forces him to ask further questions when he would rather withdraw and remain aloof.

Bertha's honest and forceful delivery also contrasts with Rowan's hidden agenda. When he asks what followed Hand's request for an embrace, saying only, “And then?” (167), she bluntly reveals that “He said I had beautiful eyes. And asked could he kiss them. I said: *Do so.*” (167). She has no difficulty tackling her husband's interrogation; indeed, she answers eagerly, willing to give him even the details which cause him to look away “*at the floor*” (167). She wonders whether or not “all this disturbs [him]” (167), but makes no effort to approach him or to change the subject; instead, she is quick to insist that she does not “mind” discussing it at all (167). If anything, she enjoys recounting these events because her story gives her power by reducing Rowan to passivity.

Bertha's ability to exercise control makes this dialogue a pivotally confrontational moment in the play. Every other pairing in the play remains lopsided in some way, with one character directing the discourse. This scene, however, has two commanding presences: Rowan, who dominates as the central character, and Bertha, whose equal power as the opposed, contrary figure in the play emerges in this scene. The result is an open, irresolvable argument that creates drama and strife. Joyce uses this strife to further define both Rowan, whose agitation and anger betray his loss of control, and Bertha, who now rejects her role as a meek and obedient domestic

partner. Rowan's actions, his "*bounding to his feet*" (172) and "*striding to and fro*" (173) as he absorbs the truth about Hand's intentions, add to the sense of drama. Rowan abandons the reserved air of his earlier scenes and attacks Hand, calling him "A liar, a thief, and a fool!" (173), before regaining his composure. Bertha also speaks "*hotly*" (173) and "*scornfully*" (175), even calling Rowan's deceitfulness with Hand the "work of the devil" (173). These outbursts at the end of Act I change the tone of the dialogue, moving it far from the stasis and subtlety of the earlier oppositions by accentuating Rowan and Bertha's self-perpetuating contraries.

The final exchange of this scene near the end of Act I establishes the irreconcilability of their desires. When Bertha tells Rowan the truth about Beatrice's selfishness, Joyce employs more questions to increase the tensions between them. Bertha tells him that he "will get very little from [Beatrice] in return Because she is not generous" (179) and presses him to be equally honest by assuming his interrogatory pose: "Is it all wrong what I am saying? Is it?" (179). Though Rowan acknowledges Bertha's insight by admitting she is "not all" wrong (179), Joyce prevents him from further vocalizing his feelings by interrupting the scene, thus extending the miscommunication which creates the strife. The entrance of the maid, Brigid, leaves Bertha—and indeed the entire audience—unable to understand Rowan's thinking. Once Brigid leaves, Rowan returns instead to the question of Hand, telling Bertha to "decide" for herself (180) about visiting him that night and forcing her to grapple with her incertitude about Hand's intentions on her own.

Rowan distances himself emotionally from Bertha with each line at the end of Act I, refusing to compromise his isolation by answering her questions. Physically, he remains at the center of the stage, avoiding her eyes, until Bertha withdraws, leaving him alone in the room. His replies are equally cold by the end of the scene, conveying no information, not even when Bertha demands to know what he wants her to do:

BERTHA: Am I to go? . . . Do you tell me to go?

ROWAN: No.

BERTHA: Do you forbid me to go?

ROWAN: No. (180)

Betraying no indication of his feelings or wishes, Rowan ensures that all communication breaks down between them, leaving only doubt, distance, and the threat of betrayal. When extended through the play, these unresolvable conflicts weaken the play by preventing traditional dramatic closure, but Joyce's continued emphasis on such contraries instead of resolutions indicates that he saw them as necessary to the "drama" of the play.

When Rowan and Bertha meet again in the second and third acts, their dynamic remains unchanged: Richard stays indecisive and incapable of voicing his desires, while Bertha grows more and more "*selfpossessed*" (204), according to Joyce's stage directions. Their opposition, and corresponding dependence on questions, continues to deepen as a result. Joyce explores this now-frozen dialectic each time the two meet, culminating in the final scene of Act III, where Rowan, choosing to embrace his contrariness, refutes Bertha's offers of love and compromise. This final exchange completes the drama's steady march away from reconciliation and understanding.

For Joyce, the pair's separation becomes irreparable during the interlude between the final two acts.¹⁰ He keeps that evening's pivotal events a mystery, but makes the implications tangible by suggesting that Bertha remained at the cottage for at least part of the evening, enjoying what Hand later calls their "sacred night of love" (255). Bertha's brief exchange with Richard near the beginning of Act III clarifies the damage to their relationship:

BERTHA: You have not spoken to me.

ROWAN: I have nothing to say. Have you?

BERTHA: Do you not wish to know—about what happened last night?

ROWAN: That I will never know. (249-50)

Discourse no longer means anything between them: even though Bertha willingly agrees to tell him, Rowan asserts that, "You will tell me. But I will never know." (250) Indeed, Rowan's

excuse—that he has “nothing to say” (249)—suggests that communication between them becomes impossible in the wake of Bertha's time with Robert Hand.

Ironically, Bertha herself remains open to conversation if Rowan will simply “ask” her (250)—one of the few times a character in this play promises to answer a question—but he now sees answers as futile. Insisting that “You will tell me. But I will never know. Never in this world.” (250), Rowan begins his final withdrawal from Bertha, even as she promises to reveal the truth. By embracing questions and doubt instead of answers and truth, Rowan's actions represent Joyce's decision to favor strife and opposition over closure in the drama. Joyce clearly prefers at this point to move more deeply into the unresolvable doubt and unanswerability which mark the final, static “movements” of the play.

In this scene, the “process of ironic contrast that . . . gradually develop[s] throughout the play . . . emerges openly” (Krause 276), keeping the dramatic oppositions vividly focused. Joyce uses the unresolvable contrasts to cement our sense of Richard and Bertha's incompatibility and the friction of their final dialogue establishes that the dialectic at the end of the play will remain divisive and doubt-filled. Rowan now believes “it is useless to ask [her] to listen” (251), and seems willing to end both the conversation and the relationship. For her part, Bertha accuses Rowan of being a “stranger” to her: “You do not understand anything in me, not one thing in my heart or soul. A stranger! I am living with a stranger!” (252) The contraries Joyce embodies in each of them ultimately conspire to overwhelm any chance for unity.

Ironically, though this final dialogue forms the climactic moment of the play, it provides no closure, revealing little more than why communication and connection have become so difficult. Bertha confesses to the depths of her solitude by acknowledging that her feelings of isolation predate the family's return to Ireland: “Heavens what I suffered then—when we lived in Rome! . . . I was alone, Dick, forgotten by you and by all. I felt my life was ended” (263-4). Yet, she also attempts to remain open, wanting him to talk, in the hope that communication might bring them back together. She begs him to “speak out all your heart . . . what you feel and what

you suffer” (265), but Rowan only admits a “deep, deep wound of doubt” (265). His response forms yet another evasion that provides no closure. They speak without connecting, and each moves further from the other by following their individual, contrary desires instead. As Voelker points out, these moments of what he calls “discomfiture” form the “terminal dramatic moment of Exiles—the pause or silence of anxiety towards which all dialogue [in the play] tends” (502). Such moments leave Richard content to “long” for Bertha only “in restless, living, wounding doubt. To hold [her] by no bonds” (Exiles 265), while she wants him to love her again so that she can “meet him, go to him, give [her] self to him” (266). In the end, divisions and discomfort begin to preclude dialogue itself—he speaks “*as if to an absent person*” (265), while she “*closes her eyes*” (266)—because even their desires have become wholly contrary.

Joyce creates this “doubt” and incertitude with unresolved dialogues. The characters' contrary and irreconcilable natures duel in every conversation, moving the play away from any satisfying means of resolution from the very first exchange in Act I. This, however, leaves the play's structure open and seemingly unfinished as well. Even Tindall, who argues for the skillful construction of the play, concedes that “there is neither union in Exiles nor victory, whatever the abundance of conflict” (122). In his opinion, Exiles, though “made of the stuff of drama . . . somehow escapes it” (122), leading to the play's failures on stage¹¹.

The problems created by Joyce's almost exclusive emphasis on conflict, combined with his attempt to use Ibsenesque dialogue to convey unspoken ideas and feelings, generate another difficulty: dialogue that explores an inability to communicate creates a text with a method that becomes increasingly ponderous and ultimately fatal.¹² In Exiles, Joyce's dramatic aesthetic works in Act I, but, since he never allows the dialogues of the play to move beyond strife towards unity and resolution, he cannot create a sense of closure or purpose in the play as a whole.

Jean-Michel Rabate holds that Joyce actually intended this lack of closure to generate an ironic, Modernist sense of “completeness.” He sees the layers of frustrated communication as the means by which Joyce “multiplies dialogues . . . so as to stage [the text's] lack of an answer

effectively” (28), yet Joyce's method fails to create a coherent and stageable drama. He risks this, however, for the sake of the text's pervasive dualisms and is content to end the play with Rowan and Bertha as separate “as every person is separated from every other” (Brivic 51). While this separation generates the doubt and disunity that Joyce hoped to achieve by leaving the “great question” of the drama open, it leaves Exiles itself a deeply flawed play.

These same failures, however, become the strengths of Ulysses because Joyce learns how to refine his use of duality and dialogue, particularly in the closet drama which comprises the twelfth episode, “Circe.” Throughout Ulysses, dualities create dramatic strife, but with greater success because Joyce also abandons the method in the closing chapters, where Bloom returns home and Molly, in her roundabout way, affirms his presence through her monologue. Joyce's more balanced, and fruitful, applications of Bruno's ideas in the crucial chapters of Ulysses involve acquiescing to the fact that contraries move toward unity in both drama and philosophy. Exiles remains a text which MacNicholas sees as more the “invention of a possibility [rather than] the ratification of a result” (“Joyce's” 37)¹³. I will argue that “Circe,” the “ultimate development of the Dedalian aesthetic pronounced in Portrait” (Benstock, Narrative 148), illustrates Joyce's success in using his ideas on drama within a narrative context.

III

Drama becomes one of the major styles Joyce employs in Ulysses, contributing to both its method, in the text's pervasive duality, and its form, in the mini-dramas that makes up a part of the "Scylla and Charybdis" chapter and the entirety of "Circe." Yet, as often as Joyce relies on the principles of drama in Ulysses, he manages to avoid the failings of Exiles by finely tuning the way he emphasizes the contraries embedded in the text. By enhancing the balances and counterbalances of opposition in the text, Joyce retains a higher degree of control over the contrary forces in Ulysses and avoids pressing any of the contraries to the irresolvable depths he touches in Exiles. Even Bloom's opposition with Molly throughout the text leaves itself open to a potential unification in the "Ithaca" and "Penelope" chapters. By using contraries as a consistent pattern rather than a fixed set of dualities, Joyce invents a more successful use of Bruno's concept. Exiles had allowed Joyce to experiment with enhancing his text via Bruno's pattern of opposition, but the refined control he exerts in Ulysses makes Bruno's idea both more practical and more central to the actual structure of the text.

Since most of Ulysses hinges on duality and opposition, one can consider Bruno's influence in nearly every episode, particularly those which concern the wanderer himself: Bloom encounters contrariness in almost every person who crosses his path on June 16th. These oppositions work to establish our growing sense of Bloom's character and dignity. The chapter which employs Bruno most clearly, however, also places Bloom into a dramatic structure: the "Circe" chapter, where the rapid interplay of oppositions creates Joyce's most dramatic writing.

Joyce chooses the dramatic format of "Circe" because the episode falls at a point where Bloom, in order to "rescue" Stephen, must confront many of his own fears and uncertainties—most of which he has attempted to avoid all day. These repressed oppositions now rise up to

challenge him, and because Joyce, despite Exiles, still saw drama as the ideal art form for portraying conflict, he uses the style and form of a stage drama in “Circe” so that we can visualize the strife between Bloom and his subconscious insecurities. In addition, Joyce's more overt use of Bruno's ideas allows “Circe” to manifest the numerous Bloom-oppositions in the novel in tangible, voiced form, as it re-enacts both Bloom's day and his past.

Bloom wrestles mostly with himself in the hallucinatory episodes, attempting to come to terms with his uncertainties about his class, race, and gender. Joyce's preoccupation, however, remains the tension between men and women, with all of its attendant desire and, for Bloom, guilt. This gender dialectic generates strife and interplay throughout Ulysses, but, in “Circe,” it dictates both the episode's oppositional structure and its Nighttown setting. Even the Homeric parallel stresses gender strife: the 'magical' Circean power of sexuality and desire that Bloom must resist or conquer in the episode remains distinctly feminine. Because of this preoccupation, the most dramatic moments in the episode emerge when the contraries, as gender oppositions, force Bloom to confront his sexual desires and insecurities, first with Molly (Ulysses 15.297-353) and then with Bella Cohen (15.1991-3441) once he reaches the brothel.

At the same time, no single character or even gender opposition dominates the episode. Instead, “Circe” cycles quickly through a host of dualities, leaving the doubt and interplay of “great questions” active without risking the stasis of Exiles. Thus, Bloom is opposed in Nighttown in many ways that do not involve the opposite sex: as a son by his father, Virag; as a father by his son, Rudy; as a sober guardian by the drunken excesses of Stephen. Indeed, most of the other characters in the episode have their “contraries” as well. David Weir even suggests that Stephen's major goal in the episode is to confront “the contrary of himself that is Bloom” (177). The most powerful contraries in “Circe,” however, remain sexual: Bloom, as a man and faithful husband opposed by memories of his own past indiscretions, by his doubts about his wife's fidelity, and by his manifested desires with Bella/o Cohen.

This pattern of oppositions draws heavily on the philosophy of Bruno, which may in fact have supplied a source of the episode's title and hallucination-based method.¹⁴ Weir argues that Bruno's ideas are “invaluable to Joyce's artistic practice” (179) in “Circe” noting that:

The presence of the Nolan and the coincidence of contraries are felt everywhere from the simple tag 'Nes. Yo' (15.2766) to Florry's observations that '[d]reams [sic] goes by contraries' (15.3928), to the elaborate gender transformations involving Bloom and Bella/o. (179)

In Weir's view, Bruno's philosophy provides both a “dialectical principle” and “material to be exploited” throughout “Circe” (180), but it also provides Joyce with a means of finally creating a piece of drama which embodied his aesthetic.

“Circe” openly signals the return of Joyce's dramatic ideas within the first few lines. Even visually, the episode assumes the form of drama and, despite the Linati Schema's indications about the art and technique in this episode¹⁵, the narrative flaunts the conventions of scriptwriting: stage directions, imposed character denotations (in capitals), the absence of any consistent narrative voice, and distinct sections of direct dialogue. This format, and the careful way in which Joyce applies his aesthetic to the structure of “Circe,” renders this chapter the fullest embodiment of Joyce's early visions of drama's possibilities. “Circe” is largely a “closet drama,” too unconventional in its entirety for a physical stage¹⁶, but it is also “Joyce's only serious play” (Lanters 129) and his most dramatic composition, because of his conscious effort to return to the principles of his aesthetic. Even as a pivotal and even stylistically climactic chapter which “recapitulates the large structure of Ulysses” (Riquelme 147) by self-referentially using the text as a whole as a source of allusions, the drama of “Circe” remains its most significant and successful aspect.

The episode's dramatic method reemphasizes the dualities introduced earlier in Ulysses, as Joyce returns to the use of questions and confrontations to sharpen the dramatic potential of the text's contraries. Joyce's dramatic intention for “Circe” emerges in the opening “stage direction,”

which announces the episode's "dialectic principle" through the whistle's "call and answer" (15.9). Joyce uses the exchange between Call and Answer (15.10-3) to reveal the dualistic nature of "Circe" with the authority of an unseen and "anonymous" dramatist.

The initial note also defines the staged and structured nature of the actions in "Circe": each one clearly "blocked" as if according to a playwright's wishes, reminiscent of the elaborate choreography of Exiles. Yet, where the directions in Exiles became almost too detailed to permit staging, "Circe's" hallucinations and costume shifts actually require such precision because of the elaborate, expressionistic details Joyce employs. In essence, one of the prime failures of Exiles as stageable drama—its bulky, "novelistic" stage directions—becomes a vital part of "Circe's" success, allowing Joyce to take the episode beyond the bounds of literary conventions. The notes provide a means of incorporating elements normally prohibited by the conventions of realistic fiction: rapid, protean costume changes, abrupt gender switches, and physically manifested thoughts and desires.

The blocking indicated by these notes, which stipulates the kind of oppositional staging Joyce used in Exiles, becomes another significant mode of conveying contriety. The initial sequence of "Circe" fills the "stage" with contrary couplings: the children and the Idiot (15.14-25), Privates Carr and Compton versus the Virago and Cissy Caffrey (15.43-61), and then Stephen with the Bawd (15.78-87). Yet, while these pairings echo those in Exiles, the nature of conveying their oppositions shifts in "Circe" because Joyce cannot maintain the largely binary presentation of the earlier work. Since the episode takes place on the streets of Dublin rather than in the controllable confines of Richard Rowan's drawing room, Joyce cannot isolate any single pairing. Even the most focused, binary moments—Bloom with Molly and later Bella/o—take place among other characters. Rejecting the solitary pairings of Exiles, Joyce instead makes the dialogue in "Circe" provide the same division and separation by implying oppositional blocking, even when these pairs are not isolated "on stage."

For the dialogue to function this way, however, the characters must define themselves by speaking “oppositionally.” The first spoken lines in the episode, delivered by “THE CALL” and “THE ANSWER” (15. 10-13), establish Joyce's pattern of using of inherently contrary pairs, together with their lines, to expose the necessary oppositions. The dialogue thus suggests opposition without requiring stage directions to indicate opposite positions. All of the dialogues in the opening passages perform the same role: from the children and the Idiot to Stephen and the Bawd. Additionally, even though the call does not ask a question, its very nature demands an answer, creating a moment of dramatic dialectic.

Having established this dialectic, Joyce uses Bloom's entrance to focus the random pattern of oppositions. He places Bloom at the center of the action, and blocks the other figures and forces around him; the idea of opposed pairs remains because Bloom, set off oppositionally against each new character, acts as the primary “limit and term” described in Bruno's doctrine on contraries (qtd. in Greenberg 72). Bloom's experience in Nighttown thus comes cast in terms of immediate and ceaseless conflict, forcing him to contend with cyclists, a “dragon sandstrewer” (15.185), the Caffrey brothers, and the sackragman. Bloom, of course, does the requisite “trickleaps” (15.198) and “stepaside[s]” (15.229) for each, so that Joyce can keep him blocked oppositionally (15.178-229).

One of the few constant modes of opposition in the episode, the strife between the masculine and the feminine, quickly emerges, turning Bloom's journey through Nighttown into a series of encounters with the women of his life. These confrontations, which pit Bloom's masculinity against various embodiments of the feminine, create a dialectic that uses the contrary genders to maintain the pattern of opposition. This cross-gender dialectic dominates the episode once Bloom arrives, affecting all of the male characters, including Stephen. As the center of the episode's oppositional structure, however, only Bloom faces a host of women from his past who hold real significance as contraries. He finds himself confronting his mother, his wife, Gerty MacDowell, Mrs. Breen, and, during his hallucinatory interview with the First and Second Watch

later in the episode (15.688ff), Martha Clifford and even Mary Driscoll, the Bloom's former maid. Each of these women has affected him through a binary, judgmental relationship, emphasizing the influential role of all contraries. Their presence also prefigures the episode's central moment of interplay: Bloom's sadomasochistic turn with Bella Cohen. Of course, all of Ulysses toys with Exiles' issues of incertitude and miscommunication between genders, but only "Circe" allows the two genders to converse—and conflict—so openly. The centrality of the gender dialectic in this episode even prompts Joyce to allow Molly to return for her first dialogue since Bloom left home that morning (15.297-353), thus confronting the reader directly with the very opposition Bloom has repressed all day.

The brief exchange with Molly reflects Joyce's intentions throughout "Circe": to sustain drama, he "voices" every person, object, and idea in Bloom's mind and empowers them to confront Bloom with questions at every turn. "Circe" is an episode where, like Zoe, the reader discovers that everyone "can read [Bloom's] thoughts" (15.1972) because Joyce allows each thought to voice itself openly. This extreme use of dialogue, sometimes involving otherwise inanimate objects, allows spoken words to create tangible, strife-ridden interactions between all of the text's underlying oppositions. Joyce attempted to use dialogue in similar fashion when writing Exiles, but its dialogue failed as a vehicle for his dramatic aesthetic. Joyce burdened the dialogue of Exiles with symbolism, hidden thoughts, and the play's central theme of doubt, but he fell short by remaining "disappointingly within the narrow confines of post-Ibsenian naturalistic drama" (Rabate 22). In "Circe," however, Joyce begins to draw on the innovations of German Expressionist drama, and every thought and private impulse in "Circe" thus appears on-stage, publicly embodied in spoken words.

Expressionist drama had its origins in August Strindberg's To Damascus which premiered between 1898 and 1901. Joyce encountered Strindberg's work in 1917, when Zurich became a theatrical haven during the war (Ellmann 412). At the time, Joyce saw all of Strindberg's plays and, while he thought little of them—telling Claude Sykes in an interview that

he saw “no drama behind the hysterical raving” (qtd. in Ellmann 412)—the plays introduced him to the tenets of Expressionistic theater, acquainting Joyce with a much different dramatic method than he had gained from Ibsen. In Expressionism, “the canons of naturalism, the demand for plausibility, and inner logic are totally ignored” (Furness 5) to promote subjectivity.

Expressionists like Strindberg did not concern themselves with “projecting an illusion of reality on stage,” but rather with presenting ideas “abstracted from reality” (Ritchie 15), using a host of new dramatic methods. As Mardi Valgemae's study observes:

The expressionists' concern with subjective states forced them to fashion dramaturgical techniques that distorted reality and created a nightmarish world of dream images. Actions and words were no longer viewed photographically but were seen symbolically. . . . These distortions for the sake of objectifying inner truths freed the drama from the rigid conventions of realism and encouraged playwrights to turn to a more imaginative handling of their subject matter. (12)

In “Circe,” Joyce employs Expressionistic “distortions” to portray Bloom's inner feelings; as Walter Sokel notes, Joyce “abandons the verbalizing stream of consciousness for a symbolizing technique” in writing this episode (qtd. in Furness 84). Just as in Expressionistic plays, where dramatic figures and characters “tend to embody principles . . . [and] represent states of mind, social positions, official functions, etc.” (Ritchie 15), the “cast” of “Circe” includes both persons and thoughts, particularly when Joyce assigns spoken dialogue to inanimate objects, such as the bells of the Trinity cyclists (15.180-1), the trolley motorman's “*footgong*” (15.187), and Bloom's “*cake of new clean lemon soap*” (15.337). The expressionistic distortion of these “voiced objects” help Joyce generate confrontations for Bloom that, by themselves, work create additional dramatic interplay.

Interestingly, both “Circe” and Ulysses as a whole reflect two other hallmarks of this movement. Expressionists abandoned coherent, realistic structures in favor of “episodic and often disconnected *Stationen*, or brief scenes” (Valgema 13), a tendency reflected in the episodic structure of Ulysses as well as the sequence of loosely connected “scenes” in “Circe.” Ritchie also notes that “extreme opposites seem to be a mark of the expressionist style” (19), much like the oppositions used by Joyce throughout Ulysses to generate meaning. Indeed, Joyce’s awareness of Expressionism seems to have reinforced his Brunoesque vision of drama as a struggle between binary opposites. For Joyce, expressionism clearly suggested new ways to embody opposition in his texts, many of which he incorporates in “Circe.”

Joyce’s Expressionistic approach allows him to “dramatize Bloom’s secret fears and longings” (Kelly 2), creating the Circean moment with Molly early in the episode in which Bloom’s ever-present thoughts of Molly emerge as actual dialogue. Molly’s “physical” appearance in the text, where she speaks directly to us as well as Bloom, turns a silent, fleeting image in Bloom’s mind into a richly dramatic moment of interplay. She questions and challenges Bloom openly, “satirically” wondering whether “poor little hubby [has] cold feet [from] waiting so long” to enjoy the pleasures of her bed (15.307). Bloom will not answer her question, preferring denial—“no, no. Not the least bit” (15.309)—to confrontation, which Bloom avoids throughout the text. Yet his refusal leaves the question open: it can, and will, continue to worry him. In reality, of course, the whole conversation remains another quickly stifled recollection of Molly; Bloom has avoided similar memories and thoughts all day. In “Circe,” however, Bloom cannot prevent the reader from seeing the thought, or his reaction, because they happen “in the open,” thrown on “stage” by Joyce. This is the first time in the text that readers can “see”—and judge—Bloom’s inner feelings about Molly. Though we must still view the confrontation through the subjective lens of Bloom’s mind, it remains a moment that he would prefer to suppress and only the expressionistic style of “Circe” opens it to the reader.

This pattern continues throughout the chapter, where Bloom's memories of his father and son also emerge as full dialogues, as do his fantasies about his trial and the “new Bloomusalem” (15.1548). These interactions bring into view all of the anxieties and desires Bloom suppresses during his day, as Joyce plumbs Bloom's secrets for what he calls in “Drama and Life,” the “artstuff of drama” (45). Of all Bloom's encounters in “Circe,” however, the most oppositional and dramatic is his masochistic struggle with Bella Cohen, because it stems from the primary gender duality in the text. This scene, arguably the most dramatic moment in the whole text, vibrantly captures the idea of strife and interplay between diametric contraries by drawing on Bloom's sexual insecurities.

When Bella enters the “musicroom” (15.1991), she does not speak to Bloom at first. Instead, she makes a general comment pointedly addressed to herself alone: “My word,” she exclaims, “I'm all of a muckswat” (15.2750). The personal pronoun makes it clear that she sighs reflexively and remains uninvolved in the dialogues already going on in the room. She does, however, attract attention and lets “her eyes rest on Bloom” (15.2751), presumably because he is the only male who notices her (Lynch and Stephen are too busy with their own pursuits, feminine and intellectual, respectively). Significantly, she does not engage Bloom herself; in order to heighten the dramatic oppositions at work, both her fan and later her “hoof” (15.2810) do the talking. These voiced objects, together with both Bella's silence and Bloom's indignity at being ordered about by the fan, set up a clear notion of distance between Bloom and the whoremistress. Homerically, the fan and hoof also put the wanderer-hero under Circe's spell, just as Bella controls Bloom from the outset with her “magic wand.”

The ways in which the Fan establishes control of Bloom recall the ways Bertha asserted herself in Act I of Exiles. First, it calls on the hurtful truth that Bloom's “missus is master” (15.2769), noting that he, perhaps, seeks refuge from a “petticoat government” at home (15.2769-70). This observation gives the fan initiative in the discourse by playing on Bloom's insecurities with questions that keep him on the defensive. These questions solidify the Fan's control, largely

because—like Rowan in *Exiles*—Bloom finds himself unable to supply the correct answers. When the Fan asks, “Have you forgotten me?” (15.2764), Bloom's response, the dualistically phrased “Nes. Yo.” (15.2766), fails to answer satisfactorily, thus leaving the question open. The Fan continues, pressing Bloom to attend to Bella's “unfastened bootlace” (15.2800), and by the end of the exchange, Bloom is already on his knees, without a word from Bella herself. In fact, Bella does not speak to Bloom at all until after she has become Bello, towering over Bloom's submissive, feminized form.

Joyce uses the Fan to play a vital role in Bloom's encounter with Bella/o, because each of its accusations and assertions creates strife where, in reality, only a silent glance passes between Bloom and Bella. This exchange intensifies the drama of the moment by providing what we might call an exploded view of an otherwise brief and dialogue-free moment. Since the conversation with the fan explores much of Bloom's emotional state, Joyce uses it to show everything Bloom feels in the instant Bella that rests the “hard insistence” of her gaze on him (15.2752).

As a wholly contrived moment of dialogue, this invented exchange could not exist without the Fan's hallucinatory voice. Certainly, Bloom, as a man and a faithful husband, opposes Bella, a woman and a prostitute, in many subtle and silent ways, but the imagined dialogue makes this duality dramatically active as well. Of course, this technique for dramatizing contraries can only work in the Expressionistic framework of “Circe”, but Joyce uses this style to firmly establish the central external conflict of the episode.

Once Bella shifts genders and addresses Bloom directly, Joyce keeps the scene dramatically taut by using Bello's masculinity to oppose the now-feminine Bloom's physical submissiveness. Even Bello's ability to berate Bloom with a threatening male “baritone” (15.2835) preserves an active sense of contrary opposition. As a result, the gender reversal itself matters little in terms of the dramatic structuring: the two characters remain opposed, despite each one's shift in role and identity. More importantly, the cross-gender dialectic stays intact, even

though it now operates in a bizarrely reversed direction. The switch turns the initial dualities around, but leaves the two diametrically contrary; in fact, the reversal is made possible precisely because the opposition remains in place.¹⁷ Notably, neither Bella/o nor Bloom ever exists in the same gender simultaneously; both shift genders at the same instant to preserve opposition.

Apart from this reinforced sense of conflict, the new roles Bloom takes on become perhaps the most dramatic side effects of the gender shift. While under Bello's control, Bloom imagines himself as a subservient female in a succession of binary relationships. Each new female "part" assumed by Bloom sharpens the opposition with Bello, who seems to enjoy dictating the obligations that will saddle Bloom's womanhood. Bello sets forth Bloom's feminine responsibilities as commandments, speaking with emphasis about how Bloom "will" (15.2973) now be attired in the masochistic accoutrements of womanhood: the "vicelike corsets" (15.2976) and "nettightfrocks" (15.2978) of Bloom's "punishment frock[s]" (15.2766). He treats Bloom's potential domestic chores the same way, emphasizing both the least appealing duties, and the consequences for failing his expectations:

You will 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! (15.3073-6)

Bello's invectives place Bloom even lower than his "cook" and threaten horrible penalties for "misdeeds" (15.3076). He goes on to view Bloom as a love slave, to be shared, no less, when Bello's "boys" visit "the night before the wedding to fondle my new attraction in gilded heels" (15. 3081-3), and then as a head of cattle on the auction block, where Bloom becomes desirable because he is "quite easy to milk" (15.3105).

With each role Bello degrades and objectifies Bloom further, wielding his antagonistic maleness to increase his opposition to Bloom. The sequence is quite unlike anything we see elsewhere in *Ulysses* or in *Exiles*, where both Richard and Bertha resolutely refuse such complete

domination. The brunt of Bello's power, however, springs from Joyce's construction of the dialogue, just as the structure of the dialogue conferred power in the earlier play. Once again, authority in the dialectic rests with the questioner: Bello remains dominant by asking questions Bloom feels compelled to answer. As open-ended invectives, however, the questions cannot be satisfied by Bloom's attempts to respond. They sustain both dialogue and drama in the same way that Richard Rowan preserves his "deep wound of doubt" (265) in *Exiles*: by staying closed to answers.

In creating Bloom's submission through questions, Bello "overpowers" (15.3425) him using the shape of the verbal exchange. The questions actually become so vital to Bello's sense of power that he repeatedly rejects Bloom's replies, both by answering his own questions—much the way Richard Rowan does—and by actually ordering Bloom to stay silent: "Hold your tongue! Speak when you're spoken to!" (15.3059-60). Both actions refuse the closure of answers and, because each open question keeps Bloom powerless, maintains Bello's dominance. In fact, Joyce designs the questions to remain unanswerable by addressing them to Bloom's insecurities: Bello touches on matters Bloom would prefer not to think about, asking questions Bloom cannot even acknowledge. As Karen Lawrence points out, Bello's questions allow us to "see the fears, wishes, and guilty feelings [Bloom has] tried all day to suppress" (153). The technique allows the chapter to "symbolically [dramatize] those painful thoughts that we have learned of obliquely, by means of the characters' avoidance or narrative omission" (Lawrence 153). The questions Bello pursues rattle Bloom and expose his hidden emotions, especially when he addresses Bloom's past indiscretions, the "many women [he has] had . . . following them up dark streets, flatfoot, exciting them by your smothered grunts . . . you male prostitute" (15.3176-9). The structure and direction of these questions keeps the scene energized with opposition because they force Bloom to keep his answers to himself.

The questions allow Bello to confront Bloom with everything he attempted to avoid during the day, including Blazes Boylan, by using an expressionistic situation "to dramatize

Bloom's secret fears and longings" (Kelly 2). By wondering aloud whether Bloom "can . . . do a man's job" (15.3132), Bello reminds Bloom that there remains a "man of brawn in possession" (15. 3137) of Bloom's wife and home. Ultimately, of course, Bello also forces Bloom to recognize his submission to Molly herself. By mockingly asking Bloom if he will return home, "As a paying guest or a kept man?" (15.3198), Bello insinuates that Molly dominates him either way. Bloom, of course, has tried to ignore both possibilities since leaving 7 Eccles Street that morning. Bello's judgement, that Bloom has "made his secondbest bed and others must lie in it" since his "epitaph is written" already (15.3198-9), touches Bloom's fear that he will be forced to submit to Molly since he can neither leave the marriage nor control her affairs.

Joyce uses these open questions and the strife-filled dialogue to fill the requirements of dramatic interplay. Of course, these unanswerable questions prohibit any closure in the exchange between Bloom and Bella/o, just as the questions at the heart of *Exiles* bred only uncertainty and anticlimax. No one can answer the questions in "Circe" either, but Joyce now knows how to generate closure *without* closing the questions. Instead of employing the traditional *denouement* of answers, he entirely avoids the problem of closure by simply ending the conversation prematurely for an apparently unrelated reason. As a result, Bello's litany of difficult questions holds Bloom captive only until his trouser button pops with a "Bip" (3441). When that rear button bursts under the strain of his submissive posture, Bloom regains the memory of his actual manhood. More importantly, the popping button rescues both Bloom and the text from becoming mired in endless, unresolvable uncertainty.

This sequence of oppositional exchanges between Bloom and Bella/o illustrates the lessons Joyce learned from *Exiles*. Like the play, this "scene" relies on question-driven dialogue to communicate its dualities and themes, but here Joyce keeps the drama-rich questions from becoming the center of the text. Bello does challenge Bloom, but his queries remain subordinate to the episode's more overt structures, such as the physical contrariety created by Bloom's transgendering. Likewise, the button's "bip" allows Joyce to control the flow of this particular

sequence of opposition. The contraries between Rowan and Bertha overwhelmed Exiles, creating permanent incertitude; in “Circe,” however, Joyce never relinquishes command of the extent to which Bloom is opposed. Indeed, Joyce ends the exchange with the button’s “bip” just at the moment that the opposition threatens to outstrip its dramatic potential.

The timing of the “bip” also attests to Joyce’s more refined sense of how to create drama, suggesting he had discovered a way to manage the strife he was using in his texts. “Circe” uses the same types of oppositional characters to foster interplay as Exiles did, and both works create meaning through the resultant tensions, but Joyce does not allow the oppositions or tensions to dominate this text. Instead, the contraries in “Circe” enhance and inform, leaving the text itself free to move beyond any one set of oppositions. Thus, where Rowan and Bertha’s impasse swells to become the sole note of Exiles, “Circe” works with a multitude of contraries, even the most central of which, Bloom and Bella/o, is forgotten as the text moves on to other sets. In this way, Joyce keeps the text fluid and, since none of the antipathies are permanent or even omnipresent in any single form, Joyce avoids the stasis of Exiles’ closing scene. In the earlier play, Joyce erred by structuring his most central meanings around a single opposed pairing; the construction of “Circe,” with its myriad oppositions, proves that Joyce had developed a way to render strife more workable. As a result, he can engender the conflict, and thus drama, of “Circe” without sacrificing the dynamic flow of the text.

With this measured strife and interplay, “Circe” both echoes Joyce’s initial intentions for Exiles and represents a culmination of Joyce’s experiments with his theories on drama. It also proves that Joyce was beginning to understand the larger implications of both his aesthetic and of Bruno’s philosophy: contraries are not ends in themselves, but merely steps en route to an ultimate unity. Ulysses as a whole exhibits Joyce’s acquiescence that all things, however opposite, move towards one thing, but that realization is particularly important in *Circe*, where it allows him to use opposition for dramatic effect without losing sight of the larger trajectory of the novel.

IV

Joyce's development and application of dramatic principles between the experiments of Exiles and the successes of "Circe" reflects the trajectory of his ability to place drama in his fiction. Joyce's admiration for drama may have made "all his novels dramatic" (Ellmann 73), but these two works demonstrate precisely how Joyce developed a way to allow his aesthetic preferences to shape the form and meaning of his texts. Joyce's sense of drama as "strife" and "interplay" drove his writing; Exiles and "Circe," and the progress between them, reveal the workings of that process and show how Joyce discovered ways to render the drama of his works.

Joyce's idea of drama as "strife . . . in whatever way unfolded" ("Ecce Homo" 32) led him to see dualism and oppositions as sources of dramatic interplay, even in non-dramatic prose. While Joyce stated this realization in his essays, the parallels which he found in Bruno's notion of contraries aided the development of his aesthetic. Furthermore, the changes in the way Joyce applied his aesthetic between the writing of Exiles in 1913-5 and the completion of "Circe" in 1920 represent his growing sense of the possibilities afforded to him by duality, much of which was supported by his understanding of Bruno's writings. As a result, one can see the changes between the experiments of Exiles and the more elaborate dramatic structure of "Circe" as a reflection of Joyce's struggle to define mechanisms through which he could incorporate dramatically productive dualities in his texts.

As Exiles reveals, the most fruitful methods Joyce settled upon involved dialogue. First, he constructed the play out of oppositional exchanges between contrary characters, each of whom opposed the other in a dramatically rich way. His second method, the use of questions to expose and deepen the existing dualities, grew out of the way he saw the oppositions interacting in Exiles' dialogues. The dramatic flavor of "Circe" benefits from both: even in places where

“Circe” lacks the isolated dyads of Exiles, its characters remain clearly opposed through the nature of their dialogues and their insistence on posing questions. In each text, these questions work to convey the underlying oppositions in each character, but Joyce applies the method to a far more complex text in “Circe” and succeeds in creating usable dramatic strife.

In “Circe,” the dualities perpetuated by its questions are much more effective than in Exiles, thus demonstrating Joyce's developing sense of how to generate the proper degree of interplay. Exiles showed him that strife alone could not create a viable drama because it lacks a means of closure and becomes mired in irresolvable oppositions. The solution, maintaining a way of escaping opposition so that the text could move forward, manifests itself in the “Bip” from Bloom's button. In “Circe,” the oppositions shift and change, allowing Joyce to avoid the problems of Exiles' stasis by keeping each moment of dramatic strife from arresting forward movement: instead of letting strife or opposition become the single note of “Circe” or Ulysses, it exists instead with the purpose of deepening the text even as the narrative moves past each specific duality. Thus Joyce mines the opposition between Bloom and Bella/o, for example, without letting it control the outcome or prevent closure. Instead, Joyce moves towards a larger conception that sees oppositions as part of a greater whole which is, ironically, largely non-oppositional and does not preclude unity.

Even Bloom's primary “contrary” in the novel, Molly, does not remain purely an opposite. While much of what she does and represents is antithetical to most aspects of Bloom's character, their enduring if strained marriage symbolizes how they remain uncontrary on the whole. Joyce presents this mixture of contrariness and unity in the closing image of the “Ithaca” episode: sharing one bed but sleeping “S. E. by E. [and] N. W. by W.” (17.2303), Bloom and Molly are both opposed and united at the same time. Molly's own discourse in “Penelope” echoes this pattern each time she affirms her husband and their unity while almost simultaneously remembering her other lovers, the oppositional forces in the episode.

In many ways, “Circe” establishes the pattern which characterizes the closing chapters of Ulysses, because, despite its powerful and dramatic oppositions, “Circe” remains the first place where Joyce exhibits enough control to use strife without sacrificing movement. The balance between opposition and fluid change found throughout “Circe” allows Joyce to use the full power of his dramatic methods without precluding the closure required by the novel as a whole. It also suggests that Joyce's success was at least partially due to his realization that contraries actually can move toward unity, even in drama, just as Bruno's original philosophy had asserted.

The shift in “Circe,” then, actually reflects Joyce's growing fascination with the unity of opposites. As we see in “Ithaca” and “Penelope,” Ulysses exposes a theme of unity which never appears in Exiles. Even as Ulysses explores the isolation and paralysis of Bloom's Dublin, it implies that its contraries slowly drift back together, just as Bloom eventually returns to home, bed, and Molly. Arguably, much of “Circe's” success comes in the way that Joyce's movement away from the irresolvable contraries of Exiles subordinates the questioning dialogue that provides the dramatic encounters in his texts. Those questions remain active and vital, but Joyce's new understanding of dramatic dynamics allows them to operate at a more effective level without dominating the text. Instead, Joyce shifts towards allowing contraries to drift into unity, following a dynamic wholly opposite to that of Exiles.

Strife still rules “Circe,” with Joyce mining opposition for dramatic effect, but the text and Bloom himself have already begun to move in a different direction, away from the doubts and uncertainties which spur Bloom in his wanderings. That path allows both strife and unity to work together: as the night grows late, Bloom begins to resolve his doubts, however imperfectly. The result is a sense of closure that Joyce's questions alone, however powerful dramatically, never provide. Ironically, we find Joyce abandoning his dramatic method after “Circe” to make the final chapters of Ulysses—“Ithaca” and “Penelope”—both dramatic and complete.

The “Circe” chapter plays a pivotal role both in Ulysses and in Joyce's own development. It proves that Joyce had perfected the ability to compose fiction without sacrificing dramatic

styles and principles, but also provides a place in Ulysses where Joyce can transcend the simplistic nature of contraries to move the text, as a whole, towards a greater, and more complex, sense of unity. “Circe” thus concludes the developmental trajectories of both Joyce as a “dramatist” and of Ulysses as a dramatic text. “Circe” also perfects the method of dualism which enables Joyce to write dramatically, with oppositions to generate meaning, without sacrificing the larger themes of Bloom's journey through Dublin on June 16th. In “Circe,” when Bloom confronts his opposites, the text acknowledges its underlying dualistic method before moving on to embrace the unities, however imperfect, that we find in “Ithaca” and “Penelope.” In many ways, a chapter like “Circe” was essential for Ulysses as a whole, allowing Joyce to perfect the tensions afforded by drama before completing a work that, like life, embraces both oppositions and unity. Since the triumph of Ulysses lies in this cleverly nuanced balance of the dramatic and the real, the contrary and the unified, one can see that a major keystone of Joyce's mature themes in both Ulysses and Finnegans Wake emerges from his experiments within the dramas of Exiles and “Circe.”

NOTES

¹ Joyce first makes this claim in the essays “Ecce Homo” and “Drama and Life,” but most clearly sets it forth in the Paris notes on “Aesthetics” of 1903-4, which later helped him formulate the discussion of aesthetics in Portrait. In the notes, he sets drama apart from the lyrical and epic modes of art for the first time and “award[s] the palm to drama as the most impersonal” (Mason and Ellmann 142n).

² Joyce himself pronounced its Munich premiere (on 7 August 1919) “a fiasco” and “a flop” after receiving a telegram about its unsuccessful opening (Ellmann 462); even the most “respectful” reviews “suggested that the play was not for the general public” (462).

³ Herr explores the debt which the “allusive network” (5) in Joyce’s texts owes to the culture of Dublin, and its popular forms of theater. She cites the allusions in both Ulysses and Finnegans Wake as proof that Joyce “found the [music] halls fascinating” (189), and argues that “Joyce paid particular heed to the messages, ideological and explicit, that emanated for the highly codified popular theater of his day” (97) when he composed “Circe.” Though her reading of Joyce’s intentions in using “the demotic” (15) is largely Marxist, using Joyce to conduct an ideological reading of culture in early twentieth century Dublin, she provides excellent insights into the other forms of drama influencing Joyce’s developing aesthetic. In fact, she points out that these other influences are so pervasive that “Joyce’s allusions in “Circe” and Finnegans Wake to the popular stage rely on our being familiar with the range of performance styles and dramatic modes typical of his era” (5).

⁴ Some might argue that Joyce's sense of Bruno actually represents a misreading of the latter's philosophy of unity, but both this “mis-understanding” and Joyce's recollection in the 27 January 1925 letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver remain consistent with his initial applications of what he learned from Bruno.

[Notes to pages 7-18]

⁵ In 1903, Joyce read and reviewed J. Lewis McIntyre's biography of Bruno (1903), which discusses the 1584 document in detail, including the sections Joyce drew from most heavily.

⁶ Joyce had written only one play at this point, A Brilliant Career, which he finished in 1900. He later burned it after William Archer told him in a letter that it was “wildly impossible” for the stage (qtd. in Ellmann 79).

⁷ Brivic traces the structure of these “representative positions”—and their juxtapositions—in “Structure and Meaning in Joyce's Exiles,” an early critical study of the text written in 1968. He argues for two schema, one “natural” and one “moral” (30), by which the play can be analyzed and understood.

⁸ Ibsen's influence actually complicates Exiles by adding complex domestic relationships to the Joyce's theme of artistic struggle. Yet both the “situation” and “organization” of Exiles come from Ibsen's plays (Farrell 113), shaping Exiles into a “naturalistic play with certain symbolist touches, a domestic situation with extended social ramifications, [and] a bourgeois setting within a box-stage structure” (Benstock 363). This derivative structure of Exiles contributes to the stage flaws noted by MacNicholas, but Joyce intentionally followed this model, believing it yielded characters whose drama could rise out of their dialogue “with no perceptible effort” (“Ibsen's,” 55). Joyce succeeded in mimicking Ibsen's “easy dialogue” (“Ibsen's,” 49), but had difficulty emulating the subtle balance of “symbolist touches” which Ibsen had mastered in the late plays Joyce most admired.

⁹ Tindall does concede, however, that this “neatness of structure” does not create the “clarity of meaning” it seems to promise (107-8), but it does serve purposes in Joyce's dramatic scheme which Tindall fails to acknowledge in his reading.

¹⁰ According to Brivic's reading, these “offstage events . . . constitute the main action of the play” (44).

[Notes to pages 20-24]

¹¹ As a play, Exiles had difficulty in reaching audiences despite Joyce's hopes for success. Its longest run, a 1924 production at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, lasted only forty-one performances and drew reviews that were “evenly divided: two favorable, two adverse, one ambiguous” (MacNicholas, “Stage” 11), including Robert Benchley's review, which claimed that the play came “pretty close to zero in stimulating drama” (qtd. in MacNicholas 11). In 1926, the London Stage Society produced Exiles for two nights, but the reviews were uniformly worse and Joyce abandoned his efforts to promote Exiles for the stage.

¹² Harold Pinter would later perfect techniques for staging such inabilities and he used these methods to stage Exiles successfully in 1970. Not surprisingly, most critics, including David Krause, credit the reception of that production to Pinter's stagecraft rather than to Joyce's script (Krause 265-6).

¹³ MacNicholas' emphasis on both the failings and the potential of Exiles echoes a number of critics who also see the play more as “an outstanding piece of unfinished Joycean business” (Adams 85). Carole Brown and Leo Knuth's 1979 article presents a similar case for the play as an experiment and disputes the critical tendency to see only failure in Exiles. Others, like Michael Gillespie, see the work as a representation of an important stage in Joyce's development. Gillespie actually locates the origin of Ulysses's radical style(s) in Exiles, which he sees as the “sketch for the more ambitious characterizations that would follow” (15) that helped Joyce sort through the demands of the “polyvocal” (14) structure he was planning to employ in Ulysses.

¹⁴ Norman Silverstein's “Bruno's Particles of Reminiscence” argues that the Bawd's observation to Bloom, “Sixtyseven is a bitch” (15.371) alludes to Bruno's Ars Memoriae, in which Bruno had composed a list of “sounds of reminiscence,” a mnemonic tool in which each sound had an accompanying name, power, and number. For the number sixty-seven, Silverstein finds the name Circe listed as having the power of “Fascinatrix” (274), suggesting that Bruno may have also been present on another level in Joyce's construction of this chapter.

[Notes to pages 24-32]

¹⁵ Linati's schema lists the art as “magic” and the method as “hallucination,” making no mention of drama as a guiding principle, perhaps because Joyce felt the dramatic aspect of “Circe” was obvious.

¹⁶ Interestingly, selections from “Circe” provided the basis for one of the most successful stagings of a Joyce work: a 1958 off-Broadway production entitled Ulysses in Nighttown, which used dance and “expressionistic devices” to stage “Circe” (qtd. in Laners 80). As Jose Laners notes, the adapters and producers of the play “obviously felt that 'Circe' could and should be staged [. . .] if only to spite all those critics who maintained that it was impossible” (81).

¹⁷ Of course, this technique prefigures the Protean shifting of identities in Finnegans Wake, where everyone can be anyone, so long as their opposition identities, as a Shem or a Shaun for instance, remain intact.

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