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The Influence of James Joyce on Bohumil Hrabal:
Stylistic Experimentation and Epiphanies of the Everyday

Master's Thesis

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In Prague,

Acknowledgements:

It is only fair and proper to begin this section with a thanks to Bohumil Hrabal for finding his way into my life via a box of books in translation discovered in a charity book store by professor Vic Bobb from Whitworth University. Talk about streams of cultural consciousness. Vic started a course in literature from central Europe based on this find, and my life was changed incredibly as a result. Thanks to Vic and my other professors at Whitworth, including Dr. Leonard Oakland, who at about the same time properly acquainted me with the power of James Joyce.

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Abstract:

This thesis investigates the degree to which James Joyce's writing had an influence on Bohumil Hrabal. I investigate the historical context of both, as well as the movements, such as surrealism, and figures, from André Breton to Adolf Hoffmeister, that connect the two authors. I utilize Renato Poggioli's *The Theory of the Avant Garde* as a platform from which to analyze the general stylistic elements in Joyce's and Hrabal's writing, while also divulging their social aims. The principle overlap for the pair is their mutual position as observers who are keen on revealing the epiphanies of the everyday. The writing of Henri Lefebvre helps clarify this term "everyday" and confirms its value. From this central focus, three questions arise with respect to what to do with such awareness in writing. First, how do we perceive what is around us and how can the imagination work with perception? Second, what should the narrative approach be with respect to telling stories in light of trying to reveal that awareness or consciousness? Third, what is the actual method of putting together stories and how exactly should language be used or manipulated? Each of the chapters analyzes one of these questions with respect to several texts. In the case of each chapter I contextualize these texts with respect to aspects of the avant-garde, the stage of the author's development, as well as any pertinent historical events.

Abstrakt:

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá, do jaké míry měla tvorba Jamese Joyce vliv na Bohumila Hrabala. Analyzuji nejen historický kontext obou autorů, ale i hnutí, jako je surrealismus, a postavy od Andrého Bretona až po Adolfa Hoffmeistera, které oba autory spojují. Využívám Poggioliho *Teorii avantgardy* jako základ analýzy surrealistických i obecnějších stylistických prvků v Joyceově a Hrabalově díle, a zároveň rozebírám jejich společenské cíle. Tato dvojice sdílí společnou pozici pozorovatelů, kteří vášnivě odhalují epifanii každodenního života. Dílo Henriho Lefebvra napomáhá objasnit tento pojem "každodennosti" a potvrzuje hodnotu všednosti života. Z hlavního zaměření práce vyvstávají tři otázky, které se týkají toho, jak lze s takovýmto uvědoměním v písemné tvorbě naložit. Zaprvé, jak vnímáme, co je kolem nás a jak může fantazie pracovat s vnímáním? Zadruhé, jaký by měl být přístup k vyprávění, pokud jde o vyprávění příběhů ve snaze odhalit toto uvědomění nebo vědomí? Zatřetí, jaká je skutečná metoda sestavování příběhů a jak přesně by mělo být jazyka používáno nebo manipulováno? Každá kapitola zkoumá jednu z těchto otázek ve vztahu k několika textům. V případě každé kapitoly zasazuji tyto texty do širšího kontextu s ohledem na aspekty avantgardy, stádia autorova vývoje i všech relevantních historických událostí.

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Introduction:

Pirouettes on a Postage Stamp[1] is the carefully cut-apart and pasted-together record of an entertaining and illuminating interview between László Szigeti and Bohumil Hrabal. The original title refers to the great Hungarian footballer Nándor Hidegkuti, who ably and elegantly out-maneuvered defenders on the pitch. In same way, Hrabal and Szigeti navigate a variety of topics, from childhood books to psychology and from free associations to the love of cats, all in the pursuit of revealing a great deal about Hrabal's influences, goals, and style. Because of Hrabal's involvement in reading, dismantling, and reconstructing parts of the interview in his own vision, the book is a delightful and tangent-filled exploration all so indicative of Hrabal's style. As much as Hrabal leaps, often in bounds, from one topic to the other, there are moments of particular strength and discernment, where the importance of the point lingers and it is clear that Hrabal has reworked the bit of dialogue to frame that importance. No more clearly is this seen than in Hrabal's response to Szigeti's prompt and question "you say that through writing you learn what your own essence is. And what have you learned so far?" (55). What follows is a four-page meditation in which Hrabal chronicles his development as a writer, from realism to lyricism, the journalistic to "total realism," simultaneously relating his biography, his move to Prague from Nymburk, as well as his work in Kladno, all the while interspersing references to various philosophers and writers. The meditation reaches a peak with the entry of James Joyce and his standing in Hrabal's learning. Hrabal explains:

> For me Joyce was a real giant, and I am still reading him today. His *Ulysses* is another pinnacle for me; everything's there really. The whole of modern art is in *Ulysses*, which was written somewhere between 1912 and 1921, so all the art-forms—I mean Dadaism, Realism, Surrealism, the psychoanalytical, they all run through it; that current is even in Molly Bloom, it's the border area between the subconscious and consciousness, just about visible. So I was bewitched by Joyce and I would go so far as to say that to me he is the acme of literature, where poetry merges with prose, science and music. (58)

This statement in itself prompts a debate. Does *Ulysses* really contain so many different forms, so many schools of aesthetics and ideology, everything, and is it not just an observation of the prevailing movements during that time? These questions aside, Hrabal's mention of a current running through the works is truly significant. Consciousness interested Hrabal greatly, particularly in the sense of a shared social and political understanding among writers and artists. In *Total Fears*, a series of letters to an American scholar, Hrabal shares several discussions he had with other artists and critics, including Susan Sontag. Of his

[1] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Pirouettes on a Postage Stamp.* (Original: *Kličky na kapesníku*). Trans. David Short. Prague: Karolinum, 2008. 58. Referred to as *Pirouettes* throughout.

meeting with Sontag, Hrabal writes "our conversation floated about in Central Europe, she knew the crossroads of linguistic consciousness, she knew that this was what made great literature."[2] Hrabal speaks about influences and ideas spreading almost like the confluences of rivers; streams cross and something is absorbed and continues moving on. That Hrabal uses this metaphor is again indicative of Joyce, whose work is permeated by water, rivers, and the idea of flow. The question becomes then whether there is a kind of shared wellspring that feeds into tributaries ultimately linking Joyce and Hrabal, and whether critics have given much attention to any intersections between the two writers.

Joyce's name arises time and time again in Hrabal's list of pantheons and Hrabal is quick to cite *Ulysses* in particular as a book he returns to with regularity. A little later in the interview with Szigeti, Hrabal relates how he would read sections of *Ulysses* to his group in Libeň and then goes so far as to suggest that if he could, he would "take my scissors and assemble something not unlike another *Ulysses*" (59). It was not just in Libeň that he consulted *Ulysses*. Late in life, after Hrabal had given away much of his personal library, Joyce's works were some of the few books that remained. This fact arises in Tomáš Mazal's picture of Hrabal at his cottage in Kersko, where he describes the haphazard nature of Hrabal's late library:

> The library of Bohumil Hrabal in Kersko, if it is possible to call two cupboards and a couple of wardrobes, comprised more or less of books which Hrabal made off with in the time that he worked in the wastepaper processing. Old German prints, catalogues, monographs and a few books, which followed him from his youth and studies. Joyce, Breton, Schopenhauer, History of Modern Philosophy…[3]

Besides being a delightful picture that is all too reminiscent of Haňt'a from *Too Loud a Solitude*, the presence of Joyce's books even late in life suggests not only Hrabal's long affinity for Joyce's writing, but also a kind of constant re-investigation of his style. Here too, the presence of Breton stands out because of Hrabal's interest and grappling with surrealism, from his friendship with Karel Marysko and their group in Libeň. Other critics have also touched on Hrabal's fascination with Joyce and even surrealism. One Czech critic, Jiří Holý, draws together not only a couple of Czech influences on Hrabal, but a movement, type of language, and once again, Joyce: "In the pedigree of Bohumil Hrabal, we find both Jaroslav Hašek and Ladislav Klíma, and so too late surrealism, Group 42 and James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

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[2] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Total Fears: Letters to Dubenka*. Trans. James Naughton. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 1998. 77-78.

[3] Mazal, Tomáš. *Bohumil Hrabal*. Praha: Torst, 2004. 281. Original: "'Knihovna' Bohumila Hrabala v Kersku, pokud by tak bylo možno nazvat dvě skříně a pár regálů, obsahovala vícemeně knihy, které si Hrabal pořídil ještě v dobách, kdy pracoval ve Sběrných surovínách. Staré německé tisky, katalogy, monografie i nemnoho z knih, které se mu dochovaly z dob mladosti, studii. Joyce, Breton, Schopenhauer, Dějiny novověké filozofie…"

He was also strongly influenced by modern art."[4] Holý also mentions Hrabal's unique style of "pábení," from the verb to "pábit," an element of his writing that is essential to understanding many of his works. Beyond that, the former connections to Hašek and Klíma have received a great deal of attention and scholarship, as has Hrabal's connection to surrealism. Taken together, however, Holý's mention of surrealism, *Ulysses*, modern art, and "palavering" or to "pábit" provide a great deal of the focus for this thesis. To a greater extent, the scholarship of one of Hrabal's friends and biographers, Radko Pytlík, provides further connections that help focus the analysis in this thesis. In an interview, Pytlík summarizes the connection between Hrabal's style and that of James Joyce, and the vast importance Joyce had on Hrabal. Pytlík says:

> Hrabal was also a big fan of James Joyce and could recall whole passages of his work. Joyce was his poet. Later there would be others, but Joyce held a special place for Hrabal. As we know Joyce himself used a kind of collage or montage of different levels and layers of language, reflecting different historical epochs. That was certainly an influence.[5]

This is probably one of the most significant mentions of Joyce in conjunction with Hrabal and style, and yet little has been written to connect specifically the use of montage or the levels of language as it appears in Joyce's writing to that in Hrabal's own oeuvre. One such suggestion of Joyce's impact on any of Hrabal's works comes in an essay by Jaroslav Kladiva on Hrabal's life and writing. Kladiva describes the entry of *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age* and what it most seemed to resemble:

> In 1964 Hrabal's third book, *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age* came out…like the testimony of a narrator, only coming to an end with an ellipsis…He approached the manner of James Joyce, and his serious experimentation in his *Ulysses*…This book of Hrabal's is a specific mould of his perspective on style…[6]

It is worth noting that this version of Kladiva's essay has actually been specially constructed with input, or at least the cutting and pasting of Hrabal himself in the same way as

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[4] Holý, Jiří. *Česká literatura 4: Od roku 1945 do současnosti (2. polovina 20. stoleti).* Praha: Český spisovatel, 1996. 109 Original: "V rodokmenu tvorby Bohumila Hrabala najdeme jak Jaroslava Haška a Ladislava Klímu, tak pozdní surrealismus, Skupinu 42 a *Odyssea* Jamese Joyce. Silně na něj působilo i moderní výtvarné umění. Pro jednu linii Hrabalových próz je příznačné "pábitelství". Slovo "pábit" použil již Vrchlický, ale proslavilo se až Hrabalem…

[5] Pytlík, Radko. "Bohumil Hrabal—A few notes on the author's style." Interview with Jan Veliger. Radio Praha. Dec. 10, 2003. <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/czechs/bohumil-hrabal-a-few-notes-on-the-writers-style>

[6] Kladiva, Jaroslav a Bohumil Hrabal. "Životopis trochu jinak." Únor, 1985. *Naivní fuga. Sebrané spisy Bohumila Hrabala: Svazek 16.* Praha: Pražská imaginace. 147. Original: "V roce 1964 vyšla třetí Hrabalova kniha Taneční hodiny pro starší a pokrocilé…jako výpověd' jediného vypravěče, jež je teprve na posledné stránce zakončena třemi tečkami…Přiblížil se svým způsobem J. Joyceovi, odvážně experimentujícímu ve svém Odysseovi…Tato Hrabalova kniha je specifickým útvarem z hlediska stylizace…Hrabal měl vždycký velikou radost, když do jeho fantazie zapadl nějaký skutečný člověk…"

Pirouettes.[7] It is not clear whether this particular passage was changed in any way, but it seems finally that one critic joins one of Hrabal's texts to those of Joyce. This is a helpful connection, and one to be examined in the first chapter of the thesis. Three different critics draw Hrabal and Joyce together, two focusing simply on the influence while one promotes a stylistic connection. Still though, no critic has really investigated the stylistic overlaps between the two authors, which makes the focus of this thesis all the more intriguing and relevant.

Thesis Statement and Summary:

The central focus of this thesis is to analyze Joyce's influence on Hrabal, looking at what elements of Hrabal's works are indicative of the experimentation in Joyce's *Ulysses, "Work in Progress"*, and even some of Joyce's earlier works as they tie especially to *Ulysses.* Mazal, Holý, and Pytlík's quotes taken together encompass the range of elements in Hrabal's works—Breton and surrealism, modern art, 'pábení,' collage/montage and "different levels and layers of language"—that actually serve as points of departure for investigating the overlaps between Hrabal and Joyce. These elements warrant greater investigation within the scope of the movements Hrabal ties to Joyce and *Ulysses* in the quote from *Pirouettes.* Homing in on Dadaism and surrealism, with realism in between, Hrabal presents the breadth of Joyce's style in *Ulysses*, and at the same time a conspicuous conflict between more avant-garde tendencies and more conservative style. In this thesis, I aim to focus more on the former avant-garde tendencies, and the degree to which Joyce and Hrabal can be seen as adhering and simultaneously running in opposition to characteristics of the avant-garde in the pursuit of a more specific and non-programmatic goal. As an incredibly detailed and wide-ranging topic, the avant-garde can be hard to pin down with respect to particular elements, characteristics, and social effects. For the purposes of this thesis, I employ Renato Poggioli's examination *The Theory of the Avant-garde*[8] because the characteristics Poggioli covers are particularly useful towards understanding how Joyce and Hrabal link to the avant-garde in their stylistics. These theories on the avant-garde along with supplemental details from Walter Benjamin and Henri Lefebvre in particular provide a theoretical backdrop for interpreting the works of Joyce and Hrabal. Yet at the forefront is a greater analysis of their shared vision and aspirations for their writing.

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[7] Hrabal actually had a role in putting together the final product. Entitled "Životopis trochu jinak," this essay, a "montáž" from February 1985, compared to its original published by Pražská imaginace*,* was not only cut up, but in several places actually lengthened.

[8] Poggioli, Renato. *The Theory of the Avant-garde.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981.

Since it may seem rather superficial to simply link two authors out of a cited influence, the opening chapter of this thesis lays out the individuals and groups through which Hrabal and Joyce can be brought together. This background at the same time lays the foundation for understanding the strains of the avant-garde and how they may have been or were a part of Joyce's and Hrabal's respective contexts, in experiencing and in writing. I separate "experiencing" because through the analysis and juxtaposition of their respective works, it becomes clear that Joyce and Hrabal wrote not out of a sense of needing to adhere or even develop a particular style. Indeed, their very experimentation with style and the relationship between reader and text are very much driven by the greater need to actively experience the world, the everyday, and convey the significance of those trivial aspects of daily existence. The second chapter covers this shared drive and purpose for writing, the pursuit of epiphany in the everyday. This pursuit is the most significant element that ties the authors together and provides the basis for investigating the greater influence in specific works. The shared focus on the everyday and the pursuit of revealing epiphanies prefaces three questions related to the actual development of stories: First, how do we perceive what is around us and how can the imagination work with perception? Second, what should the narrative approach be with respect to telling stories in light of trying to reveal that awareness or consciousness? Third, what is the actual method of putting together stories and how exactly should language be used or manipulated? These three questions form the structure of the remaining three chapters. Chapter three covers the struggle with perception, with conveying consciousness, and Joyce's and Hrabal's use of stream of consciousness in the "Penelope" episode of *Ulysses* and *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*, respectively. The question of narration and troubling narrators in "Eumaeus" and *I Served the King of England* forms the heart of chapter four, while chapter five brings the thesis to the topic of constructing stories and working with language and images across several works of both Joyce and Hrabal. In the case of each chapter I contextualize the works with respect to aspects of the avant-garde, the stage of the author's development, as well as to any pertinent historical events.

Chapter 1: Connecting Joyce and Hrabal through Surrealists French and Czech, and a Background to Poggioli's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*

The well-known Czech author Josef Škvorecký, writing under the pseudonym Daniel S. Miritz in his introduction to *The Death of Mr Baltisberger,* describes the driving force behind much of Hrabal's works quite simply: "The key to the imagination that is Hrabal's is the most durable scion of modern art's family tree: surrealism."[9] Indeed surrealism is a significant force within Hrabal's writing, and yet this branch of the avant-garde is also the one through which several founders and adherents connect Hrabal to Joyce. This first chapter delves into how Hrabal and Joyce were connected via the Surrealists, in Paris and in Prague, through André Breton, Adolf Hoffmeister, and Karel Teige. I present some of the central tenets of surrealism as Breton developed them in the early manifestos, as well as how Hrabal came to understand surrealism largely through the efforts of Karel Marysko. The latter half of the chapter moves away from the historical details and delves into the tenets of the avant-garde as seen by Poggioli.

The Paris Connections:

Despite a brief overlap in their lifetimes, Joyce (1882-1941) and Hrabal (1914-1997) were connected through a number of individuals as well as a shared interest in their respective cultures. Perhaps it is not so surprising for Joyce to have been interested in the small Czech nation, considering the marriage between his sister and a Czech, and yet the connection went a great deal deeper than the familial. Before getting to this, the predominant connection between the two writers came in their shared connections among the Surrealists, both in Paris and in Prague, connections worth clarifying in greater detail.

Paris was inarguably the center of the art and literary world in the 1920s. Joyce moved to Paris in 1920 and stayed there up until the breakout of World War II. He finished *Ulysses* in Paris and went on to write the bulk of *Finnegans Wake,* publishing it serially in *transition* literary magazine as "Work in Progress." This is all well-documented history, but is worth noting because of the stature that Joyce developed, and for the fact that Paris became a kind of pilgrimage site for those who had read *transition* and wished to know more about Joyce's project. The way that "Work in Progress" was published speaks to this fact, as the installments appeared along with a great deal of simultaneous scholarship of Joyce's project. As David Vichnar notes:

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[9] Miritz, Daniel S. Introduction. *The Death of Mr. Baltisberger* by Bohumil Hrabal. Trans. Michael Henry Heim. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2010. ix.

> The *transition* magazine, during the eleven years of its activity (1927-38), published not only seventeen installments from Joyce's ""Work in Progress"" to become *Finnegans Wake* in 1939, as well as all the twelve essays that were to form the *Our Exagmination* collection, but also many theoretical analyses, polemics, proclamations and defences of the work against its detractors.[10]

At the same time, the installments of "Work in Progress" appeared alongside not only connected scholarship, but a great deal of equally experimental and avant-garde prose and poetic pieces. Vichnar connects Joyce to the avant-garde through *transition* and Eugene Jolas's pronouncements regarding the materiality of language, and focuses on the element of the avant-garde that Poggioli describes regarding language and obscurity: "The problem of obscurity in so much contemporary poetic language is furthermore understood by many modern critics as the necessary reaction to the flat, opaque, and prosaic nature of our public speech, where the practical end of quantitative communication spoils the quality of expressive means."[11] Poggioli's observation is a crucial one not only in the connection of Joyce to the avant-garde, but also to the joining of Joyce's works with Hrabal's. The question of obscurity will be touched on in further detail in this thesis, such as it arises not simply in language, but address and overall style. Here though, the idea of obscurity as a reaction stands out, not just as it arises in "Work in Progress", but also in the works of one of the equally prominent Paris figures of the time, André Breton.

Just a couple of years after the publication of *Ulysses* (1922), Breton published *The Surrealist Manifesto* in booklet form and became the head of a movement that would grow and fracture within Paris, but also spread across Europe, and formally find a place in Prague. Four years after the manifesto, Breton shared the pages of *transition* with Joyce for the first time, the latter presenting readers with the beginning of the third book of "Work in Progress" while Breton introduced the opening chapter of *Nadja*.[12] Many of the original surrealists also published works in *transition,* and their placement alongside segments of "Work in Progress" alone posit a question whether there were overlaps with the surreal in Joyce's writing. Proximity and shared publications aside, Breton and Joyce seemed to have little to nothing in terms of a personal relationship. Apparently Breton "never paid attention to the American, British and Irish exiles in Paris. Only in 1953 did Breton acknowledge the talent of Anglophone writers such as Joyce and Cummings…"[13] Despite the lack of personal

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[10] Vichnar, David. *The Avant Postman…PhD Thesis.* Forthcoming publication.
[11] Poggioli 37.
[12] Jolas, Eugene and Elliot Paul, eds. *transition*. March, 1928. Paris: Shakespeare and Co. Online: <gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k64480512/f1.image>
[13] Brooker, Peter and Andrew Thacker, eds. "Cross-currents: America and Europe." *The Oxford Crtiical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Vol II. North America 1894-1960.* Oxford UP, 2009. 732.

connection between the two, their position in Paris, as mentioned earlier, brought many aesthetes and critics round for interviews, teaching, and even the opportunity to translate.

Around the same time as the publication of *transition*, several Czech writers and artists made trips to Paris to meet with both Breton and the surrealists, and with James Joyce. In 1930 Adolf Hoffmeister visited Joyce to speak about translations and possibly taking on the ALP episode from "Work in Progress.” Hoffmeister kept notes from the interview, several moments of which stand out and are pertinent to the discussion of Joyce’s importance for Czechs and for Hrabal. For the substance of this introduction, besides the fact that Hoffmeister secured the right to translate ALP in this interview, the other takeaway is a moment that shows Joyce’s affinity for the small country in the heart of Europe. There comes a break in the conversation, an odd silence, where Hoffmeister is not able to listen to himself and actually say something, so he waits:

> *I did not care to speak. I waited for Joyce to break the silence, but I did not expect to hear, without introduction and in a perfect accent and in clear Czech:* České Budějovice. *I was genuinely startled.* Živnostenská Banka. ‘*Have you learned Czech since we last met?*’ Oh no, it is just that I have discovered some interesting roots in your language and in mine. I know the rhythm of your language, naturally.[14]

The discussion continues with Joyce explaining that his sister Eileen married František Schaurek, who worked for the bank in Trieste. Yet it is pertinent that Joyce discusses the language before the familial connection, that he was interested in certain “roots” between the languages. This alone ties to Hrabal’s metaphor of a crossroads, an interconnectedness with language as well as perhaps as in consciousness. But a moment just a little later in the conversation, one which will be examined in greater detail later in the thesis, shows the depth of Joyce’s interest in all things Czech. Joyce mentions several Czech rivers to Hoffmeister, who is greatly surprised at the knowledge, but is probably taken more by Joyce’s advice for translating. Of the rivers, Joyce says:

> It is possible to break them up into living words, which they were at the beginning, when God was the Word. Create a language for your country according to my image. Viktor Llona in *transition* posited a thesis: language can be made by a writer. In this case, also by the translator. (1)

Take the names of bodies of water and break them up into living words. That this instruction arises in the context of when Joyce was writing "Work in Progress" comes as no surprise, since rivers and water are one of the dominant themes of the book. But this instruction of creating a language “for your country” is powerful and yet also very much fraught with

[14] Hoffmeister, Adolf. “The Game of Evenings.” Trans. Michelle Woods. Granta 89: The Factory, 1 Apr. 2005. Online: <https://granta.com/the-game-of-evenings/>

difficulty, particularly along with the following "according to my image." What constitutes "your country" in this situation? Is it a matter of representing the then and now of the moment, the prevailing politics and culture? The question of Joyce's "image" is equally difficult here, with respect to whether he means the man extemporizing on Czech rivers and language, or the author behind *Ulysses* and other works, or merely the works themselves. In any case, Joyce's instruction is not simply important for Hoffmeister and his approach to translating the ALP episode of "Work in Progress", but is also important for how readers might consider Joyce's works, and what then a posited influence could mean coming from Hrabal. Since Joyce draws on Viktor Llona's thesis from *transition*, this quote also shows that Joyce actively read what was published alongside "Work in Progress," supporting the notion that he was aware of what Breton and the surrealists were doing. This group actually spread out of Paris formally to Prague, a transition in itself that happened as a part of Breton traveling there five years after the interview with Hoffmeister.

Paris to Prague

André Breton made his way to Prague on March 27, 1935, accompanied by Paul Éluard, his wife Jacqueline Lamba, and the Czech painter Josef Šíma.[15] They were greeted with much fanfare and Breton flattered his Czech audience, acknowledging "Prague with its legendary charms is, in fact, one of those cities that electively pin down poetic thought, which is always more or less adrift in space." He also went on to say that "By the very fact that [Prague] carefully incubates all the delights of the past for the imagination, it seems to me that it would be less difficult for me to make myself understood in this corner of the world than any other" (15). Yet the city was not the only element significant to Breton in making this trip; so too, was the prospect of reacquainting himself with and meeting some of the Prague surrealists. "For many long years I have enjoyed perfect intellectual fellowship with men such as Vítězslav Nezval and Karel Teige. Constantly interpreted by Teige in the most lively way, made to undergo an all-powerful lyric thrust by Nezval. Surrealism can flatter itself that it has blossomed in Prague as it has in Paris" (15). As Sayers makes clear, the relationship between Breton, Nezval and Teige had not in fact been that long—Nezval first met Breton in Paris in 1933, the Prague Surrealist group started only in 1934 and Breton was meeting Teige for the first time in Prague—and yet the "exaggeration was poetic" and probably represented a kind of "objective chance" (*hasard objectif*) by which he was often taken (16). Regardless of the

[15] Sayer, Derek. *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century: A Surrealist History*. Princeton UP, 2013. 13.

extensive background into his comments, Breton's speech in Prague cemented his connection to the Czechs and to their project of surrealism. Teige's position within the group is particularly important, as he would be the principal figure connected to Hrabal later on. Sayer's observation about the "objective chance" with respect to Breton's comments on surrealism in Prague is helpful for setting up the discussion late in this thesis of how Hrabal's movement from surrealism was in large part stirred by his need for the power of observation and what could arise in almost reporting what he saw, allowing the moments to conjure up their own significant meaning, or rather chance epiphanies. Here, though, the context of the speech is important particularly in the frame of what Hrabal was doing at the same time that Breton was giving speeches in Prague.

There is unfortunately no evidence as to whether Hrabal attended any of the lectures that Breton gave while in Czechoslovakia. By the mid-1930s Hrabal was studying in Prague at the Faculty of Law and it was only when he turned 20 that he began focusing more on the humanities. Tomáš Pavlíček marks Hrabal's registration date at the Law Faculty as October 7, 1935 and notes "the university years are associated with his first literary experiments. Above all, he was reading intensively at the time, especially world literature (François Rabelais, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, James Joyce, Thomas Stearns Eliot), and he was interested in philosophy and the fine arts. "[16] As Hrabal describes of the time, besides reading: "I also attended philosophy lectures; I was taken with Schopenhauer and the Greeks. I went to lectures on Surrealism, on the whole of French literature; I won't even begin to list everything…"[17] His mention of "lectures on Surrealism" noticeably lacks Breton's name, yet these early lectures, whomever they involved, got him started, and a developing friendship with Karel Marysko took him a great deal farther. Marysko and Hrabal both grew up around Nymburk, albeit on different sides of the Labe River and did not get to know each other until the 1930s.[18] Yet they became fast friends, the musician and thinker, respectively, and shortly after the war started establishing their own group—"In the 1940s, when Bohumil Hrabal and a group of Nymburk friends formulated their own program of prominent literary efforts, they called it a performance of Devětsil's 'neo-poetism.'"[19] Marysko and Hrabal harkened back to

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[16] Pavlíček, Tomáš. Ed. *Kdo jsem: Bohumil Hrabal: spisovatel—Čech—Středoevropan*. Prague: Památník národního písemnictví, 2014. 49. Original: "Vysokoškolská léta jsou pak spojena s jeho prvními literárními pokusy. Především však v té době intenzivně čte, zejména světovou literaturu (mj. Francois Rabelais, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, James Joyce, Thomas Stearns Eliot), zajímá se o filozofii a výtvarné umění."

[17] Hrabal, *Pirouettes*, 29-30.

[18] Marysko, Maxi. *Karel Marysko*. Praha: Pražská imaginace, 1995. 12.

[19] Kotyk, Petr and Světlana Kotyková, Tomáš Pavlíček, eds. *Hlučna samota: sto let Bohumila Hrabala*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 2014. 20. Original: "Ve čtyřicátých letech, kdy Bohumil Hrabal se skupinou nymburských přátel

the Devětsil group, formed in 1920 by a group which included Adolf Hoffmeister and Karel Teige. The group spoke of themselves as "the youngest generation," in defiance of the old ways of looking at the everyday, and Karel Teige provided one of the early manifestos for the group, "Poetismus," in which poetry might be found in "film, in the circus, sport, tourism, and in life itself…the poetry of Sunday afternoons, outings, glittering cafes, intoxicating schools, bustling boulevards, and spa promenades."[20] It was also Teige, who in the interim had spent a great deal of time with Breton, with whom Marysko and Hrabal met between 1949 and 1955. As Pavlíček writes, Karel Marysko did the introductions and then Teige actually read some of both Marysko's and Hrabal's writing.[21] Other interactions included those with Egon Bondy and Vladimír Boudník, instances where the whole group would discuss philosophy, literature and new directions they might take.[22] By this point the Prague Surrealists had broken apart and become something else entirely, yet in their group, Marysko and Hrabal sought to maintain parts of the original. Prior to analyzing what Marysko and Hrabal took from the surrealists, and what their "performance of Devětsil's 'neo-poetism'" meant exactly, several characteristics of surrealism as Breton laid out need to be touched on.

Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924 concentrates initially on the importance of the imagination, its connection to madness, and how the search for truth is severely constricted. He proposes a new approach, one founded on the basis of Sigmund Freud's discoveries, which " a current of opinion is finally forming by means of which the human explorer will be able to carry his investigation much further, authorized as he will henceforth not to confine himself solely to the most summary realities."[23] Much of the focus hereafter is on dreams, their significance in sleeping and waking, and their potentiality for explaining the greater questions in life. In tracing dreams, Breton hopes "that the mysteries which really are not will give way to the great Mystery. I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality, if one may so speak." It is in pursuit of this "surreality" that Breton goes, and in route he highlights the importance of the "marvelous" before defining surrealism as follows:

> SURREALISM, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of

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formuluje programové vzjadřední svých literárních snah, nazývají svůj program vystoupení Devětsilu 'neopoetismus'"

[20] Sayer 199.

[21] Pavlíček, 50. Original: "Karel Marysko navštěvuje Karla Teigeho, jemuž dává přečíst své a Hrabalovy texty."

[22] Kotyk 113.

[23] Breton, Andre. *Manifestoes of Surrealism.* Trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1969. 10.

> thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern. (26)

The elements of surrealism then, as Breton lays out, most significant for this thesis are: the focus on some kind of psychic automatism, the interest in the marvelous, the attempt to rediscover "neglected associations" in the "disinterested play of thought" and the interest in a kind of "absolute reality." Breton's focus on going beyond the "most summary" realities and doing so through a manner that is unmediated, unfiltered by any sense of style or conscience is problematic immediately from the sense of what art and an artist do. This criticism arises in the first chapter of this thesis, which addresses consciousness and the "automatism" that Breton talks about. Yet the idea of the "most summary" coupled with Breton's interest in the marvelous is what creates a lasting connection to both Joyce and Hrabal in whatever surrealist impulses they divulge, since both are keen on representing reality with the intention of revealing something of the marvelous, or remarkable. Hrabal actually summarizes some of these impulses in Breton's manifesto quite well in *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age,* addressing Freud in turn:

> That is, Freud and the way he did his examinations, with that stream of subconsciousness, is identified with the automatic texts of such Surrealists as Andre Breton, Philippe Soupault and Artaud, and Crevel…It might be said that Freud's psychoanalysis gave them a method that disturbed people are not reprehensible, but remarkable…that Freud's method helps one get at the essence of man…[24]

Having said that Freud's method helps in getting "at the essence of man," Hrabal suggests that perhaps the surrealists investigations were also able to strike at something behind humanity. Indeed this draws back to what Hrabal and Marysko were discussing from very early on in their development of artistic theory.

Hrabal and Marysko's project became an amalgamation of courses really, the surreal with something more, drawing in line with their "neopoetism." In a letter to Hrabal, Marysko describes his (and ultimately their) beliefs considering the critical movements in art. He begins by invoking the Surrealists as having "the one and only truth in art,"[25] before breaking down the elements of such other movements as impressionism, futurism, and Dadaism. The latter he connects to surrealism, writing:

> Dadaism buys back, recovers the blood and tears of millions afflicted by the world war and is the agonizing preparation for not only the subjective destruction of the prevailing planes, spaces and forms, but also the subjective breaking down and expulsion of the subjects externally, which surrealism concludes and augments, which is like this, that it is its own

[24] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*. (Original: *Taneční hodiny pro starší a pokročilé*) Trans. Michael Henry Heim. London: Vintage, 2009. 47. Referred to as *Dancing Lessons* throughout.
[25] Marysko, Maxi. 17.

essentially single truthful means of expression, bereft of its own ballast, lies, artificiality, pseudo-moral and interior lies. That it does badly or perfect, there can be no idea.[26]

The summarizing statement on judging surrealism leads into understanding how Marysko and Hrabal distanced themselves from surrealism proper. It was not out of a particular judgment, for they could not say that it did things worse or better than other movements, from which it had grown out of in the first place. Linking Dadaism to surrealism is something that will be touched on later with respect to images in Joyce's and Hrabal's writing. Marysko's thoughts here provide the backdrop to his and Hrabal's "neopoetism," something that the two had corresponded about very early on. In a 1945 letter to Hrabal, Marysko describes how neopoetism is set apart from the surrealism of some twenty years earlier:

> The difference between surrealism and neopoetism is probably the same: surrealism is true, but only as a poem, like emotions. Neopoetism must be true not just as a poem and emotion, but also as life itself, but it is your 'words,' every such poem must be a thermometer set in a still brilliant presence.[27]

As with the previous quote on artistic movements, Marysko acknowledges the truth in surrealism, while at the same time suggesting that it only plays on the emotions. Neopoetism represents "life itself" and surprisingly the power of a poem is less than the reality it is presenting. In other words the subject is more than what can be presented in a text. To some degree this sentiment relates back to what Joyce told Hoffmeister about translating, about creating a language. It was not necessarily suggested directly by Joyce, but it seems fair to say that language is the element that is allowed to be changed and experimented with since little can be done with the subject itself. An interesting and possibly important detail regarding this letter is the fact that it comprises five incredibly delicate pages that Hrabal has glued onto thick sheets of polishing or sandpaper, roughly of 120 grit. They seem to have been attached to such rigid paper because of the importance of their content, an extended look at what Neopoetism meant for Marysko, and at the same time Hrabal. It could also be a delightful play on what they were trying to accomplish, smoothing out the rougher edges of such movements. Whatever the case might be, this particular letter, mounted in its own unique way, seems to set at least one of the central values that would follow Hrabal into his writing,

[26] Marysko 17 Original: "V nedatovaném dopise B. Hrabolovi z raných padesátých let vyjadřuje své umělecké a filosofické přesvědčení slovy:" '<u>Jedinou pravdu v umění mají surrealisté</u> (dosud ovšem jen <u>ideově</u>)…Dadaismus vykoupený krví a slzami miliónů postižených světovou válkou je bolestná příprava k <u>nejen subjektivnímu rozbití dané plochy, prostoru a formy, ale i subjektivní rozbití a vyloučení předmětu v externu</u>, což dokončil a umocnil surrealismus, který je jako takový, to je ve své vlastní podstatě jediné pravdivý způsob vzjádření, zbavený všeho balastu, lží, umělůstek, pseudomorálky a vnitřní lži. Že ho dělají špatně nebo nedokonale, za to nemůže idea.'"
[27] Marysko, Karel. Letter on esthetics to Hrabal. 24 February 1945. Památník národního písemnictví. Original: "Rozdíl mezi surrealismem a neopoetismem je asi takový: surrealismus je pravdivý, ale jen jako báseň, resp. jako emoce. Neopoetismus musí být pravdivý nejen jako báseň a emoce, /page break/ ale i jako život sám, to je ale Tvých "slov".. musí každá taková báseň být teploměrem zasazeným do ještě žhoucí přítomnosti."

the focus on "life itself," with its associated emotions and style, and letting the language merely work as a measure around that life. This is a crucial element to understanding the aims of both Hrabal and Joyce, and one that is further clarified in understanding elements of the avant-garde and the stylistic and social aims within the movement.

Poggioli's *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*

In considering the aims of Joyce and Hrabal, particularly having contextualized their writing as both done contemporaneously with and inspired by the surrealists, respectively, it is necessary to take into account a background of the greater avant-garde and its various aims, which Renato Poggioli ably covers in *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Written in 1963, Poggioli's book holds a unique position as the earliest major piece of scholarship to outline historically and socially the development of the avant-garde project. As he explains in the introduction: "we shall here examine avant-garde art not under its species as art but through what it reveals, inside and outside of art itself, of a common psychological condition, a unique ideological fact."[28] Through the discussion of the historical and social background, Poggioli identifies four aspects that make up a kind of "dialectic of movements" to be connected to the avant-garde— activism, antagonism, nihilism and agonism. The first two focus more on attitudes, "immanent in the concept of a movement" while the latter spring from but ultimately transcend the first. These attitudes run the gamut of avant-garde movements, although with varying intensity and significance.

Activism refers to the sense that there is some desire for change, or for some success, which on a higher level might be "the affirmation of the avant-garde spirit in all cultural fields" (25). Yet Poggioli identifies that sometimes the movement "takes shape and agitates for no other end that its own self, out of the sheer joy of dynamism…" (25). This is related to the literal meaning of 'avant-garde,' something militaristic and initially connected to adventure, or technological advancement as the Italian futurists identified it. Poggioli posits that such a view is salvaged by drawing on Rimbaud's "noble dream" from *Lettre du voyant*, "the dream of a poetry of the future returning" (29). As he explains "Here we have the truly dynamic and progressive vision of poetry, even if only as pure idea" a vision that "is far more exalted than the one dominating the ingenuous futurism of so much modern thought" (30). With a feeling for change or any kind of affirmation some kind of opposition, even a spirit of hostility, can arise and the resulting feelings reveal antagonism, "a permanent tendency" of the avant-garde. While antagonism suggests a simple divide between two parties, perhaps

[28] Poggioli 4.

even just an individual versus society, Poggioli writes that it is not so simple, because those individuals are often tied to at least some group—"on one hand, the anarchistic state of mind presupposes the individualistic revolt of the 'unique' *against* society in the largest sense" whereas on the other side "it presupposes solidarity *within* a society in the restricted sense of the word—that is to say, solidarity within the community of rebels and libertarians" (30-31). In short an artist finds place within at least a subgroup with the same perspective, regardless of the necessity to stand apart against society as a whole. Further discussion leads Poggioli to suggest that the modern artist is ultimately "declassed," where two postures are formed, 'dandy' and 'bohemian,' postures which are "equal and opposite manifestations of an identical state of mind and social situation" (31). This all fits under the general theme of alienation, wherein there is a designed or chosen separation between the artist and their audience, something key to Joyce's and Hrabal's works, as well as their respective statures as authors within unique communities.

Whereas these first two aspects rise from the relationship between artist and society, grounded in particular feelings, the other two aspects, nihilism and agonism, represent a transcendence of the previous two. Just as activism arises out of a sense to make change, out of dynamism, Poggioli notes that this drive can often go too far, and that it "finds joy not merely in the inebriation of movement, but even more in the act of beating down barriers, razing obstacles, destroying whatever stands in its way" (26). Essentially the action is taken by antagonistic impulses that override everything else. At the same time that the ultimate leap into nihilism occurs, there comes, "in the febrile anxiety to go always further," a point where the movement and associated artist "no longer heeds the ruins and losses of others and ignores even its own catastrophe and perdition. It even welcomes and accepts this self-ruin as an obscure or unknown sacrifice to the success of future movements" (26). Poggioli expands on agonism by highlighting that his use of the term should not be tied simply to the Greek *agone* or *agonia.* In the context of his study it "means tension" and "is not a passive state of mind, exclusively dominated by a sense of imminent catastrophe" but instead "strives to transform the catastrophe into miracle" (65-66). He links it to history, and how artists of the avant-garde have a distinct knowledge of history and a feeling of their place and laying the groundwork for the future, as precursors. This is a term that Poggioli explains in greater detail, because it is an *a posteriori* concept, so for the avant-garde artists to label themselves is for them to have a heightened historical awareness and rather paradoxically look back while being so future-focused. Such a conundrum is helped by the consideration of the idea of transition, and Poggioli notes that transition is the agonist principle "par excellence" (72). The aspect of

agonism is a little less clear cut in the way that Poggioli discusses history and working for the future, save for the fact that it is meant to be understood in the extreme. However the idea of turning “catastrophe into miracle” appears to have connotations that link it to Breton’s hope for surrealism, the aspirations of Marysko and Hrabal with respect to neopoetism, and also to the wider discussion of language and what it can provoke.

These four aspects that Poggioli develops as making up the dialectic of a movement, of the avant-garde, seem quite constraining and inflexible to include Joyce or Hrabal more deeply. However, the aspect of antagonism stands apart as something accommodating both Joyce's and Hrabal's problems with and goals in writing, and being writers. Of especial use, too, is Poggioli’s discussion of language as it is connected to the antagonistic tendency. He describes how there is a young-old dichotomy to antagonism, displayed in the former’s desire to create a language, a jargon, all their own, “semi-private.” Indeed, part of this quote has already been mentioned, in the connection that David Vichnar makes between Joyce and that avant-garde, but it is useful to include the full context below with respect to language and antagonism:

> In other words, from this point of view, the same linguistic hermeticism, which is one of the avant-garde’s most important characteristics of form and style, would be conceived of as both the cause and the effect of the antagonism between public and artist. The problem of obscurity in so much contemporary poetic language is furthermore understood by many modern critics as the necessary reaction to the flat, opaque, and prosaic nature of our public speech, where the practical end of quantitative communication spoils the quality of expressive means.
> According to that doctrine, the linguistic obscurity of contemporary poetry should exercise a function at once cathartic and therapeutic in respect to the degeneration afflicting common language through convention and habits. (37)

The recognition of the obscurity of the avant-garde linguistically as being a reaction to the basic nature of public speech is an essential point of consideration with respect to the works of Joyce and to some extent Hrabal as well. Little has not been said about Joyce and his experimentation with language and style, and the effects it has had on readers. Important to conjoin with Poggioli’s discussion of the antagonistic nature of language use in the avant-garde is his discussion of place and history in respect to agonism. When he mentions “transition” as the agonist principle “par excellence,” he rightfully discusses *transition* literary magazine, highlighting editor Eugene Jolas’s declaration in “Revolution of the Word” which reads “The writer expresses. He does not communicate. The plain reader be damned” (38). Poggioli cites Jolas’s declaration as proof of the antagonistic nature of language under the avant-garde. Yet the principle of “transition” taken in concert with the declaration of Jolas suggests the unique place of the writer within the avant-garde, as one knowledgeable of what came before, perhaps even looking to some connections to establish a “precursor” position for

what might follow, but also someone working on the relationship between artist and audience. Jolas's declaration, strong as it might be, poses three significant questions which are grappled with in both Joyce's and Hrabal's writing: what is the nature of expression?; how is that expression differentiated from communication?; and what is the position of the reader? These three questions align well with the central structure of this thesis and will be considered in tandem throughout the analysis in the latter three chapters.

The connections between Joyce and Hrabal, the links between the Surrealists of Paris and Prague, as well as the insights into the theoretical backgrounds of the figures provide a solid backdrop for investigating their works in greater detail. Yet in conjunction with the historical context and the various figures, it is important to identify and expand on the similarities in Joyce's and Hrabal's goals in their writing. Their respective pursuits of dealing with questions of the nature of expression, of communication, the position of the reader, as well as the actual construction of texts are all predicated on the observation and recording of epiphanies.

Chapter 2: Recorders of the Everyday, Working Towards Epiphany

For the connections that they had between Paris and Prague and the Surrealists, and for the level that they display tendencies in line with tenets of the avant-garde, Joyce and Hrabal connect more fundamentally with respect to the role they sought to take as artists and individuals, and how that role ultimately served the goal that drove much of their writing. This role, as recorders, and the goal of bringing to the fore elements of the everyday as a means of revealing the epiphanies therein, forms the basis for this chapter. To some degree this focus is touched on in Hrabal's quotes from the the introduction. While his idea of the "crossroads of linguistic consciousness" indeed points to an interest in language, it can be construed more generally as a focus on shared cultural understanding or awareness. This awareness is central to the kind of observers that both Hrabal and Joyce were, and what they sought to display in their writing. Both authors experiment with different forms to present this awareness and allow those observations into the everyday to reveal sudden understandings, manifestations of truth, or simply, epiphanies. Critics place Joyce and Hrabal in similar positions, and these descriptions, along with the Joyce's and Hrabal's respective definitions of the epiphanies which come from the everyday, display the strong correlation in their goals for writing.

Joyce and Hrabal as Recorders:

Joyce and Hrabal were equally adamant about being observers and recorders as opposed to simply writers. This is manifest in their own statements as well as the analysis of various critics. Hrabal is simultaneously direct and circuitous in his own characterizations. He often pointed out that he considered himself more a "zapisovatel," specifically a kind of recorder or secretary, than a "spisovatel," or author. Yet the details that he provides with regard to what he observed, the context and nature of those observations, and what he recorded are important to understand. In an early moment in *Pirouettes*, when Hrabal is asked about considering his readers and the contents of his writing, he admits that he writes for himself, but then becomes confused as to whether what he writes is actually his own. He explains:

> It's because I'm really so intoxicated by the environment in which and through which I move… I can actually sense that I'm writing for myself; and only later do I discover that those other people have been stealing my words, that I've actually been speaking on their behalf. So my extremely subjective discourse is suddenly objective. [29]

[29] Hrabal, *Pirouettes,* 33.

There is a bit of circularity to his response, as well as a great deal of contradiction. His mention of intoxication is a useful detail for later chapters of this thesis, but in the moment is equally important for understanding the amount of what he would take in, and how focused he was on what was going on around him. He continues to say that of the writing process "obviously it's like a pair of bellows, that's to say I take a deep breath then breathe out again. I simply breathe in a certain amount of information, and as I write I'm exhaling it" (33). This sentiment makes it all seem so simple, like it is merely a matter of living, and the analogy with "exhaling," lends itself especially to his unique style. However, there is a greater amount of work being done with these bellows, and his indication of "a certain amount of information," points to particular discernment on his part. In *Vita Nuova*, part of the trilogy in which Hrabal adopts the role of his wife Eliška to present a kind of autobiography, Hrabal reveals more about this "breathing in" and his overall process to Eliška:

> and my husband took me by the elbow and droned into my ear Look here sweetheart that which you forswear becomes your greatest temptation why even you could be a writer so look here I can only tell you what rings true to me so look here…At first there's astonishment but then you begin to analyze which in turn leads to a remoteness a certain passivity but not to worry that's nothing but humility a spark of anticipation a moment prior to the holy announcement when your eyes are wide open and your soul is wide open and suddenly the passivity is turned on its head and it's not just that you *want* to take it all down you *must* take it all down and a writer is one who transcribes what he has seen what has been revealed and the whole thing is a huge kick in the pants knowing there's something out there other than yourself…So my husband blathered on…"[30]

To some extent this is a condemnation of not observing, that the sense of remoteness or passivity is something that should be shed. This change happens in the process of what he describes as a kind of spiritual awakening and subsequent desire to record, to "take it all down." From this quote and many others, Hrabal displays a certain kind of affliction with regard to the need to record, and the need to write, and this affliction is further evidenced by his distinct approach to writing even under an oppressive regime. While this thesis does not go into politics a great deal, it is worth noting that Hrabal felt more strongly about writing and publishing than protesting and losing that ability. His response to questions of politics and possible protest always turned back to the issue of writing and this process of recording. In a late essay entitled "Public Suicide" ("Veřejná sebevražda"), Hrabal emphasizes the connection between his style and the situation, which Radko Pytlík contextualizes thusly:

> Later it led to his polemic by means of his unique type of poetic style—pábení (or palavering, as it has sometimes been translated). Thanks in large part to this, the "unbelievable or incredible became real" and a former literary outsider was recognized as going against the

[30] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Vita Nuova*. Trans. Tony Liman. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2010. 14.

> powerful. The poetics of pábení allowed Hrabal to engage in a detached, and indeed dissident relationship with time. ("Di sideo" means "sitting aside"). 'My pábení, it is my defense against politics, it is my own politics or policy…my manner of writing,' he declared…[31]

Style, or the means of presenting the observed elements of the everyday and creating stories, is something discussed in greater detail in the final chapter. However here it is important to touch on Hrabal's pábení so as to clarify how much it became indicative of his observations. The previous quote in which Hrabal inhabits Eliška's persona is actually a prime example of pábení, one in which the excitement that Hrabal describes in observing and feeling a need to record serves to draw together all the thoughts and sudden realizations into a dense amalgam of information. Pábení is best understood as a kind of rambling that amalgamates thoughts and observations in a flowing manner that often foregoes punctuation in favor of a continued sense of the process. Observations really are key, and the suddenness and excitement that Hrabal proclaims to Eliška supports the intoxication he remarked about being in a place and observing. In pointing to pábení as his own politics, Hrabal foregrounds the observation and power of the everyday as the strongest reason for his project. Hrabal's remarks and declarations are incredibly reflective of Joyce's own descriptions and what critics have said about Joyce.

On the topic of politics Joyce was quite frank: "for God's sake don't talk politics. I'm not interested in politics. The only thing that interests me is style."[32] This singular interest and the straightness of the proclamation corresponds nicely with Hrabal's own sentiment. In the same way as Hrabal, Joyce's works were shot through with experiences from his life and the world around. Many critics have detailed the breadth of topics in Joyce's works, *Ulysses* in particular. Harry Levin connects Joyce to the naturalistic school even, writing that Joyce was a "conscientious pupil" of this movement and "would not invent his material." However, Levin continues to say that while Joyce used his own experiences,

> his imagination was to carry him much farther than the naturalists in interpreting and arranging it. The precincts of his observation were restricted, but his perceptions were abnormally acute. He was the sort of person that Henry James advises the novelist to be, 'one of those people on whom nothing is lost.'[33]

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[31] Pytlík, Radko. *Koridor smrti Bohumila Hrabala a jiné záhady.* Emporius, 1998. 11. Original: "Později vedl svou polemiku s dobu prostřednictvím zvláštního druhu básnického stylu—pábení. Jen díky tomu se podařilo , že se "neuvěřitelné stalo skutkem! a bývalý literární outsider byl uznán i proti vůli mocných. Poetika "pábitelů" mu umožnila zaujmout odtažitý, a tím vlastně dizidentský vztah k době. ("Di sideo" znamená totiž "sedím stranou".) "To moje pábení, to je moje obrana proti politice, to je vlastně moje politika…můj způsob psaní," prohlásil, ovšem dodatečně, v eseji Veřejná sebevražda."

[32] Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. Oxford UP, 1966. 710.

[33] Levin, Harry. *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction*. Faber and Faber, 1944. 27.

"Nothing is lost" here is appropriate in the sense of the wide range of topics detailed in Joyce's writing, most likely due to Joyce's own observation that much had long been left out of the novel. From early on Joyce set about observing and noting down what he experienced with design on writing about the topics. As an apprentice writer, the young Joyce "hung around stairways recording exactly the conversations he heard, and many of his 'epiphanies' record banal, meaningless, or odd bits of conversation, complete with frequent lacunae, ellipses, and pleonasms…"[34] Joyce similarly filed away and made reference to much of what he experienced within his own family, as he:

> liked to tell people how he had appropriated his father's jokes, stories, songs, and turns of phrase, distributing them among more than one character in his fictions. Richard Ellmann reports Joyce remarking in 1931, the year his father died, 'The humour of *Ulysses* is his; its people are his friends. The book is his spittin' image.' Ellmann also helps us to see how Joyce transposed whole anecdotes from his family memories into *Finnegans Wake*, where John Joyce's witty voice is not entirely suppressed even by the artificially fabricated language."[35]

The remark "the book is his spittin' image" has led to a vast project of genetic criticism with respect to anecdotes and moments in *Ulysses* and the *Wake*. Yet the remark is equally important in recognizing that Joyce's works are indeed full of images taken directly from experience. Though molded by an imagination that would "carry him much farther," the basis for much of what he wrote came from his observations, and specifically the wide range of experiences that he was more willing to address than others. Robert Martin Adams speaks to Joyce's inclusions in his writing in discussing the reception of his works, especially the fact that his writing brought together aspects of everyday life that were difficult for parts of society to accept. Adams explains that:

> The combination of the mean or squalid materials, deep insights into them, and scrupulous artistic workmanship pointed him [Joyce] toward an art which combined two extremes—a scrupulous reproduction of the everyday and a visionary insight. The traditional English novel dealt with the middle range of experience, treated in a middle style within the boundaries of good middle-class taste. Joyce in his fiction undertook to sink below and rise above those levels.[36]

Highlighting the two extremes and the antagonism towards a middle way, this quote helpfully supports positioning Joyce as a unique and far-ranging kind of observer. Moreover, in pointing out the "mean or squalid" and noting "a scrupulous reproduction of the everyday," this quote helpfully leads into both an overview of what the everyday means exactly and the definitions of epiphany. Prior to that discussion though, it should be noted that in his bellows-

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[34] Kershner, R. Brandon. "Dialogical and intertextual Joyce." *Palgrave Advances in James Joyce Studies*. Ed. Jean-Michel Rabate. London: Palgrave McMillan, 2004. 184.
[35] Sabin, Margery. *The Dialect of the Tribe: Speech and Community in Modern Fiction*. Oxford UP, 1987. 7.
[36] Adams, Robert Martin. *AfterJoyce*. Oxford UP, 1977. 10.

like approach to absorbing and then breathing out his experiences of the everyday, Hrabal also went about sinking below and rising above certain levels, occupying a role similar role to Joyce. To some extent, though, Hrabal went further in pushing the importance of what he observed over his own writing.

As Václav Havel writes in an early essay, Hrabal is not an author "who lives a rich man's fate in order to write, but on the contrary, lives his fate and that gives him the capacity to write. Hrabal is a common man who writes not as a writer living like a common man. He doesn't live to write, he writes because he lives."[37] More than living as and writing of the common man, Hrabal sought to capture the everyday, and present it, nearly without interpretation (although more than open to the "will of the reader" as Havel identified). As a result, there is a great deal of humor that runs through his works, a different kind of humor that once again relates to the individual and a system of power. Kundera discusses this humor of Czech authors, Hašek's and Škvorecký's primarily, and makes mention of Hrabal in a parenthesis: "Škvorecký's humor (like Hašek's or Hrabal's) is the humor of people who are far from power, make no claim to power, and see history as a blind old witch whose moral verdicts make them laugh."[38] Once again there is a kind of distinction in levels in this quotation, that the humor of Hrabal's writing comes from those necessarily separated or stranded in a low segment of society. Yet a great deal of power comes from such humor, and the perception of history and the moral verdicts therein involves the kind of chance that Hrabal, and Joyce as well, perceive in much of the everyday. With respect to this idea of chance, as well as the variety of topics and levels that Hrabal and Joyce transcend in their observations and subsequent writing, it is necessary to better understand what is meant by the everyday theoretically, especially in the writing of Henry Lefebvre.

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[37] Havel, Václav. "Nad prózami Bohumila Hrabala." *Čtení O Bohumilu Hrabalovi: Rukovět otevřeného díla.* Praha: Institut pro studium literatury, 2016. 16 Original: "že Hrabal není spisovatel, který žije bohatý lidský osud proto, abz měl z čeho psát, ale že naopak píše proto, že žije tento osud a že tento osud mu dává nesčíslná nutkýní k psaní. Hrabal je obyčený člověk, který píše, nikoliv spisovatel, který žije jako obyčený člověk. Nežije proto, aby psal, ale píše proto, že žije."

[38] Kundera, Milan. *Encounter*. Trans. Linda Asher. New York: Faber and Faber, 2009. 119.

The "everyday" and Joyce and Hrabal—

Any discussion of the everyday necessitates a look at its first real analysis, which came in *Critique of Everyday Life*, an investigation by Henri Lefebvre that is significant both for what it reveals as being inherently political and for the way it addresses means of understanding what is seen in society. While it is ultimately a treatise against consumerism and the perils of capitalism, Lefebvre's more general discussion of illusion and truth in the everyday is most suited to the discussion of what Joyce and Hrabal target in their own writing. Similarly, one of his most powerful points, that of affirming the spirit of life in the everyday, is more than congruent with the pursuit of epiphany that Joyce and Hrabal follow. Lefebvre did not at all write about Hrabal, but his mentions of Joyce, and the subsequent secondary material that has been produced, shed light on the ways that Joyce's style helped achieve his goals. The notable quote about Joyce comes early in the first volume, and in it Lefebvre is quite candid about *Ulysses*, which for him: "demonstrates that a great novel can be boring. And 'profoundly' boring. Joyce nevertheless understood one thing: that the report of a day in the life of an ordinary man had to be predominantly in the epic mode."[39] Boredom is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind with respect to *Ulysses,* and yet, purely in terms of content, there is a great deal of mundane and petty things. Yet the layers of consciousness especially, combined with references and various stylings make the novel something much more, and something which reaches to take the novel to another level. In his introduction to Lefebvre, Andrew Merrifield frames Lefebvre's connection to Joyce, "the other brilliant spokesperson of the everyday," and the offhand remark Lefebvre made about *Ulysses*:

> the bond between Leopold Bloom, one ordinary man during a single, ordinary day in Dublin, and the heroic epic journey of Odysseus is precisely the bond that exists between Lefebvre's ordinary man and his 'total man,' between the present and the possible. The *Ulysses* that says Yes to life is an 'eternal affirmation of the spirit of man,' a great gust of generosity that is indeed the spirit of Lefebvre's total man. Yet Lefebvre knew it bespoke a more commonplace theme: everyday passion. These, both he and Joyce knew, match the dramatic successes and failures of Greek heroes. Life at its most mundane level is as epic and spiritual as any official history or religion.[40]

More than just an apt summary of how Bloom gravitates toward the position of Lefebvre's "total man," the connection that Merrifield makes between Lefebvre and Joyce points to the presence and pursuit of epiphany in the everyday as the central guiding point in Joyce's writing. Here another word is used, "spiritual," and this is quite suggestive of the moments that Joyce and Hrabal focus on as epiphanies in their observations. Lefebvre presents a clear

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[39] Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. 2nd Edition. Trans. John Moore. New York: Verso, 2008. 27.

[40] Merrifield, Andrew. *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*. Routledge, 2013. 12.

description that strikes directly at the heart of what additional characteristics these spiritual moments take on, characteristics central to both Hrabal's and Joyce's projects:

> The most extraordinary things are also the most everyday; the strangest things are often the most trivial, and the current notion of the 'mythical' is an illusory reflection of this fact. Once separated from its context, i.e. from how it is interpreted and from the things which reinforce it while at the same time making it bearable—once presented in all its triviality, i.e. in all that makes it trivial, suffocating, oppressive—the trivial becomes extraordinary, and the habitual becomes 'mythical.'[41]

Context is central to the presentation of the equally extraordinary and the everyday, because much can be done to circumvent what makes those things so unique. Joyce and Hrabal both knew this, and played with style only as a means of affecting their audience in the way that would preserve what was profound in their subject matter originally. As will be seen in several of the examples in the coming chapters, they were particularly keen and able to simultaneously emphasize the triviality and create something ritualistic and mythical. In a certain respect the way in which Joyce and Hrabal construct their texts takes on a certain element of surrealism. While it is fair to interpret some of the stylistics through this prism, it must be said that their primary shared goal was elsewhere. Joyce and Hrabal consciously took note of the experiences in their lives—images, language, gestures, and emotions—and indeed presented them in a mediated way, sometimes in contexts suggesting an alternative depiction of reality, some kind of psychological space. However, in the end both sought to present reality and the sudden realizations that might come from the everyday, the most trivial. One final thought, from Walter Benjamin via the critic Garry Leonard, regarding the nature of observation and the characteristics of an observer helps bolster the position that Joyce and Hrabal took and show the greater prism through which they view the world in their writing.

In his essay "Hystericizing Modernism: Modernity in Joyce" Garry Leonard focuses on commodification in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses,* but grounds his thoughts in a discussion of the development of modernist studies. Describing modernism's attempt to find a "middle ground between two different 'modernities'" Leonard alights on the object as a central focus. Here Leonard suggests that Baudelaire's *flaneur* represents this focus, something Walter Benjamin initially cited, when he argued that Baudelaire was the first poet of modernity because "Baudelaire insisted on the necessity of the truly modern poet to immerse himself in the city, and the crowd, and become 'a *kaleidoscope* equipped with a consciousness.'"[42] "Flaneur" is an interesting word that comes from Old Norse via French and means "loafer, idler" but also

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[41] Lefebvre, 14.

[42] Leonard, Garry. "Hystericizing Modernism: Modernity in Joyce." *Cultural Studies of James Joyce.* Ed. R. Brandon Kershner. Amsterdam: Rodopi 2003. 171.

has meanings connected to “stroll, loaf and saunter.”[43] Baudelaire’s original meaning focused especially on the latter, and the sense of a man without much to do but wander and consider what he sees in the streets. In his essay Leonard uses the terms as a means of analyzing Stephen’s own forays about town, and interactions he has with objects, namely the lamp in “Circe.” Leonard’s focus and introduction of Baudelaire’s idea of *flaneur* as well as Benjamin’s accompanying quote clarify the position of Stephen and others with respect to experiencing “epiphany.” These are not moments of a particular setting, state of mind, or within a sort of audience. These are indeed moments with a suddenness, surprise, and sometimes simplicity in the face of a more complicated situation. Leonard touches on Stephen’s position as an artist in *Portrait* briefly, writing:

> Stephen’s lack of production is not just because he is a ‘young man,’ but also because he is a modern ‘artist.’ But this connection is not apparent because Stephen is so busy translating his experience of modernity into his theory of modernism. The truck that rumbles in front of him, drowning out his voice as he expounds his theory to Cranly, might be modernity itself, noisily inserting itself into the middle of his theorizing, but to no effect.” (171)

The interruption of the truck as the insertion of modernity is a helpful example not only in the sense of the sometimes passing (literally) nature of epiphany, but also in the way that it shows how characters, and even the authors themselves perhaps, are not necessarily the avenues through which epiphanies occur. That is to say that Baudelaire’s description of a modern poet becoming a “kaleidoscope equipped with a consciousness” provides a fallible model, as such a poet is still prey to the errors of consciousness and perhaps the misinterpretation of what he sees through that kaleidoscope. Baudelaire’s provision of “kaleidoscope” is pertinent to the discussion of Joyce especially for the “collideroscope” that arises in the *Wake*, and perhaps this portmanteau is an appropriate replacement for Baudelaire’s “kaleidoscope” in the sense that the integration of “collide” provides for the misinterpretation or complete dismissal that can happen in the eyes of a modern poet. Understanding Benjamin’s quote and the idea of *flaneur* helps to understand the inherent tension in Stephen’s character in Joyce’s *Portrait*, but more generally the tension in texts which involve, or at least suggest, some focus on the everyday and the insights that observing the everyday may lead to. In fact for Joyce’s later *Ulysses* there is an awareness of the fallibility of both characters and the authors to relate elements of the everyday and the perceived revelations therein. This arises especially due to the necessary construction of texts with the simultaneous pronouncement by the authors that they are more of recorders than creators.

[43] “Flaneur.” Def. 1. www.dictionary.com/browse/flaneur. Random House Dictionary. Random House, Inc. 2018. Web. 15 January 2018.

Epiphany

The ideas of chance, humor, sinking below and rising above certain levels, along with the discussion of scrupulously recording and noticing combine and point to Joyce's unique description of epiphany. This word, "epiphany," in general relates to a kind of spiritual realization in the religious sense, though Joyce expands the meaning in *Stephen Hero*, and simultaneously makes note of who might articulate such events. Stephen is wondering about what to do with his life, much like the Stephen of *Portrait*, except in this moment Stephen goes into greater detail about the focus of someone in the humanities:

> This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant 'a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.[44]

There is still a sense of spirituality in this definition, but the cases encompass language, movement, and memory. The fact that Stephen thinks of the "vulgarity of speech" points to the range of values and experiences that Joyce and Hrabal take in and hence cover in their writing. At the same time, the necessity of a "man of letters" to record these moments, and do so "with extreme care" points to both Hrabal's and Joyce's positioning as "recorders" and their focus on presenting everything with scrupulous detail. This definition of "epiphany" should be presented in conjunction with perhaps the second most known statement regarding a sudden realization in Joyce's oeuvre, which comes in the conversation Stephen has with Mr. Deasy in *Ulysses*. Here teacher and headmaster discuss debts, Ireland, and Jews among many other things. Yet most notably they alight on God:

> The ways of the Creator are not our ways, Mr. Deasy said. All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God. Stephen jerked his thumb towards the window, saying: —That is God. Hooray! Ay! Whrrwhee! —What? Mr Deasy asked. —A shout in the street, Stephen answered, shrugging his shoulders.[45]

The mere crying and enjoyment of children provides the primary example of epiphany as Stephen of *Ulysses* describes, fitting into the way *Stephen Hero* frames it. God is manifest in a simple string of "Hooray! Ay! Whrrwhee!" Stephen's connection here calls into question even the ability of the written word to convey the significance of the boys' jubilation while playing. Yet Stephen's simultaneous shrugging of his shoulders, and his characterization of "a shout in the street" points to the fact that there is a balance to the words and presentation of those words, that in some ways the "vulgarity of speech" needs to be combined with "gesture"

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[44] Joyce, James. *Stephen Hero*. Ed. Theodore Spencer. New York: New Directions, 1959. 211.
[45] *U*.2.380-386.

in order to fully encompass the feeling. Perhaps what makes the moment more powerful as well is the separation between the boys and the two men, the distance and the gravity of their respective actions in the moment. This is one of the ways that combines the everyday and the idea of epiphany as Joyce and Hrabal pursue it, that it is necessary to present varying levels of experience and all manners of the everyday. Yet at the same time, this description ties to the notion that an author must mostly be an observer and recorder—that it is the very interrupting shouts of the everyday that convey the deeper meaning concerning one's existence. There is chance in this process, obviously, and also a certain degree of humor, and both arise in Hrabal's own description of epiphany.

Havel's comment about a blind old witch making funny moral verdicts obliquely lines up Hrabal's humor with Joyce's idea of epiphany—both involve chance, and a kind of surprising result given a situation. Hrabal speaks to chronicling such moments numerous times and one that stands with this idea of chance and suddenness comes from the title story of his *Rambling On: An Apprentice's Guide to the Gift of Gab*. In a lengthy passage he describes a scene that is reminiscent of both quotes from Joyce:

> …to me forgetfulness and dementia and the twittering of children are the start of potential discoveries, through playfulness and play I convert the vale of tears into laughter, I invoke reality and it does not always give me a sign, I am a shy roebuck in a glade of impertinent expectation, I'm a solid bell of imbecility cracked by a thunderflash of cognition, in me objectivity takes on a measure of extreme subjectivity, which I consider an increment of Nature and the social sciences…[46]

The "twittering of children" here aligns nicely with what Stephen overhears when speaking with Mr Deasy, while the "thunderflash of cognition" effectively stands for the "sudden spiritual manifestation." This selection is indicative of Hrabal's pábení and indeed is merely part of a long string of continuous thoughts, contradictory statements, and paradoxes. Here, though, Hrabal covers the difficulty of what he does, and Joyce too, in trying to approach reality. It is a problematic enterprise because the signs do not immediately arise, in part due to the fact that such expectations are unwarranted, "impertinent." More difficult is the fact that the process of writing ultimately undermines being a recorder. The necessary thought and construction that goes on with writing can take away from what was observed, and even the language can serve to distract from the original experience. In this paradox of "objectivity" taking on "a measure of extreme subjectivity" one can see the project of writing, of recording with some layer of mediation. This difficulty in recording while at the same time stylizing forms the basis for the analysis of methods and styles throughout this thesis.

[46] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Rambling On: An Apprentice's Guide to the Gift of Gab*. Trans. David Short. Prague: Karolinum, 2014. 329.

Elements of style, of crafting, and influence all serve to affect the presentation of the everyday and also their possible interpretation. Yet what is important in both Joyce's and Hrabal's writing is not that there is a pointing to the infallibility of characters to present or interpret what is going on around them,[47] but that what happens in their texts is very much of the "collideroscope" nature. The consciousness they depict in their characters coupled with, or set against, the range of styles displays the everyday and the "epiphanies" therein as textual events inherently affected by the position of the reader. Hrabal alighted on the word "awareness" in the opening, the sense of understanding the currents of literary thought. This chapter showed the overlaps in understanding the context for and the ability to record epiphanies. Since a sense of awareness is necessary to the projects of both Joyce and Hrabal, then a different kind of imagination must be applied in order to present that awareness and its depth. For both Joyce and Hrabal this is evident in a play with language and style, although among the foremost approaches it is the use of stream of consciousness that is significant.

Chapter 3: Flow and Weaving Together a Sense of Consciousness

Since awareness is at the heart of being able to mark epiphanies in the everyday, the question becomes, and became for Hrabal and Joyce in their writing, how to present awareness, or at least the thought processes behind the mind and imagination. In other words, the question concerns the manner through which we perceive the events of the everyday. Kladiva's quote from the introduction in which he connects *Dancing Lessons* to the experimentation in *Ulysses* not only stands as one of the most direct critical connections between the two authors, but also highlights the two works in which both Hrabal and Joyce explicitly show their experimentation with revealing the thought processes connected with perception and consciousness. The study of and focus on consciousness was a significant element of the avant-garde, under surrealism especially, and also one that had a bearing on the relationship between artist and society. Investigating the use of stream of consciousness by Molly in the "Penelope" episode of *Ulysses* and various critical viewpoints will help establish a means of looking at the same method in Hrabal's *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age.*[48] Preparatory to either text, I will reexamine of the origin of the phrase "stream of consciousness" in order to consider what was understood and maintained with respect to the thought process, and how this contributes to the discussion of the avant-garde project. While both Joyce and Hrabal employ stream of consciousness, it runs through their characters in different ways. Molly's is very much an internal monologue, though from the beginning there is a question as to some kind of presence of an audience. On the other hand, Hrabal's cobbler in *Dancing Lessons* vocalizes his own thoughts to a group of young girls. Even then, just as with Molly's monologue, there is a question of whether or not the cobbler has simply imagined his audience.

To an extent these conflicts in even describing how each writer approaches perception and "stream of consciousness" tie nicely to the idea William James initially described and how André Breton saw art revealing it. At the same time, the two approaches touch on Poggioli's theory and the particular vein of antagonism, as Poggioli explores it through a discussion of fashion. Most helpful here is the simple and rather taken-for-granted idea that "fashion's task, in brief, is to maintain a continual process of standardization: putting a rarity or novelty into general and universal use, then passing on to another rarity or novelty when the first has ceased to be such" (79). Stream of consciousness had been used in novels previously, but Joyce put his name on it while bringing it to the forefront of modernist

[48] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*. Trans. Michael Henry Heim. Vintage, 2009. Original: *Taneční hodiny pro starší a prokročílé*, from here *Dancing Lessons*

literature, to some extent even surpassing the experiments of the surrealists into the psychological in recognition. Of course, such a pronouncement is problematic not least of all in that Joyce was hardly a surrealist, but more simply in the fact that what he does in the "Penelope" episode, and what Hrabal does in *Dancing Lessons* and elsewhere, is exactingly constructed and governed stream of consciousness. In short, beyond analyzing the differing applications, in this chapter I aim to show the similarities in purpose for either authors' use of stream of consciousness, and how its use serves to draw attention to the difficulty of presenting such awareness and what the effects are on the reader, how they perceive, and are meant to understand this perspective.

William James, the basis for the "stream," and the tie to Breton

The term "stream of consciousness" originally comes from William James's *The Principles of Psychology,* written in 1890. In chapter 9, entitled "The Stream of Thought," James sets up his investigation into the mind "from within" and eventually lays out the terminology: "*in talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.*"[49] Much comes before in framing the discussion of "the stream" and it is important to keep in mind three elements. First, the chapter begins with James's insistence on looking at the simple sensations connected to thinking itself, which he describes quite basically: "no one ever had a simple sensation by itself. Consciousness, from our natal day, is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations, and what we call simple sensations are results of discriminative attention, pushed often to a high degree" (224). The presence here of "discriminative attention" is worth remembering with respect to 'stream of consciousness' as it relates to writing and presenting ideas in a mediated way.

After the introduction to thought, James enumerates five "characters in thought," which include: "Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness," within this personal consciousness; thought is "always changing" and "is sensibly continuous," and it "appears to deal with objects independent of itself" while also being "interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others"—that there is some kind of choice or rejection process occurring (225). Choice within thinking will be pertinent to the discussion of the stream as a narrative technique, but also as it ties to the writing of Poggioli on the avant-garde. The nature of thought as "changing" but "continuous" leads James into a discussion of what might be the controlling metaphor for consciousness. Eventually, the aforementioned

[49] James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. 1890. 239. Online. <psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/Principles/prin9.htm> Italics original.

quote is set in a frame that pushes aside more disjunctive words: "Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described…" (239). The fact that James grapples with even developing the phrase is something worth keeping in mind when considering Joyce's and Hrabal's use of stream of consciousness narratively in their works. That "most naturally described" metaphor for the process of thinking, the stream, is one that is applied and deconstructed by critics, as will be seen in the case of Molly's monologue, and even in the explication of *Dancing Lessons*. What is equally pertinent to consider in relation to James's development of the phrase, as though by some kind of collective notion, is how Breton interpreted the thought process and aimed to concretely reveal it.

James's principles were taken up by Freud and made more well-known and clinical in the psychologist's investigations into the mind and its various components. It is via Freud that André Breton came to understand the new processes of the mind, and put them together in his surrealist project. In *The Surrealist Manifesto*, Breton describes the sudden impulse to write after a dream of a man watching him, a man "cut in two by the window," and then delves in to what Freud made available not only for patients, but also for artists:

> I resolved to obtain from myself what we were trying to obtain from them, namely, a monologue spoken as rapidly as possible without any intervention on the part of the critical faculties, a monologue consequently unencumbered by the slightest inhibition and which was, as closely as possible, akin to *spoken thought.* It had seemed to me, and still does -- the way in which the phrase about the man cut in two had come to me is an indication of it -- that the speed of thought is no greater than the speed of speech, and that thought does not necessarily defy language, nor even the fast-moving pen.[50]

Breton's italics home in directly on what became a central goal of the surrealist movement, automatic writing in order to reveal the processes of the mind. The fact that this quotation encompasses not only "spoken thought" but also the idea of a lack of intervention and a reservation about the respective speeds of thought and writing shows the complications of applying psychological theory to art and shows a counter to James's original definition. This seems to run counter to James's own description where there is always some kind of mediating or excluding element in the mind. At the same time, the question arises about the connection between language and thought in the first place, and what, then, that means for the audience. Any effort by an artist to approach the processes of their own mind through automatic writing would probably have little meaning or effect on any reader other than the artist herself. However many questions Breton's quote raises, it is a pertinent thought not only

[50] Breton, *The Surrealist Manifesto.* 22.

for the discussion of stream of consciousness in this chapter, but also later in the second where the issue of alienation and the reader is explored further.

One additional consideration to take into account prior to the Joyce's and Hrabal's texts is actually a much later comment Breton made about stream of consciousness that draws Poggioli's discussion of antagonism and language together with surrealism and the work of Joyce. While they share "a common desire to take up arms against the tyranny of a thoroughly debased language" Breton writes that "the 'automatic writing' that began Surrealism and the 'inner monologue' in Joyce's system are radically different at base."[51] He continues, criticizing especially the degree to which Joyce's project was controlled and limiting:

> That is to say, underlying them are two modes of apprehension of the world that are different in every particular. In opposition to the illusory stream of consciousness associations, Joyce will present a flux and try to make it gush forth from all directions, a flux that in the last analysis tends to be the closest possible *imitation* of life (by means of which he keeps himself within the framework of *art*, falls once again into *novelistic* illusion, and fails to avoid being placed in the long line of naturalists and expressionists). Much more modestly when one first looks at it, over and against this same conscious current 'pure psychic automatism,' which is the guiding principle of Surrealism, will set the flow from a spring that one need only go search for fairly deep down within oneself, a flow whose course one cannot try to direct, for if one does it is sure to dry up immediately. (298)

This criticism more than anything affirms the idea that Breton's ideas about stream of consciousness are conflicting when it comes to application and art. In pointing to Joyce's efforts as presenting "a flux" further shows the difficulty of even labeling the thought process, nevertheless criticizing its use, since flux means flow. So too does the use of "imitation of life" cause problems, since Breton does not even clarify in his manifesto the relationship between language and thought, as though language is not an entity that is governed itself by certain thought processes.

This is probably the most significant takeaway from this late criticism, the idea of a framework versus the coursing nature of thought, something Breton seems to think cannot be directed. Poggioli responds well to the inherent conflict between the "stream of consciousness" that William James defined, and the definition and application as Breton saw it. He encapsulates into his discussion Larbaud's "*monologue intérieur*" and stream of consciousness, ultimately positing "both spoken thought and interior monologue, even when limited to technique and method, are little more than simple metaphors. Art can be called automatic only if the adjective is understood as a synonym for spontaneous…"[52] Poggioli rests his case quite clearly on the notion that art is a conscious act, no matter what effort one

[51] Breton, 298.
[52] Poggioli, 192.

takes to let it "flow" out. The significance of the kind of conflict between how Breton saw "stream of consciousness" and how William James initially defined it provides the basis for understanding how and why Hrabal and Joyce employed what eventually became a style. In their use, Joyce and then Hrabal provide models that show the extent to which language might reveal something of the mind's process and perception while at the same time revealing how much the process of reading, and the placement of the reader, governs the interpretation of that language.

The "Penelope" episode of *Ulysses*

"Yes," Molly Bloom responds, at the beginning of the Penelope episode, continuing:

> he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting for that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he though he had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing all for masses for herself…[53]

In his guide to *Ulysses* Harry Blamires summarizes this beginning to "Penelope" in the following manner: "apparently Bloom has asked Molly to bring him his breakfast to bed in the morning, and the request takes Molly back mentally to the City Arms days when Leopold played a sick man as part of his campaign to get round Mrs Riordan…"[54] Blamires's description is helpful in guiding the reader into the background of Molly's various references, yet it fails to discuss the form of address that Molly has taken, as well as the underpinning feeling of her realization, or simply knowledge of, Bloom's act and acting throughout their lives. To whom is Molly saying "yes"? Moreover, what is to be made of the recollection of his request for breakfast in bed, and what of remembering and order in general? Molly's entire monologue is internal, and yet from the beginning, and then throughout with the affirmations, she seems to speak through her mind to someone. At once the episode is alienating for the reader, who must grapple with not only the strange style and the question of the audience, but also what the refrain, the yeses, might mean.

Numerous critics have looked at Molly's episode and the various stories and meanings it encompasses. Yet, as Vicki Mahaffey describes, there is a relative lack of balanced representation of the "Penelope" episode. In her book *Reauthorizing Joyce*, Mahaffey covers some of the varying, and sometimes harsh, opinions on the style and purpose of Molly's section, noting a consistent emphasis on the "formlessness" or lack of contribution to Joyce's development of style throughout the novel, as noted by such critics as Hugh Kenner and A.

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[53] Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Ed. Hans Walter Gabler. Random House, 1986. 18.608
[54] Blamires, Harry. *The Bloomsday Book.* London: Metheun, 1966. 246

Walton Litz.[55] Rather than having a lack, or not contributing to Joyce's development of style throughout *Ulysses*, Molly's closing section actually draws together, weaves together once more in the way of Penelope, the styles from throughout the novel. Considering the specific styles Joyce parodies throughout "Oxen of the Sun" and other episodes, and the histories they occupied, Joyce's writing speaks to the kind of development Poggioli writes about regarding ideology, audience and the fashionable nature of the avant-garde. Joyce seems to cast aside the past styles as though they were fads, retreats into a textbook form in "Ithaca" before launching into something, yes, not particularly new in the kind of interior monologue of Molly, but something he has crafted that stretches, that incorporates much of what came before it while standing out as something jarring and unique. The nature of the episode has led to various attempts by critics to clarify what exactly is happening in the monologue of Molly.

Mahaffey focuses on Molly's language through that image of Penelope weaving, departing from the fact that the word 'text' comes from 'texere,' which means "to weave" (146) —"Molly's monologue, far from being an escape from style, makes possible a 'recovery' of the text's styles through its complex relationship to textiles, reestablishing, in the process, our awareness of the affinity between materiality and dream" (142). There is a surprising nature to Molly's "yes" at the beginning of the chapter, and it serves as an acknowledgment to the presence of everything before it as well as a kind of directed message that she indeed does know about everything that Leopold went through that day. One of Molly's thoughts considers a moment when she confronted Bloom about a girl in a photo, quite a while after having considered the strangeness of a man's sex : "…I asked him about her and that word met something with hoses in it and he came out with some jawbreakers about the incarnation he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand then he goes and burns the bottom of the pan all for his Kidney…"[56] Though nearly fifty lines removed from her wonderment about a man's apparatus, the imagery in her mind is still set on that previous thought, her language still suggestive and meeting that topic, but at the same time she aptly judges Bloom's character in speaking and revisits the beginning of his story, with the kidney frying. This quote also lends to the idea of Molly constructing Bloom in her weaving, that he came out with some "jawbreakers about the incarnation," decidedly unclear descriptions, wordiness, that fly in the face of "the way a body can understand." It is not a problem of the mind, but of the body in which Molly is quite interested. Blamires summarizes this passage with a clear juxtaposition of the thoughts on Molly's mind with the danger to

[55] Mahaffey, Vicki. *Reauthorizing Joyce*. University Press of Florida, 1995. 138
[56] Joyce, *U 18*.565-568

men: "the delicate sexual apparatus dangling in front of them makes her think of how wordily and unintelligibly Bloom answers her queries. And so to Bloom's failure over such simple matters as cooking kidney without burning the pan."[57] Essentially the fragility of a man's body, of her man's body, suggests to Molly that Bloom's words are an equivalent weakness. This is one moment where the episode steps outside of the moment to some extent, and questions the schemata, the focus on organs, as well as all the language.

Yet only shortly after, she acknowledges Bloom's use, saying "I declare somebody ought to put him in the budget if I only could remember the half of things and write a book out of it the works of Master Poldy yes…" (578-580). It is a fitting meta-question coming from Molly, and shows the deeper kind of awareness to her perspective. Far be it to say that Joyce is inhabiting Molly's character, and yet the way she is able to string together not just the events of the day but the overriding anxieties and inabilities of her Poldy shows the interplay between author and character occurring. In another way though, Molly essentially puts together Leopold's day and being in her monologue, weaving it all together and connecting even to Stephen's thinking in "Scylla and Charybdis."[58] Perhaps what is more indicative is the moment that arises early on in the novel, in "Nestor," when Stephen is considering the fates of those in history and imagines:

> had Pyrrhus not fallen by a bedlam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind. (*U* 2.48-53).

This quote has importance for the discussion of history certainly, but here also serves to maintain the thread connection in *Ulysses*, wherein certain stories and understandings are developed but at the same time are redone, re-considered and even remade. In her book *Joyce's Web*, Margot Norris takes the weaving metaphor further and suggests that within Joyce's works there is "a teasing apart and reknitting of writing intertexted with itself as gaps in early works become visible only when they are sutured by extended narratives in later works, as later works rewrite and revise earlier texts that themselves give the later ones a different significance."[59] Norris's point serves particularly well in explicating the moments of resemblance to such processes as characters from *Dubliners* popping up in *Ulysses,* but at the

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[57] Blamires, 252.

[58] Mahaffey describes this in greater detail, writing "The emphasis on weaving in the later episodes helps to bring together the two halves of the book. Molly's weaving and unweaving of her thoughts in 'Penelope' materializes the notion of material and verbal artistry that Stephen presents in 'Scylla and Charybdis'…" (144-45).

[59] Norris, Margot. *Joyce's Web*. Austin: University of Texas, 1992. 22.

same time plays equally well to Molly and her ability to parse the emotions and or misgivings Bloom had in particular moments from the near past of the timeline of *Ulysses* and even before it. In a way, it seems that the "weaver of the wind" may very well be Molly Bloom. "Yes" serves as a refrain, as well as a way of pointing to particular traits of development in the character of Bloom while at the same time alluding to parts of the novel as a whole. The following are three instances where Molly thinks on particular traits of Bloom, with those thoughts carrying her mind to other threads, other elements of her own life, even sometimes parallel characteristics she shares with her husband.

Throughout her monologue, Molly points to her husband's doubts and worries regarding their relationship while at the same time openly and subtly bringing attention to symbols of her own affairs. The following quote shows a confusing blend of judgment with cues to Bloom's appearance and place in the novel as narrator:

> …when he slinked out looking quite conscious what harm but he had the impudence to make up to me one time well done to him mouth almighty and his boiled eyes of all the big stupoes I ever met and thats called a solicitor only for I hate having a long wrangle in bed or else if its not that its some little bitch or other he got in with somewhere or picked up on the sly if they only knew him as well as I do yes… (18.41-46)

Her invocation of "mouth almighty" and "boiled eyes" represent not only echoes of the organ schemata that Joyce lays out for the novel, but give credence to the thought of Bloom as a god-like figure in the novel. Here though, he is struck down a notch because his eyes are not "cod eyes" (God-eyes, as in "Cyclops") but instead "boiled," not necessarily out of anger, but perhaps more by Molly's own apt perception that her husband cannot rid the sight of her lover, Boylan, from his eyes. Not too much later, she speaks to a symbol of her infidelity, albeit in a time when she was with Bloom:

> …after the last time after we took the port and potted meat it had a fine salty taste yes because I felt lovely and tired myself and fell asleep as sound as a top the moment I popped straight into bed till that thunder woke me up God be merciful to us I thought the heavens were coming down about us to punish us… (131-35)

The thunder waking them up is indicative of the resounding thunder in *Finnegans Wake*, not that it was even in progress at that point, but again, this shows how many details are manifest in the tapestry that Molly is weaving. Yet then moments follow where the previous two thoughts are undone, where Molly seems to have given up on the characterization she has already alluded to. Discussing belief and the church, Molly says of Bloom "…though hed scoff if he heard because he never goes to church mass or meeting he says your soul you have no soul inside only grey matter because he doesnt know what it is to have one yes…" (140-42). Perhaps this fits the scientific- minded quality of Bloom as well as the fact that he is Jewish and would not go to mass anyway, but the quote takes a bit away from Bloom as a

narrator all-knowing with substance. Suddenly Bloom is soulless and equally gutted, containing "only grey matter." Surely the man who is initially described as having a fondness for internal organs must have them as well! Such a shift shows that Molly indeed does develop and tear down the character of her husband in her thoughts, as well as events, often represented only in symbols, of the novel. However weaving is just one of the metaphors for representing Molly's monologue, and it is necessary to consider the more common "flow" and how it overlaps with what Mahaffey has written.

While the idea of "weaving" correlates nicely not only with the overlap of Molly and Penelope, but also with the development of styles throughout *Ulysses*, a more common word used to describe Molly's section, and a word more closely aligned with stream of consciousness, is "flow." In his essay "Stopping the Flow," Derek Attridge is similarly fascinated by Molly's monologue as a text, much in the way of Mahaffey. However Attridge's interest is vested in the episode as simply being in the written word, and what the necessary implications are for examining such a text, but also the style and construction as Joyce meant it. In this way Attridge addresses both the nature of the content, the attempt to reveal the perception and awareness, albeit in a particularly mediated manner. Put into writing, Molly's thoughts can be enumerated, broken down, analyzed for their distinctive lack of punctuation, all practices which call into doubt the use of the word 'flow' to describe such a work. Attridge chronicles a great number of critics' descriptions of Molly's section using the word "flow," that which seems to be the predominant term. But then he goes on to question the use of the word "flow" for the previous reasons and for the nature of its appearance, and the appearance of the mind behind it: "it is Molly's greater syntactic correctness and explicitness which conveys the sense of smooth transitions from subject to subject," as opposed to Bloom's thought processes "whereas the jumps and ellipses… disclose a more eccentric and unpredictable mind."[60] This sense of "syntactic correctness and explicitness" comes from breaking down Molly's stream of consciousness as if it were properly punctuated and broken up. Attridge notes that

> replacing the punctuation and capitals in fact makes our progression as readers more 'flowing,' and does not affect the thoughts being represented (since the ambiguities we struggle with are not ambiguities we attribute to Molly), but it takes away that striking visual symbol of homogeneous continuity, a feature which belongs to the printing not the thinking. (100)

In other words, it is the structure of writing, the punctuation, sentence and paragraph structures, which contribute to reading becoming a "flowing" experience. Although at the

[60] Attridge, Derek. *Joyce Effects.* Cambridge UP, 2000. 97.

same time these structures allow for reading that is not necessarily wholistic. Roland Barthes touches on this issue to some degree in his *Pleasure of the Text*, where he makes a note about tmesis in texts, the split between words, or, in his book, the split between what is written and what is read. Specifically, he writes that tmesis is

> …a seam or flaw resulting from a simple principle of functionality; it does not occur at the level of the structure of languages but only at the moment of their consumption; the author cannot predict tmesis: he cannot choose to write *what will not be read*. And yet, it is the very rhythm of what is read and what is not read that creates the pleasure of the great narratives.[61]

A writer does not know what actually gets read from their work. Attempts to circumvent the standards of writing may help in forcing a more concerted reading effort, something that more than likely happens with respect to Molly's monologue, especially given the lucidity of the seeming sentences that make up the large blocks of uninterrupted (punctuation-wise) text. A footnote to Attridge's essay draws the reader's attention to the fact that another critic, Erwin Steinberg, "proposes that, in addition to the lack of punctuation, it is the 'comparatively long sentences' and the 'use of transitional words' (co-ordinating conjunctions, *yes,* and *then*) that might suggest the impression of continuous flow in the episode."[62] Yet as Steinberg points out, the average sentence length in Molly's episode is only 15.04 words, significantly less than in normal English prose, nor even in *Ulysses*, where in the "Eumaeus" episode the sentences average 53 words! Though many have been quick to look at and address Molly's stream of consciousness as something flowing, Attridge, along with the analysis of several other critics such as Steinberg, shows that in fact it is a mere impression, that through breaking down the actual text systematically, one can discover that what Joyce has done through Molly is affect the relationship between the character and her moment, and the reader. Essentially there is a shaping of the text in a manner meant to convey thought the pushes the reader to pay closer attention and come away with the impression of having read something freely formed. Yet the result is a kind of alienation, much as it is a drawing in. In effect, Joyce's work to present the consciousness of Molly, to show her awareness, simultaneously foregrounds the difficulty of such an enterprise and how much it is predicated on a reader's idea of thinking and awareness of texts. As Attridge points out, the effect of this episode "relies on the strategies and techniques of an activity that has nothing to do with the continuities of unexpressed thought: the activity of reading" (98). Molly's thoughts are

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[61] Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text.* Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975. 11.

[62] qtd. in Attridge, 98.

bounded much more by the activity of reading and the perception the reader has of a text, something that further points to the importance of Barthes's idea of the seam or gap.

In the end, the "Penelope" episode reveals as much about the importance of a reader's awareness as it does the difficulty of attempting to fully encompass the consciousness of a character in writing. Molly indeed weaves together elements from the whole day, displaying a high level of awareness of what has happened and been happening all around, albeit not quite on the level of Bloom. While initially in this chapter this thought seems arguable, since a stream of consciousness is being presented explicitly, a closer analysis reveals that there is a great deal of mediation on the part of Joyce, but also on the part of the reader. The apparent formlessness of the episode, with the lack of punctuation and the random and repeating "yeses" for example, in fact give it greater structure for the reader, and increases the likelihood of the reader fully engaging in the text. In this manner Joyce's use of stream of consciousness serves to work on several meta-levels of awareness— between author and character, character and her story, and character and reader. Molly seems to be speaking to an audience, yes, but ultimately it is the processing of the text through reading that gives power to her thinking and awareness.

The Stream in *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*

Hrabal's use of stream of consciousness as a means of presenting awareness is equally governed by the position of the audience and the mediation of observations into texts. His "pábení" is in fact often explained as a freeform train of thought put into writing, and it runs throughout his works. The pinnacle of stream of consciousness for Hrabal occurs in *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age.* This story is in fact just one long block of text, for which both weaving and flow would be apt descriptors, as would the meaning derived from those two terms in connection with Joyce. The title itself is suggestive of fluid physical movement, albeit broken up by the instabilities of older age. This is an appropriate place to start, the title, as it hardly seems connected to what follows in the text (novella, short story—even the genre is up for discussion). The narrator is based on Hrabal's Uncle Pepin, and the text itself comes from a number of Hrabal's very earliest writings. As Hrabal writes in *Nová setkání,* "the origins of *Dancing Lessons* is plain. It is a suave inner monologue which started flowing out of my Uncle Pepin's mouth forty years ago, when he came for a two-week long visit, and continues to this day. In 1946 I first composed the miraculous narration of my uncle and called it: *The Sorrows of Old Werther.*"[63] For the basis of this section, the analysis of the text will focus less on the biographical connection than simply on the nature of it "flowing out." In this way, rather than speak of the narrator as Uncle Pepin, as other critics have, it will function better to consider him as an elderly man who was once a cobbler. In his narration, this old man shifts topics just quickly as making steps in an intricate dance maneuver. To quote from *Dancing Lessons* proves a difficult exercise because the text, a meandering of the greatest swoops and turns, is dizzying and continuously gaining momentum. In order to rein in the flow to some extent, it is necessary to present both the beginning and ending sections to get a sense of how, though the text moves so quickly onward, it is actually quite reciprocal:

> Just like I come here to see you, young ladies, I used to go to church to see my beauties, well, not exactly a church, I'm not much of a churchgoer, but to a small shop next to the parish house, a tiny little place, where a man by the name of Altman sold second-hand sewing machines, dual-spring Victrolas from America, and Minimax fire extinguishers, and this Altman he had a sideline delivering beauties to pubs and bars all over the district, and the young ladies would sleep in Altman's back room, or when summer came they set up tents in the garden and the dean of the church would take his constitutional along the fence and those show-offs would put a Victrola out there and sing and smoke and tan themselves in their bathing suits, a sight for sore eyes it was, a heavenly sight, Eden on earth, which is why the dean took all those inspection tours along the fence…[64]

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[63] qtd. in *Jsme jako Olivy* 406. Original: "Vznik *Tanečních hodin* je prostý. Je to dotažený vnitřní monolog, který začal vytékat z úst mého strýce Pepina před čtyřicet lety, kdy k nám přijel na čtrnáctidenní návštěvu a je u nás podnes. V roce 1946 jsem sepsal podivuhodné vyprávění svého strýce a nazval jsem je: *Utrpení starého Werthera*."

[64] Hrabal, *Dancing Lessons,* 3.

> …so anyway, ladies, there I was, sitting on my Minimax fire extinguisher case, while six beauties lolling in the sun listened to my stories and the dean of the church standing on his watering can with one arm over the fence stared at me like I was an apparition while in fact I was only a loyal reader of the illustrated weeklies and Havlíček and Mr Batista's book on sexual hygiene… (103)

It is not simply that the voice of the narrator is strong and compelling; the images that he presents are vivid and jump to the mind cinematically, albeit comedically and in the way of a Chaplin film or something vaudeville. The old cobbler is simultaneously in the middle of the story and outside of it. Contradictions dominate his presence, as he goes to the place to tell stories the way he "used to go to church" and yet he "is not much of a churchgoer." The young ladies may or may not be those that Altman delivers as a side business and the narrator himself may or may not be the salesman in question. The subtle remark that the dean of the church "stared…like I was an apparition" gives some credence to the idea that perhaps this man, this cobbler, this narrator, has imagined his way into a scene, into a situation where he might provide advice to some random people.

While it is unclear what the exact position of this old cobbler is, whether he has just gone to buy from Altman, or has imagined Altman and the ladies and the dean of the church, he does seem to have a sense of an audience—"young ladies" and "so anyway, ladies" are just a couple of the many returns to this particular group. Reconsidering the title, one has to ask what connection these "young ladies" have to "dancing lessons" particularly those for people getting on in age. This question becomes further fraught with difficulty as the cobbler relates his advice through the local to the more universal, or in the way connected to Joyce, the universal in the particular. Soon after the scene is interrupted, rather to say the book has begun, the man explains:

> …take Manouch, who thought he had it made because his father was a jailer and all he did was drink and pick up bad habits, which leads to fights like the quarrel in the days of the monarchy between the social democrats and the freethinkers and clerics over whether the world comes from a monkey or God slapped Adam together out of mud and fashioned Eve from his insides, no He could have made her out of mud too, it would have been cheaper… (5)

The fact that the cobbler links the local jailer's son picking up bad habits as leading to fights which are on par with the critical existential and religious question of the 19th century is not something that is as ridiculous as it is confounding to whatever message he seems to be professing to the "young ladies." There is something similarly pejorative and desiring in the repeated use of "young ladies" as the thoughts and advice pile up. Later, with one of the first mentions of Batista, the narrator explains different positions of women:

> …but I had read my Batista, so I knew that if you hold nothing sacred you are open to sin and there are women who fall for love and women who fall for money and women who fall for

> both, there are women who indulge in debauchery and women who indulge in fads and women who indulge in artists, but marriage is meant to be what Master Jan Hus said it was, don't show leg, girls, until you know who the boy really is, though the best thing is to keep your word… (13)

'Keeping your word' is something that the cobbler may never be able to do because what he says is so full of contradiction. The above quote comes after his recollection of two women who were "tearing each other's blouses to shreds over" the narrator, who was some kind of looker in his day, particularly in his Sokol uniform. That he speaks to the topic of marriage and different types of women is problematic, considering his status as a life-long bachelor—as he says later "…I followed Christ's example and kept my illusions, I went with beauties but didn't let them get too close…" (40). But what also proves difficult is that he has chosen to profess to a number of "young ladies" what they should do despite the fact that his long sermon was not asked for, nor is necessarily even being listened to. The word "illusions" is appropriate in the aforementioned quote, because for all the prattling on about women, and the "young ladies" of address, there is little if any interaction of those ladies in the story, further drawing back to the initial question of audience.

The cobbler's reflections on women, marriage and sexuality resemble Molly's parallel thoughts in her monologue. Though the latter are far more crude in their description, Molly's memories and putting together of Bloom's day contain asides that stand as philosophical realizations, mini-epiphanies, or perhaps simply lessons to be gleaned from putting together events with the past. She is critical of her husband, but at the same time acknowledges her own infidelities, and through the symbols of those infidelities, such as the potted meat, shows the extent to which illusions of perfect harmony in marriage are just those, illusions. Referencing his having "followed Christ's example" shows the irreverent nature of the cobbler at first, but also the sense that much was to be made of the relationship that was never made into marriage. As often as the old cobbler speaks of dreams and of particular yarns from all kinds of men, he returns a great deal to the subject of love and marriage, particularly of failed relationships often leading to suicide of one party or the other. In one strain he cites several men whose wives were, respectively, no good at stealing and a pilfered shirt seller (35). Both men were forced to commit suicide for the errors of their relationships. Later on in contrast, the old cobbler brings up Mary Magdalene and her faithfulness—"…think about it, where are all the other beauties of her day? gone and forgotten, but little Mary Magdalene will forever touch the hearts of poets…" (64). This may be continued irreverence, but at the same time, as advice to young girls sunning themselves in sight of church fathers and churchgoing

people, seems to suggest the redeeming quality of standing out despite suspect or salacious background.

In a way this seems to be one of the purposes of the old cobbler's monologue in *Dancing Lessons*, putting together stories chronicling various failures of men and women, often because of problems of the flesh, in a rich cavalcade of language in order to teach young ladies something of life. In the more complex sense concerning language and stream of consciousness, the old cobbler shows that perhaps the "discriminative attention" to the thought process through representation in literature is simply the non-avoidance of any language, that the obscene should find placement right alongside everything else. At one point the old cobbler speaks more directly regarding the purpose of his monologue with a metaphor particularly reminiscent of Breton's dream, and then later to the purpose of a physical book. Through these cobbled-together stories, a sense of refinement should arise, as he explains to the ladies "…what I'm giving you now, young ladies, are like windows on the world, points, goals, scores, the principle the late Strauss applied to his heavenly melodies, sending them out into the world to refine the emotions…" (27) The stories are open to review, are both talking 'points' and perhaps something gained in a game, goals to strive for and also something scored, scores both on the way to winning but also problems to be solved later. If there is a score to settle, it is the issue of the presence of the book itself. The cobbler speaks to books, exclaiming "…no book worth its salt is meant to put you to sleep, it's meant to make you jump out of bed in your underwear and run and beat the author's brains out…" (30) Some readers of this book might criticize it for its length, for the rambling nature of the cobbler, who seems to be as much a drunk man in a bar regaling life's successes and eventual downfall, and thus might seek to heed the cobbler's advice. Yet once again it is important to recall that the attention given in his monologue is focused on incorporating as many aspects of life as possible, so as to make language the center of being and how to exist. Hrabal weaves numerous such comments on the thoughts themselves and writing throughout the text, and the cobbler's seeming advice never becomes polemic or anything of the sort so much as it is an outflow of the connections that give his life purpose. But what is the effect on the reader? Continually addressing "young ladies," the speaker of *Dancing Lessons* insists on a different kind of reader-writer relationship. In discussing the novella, one critic, Heinrich Kunstmann, even connects the approach to that of the stage.[65] While the form of address does connote

[65] Kunstmann, Heinrich. *Zur auditiven Stillsierung in der tschechischen Prosa. John, Hašek, Hrabal.* 1970. Qtd. in *Spisy III. Jsme jako olivy.* Mlada Fronta, 2015. 415. "This great monologue begins with speaker directly addressing of the listener (Miss); interest in the addressee—sometimes even in plural (dear ladies)—is

reception by an audience similar to that of the stage or radio, there is a more important element at play in the novella.

Susanna Roth, longtime friend, translator and correspondent of Hrabal, writes that the most important contrasting element of the text is "the presence of written quotations in the colloquial narrator: the overall structure thus gives the impression of a permanent dialogue of different language strings, where or while the relation is preserved by the rhythm."[66] She continues, addressing Kunstmann and his identification of both the "dramatic monologue" and the "auditory stylization" by saying that:

> if we turn our attention not to the way of the statement but to the material from which it is composed, we can talk about *Dancing Lessons* based on the integration of quotations and paraphrases into the narrator's straightforward speech as a 'literary assemblage or montage,' in which the author has developed the most striking example of harmony through inconsistency.[67]

This is a particularly poetic sentiment and an appropriate one from Roth, as it encompasses not just the cobbler's style, but draws it back to Molly's monologue and the disparate elements therein. The text at first glance seems to be wildly inconsistent, and the thoughts seems to go round in circles, without any apparent control or mediation. Yet there is great harmony particularly in the references the cobbler makes to what he is doing, and in the same manner of Molly's affirming "yeses," a kind of return to focus on communicating to the young ladies, the audience, and through them to the reader as a means of maintaining their connection to the text.

This idea of montage will be given greater due later, but it is appropriate to address the word in correlation with *Dancing Lessons* insomuch as to reaffirm the very constructed nature of the text, which does go against the kind of automatic writing which Breton promoted. Yet considering Hrabal's descriptions of his Uncle Pepin as a teller of stories as well as the nature of messages throughout *Dancing Lessons* it does not seem unfair to consider the "montage" -like aspect of the piece as something that in fact came about from chance, from the kind of

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occasionally actuated. Hrabal's self-confessional monologue can be assigned to those dramatic monologues that have recently entered into fashion, apparently supported by the dramaturgy of radio plays …" Original: "Přízačně začíná tento velký monolog vokativem, přímým oslovením posluchače (*slečno*); zájem o adresáta — někdy i v plurálu (*milé slečny*) —je čas od času akutalizovan. Hrabalovu ševcovskou samomluvu lze přiřadit k oněm dramatickým monologům, jež v poslední době přišly do módy, zjevně podporovány dramaturgií rozhlasových her…" 415.

[66] Roth, Susanna. *Hlučna samota a hořké štěští Bohumila Hrabala*. 1986. Qtd. in *Spisy III. Jsme jako olivy.* Mlada Fronta, 2015. 417. Original: "Nejdůležitější kontrastní prvek tvoří však spisovné citáty v hovorové vypravěčově řeči: celková struktura tak budí dojem trvalého dialogu různých jazykových vrstev, přičemž souvislost je zachovávána rytmem."

[67] Original: "Obrátíme-li pozornost nikoli ke způsobu výpovědi, ale k materiálu, z něhož je sestavena, můžeme mluvit o *Tanečních hodinách* na základě integrace citátů a parafrází do přímé řečí vypravěče jako o "literarní montáží", jíž vytvořil autor nejvýraznější přiklad harmonie nesouladu." 417.

free association that Breton and others sought. While Hrabal does not mention this novella as one that he wrote *alla prima*, like several of his later works, perhaps it was enough for him to recollect his uncle and proceed from an inkling of an anecdote. Tim Beasley-Murray calls *Dancing Lessons* an "associative stream of quickly intercut images"[68] and it is an appropriate description and correlates well with Roth's use of "literary assemblage or montage." At the same time, however, such descriptions take *Dancing Lessons* further away from presenting the kind of stream of consciousness Breton aspired to. Yet strangely there becomes a kind of double-bind with respect to both Molly's monologue and the cobbler's, in that while they are not so much 'automatic', the freedom of juxtaposition evident in both draw out images of the marvelous and whimsical that fit the more visual aspirations of the surrealists. If anything, perhaps the judgment of the attempts to do "stream of consciousness" writing suggests that there is always some mediation, just as the mind, James noted, gives "discriminative attention" to certain thoughts.

In the end Joyce and Hrabal show that presenting awareness through stream of consciousness is actually an apotheosis of style, that the attempts to reconcile thought processes and awareness in writing demand a consideration of the thoughts themselves, a keen eye into what the reader might perceive, and how texts are constructed. Both examples are texts in the end, and for all the address towards the audience, the lack of punctuation, and the seemingly free-flow of ideas, they are carefully constructed in such a way to heighten the significance of what these characters are thinking so that a reader comes away with a greater sense of Molly's and the cobbler's respective awareness. More specifically, Joyce and Hrabal fashion the texts to prompt the reader to pay greater attention, in a way providing directions, the "discriminative attention" of an author. Just in the way that Attridge describes in his section "Stopping the Flow," putting the correct punctuation back into such writing would ease the process of the reading and would cause the reader to get through the passages more quickly. The point seems to be much more the direct engagement of a character sharing their thoughts, telling anecdotes that relate to a greater story, to a captive audience, an audience stricken with the lack of punctuation, the lack of a clear direction. This is only part and parcel of a greater structural turn taken by Joyce and Hrabal, in which it is not only the attempts to reveal the consciousness of particular characters, but also to reconsider the role of the author and characters in telling stories. In other words, while this chapter has focused on stream of consciousness as a means of enlightening the reader not just to particular processes in the

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[68] Beasley-Murray, Tim. "The Avant-garde, Experience and Narration in Bohumil Hrabal's *Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále*" *Papers from a Symposium.* Ed. David Short. University College London. 2004. 85-86.

minds of Molly or the cobbler, but also to the greater themes of the respective works and the importance of reading to a text and to awareness, what follows is a deeper investigation into what Joyce and Hrabal do with their narrators, and how their narrators indicate not just a special kind of awareness, but also a disjunct predicated on outside thinking or aspirations.

Chapter 4. *Ulysses* and *I Served the King of England*: Troubling Narrators

Juxtaposing the story of a day in the life of a man, Leopold Bloom, with the story of a man's entire life seems hard to quantify at first glance. Yet *Ulysses* must be remembered as the saga of a day, a saga made up of multiple episodes that connect not only to Homer's grand, originally oral narrative, but to the historical events populating both Joyce's home country and the continent on June 16, 1904. Ditie's narrative within *I Served the King of England*[69] repeats similar stories of service in hotels, ultimately tightening the passage of the time in the novel. The idea too of comparing what is considered one of Hrabal's most 'conventional' novels with the apogee of modernist works also stands as a rather strange endeavor. Yet the purpose in this section is to look at narration in both novels, and how Joyce and Hrabal, via the protagonists and several minor characters, grapple with the role of narrators and narration to provide a sense of awareness and what happens when that narration is shot through with a kind of intoxication. Some has already been written about the sensory elements that both Hrabal and Joyce inject into their works—these are significant here, but only inasmuch as they cause the narrators to live up to or deny their duties as storytellers.

Important in the discussion of narrators here too is the authorial voice versus the character's voice, something that Bakhtin especially focused on, his idea of "polyphony" as developed in detail in *The Dialogic Imagination.*[70] Much has been written about Bakhtin's book, but it is helpful to revisit exactly his focus, if only from a secondary critic. In his *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature,* R.B. Kershner summarizes that "Bakhtin delineates an ongoing dialogical relationship between an author and his character, a process in which their distinct languages or idioms converse, blend, debate, and counterpoint each other on every page."[71] This active relationship between author and character is an important point and continues a more expanded look at the experience for the reader with respect to both Joyce and Hrabal. In part this relationship involves a certain amount of alienation, leading even to a kind of antagonism between artist and audience. The actions of Bloom in *Ulysses,* here primarily in the "Eumaeus" episode, are not really surrealist, yet seem to be governed by certain aspirations, of a sort parallel to dreams. Dreams form the heart of *King of England* and the narrator Ditie is so taken by them that he often forgets his duties as a waiter, as a husband and finally as a narrator of a life story. This forgetfulness, and in some cases pretending to be

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[69] Hrabal, Bohumil. *I Served the King of England* (Original: *Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále*). Trans. Paul Wilson. London: Vintage. 2009. Referred to as *King of England* throughout.

[70] Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination.* Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas, 1981.

[71] Brivic, Sheldon. *The Veil of Signs: Joyce, Lacan, and Perception*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1991. 6

something else, connects Ditie to Bloom, who goes "all at sea" for a moment in "Eumaeus," prompting a question of how grounded and in control he is as a narrator in the first place. The question of dreams, of perspectives governed by aspirations that are capable of removing someone from the present moment, is one central to surrealism, and even the avant-garde as a whole. Walter Benjamin, in an essay entitled "Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," characterizes the central focus of surrealism before continuing to show the necessarily political nature of the movement. His take on language and image includes an interesting detail:

> Image and language take precedence. Saint-Pol Roux, retiring to bed about daybreak, fixes a notice on his door: 'Poet at work.' Breton notes: 'Quietly. I want to pass where no one yet has passed, quietly! After you, dearest language.' Language takes precedence. Not only before meaning. Also before the self. In the world's structure dream loosens individuality like a bad tooth. This loosening of the self by intoxication is, at the same time, precisely the fruitful, living experience that allowed these people to step outside the domain of intoxication.[72]

An emphasis on language taking precedence, before meaning and even self, harkens back to Poggioli's discussion of obscure language and antagonism. The intoxication that Benjamin speaks of does find connections to illicit substances, but Benjamin suggests that those are only some ways of entering a different sort of experience. That conversation is not so pertinent here as is Benjamin's identification of the primacy of language over not only meaning, but also over a sense of self. Dream, or some kind of intoxication, has the ability to alienate the self, but at the same time make experiences more vivid, more alive. Elements of this alienation of the self occur in the selections in this chapter, albeit not necessarily wholly. What is important is the study of language surrounding these moments of intoxication. As Tim Beasley-Murray describes in the case of *King of England,* the novel "gains narrative momentum through moments of surrealist intoxication which break through the surface of conscious life…"[73] Beasley-Murray starts with what is surrealist in the novel, but goes beyond the nature of the text being an example of automatic writing[74] and focuses on the text as "an associative montage of anecdotes and images." The idea of gaining "narrative momentum" through particular moments of "intoxication" is an apt representation of what is going on in both *King of England* and the "Eumaeus" episode. At the same time, the idea of "sounds are impostures," Stephen's response to Bloom early in "Eumaeus," plays to the idea

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[72] Benjamin, Walter. "Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia" 1929. 48 Online: <monoskop.org/images/a/a0/Benjamin_Walter_1929_1978_Surrealism_The_Last_Snapshot_of_the_European_Intelligentsia.pdf>

[73] Beasley-Murray, 87.

[74] *King of England* is especially notable for the fact that Hrabal wrote it all in a sitting, *alla prima*. While this bears attention for a surrealist interpretation, here I choose to focus on the changing quality of the narrator and probably moments that were edited a great deal (or even cut and paste, as Hrabal was wont to do).

of intoxication, or at least incoherence, but is also an indictment of language and perhaps too the position of any narrator, as will be discussed in detail with regard to Bloom.

In short, this chapter then will look at what happens to Bloom and Ditie as narrators, how their stories are impacted by moments of "intoxication" of some sort, and to what extent the idea of sounds and senses are marred by a kind of acting, or deception, either individually or toward the reader. This discussion continues along the line of Poggioli's antagonism in the avant-garde, both in the sense of language but also in the role of the artist. One of the distinctions Poggioli makes has to do with the ideology of the avant-garde, of which he writes "We might even say that avant-garde ideology is a social phenomenon precisely because of the social or antisocial character of the cultural and artistic manifestations that it sustains and expresses" (15). Within this definition one must consider that the social or antisocial character can be directed either at the public or at tradition, and from the point of view of the artist or within the work itself. To some extent then, this chapter will analyze Joyce's and Hrabal's roles alongside their narrators and the break that happens with the reader.

Undergirding all of this, from the alienation to the language, the intoxication and "sounds are impostures," is the question of consciousness as was discussed in the introductory chapter, and touched on in the "Proteus" and "Aeolus" episodes. In the latter, amidst all the newspaper development, the term "planes of consciousness" arises. Stephen is talking to several of the guys prior to going to the pub. In the midst of their conversation, JJ O'Molloy turns to Stephen and tells him a bit of gossip from Professor Magennis: "A.E. has been telling some yankee interviewer that you came to him in the small hours of the morning to ask him about planes of consciousness. Magennis thinks you must have been pulling A.E.'s leg. He is a man of the very highest morale."[75] While this quote is a mere aside in the greater conversation, the fact that it mentions "planes of consciousness" is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it earns an immediate reaction from Stephen, who thinks to himself "Speaking about me. What did he say? What did he say? What did he say about me? Don't ask" (*U.*7.789-90). The character Stephen is suddenly questioning not only Professor Magennis, but in the repetition seems to ask out of the situation, to the reader or even Joyce himself. The end of the line is a stark rebuttal that also seems to have no clear intended recipient. All this questioning follows from Stephen's existential moment on the beach in the "Proteus" episode, where he comes to question the infinite and his place: "His shadow lay over the rocks as he bent, ending. Why not endless till the farthest star?…Endless, would it be mine, form of my

[75] *U* 7.784-87.

form? Who watches me here? Who ever anywhere will read these written words?" (*U*.3.413-414) While Molly helped to construct characters in her monologue, much of the rest of the novel is focused on Stephen and Bloom discovering themselves, and in their search there are multiple levels of awareness, or consciousness at play. Here Bloom's awareness and focus will be analyzed, and similar consideration will be given to Ditie as he grows up, and yet remains very child-like.

"Eumaeus" and Leopold Bloom "all at sea"

Much is made about the development of style throughout *Ulysses*. Prior to looking at "Eumaeus" in detail, it is important to emphasize what directions Joyce has taken the novel narratively. Just as Molly's is jarring, the "Cyclops" episode is probably the most alienating episode, since the perspective taken is of an unnamed and unknown narrator. Joyce does this in part in fitting with the frame story from Homer's epic, but more because he does not want to be burdened with the same approach throughout. As Blamires describes with respect to the nature of perspective in "Cyclops,"— "this two-eyed view is persistent with Joyce. He will never totally surrender himself or his reader to a single mood or style: the tragic and the comic moods exist side by side; poetic and 'vulgar' styles are intertwined."[76] This is a sentiment that reaches back to *Portrait* and even *Dubliners* to some degree, and is useful especially for the idea of "surrender," either on the part of the reader or Joyce. Blamires, as many other critics have, notes the play on "eyes of cod" in "Cyclops" and how Bloom's eyes are those of "God." Yet that perspective is never fully formed because Bloom wavers in his control of his thoughts and the narrative, evidenced a great deal in "Eumaeus."

This episode, Blamires writes, "has a flabby, weary, rambling style, aptly suggestive of the vague, sleepy, inert mood of the early hours. Syntax and sentences trail on inconclusively, lose themselves, or feebly recover. The discipline of alert sobriety is withdrawn" (208-209). Neither Stephen nor Bloom is drinking alcohol at this point; Bloom has pushed Stephen toward the cabman's shelter in order to sober up, and once there they sit down for coffee and a bun. Whatever effect the coffee is actually having seems mum though, because Bloom meanders in his speaking and thoughts as much, if not more, than Stephen, in ways reminiscent of some kind of mental intoxication. As Margery Sabin notes in a particularly harsh, but apt, judgment of his thinking: "in the interior monologues Joyce shows Bloom's inner language to be by turns pathetically and ludicrously inadequate as a medium

[76] Blamires, 122.

for sustained, consequential contemplation."[77] Although Sabin's remark is pointed toward the whole of Bloom's thought processes, the inadequacy is pointed in "Eumaeus." This is indeed odd considering the nature of the Bloom's counterpart in the *Odyssey* at this juncture. By the "Eumaeus" episode the hero Odysseus has made it back to Ithaca at long last, and is taken in by his loyal swineherd, with whom he is able to make contact with Telemachus for the first time. While critics have pointed to the oddity of Bloom's actions in the "Eumaeus" of Joyce's epic, perhaps it bears in mind revisiting the exact nature of Odysseus once he has reached home. When Ulysses reaches Ithaca, it is in sleep. He is placed on the shore fast asleep, in a slumber "deep, sweet, and almost deathlike."[78] When he wakes up, he has no idea where he is and rather feels like he is still on his voyage, having simply arrived at yet another foreign land. In short, he is rather like an impostor in his own land after having longed for and romanticized it for such a long time. This idea of being "an impostor" plays out through the use of language in the episode, as well as through the shifting of narrative point of view and the separation from reality recurring in the episode.

Early on Leopold Bloom is described as being "all at sea for a moment."[79] Bloom seems confused and unable to comfortably communicate his positions. The "all at sea" comment comes at the confusion of Murphy's knowing a Dedalus, which follows directly from Stephen's suggestion that "sounds are impostures" and the question "what's in a name?" (*U* 16.362-364). Much has been written about Stephen's quote, and particularly how it relates to the strange narration of the chapter. One critic, Gerald Bruns, describes that this idea "adumbrates a basic nominalist formula, according to which a discontinuity is said to prevail between words and things. In the context here the discontinuity is between names and persons…"[80] Bruns continues from this to suggest that "an authentic role" is established for Bloom in the chapter because of this, that he becomes "the *eiron*, whose business it is to expose the discontinuity between character and role—that is, to expose the impostor and to deflate the romantic" (370). While this may be true in the sense that Bloom reveals Murphy as a kind of impostor sailor upon looking at the postcard Murphy passes around, it is not entirely true in the sense that Bloom remains very much "at sea" in this thinking even well after the interaction with the sailor. As Brian McHale describes, the perspective in "Eumaeus"

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[77] Sabin, 32.
[78] Homer. *The Odyssey.* Trans. Samuel Butler. <http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.13.xiii.html> Book XIII
[79] Joyce, *Ulysses,* 16.380
[80] Bruns, Gerald L. "Eumaeus." *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays*. Ed. Clive Hart and David Hayman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974. 369.

becomes one that is "predominantly Bloom's, but not *entirely* his."[81] The lack of clarity between Bloom and the narrator suggests that Bloom is perhaps emblematic of the discontinuity between character and role, between an authority and the audience, and also with language. Derek Attridge finds a kind of weakening force on the narrator Bloom in the episode. He writes: "What the style of "Eumaeus" achieves, for all its attempts at propriety, is a vivid demonstration of the impossibility of fixed boundaries and significations when the structures of language are permeated by the dissolving energies of erotic desire."[82] Bloom's thoughts are taken regularly to his wife and their relationship, but at the same time the desires are not necessarily only erotic, but something of paternal longing; after all, Bloom's efforts are the desire not to reacquaint with his own son, long dead, but to bring into place a new heir. This idea comes into play later, but is important to consider as Bloom and Stephen converse during the episode.

Necessary to take into consideration in that moment of discontinuity is the juxtaposition of Bloom's notion of stories and language when he speaks to Stephen and the story that follows from the fellow Murphy. Bloom clearly tries to appeal to Stephen, remarking on the language of the Italians speeding by and thoughts of singing and poetry. When they do get into a conversation about sounds and names, the discussion is cut short by a pirating sailor: "The redbearded sailor, who had his weather eye on the newcomers, boarded Stephen, whom he had singled out for attention in particular squarely by asking: And what might your name be?" (*U* 16.367-368) The "boarded Stephen" is an odd interpolation of narration, seemingly by someone observing the scene alongside Bloom. Perhaps too, it is Joyce reaffirming his presence in the novel. Whatever the case, while the conversation continues briefly in the direction Stephen had set it on with his comment about sounds and names, quickly the moment turns into a sailor's yarn, linking together a marksman named Simon Dedalus with the sailor's travels from Sweden to Bolivia to China and everywhere in between, apparently. The sailor eventually offers his name— "Murphy's my name…W.B. Murphy, of Carrigaloe", asking with it "Know where that is?" (*U* 16.415-16). Stephen acknowledges that he does and then Murphy emphasizes his port: "That's right…that's where I hails from. I belongs there. That's where I hails from. My little woman's down there…She's my own true wife I haven't seen for seven years now, sailing about" (*U* 16.418-421). The latter half of this quote seems to tie Murphy to Eveline, from the story in *Dubliners*, but at the same time suggests he is a kind of Odysseus, forever separated from home. Yet the fact that

[81] McHale, Brian. *Constructing Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1992. 52.
[82] Attridge, Derek. *Peculiar Language*. London: Routledge, 2004. 182.

he repeats "where I hails from" suggests that he is indeed an impostor, a gallivanting yarn spinner. In this way Murphy seems to present connections that link him to Bloom, thoughts of a wife as well as connections in the actual narration that suggest control. However there is a doubt to his origin, and this subsequently leads to a doubt of everything he has to say.

In fact for all his abilities in garnering the attention of those in the cabman's shelter, Murphy does not actually offer too much in the way of actual stories. Mere recitation of place names—from the Red Sea to China, South America and Russia (emphasized with "*Gospodi pomilyou.* That's how the Russian prays) (*U* 16.459-463)—seems to be enough to keep everyone's attention. However for the reader the real tale-teller is Bloom, who is taken by the sailor and the lingering theme from his discussion with Stephen. In response to Murphy talking about his origins and his wife, Bloom envisions himself in the similar situation and considers the many stories—"across the world for a wife. Quite a number of stories there were on that particular Alice Ben Bolt topic…" (*U* 16.424-25) and yet the strangeness of the fact that there was never one "about the runaway wife coming back, however much devoted to the absentee. The face at the window!" (*U* 16.428-29). His thoughts carry him to consider the sight that Murphy might return to one day, a "postmortem child" (*U* 16.437). To this the reaction, or at least following sentence is "With a high ro! and a randy ro! and my galloping tearing tandy, O!" (*U* 16.438). The grotesque nature of the internal exclamation seems to speak to Bloom's recurring depression surrounding the death of his son, Rudy, but also shows that his separation from home and his wife has been marked by that madness of loss for a great amount of time. In short, this moment after Murphy's name and home is marked by Bloom's own consideration of his place in life and even in the story. Where Bruns has marked Bloom as an *eiron* to root out the inauthentic is shown in the return to Murphy marked by the narrator as "the sailor, who scarcely seemed to be a Dublin resident…" (*U* 16.441). This is not Bloom's direct comment, but considering what went before it, seems to be the kind of judgment that might come after the extended retreat into Bloom's mind. More indicative of Bloom's separation as character and narrator is his series of thoughts following the introduction of Murphy's postcard.

After the list of exotic destinations in his travels, Murphy procures a postcard as evidence and the whole of the shelter is taken in looking at not just the postcard, but also Murphy's discharge papers. Bloom, however, turns the card over and sees a "partially obliterated address and postmark" (*U* 16.488) as well as a name, Senor A. Boudin, that does not at all correspond to the storytelling sailor. At the same time, Bloom finds that on the card "there was no message evidently, as he took particular notice" (*U* 16.490). Despite all this and

Bloom's own doubts about Murphy, he was "not an implicit believer in the lurid story narrated" (*U* 16.491), Bloom allows the story to take him elsewhere, contemplating his own travels on the sea, to London, and then later perhaps on a "concert tour of summer music embracing the most prominent pleasure resorts" (*U* 16.519). But he soon becomes embroiled in an internal conflict, over whether the idea of vacationing and touring elsewhere is even a good idea, remarking on prime spots on the home island, "in and around Dublin" or "farther away from the madding crowd, in Wicklow" (*U* 16.552). In closing to his departure, Bloom thinks:

> Because of course uptodate tourist traveling was as yet merely in its infancy, so to speak, and the accommodation left much to be desired. Interesting to fathom, it seemed to him, from a motive of curiosity pure and simple, was whether it was the traffic that created the route or vice-versa or the two sides in fact (*U* 16.563-567).

That the story and postcard of Murphy's take Bloom so far elsewhere in his thoughts seems to be one of the sticking points about stories and consciousness that Joyce is tackling throughout *Ulysses*. Yet the comment of Bloom's on "tourist traveling" is perhaps more pertinent not just to the idea of stories, but to the idea of words and pictures removing people. This though, must be broken down into its respective parts, the "traffic" and the "route," because for Bloom, the story was part of what drove his mind inward to traveling around, but so too did the lack of information on the card itself. With no message there, what really prompted such a lengthy excursion into the possibilities of traveling at sea? Was it the card itself, the words of sailor or something else that had been on Bloom's mind for much of the day? This is where the discussion of consciousness really arises, particularly in the vein of Stephen's questioning in "Nestor" about who may read this all. Once the sailor is done, "tired of all them rocks in the sea," Bloom falls "to woolgathering on the enormous dimensions of the water about the globe" (*U* 16.622, 625-26). He cannot help but spin yarns in his own head, and continues analyzing the sailor but on a much larger scale, extending to the entire sea. Bloom, who was "all at sea" now cannot stop considering the greater meaning of that expansive place.

After asking Stephen whether he thinks Murphy's stories to be genuine, Bloom is described as having been "Sherlockholmesing him up ever since he clapped eyes on him" (*U* 16.831). The investigation is never ending but later extends far beyond the confines of the cabman's shelter and the yarn spinning of the sailor. Shortly before retiring from the shelter, Bloom shows Stephen a picture of Molly, whose positive remark once again sets Bloom on an extended monologue that is judgmental of the very story he is a part of, and that concerns him in all actions through the day:

> An awful lot of makebelieve went on about that sort of thing involving a lifelong slur with the usual splash page of gutterpress about the same old matrimonial tangle alleging misconduct

> with professional golfer or the newest stage favourite instead of being honest and aboveboard about the whole business. (*U* 16.1480-1484)

The adman judges much of what goes into newspapers while at the same time showing the basis of his worries about his own relationship, which to a certain extent has been shown to be the kind of gossip on par with that on the "splash page of gutterpress." The "lifelong slur" is surely Bloom's being Jewish, which is touched on several times, notably in "Cyclops." Little needs repeating with respect to Bloom's relationship with Molly and his own infidelity, save the fact that his affair is itself a written one, in letters to Martha. That odd phrase "gutterpress" may even point to the schemata of the novel, the emphasis on organs and Bloom's failings with words in Molly's perspective, but also the constant overlap of words and parts of the body inducing sensations. At the same time, the necessity of being "aboveboard" points back to the sailor and the sailing metaphor for Bloom throughout. All this explanation, however, must be understood as removed from the direction Bloom has been taking it, as the affair actually ties to Parnell. Working through marriage triangles, Bloom comes to judge those who make fun of such issues: "On the other hand what incensed him more inwardly was the blatant jokes of the cabman and so on who passed it all off as a jest, laughing immoderately, pretending to understand everything, the why and the wherefore, in reality not knowing their own minds…" (*U* 16.1529-31) Far be it for him to judge those who look upon the affairs of married couples in casting aside ways, and yet what is the effect supposed to be on the reader, who is very much in on the situation of Bloom and the various opinions of his relationship with Molly and even Boylan? Indeed, it seems as likely that the proper response to Bloom's own meanderings in thinking and narrating are his own words, that in fact Bloom is very much only "pretending to understand everything," when in fact he does not "know his own mind."

The final element that complicates Bloom's judging and own position is his invitation for Stephen to enter into his own situation with Molly, using music as the connector. In one of the last strange narrative actions in "Eumeaus" Bloom anticipates Molly's monologue and speaks to his departures in thought—"What's this I was saying? Ah, yes! My wife, he intimated, plunging *in medias res*, would have the greatest pleasure in making your acquaintance as she is passionately attached to music of any kind" (*U* 16.1800-1802). What has been on his mind the entire episode, and the entire book, is affirmed through his welcoming statement towards Stephen. Strangely, that affirmation, the 'yes' that is going to become a refrain in the final episode, is directly identified as coming in the middle of

something, ‘*in medias res,*’ when the reader has been well aware of the development as Bloom led Stephen to the cabman’s shelter and from it.

This is rather the crowning moment displaying the levels of consciousness at work with respect to Bloom as character, as a narrator judging the reliability of other people, as a narrator “all at sea,” and one intoxicated by thoughts of what has happened during the day, both as they relate to his own family, but also to politics and even to the epic that inspired the novel. Blamires noted that “alert sobriety is withdrawn” in the episode, and while this is true in a literal sense for Stephen, for Bloom it happens because of his preoccupation with several competing “intoxications”—the desire for a son, the mourning of his lost son, a fascination with language and stories, and thoughts of his wife. Murphy takes control midway through and is clearly an impostor, but displays characteristics similar to Bloom. Murphy’s storytelling serves to distract Bloom further, but at the same time provides markers that take Bloom’s thinking elsewhere, in the directions of his intoxicating desires or dreams. This strange position of Bloom, as a narrator keen on personal desires but also on the interactions with Stephen and the stories of Murphy, shows the difficulty of presenting a fully-encompassing awareness of a character who is also the narrator. In the end much of the section is governed by Bloom and his thinking, but he never quite has complete control, as “intoxicated” as he is by other considerations and stories. Indeed, the position of narrator is not completely his own.

Ditie and *I Served the King of England*

The discussion of discontinuity in roles and the overwhelming nature of intoxication on awareness connects nicely to the position of Ditie in *King of England*. Ditie's role as a narrator is called into question from the beginning of the novel in his very namesake. "Ditie" in Czech is equivalent to "child." The fact that the narrator and protagonist is named Ditie is yet another return from Hrabal to a manner of speaking to the audience—here is a child, or "here, you child, here is the history." At the same time, it seems to diminish his capacity for the role, an important distinction to make, considering one of Ditie's primary goals in life. In the context of the novel, it is important to remember both this speaking around and speaking through Ditie. The very beginning of the novel finds Ditie starting work at the Golden Prague Hotel, where his boss grabs him by the ear and says "You're a busboy here, so remember, you don't see anything and you don't hear anything. Repeat what I just said. So I said I wouldn't see anything and I wouldn't hear anything." This quick admonition and distancing by the boss is immediately countered by the boss pulling Ditie up by the ear and saying "But remember too that you've got to see everything and hear everything."[83] If the narrator of the novel is commanded to neither see nor hear anything while indeed seeing and hearing everything, then there must be some statement being made about the position of the reader with respect to this child-like narrator. Though the novel covers Ditie's life as he goes from one position in a hotel to another, whether or not he really changes in stature, in either the sense of growing up physically or mentally, moving beyond his simple dreams is at question throughout. One of the enduring moments in the novel comes early on when Ditie learns about a clothing company in Pardubice that has a unique method of providing suits to important men. The salesman for the company explains how he takes and then sends measurements to a workshop,

> where they take those strips and sew them together on a kind of tailor's dummy with a rubber bladder inside it that's gradually pumped up until the parchment strips are filled out, and then they're covered with fast-drying glue so they harden in the shape of your torso. When they remove the bladder, your torso floats up to the ceiling of the room, permanently inflated, and they tie a cord to it, the way they do to babies in the maternity wards so they won't get mixed up, or the way they tag the toes of corpses in morgues… (31)

These balloon mannequins then become the "inflated stand-in" for any of the many clients of the company, all important people who are carefully divided up according to "rank and profession." Ditie greatly desires a suit from this company, as he says, so that "I and my mannequin could float near the ceiling of a company that was certainly the only one of its kind in the world," a thought that expands to a dream "about how I personally, not my torso,

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[83] Hrabal, *King of England,* 1.

was floating up there by the ceiling of the Pardubice tailoring firm, and sometimes I felt as though I were floating near the ceiling of the Golden City of Prague restaurant" (32). Clearly Ditie has great aspirations for himself, and yet they are tempered by the fact that this sense of rising up seems controlled only by a simple fascination for floating torsos. And therein is a kind of substitution, a representation for Ditie himself, as well as a frame, either the factory or the restaurant where he works. As wildly imaginative as the firm seems to be, Ditie does eventually get measured and have a suit made by the Pardubice firm. When he visits, he simply has to see the room full of floating torsos and the moment is beautiful and indicative of the concerns that will follow Ditie through the novel:

> It was a magnificent sight. Up near the ceiling hung the torsos of generals and regimental commanders and famous actors… A draft from an open window made the torsos move about like little fleecy clouds in an autumn wind. A thin thread bearing a name tag dangled down from every torso, and the tags danced gaily in the breeze, like fish on a line. The boss pointed at a tag with my name and address on it, so I pulled it down. It looked so small, my torso. I almost wept to see a major general's torso beside mine, and Mr. Beránek the hotelkeeper's, but when I thought of the company I was in I laughed and felt better. (44)

The boss at the company points to several new suits being made, emphasizing the importance of those sharing the ceiling of the factory with Ditie's torso, and Ditie gets "a lift" from the gesture. In this passage there is not only stunning imagery but a clear sense of Ditie's insecurities and simple desires. His longing to have his torso up near the ceiling does not mean that he aspires to be those generals, regimental commanders, famous actors, but that he wants his story to be held to the same great esteem.[84] At the same time, considering the instructions Ditie receives on his first day of work alongside the idea of an empty vessel representing Ditie floating at the ceiling, points to the question of what Ditie's position as narrator will be in the novel, whether he is presenting his own story, or what he talks about are all dreams for the reader to place themselves in. Essential to Ditie's position in this regard is how history is presented in the novel.

Adam Thirlwell equates the opening of *King of England* to Hrabal's certain form of presenting history, through Ditie's story, "his rise and fall, which is really a fall and rise,"[85] but at the same time "an occluded history of Bohemia in the middle of the twentieth century, where everything is seen but not seen: where foreground and background are reversed" (xii). This is an important point to consider with both *King of England* and Hrabal's writing in

[84] There is very much some play on the meaning of inflated in this instance, which cannot go unmentioned. In Czech, the adjective from the verb to inflate—"nafoukaný"— means "conceited" or "pompous." While for Ditie there is more of a naive desire, there is also a judgment of those already with their torsos at the ceiling.
[85] Thirlwell, Adam. Introduction: "The Death of Bohumil Hrabal." *I Served the King of England*. Trans. Paul Wilson. Vintage, 2009. xi.

general, that allusions are made to history and the contemporary state of politics in Czechoslovakia, yet they are decidedly hazy. Thirlwell's point that "foreground and background are reversed" proves both accurate and poetic to the sensibilities of Hrabal, who repeatedly shifts traditional dichotomies (most clearly in *Too Loud a Solitude*). What is prompted by this shift is a question of what exactly Ditie is choosing to reveal as narrator, and what the reader can glean from especially the language Ditie uses and how his perspective changes from being the observer/non-observer from his first job at the Golden Prague Hotel.

When Ditie goes to the second hotel of his career, Hotel Tichota, he is at first struck by a sense of nostalgia for his previous employer, but then is taken by the feeling of being followed, just in the manner of how he was to supposed to pay attention to the guests in the previous hotel. He describes how for the first two weeks:

> though I lived alone in this little room counting my money whenever I was off duty, I still felt as though someone always had an eye on me, and Zdeněk, the headwaiter who'd been here for two years, had the same feeling and was always ready to jump over the fence and run to the restaurant whenever the whistle blew, even though there was practically nothing to do all day long. (53)

The "whistle" refers to what the owner of the hotel, a massive man in a wheelchair, uses to get all the workers in order for inspections and events. Yet save for the direct meaning here, that sense of being watched at the second hotel is representative of Ditie's developing awareness of his place in the story, as one whose story may be followed and judged. It continues to trail after Ditie through the novel, and is compounded by other thoughts and memories. This is most pointed in the depiction of his son, the son that he leaves after his wife is killed and the son whose one ability in life will continue to trace after his father. After an aerial bombing, Ditie returns to finds his wife clutching their suitcase full of stamps and his son hammering away, as he had done all through his short childhood:

> …on the top floor I saw my little son still sitting, picking up nails and pounding them into the floor with powerful blows. Even from that distance I could see how strong his right arm was, and how that was all he really had, just a strong fist and a rippling bicep that could drive a nail right into the floor with a single blow, as if no bombs had fallen, as if nothing in the world had happened. (172)

With the emphasis that is put on Ditie's ability to have children, since his wife is German and she must be ensured to be bringing into the new Nazi world children with appropriate genetics, to some extent Ditie's son is meant to fly in the face of the superior race idea. Perhaps too, it is a note of mockery towards Czechs, or at least the perception of the Czech people during WWII.[86] Yet more than either of those appropriate characterizations, Ditie's

[86] Consider here, for example, Heydrich's assessment in "On the Elimination of the Czech Nation."

child, the ‘child’s’ child, oddly mirrors Ditie’s life to some extent, the proud waiter of hotels, ever at the ready with a serving platter of food, beer or fine spirits. More important though, is Ditie’s departure and his acknowledgement that his son would be going with him one way or another: “on the fourth day I took the little suitcase and without saying good-bye to anyone walked away, and behind me the blows of that hammer grew fainter, blows that I would hear for the rest of my life” (173). This seems as though it might be a moment of realization for Ditie, that he did nothing in the face of the war, keeping to his grandiose notions of having a hotel in the future. In fact it is a castaway thought—he indeed takes those stamps and goes and builds a grandiose hotel. Yet these thoughts do weigh on him at the end of the novel.

When Ditie reaches the little cabin in the woods out in the middle of nowhere, a place where he is meant to mend the road, he reminisces on his life, considers what he has learned and compares it to the more recent teachings of the previous inhabitant of the cabin, a former French professor. He explains “I thought about how the professor of French literature had told Marcela that the only true man of the world was one who could become anonymous, who could shed himself” (235). This comes in the context of Ditie having felt the presence of Zdeněk while doing chores around the place, and that presence of Zdeněk disappears after this line. However this notion of a man becoming anonymous is really the crux of the novel, that the life of this child who comes to serve the Emperor of Ethiopia, becomes a millionaire and builds his own hotel resort, actually evolves into a kind of myth. As Miroslav Drozda notes, the “narrative in *King of England* evolves in tension between biographical romance and natural cyclical myth.”[87] What is personal and delightfully naive in the early part of the book gives way to the sense that much of what transpired perhaps is to be considered as simply the dreams of success of small men. This separation between the memories of the old waiter at the end and a kind of mythical nature to the stories is shown especially through the language that Hrabal employs throughout. While Joyce, via Bloom, presents more indirect language connected to symbols and recollections of events throughout *Ulysses*, Hrabal invokes a great deal of imagery and repetition to emphasize the mythic in *King of England.* Both approaches have effects on the respective novels in terms of the stories being developed and ultimately told, albeit Hrabal departs from Joyce’s method in a couple of ways.

[87] Drozda, Miroslav. *Hrabalův mýtus a děj.* 1989. qtd. in *Spisy III. Jsme jako olivy.* Praha: Mlada Fronta, 2015. 467. Original: “Vypravěčův příběh nás však svádí, abychom zprávu o něm považovali za román. Ale autor sám dal textu podtitul Povídky. a tím nás obrací od biografické míry začátku a konce k míře ‘prostředka’, neuzavřeného opakovaného dění, od lineárnosti k cykličnosti, od epiky k mýtu. Vyprávění v *Anglickém králi* se vyvíjí v napětí mezi biografickou románovostí a přírodně cyklickou mytičností.”

Whereas Joyce repeatedly calls attention to the physical processes that are attached to words, and shows the power of words to dictate such processes ("ears hear" and the like), Hrabal points to words having been heard well before they were written down. Those aforementioned directions at the beginning of *King of England* are there as much for the reader as they are Ditie, and through them Hrabal calls for the reader to listen, to pay attention to the stories as they had already been told. George Gibian speaks to the effect of these instructions, as well as Hrabal's polysyndeton throughout the novel, tying them to oral tradition:

> The directness of the image ties in with another feature of the book—its oral style. The syntax is that of oral narration. Series of sentences, linked by often repeated conjunctions ('and' or 'so'), direct addresses to the reader, non-literary forms of words, oral diction, all give a sense of direct listening, of being in the presence of a story teller in a tavern.[88]

The old cobbler in *Dancing Lessons* rambled through his stream of consciousness, notably lacking the structuring of *King of England*, well acquainted with the "young ladies" of his address, interacting with them to the extent that they reminded him of what advice and memories to share with them. As Gibian describes, the narrator of *King of England,* Ditie, makes his own memories into something that comes to resemble the basis of Joyce's *Ulysses*, from the epic tradition. Ditie appears to be a storyteller well-versed in the oral tradition, returning again and again to certain schema that connect the story and the audience to that tradition. Gibian expounds on the structures within *King of England,* writing:

> Repeated formulas in addition produce the effect of ritualization. The various parts of the story are introduced with the sentence, 'Pay attention to what I will now tell you' and concluded with, 'Is that enough?' When stories of cruelty and violence are told, when improbable events take place, the narrator repeatedly uses the tag, 'the incredible became reality' (80).

In this kind of ritualization, Hrabal shifts the position of the reader, to that of listener, and from a space of reading to the pub, to those social places where stories are told, repeated, exaggerated and retold. Jarring as it might be for a reader to be told to listen, perhaps the repetition, or ritualization of the word is what is most effective for Hrabal in taking readers elsewhere. If the repetition of such forms of address and emphasis are not enough, the use of certain words and corresponding metaphors give rise to the "incredible" in the frame of Ditie's reality. Tim Beasley-Murray, for example, notes Hrabal's repetition of the words 'beauty' (krása) and 'beautiful' (krásný) throughout, and connects their use to "intensity of

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[88] Gibian, George. "*The Haircutting* and *I Waited on the King*: Two Recent Works by Bohumil Hrabal." *Czech Literature Since 1956: A Symposium*. Eds. William E. Harkins and Paul I. Trensky. Praha: Bohemica, 1980. 80.

experience and intoxication, in the Surrealist sense."[89] It is appropriate to revisit the idea of intoxication at this point, because to a point the repetition of such phrases on the incredible as well as those related to beauty show the extent to which Ditie is overcome by his dreams and the perceptions of others with regard to those dreams.

One such instance that rather nicely frames both the emphasis on repeated imagery to create the "incredible" while showing the extent to which Ditie creates doubt as to the veracity of his story comes when he discusses neckties. At the Hotel Paris Ditie comes upon several ways to make extra money beyond tips, and his penchant for beauty leads him to neckties, which he buys, but is always comparing to those left by different guests. These ties are kept in the hotel closet with tags "attached to them by thin thread"[90] and cause Ditie to spend a great amount of time admiring. Two stand out in particular because "they both shimmered like the wings of rare beetles or butterflies" and would prop Ditie up, that he "would be admired by everyone" (102). However he ends up taking a different tie from the closet, one left behind by Prince Hohenlohe, a tie that is "white and seemed to be made of an unusual rough fabric covered with small blue dots, light blue, like forget me nots, and though those dots were part of the weave, they looked as if they'd been stuck on and glittered like sparks struck from an anvil" (102-3). Such imagery in the connections to beetles, butterflies, flowers and sparks seem to derive from the kind of intoxication Beasley-Murray suggests, while also pointing to something of a literary construction, well after the event. These are pertinent thoughts to remember as the passage develops. Putting on the tie, Ditie feels "some of Prince Hohenlohe flow from his tie to me" (103) and then goes out in the streets and to a couple of shops, where all marvel at Ditie and his tie, even a woman he had pleasured just the week before. However to whatever height grandeur this takes Ditie, it all comes crashing down with the entry of headwaiter Mr. Skřivánek, who initially walks past, but comes back and looks at his protege. In the look, Ditie realizes "that all he had seen of me was a white tie walking down Přikopy," and then he asks himself silently how the headwaiter knew, to which Mr. Skřivánek replies "out loud, How did I know? I served the King of England!" (105).

Ditie's describes his dismay several ways, from feeling "like a lamp whose wick the headwaiter had turned down" to "an inflated tire whose valve he had loosened." As a result Ditie says that he "could hear the air hissing out of me as I walked along, and I felt that I was no longer lighting my own way, and that the tie and the handkerchief had wilted like me and were limp, as if I had just run through the rain" (105). While the imagery connecting the tie to

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[89] Beasley-Murray, 88.
[90] Hrabal, *King of England*, 102.

the natural world shows the intoxication of Ditie in connection with his dreams, his deflation at being recognized by Mr. Skřivánek is emblematic of Ditie's position as a narrator operating at the end of his life, or at least as a kind of omniscient force. The suggestion of being a downturned wick refers to Ditie's consistent worry about sexual prowess throughout the novel, from his first excursions to Paradise's as a young waiter to the time he chooses to marry the German woman. But the more interconnected image is the "inflated tire" and the line it has emerged from in the course of the novel. While in this entire passage the focus has been on the necktie, Ditie's initial dream with respect to clothing was the custom suit and the "inflated torso." Clearly there is a careful amount of construction that has gone on to maintain the metaphor of inflation, and of floating above, throughout the novel. It is actually a metaphor that runs through Hrabal's works, tying especially to the kite that is Haňt'a's face at the end of *Too Loud a Solitude* with the name of the long forgotten lover finding its way up the cord.[91] The play on floating and inflation/deflation point to Ditie as consistent with his imagery, true, but as naive and taken as he can be, intoxicated, by his dreams, there is a disjunct and a great deal of posturing. In the moment at the Pardubice clothing factory, Ditie feels a lift knowing his torso was up among all sorts of great men of high stature. Yet in the moment where he has taken a tie, with a similar dangling tag no less, in order to appear like those great men, his shell loses its air and comes quickly back down to earth at the recognition of headwaiter Mr. Skřivánek. Perhaps here the name of the prince is indicative of Ditie's rising and falling, as a loose translation from the German shows "Hohenlohe"[92] to be 'high flames,' as though Ditie's aspirations are those that burn highly, but perhaps in the way of Icarus ultimately lead to a tragic fall. In another way, perhaps, this instance cements the viewpoint that Ditie really does shed himself as he suggests at the end of the novel.

Ditie comes to resemble Bloom in terms of their narration, and is representative of the greater project both Hrabal and Joyce take part in. Bloom goes "all at sea" and grapples with the person and persona of the sailor through reflections on his own position in life, in the cabman's shelter and in *Ulysses* as a whole, ultimately revealing the complex nature of his character. This complexity is largely bounded by the fact that he acts as a narrator, but seemingly gives up the position when given to thinking and reminiscing on the actions and ideas of those around him, ultimately drawing on his overwhelming desires. Ditie, in being charged with being aware of everything around him while not absorbing any of it, as well as

[91] Hrabal, Bohumil. *Too Loud a Solitude.* (Original: *Přílis hlučná samota*) Trans. Michael Henry Heim. London: Abacus 1993. 98.
[92] "Hohenlohe" is the name of a royal family from Germany, but seems particularly suited to Hrabal's development of Ditie.

with emphasizing sensations through language that suggests an overcoming, a kind of intoxication that reveals his aspirations, comes to be less the narrator of a sort of memoirs and rather just the measurements of a person inflated and brought down by the events of any life. Both Bloom and Ditie display incredible awareness—directed or not—throughout their respective stories, at times even suggested a kind of meta-understanding of what is happening within the respective novels and at the same time they are overwhelmed by their hopes and aspirations. In effect the cases of the two and the respective narration choices that Hrabal and Joyce make are indicative of the attempts to develop stories with perspectives that are strongly aware of what is going on. This meaningfully follows from the presentation of consciousness from "Penelope" and *Dancing Lessons*, emphasizing in particular how consciousness can overwhelm the role of the narrator. The final chapter follows in the vein of overwhelming attributes, and focuses on images, references, and montage, and how it is necessary to layer texts in order to recreate the depth of the everyday and best present the full sensory experience that provides for epiphanies.

Chapter 5. Scissors-and-paste men

Any consideration of the movements mentioned by Hrabal as evident in Joyce's *Ulysses* —"Dadaism, Realism, Surrealism, the psychoanalytical"—most likely prompts an immediate connection to the visual arts more than literature. Indeed the discussion of antagonism toward the public, as Poggioli deems it, probably arose on a greater level through the works of such artists as Picasso, Braque, Dalí and others than it did through the writings of Breton, Joyce and onward to Hrabal. Yet the issues of the image, of montage—layering details in order to effect a particular response— were significant and taken to mind and played with by both Joyce and Hrabal, albeit in differing ways. In their addressing the difficulty of putting together stories, both Joyce and Hrabal gravitated toward images, as well as references and manipulated language in order to present montage most apt at displaying the complexity of everyday life. Pertinent to the discussion of image and metaphor is the section in Poggioli's book where he delves into the aesthetics of the avant-garde, and what is happening with regard to the play of mystification as yet another alienating force.

Poggioli describes the recipe for a dadaist poem as Tristan Tzara lays out—the cutting up and mixing of articles from a newspaper in a bag and the selection of piece by piece in order to put together a poem—and uses it as a point of departure for discussing mystification and imbroglio, which he says are:

> practices not only admitted by the avant-garde itself, but even highly praised by it. Precisely on this account, the artist-mystifier cannot be accused of insincerity or dishonesty. Avant-garde mystification is in fact not only a practical act; it is also gratuitous. It derives, even if indirectly, from the aesthetic of the joke and the poetics of the game.[93]

Mystification and imbroglio mark the inherent antagonism and agonism in the avant-garde, the push to alienate the audience, a push that can sometimes become an end in itself. Yet these qualities of confusion and perplexity are worth noting for their natural place in everyday life. The avant-garde project is about fusing art with society and necessary to the project is the inclusion of those things that are not easily explained or communicated. Poggioli acknowledges this, writing that the Dada recipe and other poems, "all suffice to exemplify or suggest the fusion of determinism and free will, automatism and caprice, basic to the modern concept of volition" (191). In other words the gratuity of mystification is simply a part of the paradox of existence, and is both liberated and subject to some kind of framing. It seems to be a recurring trend in this thesis to look at the paradox of the unmediated and the free-flowing, and in no place is this more evident than in this chapter, where the focus is on the images and

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[93] Poggioli, 190-191.

montage constructed and yet seemingly random in the writing of Joyce and both the writing and collages of Hrabal. Of this materiality of language, David Vichnar presents an apt overview what exactly is presented in *Ulysses.* He writes that Joyce's novel "foregrounds linguistic materiality on the many various macro-levels," the foremost being the mythological method, but also through "the multiplicity of its styles and discourse parodies"; "through the amount of 'found' or 'ready-made' linguistic material included"; "through its exploration of the visual and graphic dimension of typography and textuality"; and at the "level of the signifier."[94] The mythological method has been touched on already in this thesis, as have some of the specific styles. This third chapter will conduct some investigation into both the "'found' or 'ready-made'" material in *Ulysses* and Hrabal's works, to be considered more in the vein of "everyday" items, while also focusing on the visual and graphic dimension. There is something mystifying in both, but there are also clear referential aspects to each which will be examined in detail.

While it bears repeating that neither Joyce or Hrabal was truly surrealist, in this chapter their respective work falls in line with the visual interests of Breton, as he lays out the focus of the image in the Surrealist Manifesto. He writes that this image is the one "that is arbitrary to the highest degree, the one that takes the longest time to translate into practical language" for a multitude of reasons: the presence of contradiction, concealment via masks, sensationalism, hallucination, some kind negation of the natural order or even because it "provokes laughter."[95] As Elza Adamowicz ably summarizes, Breton "favoured modes of production and experience which stage the clash of disparate elements to produce the étincelle or moment of revelation." This production, or collage, goes in the face of the other surrealist technique, automatism, a "more passive tuning into the inner voice," whereas collage "is a deliberate and often aggressive action on reality, both a subversive gesture and a creative statement, a cosmogonic game, 'le jeu de patience de la création.'"[96] Both the "subversive" and "cosmogonic" aspects relate back to what Poggioli described with respect to mystification having a role in the discussion of will. However the most important takeaway from both Breton's definition and Adamowicz's explication is the focus on the difficulty of deriving meaning from an image with the simultaneous ability of such juxtapositions, montages or collages, to provoke a "revelation" or epiphany.

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[94] Vichnar, 5.
[95] Breton, 38.
[96] Adamowicz, Elza. "Hats or Jellyfish? André Breton's Collages." *André Breton: The Power of Language*. Ed. Ramona Fotiade. Glasgow: Intellect Books, 2000. 83.

As has been mentioned, this is probably one of the central overlaps between Joyce and Hrabal, and the one critical to Hrabal's description of the "crossroads of consciousness"—both wrote about or presented the everyday, whether outrageous, clear or incredibly perplexing—in a way that, either constructed or free, would produce some sort of sudden understanding, an epiphany liable to explain the existence of God even in a "shout from the street." Here the focus is on montage in Joyce's "Aeolus" episode and the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" episode from "Work in Progress" (what eventually became *Finnegans Wake*, but what Hrabal knew early on only as ALP) alongside both the written and visual portions of *toto město je ve společné péči obyvatel*[97] (*this city is in joint custody of its inhabitants*) as well as the marvelously crafted *Too Loud a Solitude*. The ideas of materiality, layering, arbitrariness, concealment, and laughter, all within a very deliberate and aggressive action, are significant for looking at the collage in Hrabal and Joyce, especially for the sense of both a game and producing the moment of revelation. Similarly, much as there is a juxtaposition of images in these passages, they are very much about sensory overload, playing as much to sound as the visual, another aspect that will be examined in this chapter.

Insertion about Joyce and Hrabal's own remarks and sources

While not completely in line with the recipe of Tzara, both Joyce and Hrabal acknowledged their penchant for physically altering their texts, taking them apart, moving pieces around and inserting various anecdotes and everyday elements. Joyce was famous for saying that he had not invented anything and that he was "quite content to go down to posterity as a scissors and paste man."[98] As Brandon Kershner explains with respect to this statement, Joyce was clearly exaggerating "and yet he was also emphasizing the degree to which his writings were a verbal collage of 'given' or 'found' elements—spoken and written quotations both from the immediate life-world of Dublin and from the broadest imaginable version of cultural history."[99] The chapter on epiphanies touched on the elements that Joyce would include in his oeuvre, the wide range of overheard conversations, stories, and family anecdotes. Indeed both *Ulysses* and the *Wake* present a great deal of Joyce's own life and family. Mentioning the *Wake,* it is important to keep in mind here the project of "Work in Progress" which eventually became *Finnegans Wake*. One of the most famous stories about that experiment is the one that keys in on Joyce's intent to include everything, the fact that at

[97] This is not yet translated into English and is unlikely to be, as will be discussed in the chapter. Throughout I will refer to the book as *this city*, maintaining the lack of capital letters as in the original.
[98] Joyce, James. *Letters of James Joyce.* Ed. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Viking Press, 1957. 297
[99] Kershner, 184.

one point while dictating to Samuel Beckett, someone knocked on the door, to which Joyce said "come in." Shortly after, when reading back what he had already typed, Beckett read "come in" and Joyce, though surprised, allowed it to stay, an "inclusion" for that moment. Mark Nunes discusses this story, which originally appeared in Ellman's biography, and its importance in providing "a cautionary tale to the image of Joyce as a modernist artist whose 'controlling hands' plan out each resonance in the text. Instead we have an image of Joyce incorporating error and collaborating with chance."[100] It is a disputed story, but supports both the notion of Joyce being willing to include so much of what he observed and experienced, and the idea that Joyce is considered by most critics to be such a fastidious craftsman in putting together his stories. One other quote stemming from the development of "Work in Progress" is even more helpful in laying out the experimentation at root and the importance of plying the senses. This discussion comes from an interview Joyce had with the Polish writer Jan Parandowski, in which Joyce states:

> the few fragments which I have published have been enough to convince many critics that I have finally lost my mind, which, by the way, they have been predicting faithfully for many years. And perhaps it is madness to grind up words in order to extract their substance, to create crossbreeds and unknown variants, to open up unsuspected possibilities for these words, to marry sounds which were not usually joined before although they were meant for one another, to allow water to speak like water, birds to chirp in the words of birds, to liberate all sounds from their servile, contemptible role and to attach them to the feelers of expressions which grope for definitions of the undefined…With this hash of sounds I am building the great myth of everyday life"[101]

While in this quote Joyce promotes especially his manipulation of language to achieve ends largely unseen to that point, there is equally a measure of letting observation and the natural state of things, like water and the chirp of birds, to actually speak for themselves. This brings to mind Joyce's representation of the cat "speaking" to Bloom in *Ulysses*, the "Mkgnao!" (*U* 4.16) and "Mrkgnao!" (*U* 4.25) being some of the most appropriate written notations for an animal. Such observation and attention to how the senses interpret are important for this final chapter. Moreover, The very end of this quote provides further support to the importance of observation for Joyce in presenting those basic elements of life, of the everyday, in pursuit of greater meaning.

Hrabal, beyond the quote mentioned in the introduction about seeking to do a cut and paste job along the lines of Joyce, repeatedly mentions and carries out his own practice. The quotes range from the direct to the absurd, but all communicate a sense of drawing together

[100] Nunes, Mark. "Gaps and Convergences in the Joycean Network." *Joycemedia: James Joyce, Hypermedia & Textual Genetics.* Ed. Louis Armand. Praha: Litteraria Pragensia, 2006. 50
[101] qtd. in Škrabánek, Petr. *Night Joyce of a Thousand Tiers: Studies in Finnegans Wake*. Eds. Louis Armand and Ondřej Pilný. Praha: Litteraria Pragensia, 2002. 2

and reforming various impulses, sensations and experiences. In "Proč píšu" Hrabal likens his cutting to another industry, one to which a number his books were adapted, film:

> And so, as I cut myself off from the past, those scissors did stay in my fingers and I began to use them after writing the texts, when I began to use the "cutter" technique on the text as on a film. […] And so in those days I wrote with scissors in my fingers, indeed I only wrote in anticipation of the moment when I could cut the written text up and combine it into something that would astonish me in the way a film does. […] Nowadays I can indulge in the luxury of writing *alla prima*, using the scissors as little as possible…[102]

David Short includes this quote in his lead-in to discussing *this city,* and it is an apt quote, in particular because it acknowledges the enigmatic nature of Hrabal's approach, that much as he wanted to adhere to the automatic-writing aspect of surrealism, he came to expect later revision and restructuring. By invoking the processing of film as a metaphor for his writing process, Hrabal highlights this mediation of his storytelling, while at the same time pointing out once again the significance of juxtaposition and how certain elements, random even, could provoke something astonishing or meaningful. Film, of course, was something Joyce had latched onto, and also something whose development was in part related in the *Wake*. Throughout this chapter, many of the examples will connect to Hrabal's and Joyce's perceived notions of their process as it related to film. However much there was a serious art to the references and images they highlight, there was a great deal of randomness as well as play at work. This is evident in another quote where speaks to how Hrabal perceived the thoughts and images that he put together. It comes from one of the more biographical novels, *Vita Nuova*, where Hrabal, via his wife Eliška, says:

> …An extraordinary amount of junk and scrap littered every factory yard and my husband was struck by this scene because he said the whole picture was a precise rendering of not just his own writing but of his thinking as well he said he belonged to this epoch and was in fact a child of the times…[103]

The idea of "junk and scrap" littering his writing is an apt way of considering what Haňt'a works with in *Too Loud a Solitude.* Ultimately there is a great value to what Hrabal puts together on the page and in creating images. Cutting and pasting, to be sure, is not something easily analyzed. These quotes, these acknowledgments by the respective authors simply serve to show how much they constructed their texts, working to include everything from family anecdotes to the very trash of everyday life. In this way they are already self-identifying with

[102] Quoted in and translated by David Short in "Fun and Games with Montage: the Individual Case of Hrabal's *toto město je ve společné péči obyvatel.*" *Bohumil Hrabal (1914-97). Papers from a Symposium*. Ed. David Short. University College London, 2004, 60.
[103] Hrabal, *Vita Nuova,* 92.

the kinds of gratuity, gamesmanship, and mystification that Poggioli writes as aspects of the avant-garde project.

"Aeolus" and the Great Organ

At the same time that *Ulysses* experiments with narration and consciousness, the novel plies the senses with language and images, overwhelmingly layered and juxtaposed. Mulligan's entry alone, at the beginning of the novel, is an homage to epic poetry with its alexandrines, a mock baptismal scene, and, ignoring either of the previous interpretations, a literal mouthful of language and exuberance of stage-acting. Again and again there are layers and layers of meaning and sensory information. One episode where the focus has a particular emphasis on the visual and sensual is in "Aeolus." While critics have pointed to other episodes of *Ulysses* as surrealistic in terms of style, "Circe" in particular coming up quite often with the drunkenness of Stephen and the sense of "enchantment" that affects the two men, with its focus on the development of a great "daily organ" in the form of a newspaper, the oddly constructed "Aeolus" warrants a look at the level of montage and collage at play. Breaking up "Aeolus" into various headlined sections, Joyce invites a great deal of wonder and demand for interpretation, particularly with regard to those headlines, which at times in their perplexing order suggest something of Tzara's recipe. Yet there are also little phrases, sounds and images within the 'articles,' as they were, which serve to construct a montage that is something much more than just a newspaper and has greater bearing on the novel as a whole.

One such phrase arises very early, and in greater significance with respect to the first couple of headlines. Shortly after Bloom's entrance to the newspaper office, Red Murray points out the editor to Bloom and queries Bloom about the editor's appearance, whether he looks like "Our Saviour." This moment alone should give pause, particularly considering who is being asked, Bloom the 'saviour' figure of the novel, as well as the subject of the question, the editor, and his position at either the paper or within the novel. Bloom does not immediately respond to the strange question and instead his attention goes to the editor's door and the strange noise it makes: "The door of Ruttledge's office whispered: ee: cree. They always build one door opposite another for the wind to. Way in. Way out."[104] The fact that a door "whispered" is strange enough. However what is more curious is that the door whispered a very specific "ee: cree," a detail that has greater bearing than the whispering in the first place. Emphasizing that doors offer a "way in" and "way out" in individual sentences

[104] Joyce, *U* 7.50-51

heightens their significance in the moment, as though Joyce wants to highlight that there is a different kind of entering and exiting happening. In large part that is what the “ee: cree” is doing, offering an entrance into the episode, as the pairing represents the sound of what become crucial in connection to the advert Bloom is at the newspaper to deal with, one for Alexander *Keyes* involving “two crossed keys” (*U* 7.141). In describing the sound of the door in this way, Joyce has provided a kind of aural symbol for the focus of the chapter.

Karen Lawrence identifies this moment as one of the “games of notation” that lends to the overture of *Ulysses* existing across the “Wandering Rocks” and “Sirens” episodes.[105] The musical element is important to emphasize, because ‘Aeolus’ is one full of noise, something that Bloom references throughout. In having Bloom identify the particular sound of the door, Joyce is not only getting at the important plot point, but is reaching out to the reader’s own consciousness and task at hand. The very appearance of “ee: cree” is eye-catching, more so than many of the headlines, and provokes a question of both description and construction. Has the door really made that noise, or is it the aural symbol for Bloom’s presence in the office? Moreover, does a colon belong in the description of something that is probably a fluid (or at least connected) sound? Perhaps the colon is meant as a representation of the interpretation that comes with a sound that is not easily put into some literal form. That would make the visual, the montage, guide the reader’s undertaking. It should be noted here that the first Czech edition from 1930, the one Hrabal read, maintains the colon use throughout the episode. The moment in question the “ee: cree” is translated as “zašeptaly: í: krí,”[106] thereby preserving the attempt to describe the sound. Joyce has provided in six letters and a mark of punctuation a notation via the consciousness of Leopold that reaches out to the reader a great deal. More details such as this door’s sound arise in the episode, but the headlines eventually become quite significant, especially to the thematic elements of the novel as a whole.

Not too long after Bloom’s entrance and viewing of the editor, the headline “How A Great Daily Organ is Turned Out,”[107] is read out, a headline that has multiple meanings in itself. Despite the difficulty in interpreting all of the headlines emblazoned in “Aeolus,” there is a bit of both revelation and play in this particular headline and the subsequent confession of Leopold the ad-man. Joyce is keen on wordplay, and “daily organ” here has several connections. The headline of course connects back to Leopold’s breakfast of the day, the piece of liver which he failed to cook well, something Molly remarks on in her monologue.

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[105] Lawrence, Karen. *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses*. Princeton UP, 2014. 89-90.
[106] Joyce, James. *Odysseus.* Trans. Ladislav Vymětal a Václav Petr, Praha, 1930. Svazka 1. 165.
[107] *U* 7.84

Similarly, what is emblazoned at the top of the page could also be seen to suggest the kind of cuckolding that happens later to Leopold by Blazes Boylan. In fact Leopold has not enjoyed such relations in a long time, but he can be seen to have been 'turned out' or cast aside by Molly, his 'daily organ" the object of great dismay and worry. Via Boylan there is also a musical connection, that he is the manager of the show involving Molly, a fact that a number of characters draw attention to throughout the story, as if to heighten Leopold's worry further. More generally, the music comes from the instrument of an organ, and in this section, since the corresponding anatomical organ is the lungs, this instrumental connection is bolstered, an organ of course needing a forceful wind behind it. But the headline could also be seen as a simple headline for the construction of the whole book, a connection to the various schemata given for the reading of *Ulysses*. Regardless of the interpreted meaning, Joyce has again offered just a little part that draws attention to the construction of the novel, particularly in the way that the headlines do also beg the question of who has come up with them in the first place. Who is the editor? This question will be discussed in greater detail later, but in giving this headline early on, Joyce prompts a discussion of the reader's, Bloom's and his own place in the novel-newspaper.

While the "ee: cree" incident is probably more significant than the headline of the section it is in, the article that follows the "Great Daily Organ" headline is equal in its connection to the greater novel. Inside, Joyce writes: "Mr. Bloom halted behind the foreman's spare body, admiring a glossy crown. Strange he never saw his real country. Ireland my country…He boomed that workaday worker tack for all it was worth. It's the ads and side features sell a weekly not the stale news in the official gazette" (7.85-90). While Bloom's feeling of never having seen "his real country" is an important political note, the more pertinent part of this quote is that which addresses the "workaday worker tack." The word "tack" suggests not only method but direction as well. Thinking of being on water in a sailboat and the need to turn, or tack, into the wind, the question becomes Leopold's political statement with this. There seems to be a need to turn toward the working class in writing a newspaper, obviously to sell more newspapers but perhaps also to inspire and or promote a different kind of viewpoint. Leopold is probably also being a bit judgmental here, "tack" merely a short form of "tacky," yet pulling this quote out of the context and applying it to the novel as a whole suggests once again evidence of Joyce's purpose as well as the unique stylistic devices. That Joyce emphasizes the booming of the "workaday worker tack" in a newspaper relates to Marshall McLuhan's idea of the the "collective dimension of human

experience"[108] and "wake-a-day world" becoming the primary vision of literature. It is a mechanical connection, the booming yet another one of the sounds running through the chapter that literally hammers home the text of the world, the human experiences in the novel, for the reader. Yet at the same time, as much as Joyce may be advocating for the everyday in writing a newspaper, the last line of the above quote, highlighting the importance of "ads and side features," reminds the reader that there is a market being catered to, a market which requires something more planned, something in the form of Leopold Bloom.

In essence, Joyce has tried to rein in control of the publishing of the newspaper that is *Ulysses*, acknowledging that while the regular stories, the details of all the characters and their backgrounds, must be printed, there is still need for particular devices, ads, from "ee: cree" and "Daily Organ" to Leopold and Stephen, to make, or boom, the novel. This is a montage not just of the goings on in a newspaper office, but a breakdown of the novel as a whole into itemized and digestible parts. These parts in themselves are revelatory for what they say that a novel can do as a means of drawing together elements of the everyday world. Adverts, headlines and the textual form of a sound, one that equally points to the reading process, are not necessarily elements of a novel, but are essential to any depiction of everyday life. The discussion of the editor posed a question of who the editor is of the "daily organ," and this very play on words coupled with all the sensory elements of the episode combine and relate back to the discussion of Bloom from the "Eumaeus" episode, and the particular role that an audience has in constructing a narrator. Here it is evident that the readership makes the newspaper, and that Joyce has played to the reader experiencing the sensations of a newspaper press just in the way of Bloom. It is an overwhelming experience, the booming of stories and elements of the everyday, and while it is an attempt at a holistic description, it at the same time suggests the power of particular details to give greater meaning, or revelations, concerning the wider world or situation of the character.

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[108] McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy.* University of Toronto: 1962. 269.

ALP and Linguistic Puzzles

Joyce's last work is a journey into the realm of dream. Whereas *Ulysses* is the story of a day in the life, *Finnegans Wake* is a venture into what comes during sleep. Joyce perhaps went much farther than Breton or the surrealists could imagine, and certainly went farther than most readers care to even try. The *Wake* is so full of linguistic and sensory play that it is overwhelming as a text. Molly's monologue gives the reader pause and consideration of the thinking and reading processes, but the challenge of the *Wake* is pointed towards language and the idea of communicating the incommunicable. It compounds the efforts of "Aeolus" by in many ways trying to include not only the entirety of language, but also parodies and re-interpretations of many forms. Written as it is, the *Wake* is also a text for which the prospects of translating are often argued as close to nil. And yet, many efforts were conducted with Czechs among the first to try. The primary portion that Hrabal would have had the chance to study was the Anna Livia Plurabelle episode, and most likely the earliest version, a translation of the version which appeared in *transition* magazine originally. That is why it is important to revisit Adolf Hoffmeister's interview with Joyce, and what was said with regard to such an undertaking as a translation of ALP. Only then is it pertinent to look at the Czech version of ALP and analyze what Hrabal was able to take away both in the sense of the quality of the translation, or interpretation, and the later ideas about language and play that Joyce was promoting.

When Joyce and Hoffmeister discuss translating ALP, Joyce desires instant assurance, and asks his secretary Leon and Hoffmeister to go about translating a bit right then and there. In response to the promise that the undertaking will be done with "great thoroughness" Joyce explains:

> …I do not want to make trouble for the Czech translator, I do not want to supervise you like a grump and a pedant, but I am afraid for my work. I do not want to be translated, I have to remain as I am, only explained in your language. I am giving you every possible freedom in the transformation of words. I depend on you. In your country there are many rivers. Take your rivers: Vltava, Váha, Úslava and Nežárka. *Joyce has a surprisingly detailed knowledge of the names of Czech rivers.* It is possible to break them up into living words, which they were at the beginning, when God was the Word. Create a language for your country according to my image. Viktor Llona in *transition* posited a thesis: language can be made by a writer. In this case, also by the translator.[109]

This lengthy segment from the interview provides a trove of information respecting Joyce's considerations for writing and translation, and his incredible general knowledge. That he seeks to be "explained in your language" is both a particularly helpful understanding of

[109] Hoffmeister, Adolf. "The Game of Evenings." Trans. Michelle Woods. Granta 89: The Factory, 2005. Online: <https://granta.com/the-game-of-evenings/>

translation, but also the importance of ideas and images for Joyce, just as much as language. Joyce here also extends the living nature of his works, with the emphasis on making the names of rivers into "living words" and also with the emphasis to remember that language can be made. This materiality courses through his works as an experiment he actively re-tests, as seen already in the "Aeolus" episode. The question is whether it can be maintained even in translation.

Hoffmeister's translation of ALP shows how much Hoffmeister took Joyce's instructions to heart, the emphasis to work towards explanation rather than translation with a free choice of words, the freedom to construct language, as Llona suggested. At the beginning, the washerwoman remarks, "My wrists are wrusty rubbing the mouldaw stains. And the dneepers of wet and the gangres of sin in it!" Hoffmeister translates these lines as "Klouby mi zrezavěly drhnutím toho vltavského kalu. A ty dněpřiny mokra a gangrény neřesti v ní!"[110] The lines are remarkably similar and manage to preserve, for the most part, the dual meanings of Joyce's words that reveal or hide major rivers. "Dneepers" refers to the Dnieper River, the longest river running through Ukraine and Belarus, yet for those not in the know, can appear to be something of the deep. Hoffmeister's change of the Czech name of the river—Dněpr—into a kind of plural noun that seems to be a viable Czech word in itself, helps highlight not just the river, but perhaps also the first part of the name, 'dně,' which means 'bottom' in Czech, thereby maintaining the sense of Joyce's original. Unfortunately Hoffmeister cannot maintain the "mouldy" connotation of "moldaw," only drawing attention to the Czech name of the river Vltava, and yet this is a reference that the German-speaking Hrabal would have caught even in the original. Several other moments stand out as moments of success in interpretation, and of pertinence to what Hrabal might have gleaned from reading ALP.

When the woman calls to hear more, she invokes yet again more places connected to water, the Cliffs of Moher and a 'moat': "Well, I never now heard the like of that. Tell me moher. Tell me moatst." The Czech language does not share such an overlap with such places and the word for more, so Hoffmeister chooses a different tack, translating the lines as "No něco takovýho sem eště neslyšela. Povídej dahál. Povídej dahahál" (34-35). He interprets the breath need to pronounce 'moher' and 'moatst' and puts an 'h' and then an extra breath of an 'ah' on top of that in stretching out the Czech word 'dál' for further. It is an elegant means of emphasizing the nature of speech that Joyce is promoting in the washerwoman's desire to

[110] Joyce, James. *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. Trans. Adolf Hoffmeister. Praha: Dauphin 1996. 28-29.

hear more. There is a small revelation that bears mentioning only as something Joyce would have appreciated and probably something Hoffmeister had no knowledge of. A cursory Google search provides that "dahál" comes from the Indonesian language Hiligaynon and means "haughty, insolent, proud of speech…"[111] Hiligaynon is known more colloquially as "llonggo," a word that connects well not only to the feeling of 'more' but also to a couple of other characteristics of ALP that Hoffmeister is able to maintain, specifically the repetition of sounds or letters. Joyce refers to "lodden lodes," which Hoffmeister translates as "nákladonáklad" (42 and 43), literally a load enjoining a load. With respect to repeated letters, a la "llonggo," where Joyce writes 58 and 59- "…and the rrreke of the fluve of the tail of the gawan of her snuffdrab siouler's skirt trailed ffiffty odd Irish miles behind her lungarhodes," Hoffmeister maintains and even goes beyond with his letters: "a pořád něco dviného omílala ve svých rrjeckých ústech a párrry vapeurrů z podolíku jejího roucha její šňupohnědé podskalácké koššile táhly se šššedesssat irských mil za jejím varletokem." (58-59) In Czech Hoffmeister does have to alter the number to 60, as 50 ('padesát') would require repeated hard consonants that fly in the face of the softer "fs" of "ffiffty," but the appearance to the viewer remains similar.

While this is but a look at the ALP that Hrabal would have read, it shows the amount of play that Hoffmeister was able to preserve in his translation, as well as the numerous references, and sometimes even coincidentally their double meanings. Also what stands out is Hoffmeister's ability to manage even the sounds of words, at least providing equivalent assonance or even rhyme to show the extent to which ALP was really working on language and the audience's perception of it. More than anything, Hrabal would have developed a sense of the kaleidoscopic imagery present in the work, the true "collideroscope" nature that barrages the reader with places, senses, references and even simple nonsense. Probably most significant in this entire episode is the instruction that comes midway through, where Joyce writes "No electress at all but old Moppa Necessity, angin mother of injons. I'll tell you a test. But you must sit still. Will you hold your peace and listen well to what I am going to say now?" (57). ALP serves to bolster the emphasis on hearing as much as reading, creating an overwhelming and perhaps wholistic perspective as to what literature can and should be. Furthermore, the multitude of references amongst the wordplay surely showed Hrabal something of the effect that language approached from a different way could have on the reader.

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[111] Search: "dahál" Online: <//hiligaynon.pinoydictionary.com/word/dahal/>

Hrabal, material, and the body

Hrabal was not so much one for developing a new language in going about his own writing, and yet he showed in early experimentation some Joycean elements as apparent in the *Wake*. As David Chirico notes in his essay on Giuseppe Ungaretti and Hrabal:

> Ungaretti's long poem 'I fiumi' (The Rivers), for example, finds in the rivers of the narrator's past (the Nile, Seine and Isonzo) his own essence; when Hrabal wrote 'Řeka' (River), published in 1938, the poem was generated by a play on 'řeka-řikej' (river-tell/say)' the river will tell the narrator that he is aging, that he will die, but 'Say what you will / I have pinned you / with the thumbtacks on white paper.' (17)

Chirico explains "Words are less the pure essence of reality, thrown up miraculously by its ferment, as in Ungaretti, than a conversational weapon, part of the ferment itself, with which reality can be held down" (17). This notion of being held down is one that Chirico ties to Hrabal's description of sales slips in the brewery where he worked, but in some ways connects to a variety of images, from the nailing that Ditie's son does in *King of England* to the words written on slips of paper and not tied down, but allowed to float away on the tail of a kite in *Too Loud a Solitude.* Chirico makes the point that "the implied opposition is the Mallarméan one between hopes for a pure language, fitting transparently over the material world whose reality it essentializes, and fears of a contingent language, pinned in black matter to the white matter of the page" (18). Chirico's explication of Ungaretti and Hrabal's use of words as a means of "holding" reality down lends to the connection of Hrabal's writing to Rabelais and the idea of writing the body. Much has been made in this essay about the difficulty of using words to adequately describe or replicate thought, narration and images, and one of the questions in relation to the visual in this section is the relationship between the sensations and the body itself, and how to write or describe the body. Zuzana Stolz-Hladká investigates the issue of language and the corpus in her essay "Bohumil Hrabal and the Corporeality of the Word," and in doing so makes several points the key in on sensations and the purpose and difficulty of using particular words.

Stolz-Hladká's primary focus is the connection between the body and word "with its continual oscillation between matter (*material*) and spirit (*pneuma*)"[112] and how it was a focus throughout Hrabal's works. She homes in on the relation of certain imagery from the short story "Ingot and Ingots," as well as *Too Loud a Solitude,* to the core link in the Gospel of John, the well-known "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the

[112] Stolz-Hladká, Zuzana. "Bohumil Hrabal and the Corporeality of the Word." *Bohumil Hrabal (1914-1997) Papers from a Symposium*. Ed. David Short. School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2004. 36.

Word was God…and the Word became Flesh." At the same time though, Stolz-Hladká points to Hrabal's reference of *Ecce Homo* as a slightly different suggestion of metamorphosis; in that text Nietzsche's reappraisal of the interaction between Adam and Eve and the serpent has the serpent actually being God, who in His rest on the seventh day turns evil and fulfills an altogether different role (42). Further supporting her essay is the fact that Hrabal invokes communion in all meanings throughout his works, notably in *Too Loud A Solitude.* What her essay is helpful in achieving is elevating the concern Hrabal had for words as a means of constructing not just images but the sensual, the understanding of processes of the body basic and more complex. In his essay "The Beauty of Compacting Human Heads. Metaphors of Writing and the History of Book Destruction in Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude*" Heike Winkel not only describes the historical situation in which Hrabal was writing and the associated book destruction that was occurring at the time, but also looks at Hrabal's play with regard to the use and consumption of language. This consumption comes from the allusions and readings of Rabelais evident in Hrabal's texts. Winkel notes how in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* Rabelais "develops a critique of writing that consists not of a pessimistic account of the loss of immediacy and sensuality in letters, but rather of experiments with the materiality and corporeality of the written word in order to revive its sensual notion of literature" (184). One of these sensual notions is simply how literature is taken in, which leads Winkel to discuss the traditional dichotomy of orality and literacy as represented respectively by "the metaphor of 'flowing speech' and 'frozen text'" through which "it becomes clear, that the metaphor of a book being drunk is a very strong one in the context of the literary project of a revitalization of letters. It is amongst the most important metaphors in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and obviously one that closely links Rabelais and Hrabal."[113] Winkel then quotes from Rabelais's prologue where the readers are addressed as "Most noble and illustrious drinkers, and you thrice precious pockified blades (for to you, and none else, do I dedicate my writings…" (185), a quote which bolsters the notion of texts being drunk up. This notion relates back to and creates a rather cyclical loop with regard to Stolz-Hladká's discussion of the sacrament of communion, a process Winkel touches on as well.

To interpret the heading "How a Great Daily Organ is Turned Out" in another way, one might suggest that Joyce and Hrabal equally are working to present the body of a people at a certain time through language, as simultaneously provocative and unfeasible that might be. Hence this section on Hrabal's *this city* and *Too Loud a Solitude* will take into account the

[113] Winkel, Heike. "The Beauty of Compacting Human Heads. Metaphors of Writing and the History of Book Destruction in Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude.*" *Slovo a Smysl.* Vol. 24. XII (2015). 180-195. 184.

idea of writing about the everyday in the sense of constructing some kind of whole, a kind of corpus representative of the times and representative of the difficulty of language, necessarily, to present such a construction. In this way one might perceive the connections to Joyce's experiments in both "Aeolus" and ALP. There is also a simultaneous development of the body through the word, as Stolz-Hladka describes and a consumption of that word, which Winkel points to, in an almost religious manner. Such a loop is necessary to recognize in relation to Hrabal's texts, especially *this city* and *Too Loud a Solitude*, as in each there is a look at both constructing and absorbing the word, and the failures and successes therein.

***this city*, and other news**

this city is very much a kind of newspaper, albeit one without resounding headlines. Instead, Hrabal puts the image, perhaps the heart of the story, front and center, allowing it to guide the following texts. Elsewhere, in *Dancing Lessons* and *King of England* for example, there have been images that some may say are more memorable than the texts themselves: beautiful and equally elusive and illusive women in *Dancing Lessons* that flawed men pursue to failure; the flowers and greenery carefully placed on the women in Paradise's; and the magnificent feast for the Emperor of Ethiopia or the floating torsos in the Pardubice clothing company. Yet in all these cases the images build off each other and construct an intricate form (or seemingly free-form) that ultimately becomes something mythic and instructive about storytelling and reading. That is not to say that they do not reveal anything about everyday life—*King of England* is uniquely a historical work with a particular politics, something discussed in greater detail in the final chapter—but the workings of *this city* and *Too Loud a Solitude* reveal something more about existence, both in an actual place, in Prague, and also of the difficulty of language and reading to comprehend that existence.

The kind of stylization in "Aeolus", as well as the barrage of senses in ALP, are taken to much further extremes in putting together the picture of a people, of a day and its events in Hrabal's most striking work of montage, *this city*. It is a book of borrowed texts cut apart and then coupled or juxtaposed with photos taken by Miroslav Peterka. David Short identifies the special nature of the textual apparatus of the book and its sources, writing:

> …It is not only, like the photos, 'put together loosely', but consists entirely of fragments from other sources, but nothing directly from the author's own pen. The sources are: *Attribute der Heiligen,* Biliánová's Popelka (1862-1941) Pražské tajnosti, Mysterium der Schachkunst, transcriptions of court proceedings (other people's 'protocols' of things said), and snatches of conversation overheard in the street (Hrabal's own 'protocols').[114]

[114] Short, 62.

Short homes in on the word 'protocols' as other critics and Hrabal himself have used it and it is an appropriate one to consider for this work, as Hrabal's protocol here is a kind of record in photographs and bits from the aforementioned texts. Yet, Short says, it is not really Hrabal's protocol at all, since he has not taken the photos (though has surely been to all the places captured) nor really 'written' the texts (62). This is what makes *this city* a subversive kind of text in its construction, and one that once again shows Hrabal's penchant for the kind of surrealist juxtapositions of Breton and others. In the untitled introduction Hrabal acknowledges the surrealist influence on the montage in the book, but he also makes a more general statement about the nature of observation and about the reality around. It is a statement that will be investigated more fully in the last chapter, but bears quoting here to understand some of the images in particular. Hrabal writes

> …so any native, who is but a stranger at home, can make an ironic discovery in this town that they can stride through these streets and be dazzled with the beautiful idea that all the isms have had a rendezvous just here, and that all those montages, collages, assemblages which got into the streets through disorder and negligence and forgetfulness, can be considered as an objective coincidence that is able to provoke a simultaneous poem.[115]

The remarkable part of this quotation is not simply the degree to which it affirms much of the avant-garde project, but also that Hrabal suggests that all the different movements in art therein—"all the isms" —are at once present in the everyday. This may not exactly comply textually with all parts of the avant-garde, but prompts a discussion of the visual. Most important to this quote is the "objective coincidence" provoking "a simultaneous poem" as this sentiment connects very well to the idea of epiphany, of the "shout in the street" that Stephen suggests early in *Ulysses*.

There are several photos and bits of text that stand out in the book itself, and the first of note is one that also had an effect on David Short. However I share a slightly different interpretation than Short with respect to the image and its meaning. In the middle of the book there is a picture of a sign for "Kanovnická" street, above which there is a window where someone has hung particularly old-looking socks to dry. In his essay, Short points to this picture as "a good example of odd juxtaposition ('wondrous encounter')" (68). While he correctly identifies the nature of the photo, Short's translation of "Kanovnická ulice" to "Cannon Street" as well as the lack of research into its place in Prague is problematic.

[115] Hrabal, Bohumil and Peterka, Miroslav. *Toto město je ve společné péči obyvatel.* Praha: Československý Spisovatel. 1967. Foreword 1. Original: "a tak i každý domorodec, který ale doma je cizincem, může v tomto městě učinit ironický objev, že těmito ulicemi lze kráčet a být oslněn krásnou představou, že všechny ismy si právě tady daly dostaveníčko a že všechny ty montáže, koláže, asambláže, které se na ulice dostaly nepořádkem a nedbalosti a opomenutím, lze považovat za objektivní náhodu, která je schopna vyvolat simultánní báseň."

”Kanovnická” refers to a canon of a church, or a prebendary, a senior member of the clergy who receives a kind of stipend for performing administrative duties within the church. Kanovnická ulice connects Hradčanské náměstí with the street Nový svět, or, the grand square just to the east of Prague castle down to one of the most picturesque little roads in Prague whose name means “new world.” As stated on the Prague one’s district website, this street dates back to the 14th century and was named after the prebendary who lived on the street to be close to St. Vitus’ cathedral where he helped with liturgical services and the confessions of the bishopric diocese.[116] Taking both the long history of the street into account along with the actual meaning of the name, and those rangy old socks hanging out to dry in the window above the street sign begin to take on even greater significance. Yet Short’s identification of the image as providing an “odd juxtaposition” is a right one and lends a descriptor to many of the images in the book. Simultaneously, his superficial analysis of the image is bolstered by another picture from the book, which draws to mind the gap between words and sensations. This picture shows the corner of a building where a warning sign reading “Slepá ulice” or “Blind Street,” hangs not too far from the street sign “Divadelní ulice,” “Theater street.” Such a juxtaposition seems placed in the book to suggest the difficulty of recreating life in any form, that there is a gap or darkness, if you will, that comes between art, artist and audience. Hrabal supports such an idea through the actual text, or construction and ordering of texts in *this city.*

The book begins with the line “Má nevlastního otce, který žije s matkou na severu” which can be translated as “he (or she) has a stepfather, who lives with mother in the north.” At the beginning there is no preamble, not even a picture before, and it is followed immediately by lines in a different typescript: “Stromeček v ruce. / Františkán. / Chodící po žhavém uhlí. / Salvator ab Horta” or “Little (Christmas) tree in hand. / Franciscan. / Walkers across burning coals. / Saint Salvator of Horta” After these short lines two longer sentences follow:

> Větří paralytické mrtvé figury a následuje tak ty šťastné stopy. Triumf optiky.
> Napsal dvě knížky: “Kterak upoutaným balonkem jsem naučil kocoura asociace, takže ve skvrně na zdi viděl mola a šel pacičkou po něm.” A: “O vlivu kouření, zrcadel a biografu na uzavírání sňatků mezi osobami se stejnými rysy ve tváři.” Vladimír.
>
> He catches the scent of paralytic dead figures blow, and then he is following such happy traces. Triumph of optics.
> He wrote two books: "How with a tethered balloon I taught the male cat associations, so that he saw in the stain on the wall a moth and went after it with his paw." And “On the influence

[116] Městská část Praha 1. “Kanovnická.” <http://www.praha1.cz/cps/praha-1-kanovnicka.html>

of smoking, mirrors and cinema on marriages between persons with the same features in their faces." Vladimir.

These are starkly odd juxtapositions, the image of people paying homage to one of the saints from Catalonia with paralytic dead figures in some street scene, all being watched by someone happy in their observation. No clarity arises as to whether the writer of the strange books is the watcher, but taken altogether, the images point to someone keenly focused on minute details "traces" such as they were, of pilgrims, the smell of figures going by, of stains, and mirrors and cinema. Perhaps it is most appropriate that the cinema is mentioned and stands out as the heart of one of the investigations, because this layering is suggestive of avant-garde film, of the kinds of cuts between seemingly unrelated images in order to paint, layer by layer, a particular theme or emotion. This is to say nothing about the sheer whimsy Hrabal enjoys in drawing together references from all the mentioned texts and splicing them together to create this particular reel, as it were. Hrabal continues from here with even more odd constructions interspersed with pictures depicting all manner of everyday sights. While more instances could be touched upon, it is more important to explicate the first line of the book, as well as the title, its presentation, and its greater meaning in more detail.

The first line of the book is actually the conclusion as well, with the title appearing in the penultimate position. While in no means circular, the repetition of the "stepfather" line draws attention to the missing subject. "This city in control of its citizens" is separated from its mother, which begs the question of who might look over it. Reconsidering the cutting of the title along the spine and there is evidently some divide, some missing part to the work. That seems to be one of the messages subtly hinted at in both the photos and the text, that whatever the true context, whether one recognizes the street name or is able to place the reference of the lines of poetry or court deposition, there is always a significant portion missing, as well as a pointing to whatever forces (mother, author, artist, photographer) might be controlling the presentation. Delight springs forth when looking at the photos and gleaning something from the texts, yet the remaining question seems to be who is in control, and ultimately that leads to questioning the effectiveness of the experiment in the first place. This is to be covered more fully in the conclusion, but suffice it to say now that this experiment is jarring for readers and lookers but indeed draws questions greater than the simple parts of the book.

Miloslava Slavíčková looks at *this city* from the point of view of its initial reception, and the significance of the title standing as a kind of code for the first people to receive the book. She notes that the title does not just formulate the theme, but also that it:

> foreshadows the ironic colorings. Readers who received this book straight to their hands after the first publishing easily found the connection with the message "this house is under control of its tenants," which could be seen hanging at the entrances to neglected nationalized buildings. They could therefore understand the irony of the title and surmise that the text will go on about the dilapidated city. It was about these cities that Hrabal covered in real terms in his works. He does not praise the beauty of Prague for its interesting historical monuments, but draws attention to the shabbiness of their buildings and the mess/disarray of the streets. Beyond the disarray is by no means something not scandalous, but on the other hand looks forward to the beauty of the mood and decay, which excited modern poets and visual artists from Rimbaud to Robert Rauschenberg.[117]

In a way *this city* represents an overarching metaphor for Hrabal's and Joyce's works in terms of their focus on particular places and the everyday occurring in those places. Those moments in the streets, those stories overheard and juxtapositions seen in windows and street signs, exert a greater control over writing than the constructed ever can. In considering Slavíčková's quote, the constructed nature of the text as a mix of quotations and lines from other documents must also be recognized as a kind of judgement against texts that try to much to be streamlined, or beauty in a common way. Hrabal's interest in Prague largely lay in its industrial past as well as in the quarters where few people wanted (and still do not want) to visit. The way that he works the text in concert with Peterka's photos further points to the fact that he wished to use language and reference to draw attention to the less-desired as a means of promoting, as mentioned before, a special kind of realization or epiphany.

For all images and encounters related in the photos and the texts themselves, there is one detail about the text that David Short points out that is emblematic of the greater project of *this city,* as well as an apt transition point to talking about *Too Loud a Solitude*. On the spine, the title is sheered vertically, leaving only *toto je spol oby.* This, according to Short, is "perhaps interpretable as a kind of Slavonic 'lingua franca' to mean 'this is half of both.'"[118] I agree with this interpretation to some extent, but would only add that 'spol' might also reference the abbreviation for a company, rendering the spine's title as *the company of both*. Both cases cause reflection as to what really is contained within the book and whether it is as full of meaning or lacking as either interpretation of the shortening might suggest. While it is not clear whether or not the truncated title printed on the spine of *this city* points to the

[117] Slavíčková, Miloslava. *Hrabalovy literární koláže.* Praha: Akropolis, 2004. 149. Original: "Název *toto město je ve společné péči obyvatel* neformuluje pouze hlavní téma textu, ale naznačuje i jeho ironické zabarvení. Čtenáři, kteří tuto knihu dostali do rukou v době jejího prvního vydání, našli velmi snadno spojitost s heslem "Tento dům je ve společné péči svých nájemníků", které visívalo u vchodů do zanedbaných zestátných domů. Mohli tedy porozumět ironii titulu a vytušit, že v textu půjde o město zchátralé. O takovém městě skutečně Hrabal hovoří ve svém úvodu. Nevelebí krásu Prahy či zajímavost historických památek, ale upozorňuje na sešlost jejích budov a nepořádek na ulicích. Nad nepořádkem se nijak nepohoršuje, naopak se těší z krásy neladu a rozpadu, která vzrušuje moderní básníky a výtvarné umělce od Rimbauda po Robert Rauschenberga."
[118] Short, 63.

meaning “this is half of both” or “company of both,” there is an additional bit of play and perhaps latent meaning in the cover and spine design on the part of Hrabal. This play extends to an even greater extent in the manuscript version of *Too Loud a Solitude.*

Too Loud a Solitude

Just 98 pages long, *Too Loud a Solitude* is an incredibly dense novella that contains all of the elements touched on throughout this thesis, from the questions of awareness and consciousness, to narration, the development of images and sensory experiences, and the revelation of epiphanies. Haňt'a’s somber character is indicative of the knowledge that what he has observed, what he has destroyed and at the same time put together anew, will more than likely be destroyed for good. Perhaps there is too much read into the novella, but suffice it to say, the background it comes from—Hrabal’s own experience working at a wastepaper compacter station on Spálená street in Prague—coupled with the potentiality that Hrabal may have pressed copies of Joyce’s works in translation, perhaps even those done by Hoffmeister and his group, make the novella the logical place to wrap up the analysis in this thesis. *Too Loud a Solitude* may be one of the finest odes to books and reading. At the same time, it is probably the greatest of Hrabal’s works, and one that speaks to his penchant for complexity and layering as promoting something of greater meaning. Just in the manner of the title of *this city* and its shortened version on its binding, the original 1976 manuscript of *Too Loud a Solitude* also presents something telling in its cover and binding.

Like the letters from Marysko mentioned earlier in the thesis, Hrabal at first glance seems to have used a found item for the manuscript, a red folder meant for the “Annual Report of the Joint Venture ChemoPetrol and Paramo of Pardubice.”[119] Such a cover is odd at first, but on reflection of the story itself, is more than fitting, especially in the sense that as much as *Too Loud a Solitude* is about the compacting of books, it is also about the extraction of knowledge and the divulging of spirit. Hrabal touches on this theme throughout, notably in the beginning where Haňt'a connects holding and feeling the weight of his mother’s ashes with his job and a reference to the Jewish holy book: “I would hear the crunch of human skeletons and feel I was grinding up the skulls and bones of press-crushed classics, the part of the Talmud that says: ‘For we are like olives: only when we are crushed do we yield what is best in us.’”[120] Beyond the literal oil connection here to the odd folder encasing the manuscript, this description joins the body and its elements with books, in a way pointing to

[119] Manuscript viewed on request at the Památník národního písemnictví
[120] Hrabal, *Too Loud a Solitude,* 13.

the spirit that comes from reading and learning from those that came before. Where the "Aeolus" episode points to the newspaper and, within the greater sphere of *Ulysses* too, the stories of a day, in *Too Loud a Solitude* Hrabal divulges the record of a lifetime made up of the stories read and slowly compacted in the mind. This moment encapsulating the manuscript cover, Haňt'a weighing his mother's ashes, hearing the crunch of human bones as elements of the classic books being compacted while referencing the Talmud is just one moment in the novella where references mix with images and the senses to yield a montage out of which an epiphany thunders. As Haňt'a creates his bales of wastepaper, he emphasizes not just the routine, but the ritual of his actions, and as the novella develops this ritualization becomes intoxicating and further suggestive of the fact that through the repeated, even banal everyday, there is something much greater occurring.

Moments abound with respect to Haňt'a's actual processing of the books, yet it is necessary to highlight one where he specifically attests to the compaction as ritual. In the following example Haňt'a shows the magic of his situation and the wonder that grips him even after 35 years of working in the place. The image at the beginning is pertinent not only for describing the wonder, but also for connecting to the idea of streams and flowing awareness that forms the heart of this thesis:

> But just as a beautiful fish will occasionally sparkle in the waters of a polluted river that runs through a stretch of factories, so in the flow of old paper the spine of a rare book will occasionally shine forth, and if for a moment I turn away, dazzled, I always turn back in time to rescue it, and after wiping it off on my apron, opening it wide, and breathing in its print, I glue my eyes to the text and read out the first sentence like a Homeric prophecy; then I place it carefully among my other splendid finds in a small crate lined with the holy cards someone once dropped into my cellar by mistake with a load of prayer books, and then comes my ritual, my mass: not only do I read every one of those books, I take each and put it in a bale, because I have a need to garnish my bales, give them my stamp, my signature, and I always worry about whether I've made a bale distinctive enough… (5)

The "spine of the rare book" emerging as a "beautiful fish" is not just an elegant visual, but one that further combines the body of a text to a living entity. Taken in concert with the Talmud reference, this lends to the central theme of human experience and humanity being compacted in the books and bales. At the same time, it is another instance of epiphany, and one that occurs even despite the unpleasant and disappointing situation. It may be difficult to consider the destruction of books as an everyday event, but within the reality of a communist regime, this must be taken as what was the normal destruction of culture and history. Within this epiphany there is also the recognition that it is mediated, that the books come flowing just as part of the everyday job, but Haňt'a takes them and puts them together in a special way, with care and worry as to whether they are "distinctive enough." Shortly after this, and several times throughout the novella, Haňt'a points to the fact that just as he will "garnish" bales with

a rare book at the heart, when he receives reproductions of old masters' painting, he will completely surround or envelope bales with those paintings. From *The Night Watch* and *Saskia* (Rembrandt), *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Manet) to *Guernica*, *Bonjour, M. Gaugin* and *Sunflowers*, Haňt'a's bales take on new meaning visually and metaphorically with their wrappings. Each of these actions, he describes, constitute "his mass," and while the moments of compacting bales point to the daily ritual of Haňt'a, the rhythms and codes within the book similarly take on something religious or even mythical.

Throughout the discussion of Joyce's and Hrabal's works the dichotomy of high and low has been touched on both in relation to the elements of the everyday that each author is willing to cover, and in the topics that the characters then address as relating to their stories, or simply to what arises in their consciousness relative to their hopes or aspirations. The cobbler from *Dancing Lessons* and Molly in *Ulysses* display a need to share their experiences as a means of teaching some audience, be it the readers of the story who they are cognizant of, or other characters seemingly offscreen. Bloom and Ditie share the same transfixion on their respective desires for love and a son, and an elevation in stature, in all meanings of the word. For Haňt'a the gap between high and low is effectively eliminated in the manner that he develops his story. The majority of the chapters begin with a variation of "For thirty-five years now I've been in wastepaper" and the repetition is equally reminiscent of a refrain and a prayer. The line is indicative of a prayer in the sense that Haňt'a repeats it in order to alleviate doubt about his existence and trials, which he insists require a "divinity degree" (96) to go through. It is like a refrain both in its poetry and the way it marks the sections of the book. Interspersed within the later chapters and the refrain is Haňt'a's reflection on "*progressus ad originem* equals *regressus ad futurum*" (88). In his insistence on cycles and a constant turning back, it seems as though the rather plotless novella will go nowhere, that indeed the cycles of destruction and the small revelations of the everyday will continue just as they have. Yet two details mark a more hopeful viewpoint, and display the ultimate epiphany that arises out of the mass, the densely constructed bale that is *Too Loud a Solitude* itself.

Late in the novella Haňt'a discovers that the nightmare he had been experiencing had come true, that indeed there is an industrial press in Bubny where the young workers drink milk with their lunches and toss the books into the machine without a moment's consideration for their contents. Shortly after, he arrives at his own press and finds two of the young men there, working away in the little basement area. There is nothing for him there but depression, save for the fact that one book flies off a pitchfork, like the beautiful fish, and he grabs it. It is the story of Charles Lindbergh crossing the Atlantic and Haňt'a is ecstatic because he can take

the book to Mr. Šturm (80), one of his patrons for whom he collects all books on aviation and flying. That this is the last book that he takes from those being compacted is no coincidence, as the theme of flying is significant to the entire novella and a sense of flying foreshadows the very last moments of the book. Yet after meeting Mr. Šturm, Haňt'a is overcome by a dream in which the entire city around him, all the buildings expanding out from his workplace, down Spálená street, to the National Museum and to the castle, are consumed by an immense press that he sees himself controlling, pressing the green button. As everything is compounded, Haňt'a finds himself overcome by it all: "the walls picked up speed as they gathered together what they had demolished, and I saw myself as the Holy Trinity toppled over my head, no longer seeing, but feeling myself being compacted and thrown together…" (85). As the walls finally come to a close, pushing out all of the air, Haňt'a remarks on what is left, in which he sees "a cube fifteen hundred feet long, maybe more, with all Prague compacted in it, myself included, all my thoughts, all the books I'd ever read, all in my life, and it was all nothing more than the tiniest of mice being crushed with the wastepaper in my cellar…" (85). Haňt'a's revelation is an appropriate reversal of the repeated discoveries he had made before; here, when everything around him, everything of his everyday, from the little basement to the buses and the monuments and the entire city, is compressed together, the resulting bale produces nothing greater.

However this reversal is not at all a denial of the power of everything he has consumed and compressed in his 35 years. Instead, the space between low and high is eliminated, that even just one book can have the power of the entirety of those he has read and collected. Noting that he sees himself as the Holy Trinity in the moment of compaction is suggestive too that even the lowest, as Haňt'a perceives himself, can be made or at least feel divine when compressed. Numerous other moments support this notion, the clearest being with respect to mice and the fact that at his little apartment Haňt'a is well aware that at any moment one little mouse, one of the many tunneling through his piles and shelves of saved books, could be the one to bring the whole place down on top of him while he sleeps. At the same time he perceives the books themselves as "Swords of Damocles," ready to bring down the shelves on their own. Yet this is the power of individual books, and individual moments, to reveal something to those who might consume them. This entire discussion springs from the very form of the novella, and the many references Hrabal makes throughout. These include not only the aforementioned works of art, but to books ranging from *Ecce Homo* to Lao Tze's *Canonical Book of Virtues,* to *Metaphysics of Morals* and *Hyperion.* Knowing the references helps to understand Haňt'a's point of view, but catching even just one in the

appropriate moment may do more for a reader than all taken together. The dream of this city-encompassing press foregrounds the end of the novel, Haňt'a's ultimate decision from which one of these minute yet powerful epiphanies emerges.

Rather than change jobs as a result of the change at the press, Haňt'a chooses a different path, one grounded in the "unwitting education" he has experienced working the 35 years in the cellar. He pronounces:

> I will follow Seneca, I will follow Socrates, and here, in my press, in my cellar, choose my own fall, which is ascension, and even as the walls press my legs up to my chin and beyond, I refuse to be driven from my Paradise…and at the moment of truth I see my tiny Gypsy girl, whose name I never knew, we are flying the kite through the autumn sky… (97)

His choice at the end comes as little surprise, and at the same time it seems that it is not really a choice at all, but the logical conclusion to what he had been doing all those years anyway. He sneaks back in and climbs into the press, making the above pronouncement while clutching Novalis, open to the line "Every beloved object is the center of a garden of paradise" (97), once again carefully preparing the bale in the manner of all those before. He is at once inside and outside the bale however, as his thoughts go to ascension, the kite, and the "tiny Gypsy girl." This Gypsy girl arrives early in the novella as a mysterious figure who follows Haňt'a one step at a time from the street to the curb to the steps, all the way into his apartment where she claims to be living. He takes it all in stride, as if she indeed had been part of his life the whole time before. They live happily for a time before she suddenly disappears, and the recollection of her returns several times, albeit always without a name. The Gypsy girl is indicative not only of the fleeting moments in life, but also of the unreliable nature of Haňt'a as a narrator. He is very much intoxicated by everything that he has experienced, read, and baled together to the extent that he loses sight of the story that he is developing. Nevertheless, in the final moment, the kite takes the form of Haňt'a's face and he describes, looking down, the Gypsy girl sending up a message: "I see it making its way up the cord, I can almost reach it now, I stretch out my hand, I read the large, childlike letters: ILONKA. Yes, that was her name" (98). His descent is really an ascent, and in the very last moment there is one final epiphany, one final revelation that overrides all the other thoughts that could have come from the books and pieces of art around him.

Haňt'a in a way represents a montage of all the elements discussed in this thesis. He is a character constantly revealing his inner thoughts, albeit in a way carefully constructed by Hrabal. Haňt'a is overcome by intoxication literally, yes, but also by a kind relating to his desires. He narrates his life story, his "love story," but in a large part gives up the narration in favor of splicing in references, moments, and images which construct a vast picture of a

specific everyday world in which the destruction of books is regular, and whose society is vastly segmented into those low and high. The newspaper that Haňt'a constructs, his "great daily organ," is in fact a body of sensations, stories, images, and language that is to be recognized as something that he consumed and is now made available to readers after having been pressed, compacted, extracted. For Haňt'a has been pressed, and the resulting bale has yielded not only what is best in him, but what is best in observations, in books, and in the everyday.

Conclusion:

The basis for much of this thesis came out of an implied or anecdotal influence of Joyce on Hrabal, stemming from Hrabal's repeated mention of Joyce in his pantheons. It also came about in part because of the few mentions of similarity between Joyce's and Hrabal's use of stream of consciousness. More than anything it arose out of my own interest and the fact that little research had been done with respect to the connection between the two writers. In working through the questions that frame this thesis, though, it has become less of an analysis of influence as it has become an analysis of shared approaches, values, and purpose.

In a way this shift is indicative of Stephen's thinking at the beginning of *Ulysses*, which Buck Mulligan states so nicely, noting it would require a couple of pints for him to discuss it further. "It's quite simple. He proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father."[121] Where Stephen's reasoning comes from is not so much the question as what prompted such an investigation. What is written on the page can often lead to far different destinations than intended. Studying influence may indeed result in finding direct overlaps, or lineage between two writers. There has been no mathematical reasoning in this thesis per se, and yet there is a kindred spiritualness between Joyce and Hrabal that arises. Rather coincidentally, late in *Pirouettes* Hrabal once again touches on *Ulysses* and makes a connection that follows from the Mulligan quote. He explains: "Because there's a direct line from Shakespeare to Joyce. Then from Joyce to Eliot. Eliot, that *Wasteland*, owns [sic] much to an inner kinship with Joyce's *Ulysses*."[122] Hrabal may not have Mulligan's line in mind in mentioning this in the interview, but it is an uncanny correlation and one that can be altered to suggest that much of Hrabal's writing has a similar "inner kinship" to Joyce's *Ulysses* and other works.

Joyce and Hrabal have remarkably similar views on the power of observation and importance of awareness, as well as a strongly comparable understanding of what constitutes an epiphany. In approaching writing, they grapple with the same issues of how to present the mind's thinking process, how to narrate and present awareness, as well what should go into the construction of stories. Their approach to stream of consciousness is marked by a great degree of mediation meant to draw and direct the audience in a particular way, while staying true to what William James originally described. Their characters are often overwhelmed by a

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[121] Joyce, *U* 1.554-556

[122] Hrabal, *Pirouettes*, 153

kind of intoxication that affects the ability to narrate or even tell coherent stories.[123] This in part connects to the characteristic of antagonism as Poggioli describes with respect to the avant-garde. Joyce and Hrabal also use references, images, and manipulate language in order to fully engage the senses and better present the density of the everyday experience. In this way they are equally interested in the materiality of language, another aspect of the avant-garde. Behind all the similarities in the approaches to these questions, Joyce and Hrabal were connected through unique and influential individuals, and these connections, coupled with some of the theoretical discussions of movements and the purpose of literature, buttress the juxtaposition of the two. Just as the two share characteristics of the avant-garde in their writing, Joyce and Hrabal might also be connected through a deeper consideration of politics, and particularly in the vein of "minor literatures" as Deleuze and Guattari discuss.[124] Yet in this thesis the discussion of politics was only briefly touched on out of respect for each author's pronouncements putting style at the forefront.

In closing, it is probably most helpful to revisit one of the significant quotes from this thesis, one that comes from probably the most obscure work cited, *this city*. It bears repeating for both the way it connects the original driving quote of the thesis as well as how it helpfully frames the guiding goal of both authors:

> …so any native, who is but a stranger at home, can make an ironic discovery in this town that they can stride through these streets and be dazzled with the beautiful idea that all the isms have had a rendezvous just here, and that all those montages, collages, assemblages which got into the streets through disorder and negligence and forgetfulness, can be considered as an objective coincidence that is able to provoke a simultaneous poem.[125]

The mention of "all the isms" having their rendezvous in the street corresponds to what Hrabal stated as an element of Joyce's writing, but is also indicative of the inescapability of literary movements on those who record what they see in the everyday. For what effect those movements and structures—in this thesis represented in part by surrealism and the greater avant-garde project—might have on producing stories, they are still shot through with an element of chance, of "disorder" and "coincidence." It is this element, the "whrrwee," the "shout in the street," the "thunderflash of cognition"—epiphany—that Hrabal and Joyce observe in the everyday, work toward reproducing in writing, and achieve within their styling and stories.

[123] There is of course a great deal of actual drinking in their works, but that is a topic of possible future consideration.
[124] I have written on the topic with respect to Hrabal, but the topic could certainly be investigated more fully.
[125] Hrabal, Bohumil and Miroslav Peterka, *this city.* Foreword 1.

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