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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

Refamiliarizing Empathy Through the Aesthetics of James Joyce and Agustín Yáñez

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

by

Stephanie Marie Fousek

December 2014

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Sabine Doran, Chairperson

Dr. Heidi Brevik-Zender

Dr. Kimberly Devlin

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2014

The Dissertation of Stephanie Marie Fousek is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Refamiliarizing Empathy Through the Aesthetics of James Joyce and Agustín Yáñez

by

Stephanie Marie Fousek

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Comparative Literature  
University of California, Riverside, December 2014  
Dr. Sabine Doran, Chairperson

In my dissertation, "Refamiliarizing Empathy through the Aesthetics of James Joyce and Agustín Yáñez," I perform a comparative study of aesthetic portrayals of empathy primarily through two representative novels of Latin-American and European modernism: Yáñez's *Al filo del agua* (*The Edge of the Storm*) and a work that greatly inspired it, Joyce's *Ulysses*. In doing so, I advance a new interdisciplinary approach that incorporates aesthetics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, narratology, ethics, and the haptic in order to show how these two narratives, despite generally being more associated with modernist themes such as alienation, not only contain but construct empathy as well. In *Al filo del agua* I focus primarily on the character Father Reyes as a figure of empathy, while in *Ulysses* I namely analyze Bloom, particularly within the blind stripling scene. I also include an examination of the striking woodblock prints that accompany the original edition of *Al filo del agua* in order to demonstrate how this text features empathy not only textually, but also visually. I ultimately argue that empathy primarily makes an appearance in *Al filo del agua* through its more political form, prosocial action, while in *Ulysses* empathy occurs principally in the form of perspective taking via the perspicacious musings of Bloom.



## Table of Contents

<b>List of Images</b> .....	x
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	
Approaches to Empathy.....	3
Why Modernism?.....	7
European Modernism.....	8
Latin American Modernism.....	10
Woodblock Prints.....	14
Overview of Chapters.....	16
<b>Chapter 2: Empathy and the Gaze</b>	
Theoretical Background .....	21
The Catholic Gaze.....	27
Lack of Empathy.....	31
The Students.....	34
Stephen Dedalus and Luis Gonzaga Pérez: The Artist’s “Look” .....	36
Mercedes.....	42
Don Dionisio’s Struggle.....	43
Father Islas: And Island Unto Himself.....	46
Burial of Sins.....	50
Music and Yáñez’s Aesthetics of Empathy.....	52
<b>Chapter 3: Empathy and Overdetermination</b>	
Mujeres, Marys, and Mothers: The Incorporation of Joyce’s female as “Musa- Musica/Mater-Materia” into Yáñez’s “Daughters of Mary” .....	59
<i>Ulysses</i> : The Molding of Mary, Martha, Molly and Milly.....	60
The Merging of María, Marta, Mercedes and Micaela in <i>Al filo del agua</i> .....	62
The Overdetermined Figure of Gerty MacDowell.....	69

**Chapter 4: Empathy and Agency**

Bloom: Empathizing with Men, Not Masculinity..... 83  
Finding Altruism: Father Reyes..... 105  
María..... 109

**Chapter 5: Haptic Empathy**

The Stripling Scene..... 122  
Intuiting or Projecting Oneself into Another’s Situation..... 124  
Imagining How Another is Thinking and Feeling..... 127  
Imagining How One Would Think and Feel in the Other’s Place..... 129  
Condescending Pity..... 130

**Conclusion**..... 132

**Bibliography**..... 139

## List of Images

### Image 1

Woodblock print by Julio Prieto.  
From “El Padre Director,” *Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 246.

### Image 2

Woodblock print by Julio Prieto.  
From “El Viejo Lucas Macias,” *Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 148.

### Image 3

Woodblock print by Julio Prieto.  
From “Pedrito,” *Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 328.

# **Introduction**

Where might empathy find its place in a period of literature such as modernism, with its commonplace associations of alienation and disconnection from others and with the self? While it may not explicitly appear on the surface of such texts, this project seeks to understand different conceptions of empathy, and to locate its textual occurrences in modernist works of literature. Naturally, such an attempt would raise several questions; for example, how might modernist works help us to come to a more precise understanding of an experience as difficult to grasp as “empathy”? More specifically, how might such constructed literary techniques such as those found in modernist works thematize empathy? And when and how do modernist characters, often portrayed as overwhelmingly entrenched in their own subjective viewpoint, actually demonstrate empathy? While I do not propose by any means to answer these questions in full, I do attempt to explore them in some depth by focusing on representative modernist works by James Joyce and Agustín Yáñez; namely, in *Ulysses*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Al filo del agua* (*The Edge of the Storm*).

One reason that I engage in this pursuit of teasing out the theme of empathy in two major modernist works, *Al filo del agua* and *Ulysses*, is so that I may use these texts to speculate more broadly on how empathy is generally constructed in aesthetics, especially modernist aesthetics. Simultaneously, this project opens up an avenue that, importantly, problematizes theorizations of modernism that too heavily emphasize alienation without recognizing how something like empathy is already nevertheless present.

I attempt to answer these questions in four chapters: the first two, primarily by looking at how the aesthetics of *Ulysses*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Al filo del agua* thematize empathy through characterization and overdetermination; in my second two chapters, I examine empathy by looking at how certain characters at certain moments *demonstrate* empathy, interrupting readings of modernism that too heavily stress alienation.

### **Approaches to Empathy**

Theorizing about empathy poses many problems. In other fields it has been assigned widely varying definitions, and for different aims. Such an amorphous term can be difficult to grasp indeed, and may be the reason that, for instance, in “Empathy in Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice” psychoanalysts Donald Grant and Edwin Harari observe the “long tradition among British psychoanalysts of writing about empathy but not naming it” (4).

Empathy has until relatively recently suffered nearly the same neglect in literary studies, even though narratology, for instance, can be a useful methodology for discussing empathy in literature since interior monologue, so central to modernist aesthetics, is one of the main literary features that grants the reader access to a character’s inner world. Similarly to Grant and Harari’s above assertion regarding the field of psychoanalysis, empathy is likewise everywhere in particular throughout modernist texts yet rarely addressed directly; thus, in combining a psychoanalytic and narratological approach, new readings of these works become possible.

By examining the governing structure of the narratives I will be exploring, I use a narratological approach in conjunction with the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan. Despite that Lacan chooses not to develop a discussion of empathy, but instead creates “a theory and practice which confronts individuals with the most radical dimension of human existence” (*How to Read Lacan*), his formulations of the subject are particularly useful for understanding how empathy is constructed in modernist texts, for it is precisely the depiction of this “radical dimension of human existence” through the modernist technique of interior monologue that calls upon the reader for an empathic response, especially in regard to the Latin American work on which I focus, *Al filo del agua*.

Via her analysis of *Antigone*, Marilyn Nissim-Sabat responds to Lacan’s avoidance of empathy, theorizing that empathy can be seen as a radical ethics, a deep concern for others made possible by an always-extant interconnectedness with the other:

Here is the essence of empathy: concern for the person’s ethical being, *for that person’s relatedness to transcendence* [. . .]. [Antigone’s] empathy for Ismene is a directedness toward the autonomy of the other, toward the growth and transcendence of the other, which is at the same time a directedness toward stimulating the empathic capacity of the other. That is, empathy, as active grasping of the motivational structure of the psychic life of the other, is a directedness toward recognition of transcendental intersubjectivity, that is, there is not ‘a multiplicity of separated souls [. . .] but rather [. . .] there is a sole psychic framework [. . .] of all souls, which are united [. . .] through the intentional interpenetration which is the communalization of their lives [. . .]’ (*Neither Victim nor Survivor: Thinking Toward a New Humanity* 150)

Nissim-Sabat’s characterization of empathy emphasizes a sense of unity which lies behind our sense of separateness from the self – a sense of separateness that Lacan highlights.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also Gadamer’s discussion of Husserl’s transcendental concept of empathy (*Truth and Method* 250).

On the one hand, then, I use Lacanian psychoanalysis because, when portrayed in literature, a depiction of radical otherness makes empathy possible: a textual medium, I posit, has the potential to clarify another's otherness and thereby create the potential, at least, for a reader to better empathize with this otherness. Though as narrative theorist Suzanne Keen points out, "many readers experience narrative empathy without undertaking prosocial action in the real world as a result" ("Readers' Temperaments and Fictional Character" 297), I am not here suggesting that the authors I examine, Joyce and Yáñez, are necessarily intending to inspire empathy in the reader, nor am I arguing that readers will necessarily respond to their texts with empathy. Instead, I submit that the portrayals of radical otherness such as those that we see in modernist works like *Al filo* and *Ulysses* simply open up a possibility for the reader to be able to empathize that was not there before. To show this in the first chapter, for instance I focus in particular on the textual aesthetics of empathy: the characters in *Al filo*, *Portrait*, and *Ulysses*, not always presented in a particularly noble or ethical light, nevertheless have the potential to generate empathy due to the specifically religious repression that they experienced in their environment and the way in which these texts convey these characters' struggles.

I use Nissim-Sabat's conception, on the other hand, to demonstrate in later chapters how *Ulysses* and Yáñez's *Al filo del agua* implicitly demonstrate an interconnectedness (much like she shows in the above quote in *Antigone*) between characters over and against a simplified reading of pure alienation. For if this interconnectedness proves to be extant even in modernism, it is a much greater testament



to the truth of this idea – and our capacity for empathy – given that modernist literature is generally conceived of as highlighting separation and isolation from others.

My second chapter also focuses on an aesthetics of empathy, and suggests a new function for the role of overdetermination as a modernist technique. Rather than thinking of it more generally as a means of complex figuration, I here examine it from the standpoint of empathy, to suggest that when this concept is brought to bear on the consideration of a character, the complexity that overdetermination generates can serve as a reminder of our own capacity to experience empathy or exist as beings with at times conflicting tendencies.

My last two chapters focus on how empathy is represented or thematized in the content of *Ulysses* and *Al filo*. This is not a simple task, since empathy is a word used commonly, yet which has uses that vary greatly. For instance, empathy sometimes gets folded under the umbrella of sentimentalism (especially when considering the Victorian novel), with all of the historical implications that accompany such an association. Here, however, I examine empathy from a patently different angle, exploring many other conceptions of the term, and drawing in part from conceptions of empathy in social psychology<sup>2</sup> in order to better understand how it manifests in these works. Taking advantage of the amorphous nature of this term allows me to tease out ways that an author such as Joyce is able to play with empathy as a concept.

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<sup>2</sup> See Daniel Batson, “These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena,” (3–15).

## Why Modernism?

Empathy may not likely be at the forefront of one's mind when considering the aesthetics of high modernism. Narratologist Suzanne Keen posits in *Empathy and the Novel* that empathy was mainly featured as a form of sentimentalism in mainstream novels during the modernist period, while far more difficult works of high modernism (*Ulysses* especially) employed what Jean-Michel Rabaté called "relentless linguistic experimentalism" (*James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* 46). Nevertheless, she argues that "[t]his does not mean, however, that modernist experimental fiction eschewed empathy, rather that it recast the representation of consciousness and feelings as one of the primary tasks of novels rejecting conventional representation" (Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* 58).

Indeed, as a text that worked against such "conventional representation," *Ulysses*, as well as other high modernist texts, can be seen as disrupting not only traditional aesthetic techniques found in Victorian works, but also previous thematizations of empathy that, in earlier decades, would have been expressed in literature more overtly. As I will maintain throughout this project, the fact that a key feature of modernist works is their focus on psychologically intense moments of alienation, means that they can make readers privy to an interiority one would not have been afforded in real life.

The modernist aesthetic seems to privilege the mind that is disconnected from the body and other people. Intimacy is present, however, in the lament about alienation, which is a condition borne out of the loss of intimate connection. The degree to which that loss generates such lamentation and ennui attests to intimacy's fundamental and pervasive value. (Siân White "'O, despise not my youth!': Senses, Sympathy, and an Intimate Aesthetics in *Ulysses*" 503)

That modernism focuses to such a great extent on character interiority, then, renders it a particularly interesting period for examining new ways in which something like empathy works in literature.

### **European Modernism**

European modernism is generally conceived of as having “early,” “high,” and “postmodern” periods. While I find the distinctions between "early," "high" and "post" modernisms to be problematic, I find them to be even more useful, despite that these periods of modernism must inevitably be categorized imperfectly if they are to be categorized at all. Therefore, these terms are not to be avoided, but rather embraced with the understanding that they, in their own way, are limited yet also the foundation out of which a more intricate understanding of the connection between different types of "modernisms" can begin.

With this in mind, "early" European modernism may tentatively be used to designate literature beginning from roughly the beginning of the twentieth century up until World War I. The aesthetics of the early modernist period were rapidly changing, and include an increased emphasis on different kinds of characterization, often highlighted through characters' thoughts and actions, and the significance that accompanied such characterizations: a breaking away of both the repressive elements remaining from the Victorian period, including the belief in the possibility of unimpeded progress; a distrust of institutions; an uncertainty about a unified self; and a consequential, subsequent sense of self-alienation. However, alongside these modernist

considerations, there was still the faith in the early modern period, generally, that words could still do their job, that literature could effectively communicate in a more or less universal manner.

In light of World War I, high modernism, which can generally be placed between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, understandably adopted more extreme concerns about what it means to be “human” and whether it is possible to believe in progress at all. Writers of high modernist works thus sought to extend and epitomize the earlier ideas that had been experimented with tentatively, now with greater confidence. Accompanying this, then, were the incorporation of more radically subjective aesthetic techniques: modes of characterization that began to more greatly blur the lines between fiction and reality; more emphasis on individualized style; more experimental forms of narrative, such as stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse; and further questions of and experimentation with words, including the more frequent creation of neologisms.

Finally, postmodernism is generally considered to take place at the end of the 1940s (or even beginning as late as the 1960s for some critics). But while postmodern writers sought to push modernist aspirations even further in some ways, they simultaneously tended to critique their predecessors for maintaining, still, too much of an emphasis on Western tradition, elitism, and faith in a sense of unity. Therefore, now having faced World War II, there is an even more profound emphasis on preventing any sense of a stable identity of character, or meaning to be derived from their texts; but this is executed more through an attempt to undercut elitism by, frequently, adapting more

minimalist forms of narrative, and seeking to expose further the illusory nature of traditional narrative.

It should be noted, however, that Joyce's aesthetics, which would obviously within the sketch here be considered "high" modernism, nevertheless well fit into the other categories as well: the naturalism and "early" modernist type of characterization of *Dubliners* and the completely and utterly fragmented portrayal of "self" in *Finnegan's Wake* and even, to an extent, *Ulysses*. That Joyce's aesthetics seem to forever stretch whatever categories or boundaries one may try to place on them<sup>3</sup> makes his work an even more fascinating site for exploring a concept of empathy, since this concept is such an important one and yet bears no precise definition that is simultaneously definitive.

### **Latin American Modernism**

When referring to Latin American modernism, I am not referring to the *modernismo* movement from 1888-1915, which does not share a similar aesthetics to the European modernist movement. Borges did read Joyce at the time the latter was writing, and thus Joyce's influence is clear in some of his work; in particular, as Suzanne Jull Levine mentions in "Notes to Borges's Notes on Joyce" the short stories "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote" (1939), "Funes the Memorious" (1942), and "The Aleph" (1945). However, Joyce did not exert what could be considered widespread influence in Latin America until approximately the middle of the twentieth century, when Latin

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<sup>33</sup> For a detailed outline of various theorists' placements of Joyce's work within the modernism spectrum from early to post-, semi- to anti, see Brian Richardson, "The Genealogies of Ulysses, the Invention of Postmodernism, and the Narratives of Literary History," *ELH* 67.4 (2000): 1035–1054.

American modernist aesthetics became prevalent. One of the first clear examples of a work incorporating Latin American modernist aesthetics first appeared with Miguel Ángel Asturias' *El señor presidente* (1946), to be followed by such works as Agustín Yáñez's *Al filo del agua* (1947) (the work which will be examined here), Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), Gabriel García Márquez's *La hojarasca* (1955), and Mario Vargas Llosa's *La casa verde* (1966) and his *Conversación en La Catedral* (1969).

However, since Latin American modernism arose at the time that the European and North American postmodernism was well underway, the consequence is that the Latin American modernist period was more short-lived than in Europe and North America. As Raymond L. Williams indicates in "Modernist Continuities: The Desire to be Modern in Twentieth-Century Spanish-American Fiction" (MC),

An overview of Spanish American fiction of the 1960s does indicate that by 1967 the aesthetics of Modernism were pervasive, and the initial signs of the postmodern were also evident. Indeed, on the international scene, not only were some of the most talented masters of Spanish-American fiction at their apogee, but also several others were writing in ways rarely imagined in Latin America, with the exception of Borges in his *Ficciones*. (384)

Thus, we must keep in mind that for the Latin American writers, modernism bled into postmodernism more quickly than for European modernism, since the shift to the former had already occurred elsewhere in the world. Some works that clearly incorporate modernist aesthetics, for instance, but which perhaps are more distinctly postmodern than the aforementioned works would be Julio Cortázar's novel *Rayuela* (1963) and short story *Las babas del diablo* (1959), and García Márquez's *Cien años del soledad* (1967).

However, as one of the very first works that set off this period, *Al filo del agua* is certainly more straightforwardly the former (that is to say, more straightforwardly

modernist). As Raymond L. Williams points out, “Published in 1947, *Al filo* is, indeed, an accomplished modernist novel and a major contribution to the rise of modernist fiction in Mexico and Latin America” (*The Modern Latin American Novel* 19).

Yáñez is one of, if not the most, important modernist Latin American writers for exploring aesthetic empathy as a theme. John L. Walker states in “Subjective Time and Images in *Al filo del agua*,”

Since Yáñez was a professor of aesthetics, it is to be expected that these images in his novel be related to beauty and effect that thus Impressionism, which makes their effect more emotional than rational. [ . . . ] As an example, the effect of the town as expressed in the “Preparatory Act” (the chapter giving the preliminary picture of the town before the action starts) is shown by Yáñez as one of a spiritual and sexual desperation emanating from the polarities of “desire” and “fear”, which exist in an atmosphere that is repressive and almost inflexible [ . . . ]. The important impression is that which the town makes on the soul, not on the eye or mind. (Walker 51)

That Yáñez incorporated European modernist techniques into his works is a crucial element to understanding the role that aesthetics play in the discovery of emotion, and in particular empathy, in *Ulysses* and *Al filo*. In fact, it is precisely in examining the more overt thematizations of empathy in Yáñez that makes the tracing back to the more subtle conceptualization of empathy in Joyce’s work possible. As Normal Luna points out in “*Ulysses* and *Al filo del agua*: A Textual Comparative Study,” “[T]he labyrinths of language, mythology, archetype, and motif that pervade *Al filo del agua* are indissolubly linked to the elaborate construct of stylistic techniques of Joycean inspiration” (1).

Despite the fact that both *Al filo del agua* and *Ulysses* are emphatically modernist works, however, it is nevertheless still important to remember their very different historical contexts. Though both of the regions in which the works primarily take place,

Ireland and Mexico, suffered great hardship under those that ruled them, the Mexican population living at the time during which *Al filo del agua* takes place (that is, right before the start of the Mexican Revolution) could be said to have generally suffered harsher conditions than those living in Ireland during the early twentieth century. At the same time, it is important to note that, as Mark D. Anderson convincingly argues in “Agustín Yáñez’s Total Mexico and the Embodiment of the National Subject,” Yáñez was, in part, potentially projecting his own particular childhood experience onto an idealized version of the Mexican National Subject, and also likely intensifying the experience in the name of promoting his political project. Still, one could argue, as Suzanne Jill Levine does, that Joyce can also be considered a “‘third world’ brother disguised in European clothing—colonially marginalized as both an Irishman and as an exile, whose only territory, the written page, was further shadowed by blindness” (346).

Regardless, a consideration of the different historical contexts helps to explain why, in my first chapter, *Al filo* features a stronger construction of empathy than does *Ulysses*, while in my final chapter, which focuses on moments of haptic empathy, the difference between the works is so great that I analyze only *Ulysses* (namely, through Bloom). The most comparative chapter is my second one, because it deals with that which the works most greatly share: their use of specifically modernist devices (in this case, overdetermination).



## Woodblock Prints

In this project I also include an analysis of some of the woodblock prints published in *Al filo del agua*, for a couple of reasons. One is to provide an example of a medium that was prevalent in both the European and Latin American modernist movements, thus underlining yet a further aesthetic connection between them. Another reason is to suggest that the necessarily high contrast inherent in such a medium afforded an ideal means of expressing (note that the medium reached a height of popularity in Europe during the German “Expressionist” movement) an intense psychological reality, which emphasizes Yáñez’s desire to create a novel that would at once further his political project and yet do so through a more psychological portrayal of characters, rather than taking on a more overtly political tone. Therefore, these woodblock prints can be seen as another way in which Yáñez’s novel constructs empathy.

It should be further noted that the process of creating a woodblock is a particularly visceral one, given the fact that the image is carved from a block of wood. The intensity of this procedure translates well into the print that appears in a literary work. Strictly in terms of their production (as opposed to their content/subject matter), other related mediums, such as lithographs, perhaps cannot evoke the same level of empathy as can woodblocks, though their modes of production as well as their level of popularity do share some commonalities during the early twentieth century.

The initial revival of this medium occurred slightly before the European modernist period. Though Paul Gauguin is generally credited with the rejuvenation of interest in woodcuts at the end of the nineteenth century, Walter Chamberlain points out

in his *Manual of Woodcut Printmaking and Related Techniques* that in 1891, as part of the Nabis, Swiss artist Félix Vallotton became interested in reviving the technique two years before Gauguin began to make prints (49).

Nevertheless, it was Gauguin who made stronger advances in the medium's popularization at the time. He made his first of his altogether 145 woodcuts in 1891. He borrowed from Japanese art (flat, formal pattern, clear outline) and primitive art, and made wood engravings as well. But in the 1890s, Gauguin decided to use greater contrast with blacks and whites, as opposed to half-tones, which gave his works a more primitive appearance (Chamberlain 48–49). Other influential woodcut artists were Emile Bernard, Henri Rivière, Auguste Lepère, who were also influenced by Japanese-style, colored woodblock prints (Chamberlain 49). Though he was influenced by Japanese-style woodblocks, his primary interest was in the more primitive style he witnessed in Tahiti, which in turn greatly influenced the Nabis group. Gauguin's work was heavily informed by his trip – which he considered to be an escape – to Tahiti, during which he began writing a journal that he wished to publish, *Noa Noa* (“Of Fragrant Earth”). This journal portrayal a highly exoticized view of the native inhabitants of French-colonized Tahiti, and he describes multiple sexual encounters and love affairs with young Polynesian women, including marrying a 13-year-old. Accounts of these interactions and affairs take up a greater portion of the account than the art that he creates; at one point, however, he describes European traditional art as “The timidities of expression of degenerate races” (Gauguin 30). Out of this trip came his first woodcuts. Though the prints never made it into his published journal, these woodcuts are nevertheless the

reason that Gauguin became known for having “rediscovered” this medium. Eventually, this led to the widespread creation of woodblock prints well into the twentieth century, with such artists as Vanessa Bell (Virginia Woolf’s sister), Frans Masereel (*A Passionate Journey*), Käthe Kollwitz, George Grosz, Max Beckmann, and Emil Nolde in England and Germany<sup>4</sup>, Lynd Ward in the United States (*Storyteller without Words*) and, later, such Latin American artists as Antonio Frasconi, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Julio Prieto. The popularity of block prints in literature is still in evidence today, in fact.<sup>5</sup> Here, I will focus on three of the woodblock prints of Julio Prieto, whose work plays an important role – both artistically and politically, as it turns out – in *Al filo del agua*.

### Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 2, “Empathy and the Gaze,” I analyze moments in which the interiority of some of the main characters of *Al filo del agua* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (as well as the manuscript that served as its basis, *Stephen Hero*, written sometime between 1901 and 1906) can be considered as constructions of empathy. I include in this chapter a theoretical discussion of Lacan, a focus on the contribution that Catholicism makes to the internal conflict of the characters, a comparative study of two young men undergoing moments of scotomization (i.e., Stephen Dedalus and Luis Gonzaga Pérez), and finally, an analysis of three woodblock print images reproduced here from the pages of the original (1947) edition of *Al filo* and the 1963 English translation *Al filo*, in order to

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<sup>4</sup> For a brief overview of these artists, see Gabor Peterdi *Great Prints of the World* (231–233).

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Stephanie Hammer’s *How Formal*, as an example of contemporary poetry which is accompanied by block prints by Ann Brantingham. (2014: 40)

show that in this work, the gaze actually shows up doubly, due to the use of two different mediums in the work.

My third (and most comparative) chapter, “Empathy and Overdetermination,” focuses on the technique of overdetermination in both texts, to show how different figures receive widely varying and at times conflicting associations, which work to create a sense of interrelatedness, thus pointing out ways in which characters come to empathize with others through their own subjective associations. Interestingly, in both texts, overdetermination seems to be primarily used for female characters. Thus, my analysis in this chapter will focus on a comparative study of female names beginning with “M” in both texts and, following this, an analysis of Gerty, in which I again utilize a Lacanian approach in order to highlight the ways that the figuration of this character can be seen as problematizing any complete disidentification with her.

My fourth chapter, “Empathy and Agency,” turns from a focus on the texts’ aesthetics (i.e., how the texts construct empathy or use modernist techniques) to, now, the content of the works. Here, I examine different ways in which various characters display empathy towards others, using Bloom as my primary example. I also examine María in *Al filo*, and with both her and Bloom, suggest that regardless of the level of alienation depicted in a work, it would be nearly impossible for a work to create a world entirely devoid of empathy. In the case of Bloom, I focus on how he demonstrates empathy in both an immediate, concrete way in his interactions with others, as well as on a more symbolic level with the imagery of the Ascot Race.

If my third chapter focuses on ways that Joyce and Yáñez greatly expand certain figures or characters via a myriad of associations that they acquire throughout the narrative, my fifth and final chapter, “Haptic Empathy,” demonstrates how *partial* representations (here, in the stripling scene from “Lestrygonians”) in *Ulysses* express Bloom’s initially frustrated attempts to comprehend an other, the blind stripling, which nevertheless eventually turns into an empathetic search to more greatly and intimately understand this other. I rely more on *Ulysses* in this chapter, without a lengthy accompanying analysis of *Al filo*, where the haptic does not figure as heavily. Yáñez has been accused of focusing on the psychological at the expense of more tangible historical factors that contributed to the onset of the Mexican Revolution, such as crippling poverty and land reform<sup>6</sup>; and this significant lacuna helps explain why, in part, the haptic does not feature as prominently in this particular literary text. In my analysis of Bloom, then, I follow Siân E. White’s analysis of the blind stripling, complicating Garrington’s approach to “haptic modernism,” whose careful but incomplete account focuses on an erotics of haptic representation at the expense of recognizing the great extent to which empathetic elements of haptic touch exist. Thus in this final chapter, I show how the tactile (literarily depicted via the partial image) figures into the textual. This, in turn, inspires empathy in Bloom and unsettles critical accounts that focus on the alienation and egoism of modernist characters at the expense of affect in modernist texts. As in the third chapter, I show where a character (in this case, Bloom), demonstrates empathy; but here, the focus is on developing a more nuanced understanding of what empathy is, and to ask,

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<sup>6</sup> See Mark D. Anderson, “Agustín Yáñez’s Total Mexico and the Embodiment of the National Subject.” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 84.1 (2007): 79–99. *CrossRef*. Web. 22 Mar. 2014.

what does Bloom show us about the nature of empathy? One of the conclusions I draw is that empathy is many, many things, and that in a single interaction, these different types of empathy can change instantaneously from one form to another. Empathy is not just feeling the same way that another person does.

## **Empathy and the Gaze**

In this chapter, I ask how specifically modernist texts construct empathy, due to techniques common to the literature of both Europe and Latin American during their respective modernist periods. However, as Siân E. White points out in “‘O, despise not my youth!’: Senses, Sympathy, and an Intimate Aesthetics in *Ulysses*,” “In one view of modernist aesthetics, the esoteric text alienates the reader and thereby allegorizes the characters’ disconnected experiences of modernity” (503). If this is the case, then, how does such an emphasis on alienation simultaneously demonstrate a figuration of empathy?

I attempt to sketch out some possibilities for how this might work, primarily relying on Yáñez’s *Al filo del agua* and Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as examples. Both texts depict a psychologically repressive reality conditioned by a Catholic environment. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely this repression that the characters experience which can cause the texts to tug at the reader, to encourage a sense of empathy with the psychological difficulties depicted in the works. Though as I hope to show, both works do construct empathy, *Al filo* does so much more strongly, in part because of the political project that motivated Yáñez to create this work.

### **Theoretical Background**

There are, of course, many ways in which interiority gets reflected in literature. In modernism, this reflection often occurs through more detailed characterization, and at times, interior monologue, which allows the reader to know directly the thoughts and feelings of a character (such as those of Molly in the final chapter of *Ulysses*). In



addition, certain aspects of a character's interiority are common in modernist texts, both in Europe and Latin America. One example is the focus on alienation and isolation in the portrayal of the interiority of the main characters of the texts: their inability to easily relate to those with whom they are surrounded.

The emphasis in such depictions of interiority in modernism does not lie primarily with empathy, but rather with alienation. However, in such cases, the result is that the depiction of interiority makes it possible for the reader to better understand a character's inner world, since what gets expressed in modernist literature are perspectives that, by virtue of the stress under which the individual is placed, are not normally expressed in real life. Thus the text invites empathy, regardless of whether or not empathy in fact occurs within the reader.

To better understand how this specifically plays out, Lacan's psychoanalytic theory is crucial. His concept of scotomization, for instance, involves the subject's folding in upon his- or herself, and thus is not conducive to real-life expression – and nor, therefore, is it conducive to real-life understanding. Instead, a modernist literary text can provide the reader with this opportunity to better understand and, hopefully, empathize.

Literary works repeatedly present us with necessarily nonegoistic imaginations of emotion-rich situations. They present us with characters' minds, often in great detail and depth. In this way, literary works may foster an inclination to simulate people's minds in that detail. In any case, literary works indicate to us that we can engage in such simulation, thus opening it up as a possibility. Literary works draw our interest toward such simulations, involving our emotion systems in the fuller imagination of other people's subjective experience. More importantly, accomplished storytellers direct our attention to nuances of emotional expression that we might ordinarily overlook. As such, they may serve to train our abilities to attend to and encode matters that we would otherwise have failed to notice: aspects of tone, gesture, phrasing, posture, and

other external manifestations of people's internal experience. (Hogan, *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion* 68)

It is precisely this attention to the “nuances of emotional expression that we might ordinarily overlook,” that serves as the basis for my project. If Patrick Colm Hogan is correct, then literature works in such a way that allows us to grasp to some degree the interior world of a character – an understanding that can develop not only from directly knowing a character's thoughts via interior monologue or else focalized through a narrator, but also from hearing about the exterior of a character, and relating it to their actions in such a way that allows us to reflect upon different possibilities for a given character's inner world.

Other concepts of Lacan's, such as positionality, binaries, *ocelli*, the split between the gaze and eye/look, and annihilation also, by making alienation more graspable, help us to see how modernist texts, for all of their fictionality, nevertheless more obviously reflect of what constituted in the early twentieth century a growing sense of alienation and uncertainty of what constitutes the self rather than the empathy that underlies this alienation.

It is telling that his findings are not only affirmed as relatable to subjects in real life, but that literature likewise seems to confirm the validity of such theory, since again and again various figures are characterized indirectly through thoughts, speech, and action that parallels what psychologists and theorists suggest about the human psyche. Of course, the manner in which these manifestations appear vary widely depending on genre and the text itself, but this only further affirms the universality of the assertions.

According to Lacan when we discover a separation from the mother, we feel a lack because we are “born too soon” which creates an over-dependency on the mother that other animals do not experience (Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master* 48). Because this perceived dependency does not match up with our actual dependency, it extends beyond a physical, short-term dependency into a psychological reality, a habitual form of how the subject views his/herself. As a consequence, once our *actual* dependency upon the mother ends, our perception of “lack” nevertheless remains with us permanently, even though it is an illusion.

Lacan argues that we emerge as a unified "self" sometime after six months of age, which is when we become capable of recognizing ourselves in the mirror. Out of a previously amorphous, incoherent mass, the subject finds in the mirror a unified image, and experiences a *méconnaissance*—a *misidentification*, but a complete identification nonetheless—with this unified image. This identification spawns later identifications with the external world; it begins, for Freud, with the image of the body, and gradually expands outward to the parents, and then the rest of society. Having created these false identifications, the ego becomes dependent on them for a sense of totality and completion; but since these identifications are false, they cannot maintain this sense of completion in any sort of lasting way.

This is why we become vulnerable to “uncanny” moments. Freud’s essay on the subject (1919) points up the fact that we experience a sense of the uncanny when we have an experience of our vision as *limited* (embodied in the metaphor of castration); this becomes exacerbated by a subsequent desire to see more, and which simultaneously

makes the subject vulnerable to an "evil eye," or an *ocellus*. *Ocelli* (plural) are large spots, such as those found on butterfly wings, and which, in a manner of intimidation, provoke the gaze in a subject by producing a sense of vertigo or some sort of disorienting and/or hypnotic effect in the desiring, vulnerable subject. The *ocelli*, Caillois argues, resemble eyes; yet it is perhaps the fact that eyes look like *ocelli* rather than the other way around that eyes possess such power to intimidate (1964).

Just as the *ocelli* can be thought to "exceed" the eye because it exists in the realm of the imagination, so it is the case for the gaze in relation to the eye. Lacan's concept of the gaze is that which "issues from all sides," and produces a scotomizing effect on the subject. To be scotomized means to be blotted out; another term used by Lacan is "annihilation." This is when the subject is temporarily unable to access a point of view, a position. During annihilation, the subject becomes aware of itself as a limited subject, thus returning to that initial feeling of lack, of castration, that it had before it began the process of identification. In Freud's conception of the return of the repressed, what gets repressed is the subject's limited positionality that it (unknowingly) accepted when it identified with its image at the moment of *méconnaissance*.

The gaze is originally provoked by the external environment, yet when it is actually experienced, it is experienced only within the subject: it does not issue from a particular, external source. Furthermore, because the gaze exists only in the mind, Lacan designates an actual, literal subject's look, in reality, as, simply, "look." Silverman makes the important distinction, lacking in Mulvey's work, that as beings that misidentify ourselves with a protective, limited identity, we can only issue looks, but never the gaze

(Silverman 56). While Mulvey equated the look with the gaze, and discussed how it issues from a voyeuristic male subject, Silverman reiterates the extremely important distinction between the two.

Though Lacan draws a sharp distinction between the subject's "I/eye" and the gaze that is experienced psychologically, he nevertheless argues that we do more closely approximate the gaze itself when we dream, and he uses the apt example of a butterfly to support his theory. He asserts, "In a dream, [Choang-tsu] is a butterfly. What does this mean? It means that he sees the butterfly in his reality as gaze" (Lacan 76). If we were to disidentify with our screen completely, if that were possible (as it can be in dreams or hallucinogenic experiences), then we would no longer experience a linear frame of reality, because it is our linear frame that is responsible for reducing the gaze to a singular point at any given time. In fact, we can see this when we remember a dream, and its lack of linearity. This is because our positionality does in fact vacillate during dreams; a sort of *collapsing* of the scopic drive, of the split between gaze and I/eye occurs when dreaming. This collapse is, however, like the nature of dreams, ambiguous, uncertain, and a difficult experience to describe, since a subject's positionality is, at that moment, in flux. And because of this, Choang-tsu is not subject to scotomization: "he is a captive butterfly, but captured by nothing, for, in the dream, he is a butterfly for nobody. It is when he is awake that he is Choang-tsu for others, and is caught in their butterfly net" (Lacan 76). Thus it may precisely be the fact that in modernist works, there is this exaggeration that can take place, that these psychological moments can so strongly stimulate our capacity for situational empathy.

The screen is the host of identifications we have that protect us from the gaze, and is removed when those are identifications pulled out from under us. Under stress, one's positionality merely vacillates; but in extreme conditions, the subject experiences annihilation, and feels reduced to a speck. It is because of the strength of the screen that the subject is able to fend off the feeling of having been castrated; in reality, however, neither the screen nor the feeling of castration is part of the Real. At the level of the Real, the subject is already complete.

### **The Catholic Gaze**

Part of what Yáñez and Joyce's works share is the kind of struggle that their characters undergo as a result of the oppressive force of Catholicism, insofar as it is depicted in *Al filo* and *Ulysses*. This is, of course, due to the fact that both Ireland and Mexico have a significant Catholic population. As Robin William Fiddian points out in "James Joyce and Spanish-American Fiction: A Study of the Origins and Transmission of Literary Influence,"

Horacio mentions the nets, or ties, of language or nationality; he does not mention religion. Yet, for several Spanish-American writers of our century, the essence of Joyce's *persona* and work has been his virulent anti-clericalism and repudiation of Roman rule, as well as his harrowing account of Stephan Dedalus' spiritual torment while on a retreat dedicated to saint Francis Xavier. Octavio Paz argues in a review of Agustín Yáñez's famously somber novel, *Al filo del agua*, that "Joyce fue un ejemplo decisivo para Agustín Yáñez" [Joyce was a decisive influence on Agustín Yáñez] inasmuch as he articulated an instantly recognizable religious and literary sensibility comprising "tradición católica y realismo descarnado: gusto por los fastos del lenguaje y por los laberintos de la conciencia: avidez de los sentidos y sabor de ceniza en los labios"<sup>7</sup> [Catholic

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Octavio Paz, "Novela y provincial: Agustín Yáñez," in *México en la cultura* (4 September 1961), 3.

tradition and brute realism: a taste for the excessiveness of language and the labyrinths of consciousness, a sensual greed and the flavor of ash upon one's lips].<sup>8</sup>" (Fiddian 35)

Fiddian therefore highlights the intense impact that Catholicism had upon both Joyce and Yáñez, and via Paz gestures to a fascinating aesthetic implication in terms of its impact on writing: the repressed desire that Catholicism embeds in the subject, potentially manifests as an insatiable appetite for exploring interiority through the complicated web of language. This can be seen not only in the words used by the authors, but in the (at times) non-linear structure of the narratives as well, which in Joyce's case obviously reaches its height by the time he gets to *Finnegan's Wake*.

The two texts' shared religious background also emphasizes the psychological trauma that Catholicism can generate, specifically with regard to sexual repression. Gerald Martin notes in both Joyce and the major Latin American writers' works Catholicism's influence on "sexual matters—desire and its repression—similar to that displayed in Joyce's own works, with a corresponding freedom, verging at any given moment on the 'scandalous' or the 'blasphemous', of sexual subject matter and language" (Martin 112). This manifests in Yáñez's text aesthetically through what D'Lugo describes as *Al filo*'s "dual energy: one that exerts a repeated stop-and-go rhythm, another that pushes forward with an uncontrollable momentum" ("*Al filo del agua*: Addressing Readership in Mexican Fiction" 860). We can see the former, for instance, in the often dry, short, stilted statements that characterize much of the "*Acto*

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<sup>8</sup> The above translations are mine.

*Preliminarario*” or “Overture” chapter, contrasted with as flowing and emotional a one as “Pedrito,” which occurs much later in the novel as the Mexican Revolution draws nearer.

The difference between the two texts, however, may be that despite the crippling poverty experienced by the majority of the Irish in Joyce’s time, there was even more oppression and consequently less room for one to exercise one’s agency in Mexico during Yáñez’s time. This perhaps explains in part why I include a greater analysis of Yáñez’s work than Joyce’s in this chapter: insofar as Bloom is far more capable of empathy than the villagers of *Al filo*, *Ulysses*’ emphasis rests more on the character of Bloom as a figure of empathy, while in *Al filo*, the villagers bear a greater burden of Catholic repression. In the latter, a strict observance of enforced rules, and an underlying, seething desire keeps the villagers preoccupied, and paradoxically creates a space which renders empathy practically impossible, let alone altruistic action. This is largely the case for the men in *Ulysses*, as well: Bloom, however, does demonstrate a greater capacity for empathy. As will be shown, though, Stephen in *A Portrait* also undergoes a similar oppression to a character in *Al filo*; and thus this text of Joyce’s constructs empathy in a more overt manner than does *Ulysses*.

Lacan, who interestingly enough also had a Catholic upbringing, developed a theory of psychoanalysis that is useful here. His conceptualizations of the gaze and scotomization highlight moments in which the characters from Joyce and Yáñez’s works suffer guilt and repression due to the strong presence that Catholicism maintains throughout *Al filo* and *Portrait*. In particular, these concepts make clear the *reasons* that such highly developed character interiority is found in modernist texts. In the works



being examined here, this lack that characters suffer as a result of a prevalent gaze is intimately bound up with their Catholic identity, and the repression that results block the characters from any strong sense of empathy from another. In addition to those who suffer scotomization under the gaze as individuals, in *Al filo*, it has been widely noted by critics that the village itself acts as a sort of psychological whole. As the narrative moves relatively seamlessly from the lives of one character after another, what remains consistent are the villagers' constant feelings of desire mixed with fear.

Lacan's theory, then, provides a way of understanding how *Al filo* and *Portrait* show Catholicism as an oppressive, stagnating force, though in neither work is this critique presented unambiguously. (As Williams points out, not all critics see *Al filo* as purely "antireligious" [for example, Brushwood; see Williams 1998: 21] , but rather as more of a critique of tyranny in general. Nevertheless, the tyranny present in this work is a Catholic one, and its suppressive forces are expertly expressed by Yáñez). Forever performing for the gaze, and in doing so suppressing their agency, the villagers are depicted by the narrative as intensely suppressed to the point that "[a]quella duda si al meter la llave dentro de la serradura o al ensartar una aguja consintió pensamientos inmundos" (the villagers felt "guilty of impure thoughts when put[ting] a key in the lock or thread[ing] a needle")<sup>9</sup>; furthermore, "[e]sta no sabe si bañándose pecó contra la pereza [. . .] [o]tra no concilió en sueño creyéndose condenada por haber escuchado tras de la ventana una conversación de hombres cuyo significado no comprende ciertamente, pero imagina deshonesto" ("[a]nother was afraid it was a sin to take a bath;

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<sup>9</sup>All translations of *Al filo del agua* are by Ethel Brinton. See *The Edge of the Storm*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963.

another couldn't go to sleep for having overheard outside a window a conversation she didn't understand but imagined to be impure") (Yáñez, *Al filo del agua* 1947: 246; *The Edge of the Storm* [English translation] 1963: 202). The gaze is never actual, but rather imagined. This is what makes it possible for the villagers to feel as though they were sinning at all moments, and this guilt was not registered by any confirmable evidence. Instead, this guilt results from an intense, burdensome, continuous experience of the gaze.

### **Lack of Empathy**

Within *Al filo*, empathy is relatively absent from the novel, with the exception of only a couple of important characters. The text is sometimes rather explicit regarding the oppressive forces of the community, and how those forces issue directly from the Church: the “triple threat” of blood mentioned in the work refers to gossip, eternal souls, and of being forgotten (1963: 260), and these keep such groups as the Daughters of Mary always in check.

But the Daughters of Mary are far from the only ones who suffer this triple threat: instead, they as a collective force symbolize the action of rendering one’s agency inactive due to social, religious, and internalized oppressive forces. At the novel’s outset, the lack of empathy is clear:

*Pueblo seco. Sin árboles, hortalizas ni jardines. Seco hasta para dolerse, sin lágrimas en el llorar. Sin mendicantes o pedigüños gemebundos. El pobre habla al rico lleno de un decoro, de una dignidad, que poco falta para ser altanería. Los cuatro jinetes igualan cualesquier condiciones. Vive cada cual a su modo, para sentirse libre, no sujeto a necesidades o dependencias.*  
--“Este no me quiere de mediero, con otro lo conseguiré.”  
--“Aquél me despreció, aquí la cortaremos.” --“Guárdese su dinero y yo mi gusto.” --“Más vale paz que riqueza.” (1947: 18)

(Barren village, without trees or gardens, not even vegetable patches; so parched that weeping produces no tears. There are no mendicants or whining beggars. The poor man speaks to the rich man with such dignity and self-respect that his attitude falls little short of hauteur. The Four Horsemen are no respecters of persons. Each man orders his life as he thinks best, each man feels free, not dependent on anyone or under any obligation.”

“So-and-so doesn’t want to be my partner; I’ll get someone else.”

“Juan turned down my offer. That’s all right with me.”

“Let him keep his money, and I’ll keep my independence!”

“Peace of mind is better than money.” (1963: 12)

In such an environment, the emphasis is on alienation and an illusion of self-sufficiency, rather than on any sense of community – an extreme depiction, given the close proximity in which everyone in the village lives with one another.

The text also highlights the incredible lack of empathy in the village when Don Timoteo’s wife dies and everyone turns on her, immediately speaking about her behind her back from the moment she is no longer alive (1963: 114). The animosity displayed toward María towards the end emphasizes this cruel attitude even more (1963: 250, 259, 328). Here, an environment devoid of empathy, and the suffering that some of the characters undergo as a result, paradoxically play into the novel’s construction of empathy by virtue of the emphasis placed on deprivation.

“The Northerners” chapter further highlights the village’s incapacity for empathy, to even remotely consider an “outsider’s” perspective at all. In commenting on the absence of a name for the village in *Al filo*, Detjens notes in “What’s in a Name: The Influence of Home in the Naming of the Microcosms of ‘Cien años de soledad, Al filo del agua’, and ‘Pedro Páramo’” that “[t]he isolation of the town parallels the isolation of its people, who are quite suspicious of anything from the ‘outside’ [. . .]” (Detjens 58).

At the outset of the chapter, the villagers make plain with their comments their attitudes towards these outsiders (who eventually, by the end of the text, become Revolutionaries): “*la falta de respeto a la mujer*” (“They’ve no respect for women”) (1947: 163; 1963: 136). However, the text portrays these comments as completely ironic since, for instance, the Northerners recognize that “*aquí tiene tantas mujeres huídas, infelices, que otra suerte les hubiera cantado si hubieran podido obrar conforme a sus sentimientos, sin andarse escondiendo*” (“Many of the women who have run away [from the village], so many unhappy women, might have had a happier lot if they’d been allowed to behave according to their feelings and hadn’t been forced to pretend”) (1947: 165; 1963: 137). It is also interesting to note how frank the parish priest, Father Martínez, is regarding the suppression of the village: so strong is his faith in the rules of the church that he is even willing to explicitly admit to the Northerners

*que la lejanía del pueblo, su difícil comunicación y otras circunstancias que usted irá conociendo y que han formado en los vecinos una segunda naturaleza, los han hecho apáticos y por completo despreocupados en esta clase de asuntos [. . .] cuando se le habla de elecciones o cosa semejante.* (1947: 180)

(that our remoteness here, the difficulties of communication, and other circumstances which you will gradually become familiar with, create a special state of mind in the villagers; it makes them apathetic and quite uninterested in political and social matters [ . . . .]) (1963: 151)

That Father Martínez is able to even consciously recognize, and even promote, the “apathy” that the Catholic milieu enforces in the town, further indicates the extent to which Yáñez seeks to underline the lack of awareness, agency, and empathy that the villagers are capable of in pre-Revolutionary Mexico. In contrast to the repressed, isolated conditions of the villagers, the Northerners represent freedom and political

awareness, a glimpse of what lay beyond the confined world of the village. Yet despite the Northerner's capacity for empathy, they collectively play such a fleeting, minor role within the text as a whole, that they are but a suggestion of a solution: ultimately, the effect of Yáñez's creation of a world that is so extreme in its depravity, is that empathy from elsewhere, outside the texts, becomes one of the only sources of hope.

### **The Students**

While the religious retreats that the men go on in *Al filo* perhaps represent a microcosm of the repression that occurs throughout the village (at the very least, a temporal, masculine counterpart of what the Daughters of Mary perpetually experience), the students, in contrast, have more perspective. They have seen what is beyond the village, and yet they still love those whom they leave when school begins. In line with his political project, Yáñez makes it clear that their presence is a positive one for the village – they are a liminal group. Unlike the Northerners, the students represent a rare group of people who are both from the village, yet who have some perspective on it:

*Muy en los primeros días de septiembre comenzaron a llegar los estudiantes, que venían a vacaciones, y de pronto el duelo del pueblo pudo sofocar sus locuras y hacerlos partícipes del sentimiento común. Poco a poco, las cosas volvieron de revés y la chispa de los estudiantes fue consumiendo la tristeza, el malestar de las gentes. (1947: 296)*

(Most of the students who are away at school begin to come home for the holidays early in September. At first the gloom of the village dampens their high spirits and draws them into the general atmosphere. But little by little the effect is reversed, and student sunshine dispels the gloom of the people.) (1963: 242)

The students act as yet another device that allows Yáñez to highlight the oppression of the ultra-religious village. By presenting a world almost complete in its oppression, and

yet including some exceptions, such as the aforementioned Northerners and here, the students, the narrative can make clear the impact of the repression of the church due to the contrast that is created.

Upon returning from school, the students at first are hit with intense repression. However, Yáñez also expresses the oppression of the church by allowing the inverse to be true: if the village is repressive, then the students, by virtue of the freedom that they elsewhere experience, are not, and can therefore muster enough agency to actually have an impact on the villagers themselves. This latter transformation is important: if Yáñez were attempting only to depict a repressive atmosphere, then including the former scenario, in which the students were impacted by the pessimistic mood of the village, would be enough. By presenting the opposite scenario as well, however, the text shows that there need only be a little perspective introduced into the village for things to change; that change is possible is essential for the potential success of what Yáñez is aspiring to inspire in the reader.

Yáñez also makes use of contrast to further highlight the vivacity that the students and their friends are capable of bestirring:

*Como todos los años vinieron estudiantes fuereños, invitados por los de aquí a pasar una parte de sus vacaciones, y profanaron e hicieron olvidar el luto del pueblo con sus algaradas, travesuras y amoríos. Retachaban en las aceras de puertas y ventanas herméticas los gritos, las pláticas resonantes, las jactancias, los apodos, los chiflidos, las canciones y aun los rasgueos de guitarras, que hacían estremecer las cruces, las piedras, los muros recoletos. (1947: 313)*

(As in the past years, the village students invited friends from other places to spend part of the holidays with them and these profaned and dispelled the atmosphere of mourning in the village with their uproarious behavior, tricks, and love affairs. Outside the doors and the tightly sealed windows, shouts, loud conversations, boasts, nicknames, whistling, could be heard, songs, and even the

scraping of guitars which sent a shudder through the crosses and stones of the conventual walls.) (1963: 259)

Therefore, though the students are able to initially improve the spirits of the people, after they have been there for a while, they began to wear on the people: such mischievousness cannot find a sustainable hold, and the parents begin to worry about their daughters. And for a reason:

*Cuando mañana es la la partida, ya no quieren ver ni hablar: se contentan con ser oídos, con ser sentidos, y golpean los pasos y silban tonadas en las aceras resonantes. Pero los que han cosechado frutos no se resignan a irse sin lograr uno más, que será su viático, y jamás quieren que el último sea el postrero: ¿han hablado alguna noche por la cerradura? pues ahora su fantasía les demanda estrechar la mano, y si esto consiguieron, desean acariciar el brazo, aspirar el ambiente de la mujer que dejan, regatear hasta lo último su presencia. (1947: 314)*

(The day before [the students'] departure they make no attempt to see or talk to the object of their devotion; they are content to be heard, to be felt, and their steps and their songs resound outside the houses. But those who have reaped rewards are unwilling to leave without a further proof of affection to carry away on their journey, and the last proof must be no less than the earlier ones. If they have exchanged words through the keyhole, they now want to hold the hand of the beloved; if they have already done that, they want to caress an arm, breathe the perfume of the beloved presence.) (1963: 260)

### **Stephen Dedalus and Luis Gonzaga Pérez: The Artist's "Look"**

The fact that a) from the subject's point of view, the gaze seems to come from the external world, but is actually generated within the psyche; and b) it constitutes one's identity, means that the subject experiences the gaze in a *personal* way. That the gaze exists only within one's mind therefore plays an important role in the figure of the artist, then, since this implies that art is always already a *particular* manifestation of an omnipresent gaze.

Even though the gaze does not literally issue from any specific subject, however, there can exist “stand-ins” for the gaze. The stand-in for a gaze can occur when a subject attributes the source of a gaze to a particular object. Nevertheless, this is nothing more than a projection. It can be the case, however, that one acts as an “aspiring-towards-the-gaze,” as we shall see in Joyce’s manuscript *Stephen Hero*.

Though the gaze cannot actually come from an individual, *Stephen Hero* tells the tale of a youth who is nevertheless ambitiously aspiring-towards-the-gaze. The narrator is in the third person, but Stephen is focalized throughout; thus, what appear to be other characters’ thoughts are actually Stephen’s attempts to impose his thoughts upon others; he is essentially attempting an omniscient status, unconsciously projecting as he does so.

For instance, towards the end of a party that he attended, “[he] sat down beside one of the daughters and, while admiring the rural comeliness of her features, waited quietly for her first word which, he knew, would destroy his satisfaction.” (Joyce, *Stephen Hero* [SH] 46). The description of what (merely deceptively) appears to be the girl’s interiority follows: “she was impressed by a possible vastness of the unknown, complimented to confer with one who conferred directly with the exceptional” (SH 46).

The midpoint of development between Stephen in *Stephen Hero*, and Stephen as he is portrayed in *Ulysses* occurs in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In this work, the gaze is everywhere present for Stephen and is a typically “religious” gaze, insofar as it is often provoked by guilt or shame. Here Stephen is portrayed as a youth struggling to come to terms with his understanding of where he fits in the political and religious realms. Initially, Stephen tries to find ways of conforming to certain aspects of



his surroundings, and almost succumbs to entering the seminary in an attempt to put an end to his private religious struggle. After hearing a particularly guilt-inducing sermon from Father Arnall, Stephen hesitates just before entering his room: it was dark inside, and at the threshold, "Faces were there; eyes: they waited and watched . . . Murmuring faces waited and watched; murmurous voices filled the dark shell of the cave" (*PA* 147). He calmed himself with words, and soon "covered his face with his hands" –here, he is attempting to use his arms and hands as a physical shield, when what he really needs is a psychological one.

This is where Silverman's article on Fassbinder becomes important, for she highlights Lacan's suggestion that the subject is able to manipulate the gaze via a "screen." While this can be metaphorized as a physical screen, as some sort of shield, what is really being referred to is, of course, a psychological one. Hence the change that occurs by the end of *Portrait*, in which his unsuccessful physical "shield" from the gaze (i.e., his hands), has now transformed into a metaphorical one: "I will not serve in that which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only *arms* I allow myself to use--*silence, exile, and cunning*" (*PA* 268-269, emphasis mine). These "arms" of "silence, exile, and cunning," are what he hopes will effectively protect his future identity.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a journey of the artist who, like the dreaming Choang-tsu, dreams of becoming free of the gaze, of that which brings a sense of instability and vertigo. One of the most well-known quotes in modernist literature,

which comes at the end of the work, emphasizes the idea behind this freedom from the gaze:

--The soul is born [. . .] first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (PA 220)

It is quite possible that Yáñez's inspiration for the character Luis Gonzaga Pérez came largely from Joyce. A very similar struggle can be seen insofar as both were at one point destined to become students in the seminary, and both felt deeply conflicted about their personal spirituality in the face of their doubts of Catholicism as a whole. Luis Gonzaga Pérez is "a former seminarian obsessed with neurotic religious scruples that will lead to eventual dementia under the spiritual direction of the likewise morbidly scrupulous Padre Islas," as Norman Luna puts it ("*Ulysses and Al Filo del Agua: A Textual Comparative Study*," 9). Stephen's highly-charged spiritual tension initially parallels that of Luis' to a large extent, for they both were provoked to question their Catholic upbringing due to the promises that they perceived in the life of an artist. In both instances, as well, this search to become an artist added an elitist aspect to their personalities; Luis egotistically thinks of himself as "*la única gente de razón*" ("the only intellectual in the village") (1947: 106; 1963: 86).

Both of these characters, moreover, often see themselves as bearers of light or truth; however, they usually fail to connect with society enough to have even a remote chance of even communicating with others, let alone communicating some sort of deep truth. Luis does hold within his mind and intentions an ideal community; the problem is that he sees himself as the sole deserving leader of this would-be community: "*Me*

*convertiré en apóstol de las Luces; fomentaré la lectura; organizaré un club de libre discusión; se acabará el aislamiento de las familias por medio de fiestecitas, días de campos, representaciones dramáticas*” (“I’ll become an Apostle of Light; I’ll encourage reading; I’ll organize a club for free discussion; I’ll end the isolation of families with little parties, picnics, plays”) (1947: 107; 1963: 86). The first-person conjugation of all of the verbs (represented by the repetition of “I’ll” in the English translation) is telling here: it is clear who *really* constitutes this romanticized “community” Luis mentally creates. In other words, Luis is paradoxically *not* empathetic in his drive to be so. As much as he wishes to lead this ideal community, he already despises the villagers who would comprise it: “*Diariamente un escándalo, hasta que el pueblo se acostumbre y rompa sus prejuicios . . .*” (“A scandal every day, until the village gets used to it and overcomes its prejudices . . .”) (1947: 107; 1963 :87). He attempts, and fails, at empathy.

Their fickle, vacillating positions, from self-concepts of light-bearers, to the narrators’ portrayals of them as Devils, make it impossible for this connection to exist. For instance, in *Al filo* the narrator associates Luis with the Devil (1963: 87), as he does Micaela. And after a ceremony, the narrator notes that

*El rapto místico iba en aumento. Un impulso mágico lo hacía contraer la cara en gesticulaciones grotescas para ahuyentar los malos pensamientos; con igual propósito retorció los brazos y los dedos en cruces y muecas de conjuro; sentía que el triste cuerpo era morada sucesiva de Dios y del demonio; a lo primero, volvía los ojos en blanco y quedaba en espera de levitación; luego lo poseía la más horrible desesperanza, dándose por condenado en vida.* (1947: 129)

(The mystical rapture was increasing. Superstition made him contort his face in grotesque grimaces to drive away evil thoughts; he twisted his arms and crossed his fingers; he felt that his abject body was the dwelling place now of God, now of the Devil; he rolled his eyes until only the whites showed, and longed to feel

his body rise into the air; he was seized with the most tormenting despair, thinking himself condemned for life.) (1963: 107)

Luis begins to break away from the church because of his increased interest in Leftist politics, and initially sought to bring these two areas to which he was devoted together, before Father Macías made it clear that such a reconciliation would not be tolerable. He felt so spiritually conflicted that he ends up in a mental hospital, mistaking the townswomen for Muses and himself, for a Greek god. Seeing himself as an Apostle, but being portrayed as the Devil, makes clear his fickle nature, and his instability. As the narrator notes, “[e]l grueso de la tormenta desatada por el desaire de ayer iba pasando en el alma veraniega—veleidosa—de Luis” (“The worst of the storm unleashed by yesterday’s rage was passing off in Luis’ shallow, changeable soul”) (1947: 119; 1963: 98). In this sense, he is “*mimado*” or “spoiled” (1947: 119; 1963: 98) like Stephen: others feel ashamed, while he feels proud (1963: 102).

In terms of these two characters, *Portrait* is the more hopeful work, since the narrative suggests, albeit not without ambiguity, that Stephen is able to break free of the society altogether by leaving Ireland; Luis’ breakdown and subsequent transfer to a mental hospital, however, is unambiguously negative, and can be attributed to his lack of options in that particular society.

Even though Luis appears to be about as self-centered as the Stephen of *Stephen Hero*, there are rare moments when is able to gain enough perspective on the village to contextualize it; and at such times, his response is one of humility. However, due to his unstable nature, his ego cannot tolerate more than a momentary lapse of egoist confidence.

## Mercedes

Mercedes, like Luis Gonzaga, and like nearly every other character in *Al filo*, leads the life of a repressed villager. She is the best friend of one of the main characters, Marta, who will be discussed in more detail later. Like Bloom, Mercedes' focus is on a forbidden love letter (though in every other respect, their situations are incredibly different). Yet like Stephen and Luis Gonzaga, she is under the spell of the Catholic gaze (1963: 24-25). As with all of the other young female characters in this work, she suffers from sexual repression. Yáñez draws a parallel between Mercedes and Leonardo, insofar as they both act out their suffering from sexual repression in the same way, sprinkling the room with holy water and crossing themselves three times in response to their distress. And, they both suffer a lack of sleep at night.

In a particularly fragmented sequence, Mercedes' moral conflict arises when she experiences the gaze, here perceived by her as the voice of her lover, Leonardo, whose "voice" she unwittingly internalizes and which battles her conscience. Though it is not, of course, exactly him whom she hears, what she does listen to reflects a supportive view of him, and shows that she is indeed being worn down (1963: 27). Near the end of this sequence, the "two" voices that are nevertheless focalized through Mercedes' perspective alone begin to merge, as "Leonardo" states: "*Pues yo soy ese hombre y ya estoy dentro de ti, lucho dentro de ti, gano terreno en ti, desde que tú piensas en mí*" ("Then I am this man, and I am in your heart, fighting inside you and gaining ground in your heart while you think of me..."). In defense, Mercedes responds (essentially to the "voice" of Leonardo, but actually to her own self), "*No eres más que un pensamiento transitorio*

*excitado por la contrariedad de su audacia y por la medicina que me provoca el insomnio*” (“You’re only a passing thought, evoked by anger, kept alive in my mind by the medicine which won’t let me sleep”) (1947: 36; 1963: 27). It is significant to note that when she finally manages to control her desire by repressing “Leonardo,” Mercedes discusses the influence of books on her: “*No volveré a leer un libro profano; estos pensamientos allí se me han ocurrido, quizás [ . . . ]*” (“I won’t read another novel, that’s where these thoughts come from . . .”) (1947: 37; 1963: 29). Nevertheless, she continues to suffer: “*La obsesión de dormir ahuyentaba las esperanzas del sueño. Ella sola, por su pecado, era la única que sufría el martirio [ . . . ]*” (“Her frantic longing to sleep kept her awake. She, alone, was suffering this punishment for her sins [ . . . ]”) (1947: 38; 1963: 29).

### **Don Dionisio’s Struggle**

In a significant dream sequence, Don Dionisio gropes his way along the dark (1947: 223; 1963: 184;); as he feels his way around, the penitent repeatedly implores him for forgiveness. He may show a lack of empathy in his constant refusal, and yet he has no choice: the figure is not literally there, but his mind will not allow him to turn away. He must listen, out of guilt, out of a perceived, distinctively Catholic gaze. The description of anguish is so intense; every word is difficult for both parties involved: “*Doblemente hijo: en el espíritu y en la consanguinidad; con esto, doblemente traidor*” (“Doubly his son, son of his spirit and son of his blood; so the betrayal is double”) (1947: 224; 1963: 185).

In this passage, the motivating factor for the priest's "empathy" is constructed as a series of "oughts":

*para [un cura de almas] que nada deben significar los apetitos ni las vanidades, los intereses y afectos personales. Debe olvidar el recuerdo, el nombre individual del feligrés. Debe sobreponerse a la repugnancia que le inspira esa oveja, y acariciarla evangélicamente. Debe llenar sus oídos con los miasmas que desprende [ . . . ] (1947: 224)*

(“a priest in charge of souls must not give way to likes and dislikes, to vanity and ambition. He must overcome repugnance for a member of his flock and treat him with pastoral compassion. He must listen to evil outpourings.”) (1963: 185)

Even though “must” is repeated three times in the translation, the original is phrased even more strongly, because the “*debe*” (“should”) begins each sentence, whereas in the translation “must” is put in the middle of a sentence. Furthermore, the translation shortens the original; it lacks the second sentence from the original quoted above, which therefore has an additional “*debe*” and makes the passage even stronger.

Furthermore, the Parish Priest wants to know the fate of the villagers, thus contributing to the depiction of his controlling nature:

*El destino—en marcha—de sus feligreses le parecía el rodar de canicas en aquellos juegos de feria donde un impulso imperceptible modifica las derivaciones por caminos diferentes, embargando la expectación de jugadores y curiosos. La parroquia es un gran plano inclinado en el que van rodando cientos de vidas, con la intervención del albedrío; pero sobre del cual, circunstancias providenciales reparten el acabamiento de la existencia, cuando menos es esperado. Algunas veces quisiera anticipado el desenlace de conflictos que lo preocupan, la resolución de pasiones, la fortuna de virtudes: precipitar el rodado de las canicas. Instantáneamente abjura de esta temeridad, contra la Procidencia; le toca sólo a él influir en el ejercicio del albedrío. ¡Canicas! Doliente pensamiento en estas horas de postración. (1947: 176)*

(The destinies of his parishioners, moving along their appointed paths, made him think of marbles in those games at a Fair where an imperceptible movement sends them shooting down different paths, surprising both players and onlookers. The parish is a huge inclined plan in which hundreds of lives move round, according

to individual wills; but, when least expected, the movement is halted at the Decree of Providence. There are times when Don Dionisio would like to know the fate in store for this one or the other, he would like to know in advance the outcome of conflicts and passions that perturb him, the rewards of virtue. He would like to speed up the movement of the marbles. But he immediately rejects this distrust of Providence; his job is only to influence the exercise of the will. Marbles! A painful thought in these hours of helplessness!) (1963:147)

Moments of the text also make explicit Father Martínez's paradoxical lack of empathy, depicting him instead as a priest who is self-occupied: "*El egoísmo de la consanguinidad, la rebeldía humana se encabrita, y el párroco necesita gran esfuerzo para sobreponerse [. . . ]*" ("Selfish concern for his own flesh and blood, human rebellion, filled him, and he controlled himself only by great effort") (1947: 288; 1963: 328). Yet no sooner do moments such as these arise, that he becomes aware of this fact and begins to judge himself:

*"Lo mismo y más debes sentir y cuidar a todos tus feligreses, libre de preferencias y lazos familiares." El pensamiento se obcecaba: "¡María! ¡María! ¿Qué irá a ser de ti?" Otro pensamiento acude, como espina: "Gabriel!"* (1947: 288)

("You ought to feel the same concern, even stronger, for all your parishioners; you ought to be above having favorites and family ties." His feelings drowned his thoughts: "María! María! What's to become of you?" Another thought pricked like a thorn, "Gabriel!") (1963: 238)

The sacristan feels compassion for Father Martínez, and it is at this time that the major scene of Father Martínez's scotomization is intense (1963: 330). By the end of the novel, Don Dionisio's approaching death signals the church's weakening state.

Therefore, Yáñez creates a different sort of emotional appeal than one typically finds in overtly political works: rather than an appeal to emotion through detailed, gruesome portrayals of violence (that have shock value), he instead depicts his emotional



appeals through portrayals of scotomization. In his extreme stubbornness, Father Martínez is portrayed as an unsympathetic character; and at the same time, he is portrayed with pity, because Yáñez stresses the very earnest suffering that he endures for what he thinks is the “right” way. As Brushwood argues, this is indeed not a simply anti-religious work, but rather one which focuses on the problems of extremism.

### **Father Islas: An Island Unto Himself**

Furthermore, as can be seen in the woodblock prints by Julio Prieto that accompany *Al filo*, the descriptions of the “gaze” within the narrative are reiterated through the woodblock prints that accompany the text, since many of them also contain hidden “eyes.” This serves to further Yáñez’s political project, as the reader becomes exposed to a “double” gaze, in terms of the mediums through which the gaze is expressed.

For instance, the below woodblock print image of Father Islas exemplifies a visual depiction of the gaze. Father Islas, who has more power in the village still, and who is even worse off than Father Martínez, is compared to a tumor (1963: 204); his face to a “graven image” (1963: 205), which can also be seen visually in the image.

Father Islas’ power is largely derived, presumably, from his power of speech: “*los tics vuélvense mortificantes para el auditorio y esa corriente de sufrimiento, cargada por el tartamudeo del Padre, redundo en eficacia predicative*” (“[Father Islas] stuttering communicates a painful current to the audience and doubles the efficacy of his preaching”) (1947: 247; 1963: 203).

As mentioned earlier, the gaze does not issue from an actual person (this Lacan would simply call a “look”), but rather takes on enormous proportions due to the overwhelming nature that the subject experiences it. In the woodcut below, the larger-than-life aspect of the gaze is suggested by the fact that Father Islas is not depicted merely as a person, but in fact merges with the very village itself, and thus corresponds perfectly with the text, following John Brushwood’s assertion that in *Al filo*, “*El ambiente de un lugar –la circunstancia social, política, geográfica—es la material temática de Yáñez*” (“La arquitectura de las novelas de Agustín Yáñez” 438) (“The atmosphere of a place – the social, political, geographical circumstances—is the thematic material of Yáñez”).<sup>10</sup> In the case of this particular work of Yáñez’s, Brushwood names the ambience “*hermetismo eclesiástico del pueblo*” (438) (“ecclesiastical secrecy of the village”).<sup>11</sup> The outline of a hill behind him continues in line with the division between Father Islas’ hair and cap. The animals of the land (here, a rooster, cow, and horse), as well as other images of the village (a clothesline and a key in a lock, the significance of which is elsewhere discussed) crowd around him; below the hill, and merging with his clock, crowd the Daughters of Mary. His larger-than-life head towers, like a hill, over the villagers; rays issue from his head, and his presence is made to seem omnipresent throughout the village; indeed, the way he is depicted both in text and image, is as the very essence of the town itself (1963: 195). This grants his character, essentially, the status of the village, and he becomes the symbol of it: thus, it is significant when, at the end, “*El ataque había matado la fe popular en la santidad del Padre Director*” (“The

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<sup>10</sup> My translation.

<sup>11</sup> My translation

seizure had killed the common belief in the Chaplain's saintliness") (1947: 374; 1963: 309). This image, then, suggests that Father Islas' presence is all-pervasive; he is merged with the whole of the environment. The imaginative, omnipresent gaze is also suggested by the satanic faces with mocking expressions that randomly appear on Father Islas' cloak, whose eerie sneers contrast with the more somber expressions and postures of Daughters of Mary below: they are forever haunted not only by the terrifying threats of the grimacing father, but also by the desire that he erases in his exertion of religious control: Satan will have his day. The faces appear in so many forms, some more dragon-like, others more like menacing clowns. One miniature apparition, perhaps the most traditionally satanic-looking, peers up at a Daughter of Mary who appears to have just discovered it with her candlelight. The extent to which these images merge the physical realm with the psychic one highlights the trauma of the gaze that the villagers experience.



Image 1. Woodblock print by Julio Prieto. Taken from “El Padre Director,” *Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 246.

## Burial of Sins

Furthermore, when Doña Tacha, Don Timoteo's wife, dies, there is a woodcut of her in her coffin (right). In this scene, Ponciano Romo stares down at her; the knots in the wood of the coffin have been turned into eyes, and there are faces with enormous eyes (specifically pupils), formed in Ponciano's hair. As the novel tells us, at this time Ponciano Romo compulsively thinks the same two thoughts, again and again: ("*Si quisiera casarse de vuelta—la mató Damián.*") ([Suppose he marries again? . . . Damián killed her!"]) (1947: 145; 1963: 120). Again and again, these same two questions are woven into the text, in random places, bracketed by parenthesis to highlight the gaze performing its work on her reaction to the death of her mother. The visual counterpart to this in the woodblock manifests as the two faces that are, this time, woven into her hair. Their placement on top of her head, of course, is suggestive of the abovementioned thoughts that are coursing through her mind repeatedly. They are the gaze, manifested specifically in this context as voices of anger within Ponciano Romo's psyche. Furious at the death of her mother, and what she perceives to be the cause and potential effect of this death, she is depicted, not as suffering *from* the gaze, but *as* the gaze: as mentioned above, her eyes are enlarged, much like the large spots that Callois discusses on a butterfly: as the gaze, it is less eyes that usually suggest the portrayal of a gaze (instead, a mere look), but rather large spots. Here, however, her eyes are enlarged far beyond any realistic sort of portrayal, and thus Prieto has successfully created an imaginative, surreal image suggestive of the gaze.



**Image 2. Woodblock print by Julio Prieto. Taken from “El Viejo Lucas Macias,”**

*Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 148.



## Music and Yáñez's Aesthetics of Empathy

For the last woodblock print (below), it is once again not difficult to see the depiction of the gaze. One of the major themes that ties in with the gaze for this image is music. When musicians arrive at the village for the purposes of playing at a festival, it awakens the entire town – which is to say, in this repressed town, it awakens desire – and with it, guilt:

*Cuántas heridas abiertas por el rebullicio de los músicos, por las nunca oídas melodías—amor, ensueño, tristeza dulce, íntimo júbilo, hallazgo de buscadas expresiones—que desvelaron al pueblo y revelaron [. . .] un mundo [. . .], mundo y lenguaje de los deseos cotidianos, hasta entonces oscuros, de pronto iluminados con magnificencia [. . .] (1947: 328)*

(How many wounds were re-opened by the playing and singing of the musicians! Their melodies, never heard before—of love, dreams, tender melancholy, secret joys, emotions long unexpressed—kept people awake and revealed a world [. . .] a world and a language of daily desires, hitherto hidden, but now magnificently illumined . . .) (1963: 269)

Opposite the page on which the woodblock print appears, the narrator states,

*Le herida de Victoria vuelve a abrirse, y la de otras bellas transeúntes, en los corazones de quienes las desearon; vuelven a abrirse las inquietudes por mujeres mal casadas o de sospechosa facilidad; estallan las fístulas de solteras viejas, arrecia el dolor sordo de inminentes “quedadas”, las heridas recientes que causaron los estudiantes vuelven a sangrar; el llanto empapa muchas almohadas; pero no quisiera dejarse de oír esta música, trasunto de felicidades imposibles, también promesa dichosa para los que no han empeñado el corazón y esperan, todavía sin rasguños de desilusiones. No quisieran dejar de oír esta música ni los viejos, que con ella deshacen su edad, ni los jóvenes y adolescentes para quienes levanta castillos, ni los que sufren porque al renovarles los dolores también les inyecta una droga placentera, ni los que desean en vano porque les finge logros, ni los que viven felices porque les confirma su felicidad. No quiere dejar de oírla María, que ha encontrado la voz viva de las ciudades y para quien cuando calle la música el pueblo parecerá más estrecho, más aborrecible. No quiere dejar de oírla Mercedes, a quien promete la reparación del daño que sufre; ni Marta, librada de su pena, recobrado su optimismo; ni Soledad, ni Margarita, ni Rebeca, vindicadas de su vergüenza por esta música, que les trae mensajes de un mundo cuya lengua comenzaron a aprender en las torpezas de los estudiantes; ni Lina,*

*Magdalena y Gertrudis, cuyas lámparas de paciencia se avivan. Lucas Macías no quiere dejar de oír, que nunca supo de modo tan directo y natural el estilo y costumbres de sus héroes remotos: esto es lo que se oye tocar en las calles, lo que silban las gentes al pasar, lo que mueve los corazones a la hora de ahora en Guadalajara, y en México, y en Querétaro y en Puebla, y en Guanajuato, y en San Luis: idioma de la música torpemente imitado por la algazara de los estudiantes. Nadie quiere dejar de oír, si no es el Padre Director y el Señor Cura, temerosos de la sensual sublevación y de los males mayores que pudieran originarse si trataran de acallarla. Se cimbra el virtuoso castillo de las “hermanas” dignatarias que trajeron a estos músicos, a estos indecentes mercenarios, que necesitan estar borrachos y tocar profanidades para estar inspirados; a ese chelista, a ese violinista, a ese tenor, que siendo los más borrachos y cuando más lo están, como ahora, son los mejores. (1947: 328–329)*

(In the hearts that had longed for them, Victoria and other fair visitors became grievous memories again. Anxiety stirred once more over women unhappily married and those suspected of easy virtue. Old maids felt the pangs of loneliness, and the heartache of those on the verge of spinsterhood was sharper. Wounds inflicted by students reopened. Many a pillow was wet with tears [. . .] No one wanted it to stop, unless, perhaps, the Chaplain and the Parish Priest, fearful of the revolt of the sense and the even worse evils likely to result if they interfered. The virtuous castle walls of the Daughters of Mary were shaken. They had brought these musicians, these disreputable mercenaries, who had to be drunk and play profane music to be inspired: this ’cellist, that violinist, that tenor; the drunker they were, as now, the better they played.) (1963: 270)

As may be noted above, the translation of the same exact passage is much shorter than the original. A great deal of text has been cut out in the translation, which seriously detracts from many of the aesthetic techniques that Yáñez implemented. The original passage builds and builds to a crescendo, performing the musicality that is simultaneously being discussed in the text. For instance, in shortening the original, the translation leaves out the repetition of the phrase “*no quiere dejar de oír*” (“she/he didn’t want to stop listening”) and the variations on it (“*no quieren dejar de oír*”), which is repeated six times. Not only is the phrase repeated again and again, but in addition, more and more individuals are listed who all likewise did not want to stop listening to the



music. Furthermore, this passage is part of a larger passage all contained in one paragraph, while Brinton's translation breaks the passage up into shorter paragraphs, thus greatly reducing the intensity of the passage. He also leaves out the listing of places that contained those whose hearts had been moved by the music. All of these techniques contained in the original add a great depth and intensity lacking in the translation.

In the woodcut that corresponds with this passage, we can see from whence this gaze arises, depicted in the image as, again, two huge, ominous eyes that watch over the musicians, but in particular, a female figure. Importantly, also on the page across from the image, nearly every major and minor female characters' experience of the music is mentioned, suggesting that the figure is not necessarily meant to represent one particular female character, but rather all of them, to strengthen the sense of the gaze that the music provoked in all of them.

On the other hand, after the experience was over, the narrative focuses on María's response to the music. In a significant passage, we have the suggestion of an utter inability of any of the characters to experience empathy, from her perspective:

*Con esta experiencia, María puede formular y formular categóricamente su antes confusa idea—hecho hoy convicción—de que nadie, nunca, en este pueblo ha sentido pasión de amor—embeleso y locura, entrega sin reservas dolorosa y dichosa, contra todos los miedos y al impulse de todos los riesgos—; el amor hercio que inflama las páginas de los libros por ella consumidos, consumida por ellos. No, nadie, ni Micaela su amiga, trivial coqueta; ni Luis Gonzaga, simulador neurasténico; ni las raptadas en oscuras noches, vencidas por la curiosidad fatalista; ni las que se casan contra viento y marea, para luego caer en la rutina de las costumbres maritales; ni Mercedes, víctima de un vulgar amor propio; ni Damián, fuerza bruta que sólo rompe obstáculos por orgullo; ni las heroínas fabulosas de Lucas Macías, mediocres vividoras; ni Soledad, ni Margarita, ni Rebeca, ni Lina, ni Magdalena, ni Gertrudis, ni Eustolia, sólo ávidas de sensaciones desconocidas y ansiosas de casarse por mero instinto, sin el profundo, desinteresado e irresistible querer de la pasión de amor. Nadie, no,*

*ni ella misma, triste mujer amargada, fracasada, desesperanzada, incapaz de ser tocada por el alto deseo, entrevisto esta noche a través de las bajas bandadas de los deseos populares; ¡cuán distinto uno y otros! ¡cuán lejos aquél de lo sórdido, de lo mezquino, de lo transitorio!* (1947: 330)

(The experience enabled María to formulate, and formulate categorically, the idea that she had earlier developed only vaguely. She was now firmly convinced that no one in the village had ever felt the passion of love—ecstasy and madness, complete surrender, both painful and happy, braving all fears and daring all risks—the heroic love that filled the books she devoured, and by which she was devoured. No, no one, neither Micaela, her friend, a common coquette, nor Luis Gonzaga with his neurasthenic pretenses, nor the girls carried off on dark nights, victims of fatal curiosity, nor those who get married come hell or high water only to fall into the routine of wedded life, nor Mercedes, the victim of self-righteousness, nor Damián with his brute strength breaking down obstacles out of sheer pride, nor the heroines of Lucas Macías' stories, only have-alive; nor Soledad, nor Rebeca, nor Lina, nor Margarita, nor Magdalena, nor Gertrudis, nor Eustolia, eager only for new sensations and instinctively anxious to get married but lacking the unselfish and irresistible love that marks the true passion. No one, no, not even she, sad, bitter, a failure, without hope, incapable of being moved by the lofty passion glimpsed that night in the multitude of common desires let loose in the village. How different the two loves were, how different this ideal of hers from everything sordid, mean, and transitory!) (1963: 272)

It is apparent that from María's perspective, the villagers are hardly capable of anything but desire. The implication that the villagers know only desire hardly suggests that they are really in a position to be capable of any sort of deep or lasting empathy with another. The fact that María begins to understand the limitations of others, however, suggests that she is gaining increasing perspective on her community, and with it, a greater capacity for such emotions as empathy. This is further evidenced by the fact that she ultimately leaves, as will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter.



**Image 3.** Woodblock print by Julio Prieto. Taken from “Pedrito,” *Al filo del agua* (1947), p. 328.

## **Empathy and Overdetermination**

It is not only through the depiction of the characters' inner thoughts that the reader has the potential to experience empathy; it is also through the modernist technique of overdetermination. From one perspective, both Joyce and Yáñez use overdetermination to emphasize figurations, rather than characters. From another viewpoint, however, tying myriad associations to a different character highlights that character's ability to internalize and embody very different perspectives. In fact, Joyce takes this to the extreme in the instance of Gerty (from *Ulysses*' "Nausicaa" chapter), whose associations are not just disparate, but at times diametrically opposed.

But what is overdetermination, exactly? Freud speaks of it, in one case, during a dream in which he was writing a monograph on a botanical plant. Of this dream, he says,

This first examination suggests that the elements 'botanical' and 'monograph' have been admitted into the dream because they are able to show the widest range of contacts with the most dream-thoughts, that is, they represent *points of intersection* where a great number of the dream-thoughts converge; and because they have *many meanings* with respect to the interpretation of the dream. The fact at the basis of this explanation can also be put differently: each element of the dream-content turns out to be *over-determined*, to be represented many times and in many ways in the dream-thoughts" (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 216).

Despite that Freud uses the term overdetermination here to describe elements of a dream, I use it in the same way in this chapter: to describe elements in *Ulysses* and *Al filo* that reappear again and again, recast in new ways each time. And, at times, these elements "pick up" or are tied to many new associations precisely during literary depictions of dream sequences.

***Mujeres, Marys, and Mothers: The Incorporation of Joyce's female as Musa-Musica/Mater-Materia into Yáñez's Daughters of Mary***

In both *Al filo* and *Ulysses*, we see an enormous prevalence of “M” names: Mary, Martha, Molly and Milly in *Ulysses*; and María, Marta, Micaela, and Mercedes in *Al filo*. The married, the mothers, the Daughters of Mary, the “*mujeres*” in general (“women”) — in these texts, they all bear strong associations with religious/mythological figures, and first and foremost, as might be expected, the Virgin Mary. And Robert Gerald puts it in “Joyce and Spanish American Fiction,” “Joyce’s remarkable oscillation between a view of the female as Musa-Musica or as Mater-Materia, deriving from his Irish catholic-agrarian heritage [ . . . ] is one that has been emulated repeatedly in Latin American up to the present, for reasons that are self-evident” (Martin 109).

While the women of *Ulysses* are more developed as individuals, the “*mujeres*” of *Al filo* act more as a collective force. This similarity between them is so striking, and Joyce was such a strong influence on Yáñez, that it is entirely possible that it is not coincidence that both include a considerable number of female characters whose names begin with “M,” and who all have relatively fluid boundaries that cause them to bleed into each other at times. This blending has the effect of enriching and layering their significance in the context of the story as a whole. Regardless, due to their fluid nature, these female figures invite empathy insofar as they are made more realistic through their conflicting and at times contradictory associations, rather than if they were constructed as more consistent, but one-dimensional, ciphers.

Drawing on Martin's work, Fiddian furthers this idea:

Elaborating on Professor Martin's scheme, we may identify two other female archetypes—the consoling virgin and the adultress-betrayer—whose cultural and historical resonances are equally strong both in Ireland and some parts of Spanish America [. . .] According to Bonnie Kime Scott, Joyce's life coincided with a period of fervent Mariology in Ireland which must have exerted a strong influence on his attitude to women. Thus, Joyce [. . .] effectively mediated popular sensibility, though not without imprinting his own stamp on a malleable raw material. From the point of view of our theme, the historical importance of *Mariolatría* throughout Latin America and its crucial role in the formation of Mexican national consciousness are singularly noteworthy. (25–26)

### ***Ulysses: The Molding of Mary, Martha, Molly and Milly***

Nearly every female character in *Ulysses* who has an even relatively important role has a name that begins with “M.” Even Gerty, whose name obviously does not start with “M,” has a last name that does (MacDowell). These characters have an a clear sexual significance that begins simply enough; but by means of the layering of symbolism of the religious figures of the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Martha onto the characters of Martha, Molly, and Milly, as well as the way in which these female characters interact with each other, serve to greatly complicate notions of what constitutes virginity, sexual purity, promiscuity, and love. Frank Budgen, for instance (writing in 1960), sees Marion (Bloom's wife Molly) as “acquir[ing] new value for [Bloom] through the fact that her flesh is desirable to other men” because “[h]er image is for him a bond of union with menfolk, as with the average man is the cigarette case and ‘What'll you have to drink?’” (Budgen 146). And as Luke Gibbons tells us in “Spaces of Time through Times of Space: Joyce, Ireland, and Modernity,” “Blooms desire to pay a surprise visit to his daughter Milly perhaps is motivated by his worries about her sexual

precocity” and that “Bloom’s anxieties about Milly are enmeshed with his deep distress over his wife’s adultery with Blazes Boylan” (Gibbons 75).

The historical figures of the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Martha are either referenced directly or at least evoked in relation to these female characters, furthering these female figures’ religious significance. Gifford in *Ulysses Annotated* tells us,

5.289-91 . . . Marta, Mary . . . that picture . . . He is sitting . . . would listen - Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus and friends of Jesus (the "he" who is "sitting in their house, talking"), in the painting Bloom recalls having seen. (*Christ at the House of Martha and Mary* by Peter Paul Reubens [1577-1640] was hanging in Dublin's National Gallery, but it is not the picture Bloom has in mind.) 'The other one' (5.295 [79:13]) is Martha, whose spirit was 'cumbered about with much serving . . . careful and troubled about many things.' Martha complained about the indolence of her sister Mary--'She' (5.298 [79:17]). 'Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.' Jesus reproves Martha: 'Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her' (Luke 10:38-42). Medieval and Renaissance tradition confused Mary, Lazarus's sister, with Mary Magdalene, the prostitute whom Jesus cures of evil spirits; hence Bloom's thoughts, 'the two sluts in the Coombe would listen,' is appropriate. (Gifford and Seidman 90)

Throughout *Ulysses*, numerous phrases, references, and fragmented memories reappear via Bloom’s consciousness. Both the phrase “O, Mairy lost the string of her” (1986: 229, 11.870) and the reference “*The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*”<sup>12</sup> (1986: 193, 584) simultaneously revolve around some form of Mary (i.e., “Mairy” and “Maria”) or Martha (see Gifford’s *Annotated* quote above)<sup>13</sup>, and relate to women with whom Bloom is close (Martha [the woman from whom Bloom is soliciting letters], his wife Molly, and/or his daughter Milly). It is therefore important to recognize, then, that the religious figures of Mary and Martha, and the characters Molly and Milly are interrelated throughout

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<sup>12</sup> For further reference see *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* (McHugh 177).

<sup>13</sup> See *Finnegan’s Wake* (Joyce 166-167 and 440-441).



*Ulysses*, and that this is particular form of overdetermination occurs as well in Yáñez, who was likely introduced to this technique primarily through Joyce.

### **The Merging of María, Marta, Mercedes and Micaela in *Al filo***

*Al filo*, likewise, contains female characters who all but with one exception (Victoria) contain names beginning with the letter “M.” These characters are also, like in *Ulysses*, associated with various religious and mythological figures, thereby preventing any complete disidentification of the reader with them.

As one critic has it, in *Al filo del agua*, the villagers are as a whole treated more like one individual, a single psyche.<sup>14</sup> We can already see this in the beginning of the text, with *Al filo*’s famous “*Acto Preliminar*” (“Preliminary Act), in which the female characters, far from being introduced individually, are referred to as a collective:

The Daughters of Mary, to a great extent, in fact almost exclusively, shape the character of the village, exercising a rigid discipline over the dress, movements, speech, thoughts, and feelings of the young girls, bringing them up in a conventual existence that turns the village itself into a kind of convent. Any girl reaching the age of fifteen without belonging to the Association of the black dress and blue ribbon with its silver medal, the black dress with high neck and long sleeves, its skirt reaching to the ankles, is regarded with grave disapproval. In this Association, all vie with one another in jealous vigilance, and expulsion from it constitutes a scandalous blot on the reputation that follows one through life. (1963: 12-13)

The Virgin Mary is mentioned at the outset, and sets the chapter up for an interconnecting weave of meaning in relation to her. More specifically, the piety that the Virgin Mary represents is recreated through these “*Hijas de María*” (“Daughters of

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<sup>14</sup> See Elaine Haddad. “The Structure of ‘Al Filo Del Agua,’” *Hispania* 47.3 (1964): 522-529. JSTOR. Web.

Mary”); but these women earn this association through this piety being forced upon them by the religious demands of the parochial village, emphasized by the use of such phrases as “*rígida disciplina*” (“rigid discipline”) and the threat of scandal that looms over these women. “An aura of death,” notes Floyd Merrell in “Structure and Restructuration in *Al filo del agua*,” “pervades the novel from the beginning with the dominant image of the village women in mourning” (51).

The initial introduction of the females as a collective de-emphasizes their individuality, a portrayal that continues even after “specific” female characters are introduced. These females’ lack of individuality and thereby autonomy is underscored by the fact that *every single* relatively important, young female character from the village has a name that begins with an “M”: María, Marta, Micaela, and Mercedes. By virtue of the fact that they are all the Daughters of Mary, it is possible that the initial “M” that begins all of their names functions as a sort of mark of oppression impressed upon the young girls of the village, a labeling which further reiterates the degree to which they have been robbed of agency. The significance of the initial letter of their names is perhaps reiterated through the use of contrast, as the only relatively important female in the work who does not bear an “M” name, Victoria, is not from the village at all. Rather, she comes from the city to merely visit the village. A seductive and strong character, she represents a mature and politically progressive figure who attempts to “rescue” the young bell-ringer Gabriel from the confines of the oppressive village.

As Doudoroff notes in “Tensions and Triangles in *Al filo del agua*” that María and Marta “appear at first as foils to the characterization of Merceditas and Micaela, but the

relationship among the four is eventually reversed” (Doudoroff 3). In the chapter “Marta y María” we find out that the strict parish priest, Father Martínez, is their uncle, and that Marta and María had been living with him practically since they were babies (1963: 63). Marta is 27 and described as “*pálida, esbelta, la cara ovalada [. . .] el andar silencioso y lenta la voz*” (“pale and thin, with an oval face [. . .]; her step is quiet and her voice low”). In almost perfect contrast to her older sister, and therefore her obvious foil, 21-year-old María is just the opposite: radiant, playful, and “*impaciente*” (“impatient”) (1947: 79; 1963: 64). She thirsts for travel, and will ultimately come to symbolize a figure of the Revolution. She at one point accused Marta of destroying her dreams of travel and as a result tries to destroying Marta’s dreams of a child, which causes Marta to say “*A veces pareces malvada*” (“Sometimes you seem to be downright wicked!”) (1947: 98; 1963: 79). María is also good friends with Micaela, envying the latter’s travel to Mexico City.

The parallels between Marta and Virgin Mary well established here, which is interesting insofar as María, who shares a name with Mary, least resembles her. Despite the quote from the Gifford, which points to the association of both Marta and Mary with “sluts,” in *Al filo*, it is Marta who is most aligned in this work with the Virgin Mary. She longs, not for romantic love, but for a child, and thus has clearly internalized the ideal of the Virgin Mary. At one point in the story, the narrator interjects the story with the commentary, “*(Marta del buen consejo, ¿dónde has aprendido la sabiduría de la vida? ¿cuál fué la escuela de tu prudencia, Marta sagaz, doncella zahorí?)*” and “*(Y tú, Marta, ¿por qué tienes los ojos tristes, la cara en penumbra, madre inviolada?)*”; (“[Marta of

the good advice, where have you learned the wisdom of life? In what school did you learn prudence, wise Marta, Marta intuitively wise?])” and (“[And you, Marta? Why are your eyes sad and your face clouded, mother undefiled?]” (1947: 95; 1963: 76).

María (“Mary” in English), on the other hand, is doubly associated with the Virgin Mary and with Mary Magdalene due to the fact that she is at once the niece of the parish priest and forcibly shaped by the Daughters of Mary. At the same time, her sense of adventure and her greater lack of piety in comparison with her sister link her as well with transgression and sexuality. As Luna puts it, “In contrast to María, the youthful rebel, Marta is modeled after the archetype of the Virgin Mother, as she reflects on the mystery of maternity” (8).

Ironically, the Parish Priest favors María, the less pious of his nieces:

*María y Marta son, en efecto, las cuerdas sensibles del Viejo Cura: la violencia con que trata de disimular el cariño que les profesa es el mejor testimonio de la profundidad con que las quiere. En lo íntimo, la predilecta es María, que vino a su amparo pequeña, de unos cuantos meses, a quien enseñó a hablar, a rezar, a leer (qué íntima ternura cuando lo recuerda); quizá también por su genio difícil que tan frecuentes dolores de cabeza le proporciona. Marta es la sobrina de las confianzas: lleva las cuentas de la casa y de la parroquia, guarda y distribuye el dinero, es el ama del hogar. ¿Qué haría humanamente si le faltaran aquellos retoños de su sangre, casi criaturas suyas, qué haría sin ellas el anciano? (1947: 81)*

(María and Marta are, indeed, his one vulnerable spot; the effort he makes to hide his fondness for them is the best proof of the depth of his love. In his heart of hearts, his favorite is María, who came into his care when she was a wee thing, only a few months old, and whom he taught to pray (with what tender emotion he remembers!); maybe he even prefers her because of her waywardness, which gives him so much anxiety. Marta is a niece to depend upon; she keeps the accounts of the household and the parish, looks after the money and hands it out; she is the homemaker. What would he do, humanly speaking, if it were not for these girls, his own flesh and blood, almost his own children, what would the old man do without them?) (1963: 66)

Yáñez makes a concerted effort to paint María in a more favorable light, but as one of the primary enforcers of the religious oppression in the villager, the parish priest's favoritism in this case comes across as hypocrisy. Not surprisingly, however, Martínez seeks to make María into something more "stable" and reliable, as Marta is. But of course, were he ever to succeed, he paradoxically would kill in her the very thing he loves about her. This quote also highlights his dependency on them, which subtly foreshadows his future loss of control. We also see parallels drawn between Marta and Mercedes on the one hand, and María and Micaela on the other. The two latter could perhaps be seen as exaggerations of the former; for instance Mercedes joins the Daughters of Mary and quits reading books; María wishes to travel, but Micaela actually does. The characterization of Mercedes and Micaela as a pair of more extreme opposites than Marta and María is further emphasized when Mercedes claims, "*Y por más que quisiera, no puedo dejar de sentir esto como envidia, ganas de llorar, de pelear, de morirme, casi como odio, y hasta ganas de ser igual que Micaela. ¡No!, eso no, ¡Dios no lo permita! Marta, ¿por qué habrá mujeres así?*" ("No matter how hard I try, I can't stop feeling this way, jealous, ready to cry, to fight, to die, full of hate—almost ready to be like Micaela. No, not like her, God forbid! Marta, why do you suppose there are women like her?") (1947: 94; 1963: 75). In a sense, María and Micaela can be seen as disowned parts of Marta and Mercedes.

In a significant dream sequence (see 1963: 184-186), the Parish Priest, Don Dionisio, "wakes up" to find a figure before him whom he cannot place. He is unaware from one moment to the next whom he sees. Initially, he believes he is seeing one of his

nieces. Then he thinks he is seeing his son, Damián. But when the figure speaks, it is actually Gabriel. Gabriel proceeds to claim that it was Marta, he loved; María, he wanted; Micaela, he actually slept with. María, Marta, and Micaela continue to blur together as Gabriel continues, “*Mi pecado es mayor, porque deseo a todas las mujeres del pueblo, sin distinción de estado*” (“It is my sin to desire all the women in the village—Daughters of Mary, married women, it’s all the same”) (1947: 224; 1963: 185). This desire, however, soon turns to anger: “*Usted tiene la culpa, Señor Cura. Primero, porque nunca me ha querido revelar quién es mi madre*” (“It’s your fault, Father. You would never tell me the name of my mother”) (1947: 224; 1963: 185). Gabriel blames the priest, for not telling him his mother’s name, and for not being allowed to be a brother to Marta and María.

Eventually, Don Dionisio’s dreams cause him to think, “*¿Por qué Marta, María, y Micaela se confundían en una y la misma?*” (“Why were Marta, María, and Micaela all mixed up together in one person?”) (1947: 258; 1963: 212). While Yáñez and Joyce both create overdetermined figures, this quote also highlights their difference in writing style: even within a character’s thoughts (as opposed to the narrator’s), Joyce is never so explicit as is Yáñez: Yáñez’s style contains undertones of high contrast, which well fit in with the woodblock prints that accompany his work; Joyce, on the other hand, is always working away at his subject matter in a more implicit and subtle manner. Or, as Michael H. Begnal in *Joyce and the City: the Significance of Place* puts it,

In Joyce, real meaning arises from what is not being said, as well as from the full comic implication of what is stated. His is a style from which an intuition of the truth arises either from reading between the lines, rather than having it expressly stated, or reading bombast intentionally misstated in such a way as to indicate its

alternative meaning [i.e., the use of irony] [. . .] In this view, *Ulysses* becomes a 'profound tribute' to Ireland and also 'a huge joke.'" (Bernal 768-769)

Along the same lines, O'Neill argues in "Interior Monologue in *Al filo del agua*" that "[Yáñez] is more concerned with the feelings of the characters, that is, with the content of their minds, than with the simulation of the psychic processes, although both aspects are important to the psychological novelist" (O'Neill 450). Indeed, it is this more conceptual focus in Yáñez that causes their ways of representing overdetermination to be very different in each work.

As with the Parish Priest, Gabriel is likewise tortured by dreams in which these female characters blend together; but in his case, it is between María and Victoria instead (1963: 215). Victoria is a relative of one of the villagers, who comes to visit. Her beauty and maturity stir great desire among the village men. In this case, the purpose that his having desirous dreams in which Victoria and María repeatedly get confused with each other, is not to underline, as in the above examples, the fundamental oppression that the young female villagers are communally subject to, but rather to highlight Victoria and María as liberating forces that he, as an artist, is drawn towards.

In conclusion, we can see that these works contain moments of the gaze, in which the subject's positionality vacillates and alerts us to a given character's confrontation with the "monstrosity" of their unconscious. Simultaneously, it is precisely the fact that these moments of alienation are depicted by the characters' various associations with symbolic binaries that the texts reveals an opportunity for a connection to take place in this invisible (because self-contained) psychologically distressing moment paradoxically made visible by literature (and woodcuts).

### The Overdetermined Figure of Gerty MacDowell

As with the other “M” females in *Ulysses* and *Al filo*, Gerty MacDowell, who dominates *Ulysses*’ “Nausicaa” chapter, is also an overdetermined character, saturated with meaning (though in this case, obviously, it is her last name that begins with “M” rather than her first, as is the case with the other females). Like these other characters, many of the associations she bears are religious and mythological, with the Virgin Mary again functioning as one of the prime associations. That Gerty becomes tied to figures often bearing opposing significances, moreover, allows her to act as a primary vehicle for empathy: by subverting a number of symbolic binaries associated with her, she has the potential to frustrate readers’ attempts to fully disidentify with her.

While literary theorist Abbie Garrington focuses on Gerty’s statue-like portrayal in *Haptic Modernism*, (suggesting a static nature that lends itself to auto-eroticism, as she well argues), another side can be seen to her as well: her all-too-fluid, dynamic nature that marks her as a transitional figure and which grounds the narrative and makes her more relatable, far more relatable on a basic human level than her lofty status as a statuesque Venus.

A point of contestation with Garrington is her subtle dismissal of the chapter as a whole, for reasons related to Gerty’s statue-like portrayal. Primarily through its “ekphrastic” aesthetic (i.e., the depiction of Gerty as work of art, or an object for aesthetic appreciation) as it renders, according to Garrington,

Both Gerty and Bloom, along with their creator, demonstrate a preoccupation with the beautiful curves of the statue- form, and both are concerned to have Gerty cast in stone. With this in mind, we can consider ‘Nausicaa’ to be the most conspicuously ekphrastic of the episodes of *Ulysses*, in that it provides, through



Bloom's eyes, a detailed description of (a young woman as) a work of art. Further, the episode follows the convention by which ekphrasis forms a pause in the narrative in order to make room for extended aesthetic contemplation, since Bloom's self-touching is a time-wasting indulgence, confounded when Cissy asks for the hour (Joyce 2008: 345). (Garrington, *Haptic Modernism* 82)<sup>15</sup>

This may be true of Bloom, but the narrative takes us through a series of symbols that ultimately subvert any simple interpretation of who Gerty is. Despite Garrington's description of Gerty as "largely static" (1963: 81), as will be seen, Gerty is associated with a number of figures that symbolically represent different aspects of herself, and portray her as being in a transitional state.

"Nausicaa" begins with an embrace. Upon being introduced, Gerty is "lost in thought, gazing far away into the distance" (1986: 285, 13.80) and later described as "gaz[ing] out towards the distant sea" (1986: 293, 13.406) while contemplating romanticized fantasies of a future husband. As Stuart Gilbert asserts,

The symbol of this episode is *Virgin* and one of its 'colours' is *blue*, and it is fitting that the romance-without-words of Gerty MacDowell and Mr Bloom should develop under the patronage of Mary, Star of the Sea, moist realm no longer Neptunes. For Star has vanquished Trident, our Lady of the Sacred Heart the Shaker of the Earth. Even in Corfu, Nausicaa's isle, the Poseideion has crumbled to dust and on its side there stands a shrine dedicated to Saint Nicholas, patron of the seafaring men. (*James Joyce's Ulysses* 287–288)

The sunset's last light appears first on the promontory, then "Sandymount Shore and, last but not least, on the quiet church whence there streamed forth at times upon the stillness the voice of prayer to her who is in her pure radiance a beacon ever to the stormtossed heart of man, Mary, star of the sea" (1986: 284, 13.5–8). And, as in *Al filo*

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<sup>15</sup> For more on Joyce's depictions of the aestheticized female, the woman as a work of art, see The Woman as *objet d'art* in Margot Norris' "Who Killed Julia Morkan?" chapter, from *Joyce's Web*. U of Texas Press, 1992.

*del agua*, the Virgin Mary is already presented within the first paragraph of the chapter. This of course sets up an association with Gerty, which is developed more as the chapter unfolds. Simultaneously, this line links Gerty with Penelope, who in *The Odyssey* is forever gazing into the sea, lost in thoughts of her husband Odysseus. Bloom, as the “Odysseus” of *Ulysses*, will eventually be noticed and provide the motivating action for the chapter, and it is therefore he for whom Gerty is the “beacon ever to the stormtossed heart of man.” In particular, the “voice of prayer to her” is ironically foreshadowed, as will be seen (1986: 284, 13.7). According to Gifford and Seidman’s *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce’s Ulysses*,

13.6-8 . . . the quiet church . . . Mary, star of the sea – The Roman Catholic Church of Mary, Star of the Sea, off Leahy’s Terrace near Sandymount Strand, the Very Reverend John O’Hanlon, canon, parish priest. This is Dignam’s parish church, where a temperance retreat is in progress in the course of this episode. “Star of the Sea” (Stella Maris) is an appellation of the Virgin Mary . . . (385)

There is an initial sense (but only a fleeting one) of cohesion among "the three girl friends . . . seated on the rocks, enjoying the evening scene and the air which was fresh but not too chilly" (1986: 284, 13.9–10). Conflict, however, will soon disrupt this harmonious scene due to a “slight altercation” between the two boys that the girls are watching over: Tommy wants to improve upon what becomes the "apple of discord" – Jacky's castle – and they soon are in a fight. The real apple of discord however, the round ball that the twins turn to next as their toy, is responsible for animating the competition for the attention of Bloom that occurs later amongst the girls. But for now, the conflict continues to build up slowly, and Gerty’s elision of the gaze is made clear. Edy states that Gerty was Tommy's sweetheart, with the clear intention of suggesting to

Gerty that her "sweetheart" Reggie was no longer interested in her (1986: 287, 13.129). Her "downcast eyes" in response to Edy's comment constitutes a determination to evade the discomfort this comment provoked, further evidenced by her attribution of Reggie's recent absence to a mere "lover's quarrel," and deciding that Edy's nose was just "out of joint" (1986: 287, 13.130). Among this and other telltale signs, Gerty's outsider status in the group is suggested by the fact that she is belatedly, and separately, introduced from the other girls with the question, "But who was Gerty?" (1986: 285, 13.78).

Having thus made clear Gerty's elision of the gaze, the narrative treats her more narcissistic moments and also implies the source of this narcissism. Thus, the narrative turns to a description of the outfit Gerty had put together, and "what joy was hers when she tried it on then, smiling at the lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her!" (1986: 287, 13.161–162). The repetition of the signifier of the mirror, which again ties in with the significance of the mirror in "Snow White," makes clear that Gerty's sense of lack drives her to intensely identify with an ideal, external image of herself. This sense of lack (largely instigated by the fact of her lame leg, as later becomes clear to the reader) is for Lacan "some self-mutilation induced by the very approach of the real" (*FFC* 83) that in turn provokes desire for an *object a*. For Gerty, this *object a* is not the united mother and child, but rather the united husband and wife: still wounded by Edy's facetious comment, unsettled by the very real gaze that it provoked, Gerty immediately turn to fantasies of an ideal husband, which tellingly contain no trace of a Reggie-esque "prince charming" (1986: 288, 13.209), but rather idealize a "manly man with a strong quiet face who had not found his ideal, perhaps his hair slightly flecked with grey, and

who would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with a long long kiss. It would be like heaven" (1986: 288, 13.210–214). There is a page-long, full description of her domestic fantasy (1986: 289).

Almost prophetically, Bloom's character soon appears while Gerty is in the midst of her ideal husband-fantasies once the more prominent "apple of discord" (the ball) is thrown along the sand for Tommy to play with, and thus he immediately assumes a concretized *object a* for Gerty, and for the other girls too, all of whom will compete for his attention. The *object a* does not represent something genuinely wanted, but rather is the object of an insincere desire born from envy; Cissy and Edy only want Bloom's attention to be able to hold it over Gerty, and Gerty clearly just wants it because she is seeking an emotional escape through Bloom, still genuinely hurt as she is by Reggie's rejection which he unconsciously seems to register; her desire for Bloom, then, is arbitrary. Her temporary dependence upon Bloom therefore explains why Gerty, provoked by the gaze yet again, "flush[es] a deep rosy red" (1986: 290, 13.266), but this time by Cissy when she boldly makes use of such an "unladylike" word as "beeoteetom" (1986: 290, 13.263); and loud enough, at that, for Bloom to hear. The subject performs for the gaze, trying to accommodate itself, even though the gaze is illusory. Gerty is here blushing because she is repressing her sexuality and trying to fit society's norms of what is and is not "ladylike," a conformity that later in the chapter breaks down as her temptation towards exhibitionist spectacle temporarily overwhelm her.

Her thoughts at this time do not linger long with Bloom specifically. As the men's temperance retreat moves from reciting the rosary and hearing a sermon to performing the benediction ceremony, voices singing "in supplication to the Virgin most powerful . . . and merciful" (1986: 291, 13.303-304) cause Gerty to begin to imagine herself in this role of the Virgin Mary, as she evokes pathos for herself in her consideration of her superb role of caretaker and homemaker (1986: 291). But now, thanks to that ball that once again demands Gerty's attention, this time rolling right in front of her legs after Bloom's attempt to throw it to Cissy, another, though less intense, gaze is experienced by Gerty, who manages to recover more quickly this time as she kicks the ball back to the boys.

After hearing more praise of the Virgin Mary during the benediction ceremony, Gerty again becomes aware of Bloom's presence; but this time, it is not the gaze that she experiences but rather an elision of the gaze as her positionality vacillates. In a wholly narcissistic passage, which begins with her looking out to the sea, she starts to appropriate Bloom's presence to further her romanticized fantasies. She renders him as a movie star (Martin Harvey), as a foreigner; and there is even a reference to Lear included in the narrative (1986: 293, 13.415-432). She sees he is in mourning attire and thus also imposes a profound sadness upon his mood (1986: 293, 13.421). Assuming again a self-gratifying perspective of herself as the Virgin Mary, Gerty's thoughts outright cast Bloom in the role of a "dreamhusband" (1986: 293, 13.431), and "she just yearned to know all, to forgive all if she could make him fall in love with her, make him forget the memory of the past. Then mayhap he would embrace her gently, like a real man, crushing her soft

body to him, and love her, his ownest girlie, for herself alone" (1986: 293, 13.437-441). Note the parallels in this phrasing with her earlier fantasies of her ideal husband. These fantasies are further driven home by the narrative's subtle shift back to the Benediction ceremony, and the proclamations being voiced from the church: "Refuge of sinners. Comfortress of the afflicted. *Ora pro nobis*" (1986: 294, 13.442).

A shift begins to take place. Cissy soon runs after Jacky and Tommy with the intent of showing off for Bloom. The narrative becomes more sexualized, beginning with Cissy's running and the potential, flirtatious opportunities that arise for her to expose herself to Bloom, a possibility that Gerty contemplates with utter disdain. This raises the stakes, and now, though a parallel between Gerty and the Virgin Mary is maintained, she also is rendered a more sexualized figure, as she begins to become associated with a different Mary as well: Mary Magdalene.

Gerty will be starting her period soon and sits in a place near Bloom. Father Conroy looks up at the Blessed Sacrament during the benediction ceremony (an image of a priest performing communion) as images of Bloom looking up at Gerty's skirt and legs are meshed (1986: 295). Thus, in this scene of communion she becomes fused with the image of the chalice, and has already been "won" by Bloom earlier in the day:

In "Ithaca," one of the question-answers is:

What pleasant reflection accompanied this action?

The reflection that, apart from the letter in question, his magnetic face, form and address had been favourably received during the course of the preceding day by a wife (Mrs Josephine Breen, born Josie Powell), a nurse, Miss Callan (Christian name unknown), a maid, Gertrude (Gerty, family name unknown). (1986: 594, 1843-1848)

Gerty is more abstractly associated with Mary Magdalene through the numerous sexual signs that now show up in the narrative: her swinging foot (13.498), her hat being taken off to expose her hair (1986: 295, 13.509-510) (subtly symbolic of her making a pass at Bloom), her repeatedly-mentioned transparent stockings (1986: 295, 13.500-502), and, of course, the sexual encounter itself that she has with Bloom, all draw attention to her body in a more sexual way than has previously been described. There may even be a connection between these transparent stockings that allow Bloom to see Gerty's legs, and the fact that that when Snow White dies, the seven dwarfs "made a transparent coffin so that she could be seen from all sides," presumably because of her beauty which is perfectly preserved in her "death" (Grimm and Grimm 202).

But how is this transition from one figure, that of the Virgin Mary, to a seemingly opposite figure, that of Mary Magdalene negotiated? It is through the figure of Eve that this metaphoric transition occurs; and appropriately so; because unlike, for instance, the static symbolism of the Virgin Mary (associated with sexual purity) or Mary Magdalene (associated with promiscuity), Eve has more dynamic connotations, for she is the figure who decidedly *falls* - there is movement in her symbolism, a movement from purity to sin. The apple of discord from the judgment of Paris now takes on another meaning: the infamous one, from the Garden of Eden. Thus arise in this part of the chapter, "[Bloom] was eying her as a snake eyes its prey" (1986: 295, 13.517), which suggests that he is the aggressor (and she an innocent Eve). But by the next sentence, a transition has already taken place: "Her woman's instinct told her that she had raised the devil in him" (1986:

295, 13.518), which now renders *her* a temptress. Milton's description of the snake as tempter incorporates highly phallic language for Satan, as serpent,

Addressed his way-not with indented wave  
Prone on the ground, as since/but on his rear  
Circular base of rising folds, that towered  
Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head  
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;  
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect  
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass  
Floated redundant. (*Paradise Lost* 211)

This realization brings yet another flush to Gerty's cheeks - in fact, of the hue of a "glorious rose" (1986: 295, 13.520) conjuring as it does myriad associations to sexuality and Gerty's approaching menstruation, while also not completely divorcing her from the associations with the Virgin Mary – and from the once-innocent Eve.

Against this predominantly sexualized imagery, Edy is described as "squinting at Gerty, half smiling, with her specs like an old maid, pretending to nurse the baby" (1986: 295, 13.521-22). Despite her more sexualized associations at this juncture, Gerty nevertheless tries to mask her sexuality behind euphemisms and weak arguments until nearly the final moments of this scene. Bloom's sexuality, for instance, is euphemized by Gerty into a "passionate nature" (1986: 296, 13.539). And while candles are busily setting fire to the flowers (1986: 296, 13.554-555) and Bloom is "literally worshipping at her shrine" (1986: 296, 13.564), Gerty is weakly trying to justify her actions by considering that "this was altogether different from a thing like [a man looking at the pictures of a woman] because there was all the difference because she could almost feel him draw her face to his and the first quick hot touch of his handsome lips" (1986: 300,



13.706-708). She also blames her actions on her period: "and besides it was on account of that other thing coming on the way it did" (1986: 300, 13.714).

But no matter how Gerty may try and render the situation otherwise, the modern eye of the narrator superimposes Mary Magdalene and her sexual connotations over imagery of the Virgin Mary, which is well-exemplified by the observation near the climax, "And Jacky Caffrey shouted to look, there was another and she leaned back and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent and they all saw it and they all shouted to look, look, there it was and she leaned back ever so far . . ." (1986: 300, 13.715-718). This mixture of Gerty and Other (the spectators of the fireworks on the beach) clearly subverts the ideal situation that Gerty tries to make it by emphasizing what is in fact the communal nature of her blatant, exposed spectacle, further tying her to the figure of Mary Magdalene. However, it must also be acknowledged that her tie to the Virgin Mary is included her as well, in that the blue of her garters is made clear.

The rocket springs, the Roman candle burst, and suddenly, the air is described as grey (1986: 300, 13.741). As this scene of desire, until now blissfully absent from the gaze, draws to a close, Bloom is suddenly confronted with it. Under this gaze, Bloom is far from reducing Gerty to a merely sexual figure that does not at all constitute his being; instead, he is struck with the embarrassment from what he thinks is Gerty's straightforward look, but which is, of course, merely a stand-in for the gaze. Suddenly, Bloom's name appears, is revealed - "it is he" (1986: 300, 13.744), which, remarkably, had not be used for the length of the chapter. It is as though Bloom has emerged from a mask, as though the mention of his name initiates recognition of the rift between Gerty's

false, abstract ideal of Bloom, and Bloom as he actually is. "What a brute he had been! At it again? A fair unsullied soul had called to him and, wretch that he was, how had he answered? An utter cad he had been!" exclaims a narrator (1986: 300, 13.745-747).

While under this seemingly interrogative gaze, Bloom actually transforms Gerty into an ideal Virgin Mary himself, when he thinks, "an infinite store of mercy in those eyes" (1986: 295, 13.748). (According to Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated*, "Mother of Mercy is an epithet for the Blessed Virgin Mary" 394). Unlike Gerty's thoughts of Bloom, which are nearly all abstract, romanticized notions stemming from fantasy, Bloom's thoughts are more concrete: Bloom exhibits a real consideration of Gerty, that is lacking from the considerations that Gerty had had of him. After the climax scene, he takes a genuine stab at trying to understand her, sometimes getting it right as when he thinks of real-life experiences that he knows of regarding women's menstruation cycles and supposes that Gerty is "near her monthlies" (1986: 301, 13.777-778), albeit with some foolishness included as well, such as when he thinks, "Wonder if it's bad to go with them then" (1986: 302, 13.825) - that is, when they are on their period. Also, while Gerty had presumed to know Bloom's innermost moods and needs, he simply thinks, "Saw something in me. Wonder what" (1986: 302, 13.833); incidentally, he answers this later in the chapter without realizing it, when he ponders the same question in reference to his wife Molly: "Why me? Because you were so foreign from the others" (1986: 311, 13.1209-1210). That had been the attraction for Gerty too. Furthermore, while Gerty constantly fantasizes of a mutual, exclusive relationship with Bloom, he, in contrast, supposes that "She must have been thinking of someone else all the time. What harm?"

(1986: 303, 13.884-885). Nevertheless, he is correct: while on a superficial level one may argue that she does think of him, essentially this is not the case. Firstly, Reggie is at the true heart of her fantasies; and secondly, even as she fantasizes about Bloom, there is such a great disconnect between her projected ideal and how he actually is, that one can hardly argue that she was truly fantasizing about *him*.

Perhaps one of the most interesting passages in chapter comes near the very end, when Bloom is contemplating writing a message to Gerty in the wet sand; after deciding to reject the idea, he thinks, "Tide comes here. Saw a pool near her foot. Bend, see my face there, dark mirror, breathe on it, stirs" (1986: 312, 13.1259-1261). This brings up connotations to Snow White, further tying Bloom to Gerty (via the mirror), and Gerty to the Virgin Mary (via the color of blue): "Meanwhile Snow White held court,/ rolling her china-blue doll eyes open and shut/ and sometimes referring to her mirror/ as women do" (*The Classic Fairy Tales*, ed. Maria Tatar 100). But also, ultimately, it summarizes their relationship: Gerty saw Bloom as a mirage, "the poo l near her foot"; and in "breathing on it" (interacting with him), he stirred in response. Gerty, in her romanticized notions of Bloom, merely plays with the face in the mirror that she has constructed, the consequence being that she never actually "sees" Bloom as he is. But we are told in "Snow White" that the *mirror* always told the truth, thus suggesting that Bloom, as a "dark mirror," an Other, was able to really see Gerty, and thus complicate any overly simplified association that might have been attached to her, indeed, that she even attached to herself.

Therefore, this single character of Gerty, featured only in one chapter of *Ulysses*, becomes a textual bearer of association with literary, religious, mythical, and folkloric

figures, associated in turn to such widely disparate figures as Nausicaa, the Virgin Mary, Aphrodite/Venus, Snow White, Eve, and Mary Magdalene.

## **Empathy and Agency**

In this chapter, I turn from an examination of the ways in which modernist aesthetics constructs empathy, and instead probe the content of *Ulysses* and *Al filo*: What is the relationship between empathy and agency? Which characters are capable of empathy? What are some powerful moments or demonstrations of empathy? What sort of empathy do they feel? What are some of the difficulties they experience that frustrate their attempts, at times?

### **Bloom: Empathizing with Men, Not Masculinity**

As Siân E. White argues in "O, despise not my youth!": Senses, Sympathy, and an Intimate Aesthetics in *Ulysses*," "Bloom's thoughts on the senses, the allusion to Coleridge, and Joyce's formal innovation collaborate to posit a critique of imperialism, militarism, and implicated views of masculinity" (505). Though White will also consider how moments of empathy contribute to the critiques he mentions, he does not directly link empathy to a critique of masculinity, and he, like the critic he follows, Luke Gibbons, focuses on a very limited definition of empathy, one so limited that I question its usefulness. The claim is that one may only be truly empathic in a moment of intimacy with the other.<sup>16</sup> I attempt to show here how the empathy that Bloom displays for other men critiques the last of these that White mentions, masculinity.

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<sup>16</sup> Luke Gibbons, and Siân E. White argue that empathy for another requires an already-extant intimate connection with the others. While this is certainly one instance that would promote empathy, I consider Patrick Hogan's usage of empathy to be more useful, insofar as it recognizes a different context in which empathy might occur: role of (albeit egoistical) memories in order for empathy to take place. These memories upon which one draws are the requirement, not intimacy with the other: if one breaks one's arm, and I have broken my arm, I will be able to empathize with her to an extent, even though I may not know the person whose arm is broken. We can sit in a movie and cringe and possibly even jump in our seat in a

The males of Joyce's *Ulysses* are often depicted as possessing such traits as egotism, insensitivity, alcoholism, and predilection to other various addictions, all of which Bloom generally lacks. Bloom's less overtly masculinized perspective, however, allows him to maintain enough distance in *order* to empathize, to disclose the debilitating tendencies of the other males as somewhat understandable attempts, whether consciously or unconsciously, to shroud the poverty, debt, sickness, and/or other tragic realities that uncontrollably permeate what often emerge as the frail lives of Dublin's men. Bloom first and foremost displays empathy because he embodies a more "feminized" perspective compared to the other men in the work, empathizing, but ultimately subverting, the perspective of the males that surround him. It is important to note, however, that this so-called "masculinity" that is subverted by Bloom's perspective is more a cloak of *supposed* masculinity that the males who surround Bloom wear as a sort of protection; a result of the oppressive environment that these men, who exist in a colonized region, are immersed in.

This argument, however, contains what may seem at first to be a contradiction: if Bloom plays less a role in this masculine community, why would it specifically be that fact which leads to his ability to empathize? Yet paradoxically, it is precisely one's recognition of one's separateness from the other, which allows a space for empathy to emerge. If one were to *mistake* oneself for another, this is more greatly related to identification and, consequently, projection might occur (which on some level, could potentially be seen as a sort of "inaccurate" form of empathy). But for true empathy to

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theater if someone gets punched in the face in a movie; this reaction would be empathy rather than sympathy, and it would occur because we at least have some sense already of how painful that would be.

occur, sees the other *as* other is the prerequisite. This is why alienation in modernist texts does not, by any means, automatically suggest a *fundamental* disconnect from others. It is often the case, in fact, that modernist, alienated characters (Gregor Samsa from Kafka's *Metamorphosis* comes immediately to mind, for instance) displays empathy, and are surrounded by many who are engaged in society at every turn, and yet cannot empathize. Neither of these conditions, of course, designates one's level of empathy; but it is important to recognize that they are possibilities, and possibilities that frequently show up in modernist texts.

In "Legal Fiction or Pulp Fiction in 'Lestrygonians,'" Karen Lawrence summarizes Nolan's view that

[Emer] Nolan is right to question the complacency of humanistic accounts of Bloom as the heroic common man who rejects the violence and masculinism of the Dubliners around him. She is accurate about Bloom's hesitancy to participate in a masculine community (although I think it is more appropriate to speak of his ambivalence than fear), and she offers a corrective to the view that his outsider status is solely due to the anti-Semitism that surrounds him . . . (Lawrence 105)

She ultimately argues that

Bloom doesn't merely reject "community" here, like a petulant child, as Nolan seems to suggest; rather, like Cormac, the pagan king, he 'can't stomach' the idea of flesh as mere corpse. Despite Bloom's comic demystifications of the *idealization* operating in the rite of the Eucharist, he has much trouble facing the nonsublimated version of incorporation, the atavistic image of the body wholly devoid of spirit. (Lawrence 105)

According to her view, then, Bloom does not wish to imagine reality away through lofty symbolism alone; nor, however, does he wish to demean it to mere matter. Instead, he genuinely engages with the implications of the reality that surrounds him, and it is



actually empathy that, ironically, isolates him and a *lack* of empathy within, for instance, this Burton scene mentioned here, that shapes the tone of “Lestrygonians.”

Religion in “Hades” serves to veil some of the weak and insincere attitudes that the men have towards death that they do not necessarily take to “heart.” In contrast to the response that others have, Bloom inward responses to the funeral suggest that he takes the difficulty of death more seriously. For instance, when Tom Kernan says “*I am the resurrection and the life. That touches a man’s most inmost heart*” (1986:87, 6.670), he is feigning a more spiritual relief during depressing moments that eases the *metaphysical* heart. Bloom, though outwardly in polite agreement, thinks to himself,

Your heart perhaps but what price the fellow in the six feet by two with his toes to the daisies? No touching that. Seat of the affections. Broken heart. A pump after all pumping thousands of gallons of blood every day. One fine day it gets bunged up: and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. (1986: 87, 6.672-676)

Bloom thus empathizes in the only way that he can: via his experience of the tactile realm. The non-tactile does not “touch” him, for it is not substantiate by concrete reality. But his physical environment grounds him and allows him to connect and reflect in a more sobering way the reality of death: the narrative shifts from the external dialogue of Kernan to Bloom’s interior monologue, which reveals his ability to realistically examine the substantive physical heart. Even when the men act unusually piously or considerately, therefore, Bloom’s perspective is still able to penetrate further to thoughts of physical (as opposed to spiritual) death, where the ego is usually reluctant to enter. As Kimberly Devlin argues, “Bloom characterizes death as an inevitability that humans usually want to invisibilize both physically and psychically: they attempt to put it ‘out of

sight' through ritual burial and to put it 'out of mind' through ritual denial" (Devlin 74). Yet Bloom also, as she suggests, feels a sense in which one is haunted by the dead (Devlin 74). Unusually, this can also be seen as a sort of empathy: while those around him are, much like Buck Mulligan, largely spiritually ironic, Bloom denies spirituality while accepting the idea of a "spirit." Dignam implies the lack of relationship to others that can be established by mere metaphysical or abstract attempts, pitting the more embodied literal against the metaphorical with both the very words "touch" and "heart" in Hades. Bloom may not be politically active, but his empathy is at least grounded when it arises, while something based more on suppositions or the imagination may lead to more passionate change, but this sort of change may be more short-lived.

As Karen Lawrence notes, upon observing the ritual of communion, Bloom notes how Catholics only seem to swallow, not chew, what for them is the body of Christ. Thus, they do not internalize the other in the way that Bloom does in the "you are what you eat" thrust of the chapter. "Bloom rejects both the triumph of idealization—the swallowing without chewing—and its materialist 'manly' opposite, the chewing of dead meat" (103). By not altogether dismissing as purely material, or idealizing and thereby imagining away difference, Bloom demonstrates a genuine, empathic interaction.

Insofar as the other men in "Hades" appear to maintain a greater level of sensitivity in the face of Dignam's funeral, this chapter actually aids primarily in enhancing the contrast between such unusually polite behavior and their "everyday" selves, of which the chapter "Aeolus" is a prime example. If "Hades" is about death and, following Joyce's Linati schema, is represented by the organ of the heart which pumps

blood, “Aeolus” is about life, and has as its organ the lungs which pump the far less substantive air. Here the men abandon their funereal state and return to their mode of everydayness where they can not only breathe more easily, but also relieve tension through puffing up their ego with sarcastic bantering. In “Hades,” for instance, Martin Cunningham had brought up a speech by Dan Dawson:

—Did you read Dan Dawson’s speech? Martin Cunningham asked.

—I did not then, Mr Dedalus said. Where is it?

—In the paper this morning.

Mr Bloom took the paper from his inside pocket. That book I must change for her.

—No, no, Mr Dedalus said quickly. Later on please. (1986: 75, 6.151-156)

In “Aeolus,” however, the speech is read with unabashed flourish by Ned Lambert, and Simon Dedalus’ first words in the chapter are, in reaction, “ ‘Agonizing Christ, wouldn’t it give you a heartburn on your arse?’ ” (1986: 102, 7.241). Ned Lambert, “laughing, str[iking] the newspaper on his knees, repeat[s]: ‘*The pensive bosom and the overarsing leafage. O boys! O boys!*’ ” (1986: 102, 7.253). Dedalus reacts to the speech again shortly after, crying “O! . . . Shite and onions! That’ll do Ned. Life is too short” (1986: 104, 7.329-330). The narration is focalized through Bloom, and thus the reader is given no more insight into the men than their external dialogue of bantering. Bloom’s private reaction, however, is to note, in practical manner, that “Doughy Daw” (even if his speech *was* ridiculous) is quite well off in life.

After thinking about O’Molloy, Bloom shifts his internal dialogue to a less sympathetic view of the newspaper men in general, thinking, “[f]unny the way those newspaper men veer about when they get wind of a new opening. Weathercocks. Hot and cold in the same breath. Wouldn’t know which to believe. One story good till you

hear the next. Go for one another baldheaded in the papers and then all blows over” (1986: 103, 7.308-311). However, what he is unsympathetic about is a lack of sympathy itself. What he criticizes here is the way that these “newspaper men” attack each other.

As if to confirm Bloom’s thought, O’Molloy later praises an almost equally airy speech delivered by Bushe: “. . . *that stony effigy in frozen music, horned and terrible, of human form divine . . .*” (1986: 115, 7.768-770). It is ironic that MacHugh interrupts Ned Lambert’s persistence with Dawson’s speech by saying ““Bombast! . . . Enough of the inflated windbag!”” (1986: 104, 7.315): neither Dawson nor the other men seem to be full of much more than the hot air that fills their lungs. Shortly before this outburst, MacHugh had “answered with pomp of tone” (1986: 102, 7.270) in contrast to Bloom asking “simply” his innocent question about Dawson’s speech (““What is it?”” [1986: 102, 7.269]). Silence is used in very manipulative, dramatic ways by the men. Even Stephen, whose own egoism prompted him to thrice wonder what Professor Magennis had said about him, realizes this. For instance, as O’Molloy takes out his cigarette case, there is a pause; the narrative focalized through Stephen more intimately shifts to interior monologue as he notes a “false lull. Something quite ordinary” (1986: 115, 7.761). His quiet reflection is juxtaposed with MacHugh’s delivery of Taylor’s speech, giving in the middle of it a “dumb belch of hunger . . . [and] lifted his voice above it boldly” (1986: 117, 7.860-861) (which Joyce comically inserts as a reminder that the current speaker is *not* the original orator), and “ceased to look at them, enjoying a silence” (1986: 117, 7.870). Thus the quiet observations of Stephen’s inner voice is contrasted with the almost trumpeting outer one of MacHugh, which creates a huge distance not only in

narrative perspective (the intimate subjectivity of Stephen contrasted with the objectivity of MacHugh), but results in an almost instinctual distancing of the reader from MacHugh in reaction to his obnoxious mode of speaking.

Because Bloom exposes the sad state of the lives of these men, the ego-fulfilling silences that they in turn ask of and submit to for each other serve as an attempt to compensate for what is underneath a fragile state of mind. They reveal what mere description of the men cannot directly state: that these silent requests from each other for ego-fulfillment ask to “fill” the emptiness of their lives – their alcoholism, loneliness, gambling addiction and accompanying debts, poverty, and masculine desires in general. If the boom of the pressmen that occurs between these emphatic, and ultimately empty pauses can be thought of in relation to the loud thumping of the press machine, with the difference that as people they are able to control the pauses of their speech, the more substantial Bloom who does not need such egoistic opportunities, in contrast and as usual, “slip[s] his words deftly into the pauses of the clanking” (1986: 99, 7.139).

As an accompaniment to these little speeches and bits of bombast, cigarettes take on a pseudo-ritualistic significance in this worship of the masculine ego as a more tangible strategy for pausing/effect/drawing out/congratulations, etc. One of the headlines in “Aeolus” directly even suggests this in its title, “THE CALUMET OF PEACE.” Though Stephen, who is present in much of this chapter, seems to be resisting the lure of the pressmen as much as possible, this ritual of passing around and lighting cigarettes clearly had an influence on him. The pressure of the smoking “ritual” is intense when J.J. O’Molloy asks Stephen for his opinion on a piece he’d just delivered,

and Stephen, “his blood wooed by grace of language and gesture, blushed. He took a cigarette from the case. O’Molloy offered his case to Myles Crawford. Lenehan lit their cigarettes as before and took his trophy” (1986: 115, 7.776-779). The objectification of the other characters, with some insight into Stephen’s thoughts, highlights especially in the effects that *social* “ritual” has on the men, events that Stephen only submits hesitatingly to, and which Bloom does not at all.

As in this case, such “ritualistic” practices as passing around cigarettes and going to taverns are something that Bloom, lacking the degree of masculinity that is seen in them (and also because of his clearly established foreignness), is generally excluded from, but this seems to be to his advantage. In “Hades,” Bloom notes how Dignam died: “Too much Barleycorn. Cure for a red nose. Drink like the devil till it turns adelite. A lot of money he spent colouring it” (1986: 79, 6.307-309). Stephen, though a much more intimate part of these “rituals” than Bloom himself is (though Bloom eventually tries to discourage him this), is still quite aware of the emptiness of their rhetoric. Again, the narrative perspective can be seen as similarly structured as the psyche; the interior monologues of Bloom and Stephen do not merely relate their inner thoughts, but this kind of internal focalization is metaphoric of their general stance towards an oppressive society: Bloom in particular is disinclined to participate in these social “rituals.” The “rituals” are instead performed by those who are *objectified* by the narrative perspective *and* in the literal situation itself, for the importance of these men smoking or going to the tavern with each other serve little benefit to their actual status in society; instead, these

actions merely function as ironic social rituals that only add further pressure to their daily, and ever more despairing, problems.

Lenehan is portrayed as one of the worst men of all. The *Dubliners*'s short story "Two Gallants" reveals that "he was a sporting vagrant armed with a vast stock of stories, limericks and riddles. He was insensitive to all kinds of discourtesy. No one knew how he achieved the stern task of living," and has a proclivity toward using the phrase "takes the biscuit" in varying forms<sup>17</sup> (i.e., he is cantankerous, since "taking the biscuit" is used to refer to someone or something that one finds to be greatly frustrating). These traits, though not explicitly mentioned in *Ulysses*, are all too apparent throughout the novel, such as when in "Sirens" "[w]ith patience Lenehan waited for Boylan with impatience, for jinglejaunty blazes boy" (1986: 216, 11.289-290):

Lenehan came forward.  
—Was Mr Boylan looking for me?  
He asked. She answered:  
—Miss Kennedy, was Mr Boylan in while I was upstairs?  
She asked. Miss voice of Kennedy answered, a second teacup poised, her gaze upon a page:  
—No. He was not.  
Miss gaze of Kennedy, heard, not seen, read on.  
.....  
Jingle jaunty jingle.  
Girlgold she read and did not glance. Take no notice. She took no notice while he read by rote a solfa fable for her... (1986: 215, 11.233-247)

After seeing such transparent rejection by females, one wonders how Lenehan manages to be such an overt pest. Clearly, his ego has allowed him to

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<sup>17</sup> James Joyce, *Dubliners* (Delaware: Prestwick House, 2006), 41. Further references to this text will be cited in the body of this paper as "*Dubliners*" followed by page number.

protectively mask the uncomfortable interactions in which he finds himself, as this passage shows as well:

Lenehan's lips over the counter lisped a low whistle of decoy.  
—But look this way, he said, rose of Castile.  
Jingle jaunted by the curb and stopped.  
She rose and closed her reading, rose of Castile: fretted, forlorn, dreamily rose.  
—Did she fall or was she pushed? he asked her.  
She answered, slighting:  
—Ask no questions and you'll hear no lies. (1986: 217, 11.338-336)

These are just a few of the many instances that overtly display Lenehan's inability to have positive communication with women, or really to observe reality sufficiently at all. And yet Lenehan's irritating mode of masculinity, as in the case of the other men, is much better understood as soon as more is known about his life. There is not as much of an intimate account of Lenehan's personal life in *Ulysses* as there is with many of the other male minor characters, but it *is* found in "Two Gallants," and establishes, like with Dedalus and O'Molloy, some perspective that earns him at least some empathy:

He fe[lt] keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit. He was tired of knocking about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and intrigues. He would be thirty-one in November. Would he never get a good job? Would he never have a home of his own? He thought how pleasant it would be to have a warm fire to sit by and a good dinner to sit down to. He had walked the streets long enough with friends and with girls. He knew what those friends were worth: he knew the girls too. Experience had embittered his heart against the world. But all hope had not left him. He felt better after having eaten than he had felt before, less weary of his life, less vanquished in spirit. He might yet be able to settle down in some snug corner and live happily if he could only come across some good simple-minded girl with a little of the ready. (*Dubliners* 48)

Thus this mournful passage helps, as others did with Dedalus and O'Molloy, to point up the cause of his misery, his impoverished environment and (up until now) lack of awareness of this fact. This passage also provides some explanation for Lenehan's



relatively pathetic representation of masculinity according to the social norms of his time: he is unable to find a good job, he has no one to build a life with, and the world has shown him thus far that he has little hope of achieving his wishes. Insofar as these insights are concerned, Bloom's intuition and perspective about other characters is often accurate. However, the focalization of Lenehan in this passage provides perhaps even more insight into him that even Bloom might have been able to suppose. It is unlikely, for example, that he could know just from outward appearance, especially considering the previously quoted passage from *Ulysses*, that Lenehan is *aware* that he is annoying. The general portrayal of masculinity by Joyce then, though frequently negative, is also understood to be largely caused by poverty and misfortune, which sheds light and sympathy upon what would otherwise look like merely chaotic and repulsive lives of the surrounding men. However, it is important to note that the last line of this passage prevents this sympathy from completely overruling his flaws as a character. Despite his hardships, it is difficult to sympathize with his desire to solve his problems by finding a "simple-minded girl" to live off of, and if the reader compares Lenehan's "insight" to Bloom's, the result is clearly that the empathy that these men deserve has its limits, and that the focalization of their characters is not as necessary as in Bloom's case, who already intuitively provides the reader with much of their situational suffering.

O' Molloy, who is even deemed by Bloom a "well-read fellow," is not much better off, if at all. Though he never presents much of a respectable character from an outside perspective, Bloom's interior monologue sympathetically notes, "Cleverest fellow at the junior bar he used to be. Decline, poor chap. That hectic flush spells finis

for a man. Touch and go with him. What's in the wind, I wonder. Money worry" (1986: 103, 7.291-294), and right after, "Practice dwindling. A mighthavebeen. Losing heart. Gambling. Debts of honour. Reaping the whirlwind. Used to get good retainers from D. and T. Fitzgerald" (1986: 103, 7.303-307). There is also the irony in Ned Lambert's whispering "Incipient jigs. Sad case" (1986: 104, 7.366), soon after O'Molloy's own life had just received the headline "SAD." Yet another man among this group who, provided less than ideal conditions to flourish in, has not lived up to his potential, and who now seeks what little joy he can in the boisterousness of the other men around him.

Simon Dedalus, an alcoholic living in poverty who must take care of four daughters and whose son has left the home, says sadly to Mr. Power of his recently late wife in "Hades," "Her grave is over there, Jack . . . I'll soon be stretched beside her. Let Him take me whenever he likes' " and then "Breaking down, [Simon] began to weep to himself quietly, stumbling a little in his walk" (1986: 86, 6.647-648). This is a rare confession of sincere feelings from a man; Bloom's focalized perspective in "Sirens" further empathizes with this: "Could have made oceans of money. Singing wrong words. Wore out his wife: now sings. But hard to tell. Only the two themselves. If he doesn't break down . . . Drink. Nerves overstrung" (1986: 225, 11.696-699). The reader can see then, why he might enjoy the distraction of the pressroom and bar, with its opportunities for a good, if crude, laugh.

Another "ritual" for these pressmen is alcohol. In "Hades," when the men were generally in a more somber and reflective state, Ned Lambert asks Simon Dedalus, "How did [Dignam] lose [his] [job]? Liquor, what?" and Simon sighs in response, "Many a

good man's fault" (1986: 85, 6.572-573), showing an awareness of its harm to the men around him. Yet, in "Aeolus," the *first thing* that Dedalus says after listening to Dawson's speech is "Come . . . I must get a drink after that" (1986: 104, 7.351-352). Ned Lambert makes to follow, and then asks, "—Will you join us, Myles?" Thus, it is precisely the *lack* of their awareness of their environment – the alcoholism that surrounds them, as well as Simon's explicit comment upon it – that leads to their ultimate downfall.

In turning to the symbolism of the race, ideas of masculinity become at once more abstract and more specific than the examples of the other minor males characters' lives. The symbolism of the racehorse *Sceptre* represents on an abstract level the masculine ego (as well as an obviously phallic symbol), but also specifically Blazes Boylan. *Throwaway*, in contrast, is more symbolic of the "outsider" underdog Bloom. The Gold Cup is a metaphor for femininity, and more specifically Molly as a universal Everywoman: despite Molly's pronounced sexuality, as Ellmann points out, "If Molly were really promiscuous in her conduct, Joyce would not have used her for heroine, for he needed an everyday woman to counterpoise Bloom's oddities" (*James Joyce* 377).

The reader knows from *Dubliners* that "[Lenehan's] name was vaguely associated with racing tissues" (44). Indeed, he often discusses the Ascot race and so plays his part in developing the symbolism surrounding it: Lenehan is the most certain of anyone about *Sceptre* winning and *Throwaway* losing, which again says something about the overweening male ego: it is often wrong. He says in "Wandering Rocks" that *Sceptre* is "a game filly" (1986: 192, 10.511) and "will win in a canter" (1986: 218, 11.374), and conversely, that *Throwaway* "hasn't an earthly" (1986: 192, 10.519). Even Boylan does

not vocalize his confidence in *Sceptre's* winning to even remotely the same extent as Lenehan.

Because the confirmed bachelor Blazes Boylan is attractive, well-known, and highly self-assured, this allows him to surpass the others in confidence. Though not much is known of his life, he does not seem to possess some of the greater difficulties that these other men possess, and, at least from Molly's perspective, is well off. The other men may seem to be more vocal about outdoing each other, but Boylan has such a strong ego he surpasses the need to engage with others as much as they do, to constantly have to prove himself. In Thorton's, when he buys a gift basket to have sent to Molly, all of his actions are easy, flowing, smooth:

Blazes Boylan rattled merry money in his trousers' pocket.

—What's the damage? he asked.

The blond girl's slim fingers reckoned the fruits.

Blazes Boylan looked into the cut of her blouse. A young pullet. He took a red carnation from the tall stemglass.

—This for me? he asked gallantly.

The blond girl glanced sideways at him, got up regardless, with his tie a bit crooked, blushing.

—Yes, sir, she said. (1986: 187, 10.324-332)

Boylan's interaction with the girl in this passage is in perfect consistency with the general portrayal of his character. Since the narration is never focalized through Boylan anywhere throughout the novel except in the line "[a] young pullet" (1986: 187, 10.327) this suggests to the reader that his priorities lie only in sexualized, superficial interactions. The narration continually objectifies him. And even when the empathetic Bloom is focalized through the narrator, he says little in the way of Boylan's difficult situation compared to what he says of the other men, which suggests that Boylan is

perhaps the character with whom Bloom knows the least about, and perhaps, by extension and for other obvious reasons, is able to empathize with the least. Furthermore, if Bloom represents a more feminized and compassionate nature, and yet reveals little compassion for Boylan, this therefore also marks the latter as *the* symbol of the masculine ego in this work.

The Ormond Bar scene in “Sirens” between Boylan, Lenehan, Miss Kennedy, and Miss Douce sets up multiple layers of significance that brilliantly and simultaneously make it *appear* that Boylan (and thereby the male ego in general) is the hero, while the underlying significance foreshadows the opposite. If one looks at the hair colors of Miss Kennedy (a blond) and Miss Douce (a bronze) as examples of metalepsis, then there is already in this scene the foreshadowing of *Sceptre*’s loss, even before *Sceptre*’s losing has foreshadowed Boylan’s loss. In this instance of metalepsis, the gold of Miss Kennedy’s hair would represent the gold medal which would represent the winner, and the bronze hair of Miss Douce would represent the bronze 3<sup>rd</sup> place medal which, in this case, would represent by comparison the “loser.” Upon Boylan’s entrance into the Ormond, there is the line “Yes, gold from anear by bronze by afar,” followed by “Lenehan heard and knew and hailed him: ‘See how the conquering hero comes.’” (1986: 217, 11.338-340). Thus, Miss Kennedy is nearby Boylan, while Miss Douce is farther away, which metaphorically associates Boylan with the “winner.” Lenehan describes the Ascot race in “Oxen of the Sun,” saying, “ ‘in the straight on the run home when all were in close order the dark horse *Throwaway* drew level, reached, outstripped her’ ” (1986: 339, 14.1132-1133). Just as Lenehan has prematurely identified *Sceptre* as the winner

with full confidence (she'll "win in a canter," etc.), he "hails" Boylan as the "conquering hero" after the statement about gold being "anear" and bronze being "afar." So at this point, between Lehenan and the color imagery, all appears in favor of Boylan, especially when he begins drinking from a "chalice"). Then, when Bloom (the "unconquered" hero, not the "conquered" one) enters just after, "all were in close." But just before Boylan's exit,

[Boylan's] spellbound eyes went after, after her gliding head as it went down the bar by the mirrors, gilded arch for ginger ale, hock and claret glasses shimmering, a spiky shell, where it concerted, mirrored, bronze with sunnier bronze.

Yes, bronze from anearby. (1986: 219, 11.419-424)

Boylan's eyes watch miss Douce travel behind the bar as though watching the race, her "hock" (a horse's hind joint) shimmering. This association is reinforced at the end of *Ulysses*, when Molly says that Boylan had treated her like a horse this afternoon: "one thing I didn't like his slapping me behind going away so familiarly in the hall though I laughed Im not a horse or an ass am I" (1986: 610, 18.121-124). Finally, at the bar, the bronze that would more appropriately have been associated before with Bloom the underdog, is now "anearby" to Boylan (before it was bronze that had been far away and gold that was near to him), and thus is now associated with Boylan, gold having disappeared from the phrase altogether ("Yes, bronze from anearby"). *Sceptre* came in third that day, and so would have won the bronze.

Indeed, Boylan clearly *had* "won the bronze": after he leaves, miss Douce, "the bronze," gazes after him, crushed that he left so abruptly after their interaction that had seemed to be going so well, and was greatly disappointed: "[m]iss Douce's brave eyes,

unregarded, turned from the crossblind, smitten by sunlight. Gone. Pensive (who knows?), smitten (the smiting light), she lowered the dropblind with a sliding cord. She drew down pensive (why did he go so quick when I?) about her bronze . . . (1986: 220, 11.460-463). Also, as he drinks from his “chalice” (his beer glass with “bubbly ale”), the color of bronze is reflected back at him (not only miss Douce’s bronze hair, but miss Kennedy’s as well: the only time her gold hair is described as “sunnier bronze”): “His spellbound eyes went after, after her gliding head as it went down the bar by the mirrors . . . where it concerted, mirrored, bronze with sunnier bronze.” Again, with Boylan as representative of the male ego, this passage forecasts the reduction of the male ego.

Though Bloom may have had what might seem a more “superficial” encounter with Gerty, it clearly happened because Gerty saw him as an *individual*: “His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul” (1986: 293, 13.412-413); “She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale intellectual face that he was a foreigner” (1986: 293, 13.415-416), and it was precisely these characteristics that drew her towards him. She appreciated his quiet mysteriousness, which pervaded her even without speaking to him. There is a link between the fact that Gerty is attracted to Bloom as an *individual*, and is therefore less superficial in her taste, and the fact that she is temporarily focalized through the narration instead of simply objectified either through Bloom or, more generally, external focalization. And in the end, he will finally be favorably received by his wife as well. This again ties back, though more implicitly this time, to the theme of the race. Women seem to be attracted

to Boylan, on the other hand, not because of his individuality but because of his more generic masculine qualities such as confidence, attractiveness, and fame.

In more everyday situations, Bloom is capable of seeing past the women who only *act* like they are attracted to one specific person: For even though he interacts with the genuinely interested Gerty, when he goes into a shop to buy soap for Molly, he notes the shopgirl smile “winsomely” on him and reflects, “. . . think you’re the only pebble on the beach? Does that do it all?” (1986: 217, 11.309-311) (of course, this is in large part because he is thinking about how his wife is about to cheat on him). Correspondingly the narration does not focalize the shopgirl at all, but is rather only objectified by Bloom with interior monologue. Bloom is not only capable of a far more “penetrating” perspective, but is able to apply his discernment of the shopgirl’s nature to his own wife as well. He considers Molly’s overall stream of would-be lovers, not only without judgment, but smiling:

If he had smiled why would he have smiled?

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity. (1986: 604, 17.2216-2131)

In contrast, Boylan, as a bachelor, easily engages in such impersonal flirtations (as evidenced not only in “Wandering Rocks” as he shamelessly stares down the shopgirl’s shirt, but also throughout “Sirens” with his overt flirting with Miss Kennedy and especially Miss Douce).



While Boylan's encounter in the bar first highlighted an association with the first place "prize," Miss Kennedy, he ended up associated with Miss Douce, who represented "third" place, and his expectations were frustrated. In the above quote, this sort of egoism centered around winning is now abstracted to each and every man who "imagines himself to be the first." Bloom, on the other hand, is contrasted with these men, by virtue of the fact that he is not only able to remove his ego from a situation enough to be able to distinguish between superficial flirting, and an at least somewhat genuine interaction, but he even wonders how Molly could *not* do this in the case of Boylan. In "Hades" he thinks, "Is there anything more in him that they she sees? Fascination. Worst man in Dublin. That keeps him alive. They sometimes feel what a person is. Instinct. But a type like that" (1986: 76, 6.201-203). Interestingly, he sees this ability to distinguish "real" sexual encounters from artificial ones as a more feminine trait (he has just attributed it to women—"they"). However, when it comes to Molly, Bloom seems to have more of this trait than she, since she has gone for Boylan (though, granted, this is for various reasons that Bloom is not necessarily conscious of).

At the end of the day, after all of the suffering he has endured, he almost jokingly considers the possibilities for "retribution" against Boylan and his adulterous wife, contemplating everything from assassination ("never") to legal action ("not impossibly"). Really, however, his focus is on the *naturalness* of what has occurred; "natural" being a word repeated over and over in his reflections of the matter (1986: 603). In a sense, Bloom *can't* lose. Even before the reader knows Molly's thoughts, and therefore that she mentally returns to him, his perspective is so pervasive, he is so understanding, he has so

frequently refrained from indulging his ego to the point of anger throughout the novel, that there is simply nothing *to* lose. Bloom comes across as intensely good-natured.

However, Bloom *has* had his distractions; namely, his letter to and from Martha, and of course his sexual interaction with Gerty. Each is ideal in its own way (his relationship to Martha being merely textual, and Gerty being merely sexual), and at the end of the day, even after he knows that his wife has cheated on him, his love for her remains. Molly matches Bloom in that her thoughts in “Penelope” also wander from ideal to real, drifting from how Boylan “puts heart into her” and “has plenty of money” (1986: 217, 11.338-336) to returning back to “full Bloom.” In choosing each other, Bloom and Molly choose the real.

There is an amusing commonality between Bloom and his phrase “flower of the mountain” and the men poking fun at the flowery journalistic writing. At times in “Circe” Bloom ridicules himself about not being as learned as he could be, enough to be a journalist for instance, yet it is Bloom’s words that, finally, speak to Molly. Through direct interior monologue, she says, “he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and understood or felt what a woman is” (1986: 643, 18.1576-1579). The almost inescapable “flowery” language that successful journalists use is concocted and cannot compete with Bloom’s language of the flowers, language based on a knowledge of his concrete, affective environment instead of a substance-less conception of it. And sure enough, despite all her complaints of Bloom, varying from her “wish[ing] hed sleep in some bed by himself with his cold feet on me give us room even to let a fart God or do the least thing” (1986: 628,

18.905-907), to her “hop[ing] hes not going to get in with those medicals leading him astray to imagine hes young again coming in at 4 in the morning. . .” (1986: 622, 18.628-629), he ultimately wins her over. Though it may not appear on the surface that Molly makes much of Bloom—near the apex of her thoughts of Bloom she says “I thought well as well him as another” (1986: 643-644, 18.1604-1605) and framing the entire memory as though she had controlled the whole thing perfectly (though her profusion of “yeses” gives her away), what she does in the end, is come *as close as she can* to expressing her vulnerability for Bloom. In fact, it is her complaining and apparent resistance of Bloom that in a way works *for* Bloom’s character – because she still returns to him despite all of it, which leaves Boylan cursing himself, “tearing up the tickets and swearing blazes because he lost 20 quid he said he lost over that outside that won and half he put on for me” (1986: 617, 18.421-426). In returning to him at the end, the entire chapter is focalized through her perspective in interior monologue, suggesting the increased identification of both the narrator, via the choice of narrative perspective, and Bloom, through his actual thoughts.

And so in the end, Bloom’s positive and sensitive qualities allow him to be with a woman who is the envy of all the men around him: “. . . Madam Bloom . . . [t]he vocal muse. Dublin’s prime favourite” (1986: 111, 609-610), and affirm what has been generally implied about the masculine ego throughout *Ulysses* until, finally, it is explicitly declared by Lenehan: “Frailty, thy name is *Sceptre*” (1986: 267, 12.1227-1228).

### Finding Altruism: Father Reyes

While the Northerners, having left, can no longer tolerate the repression of the village, Abundio Reyes presents a bit more complex case. He has lived outside the village, but always in an intensely religious, repressive atmosphere. Therefore, he has a little outside perspective, yet nothing to compare to the Northerners. Nevertheless, we find in this character an interesting ability to empathize with widely disparate groups, not ultimately taking a *strong* stand against the church, as the Northerners have, yet still pushing, in his own gentle way, for greater freedom within the community. Compared to the other villagers who are suppressed, he demonstrates comparatively more agency and empathy given the limitations that he, like the other villagers, has always been under the influence of. As Doudoroff notes in “Tensions and Triangles in *Al filo del agua*,” “The problem of the outside world, which threatens the town’s isolation, is noted first in Reyes, who has accommodated but retains a subversive humanism” (Doudoroff 2–3).

At the outset, Reyes’ demonstration of agency and enthusiasm for taking action in the world is made clear. Before being moved to the village in which the novel is set, he is in the Seminary, and described as intelligent and mischievous, as is clearly shown to have a charismatic personality:

*[N]o se le podía sustituir en torneos de agudeza y travesuras, menos aún en la organización de festividades, ‘gaudeamus’, excursions, conciertos; improvisaba discursos para cualquier circunstancia, recitaba, cantaba, enderezaba toda conversación; sin él, sus compañeros eran incapaces de intentar algo [. . . ]* (1947: 54)

(No one was better than he at organizing festivities, ‘gaudeamuses,’ excursions, concerts: he improvised speeches for any and every occasion, he recited, sang, took the lead in any conversation. Without him his companions could do nothing [. . . ]) (1963: 43)

Upon arrival in the village however, the text foreshadows the potential conflict that could occur between himself and the Parish Priest, who suspects him of being too “*modernistas*” (“modernistic”), in part due to the enthusiastic plans that Reyes proposes while serving as a priest (1947: 55; 1963: 44). As will be shown, this initial enthusiastic demonstration of agency will prove important for some of the rare moments of empathy that do occur. In Father Reyes, we see a charismatic individual who is constantly empathizing with the perspectives of others around him.

The novel does not, however, portray Father Reyes as unambiguously progressive. In “The Structure of *Al filo del agua*,” Elaine Haddad argues that “The repression of spontaneity and the crushing of fresh ideas by fears, instilled by such well-meaning priests as Don Dionisio and Padre Reyes, constitute the bases for a radical change, a revolution” (524). Ultimately, Reyes’ positive attitude and genuine reverence toward the Parish Priest granted him more freedom, to the point that he refused transfers that would improve his situation. The proximity of the villagers combined with the freedom given to him by the priest allows the community to flourish. However, he is a somewhat more overtly political figure than Bloom, since he is involved with the politics of the church, constantly going back and forth between different groups in an attempt to create harmony between them. Perhaps the closest we have to Bloom, although they are very different Father Islas’ name is not a coincidence: he is an island in contrast to the political bodies that are being formed in Mexico, surrounding but as of yet having not penetrated the village.

*Desde su llegada al pueblo y mediante el confesonario, el Padre Reyes midió con exactitud la influencia del Padre Director, con cuyos excesos no estuvo de*

*acuerdo; pero fiel a su norma de discreción, se cuidó de hacer observaciones. Cuando estuvo seguro de la confianza del párroco, decidió neutralizar indirectamente aquella influencia, que en forma de ideas obsesionantes hacía su aparición aun en hombres maduros, atormentados por vanos temores; en primer lugar se acercó a los niños, luego a los jóvenes, con quienes formó el coro parroquial; después proyecta aerear un poco el alma de las mujeres. Tiene que proceder con suma lentitud y con extreme cautela, por las afinidades evidentes— aunque con muy sensibles diferencias— que hay entre el superior y el compañero. ¡Qué diera por desatar en risas la tristeza del poblado y romper las costumbres de aislamiento y proponer a la religiosidad un ritmo alegre! Tampoco él ha escapado al escrúpulo y frecuentemente le asalta la pureza de la vida con esa rígida sobrevigilancia que ha llegado a imponer a las conciencias; razonamiento que lo cohibe para proseguir con buen pulso sus tareas renovadoras, y antes lo ha orillado a aceptar funciones de inquisidor, en la empresa de mantener un rígido control sobre los apetitos de la malicia regional. (1947: 235)*

(Ever since his arrival in the village Father Reyes has used the Confessional to get at some measure of Father Islas' influence. He was opposed to the extremes which Father Islas imposed, but with customary discretion refrained from making any comment. When he felt that he had secured the confidence of the Parish Priest, he set to work indirectly to counteract an influence that had turned even grown men a prey to fears. He made friends first with the children and afterwards with the young people by forming a parish choir; he planned to brighten the lives of the women. It was slow and cautious work because of the affinities between his superior and his colleague. What he wouldn't give to dissolve the sadness of the village in laughter, break down the isolation, and introduce some gaiety into religion! Yet he, too, has been influenced by the excessive scrupulousness and he frequently wonders whether Father Islas isn't right, after all: stern watchfulness over the conscience does protect the purity of life. The thought has tempered the ardor with which he carries out his remedial tasks and has even led him to assume some inquisitorial duties in the effort to balk the forces of evil.) (1963: 193)

Eventually, Pedrito and Father Reyes win over the Northerners (1963: 275).

Pedrito serves as the possible hope, and replacement for Gabriel:

*El Padre Reyes ha logrado que sean precisamente los norteños los participantes más entusiastas en las fiestas guadalupanas, brecha patriótica por donde ha ido insinuándoseles poco a poco, tras el fracaso de organizarlos en una sociedad religiosa de beneficencia mutua. (1947: 333)*

(The men back from the United States were the most enthusiastic participants in celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Father Reyes' appeal to their

patriotism succeeded where his attempt to organize a religious co-operative society had failed.) (1963: 274)

Father Islas' undoubtedly harmful influence on Luis Gonzaga Pérez, moreover, inspired downright opposition in Father Reyes: "*lo cree caso de consciencia y no le cabe duda cuando relaciona los extremos a que llegó el ex seminarista—manías, forbias, tics—, con la dirección espiritual a que se sujetó en manos del Padre Islas*" ("He felt it was his bounden duty to make the serious charge before Father Martínez that the ex-Seminarist's excesses, manias, and phobias were the fruit of Father Islas' spiritual guidance") (1947: 235; 1963: 193). Though Reyes is still assailed by doubt, it ultimately becomes clear that Father Islas *is* in the wrong:

*“Resueltamente no—pensaba el Padre Reyes—, no es mejor la rigidez como método de dirección espiritual, ni menos para temperamentos débiles, como el de este muchacho, como el de tantas muchachas a quienes el Padre José María inspira un sentido sombrío de la existencia. ¿Para qué? ¿Para que al primer choque con la realidad fracasen? ¿Para que los lazos que los unan con Dios sean lazos de temor y no de amor? ¡Precaria y falsa piedad la que se asienta en terreno cenagoso! ¡Pantano de angustias, propicio al desarrollo de todos los morbos, concupiscencias e hipocresías!”* (1947: 236)

“No, thought Father Reyes, severity is not the best method of spiritual guidance, certainly not for weak natures like this young man or for the many girls in whom Father Islas has inculcated a gloomy view of existence. To what end? That they may fail in their first contact with reality? For the ties that unite them to God to be ties of fear? A false and precarious piety, with roots in marshy ground! In an anguish-laden swamp, propitious to the growth of disease, lust, and hypocrisy!” (1963: 194)

Father Islas' private life is a mystery: we know nothing about it; the book cannot take us beyond the four walls. He's against marriage, for it "*huele a profanidad*" ("smacks of worldliness") (1947: 245; 1963: 202).

It is politically significant that Father Reyes takes over the religious retreats at this point (1963: 290). Indeed, Father Reyes did away with

*los toques lúgubres y las representaciones al vivo, teatrales, como el desfile con el ataúd la noche de la Muerte, los gritos y toques de trompeta la noche del Juicio, los olores de azufre y el arrastrar de cadenas la noche del Infierno; se suprimió el tiempo de tinieblas para la disciplina colectiva, encomendándola al fervor individual y privado, susceptible de cambiarse por otro género de mortificación.* (1947: 352)

(certain lugubrious elements, such as the procession of the bier on the night of the Meditation on Death, the cries and trumpeting on the night devoted to Judgment, the smell of sulphur and the dragging of chains to aid the meditations on Hell [. . .] darkness for the collective use of the discipline was done away with, and, instead, this was left to individual devotion, and could be replaced by any other means of mortification.) (1963: 290)

But in his agency, Father Reyes responds, significantly: “*Menos ruido y más nueces*” (“Less talk and more action”) (1947: 352; 1963: 290).

In contrast, though, is Father Reyes, who wants to organize a club for the Northerners. He tells Martínez that some sort of organization is needed to protect the people. Don Dionisio is so strict, and yet incredibly, he himself considers Father Islas even more so (1963: 192). He feels specifically that the problem with Father Islas is that he is so strict that it doesn’t allow for hope (1963: 192).

### **María**

María and Father Reyes share some important similarities; namely, in terms of main characters, it is they who exercise their empathy the most. And, like Father Reyes, María reads furtively (1963: 66). As Danny J. Anderson asserts in “Reading, Social Control, and the Mexican Soul in *Al filo del agua*,” there are “characters wrestling with



problems of reading—especially newspapers and novels—at the same time that they confront rising social tensions” (47). Though both characters display agency, and are even, to an extent, less inhibited than some of the other characters (1963: 68), there is a key difference between them: Father Reyes exercises his with more reservation., while María is more radical. For instance, even though he is responsible for introducing María to travel literature, he ultimately warns her about potential dangers and the possibility of corruption that accompanies travel, which she ignores. Yáñez therefore creates in the not only young, but characteristically youthful María, the opportunity for a fuller conversion than was possible for Father Reyes.

What relationship does reading have to the overall purpose of the work? As Danny J. Anderson carefully argues, Yáñez creates a work that will encourage a national imagining in the service of developing a “Mexican soul,” primarily through the theme of reading, or books, thus “*attempt[ing] to ‘cure’ the national psyche*” (48). Thus it is not a coincidence that reading is largely responsible for María’s eventual break from the norms of the repressed village. According to Mark Anderson, Carol Clark D’ Lugo arrives at similar conclusions upon studying the effects of the novel’s fragmentation on the reader. Following the subversive role of reading in the novel, she concludes that the novel was designed to awaken the extratextual reader’s critical capacities in a national context (“Agustín Yáñez’s Total Mexico and the Embodiment of the National Subject” 3).

María is important as a figure of empathy, for it is through her that the text shows how repression makes empathy impossible. Though Father Reyes may have somewhat more empathy in him, it is the adventurousness of María, in addition to her capacity for

empathy, which leads her into the revolution at the end. At the end, music serves the function of reopening wounds (1963: 269). The “language of music” is expressed (1963: 270), the effects of which leave a considerable impression on María. After the musicians leave, at the end of the work (quoted earlier),

*Con esta experiencia, María puede formular y formular categóricamente su antes confusa idea—hecho hoy convicción—de que nadie, nunca, en este pueblo ha sentido pasión de amor—embeloso y locura, entrega sin reservas dolorosa y dichosa, contra todos los miedos y al impulse de todos los riesgos—; el amor heroico que inflama las páginas de los libros por ella consumidos, consumida por ellos.* (1947: 330)

(The experience enabled María to formulate, and formulate categorically, the idea that she had earlier developed only vaguely. She was now firmly convinced that no one in the village had ever felt the passion of love—ecstasy and madness, complete surrender, both painful and happy, braving all fears and daring all risks—the heroic love that filled the books she devoured, and by which she was devoured.) (1963: 272)

Except, that is, Gabriel: the artist, the musician, the bell ringer.

The epiphany that María has following this scene of music frees her from an over-identification with the village. Damián, for instance, states accusingly, “*Usted es igual a Micaela. Son la misma mujer. La mujer que nadie podrá dominar*” (“You’re like Micaela. You’re the same woman. No one can master you” (1947: 379; 1963: 313). She is able to successfully remain in the village for a period of time without internalizing the criticism, the talk of the town, that she is met with. Rather than this causing her distress, as it would nearly any of the other villagers, she instead becomes too absorbed in her goals for her internalize such criticism. Thankfully for her, contact is not made between this dialogue and her; thus, her power is never diminished by it in the book, and her agency and capacity for empathy remains intact: “*Que se fué por su voluntad!*” (“[María]

went of her own free will!”) (1947; 394; 1963: 326), and the reader knows it is to join the cause of the Mexican Revolution.

Therefore, María can be seen as a figure who overcomes the oppression of the village. As mentioned earlier, a major push towards her freedom comes from her recognition of the other villagers’ inability to empathize, or to even feel any love towards another at all. In this way she transcends the gaze of the village by leaving it in an act of rebellion. This differs from the way that Father Reyes exercises his agency: in a more empathetic gesture, he remains with the villagers and the reader knows that he will work towards improving the village as best he can once things begin to change at the end. Nevertheless, in their own way, their ability to regain agency comes from a recognition of the importance of empathy and the horror that exists in its absence.

# **Haptic Empathy**

As Abbie Garrington states in “Touching Texts: The Haptic Sense in Modernist Literature,”

[T]he [modernist] period was one in which human bodies were becoming accustomed to startling new experiences – including most importantly the cinema and mechanized transport – that transformed the human sense of movement and of tactile interactions between body and world (Garrington 810).

We have seen how such modernist figures as Bloom and Father Reyes are constant observers, seeing what is around them and combining these observations with what he knows in order to place themselves in another’s shoes (although to achieve different aims, in each case). In this chapter I take up the question of how senses other than vision work in the service of conveying empathy aesthetically in modernism. Here, however, I demonstrate this through an analysis of *Ulysses* without an accompanying analysis of Agustín Yáñez’s *Al filo del agua*. Yáñez has been accused of focusing on the psychological at the expense of more tangible historical factors that contributed to the onset of the Mexican Revolution, such as crippling poverty and land reform<sup>18</sup>; and this significant lacuna helps explain in part why the haptic does not feature as prominently in this particular literary text. It does, however, make very visceral and frequent appearances in the works of such Latin American modernists as Miguel Ángel Asturias (such as *El señor presidente*) and Mario Vargas Llosa (*La casa verde*).

Senses such as smell, taste, and touch are perhaps articulated over and above vision most strongly in the “Lestrygonians” chapter. For instance, in “Legal Fiction or Pulp Fiction in ‘Lestrygonians,’ Karen Lawrence states that “despite the voyeurism in

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<sup>18</sup> See Mark D. Anderson, “Agustín Yáñez’s Total Mexico and the Embodiment of the National Subject.” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 84.1 (2007): 79–99. *CrossRef*. Web. 22 Mar. 2014.

‘Nausicaa,’ Bloom’s prime modalities seem to be taste and smell, in Kantian terms the more ‘subjective’ or chemical senses” (101). With taste, unlike sight, the external object is transformed as well as taken in, through a process of liquefaction. She finds ways in which “you are what you eat” is made Word in this chapter.

In constructing empathy in the modernist novel, however, I argue that the portrayal of what Deleuze and Guattari develop as the haptic in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) can function as a particularly important route for aestheticizing empathy. In this chapter I use Carels’ definition of the term, which is “the illusion of touch through other senses” (*Quay Brothers: On Deciphering the Pharmacist’s Prescription for Lip-Reading Puppets* 17). Here, touch is meant in Laura U. Marks’ sense of the term, in which it also implies a sense of knowing: while vision often acts as an optical tool by which we are moved to compassion (such as when we see that someone is crying and we sometimes feel sad with them), writers such as Laura U. Marks places emphasis on the role that the haptic plays in promoting a sense of immediacy, especially in film.

According to Abbie Garrington, “[t]he haptic sense combines touch – the reaching and touching of any part of the human skin – with kinaesthesia, or the body’s appreciation of its own movement. It also involves proprioception, a bodily sense of position and space” (Garrington, “Touching Texts” 810). Her book *Haptic Modernism* is useful here in that it complicates the notion of touch and immediacy even as it highlights the relationship between the two.

In discussing the connection between the visual and the haptic, Garrington references Laura U. Marks’ assertion that haptic films

appeal to embodied memory by bringing vision as close as possible to the image; by converting vision to touch [. . .] They do this in part by refusing to make their images accessible to vision, so that the viewer must resort to other senses, such as touch, in order to perceive the image. (Marks 159)

Marks' valuable insights into the connections between vision and the haptic have generated a great deal of work from those who apply her insights to other mediums. One might consider Julio Prieto's prints here, which, with their disproportionately close, exaggerated depictions, certainly convey a sense of immediacy. This can possibly be traced back even to the beginnings of the revival of the modern woodblock print aesthetic: in considering the aesthetic of Gauguin, Rudolf Arnheim notes the great impact that The Master of the Chapel of St. Nicholas, in particular his *Arrival of the Magdalen in Marseille* fresco had had on him. Of this picture, Arnheim points out that "The dominion of naturalistic coherence is replaced by the very different dominion of visual immediacy" and that "Spatial depth is reduced to a straight confrontation in the surface," and "Narrative interaction is replaced by the didactic clarity of visual coordination [. . .]" (Arnheim 176). One can see these aesthetic elements clearly in both Gauguin and Prieto's work.

Furthermore, in "Those Who Desire Without End: Animation as 'Bachelor Machine,'" Edwin Carels argues that in *Loplop's Nest*, a mixed media piece by the Quay Brothers, "resorted to a wide array of lenses to produce anamorphic distortion, blurring, and a deliberately crammed field of vision, in order to make it impossible to define exactly what the eyes were seeing" (Carels 17). Though the Quay Brothers are generally known for their animations, *Loplop's Nest* is an optical box that complicates linear time and understanding through visual space.

Likewise, in *Haptic Modernism*, Garrington uses Mark's work to look beyond film and discover the implications for the fusion of vision and the haptic; in this case, through literature. How are senses other than vision literarily depicted? Rather than in film or an exhibition piece, how is the connection between the visual and the haptic, constructed in text, and more specifically, in *Ulysses*?

Brought close to textural elements of a scene, the viewer is unable to gain purchase on what is depicted, responding by moving beyond looking and calling upon other somatic resources. Marks's haptic film, requiring the response of the viewer's haptic capacities, finds a near neighbour in the nearsightedness of Joyce's textural text. (99)

Thus, as Garrington suggests here, both visual and textural mediums intrinsically possess the potential to zoom in on a scene in such a way as to convey that what is occurring or present is no longer identifiable to the viewer/reader; and, in the absence of a reliance of vision, the reader is forced to rely on other senses.

In the "Proteus" chapter of *Ulysses*, for example, the narrative provides a "close up" of Stephen's immediate surroundings as he experiments with isolating different senses in order to see how dependent he actually is on vision. He concludes, as Frattarola comments in "Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel," that "as a striving writer he hears above all else" (Frattarola 146). And Stephen's orientation towards the musicality of lyricism appears in *Portrait*: in "Narrative Nets and Lyric Flights in Joyce's 'A Portrait,'" Bruce Comens argues that

In *A Portrait* that goal, the climax of the narrative, is most nearly achieved in the lyrical passages: lyricism, in Joyce's practice, is the closest linguistic approximation of presence, an attempt to embody or enact presence. Just as Stephen strives for fulfillment, narrative strives for lyricism, which thus becomes the primary means of escape from narrative constraints. (301)



Given the partial sentences, phrases, and even words that appear in *Ulysses*, then, this work is indeed a great example of a literary representation of the haptic and, as I will argue here, has the ability to highlight empathy in a powerful way.

Hogan, in *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion*, addresses the ethical implications for the partial image over the representative one. As he suggests, representative art “may foster the use of different principles for simulation for different groups (e.g., through highly distorted depictive representations of the emotional lives of out-group members[.]” (2011: 71). In such instances, representative art has actually the potential to become patently *anti-empathic*. An obscured or partial depiction, however, can act as an aesthetic move that would be highly effective for gesturing towards something like empathy.

While Garrington draws on Mark’s theorization of the visual and the haptic, she also problematizes the fact of the connection between the two. Her first chapter, “James Joyce’s Epidermic Adventures,” argues that an examination of the haptic in *Ulysses* reveals a greatly myopic perspective. For her, as for Marks, the haptic evokes the erotic and the egoistic. She opens her chapter with the disgust that two prominent female modernist writers had for Joyce: Rebecca West, whom she quotes as saying “I do not particularly like *Ulysses* or James Joyce” (73), and Virginia Woolf, who apparently wrote that she found *Ulysses* “illiterate” and “underbred,” while also mentioning her disgust with Joyce’s “autoeroticism.”<sup>19</sup> While Garrington will complicate Woolf’s claims to an extent, she also spends much of the chapter supporting the latter comment,

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Garrington, *Haptic Modernism*, 75.

using Joyce's myopia as a means of connecting the author to his work: she argues that the blind who choose to go blind, that is, that keep going nearer and nearer until myopia forms, are self-concerned and masturbatory. She points out that Joyce's eyesight is poor, and thus this must have greatly influenced his work, and focusing on Joyce's highly autoerotic portrayal of Leopold Bloom: "Ulysses, structured in relation to the *Odyssey* [. . .], is also mythic in this second sense, as a book of the closed or veiled eye, exploring the limits of vision, and written by another poet of the myopic, another man with a 'groping mind'" (Garrington, *Haptic Modernism* 98), and by including Molly as an example, desirous as she is to masturbate in the dark.

However, in an opposite light, we might note that, according to Keen, Woolf regarded James Joyce as one of the few "spiritual" writers, "concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame that flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious [. . .]."<sup>20</sup> Thus, Woolf did not meet Joyce's work entirely with disgust and condescension: for if she allows Joyce held the capacity to knowingly portray moments of autoeroticism without condemning them away for fear of societal judgment, then certainly empathy too would have room to arise freely and be aesthetically expressed in his writing. And in not condemning some of the less socially acceptable aspects of himself (and thus allowing a space in which to "reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame"), this lack of judgment towards the self is what, in like manner, allows him to

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 58-59.

refrain from judging others, and thus allowing more moments of empathy to occur, many of which were discussed in the previous chapter.

For writers such as Margot Norris, the perspective of Joyce (through his myopia) and Bloom are not so closely tied. As she argues in Section 2, *The Woman as objet d'art*, of her “Who Killed Julia Morkan?” chapter, “By overdetermining his intertexts Joyce can generalize the argument, that the female is aestheticized in the service of a disavowed violence, and that male discourse in tribute to female beauty must be scrutinized critically as symptom and mask of murder and rape” (Norris 101).

While Garrington may be correct, then, insofar as she chooses particular moments of the text that do focus on Bloom’s erotic nature, and that this is accomplished by the myopic vision of Joyce (both figuratively in terms of his writing style and literally in terms of his actual eyesight), it would be a mistake to overemphasize these aspects of Bloom at the expense of an account of how the haptic also figures into Bloom as an empathic character. For in not recognizing the picture depicted, in being unable to recognize it, the reader is called upon to reach out and explore more, and this reaching out is not always erotic.

In tying vision to the tactile, Garrington argues that Bloom’s aestheticization of female characters (as discussed in my earlier chapter on overdetermination) allows his optical input to be converted into a sense of touch, as he imagines or intuits the corresponding touch of the female. A work of art such as a statue is particularly appropriate here, and so she demonstrates multiple moments when the texts turns from a visual portrayal of a female to the contemplation of the form and figure of a statue.

But as Laura McMahon points out in *Cinema and Contact: The Withdrawal of Touch in Nancy, Bresson, Duras and Denis*, the immediacy that vision might promise or gesture to through the haptic is not necessarily, or even likely, guaranteed. Instead, she follows Derrida's submission that "optical intuitionism [. . .] is underwritten by a haptical intuitionism [. . .]" (McMahon 21). Here she draws on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the haptic from *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which an "intuitionist gesture" allows the scopic to retain a sense of touch, and "vision acts as a temporary cipher for a promise of presence that only touch would be able to fulfill" (21). The theorists that McMahon uses in her work "link touch to a destabilization of concepts of identity, propriety, immediacy and presence" (2). This is opposed to "the fusional model found in recent theories of embodied spectatorship" (3). That this way of examining the haptic empathy occurs within this separation means that it is less likely to manifest as projection, and in this way allows one to come closer to seeing the other as separate from oneself, a necessary step since genuine empathy cannot occur if one cannot first see oneself as separate from another. While Bloom at times draws upon his own conceptions of blindness in the stripling scene, as we will see, and at others one social concepts of blindness in his attempt to understand otherness, he also, as I will show, moves towards a genuine recognition of the otherness of the man, and paradoxically, these are some of the most genuinely empathetic moments that he has.

This analysis disrupts readings of the optical as interconnected with a unified sense of identity, such as what we see in earlier phenomenological thinkers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who writes, "the fact that I am able to draw together in it [a

mental bird's-eye view of the flat] all habitual perspectives is dependent on my knowing that one and the same embodied subject can view successively *from* various positions” (Merleau-Ponty 235).

### **The Stripling Scene**

As the character Leopold Bloom demonstrates here, being in “touch” with the environment promotes an increased awareness of one’s own body and one’s environment. As Erwin R. Steinberg points out in “‘Lestrygonians,’ A Pale ‘Proteus’?” “[Bloom’s stream of consciousness] manifests the warmth of generous concern for hungry seagulls, the public welfare, and a blind stripling” (Steinberg 81). This rich passage toward the end of “Lestrygonians” is a useful one for understanding the difference between sympathy and empathy, and how easily and fluidly one can transform into the other. AnnKatrin Jonsson states in regard to the stripling scene, “Here it is Bloom who experiences an other through touching him, and experience that seems to bring on thoughts that emphasize difference: ‘Wonder if he has a name’ [*U* 8:1098]. However, as Bloom tries to place himself in the blind’s man’s position, when wanting to find out if it is possible to feel the black of the hair or the white of the skin, the body once again becomes a common denominator” (*Ethics and the Modernist Subject in James Joyce's Ulysses, Virginia Woolf's The Waves and Djuna Barnes's Nightwood* 71). Thus it is precisely this heightened awareness that draws Bloom to such a figure in the first place and allows for the sustained consideration of the implications of a greater awareness of the body.

Though, like Hogan, Siân White does not discuss the haptic directly, he nevertheless demonstrates that the stripling scene provides significant moments of empathy in “Senses, Sympathy, and Intimate Aesthetics” through an aesthetics of partial representation. He focuses on the connections that can be drawn in that scene between touch and empathy,<sup>21</sup> associating the partial image, and touch, with an ethical connection between two individuals. He describes the blind stripling as “a figure that evokes in Bloom a conscious curiosity about perception and the senses, as well as feelings of pity and empathy” (White 505).

Interestingly, though Bloom does demonstrate empathy towards the blind stripling, his individuality is recognized by Bloom but not necessarily performed by the text. This aspect is in keeping with modernist aesthetics, of the alienated subject. For instance, though Enda Duffy argues in *The Subaltern Ulysses* that “The blind stripling [. . .] aggressively claiming his right to the streets, is one of the masses who now stakes a claim for himself as an individual” (here, Duffy is countering characters such as the blind stripling to Cashel Boyle O’Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell as an “imperial flaneur” (Duffy 66).

Because the focus is primarily on a monstrous, desiring other, Lacanian theory clarifies modernist subjectivity as it is portrayed in literature, rather than emphasizing the subject’s more empathic capabilities. Ruti complicates Lacanian theory by pointing out that, though such theory may highlight the ‘monstrous’ aspects of the other, it is just a

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<sup>21</sup>Though he does not explicitly mention haptic visuality, does connect touch with empathy in one section of his article entitled “Sense and Empathy of the Senses and Making Sense of Empathy: The Stripling and Bloom.” See Siân E. White, “O, despise not my youth!”: Senses, Sympathy, and an Intimate Aesthetics in *Ulysses*,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 51.4 (2009): 503-536. JSTOR. Web.

focus; and as such, Lacanian theory by itself “can eclipse the realization that, ultimately, we have a great deal in common with each other, that we *can* to some extent understand and even sympathize with the other” (*The Singularity of Being: Lacan and the Immortal within* [TSB] 211). Attempting to bring theory back to the ground for a moment, she asserts,

It seems fairly obvious that most of us are capable of projecting from the self to the experiences of the other so that a degree of empathetic understanding becomes possible. As much as we might (rightly) worry about the ethical pitfalls of using the self as a point of comparison, it is also the case that we are capable of meaningful relationality in part precisely because we have the ability to detect the similarities between self and other, because we can often (not always, but often) assume a measure of psychological and emotional symmetry. (TSB 211)

The type of empathy that Ruti here describes corresponds to a few different conceptions of empathy: Intuiting or Projecting Oneself into Another’s Situation; Imagining How Another is Thinking and Feeling; Imagining How One Would Think and Feel in the Other’s Place; and Feeling for Another Person Who is Suffering<sup>22</sup> (3–15). While the first three types of empathy suggest moments in which one is “projecting from the self to the other so that a degree of empathic understanding becomes possible,” the last type of empathy refers to a personal *reaction* to what another is thinking or feeling.

### **Intuiting or Projecting Oneself into Another’s Situation**

This is the most aesthetic type of empathy, in which a subject imagines the state of another – not a specific other, but a more generalized other. Theodor Lipps speculated

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22 Here, and for the rest of this chapter, the different conceptions of empathy that I use are formally taken from Daniel Batson’s “These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena,” *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, 2009, p. 3–15.

that artists would engage in empathy so as to better represent that with which they were empathizing. It should also be noted that this form of empathy was broad enough to include objects as well as humans – so for instance, one might imagine what it would be like to be a wave in an ocean.

Emphasizing a choreographical perspective, Susan Foster's description of empathy corresponds most closely with this type of empathy. She ties her description to the original German term *Einfühlung*, and emphasizes a tangible, tactile sense of empathy: "a kind of physical connection between viewer and art in which the viewer's own body would move into and inhabit the various features of the artwork," adding that "[w]hen the term first came into English usage at the beginning of the twentieth century, it likewise connoted a strong physical responsiveness to both people and objects" (Foster 10). Though she points out that the term does take an inward, psychological turn as the twentieth century progresses, her interest remains with the original way of thinking of empathy, since this most closely addresses her concerns with empathy in dance, choreography, and kinesthesia.

Given that Bloom is, of course, a fictional character, and that his thoughts are in turn expressed as fictional representations, this definition pertains to his reaction to the blind stripling in a particularly interesting way. By imagining that the stripling must have different tastes, for example, he is imagining the stripling as a generalized, blind "other."

In the early twentieth century, when this form of empathy was still commonly discussed, Vernon Lee was keenly interested in this aestheticized form of understanding another person or object. As Royal A. Gettman explains,



Though the concept had been broached as early as 1858 by Lotze in his *Mikrokosmos* and had been discussed fully by Lipps in *Raumaesthetik* [1893], *empathy* was put into common currency by Vernon Lee's influential *The Beautiful*, a Cambridge Manual published in 1913. But several years before that—and, it seems, prior to her reading of Lipps—Vernon Lee had put forward the concept of empathy in 'Beauty and Ugliness,' and essay published in *The Contemporary Review* [1897]. ("Vernon Lee: Exponent of Aestheticism" 50–51)

Importantly, however, Lee had a slightly different perspective on this form of empathy, as Gettmann argues. Conceiving of this type of empathy as more of a “merging” than a “projecting into,” Lee saw empathy as “neither egotistical absorption and projection nor a passive, empty surrender: it is a collaboration” (51). According to Lee, Groos and Lipps' conception of empathy suggest that whatever the mind is empathizing with produces a corresponding reaction in the body (Preston, "Joyce's Reading Bodies and the Kinesthetics of the Modernist Novel 236).

Garrington is correct in finding moments of autoeroticism in this scene, as when she claims that

The presence of the stripling in Joyce's text in fact draws out Bloom's haptic approach to female beauty, affording the latter an opportunity to consider the essentials of curve-appreciation, and leading to the conclusion that the grasp, *prehendere*, enables the imaginative conjuring of form, just as the visual contemplation of form enables the fantasy of touch. (Garrington, *Haptic Modernism* 103)

Though Garrington's claim that Bloom experiences yet another autoerotic moment in his consideration, “Must be strange not to see her. Kind of a form in the mind's eye” (1986: 149, 8.1127; 1990: 182) is absolutely valid, it is also nevertheless the case that Bloom is simultaneously engaging in a form of empathy. The topic of female form is only one of many avenues that Bloom uses as a way of thinking about the experience of blindness. Of the types of empathy mentioned here, only two strongly involve an emotional

*reaction*; the rest involve feeling the feelings or the thoughts of another, or working to achieve this aim in one way or another, and that is what Bloom is doing here.

### **Imagining How Another is Thinking and Feeling**

While there are different conceptualizations of this particular definition of empathy, one of these in particular is most relevant here, in which, “[a]t issue is not so much what one knows about the feelings and thoughts of the other but one’s *sensitivity* to the way the other is affected by his or her situation” (Batson 7, emphasis mine). To engage in an empathetic act does not necessarily guarantee accuracy; but the openness to allowing an other’s difference to exist, and trying to understand that is an act which well corresponds to White’s suggestion that “Bloom’s ability to empathize and the accuracy of his interpretation of the blind stripling’s experience are less important than his desire and openness to empathizing” (507).

This form of empathy is quite different from the one before it. The former relates more to empathizing with a construct or a more generalized person or thing (i.e., “a stockbroker,” “a six-year-old”), and this may be why Bloom draws upon society’s presuppositions in order to try and understand the stripling’s perspective. However, this is not his only approach to trying to better understand and experience how the stripling experiences life.

When one is Imagining How Another is Thinking and Feeling, it is a *specific* other with whom one is trying to empathize. That is, there are moments when Bloom attempts to empathize with how the stripling *himself* thinks and feels, as compared to

when he tries to understand the stripling as “someone who is blind.” Bloom wonders about his name, wanting more information about him specifically. At the scene’s opening, Bloom is able to intuit the stripling’s position, but confirms with him via speech, noting to himself that he “[b]etter not do the condescending” (1986: 148, 8.1092). The stripling holds a slender cane, which is not great support, and is very cautious. “The cane moved out trembling to the left” (1986: 148, 8.1082). His hand was limp, and Bloom guided it.

Nevertheless, at least initially, he seems to lack the awareness to prevent it from happening. Bloom intuits that the stripling is getting a sense of him via touch; if true, that would mean that the stripling is similarly engaging in a sort of empathic, intuitive projection in order to get at Bloom’s interiority. Garrington does briefly allow something positive for the haptic insofar as the text clearly emphasizes Bloom’s acknowledgement of the stripling’s abilities:

Yet more importantly, it proposes that blindness is not simply a matter of the eye, that those with working eyeballs might very well fail to look, and, by implication, that blindness may simply be another way of seeing: “Queer idea of Dublin he must have, tapping his way round by the stones” [Joyce 2008: 173]. (Garrington, *Haptic Modernism* 102)

His thoughts suggest a comparison between what is “normal” and what the stripling is experiencing: at this point, he clearly still registers the stripling as separate, considering his perspective very clearly from a seeing-person’s standards.

### **Imagining How One Would Think and Feel in the Other's Place**

Different from the previous concept of empathy, Imagining How One Would Think and Feel in the Other's Place involves a greater internalization of the other; in this conception, one might engage in a sort of "role playing," in an attempt to have a more embodied experience of what the other might be thinking. While this type of empathy does bear some resemblance to the aesthetic kind of empathy, in which one imaginatively projects oneself into the experience of an other, the latter focuses more on the aesthetic experience of the other, while the focal point of the former is the self's own experience of imagining the situation of another. It is also a more interpersonal conception than the aesthetic conception of empathy previously mentioned, which is broader in terms of the object of empathy.

Towards the end of the stripling scene, Bloom moves towards this conception of empathy as he experiences a more subjective, internalized sense of what blindness might feel like. When Bloom touches his stomach, he is trying to understand the other through his *own* experience, in a more tangible way than any of his previous thought experiments. Thus, his attempts at different forms of empathy ultimately return him to himself and his own experience.

It is important that he attempts this only after interacting with the stripling, and thinking and feeling through a number of scenarios; thus this effort is a significant one: the previous experiences and exercises allowed Bloom to recognize, to the best of his ability, his difference from the stripling; it is only after this separation is recognized, that one may have even a chance of empathizing with the other. Of course, some of Bloom's

thoughts are based on stereotypes and societal speculations, but per Joyce's aesthetic empathy, at other times Bloom is genuinely engaged with an attempt to understand the blind stripling as a specific other. This is what Mary Bittner Wiseman would call "Empathetic Identification," which occurs "[w]hen someone deliberately imagines himself to be having another's experience [. . .]" (Wiseman 108).

### **Condescending Pity**

Bloom does not, however, always engage with the stripling empathically. The concept of "Feeling for Another Person Who is Suffering" bears some relationship to pity insofar as both are personal *reactions* to another's state (as opposed to the preceding examples, which are related to knowing or feeling the *other's* state, or at least what that might be like). Pity suggests that one feels bad for another insofar as the former is simultaneously comparing the other's state to their own, which can produce a sort of "looking down upon" feeling. White phrases Bloom's instances of pity somewhat more negatively:

Although Bloom does exhibit pity, a condescending form of sympathy [. . .], his reaction to the stripling generally reflects a more intimate empathy; he not only feels for the youth's difficulties and desires to help but also imagines himself figuratively in the stripling's shoes. (506)

Similarly, albeit somewhat less negatively, Garrington notes:

While the stripling's hand is "seeing," however, his feet are not: "Mr Bloom walked behind his eyeless feet" [Joyce 2008: 173]. The knowing hand is assumed to have increased in sensitivity and capacities as a result of the stripling's blindness, yet his situation as a fellow pedestrian is more precarious, and it is this that elicits sympathy from the veteran perambulator Bloom: "poor young fellow! [173]" (102)

Bloom feels this both toward the beginning, and at the end, after he touches his stomach; interestingly, however, he explicitly acknowledges that it is pity that he feels (1986: 149, 8.1150).

Many social psychologists, philosophers, and neuroscientists, however, conceptualize this state of “Feeling for Another Person Who is Suffering” as “Empathic Concern.” Empathic concern, in social psychology, is often thought of as a form of altruistic action, in which one is genuinely interested in offering help, but is not driven by egoistic motivations. Bloom’s offer that marks the beginning of this scene could be considered that: after all, in terms of what the text shows, nothing more appears to motivate Bloom to help the stripling than his simple observation, “No tram in sight. Wants to cross” (1963: 148, 8.1076). The text, ultimately, provides no clear motivation for helping the stripling beyond the possibility that the stripling might want or need help. Therefore, the stripling scene offers the reader a glimpse of empathy in its most ethical light: one in which the helping subject (in this case, Bloom) is motivated by selflessness; perhaps the only “self”-motivated trait that could be said to be present at this moment is curiosity: the rest is concern.

## **Conclusion**

As I maintain throughout this project, modernist works, such as those by James Joyce and Agustín Yáñez, open up new ways of understanding empathy both through their content and their aesthetics, despite what is generally considered to be a focus on the expression of alienation. Examining Joyce's influence on Yáñez allows for a fresh return to *Ulysses* and what it, and *Al filo*, can tell us about empathy.

Some theorists of empathy stress the necessity of recognizing difference between self and other. If one mistakes another for oneself, one does not see the other as fully other, does not recognize the difference and the agency of the other; then mere projection is the consequence, and empathy is not possible. An inability to recognize difference is precisely what Lacan critiques in his emphasis on the "radical otherness" of the other. In this way, though Lacan was not a theorist of empathy, his psychoanalytic model is useful for maintaining an awareness of one's separateness for another that many theorists of empathy stress as a necessary prerequisite for empathy (as indeed it is).

Other theorists, however, stress the need for recognition of a unity that binds individuals together in order for empathy to take place. Nissim-Sabat, for instance, posits an underlying connectedness beyond the difference of the other, a "directedness toward recognition of transcendental intersubjectivity" (150)." Her focus on the idea of "a sole psychic framework" highlights the aspect of ourselves that we do hold in common and that can help to motivate empathy.

In fact, as I attempt to show here, both perspectives are necessary for empathy, but need to be appropriately contextualized. I submit that modernist works can help point up both of these perspectives of empathy, as their aesthetics offer an unusual – and



therefore useful – place for the examination of empathy. Where might it occur in a realm in which alienation is stressed? The subjective expression that we find such a high level of in modernist aesthetics allows a character’s inner world to be better known, which does not guarantee but at least allows the possibility of an otherwise alienated subject being better understood. The overdetermination that occurs in modernism exposes the particular aspect of empathy that requires association, and that various characters engage in so as to motivate themselves toward an empathic perspective. The agency exerted in these works often occurs in the service of understanding the separateness of the other (as is the case with Bloom), and sometimes even toward prosocial behavior (as is the case with Father Reyes), thereby disrupting an emphasis on alienation that so commonly occurs in modernist readings. Finally, haptic empathy as it is portrayed aesthetically in *Ulysses* points up the necessity of embodied experience related to empathy: while some neuroscientists and theorists posit that mirror neurons allow us to see and at an automatic level “feel” what another is feeling, there are other senses that inform our perspective and allow us to engage empathically. Bloom does so in numerous ways, which I analyze in detail in this final chapter.

I would like to take a moment to briefly revisit each of these ideas in turn in more detail. My second chapter, which takes Lacanian psychoanalysis as its starting point, emphasizes how in fact it is precisely the detailed subjectivity, the literary depiction of radical otherness that makes possible two things: one, the reader’s ability to better understand another’s separateness and seeing the otherness of the other; and on the other hand, simultaneously gesture to the possibility of better understanding these modernist

figures. The psychologically intense moments of alienation that are depicted in the text, grant readers access to an interiority one would not have been afforded in real life. Also, that the characters mourn the loss of a feeling of connection further emphasizes that a capacity for empathy is there, but that the repressive conditions seem to prevent or strongly discourage its expression.

My chapter on overdetermination addresses the role of association in the act of empathy. Without association, empathy would be nearly impossible. Martin L. Hoffman describes “Direct Association” as the association of “cues in the victim’s situation that remind observers of similar experiences in their own past and evoke feelings in them that fit the victim’s situation.” Furthermore, he asserts,

Direct association differs from conditioning because it does not require previous experiences in which distress in oneself is actually paired with cues of distress in others. The only requirement is that the observer has had past feelings of pain or discomfort, which can now be evoked by cues of distress from victims or situational cues that are similar to those painful experiences. Direct association thus has more scope than conditioning and provides the basis for a variety of distress experiences in others with which children may empathize. (47)

Frequently, in both *Ulysses* and *Al filo*, it was precisely a character’s active attempt to relate the actions or situation of another to his or her own circumstances that allowed empathy to take place. *Al filo*’s Don Dionisio, for instance, understood the plight of another female by relating her to one of his own family members.

My chapter that underscores the relationship between empathy and agency considers empathy from the standpoint of similarity and relating oneself to another rather than emphasizing the crucial role of recognizing difference from self that I present in my second chapter. The poverty experienced in both countries is deeply felt in their

respective texts; however, Yáñez has a political project which causes him to stress prosocial action in a way that Joyce does not. Though my first chapter emphasizes that empathy is largely lacking in *Al filo*, there are still some characters – such as Father Reyes – who do exert both empathy and agency, and these surface much more in the act of prosocial behavior than we see with Bloom, insofar as Reyes seeks to improve the situation of the villagers, and is genuinely concerned about the psychological impact that their repression will have on them, even while at the same time being a priest who is expected to uphold such repression in the unnamed village. Bloom, on the other hand, does not have a higher authority such as the Church that influences him, so that in Father Reyes the incredible influence of the church is made clear, in line with Yáñez’s political project. In the case of Bloom, on the other hand, we see a character who is very adept at relating to a number of other men throughout *Ulysses*; however, the difference is that *Al filo*’s emphasis is on prosocial action, whereas this does not make nearly such an appearance in *Ulysses*, excepting the blind stripling scene which is treated separately in my chapter on haptic empathy.

In my chapter on haptic empathy I take up the question of how senses other than vision work in the service of conveying empathy aesthetically in modernism. Bloom is what Martin L. Hoffman would call a “mature empathizer.” According to Hoffman,

“Mature empathizers have [ . . . ] passed the developmental milestone of acquiring a cognitive sense of themselves and others as separate physical entities with independent internal states, personal identities, and lives beyond the situation and can therefore distinguish what happens to others from what happens to themselves.

Second, mature observers have a sense of how they would feel and a general understanding of how most people would feel in the other’s situation. Third, mature observers know that the other’s outward behavior (facial

expression, posture, voice tone) can reflect how he feels internally but they also know that these outward expressions of feeling can be controlled to some extent and mask the other's internal feeling (Hoffman 63).

Bloom not only recognizes, as I point out in this chapter, the identity of the stripling as distinct, he also spends a great deal of time attempting to accurately assess what the stripling might be feeling and thinking based on everything that he knows. He strains to piece together what he remembers, he associates his own experiences and tries to adjust for the difference between the stripling and he, and thus, he performs the necessary steps of recognizing the difference of the other and at the same time, attempting to place himself in the other's place to actually be able to feel what it might like to be blind. He also qualifies his assumptions and does, as Hoffman mentions as the third criteria of a mature empathizer, recognize how his subjectivity prevents him from knowing for certain what the blind stripling is thinking and feeling. Accordingly, we see in Bloom a character who is conscious enough to be able to *choose* empathy, rather than just demonstrating an automatic form of empathy such as emotional contagion (in which the feelings of another are "caught" by bystanders, a verifiable phenomenon) or in which Bloom in some other way feels for another without realizing it. Instead, the kind of empathy that Bloom typically exerts is made with conscious and concerted effort, as he struggles throughout *Ulysses* to remind himself (and thereby the reader) of the difficult conditions that inform the behavior of those that surround him. Consequently, Bloom serves as a testament to the difficulty of others, while at the same time typically refraining from engaging in prosocial behavior, as his ability to empathize is generally of

a more cerebral, perspective-taking sort, in comparison with the more overtly political *Al filo*.

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