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Allusive Mechanics in Modern and Postmodern Fiction
As Suggested by James Joyce in His Novel *Dubliners*

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ALLUSIVE MECHANICS IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN FICTION
AS SUGGESTED BY JAMES JOYCE IN HIS NOVEL *DUBLINERS*

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University of Nebraska, 2006

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James Joyce in his novel *Dubliners* conducts a series of narrative experiments with allusion, and in doing so suggests a new literary criticism based upon the allusive process. This new criticism of allusive mechanics considers the text in terms of its allusive potential for character—that is, the character is treated as capable of signification. Because Joyce can mimic the process of signification, it repositions the author to the act of writing and the reader to the act of reading. Character is greatly expanded through allusive mechanics because narrative elements like allusion in a text are treated as having a character-oriented value, thus repositioning the reader to both character and the text, enriching the entire reading experience.

As a mode of interpretation, allusive mechanics organizes a text from the point of view of character. In Joyce's "The Dead" allusive mechanics reveals that Gabriel Conroy, emerging from loneliness and self-absorption, can use allusion as a vehicle to understand and value the people and the world around him; in effect, to manage his own mind. In Melville's "Benito Cereno" allusive mechanics focuses on the judgment of Amasa Delano and his personal allusion of blackness and the role they play in the

formation and maintenance of slavery. In Cather's *The Song of the Lark* allusive mechanics reveals how Thea Kronborg uses the unifying power of allusion to bring together the people and places into the creation of art, allusion being a container. In Fauset's *Plum Bun* allusive mechanics traces how Angela Murray uses the allusion of blackness to first "pass" as white and then construct a viable identity in a racist, class-conscious, and gender-based world. Finally, in Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* allusive mechanics reveals how the allusive process and the act of reading can become pitfalls of thought, imprisoning readers within the act of signification.

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Introduction

In writing *Dubliners* James Joyce suggests a new way to read and consider allusion, and in doing so, encourages a new literary criticism. This new criticism, which will henceforth be called allusive mechanics, has at its heart the re-imagining of allusion. Broadly speaking, allusion is thought of as a literary device, like alliteration or simile, a tool for the poet or author to invite a specific kind of aesthetic experience, leading to the creation of a kind of textual object/moment. What Joyce accomplishes through a series of narrative experiments with allusion in *Dubliners* is to shift the focus away from the textual object and towards the process that creates the object. His characters have allusive experiences, and it is this simple fact that repositions the reader to the text, ultimately reshaping and redrawing the potentials of the critical experience. With *Dubliners* Joyce suggests that allusions can have a character-oriented value.

At its most basic level allusion functions more or less as an invitation, placed by the author for the benefit (or sometimes detriment) of the reader. But what if the allusive value of this invitation is not confined to the creation of a textual object by the reader in the act of reading? What if the invitation for allusion is present in the fiction for a character to “create” a textual object? Obviously, literary characters do not experience consciousness independent of the reader, but they are placed within a system or systems of signification. If Saussure’s idea of the signifier is taken to its natural conclusion; that is, the individual exists in a world of signifiers and consciousness is merely the production of signs, then it stands to reason that an author could mimic that activity of production. It is this mimication of the process of signification that makes Joyce’s use of allusion in *Dubliners* different from conventional usage, where allusion acts as a minor

textual enhancement. If characters are treated as capable of signification, then the approach to allusion, the very shape of the allusive act itself, changes. Instead of processing an allusion in a more or less traditional manner—recognition, acquisition of allusive contents, importation of allusive contents, comparison of allusive contents with host context, and conclusion—readers would look for these steps *within the narrative itself*. In other words, the character processes the allusion and the reader processes the character processing the allusion. Of course, not all allusions will have a character-oriented value, but the introduction of another interpretive thread does raise some interesting possibilities. The most obvious and perhaps the most important gain is the expansion of character. In “Araby,” for example, the young narrator is desperately trying to get to the bazaar in order to purchase a gift for his love-interest, a love that is one-sided at best. What is left unclear and unstated is why the young man feels like a “creature driven and derided by vanity” (35) at the end of the story. It has been speculated that the young man feels this way because he realizes that he has been a fool. What allusive mechanics does is remove some of the speculation by identifying specific cognitive causes for the young man’s reported behavior. By viewing the textual world as an allusive world through which a character passes, two competing allusions emerge in the mind of the young man. One, a personal allusion to courtly love and the grail-quest, occurs when the young man is talking with Mangan’s sister and “she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist” (32). The young man perceives this moment as an invitation to adventure, where braving the world of *Araby* in order to secure a gift is the right thing for a knight to do for his lady. The other allusion is to the Crucifixion. When the young man gets to the bazaar, he sees “two men counting money on a salver” (35).

He feels like a “creature driven and derided by vanity” (35) because he realizes that he was not only selfish, but that he had been a willing dupe in his own seduction. Only when he sees the sacrilege of the men counting money where the body of Christ is supposed to lay does he see his truth.

In addition to treating the text as an allusively significant environment for character, allusive mechanics also throws into question traditional concepts of allusion that form the bases for interpretation and criticism. The bracelet in “Araby” would never be considered as having any allusive value because it does not hold any obvious cultural resonance for the reader. But that is selling the creative value of the allusive process short. When Mangan’s sister plays with her bracelet, it could be understood as part of the overall presentation of seduction—the posture of the body, the dialogue, the careless twirling of the bracelet upon the wrist. But if considered through allusive mechanics, that is, from the point of character, certain cognitive imperatives, in this case the sub-cultures of love and religion, come into light. The courtly-love tradition is an established paradigm in the mind of the young man—“When she came out my heart leaped” (30), “and her name was like a summons” (30), “I imagined that I bore my chalice” (31)—and when Mangan’s sister twirls the bracelet, he may read/misread it as a doorway into that tradition. The only knowledge a young man would have on the subject of love would be the kind from books. What’s worse, and perhaps even more to the point, is that Mangan’s sister knowingly gives him that potential doorway. She doesn’t have to twirl the bracelet while she talks to him, but she does, and that makes it at the very least a covert attempt at suggestion. That does not mean that Mangan’s sister is consciously trying to ensnare the young man with the courtly love tradition—there is not enough

textual evidence for such a conclusion—but her invitation does take place within his cognitive space of the courtly love template as evidenced in the subtext. In order to make the argument that Mangan’s sister is using the bracelet allusively to entrap the young man, a person would demonstrate that both characters had a working knowledge of the tradition, and that the agent was aware. If she knew that the young man had attended Rossini’s opera La Cenerentola, where a bracelet is used as a sign of recognition (78) instead of a slipper, for example, then a case could be made for entrapment .¹

Allusive mechanics is a significant literary accomplishment for Joyce because it creates the possibility for a different interpretative thread—i.e., value system—by which to consider allusion. There will always be authorial and reader-defined values for allusion, but the existence of character-defined value for allusion alters the relationship between reader and text because it advocates another point of view, another sounding-board by which a reader can create meaning. In “Araby,” for example, Joyce was able to move outside his portrayal of the Irish paralysis—the overall theme in *Dubliners*—to suggest that seduction and salvation are allusive acts. By incorporating a narrative structure based on the allusive process into his fiction, Joyce redefines allusion and allusive interpretation, and in doing so, remakes textual relationships. The act of reading changes because the reader can now ask if an allusion has a character-oriented value. The act of writing changes because the author can imitate associative aspects of consciousness without having to describe them, thus enriching character formation. Of course, the burden is still on the reader to create meaning, but allusive mechanics raises the possibility for shining a light on some of the more nebulous aspects of interpretation, such as with the feelings of vanity in the “Araby” example. Whether taken as an Irish

cultural novel or a collection of Irish short fiction, *Dubliners* is replete with allusions that have a character-oriented value. “The Sisters,” “Eveline,” “An Encounter,” “Araby,” “Counterparts,” “A Little Cloud,” and “The Dead” all contain allusions that can be shown to have a resonant value for character. Because he continues to use these integrative allusive structures throughout *Dubliners*, the possibility exists that Joyce is trying to suggest a new way of reading and organizing a text. Allusive mechanics, then, is the study of textual structures generated from character-oriented allusions.

Published in 1856, *Benito Cereno* is a cautionary tale about the paradox of civilization participating in slavery. The story is centered on the *San Dominick*, a dilapidated slave ship cruising off the coast of South America. When the *Bachelor’s Delight*, an American sealer and trader, encounters the ailing ship at sea, the good Captain Delano decides to offer aid. Tensions begin when Delano notices certain inconsistencies between his expectations and the behaviors of the crew and cargo of the *San Dominick*. Only at the end when the captain of the *San Dominick* jumps into Delano’s rowboat does he realize that slaves have taken over the ship.

Melville constructs his paradox around the two leaders—Amasa Delano, captain of the *Bachelor’s Delight*, and Babo, the slave leader who orchestrated the takeover of the *San Dominick*. Through the character of Babo Melville presents the African man as being equal in cleverness and intelligence to the Western man. Unfortunately, as Melville clearly indicates, civilization is not the impulse that governs the human being. Babo is not civilized when he orders the slave owner murdered and stripped to the bone, replacing the figurehead on the *San Dominick* with his denuded, unconsecrated skeleton. When the *San Dominick* is later retaken, it is the Spanish court—a structure that

represents the highest achievement of Western civilization—which orders Babo’s body to be burned and his head fixed on a pole in the town square. It seems, at least in *Benito Cereno*, that the principles that allow civilization to exist in the long term—order, equality, and justice—are nothing more than fiction. African man and Western man are shown to be terribly equal.

After reading *Benito Cereno*, I was struck not so much with Melville’s image of equality but how Delano could continue to misread and misinterpret the world around him. At the very beginning Melville describes Delano as “a person of a singularly undistrustful good-nature” (239), making him by authorial definition a good man. And yet Delano’s judgment is not very good; in fact, the text indicates that his judgment is very poor. When the *Bachelor’s Delight* encounters a sea-worn *San Dominick* at sea, Delano decides to board her to offer assistance, as a good person would. But his sound judgment ends there. The entire time Delano is aboard the *San Dominick* he repeatedly fails to comprehend the truth of his environment—the slaves have taken over the ship. Delano is presented with a litany of inconsistencies in the behaviors of the “slaves” and “crew,” and instead of assessing the moment within itself, he rationalizes them away with self-created explanations based on his cultural expectations. It never occurs to him while he is aboard the *San Dominick* that the real crew is forced to play a charade. The most disturbing aspect of *Benito Cereno* is not the overt slavery and barbarism, but the reasoning and judgment of Amasa Delano. It is Delano’s example that deconstructs the greater project of Western civilization, for slavery and justice cannot coexist under any rational circumstances. It is the judgment of the West that is really on trial in *Benito Cereno*, and the results are still pending.

When it occurred to me that *Benito Cereno* could also be studied in terms of the process of judgment, I was reminded of Gabriel Conroy and his cognitive missteps in “The Dead.” Rather than evaluating the moment in itself, Gabriel superimposes his expectations over the people in his life, not seeing them at all. Delano suffers from a similar problem—he imports his cultural expectations to the *San Dominick*, believing that conventions of a slave-permitting culture are in place. His main stumbling block is his construct of blackness. Delano consistently fails to read blackness in any terms other than dim-wittedness, weakness, and inferiority, just as Gabriel Conroy fails to understand the women in his life. Delano thinks he has good judgment, and from the point of view of his culture—19th century America—he probably does. At the very least, he tries to do the right thing according to his culture by extending aid and friendship to the *San Dominick*. But the bottom line is that Delano cannot see. His environment and upbringing have corrupted his ability to read his world effectively. Delano equates the West with civilization, order, righteousness, and perhaps even manifest destiny. He cannot see Babo and the other displaced Africans as human beings. The possibility that the Africans are organized and possessed of cleverness and intelligence never enters his mind because, as Melville indicates through contrast, Delano’s process of signification has been severely corrupted by his cultural programming. The associative mechanism in the human brain—the allusion machine—can only make connections between those experiences it has been given, and if an experience is a negative one, regardless of the source, the allusive connection will also be negative. Delano misreads² the Africans not because he chooses to, but because the content for blackness given to him by his culture is pejorative. It is *how* he knows.

Published in 1915, *The Song of the Lark* is a novel about a young girl who dreams of becoming a world-class opera singer. What is interesting about Cather's tale of the artist is the attention paid to the Heideggerian distinction between what and how. Cather doesn't choose one question over the other; rather, both are explored. There is an essence to art and a process that makes art possible. Beginning in a small western town, *The Song of the Lark* documents the people, places, and attitudes encountered by Thea as she struggles to find her truth and her art. Cather makes it quite clear in the beginning that talent is not enough. Supportive people like Wunsch and Dr. Archie are critical to Thea's success, and without places of self-reflectivity like Pedro's Cup and Panther Canyon, Thea would never have been able to present Cather's thesis of art as container. The multitude of creative factors in Thea's acquisition of her art suggests that art, for Cather, is synthetic in nature. It is this quest for synthesis that makes allusion the perfect tool for both Thea and Cather, for it is the very nature of the allusive act itself to bring together the past and the present, to unify disparate moments in time, into one synthetic/aesthetic experience (Thornton 237-38). Thea uses allusion to bring together all the positive elements of her past into one artistic expression. Cather uses allusion to expand the element of character and unify her narrative. As with Joyce, allusion and character are brought together to create a new way of thinking about allusion.

Cather's use of allusions with character-oriented values begins early on in *The Song of the Lark* when Dr. Archie makes a house call on the sick Thea Kronborg:

“What are you reading?” The doctor reached under the covers and pulled out a book of Byron's poems. “Do you like this?”

She looked confused, turned over a few pages rapidly, and

pointed to “My native land, good night.” “That,” she said sheepishly.

“How about ‘Maid of Athens’?”

She blushed and looked at him suspiciously. “I like ‘There was a sound of revelry,’ she muttered.

The doctor laughed and closed the book. (13-14)

If these allusions are considered in terms of their reader-oriented value, then the poem “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage,” a travelogue about a clever young man touring Europe, could be associated with Thea, and the poem “Maid of Athens, ere we part” with Dr. Archie. The allusion suggests that Thea might be dreaming about getting out of Moonstone and traveling the world, or that Cather is foreshadowing the text as Thea moves from inexperience to experience as she develops as an artist, just as Byron did. Similarly, a reader might conclude that Dr. Archie also has knowledge of Byron. One could even make the case that it is here where Dr. Archie first admits his love to Thea, because the next line of the poem reads “Maid of Athens, ere we part/Give, oh, give back my heart!” (Byron 951)

As plausible as these scenarios might be, there is something else going on here; namely, the allusive exchange between characters. When Dr. Archie asks about the poem “Maid of Athens,” Thea blushes; i.e., she understands, the allusion has value for her. What appears on the surface to be an expository conversation between characters is really a dynamic exchange between minds. Like an author Dr. Archie uses allusion to communicate on a more subtle level, and like an informed reader, Thea derives meaning from his allusion, a meaning that makes her blush. Clearly, the allusions to Byron have more than just a reader-oriented value, where the author invites the reader to participate

in a specific kind of aesthetic experience. Because allusion can also be understood in terms of its value for character, the boundaries for that aesthetic experience multiply out as the allusion is considered not only in terms of how it informs the text, but in how it informs *within* the text.

Published in 1966, *The Crying of Lot 49* is not a novel in the traditional sense of the word, or, perhaps it would be more accurate to describe it as the perfect novel. Concerned with the ideas of fictionality and indeterminacy, Pynchon tells his improbable tale through the trappings of the novelistic form. By manipulating the elements of narrative, Pynchon creates concurrently both a novel and the impossibility for a novel. For example, character is manipulated through unbelievable names like Oedipa and Mucho Maas, Pierce Inverarity, Manny Di Presso, and Dr. Hilarius. Setting is manipulated with unlikely things like KCUF radio, the Yoyodyne plant, the Nefastis machine, and, of course, the ubiquitous trystero. Plot is manipulated through the introduction of at least five possibilities for resolution. The net effect of Pynchon's narrative manipulation are twofold. First, the possibility for narrative is destabilized because "the willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge 398) cannot easily function in such an overtly artificial environment. Second, because the reader can be manipulated out of believability, the covert nature of language and of writing is revealed; namely, that writing is impossible. It is the reader caught in the act of reading who creates the possibility for writing, which is to say, words cannot exist outside the activity of production (Harty 6). Furthermore, because reading is necessarily a productive act, Adam can never reach the finger of God. The act of communication, which is constructed around the premise that information is a passable quantity, is shown through

the fictivity of *The Crying of Lot 49* to be a twofold impossibility. First of all, words cannot exist outside of their intertextual field; hence, the trystero cannot be divorced from the circumstances of its usage. Second, and more significant, is that words cannot exist without an agent. It is Oedipa, in the act of researching the trystero, who makes the trystero possible. Oedipa will never discover the meaning of the trystero because to attempt to do so is to attempt to divorce a word or symbol from its environment. That cannot be done. Words cannot exist independent of their intertextual fields. Nor can they exist outside the process of their manufacture. Words do not and cannot exist, and so *The Crying of Lot 49*, like all other writing, is really untext.

Even though Pynchon is concerned with indeterminacy and fictionality and how they contribute to the impossibility of writing, allusion plays a significant role in *The Crying of Lot 49*. When Oedipa Maas is charged with the task of executing the will of Pierce Inverarity, she encounters a mysterious horn-shaped symbol. It is the continuing presence of the trystero which intrigues Oedipa, and so armed with the tools of the reasonable person—“grit, resourcefulness, [and the] exemption from hidebound cops’ rules” (124)—she sets out to discover its meaning. From the point of view of allusive mechanics, Oedipa’s quest for the trystero reads as an attempt at allusion formation. Rather than completing the process, however, Oedipa becomes trapped within it. She experiences recognition, acquisition of allusive contents, importation of allusive contents, and comparison of allusive contents with host context, but she never arrives at a conclusion. Oedipa begins the process anew with each manifestation of the trystero—the signified becomes signifier. In semiology the signifier or sound/word produces the signified or content, thus creating a unit or sign. With regard to the trystero, the sign is

never created. For example, while walking the streets of San Francisco after a long day of researching the trystero, she encounters a group of “aging boys” (110) on their way to the bar. When she spots one of them wearing a lapel pin in the shape of a muted postal horn, she has to know: “She should have left then and gone back to Berkeley, to the hotel. But couldn’t” (111). Oedipa doesn’t realize that she has become trapped by her process of signification. She cannot understand that meaning is an unachievable condition. The closest she gets to an actual conclusion is not a conclusion at all, rather a plurality of explanations: that she is dreaming the whole thing up, that she has stumbled onto an illicit network of communication that has functioned for years if not centuries, that she is hallucinating, that she is the victim of a vast conspiracy, or that she is fantasizing the entire ordeal (170-71). Like words themselves, Oedipa is dependent upon production for existence.

Chapter One

Selections from the Allusive Community

The first short story in *Dubliners* is “The Sisters,” a tale told from the point of view of a young man who learns about the death of his friend, Father Flynn. It begins with the young man wondering about Father Flynn’s condition:

There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke. Night after night I passed the house (it was vacation time) and studied the lighted square of window: and night after night I had found it lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. If he was dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of candles on the darkened blind for I knew that two candles must be set at the head of a corpse. He had often said to me: *I am not long for this world*, and I thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true. Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word *paralysis*. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like the word *gnomon* in the Euclid and the word *simony* in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work. (9)

What is interesting here besides the emphasis on paralysis are the phrases, “*gnomon* in the Euclid” and “*simony* in the Catechism.” “[*G*]nomon in the Euclid” is probably out of the realm of experience for most people not familiar with Euclidean geometry, and “*simony* in the Catechism” would be as distant for those unfamiliar with the Biblical account of Simon Magus. According to the “Notes” in the *Viking Critical Edition* of

Dubliners, a gnomon is “that part of a parallelogram which remains when a similar parallelogram is taken away from one of its corners” (Scholes and Litz 458). *Joyce Annotated* describes simony as, among other things, the “buying or selling of ecclesiastical offices” (Gifford 30). It seems that Joyce is foreshadowing the rest of his book. ‘Gnomon’ suggests that *Dubliners* might be read as a microcosm of ‘a greater Irish experience,’ a term I use grudgingly because there can be no such animal, but it’s the only phrase that works. And ‘simony’ suggests that the Irish have sold their souls, a theme that comes up again and again in *Dubliners*. But how do these mechanisms of suggestion work? What is allusion?

It is not a simple matter to define allusion. The indeterminate nature of language renders impossible the formation of a stable meaning. Any attempt at a definition is met with the post-structuralist observation that language is “always caught up in that crowded space of interdiscursivity” (Morgan 12), which is to say that any utterance or sign is never divorced from its linguistic and cultural environment. This is the same observation that Foucault makes in *Discipline and Punish*, except that Foucault takes it a step further by arguing that the placement of signs is never accidental, that any sign in a specific location is always a strategic act by a structure of power that wishes to remain anonymous (Said 705). This “structure of power” can run the gamut from the posting of flags at all government buildings or exit signs placed above doors to an author using allusion or a scholar analyzing a text. The issue of definition becomes even more dubious under deconstruction. Derrida has demonstrated that meaning can never be fixed because the act of meaning is always open and deferred (Said 689). At a given moment any word or sign suggests both something and something else, and so the search for a

stable meaning, a stability suggested by the word “define,” becomes an impossible one. If a definition for allusion is demonstrably beyond our reach, then what do we do? The solution, of course, is the cosmopolitan conversation, that ongoing free-play between the elements of culture, or for us Pynchon fans, that whirring of “zeros and ones” about the head of Oedipa Maas in *The Crying of Lot 49*. Free-play defuses Foucault’s “structures of power” because any cultural element that has access to the conversation can participate in some fashion. That does not mean the conversation lacks authoritarian elements. “Structures of power” may function quite well within the conversation, competing with one another for conversational supremacy through censorship or debate. The cosmopolitan conversation also passes Derridian criticism because free-play is always in motion, meaning deferred. As long as there are elements within a culture that can speak and have access to the conversation, the production will go on.

Since there can be no stable definition for allusion, we must rely on the cosmopolitan conversation for evaluating allusion and allusive thought. Now the question can be asked, “What does the allusive community have to say about ‘*gnomon* in the Euclid’ and ‘*simony* in the Catechism’?” Of course, it is quite impossible to represent any community because representation as a principle of organization fails the Derrida test. To claim that a statement represents a community is in reality an attempt to create a hegemony which seeks to deny the free-play of elements within said community. Because of this paradox, representationalism is a dead-end road as a means for discovery. The only course left is the consultation of selected elements within a community, be they great or small.

In *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* Earl Miner describes

allusion as “A poet’s deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual” (38). Two significant points are made here. The first, that allusion is a conscious act on the part of the author, and second, that allusion involves another source. These two prerogatives—intention and source—are echoed throughout the allusive community. While defining allusion *Modern English* states that “By tapping the reader’s memory, the writer or speaker brings the import of an experience—with all its associations—to bear upon present meaning” (Lazarus, MacLesh, and Smith 10). The key phrase here is “the writer or speaker brings,” because it signals the belief that allusion is an intentional act. In his *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory* Wendell Harris describes allusion as

The evocation of a person, character, place, event, idea, or portion of a text through quotation (exact or approximate), implicit reference through similarity, explicit reference, or echo. Such evocation or suggestion is intended to lead the reader to bring some aspect of the referent to bear at that point of the originating text. (10)

In his description Harris also associates allusion with the concepts of intention and source. At its most basic, allusion seems to be any reference placed by the author to enhance the meaning of his or her text. If this concept of allusion is valid, it is safe to say that Joyce is describing *Dubliners* with “*gnomon* in the Euclid” and “*simony* in the Catechism.” The trouble is that allusion, like language itself, is unstable.

In *A Handbook to Literature*, for example, allusion is described as also being necessarily indirect: “Strictly speaking, allusion is always indirect. It seeks, by tapping the knowledge and memory of the reader, to secure a resonant emotional effect from the

associations already existing in the reader's mind" (Thrall *et al.* 13). This quality of indirectness is also echoed throughout the conversation. Lazarus, MacLesh, and Smith make the same observation when discussing allusion:

Loosely, any reference, direct or indirect; strictly, an allusion is an *indirect* reference to anything the writer feels should be well known in literature, history, and the arts. By tapping the reader's memory, the writer or speaker brings the import of an experience—with all its associations—to bear upon a present meaning. (10)

Harris relates something similar when he says allusion "designates the intentional but partly concealed suggestion" (10). If indirectness is a necessary element of allusion, then "*gnomon* in the Euclid" and "*simony* in the Catechism" do not qualify as allusions because they are direct references. With the introduction of the quality of indirectness, a conceptual description of allusion becomes less tenable. It does no good to utter "technically, but not really."

If the quality of indirectness fragments the concept of allusion, then the introduction of a contextual consideration must destabilize it altogether. In "Art and Allusion" Stephanie Ross argues that "Allusion is a speech act whose referent is determined by the speaker's intent but also by the content of his speech. . . . Considerable contextual setting is required for the allusion to succeed" (65). Focus on the context in which an allusion appears has also enjoyed presence in the conversation. This position argues that the narrative has to confirm a reference in order for it to be an allusion. Miner describes this environment as "the special meaningfulness of connection" (39), something akin to Umberto Eco's "overcoding" (268-69) where readers experience an

“increase of informational possibilities” brought on by the perceptions of a *“surplus of expression”* and a *“surplus of content”* (270). If this is the standard by which allusion is determined, the references *“gnomon in the Euclid”* and *“simony in the Catechism”* may or may not be allusions. If it only takes a hint, a particle of subtext or a mere association, then *“gnomon in the Euclid”* is an allusion because Joyce uses the word ‘square’ in the second sentence, and since a square is also a parallelogram, then the father of geometry cannot be far behind in a resonant mind. The same can be said for *“simony in the Catechism”* because candles are mentioned. According to Gifford, candles are symbolic in the Catholic church: “The wax of the candle is symbolic of the Body of Christ; the wick, His Soul; the flame, His Divinity. If two candles: one can be regarded as a symbol of the Old Testament, one of the New” (29). Granted, these are very thin suggestions, but they are there. The obvious problem with context as a determining factor is that the allusive environments are not fixed. Do readers consult just the immediate environment of the first paragraph or the larger context of the entire short story or the greater context of the novel or even Joyce’s oeuvre? Even though the tale is about a young man learning about the death of a friend, it is called “The Sisters.” If the story is evaluated in terms of its title, then *“simony in the Catechism”* is definitely an allusion because all they—the sisters—care about is the death benefit of the priest. This is confirmed by both the narrative and the subtext. When Eliza, one of the sisters caring for the ailing Father Flynn, says to the young narrator’s aunt “Ah, poor James! God knows we done all we could, as poor as we are—we couldn’t see him want anything while he was in it” (16), it appears on the surface as though the sisters were piously suffering over their brother and priest. But when Eliza explains that Father O’Rourke “took charge of all the papers for

the cemetery and poor James's insurance" (16), the following exchange takes place:

—Wasn't that good of him? Said my aunt.

Eliza closed her eyes and shook her head slowly.

—Ah, there's no friends like old friends, she said, when all is said and done, no friends that a body can trust.

—Indeed, that's true, said my aunt. And I'm sure now that he's gone to his eternal reward he won't forget you and all your kindness to him.

—Ah, poor James! said Eliza.

There is little doubt to what the aunt means when she says "Ah, poor James." In fact, the sisters refer to Father James Flynn as "poor James" six times in the span of two pages.

The suggestion that Joyce crafts here is that these two sisters expected to be compensated for their suffering while caring for their priestly brother. To care for someone in hopes of getting rewarded instead of caring for someone because he is a brother, a human being, a child of God, is exactly the kind of corrupted act that "*simony* in the Catechism" would try to address.

The fluidity characteristic in an allusive-environment test isn't the only problem with using context as a test for allusion. What if the feeling of allusion is just an echo of a previous work? Several elements in the conversation have made a distinction between the author choosing to place an allusion and an author who happens to use potentially allusive language. Harris calls it a difference between "conscious recollection and unconscious incorporation of a prior text" (11) and Hollander addresses the issue through categorization by differentiating between quotation, allusion, and echo (16). The matter is further complicated in "The Poetics of Literary Allusion" when Ziva Ben-Porat begins

with Górski's distinction between "literary allusions" and "allusions in general" (106), and then develops an intertextual definition of literary allusion based on a four-stage process that seeks to establish "extensive relationships between alluding and referenced text" (Harris 13). The emerging problem here, of course, is the instability of the author and unpredictability of the reader. Joyce's "*gnomon* in the Euclid" does not strike me as an intertextual mine, but something like *Ulysses* does. In fact, the relationship between *The Odyssey* and *Ulysses* is so extensive that it seems to move beyond literary allusion. This "moving beyond" aspect of allusion is articulated quite well by Bernard Benstock in "Text, Sub-text, Non-text: Literary and Narrational In\Validities." While responding to the "allusion-hunters"—those who take allusions and really run with them to the exclusion of the primary text—Benstock offers up a distinction between "literary validity" and "narrational validity." There can be allusions that "lend literary support" and allusions that are "absorbed so completely as to expand their original shapes into transformed guise and significance" (361), becoming, in effect, new narratives. Given the fluidity of the contextual field of allusion, a test based on such a field is perilous at best. What is of even more concern is the strategy for dealing with allusion that emerges from the conversation thus far, namely, differentiation leading to categorization. Each scholar consulted would be able to distinguish *for his or her self* what is an allusion and what is not, but none of them is predictable because the act of reading is unpredictable. What is an allusion today may not be an allusion tomorrow. People change. Cultures change. Education changes. A person unfamiliar with *The Odyssey* would never make the connections Joyce invites his readers to make in *Ulysses*. Therefore, "*gnomon* in the Euclid" and "*simony* in the Catechism" might be read as nothing more than narrative

description. In fact, Bernard Benstock makes that very argument. Sometimes narrative is just that, narrative (358).

Despite the various arguments for what makes an allusion, there is something profound that emerges from the dialogue, and that is an almost tacit understanding that allusion is a process. This accounts for the tension that is seen in many of the attempts to define allusion. When *A Handbook to Literature* (1992) defines allusion as “A figure of speech that make brief reference to a historical or literary figure, event, or object” and then a little later says that “The effectiveness of allusion depends on a body of knowledge shared by writer and reader” (13), the inference is that allusion is an act of actualization. This Aristotelian distinction between *potential* and *actual* has also enjoyed time in the conversation of the allusive community. The distinction can be implied, as it is in *Modern English*, “Depending as they do on shared knowledge, allusions are truly successful only when the audience does share the knowledge” (11), or it can be developed directly, as it is by Ziva Ben-Porat, “The more complex process of actualizing a literary allusion can be described as a movement starting with the recognition of the marker and ending with intertextual patterning” (109). Unfortunately, to classify allusion in terms of potential and actual is to remain in the “grip” of Western metaphysics, as Said observed while discussing Derrida in “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions” (689). There is no such thing as “actual” because the process of signification is never closed. The “web of associations” (Ross 59) characteristic to an act of meaning is ever expanding. Consciousness is never closed, and because allusion is a conscious act, it can never be closed. Therefore, allusion must be, like consciousness, intertextual and open.

In a strange kind of way Martin Heidegger anticipated this gulf between allusion and intertext, or more accurately, the shift from stasis (definition, metaphysics) to discourse (process, indeterminacy) in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) when he made the distinction between “What is X?” and “What makes X possible?” [my paraphrases]. The first question presupposes an “essence” while the second is interested in describing the conditions of “existence” (305-10). Thais Morgan says something similar in his introduction to “Is there an Intertext in This Text?”:

By shifting our attention from the triangle of author/work/tradition to that of text/discourse/culture, intertextuality replaces the evolutionary model of history with a structural or synchronic model of literature as a sign system. The salient effect of the strategic change is to free the literary text from psychological, sociological, and historical determinisms, opening it up to an apparently infinite play of relationships with other texts, or semiosis. (2)

Two important points to emerge from Heidegger and Morgan permit allusion to be considered in entirely different terms. Instead of trying to articulate what cannot be articulated by defining allusion, it is possible to study allusion in terms of its process and structure. Thankfully, intertextual interpretations of allusion have already taken place in the conversation. E. R. Harty, for example, in “Text, context, intertext,” observes that the “text [or allusion] is not an object but a process; it exists only in the activity of production” (6). Ziva Ben-Porat breaks this process of allusion into four stages:

1. Recognition of a Marker in a Given Sign;
2. Identification of the Evoked Text;
3. Modification of the Initial Local Interpretation of the Signal;

4. Activation of the Evoked Text as a Whole, in an Attempt to Form Maximum Intertextual Patterns. (110-11)

What emerges here is the notion that structures or patterns are part of any intertextual event. Applied to “*gnomon* in the Euclid,” for example, the intertextual model might argue a visit Euclid’s *Elements* to consider through filtering of the evoked text the information relevant to “The Sisters” and *Dubliners*. Unfortunately, this process is filled with pitfalls. If an allusion can only exist in “the activity of production,” then there must be a producer. Consequently, if a reader does not read “*gnomon* in the Euclid” and “*simony* in the Catechism” as allusions, then they are not allusions, regardless of whether or not Joyce intended them to be so. The author has no control over the interpretive capabilities of his or her audience, as argued by Barthes in “The Death of the Author.” What constitutes a “marker” is totally determined by the reader. And since a writer unconsciously chooses the modes of signification that reflect his or her community, as David Hurry observes while discussing Kristeva in “Style, Allusion, and the Manipulation of Viewpoint,” any text or piece of text can spawn an intertextual event, regardless of intention. Furthermore, if a “marker” is perceived, there is always the danger of getting lost in a “maze of infinite postponement,” where the reader gets caught up in the process of signification (Gefin 445).

Even though the allusive-intertextual community is diverse in its representations of allusion, the consultation of selected samples has yielded an important observation; namely, the various ways in which allusion has been considered, from a simple referent to a complex co-dependency, from a device that enriches the reading experience to one that confounds it. Allusion can, as Marlene Springer has observed, bring about “the

pleasure of recognition,” “impress a learned audience,” “illustrate” the text, “buttress an opinion,” or “provide an air of universality to the literature at hand” (4-5). Allusion can also do much more. In “The Allusive Method in Ulysses,” for example, Weldon Thornton explores the function of allusion and how its capacity for synthesis was attractive to modern writers like Joyce, who set themselves the task of dealing with the cultural dissolution and schizophrenia of the modern period. The Victorian period, as described by Altick in his book *Victorian People and Ideas*, was marked by a series of catastrophic changes in the way Western man viewed his place in the universe.

Monetary power and privilege, which had been the right of the aristocracy, was starting to shift towards the production-oriented classes through industrialization. Of course, there were still the poor and abused, but the Industrial age saw something that hadn't been seen since Rome—a real middle class. More money meant more influence.

Prerogatives that had once been privileges of the rich or the church, such as literacy and education, became available to a much wider audience. The rise of the middle-class interjected an entirely new voice into the culture. The artist, who had been beholden to the pure ideals of the past, became a social commentator (Dickens and Ruskin), leading to more utilitarian legislation and government. Darwin's theory of evolution and the rise of the evangelicals shifted religious power and identity away from the church and put it in the hands of the individual. Psychoanalysis shifted the cause of our problems away from original sin and towards ourselves. In short, the Victorian period was the beginning of the end for the past as the quintessential reference point for the present. But what do we do with it? We can't throw centuries of human experience out the window. Nor can we serve it as slaves. The central artistic question becomes how to bridge the gap

between present and the past.

According to Thornton, the modern artist as a sensitive man or woman found himself/herself torn between the demands of the inner, “subjective” world of value and quality, and the outer, “objective” world of fact and quantity (239-40). Allusion was an attractive option for writers of the modern period because it offered two things: one, it could be made to invite a comparison and contrast of its present context with its previous context (237-38), thus promoting a immediate test of validity; and two, more importantly, allusion offered a potential link between the past and the present, between an earlier culture and own our own, between tradition and the modern world, thus forming a kind of cultural continuity in a situation where historical continuity was impossible (243). In short, allusion offered a way for artists and readers to retain the past, not because it was the past, but because the past—through the intellectual rigor suggested by allusion—can be made relevant.

Besides articulating the creative and cognitive possibilities for allusion, the allusive-intertextual community has also demonstrated how allusion can confound, frustrate, or even destroy the reading experience. In “False Exits: The Literary Allusion in Modern Fiction,” for example, Laszlo Géfin argues that “all allusions are illusions” (441) because “the more one tries to track down the ever widening intertextual field of allusions, the distance seems to grow between adopted and adoptive texts, showing an irreconcilable conflict and difference” (439). What appears at first to be an “open invitation” to “enrich the reality of the adoptive text,” is in reality a seduction into the myth of transcendence (441-51). In short, allusions *lie*.

On the surface it appears that at least two dichotomies emerge from the conversation. First, there are those who place allusion in the act of writing and those who locate it within the act of reading. Then there are others who feel that allusion contributes to the act of reading and those who observe that allusion makes reading hazardous, interfering with what the author has to say. Of course, these distinctions sound a lot like the old debate between the author as “the unacknowledged legislator of the world” (Shelley 792) and the reader who makes the text possible because “a text can only come to life when it is read” (Iser 2). But there is one shining commonality between the definitional and intertextual readings of allusion, and that is the role of consciousness. Allusion requires mentality, and since mentality occurs over the passage of time, then allusion must occur over the passage of time. An author using an allusion in the act of writing conceives the allusion and what it should accomplish in that specific moment, a moment that has a beginning, although in radical multidimensional intertextuality beginnings and endings cannot exist because no sign exists independently. The same observation can be said of the reader. In the act of reading a reader begins the process of allusion by perceiving “a surplus of content” (Eco 270), regardless of whether or not the author consciously placed it there. The intertextual fields available to the reader will always differ in kind and degree from those of the author, and so intentionality is out the window. Only when the shape and content of the reader’s allusive process is similar to the shape and content of the allusive process that the author experienced when the allusion was conceived in the act of writing, can there be what might be called “communication,” but since those shapes and contents can never be identical and can never be compared or divorced from their intertextual fields, true communication—that

idea of transcendence, the foundation of Western thought—is impossible.

Even though the allusive/intertextual community is divided as to what constitutes an allusion, four basic shapes emerge—allusion is the creation of the author, allusion is the creation of the reader, allusion is a literary device that enhances the narrative, allusion is an illusion, interfering with narrative formation. As clever as they are these four shapes create an interpretive circumference around literary criticism guiding discussion and research around the author or the reader. But what if another way to value an allusion was shown to exist. What if an allusion possessed a character-oriented value?

Chapter Two

James Joyce's *Dubliners*: Narrative Experiments in Allusive Mechanics

In preparation for his discussion of literary versus narrational validity as a test for allusion, Bernard Benstock makes an interesting observation: “Yet the basic assumption remains that if the original source can be located, its ‘meaning’ isolated and determined, and its applicability to the new text determined, a neatly constructed unit becomes apparent that establishes a specific meaning within the new text” (355). What is interesting here are the steps that Benstock identifies in what is clearly a process. There is the perception of an allusion [implied], identification of the source, determination of allusive content, and finally the application of the allusion. This is more or less the same process articulated by Ben-Porat as described in Chapter One. It is also similar to the allusive process I described in “James Joyce’s Narrative Experiments with Allusion in *Dubliners*,” although I identified five stages based on the act of reading. First, there must be something that triggers the reader’s conscious focus away from the immediate text. The presence of a trigger or signifier can be the result of intent, accident, or choice, but it is the reader’s conscious mind with its multitude of intertextual fields that creates the signifier that begins the reader’s allusive process by perceiving a “*surplus in content*” (Eco 270). Yes, the signifier in a text is not the same signifier in the mind of the reader. They are two different things. Allusion, like text, “exists only in the activity of production” (Harty 6). What is on the page cannot be what is in the mind. Every time a text is read, it is read differently because the field of intertexts brought to it is different. As noted by Harty, “Interpretation . . . creates a radically new text” (4). We never read the text an author writes. It is impossible. What we do read is a self-generated text, a

pseudo-text created simultaneously during the act of reading by our processes of signification. That is as close as we are permitted to get.

Once a reader begins the process of allusion, the next step is identification. This may be instantaneous or it can take years or perhaps never be completed. The problems associated with identification can be insurmountable, especially in the Western literary tradition where so many authors reference other authors. Kristeva's observation that modes of signification reflect community, and the West, if such a category or community even exists, has been signifying with the written word for 5000 years, longer with other modes of discourse. But that is not all. An allusion does not have to reference outside the immediate text in order to reflect the steps of the allusive process. The allusive process only requires the reference of another moment in time. It makes no difference if the moment is textual, or for that matter, transtextual, intertextual, hypertextual, subtextual, or metatextual. The shape of the allusive process is still the same.

Once the adopted moment is identified, the next step in the allusive process has the reader judging the breadth and depth of the referenced text. This problem can also be insurmountable. The volume of text to be imported in the allusive process depends on the interpretive capacity of the reader (Gefin 438-39); that is, the play of consciousness and imagination upon the individual fields of intertextuality. This step in the process can also be instantaneous or take years or may never get resolved. It is possible to get lost in the reveries of the allusive process, enjoying the referenced text or moment more than the adoptive text, which is why returning to the initial allusive process is a step in itself. After the textual volume has been determined, the next step in the process is to compare and contrast the adopted and adoptive texts. This step, of course, can also be quickly

resolved, take considerable time, or never be completed, depending on the reader. The final step in the allusive process involves application of imported information, which means a return to the adoptive text or to the activity of reading. It is important to note that any step in the allusive process is never closed and final, like process of signification. The constant play of consciousness acting upon the fields of intertextuality means that any step of the allusive process can be revisited at a whim. A reading by layers occurs at each step of the process, similar to the mechanics of fractal geometry in mathematics, where equations generate shapes that are infinitely repeated within themselves (Lotus 3). The activity of reading repeats the potential for reading within itself. Likewise, the process of allusion creates the potential for allusion within itself, suggesting that, in some degree, that cognition is fractal in shape.

A clear understanding of the allusive process is important because it is the foundation of a new way of reading suggested by James Joyce in *Dubliners*, an interpretive mode I call allusive mechanics. Put simply, allusive mechanics is study of the mimicry of the conscious process of allusion, where the steps of the allusive process—recognition, acquisition of allusive contents, importation of allusive contents, comparison of allusive contents with host context, and conclusion—are located within the text. It is a new tool with which literature can be considered. Take, for example, a moment from “The Sisters.” After the young male protagonist is informed about the death of his friend, Father Flynn, he goes to the place where Father Flynn lived the following morning:

A crape bouquet was tied to the door-knocker with ribbon. Two poor women and a telegram boy were reading the card pinned on the crape. I

also approached and read:

July 1st, 1895

The Rev. James Flynn (formerly of S. Catherine's Church;
Meath Street), aged sixty-five years.

R.I.P.

The reading of the card persuaded me that he was dead and I was
disturbed to find myself at a check. (12)

What makes this card interesting is the text that follows:

He had studied in the Irish college in Rome and he had taught me to
pronounce Latin properly. He had told me stories about the catacombs
and about Napoleon Bonaparte, and he had explained to me the meaning
of the different ceremonies of the Mass and of the different vestments
worn by the priest. . . . (13)

Observe, the young man *has an allusive experience*. What appears as narrative to us is a
personal allusion from the character's point of view. The card is the trigger. The subject
is Father Flynn. The allusive content is the young man's memories of his dead friend.
The compare and contrast step unfolds over the course of the rest of the story as the
young man tries to make sense of the loss. The final step of application or conclusion—
the meaning of death—does not take place in this story; Joyce saves that consideration
for "The Dead." What this example demonstrates is that James Joyce has worked the
allusive process into his narrative. None of the concepts of allusion consulted in Chapter

One would have identified this moment in the text as an allusion. The definitional approach would not get past the reader's point of view as the primary creative force behind allusion, and the intertextualists would not grant Joyce the capacity to mimic the process of signification in his text because signification must be conscious, and yet the young man 'experiences' signification when he sees the death notice. The problem, of course, is the presumption on the part of the reader that he or she must be the only agent of any allusive or intertextual process, but what if the process of signification has already taken place? What if the allusion has a character-oriented value?

In the short story "Eveline" a young woman is torn between a promise to her dying mother to keep the house together and the desire to live her own life. After deciding to leave as suggested by the two letters she had prepared—one to her father and one to her brother—Eveline sits by the window waiting for Frank, her lover:

Down far in the avenue she could hear the organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. . . . As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being—that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. (39-40)

This is another example of a personal allusion recorded in the text. The organ music is the trigger. The subject is Eveline's mother. The allusive content is the night her mother

died in craziness. Unfortunately, Eveline never gets beyond this step of the process, which is the tragedy and message of the story—the power of memory to enslave, the loss of self to familial obligation. At first it appears that Eveline has chosen life by going to the boat that would take her and Frank to Buenos Ayres, but in the end “A bell clanged upon her heart” (41) and Eveline is frozen to the dock, unable to let go of the railing. Eveline loses her capacity for rational thought, loses her soul, to the allusion of her dying mother. She is a prisoner of the past, like her countrymen, fettered by selfish love. As Ellmann notes while describing Joyce’s oeuvre, “the dead do not stay buried” (253).

By weaving the steps of the allusive process into his narrative, Joyce repositions not only the reader to the act of reading, but the scholar to the act of criticism by introducing a new value to the allusive process. Take, for example, a simple allusion in “An Encounter.” At the beginning of the story, narrator describes his introduction to popular literature: “It was Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to us. He had a little library made up of old numbers of *The Union Jack*, *Pluck*, and *The Halfpenny Marvel*” (19). If we approach these allusions in terms of the standard author-to-reader paradigm, not much is revealed. According to Gifford’s *Joyce Annotated*, these were

Popular magazines for boys, published in England by the Irish-born editor-publisher, Alfred C. Harmsworth (1865-1922). *The Halfpenny Marvel* began publication in 1893; the other two appeared in 1894. They were advertised as reform magazines that would replace sensational trash with good, clean, instructive stories of adventure for boys, what *The Union Jack* called “pure, healthy tales.” They featured stories of American Indians, explorers, prospectors, sailors, and travelers. (36)

The information Gifford provides is helpful in describing the periodicals that are out of intertextual field of most readers, but there is a problem: the pedantry of the scholarly approach casts the magazines in a light that is directly opposite to the narrator. If we approach the allusions from the narrator's point of view—as a character reading his world—an entirely different allusive experience emerges

Every evening after school we met in his back garden and arranged Indian battles. He and his fat younger brother Leo the idler held the loft of the stable while we tried to carry it by storm; or we fought a pitched battle on the grass. But, however well we fought, we never won siege or battle and all our bouts ended with Jo Dillon's war dance of victory. (19)

It is clear from the description that the magazines offer the narrator and his friends an escape to a world of energy, imagination, and value. This observation is confirmed by the narrator when he says that “The adventures related in the literature of the Wild West were remote from my nature but, at least, they opened doors of escape. I liked better some American detective stories which were traversed from time to time by unkempt fierce and beautiful girls” (20). The need for escape is a critical part of “An Encounter” because the overall posture of the short story is one of oppression, from Father Butler chastising Leo Dillon for reading *The Apache Chief* instead of his Roman History to the encounter at the end with the pedophilic sadist who would like nothing better “in this world” than to severely whip the narrator's friend Mahoney (27). Taken from the narrator's perspective, *The Halfpenny Marvel* and the other magazines are significant elements for survival. They are defense mechanisms against a world that seeks to control, rape, and ultimately destroy the individual spirit. The critical approach to

allusion and its emphasis on the author-to-reader pathway as the primary mode of interpretation does not reveal the value of the allusions that Joyce's characters obviously enjoy. The intertextual approach with its focus on production also fails to value character-oriented allusions because characters are not viewed as capable of signification despite the fact that Joyce can mimic intertextuality and production. It seems that a new way to think of allusion is taking shape.

Because Joyce can mimic the reading process through his characters reading their textual worlds, *Dubliners* can be thought of as a series of reading experiments, a treatise on how people read or misread their world. Every single story in *Dubliners* has a character who misreads his or her textual world, from the sisters misreading their brother to Gabriel Conroy misreading Lily, Miss Ivors, and even his wife, Gretta. It is one of the elements that binds the stories together, like the city of Dublin or the selfishness that pervades every chapter or the transtextual invitations Joyce leaves his readers.³ One example of a character misreading his world can be found in the widely anthologized "Araby," a story about a very young man in love who discovers himself to be in the end "a creature driven and derided by vanity" (35). It begins with a young man having a crush on the older sister of a friend, and the fantasies that follow:

I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my

confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires. (31)

When he finally gets the courage to speak with the object of his fancy, Mangan's sister asks if he was going *Araby*, a yearly bazaar held in Dublin (Scholes and Litz 462). The young man, whose quite distracted by the living presence of his fantasies, can't even remember if he replied yes or no. The interesting thing about the exchange is the behavior of the sister:

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. . . . She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there, and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

—It's well for you, she said.

—If I go, I said, I will bring you something. (Joyce 32)

The image presented here is one of seduction. The turning of the silver bracelet, the hand on a spike, the bowing of the head, the neck, and the petticoat all speak of sensuality and submission. Given that the young man is already infatuated with her and she knows it, he has no chance. He gets the money, goes to *Araby*, only discover the depths of his own vanity when he sees the men counting money on a salver. He misread her cues and was seduced, willingly.

It is clear that the young man is a willing dupe in his own seduction, but there may be more to it. From the point of view of allusive mechanics the seduction of the

young man and his realization of vanity at *Araby* could be the result of competing allusions in the mind of the character. This is further complicated by the fact that Joyce weaves several aspects of the courtly love tradition into his narrative. Whether it's deliberate allusion or an echo is unknown, but several elements of the courtly love tradition are present. There is the "slap," that moment when the knight notices the beauty of the lady for the first time. There is the swelling of the heart, and, of course, the secrecy. In "The System of Courtly Love" William George Dodd identifies four main elements in the courtly-love tradition based upon the book of Andreas—sensuality, illicitness, secrecy, and difficulty to obtain (4-6). Perhaps more telling is the classic example from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. When Troilus first beholds Criseyde, he wonders at her beauty:

And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned,
 And gan hire bet biholde yn thrifty wyse.
 "Oh mercy God," thoughte he, "wher hastow woned,
 That art so fair and goodly to devyse?"
 Therwith his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
 And softe sighed lest men myghte hym here,
 And caught ayen his firste pleyinge chere. (I.274-280)

Troilus is frozen, his heart swells and he sighs softly to himself, lest he reveal his state to others. This description is very similar to that of the young man as he watches for Mangan's sister from the parlour window:

When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall,
 seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my

eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood. (Joyce 30)

Even though the young man is not an adult as of yet, he nonetheless experiences the quintessential element of the courtly love tradition—“a passion arising from the contemplation of beauty in the opposite sex” (Dodd 4). His heart is enslaved, and he thinks of her “even in places most hostile to romance” (Joyce 31).

The presence of the courtly love tradition and its concomitant imagery of knights and ladies and the grail quest complicates the already obscure allusive potential of the young man because it is impossible to distinguish in this example whether the value of the courtly love metaphor is oriented towards the reader or the character. What is beyond speculation is the content of his fantasies. When the young man admits that “I imagined that I bore my chalice safely though a throng of foes” (Joyce 31), it resonates with the air of romantic chivalry. Allusive mechanics requires that we consider the cognitive space of the young man leading up to the conversation on the porch, which at this point seems overloaded with images of courtly love and the chivalric tradition. It is very possible that when he notices Mangan’s sister turning “a silver bracelet round and round her wrist” and her subsequent posture (32) that he allusively superimposes his chivalric sensibility with its expectations over his textual world. This is highly significant given the allusion to the moneychangers in the Temple at the end of the story because sets up one of the classic challenges facing young people during the transition from adolescence to adulthood—the competing and often conflicting messages of elevated texts or ideas

within a culture. When the young man arrives at *Araby* he finds the bazaar on the point of closing. It is at this moment that he experiences another allusion, although he doesn't know it:

Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Café Chantant* were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

(Joyce 34-35)

This description is the most significant moment in the story because it is what moves the young man to see himself and his situation in a rational manner. The allusion here is to the moneychangers in the Temple. The young man "recognizes" the church-like silence and then, on a subconscious level, perceives the sin: the two men counting money on a salver. The salver is supposed to hold unconsecrated bread for the believers. In *Araby* and, of course, in Joyce's Ireland, the salver holds money. No wonder the very next line in the story is "Remembering with difficulty why I had come . . . (35). The young man feels the wrongness of the situation. When he sees a young woman flirting with two young men, the suggestion is that he sees Mangan's sister flirting with him, which is why the story ends "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger" (35). The allusion to Matthew 21 repositions the young man to his own experience. He discovers that he has misread Mangan's sister. Her words, her manner and the twirling of the bracelet about her wrist

were not out of her affection for the narrator. She wanted a gift, and like a chump, he fell for it. The young man concludes that he has been played by Mangan's sister, and, perhaps even worse, that he was a willing participant in his own seduction. No wonder he is upset at the end. By weaving the paradoxical allusions of romantic chivalry and Scripture into "Araby," Joyce captures one of the key manifestations of the human experience: that life is indeed filled with mixed messages.

The focus of allusive mechanics on the process of allusion provides an opportunity to study how the associative capacity of the human mind functions, or in the case of Little Chandler in "A Little Cloud" and Farrington in "Counterparts," malfunctions. Both stories are about alcoholism and how the alcoholic mentality organizes—or more accurately, disorganizes—the world. When Little Chandler meets his old friend, Ignatius Gallaher, at an upscale restaurant, he professes that he drinks "very little as a rule" whenever he meets "any of the old crowd" (75), but the "rule" does not last long as Gallaher proceeds to subtly patronize Chandler by suggesting that his life is boring. When Gallaher asks Little Chandler if he has traveled and Chandler replies that he has been to the "Isle of Man," Gallaher replies "The Isle of Man! he said. Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good" (76). Immediately after Gallaher describes Paris with words like "beautiful," "gaiety," "movement," and "excitement," Little Chandler orders another drink. This pattern is repeated throughout the encounter. Gallaher continues to use romantic and life-giving words that belong to the intertextual field of the West to the point that Little Chandler associates Gallaher with adventure and life. Gallaher becomes an allusion for Little Chandler, a yardstick by which he measures his own life:

The adventure of meeting Gallaher after eight years, of finding himself with Gallaher in Corless's surrounded by lights and noise, of listening to Gallaher's stories and of sharing for a brief space Gallaher's vagrant and triumphant life, upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature. He felt acutely the contrast between his own life and his friend's, and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher was his inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation. Gallaher was only patronizing him by his friendliness just as he was patronizing Ireland by his visit.

The barman brought their drinks. Little Chandler pushed one glass towards his friend and took up the other boldly. (80)

Unfortunately, Little Chandler does not see what is happening to his ability to think. To compare one's life with another is a catastrophic failure in reasoning because to do so is to compare one construct with another without realizing that the currency of the comparison is fiction. He does not see that Gallaher is a lonely alcoholic who can only find pleasure in feeling superior to everyone around him. He does not see that his own thought process has been corrupted by the alcohol. When Little Chandler gets home, he continues to compare his existence to the allusion of Gallaher:

He looked coldly into the eyes of the photograph [of his wife] and they answered coldly. Certainly they were pretty and the face itself was pretty.

But he found something mean in it. Why was it so unconscious and lady-like? The composure of the eyes irritated him. They repelled him and defied him: there was no passion in them, no rapture. He thought of what Gallaher had said about rich Jewesses. Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full of passion, of voluptuous longing! . . . Why had he married the eyes in the photograph? . . . A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. (83)

The effects of alcohol on the mind of Little Chandler are crystal clear. His marriage, which earlier in the evening was a positive element in his life—“Little Chandler blushed and smiled” (79) when asked about “connubial bliss” (78)—is now skewed to resentment: “Could he not escape from his little house?” (83) But the fall does not end there. When Annie steps out to get the coffee that Little Chandler forgot to bring home, he cradles their baby boy in his arms. When the infant begins to cry, as they always do, Little Chandler despairs:

It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:

—Stop! (84)

The image here is dysfunctional to say the least. An adult holding his own infant son shouts at him for crying. Little Chandler's ability to reason is corrupted by the alcohol, and since the mechanics of consciousness are, in a large part, intertextual, he incorrectly superimposes the text of Gallaher—which is an allusion, a construct—over his own text

in progress. A rational mind would never substitute a fiction for identity.

“A Little Cloud” is not the only example in *Dubliners* where alcohol has distorted the intertextual performance of the human mind. An even more disturbing image of alcoholism and its debilitating effects on the allusive process emerges in “Counterparts.”

Unlike the structure of “A Little Cloud,” where the protagonist develops into an alcoholic, this story begins with a mind already corrupted. Farrington is a long-time alcoholic who no longer has the capacity for rational thought. He sneaks out of the office to grab a drink “Five times in one day” (89) and then cannot get his work done. After getting scolded by his boss, Farrington experiences rage and thirst:

The man stared fixedly at the polished skull which directed the affairs of Crosbie & Alleyne, gauging its fragility. A spasm of rage gripped his throat for a few moments and then passed, leaving after a sharp sensation of thirst. The man recognised the sensation and felt that he must have a good night’s drinking. (87)

Obviously, Farrington has severe emotional and cognitive problems. The contemplation of murder betrayed by gauging the fragility of Mr. Alleyne’s head as a problem-solving technique does not speak well of Farrington’s thought processes. Moreover, choosing alcohol as the balm for his rage is not a positive mental health choice either. Farrington thinks of alcohol constantly: “The evening was falling and in a few minutes they would be lighting the gas: then he could write. He felt that he must slake the thirst in his throat” (88); “The dark damp night was coming and he longed to spend it in the bars, drinking with his friends amid the glare of gas and the clatter of glasses” (89); “But his head was not clear and his mind wandered away to the glare and rattle of the public-house. It was

a night for hot punches” (90). Farrington is a sad figure.

It is with Farrington’s severely dysfunctional mentality that Joyce demonstrates just how corrupted the allusive process can become. Three insignificant moments in the text, which to a rational mind would not be linked, become linked by Farrington’s distorted intertextual mechanism, unfortunately, with devastating consequences. The first moment is created in the office when Miss Delacour, Mr. Alleyne’s love-interest, comes in for a visit:

Miss Delacour was a middle-aged woman of Jewish appearance. Mr Alleyne was said to be sweet on her or on her money. She came to the office often and stayed a long time when she came. She was sitting beside his desk now in an aroma of perfumes, smoothing the handle of her umbrella and nodding the great black feather in her hat. Mr Alleyne had swivelled his chair round to her face and thrown his right foot jauntily upon his left knee. [Farrington] put the correspondence on the desk and bowed respectfully but neither Mr Alleyne nor Miss Delacour took any notice of his bow. (90)

By itself, this description does not hold much significance unless it is viewed in terms of classism. The subtext and the actions of Mr. Alleyne and Miss Delacour suggest that they view themselves as belonging to a different social group from Farrington, but that is not a revelation considering Farrington views himself as a working-class hero. While being chastised by Mr. Alleyne in front the entire office and Miss Delacour, Farrington levels him with a brilliant retort:

—*You—know—nothing*. Of course you know nothing, said Mr Alleyne.

Tell me, he added, glancing first for approval to the lady beside him, do you take me for a fool? Do you think me an utter fool?

The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head and back again; and, almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment:

—I don't think, sir, he said, that that's a fair question to put to me. (91)

In his own way Farrington reminds the upper class that wealth does not confer superior ability. Of course, our hero spends much of the evening recounting his victory to his drinking buddies, but the triumph is mingled with sadness because the reader can see that Farrington had the potential to be something greater than an alcoholic working in a dead-end job, living only for the opportunity to drink after work. The dragon-slayer pawns his watch for some drinking money.

The next instance that will become intertextually significant in Farrington's mind occurs when he is at one of the many drinking houses. While sharing a drink with the boys at Mulligan's, "two young women with big hats and a young man in a check suit came in and sat at a table close by" (95). In itself the moment does not appear important, but Farrington's reaction to one of the women is quite telling:

Farrington's eyes wandered at every moment in the direction of one of the young women. There was something striking in her appearance. An immense scarf of peacock-blue muslin was wound round her hat and knotted in a great bow under her chin; and she wore bright yellow gloves, reaching to the elbow. Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace; and when, after a little

time, she answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes. The oblique staring expression in them fascinated him. She glanced at him once or twice and, when the party was leaving the room, she brushed against his chair and said *O, pardon!* in a London accent. He watched her leave the room in the hope that she would look back at him, but he was disappointed. He cursed his want of money and cursed all the rounds he had stood (95)

Once again, Farrington is presented with a seemingly wealthy woman wearing a large, fancy hat. The resemblance of one woman to the other creates an opportunity for Farrington's troubled mind to link the two figures together allusively, even though the figures are completely unrelated. This is significant given Farrington's final act in "Counterparts." When Farrington arrives home, he is in a fit of rage at the loss of face he experienced at the hand of young Weathers who beat him twice at arm wrestling, and in a state of fury at his lack of money. He learns from his little boy, Tom, that his wife, Ada, was at the chapel. When Tom offers to cook dinner, Farrington explodes:

—On that fire! You let the fire out! By God, I'll teach you to do that again!

He took a step to the door and seized the walking-stick which was standing behind it.

—I'll teach you to let the fire out! he said, rolling up his sleeve in order to give his arm free play.

The little boy cried *O, Pa!* and ran whimpering around the table, but the man followed him and caught him by the coat. The little boy looked about

him wildly but, seeing no way of escape, fell upon his knees. (98)

It is quite clear from the description that Farrington's judgment is disorganized. He severely beats—maybe even kills—his child because his fury and rage is amplified by his alcoholism. Even more disturbing is the suggestion by Joyce that Farrington's intertextual performance is distorted by his drinking. When Tom cries "*O, Pa!*" it is a good bet that Farrington either perceives or associates the plea with "*O, pardon,*" the apology cast downward at him by the young woman at Mulligan's earlier in the evening. Because intertextuality does not require exactitude, an intertextual mechanism distorted by alcoholism would be extremely prone to making irrational connections between moments in time. When Farrington viciously attacks his son, he is striking with anger and rage, the same anger and rage that he experienced on the way home: "He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said *Pardon!* his fury nearly choked him" (97). When Farrington strikes his child, he is hitting the woman at the bar, Miss Delacour, perhaps even Mr. Alleyne, although his rage seems to be targeted at women, which might explain why his wife is not home. If this the case, that Ada is not home because she knows her abusive husband is coming home drunk, then it is damning indeed to leave the children at home for Grendel to slaughter. "Counterparts" is a devastating commentary on the alcoholic household.

With the first fourteen short stories in *Dubliners* Joyce massages the allusive process to produce several different effects. In "The Sisters," for example, Joyce was able to use allusion to not only generate and structure his narrative, but redefine allusion by expanding the value of the allusive process. Joyce was able to use both the chivalric

and biblical allusions in “Araby” to show that the pressures of adolescence go beyond mere physical infatuation to include the cognitive challenges brought on by the paradoxes presented to young people by culture. In stories like “Eveline,” “Counterparts,” and “Little Chandler” Joyce explored how allusion functions within a disorganized mentality. Now it is time to move out of the lab and into the workshop. Now it is time to say something great.

Chapter Three

James Joyce's "The Dead": An Introduction to Allusive Mechanics

Now that the groundwork has been laid for allusive mechanics and how it can operate in fiction, it is time to consider "The Dead," James Joyce's masterwork about a man who discovers that life isn't about him. In the first fourteen stories of *Dubliners* Joyce paints a portrait of a people in the grip of a self-renewing dysfunction, where family, religion, patriotism, and alcoholism breed a kind of selfishness that corrupts and enslaves the Irish soul. With "The Dead," however, Joyce moves beyond criticism to offer a solution, a way out of the darkness. Allusion is the prime mover in this story, from Gretta remembering her past to Gabriel understanding his present and repositioning himself for the future, and it is through allusive mechanics that these moments can be studied and understood, not just in terms of how each contributes to the movement towards thesis, but didactically because Joyce's characters have allusive experiences, which is to say, they function intertextually within their textual world. To read Joyce is to read the act of reading, ultimately making "The Dead" and *Dubliners* a manual on how we read and misread our world.

Of all the characters in *Dubliners* Gabriel Conroy appears to be an Irish success story. He is married to a good woman, Gretta Conroy, and they have two children. His aunts, Kate and Julia, who are renowned for their annual dinner party, are nice people who have nothing but love for their nephew and his family. Gabriel has a good job teaching at the University and reviews books for a newspaper for fifteen schillings a week. He is educated, intelligent, observant, well-liked, and not an alcoholic. He seems to have it all. The only problem is that Gabriel Conroy does not know anything about

life. He may have a college degree, teach at the University, know Browning and Shakespeare from memory, but he does not know or understand people. He cannot see or feel outside of himself to value in a human way those around him, what Ellmann calls Gabriel's "bubble of self-possession," where human interaction is constructed culturally rather than personally (258). In short, Gabriel Conroy has no wisdom.

Gabriel's incapacity to feel for others is reflected in four specific events or failures in the text; all of them, interestingly, with women. The first is with Lily, the caretaker's daughter; the second with his two aunts; the third with Miss Ivors; and the fourth—the most powerful and devastating example of selfishness in *Dubliners*—is with his wife, Gretta. Each of these moments serve to illustrate the depths of Gabriel's self-absorption and set the stage for Joyce's solution to the Irish paralysis.

The portrait of Gabriel's selfishness begins when Gabriel and Gretta arrive at his aunts' annual dinner party. While checking his coat with Lily, the caretaker's young daughter who works for the Morkans, Gabriel asks the young woman a question that is symptomatic of his problem:

—Tell me, Lily, he said in a friendly tone, do you still go to school?

—O no, sir, she answered. I'm done schooling this year and more.

—O, then, said Gabriel gaily, I suppose we'll be going to your wedding one of these fine days with your young man, eh?

The girl glanced back at him over her shoulder and said with great bitterness:

—The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you.

Gabriel coloured as if he felt he had made a mistake and without looking at her, kicked off his goloshes and flicked actively with his muffler at his patent-leather shoes. (178)

The mistake Gabriel makes is to assume he knows Lily, a conclusion based, stereotypically, on her age and social standing. Just because she is a young woman of the marrying age does not mean that marriage is in her near future. Lily might have other plans or might have had mitigating experiences that steer her away from marriage. Lily's reaction to Gabriel suggests that she has had, in fact, a bad personal experience with a male of the species. She sounds very much like the woman in "The Two Gallants" might sound when and if she discovers that Corley is a con artist.⁴ Gabriel thinks he knows Lily, but he doesn't. He superimposes his impression of Lily over Lily and she rejects it outright. This image of the ego projecting itself over others—which is the very soul of selfishness—is a constant theme in "The Dead." Consider Gabriel's thoughts about the speech he had prepared for dinner:

He was still discomposed by the girl's bitter and sudden retort. It had cast a gloom over him which he tried to dispel by arranging his cuffs and the bows of his tie. Then he took from his waistcoat pocket a little paper and glanced at the headings he had made for his speech. He was undecided about the lines from Robert Browning for he feared they would be above the heads of his hearers. Some quotation that they could recognise from Shakespeare or the Melodies would be better. The indelicate clacking of the men's heels and the shuffling of their soles reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his. He would only make himself ridiculous

by quoting poetry to them which they could not understand. They would think that he was airing his superior education. He would fail with them just as he had failed with the girl in the pantry. He had taken up a wrong tone. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter failure.

(179)

Almost every sentence in this internal monologue betrays Gabriel's self-absorption. He is worried about the lines from Browning being "above the heads of his listeners." He is worried about making another *faux pas* like the one with Lily, and the twenty-two references to the self-reflexive third-person singular confirm Gabriel's concern with his image. He superimposes his impressions of those folks with a "grade of culture" different from his over everyone at the party. Even Gretta—his wife, his life partner, the mother of his children—is characterized by Gabriel as belonging to a different group. When asked if Gretta was from Connacht, Gabriel replied "Her people are" (189), as if she were an outsider.⁴ Gabriel has little-to-no tangible human connection with anyone at the party, and by extension, with any member of the human race. He does not understand people; so, naturally, he does not understand himself.

The next moment in the story that contributes to the emerging portrait of Gabriel's selfishness occurs with Miss Ivors, a colleague at the University and a supporter of the Irish Revival. When playfully asked why he wrote for *The Daily Express*, a conservative paper opposed to Irish nationalism (Scholes 488), Gabriel misinterprets the question as an attack:

—I have a crow to pluck with you.

—With me? Said Gabriel.

She nodded her head gravely.

—What is it? asked Gabriel, smiling at her solemn manner.

—Who is G. C.? answered Miss Ivors, turning her eyes upon him.

Gabriel coloured and was about to knit his brows, as if he did not understand, when she said bluntly:

—O, innocent Amy! I have found out that you write for *The Daily Express*. Now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?

—Why should I be ashamed of myself? asked Gabriel, blinking his eyes and trying to smile.

—Well, I'm ashamed of you, said Miss Ivors frankly. To say you'd write for a rag like that. I didn't know you were a West Briton.

A look of perplexity appeared on Gabriel's face. It was true that he wrote a literary column every Wednesday in *The Daily Express*, for which he was paid fifteen shillings. But that did not make him a West Briton surely. (187-88)

Clearly Miss Ivors begins her banter in a playful and loving way, as friends so often do, especially at warm occasions like a dinner party. But Gabriel doesn't take it that way. He interprets her light-hearted criticism outside the warm light of the occasion. It is as though Gabriel is trying to measure each moment in a rational, Aristotelean sort of way, and it's not working. Instead of returning her serve, Gabriel does the very thing he wanted to avoid:

—Well, said Gabriel, if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language.

Their neighbors had turned to listen to the cross-examination. Gabriel glanced right and left nervously and tried to keep his good humor under the ordeal which was making a blush invade his forehead.

—And haven't you your own land to visit, continued Miss Ivors, that you know nothing of, your own people, and your own country?

—O, to tell you the truth, retorted Gabriel suddenly, I'm sick of my own country, sick of it! (189)

Gabriel is at a dinner party, the kind of gathering where people put aside their problems and live and enjoy life for awhile, where goodwill flows like the warmth of a fire. But Gabriel does not yet understand that the cold snow of the universe falls “upon all the living and the dead” (224).⁵ Instead of accepting Miss Ivors' invitation to banter, Gabriel commits an epic blunder. Can there be a worse *faux pas* than saying that Ireland makes you sick in a room filled with Irish men and women? Gabriel Conroy does not understand people.

The next moment in the story that contributes to Gabriel's selfish-portrait for the reader occurs while he prepares to deliver his dinner speech. As part of the annual dinner party, it was Gabriel's duty—as the pro tem head of house—to carve the goose and to provide an entertaining speech to complete the Morkan trifecta. The exchange with Miss Ivors had disheveled his thoughts and Gabriel went to the window to collect himself:

How cool it must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first along by the river and then through the park! The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of

the Wellington Monument. How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table!

He ran over the headings of his speech: Irish hospitality, sad memories, the Three Graces, Paris, the quotation from Browning. He repeated to himself a phrase he had written in his review: *One feels that one is listening to a thought-tormented music.* Miss Ivors had praised the review. Was she sincere? Had she really any life of her own behind all her propagandism? There had never been any ill-feeling between them until that night. It unnerved him to think that she would be at the supper-table, looking up at him while he spoke with her critical quizzing eyes. Perhaps she would not be sorry to see him fail in his speech. An idea came into his mind and gave him courage. He would say, alluding to Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia: *Ladies and Gentlemen, the generation which is now on the wane among us may have had its faults but for my part I think it had certain qualities of hospitality, of humour, of humanity, which the new and very serious and hypereducated generation that is growing up around us seems to me to lack.* Very good: that was one for Miss Ivors.

What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old woman? (192)

Gabriel is very much invested in himself. When everyone else is having a good time at the party, generating warmth, Gabriel would rather be outside, alone, in the snow. And to ask the question, “Had she really any life of her own behind all her propagandism?” very much indicates Gabriel’s disconnection from the human community. What is so beautiful about the question is that it reveals that Gabriel doesn’t have any life of his

own. To speak upon which one knows nothing and cannot know anything—in this case, the content of Miss Ivors’ inner life—is, in a word, ignorant. Gabriel Conroy does not understand people. Any remaining doubt of this is removed with his remarks at the end of the quote. Kate and Julia Morkan are loved and admired by everyone at the party because they know that the snow of the universe is falling “upon all the living and the dead” (224)—Julia is dying—and so respond to it by creating a pocket of warmth and humanity where people can live and be, everyone but Gabriel, who sees “only two ignorant old women” (192).

After the party is over, Gabriel takes position in the hall near the doorway in order to help people get ready to leave. While his aunts say good night to Mr. Browne, Freddy, and Mrs. Malins, Gabriel catches sight of something unusual:

He was in a dark part of the hall gazing up at the staircase. A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. He could not see her face but he could see the terracotta and salmonpink panels of her skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It was his wife. She was leaning on the banisters, listening to something. . . . There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze of her hair against the darkness and the dark panels of her skirt would show off the light ones. *Distant Music* he would call the picture if her were a painter. (209-10)

This scene is one of the most important moments in “The Dead” because it sets Gabriel up for his fall. He looks at this strange shape at the top of the stairs and experiences/creates a beautiful, artistic, almost human moment. But its significance is lost on Gabriel because of what he does with it. Instead of sharing his beautiful experience with Gretta, he takes another path, the path of self-indulgent reverie:

She was walking on before him with Mr Bartell D’Arcy, her shoes in a brown parcel tucked under one arm and her hands holding her skirt up from the slush. She had no longer any grace of attitude but Gabriel’s eyes were still bright with happiness. The blood went coursing through his veins; and the thoughts went rioting through his brain, proud, joyful, tender, valorous. . . . Moments of their secret life together burst like stars upon his memory. A heliotrope envelope was lying beside his breakfast-cup and he was caressing it with his hand. . . . He longed to recall to her those moments, to make her forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy. (213-14)

At first glance it appears as if Gabriel is moving in a positive direction. He feels something when he creates *Distant Music*, but the feeling gets distorted by his ego when he moves into a personal rapture about the past. He is no longer Gabriel Conroy—professor, father, and husband—but Gabriel the young, Gabriel the passionate, Gabriel the lover. He is seduced by his own ego. This all but confirmed by the plan:

He longed to be alone with her. When the others had gone away, when he and she were in their room in the hotel, then they would be alone together. He would call to her softly:

—Gretta!

Perhaps she would not hear at once: she would be undressing. Then something in his voice would strike her. She would turn and look at him. .

. . (214)

The level of conceit here is disturbing. He knows nothing about Gretta and what she is thinking. In fact, one could argue that he doesn't see her at all, just an image generated by his desire and superimposed over the real person. The scene becomes even more unsettling when Gretta and Gabriel arrive at the hotel. While following the porter up the stairs, Gabriel looks at his wife in front of him: "He could have flung his arms about her hips and held her still for his arms were trembling with desire to seize her and only the stress of his nails against the palms of his hands held the wild impulse of his body in check" (215). The imagery here—that of the Crucifixion—is provocative to say the least. Gabriel's lust is so powerful that he has to crucify himself in order to prevent his monster from seizing Gretta. It is the only act that keeps his beast in check.

Up to this point in the story Gabriel's selfishness has been relatively harmless. He annoys Lily, the caretaker's daughter, but there is no damage there. Miss Ivors actually enjoyed Gabriel's self-generated predicament, and the Misses Morkan don't know their favorite nephew thinks of them as two silly old women. Up till now, the only person who has really suffered from Gabriel's selfishness has been Gabriel. But the scene has changed. There are no longer any people around, no culture to help keep the beast in check—like Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*—no laws, only a man and a woman, alone. And into this situation comes Gabriel's rapacious beast, conjured up by his own selfishness, ready to take everything, take all, ready to eat the world. It is Gretta

the beast wants. Gabriel will be fighting for his soul.

After they enter the hotel room, Gretta takes off her hat and coat and begins to disrobe. Gabriel, of course, had been waiting for this moment since he saw the mysterious woman at the top of the stairs, the woman of *Distant Music*. While Gretta is standing in front of the mirror, Gabriel makes his move:

—Gretta!

She turned away from the mirror slowly and walked along the shaft of light towards him. Her face looked so serious and weary that the words would not pass from Gabriel's lips. No, it was not the moment yet. (216)

The look on Gretta's face, "serious and weary," causes Gabriel to pause. He can't overlay his expectations of Gretta over Gretta. Something prevents him from doing so, which the beast finds annoying:

Why did she seem so abstracted? He did not know how he could begin. Was she annoyed, too, about something? If she would only turn to him or come to him of her own accord! To take her as she was would be brutal. No, he must see some ardour in her eyes first. He longed to be the master of her strange mood. . . . He longed to cry to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster her. (217)

Gabriel Conroy is fighting for his soul right now. On one side there is the beast called Selfish, a towering monster who wants to rape the woman, crucify her and devour her soul. On the other is a human being, a man touched by the "serious and weary" face of another, a sister in a weary world. Gabriel must have recognized something in that face, and to recognize is to remember. Gabriel, at some point in his life, must have seen that

“serious and weary” face in the mirror, must have experienced those feelings first hand.

What else could stay the beast but compassion?

Gabriel’s struggle for his soul produces a kind of apoplexy, where time and thought cease to move. It is Gretta who breaks the silence by coming to him:

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

—You are a very generous person, Gabriel, she said.

Gabriel, trembling with delight at her sudden kiss and at the quaintness of her phrase, put his hands on her hair and began smoothing it back, scarcely touching it with his fingers. The washing had made it fine and brilliant. His heart was brimming over with happiness. Just when he was wishing for it she had come to him of her own accord. (217)

Right in the middle of Gabriel’s fight for his soul, Gretta bails him out. He would not have to let the rapacious monster surface, after all. It would remain safely hidden behind his mask of propriety. Only he would know. Thinking everything was going according to plan, Gabriel nonchalantly puts his arm around Gretta:

—Gretta dear, what are you thinking about?

She did not answer nor yield wholly to his arm. He said again, softly:

—Tell me what it is, Gretta. I think I know what is the matter. Do I know?

She did not answer at once. Then she said in an outburst of tears:

—O, I am thinking about that song, *The Lass of Aughrim*.

She broke loose from him and ran to the bed and, throwing her arms across the bed-rail, hid her face. Gabriel stood stock-still for a moment in astonishment and then followed her. As he passed in the way of the cheval-glass he caught sight of himself in full length, his broad, well-filled shirt-front, the face whose expression always puzzled him when he saw it in a mirror and his glimmering gilt-rimmed eyeglasses. (218)

Ever since he saw the strange woman at the top of the stairs, Gabriel had the desire to master that strangeness. He planned to seduce Gretta because his ego seduced him into believing that he could know people like knowing Browning and Shakespeare. When Gretta bursts into tears, his categorical method—the organizing principle of Gabriel’s life—begins to crack. He is astonished and puzzled to find his beliefs in error. How could he be so obviously wrong?

The next few pages in *Dubliners* detail the crumbling of Gabriel’s ego structure, making “The Dead,” among other things, a guide for the dissolution of the ego. If selfishness is the problem, then the first-step in the healing process is to destabilize that structure so as to allow the formation of another, more life-promoting identity. When Gretta reveals her past—that the song made her think of someone she used to know—Gabriel’s first impulse is to retreat into his ego:

The smile passed away from Gabriel’s face. A dull anger began to gather again at the back of his mind and the dull fires of his lust began to glow angrily in his veins.

—Someone you were in love with? he asked ironically.

—It was a young boy I used to know, she answered, named Michael Furey. He used to sing that song, *The Lass of Aughrim*. He was very delicate. (219)

Instead of examining his own ego-structure for problems, Gabriel, in a classic rhetorical move, questions the messenger. When Gretta describes how Michael Furey looked and how they used to take walks in Galway, Gabriel takes another *faux pas*, the biggest in the story:

A thought flew across Gabriel's mind.

—Perhaps that was why you wanted to go to Galway with that Ivors girl? he said coldly.

She looked at him and asked in surprise:

—What for?

Her eyes made Gabriel feel awkward. He shrugged his shoulders and said:

—How do I know? To see him perhaps.

She looked away from him along the shaft of light towards the window in silence.

—He is dead, she said at length. (219)

In what is one of the clearest depictions of the male ego in fiction, Gabriel jumps to the dumbest conclusion that a person could make; namely, that Gretta is upset because her true love lives in Galway and that she wants to go there to have sex with him. When Gretta reveals that Michael is dead, Gabriel finally begins to look at himself:

Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of

this figure from the dead, a boy in the gasworks. While he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another. A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead. (219-20)

This moment marks the beginning of change in Gabriel. For the first time in “The Dead” Gabriel looks at himself. For the first time in “The Dead” Gabriel acknowledges the being of another person. Gretta does have an inner life. She does have a soul. This possibility had not occurred to Gabriel in the story, that other people knew things and felt things as keenly as he did, knew what it was like to be human, to feel human. The presence of her humanity softens Gabriel’s demeanor:

He tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation but his voice when he spoke was humble and indifferent.

—I suppose you were in love with this Michael Furey, Gretta, he said.

—I was great with him at that time, she said.

Her voice was veiled and sad. Gabriel, feeling now how vain it would be to try to lead her whither he had purposed, caressed one of her hands and said, also sadly:

—And what did he die of so young, Gretta? Consumption, was it?

—I think he died for me. (220)

A vague terror seized Gabriel at this answer as if, at that hour when he had hoped to triumph, some impalpable and vindictive being was coming at him, gathering forces against him in its vague world. But he shook himself free of it with an effort of reason and continued to caress her hand. He did not question her again for he felt that she would tell him of herself. Her hand was warm and moist: it did not respond to his touch but he continued to caress it just as he had caressed her first letter to him that spring morning. (220)

When Gabriel feels an “impalpable and vindictive being” coming against him, it is the climax of the story because Gabriel has a decision to make. The “impalpable and vindictive being” described by Gabriel is not Michael Furey, but Gabriel himself, the selfish Gabriel, the beast within who wants nothing more than to rape Gretta and feast on the world.⁶ It is exactly at this moment in the text where Gabriel wins the battle for his soul. When he shakes “himself free of it with an effort of reason” and continues to caress Gretta’s hand, Gabriel chooses brotherhood. He chooses humanity. In that simple act of shutting his mouth and holding her hand Gabriel reconnects to the human community. He is not alone, and since loneliness is the currency of selfishness, Gabriel is no longer a slave to his own ego.

Gretta’s story is a legendary tale of young people in love, and the tragedy that always seems to follow that kind of love, a love formed before the corruptions of the adult world have tainted the innocence, love in its purest form. Gretta describes Michael Furey, his gentleness, his poor health, and how they used to take walks in the country.

She was at her grandmother's the night before she was set to leave Galway when she heard pebbles hitting her window. It was Michael standing in the rain. He came to tell her that he did not want to live. It was the last time she ever saw him. When Gretta finishes her story, she falls asleep on the bed still holding Gabriel's hand. It is at this moment that Gabriel experiences something new, something human:

So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. His curious eyes rested upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul. (222)

For the first time in "The Dead" and *Dubliners*, for that matter, a human being genuinely feels for another, a term we call empathy. By banishing his selfishness, Gabriel has opened himself up to a new world of being, *la vita Nueva*. The first feeling the selfless Gabriel has is pity for a sister, the lost Gretta he never knew existed. The next is pity for his Aunt Julia:

He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt's supper, from his own foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good-night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she

was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*. . . . One by one they were all becoming shades. (222-23)

As his feelings of empathy cascade down from Gretta to Julia to the human race, Gabriel understands that life is short, too short to waste upon selfish pursuits. Why waste time when everyone is dying? Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia obviously understood that time is ticking with the great effort and expense of the dinner party. Julia is going to try to go out singing, or at least Gabriel will remember her that way. As Gabriel reflects, “Better pass boldly into that other world, in full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age” (223). Now he understands. Now he can begin to live. When Gabriel reports that “His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead” (224), it not just a metaphor of the end, a symbol of the stark equality that death brings to all things. It is a call to life. It is a beginning.

In “Literature, Psychoanalysis, and the Re-Formation of the Self: A New Direction in Reader-Response Theory” Alcorn and Bracher argue that literature, among other things, has the capacity to model human consciousness, making possible the study of consciousness—how it functionally and dysfunctionally organizes and processes the world. Furthermore, they suggest that the act of reading literature can actually re-form cognition:

By exercising and strengthening our capacity to identify with others, literature provides us with an ability that will allow further growth and adjustment as we encounter new realities in the course of our lives. Not only can literature provide us with a map of the north terrain that may lie

ahead, and not only does literature offer us provisions for the journey; it can also help us attain the adaptability and resilience necessary to survive and prosper in the unfamiliar regions where we may find ourselves. (351)

The observation that literature can model human consciousness is very similar to the idea proposed by allusive mechanics—namely, that characters moving through their textual worlds encounter, process, and use allusions just as readers do when they move through their worlds. Furthermore, the idea that reading literature teaches—something Kenneth Burke noted in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* when he observed that “Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*” (296)—also sounds similar to the earlier suggestion that Joyce wrote “The Dead” in order to help his countrymen escape their self-created fetters. Of all the characters in *Dubliners* Gabriel Conroy is the only one who experiences a positive “reformation of the self” (Alcorn and Bracher 343). He begins the story with his ego projecting the world around him, and then devolves from there. Only at the end, when fighting for his soul, does Gabriel free himself of the beast within, the ego. Only after Gabriel had shed himself of himself, could he feel pity for Gretta: “a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul” (Joyce 222). But how exactly? How does Gabriel shake off the “impalpable and vindictive being” that seeks to enslave him? How does he learn to feel pity?

While describing the various models available to the psychoanalytic process in *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process*, Meredith Skura acknowledges that literature has the capacity to “call attention to the play of consciousness” (11). If we add that observation to the one already made by Alcorn and Bracher—namely, that literature can represent cognition—then “The Dead” can and should be considered as a transcript

of Gabriel's transformation of consciousness. Whatever significant elements went into the change should be present in the text because change does not take place in a vacuum, and *deus ex machina* would be pointless in a didactic exercise. But how? How do we read between the lines? How do we make visible the invisible?

As stated in Chapter Two allusive mechanics attempts to read and understand literary characters in terms of their intertextual practices, which makes the text, among other things, a record of the process of signification. To read is to signify a signified. We read and interpret Gabriel Conroy reading and interpreting his world. It has already been demonstrated how Gabriel misreads the people in his life—Lily, the caretaker's daughter; Miss Ivors; his aunts; and finally Gretta. What has not been demonstrated is how Gabriel comes to feel pity for Gretta. The text just reports that “a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul” (225). But how exactly? How does one human being learn to see another human being as a human being? The answer, of course, can be found by approaching Gabriel's world from Gabriel's point of view, to consider text as a series of intertextual invitations available for Gabriel. And if that is done, one thing stands out intertextually, and that is the play *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's famous tragedy is referenced many times throughout “The Dead,” suggesting the possibility that it plays some role in maneuvering Gabriel Conroy and perhaps Joyce himself towards pity and understanding, not only for Gretta, but for the human race as well.

The allusions to Shakespeare occur throughout “The Dead,” from direct reference to echo to subtext. Taken individually, each potential intertextual experience may or may not be effective, but taken *en masse* they create a referential environment that would be hard to miss. And Gabriel Conroy is a well-read figure. He likes to read, as evidenced

by the report that “The books he received for review were almost more welcome than the paltry cheque” (188); by the report of his familiarity with Homer, Browning, and Shakespeare (192); and by the fact that he is a professor at the University (188). The most obvious place to begin when highlighting a Shakespearean idiom is with clearly stated references. Shakespeare is quoted by name early on:

Then he took from his waistcoat pocket a little paper and glanced at the heading he had made for his speech. He was undecided about the lines from Robert Browning for he feared they would be above the heads of his hearers. Some quotation that they could recognise from Shakespeare or from the melodies would be better. (Joyce 179)

Obviously, Shakespeare is on Gabriel’s mind. But the other point of interest here is the ubiquitous nature Gabriel ascribes to Shakespeare. Even his listeners, those with a “grade of culture” (179) different than his, would recognize the bard, making Shakespeare a presence in Irish culture. This recalls Kristeva’s observation that authors unconsciously choose the modes of signification that reflect his or her community (Hurry 64-65). Is Joyce consciously using a Shakespearean idiom to make his point, or is Shakespeare so culturally omnipresent that he cannot not be referenced?

The next direct reference to Shakespeare occurs just after Freddy Malins arrives. While standing in the drawing room listening to Mary Jane play the piano, Gabriel’s attention “wandered to the wall above the piano. A picture of the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* hung there and beside it was a picture of the two murdered princes in the Tower which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown wools when she was a girl” (186). Not only is Shakespeare recalled again, but he is recalled through the picture

of Romeo and Juliet. Even more significant is that the picture references the balcony scene, probably the most famous scene that stagecraft has ever produced:

ROMEO [*coming forward*]

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[*A light appears above, as at Juliet's window.*]

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief

That thou her maid art far more fair than she. (2.2.1-6)

This moment from Shakespeare is the quintessential symbol of love in Western civilization. And it is this scene which dies when Romeo drinks the poison. It is the end of a true love. Nothing can be more tragic, and here it is sitting in Gabriel's memory, freshly recalled to consciousness by the picture, when Gretta tells her story.

Gretta's story is the pivotal moment in "The Dead" because it is the mechanism for Gabriel's transformation of consciousness. Joyce leaves no doubt of this for it is only after Gretta's story that Gabriel feels/discovers pity, the one yardstick Joyce seems to identify as the litmus test for humanity as it is the first experience following his rebirth. It is here that Gabriel learns that Gretta once loved and was loved by another. There is something in her story that moves Gabriel into the light.

In "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" Wolfgang Iser makes an interesting observation about the relationship between author and reader in the act of reading:

If reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception, it follows that the reader will be “occupied” by the thoughts of the author, and these in their turn will cause the drawing of new “boundaries.” Text and reader no longer confront each other as object and subject, but instead the “division” takes place within the reader himself. In thinking the thoughts of another, his own individuality temporarily recedes into the background since it is supplanted by these alien thoughts, which now become the theme on which his attention is focused. (298)

What is interesting here is Iser’s notion that the reader’s identity “temporarily recedes into the background.” This is an exact description of what happens to Gabriel when Gretta tells her story. Gretta’s story marks the first time in “The Dead” where Gabriel Conroy is not the prime mover of the action. He “recedes” while her dialogue holds the stage. This is so important for the development of empathy—the subduction of selfishness by another, more life-promoting sense of self. But there is more to it than that. Gabriel has “a strange friendly pity” enter his soul. But how exactly? What connections are being made in Gabriel’s mind of which he is not consciously aware?

When Gretta was a young woman living in Galway, she was “great” with a young man named Michael Furey. He was seventeen and very delicate. He had “big dark eyes” and used to sing *The Lass of Aughrim* to her as they took walks in the country (219-21). They were totally in love with each other, and it was the kind of love that only happens between two people who have not been soiled by the cares of the world. When news that Gretta was moving out of Galway reached Michael in his sick bed, he walked to Gretta’s grandmother’s house in the rain:

—Then the night before I left I was in my grandmother’s house in Nuns’ Island, packing up, and I heard gravel thrown up against the window. The window was so wet I couldn’t see so I ran downstairs as I was and slipped out the back into the garden and there was the poor fellow at the end of the garden, shivering.

—And did you not tell him to go back? asked Gabriel.

—I implored of him to go home at once and told him he would get his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live. I can see his eyes as well as well! He was standing at the end of the wall where there was a tree.

—And did he go home? asked Gabriel?

—Yes, he went home. And when I was only a week in the convent he died and he was buried in Oughterard where his people came from. O, the day I heard that, that he was dead! (221)

Aside from the sheer tragedy of Gretta’s story moving Gabriel to pity, there is something else at work here, or potentially at work. Here is a love story, a young love story, a tragic love story, with a young woman in her room upstairs and a young man standing below in a garden near a tree next to a wall. Do any of those elements sound familiar? In Act II Scene ii of *Romeo and Juliet* there is a young woman above and young man standing below her window in an orchard:

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,

And the place death, considering who thou art,
 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls,
 For stony limbs cannot hold love out,
 And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
 Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me. (2.2.62-69)

The common elements of youth, true love, tragedy, her above, him below, garden, and wall, cannot be accidental. The potential effect on Gabriel is that the Shakespearean subtext or echo summons the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* into his subconscious mind. By itself Gretta's story is tragic. But there is a deeper level of tragedy brought forth by the subtext. As a sensitive and well-read reader, Gabriel has probably read the play *Romeo and Juliet* in his past and felt the tragedy from the story of true love coming to ruin. The allusive subtext helps Gabriel understand Gretta by substituting his personal experience of tragedy—a.k.a., his knowledge and understanding of *Romeo and Juliet*—for the tragedy of Gretta's story. In other words, the feelings of another human being can only be understood in terms of one's own personal feelings and experiences. As Iser notes, "each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way" (285). Gabriel understands Gretta's pain through his own personal definition of tragedy.

Given the focus on intertextuality as a means of character formation, it seems clear that the true object of study in "The Dead" and *Dubliners* is the human mind and how it perceives and processes information. Allusion is by definition a mental activity. Joyce has demonstrated through allusive mechanics how the mind reads and misreads its

world. Any remaining doubts about this conclusion are easily laid to rest when the highly allusive nature of “The Dead” is revealed. When Gretta hears Mr. Bartell D’Arcy sing *The Lass of Aughrim*, she experiences a very personal allusion. As readers and scholars we could look up the lyrics of the song and apply them to the story, but to do so would be to miss the point—*The Lass of Aughrim* means much more to Gretta than it does to us. That is allusive mechanics, to try to read and understand in terms of another point of view.

With the two direct references to Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*, it could be argued that Joyce is providing interpretive suggestions to Gabriel (and to us), but those clues become road signs when other intertextual invitations are brought into the light. The “picture of the two murdered princes in the Tower which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown” (Joyce 186) could also conjure up the scene in *Richard III* when Richard asks Tyrrel to kill “those bastards in the Tower” (4.2.75). Paris, mentioned by Gabriel in preparation for his speech thanking Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia, and Miss Mary Jane (192), could also be a reference to Paris, the young count who is a suitor to Juliet and is later killed by Romeo. “King Billy’s statue” (208) which descriptively refers to the statue of William of Orange at Trinity College in Dublin (Gifford 122-23), might also suggest William Shakespeare. The almost familial conflict hinted at by the exchange between Miss Ivors and Gabriel—that is, between patriotic Ireland and Anglicized Ireland—is also a part of *Romeo and Juliet* as represented by the struggles between the Capulets and the Montagues, two great families living at odds in one Verona. And the similarities continue. Gretta remarks twice about Michael Furey’s eyes, his “big dark eyes” (219) and “I can see his eyes as well as well” (221). Romeo pays the same

attention to Juliet's eyes when he says "Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven" (2.2.15). And, of course, Juliet is the diminutive form of Julia (OED "Juliet"), Gabriel's aunt. Every one of these intertextual invitations is pregnant with possibility, but coupled with the direct references to Shakespeare suggests to this reader that *Romeo and Juliet* is very much a part of "The Dead." In terms of the elements of narrative (setting, plot, theme, etc.), they are very similar. Perhaps Joyce himself used *Romeo and Juliet* to fill-in the blanks with Nora Barnacle.⁷ Joyce was a reader too, after all.

Joyce sets up a nice allusive contrast in "The Dead"—one between Gabriel the selfish child and Gabriel the adult—that symbolizes both the growth of Gabriel Conroy as a person and the potential allusive mechanics holds for understanding the human mind. When Gabriel first saw that mysterious woman standing at the top of the stairs, he has an allusive experience:

There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze of her hair against the darkness and the dark panels of her skirt would show off the light ones. *Distant Music* he would call the picture if he were a painter. (210)

What makes this moment allusive is the fact that Gabriel is creating a personal allusion. Whenever he thinks of *Distant Music* he will think of this moment. The problem, of course, as indicated earlier, is that Gabriel is making this allusion from his egotistical point of view—Gretta as object. The new Gabriel Conroy also makes a personal

allusion, but this one is done from the point of view of a mature, deep-feeling human being:

Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*. Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees. (222)

By associating Aunt Julia with *Arrayed for the Bridal*, Gabriel is creating a personal allusion that he can use to manage his memories of Aunt Julia for the rest of his life. Whenever he wants to think of her, all he need do is listen to that song. The traditional approach to allusion, which favors identification and comparison, would treat *Arrayed for the Bridal* as an object to be dissected and compared to the Joycean content in which it appeared. But such an approach, I think, misses the mark. Joyce wants us to see and understand that *Arrayed for the Bridal* means more to Gabriel Conroy than it does to us. Otherwise, why place such a seemingly minute allusion at the most privileged position in a text? It is not minute! It is a deeply personal allusion for Gabriel, just as *The Lass of Aughrim* is for Gretta. And that is the lesson of “The Dead” and *Dubliners*: to understand that the world does not revolve around the individual, that personal definitions and values exist for all things, and that it is the worst of things to inflict one’s world view upon another.

With Gabriel’s creation of *Arrayed for the Bridal*, James Joyce has demonstrated for the first time in *Dubliners* how the allusive process can be used proactively to manage consciousness. All of the other character-oriented shapes of allusion which appear in

“The Dead”—Gabriel’s misreading of Lily and Gretta, Miss Ivors’ use of “West Briton,” Gretta’s reaction to *The Lass of Aughrim* and Gabriel’s probable reaction to the subtextual atmosphere of *Romeo and Juliet*—were used in the first fourteen short stories. When Gretta hears the song and remembers, it is reminiscent of “Eveline” and “Araby,” where a character has an allusive experience resulting from a chance encounter. Gabriel’s faux pas with Lily is similar in shape to Farrington’s reaction to “*O, Pa*” in “Counterparts,” where a character misreads an allusion by making false connections between two events. Miss Ivors’ characterization of Gabriel as a “West Briton” is reminiscent of “Araby” and “A Little Cloud,” where a character uses allusion to manipulate another character. The three rhetorical shapes for allusion emerging from *Dubliners*—chance-to-character, character-to-character, and character-to-self—can now join the more familiar allusive pathway of author-to-reader/text-to-reader to form a more diverse and creative reading and writing experience.

By making allusion and the allusive process an integral part of plot resolution and character development, Joyce suggests to me a new kind of literary criticism, one based upon reading the act of reading, where character is treated as having intertextual potential. Such an approach, if valid, should enhance our understanding of character and textual mechanics. If a literary character is treated as participating in the act of reading, that which is largely hidden in literature —psychological processes, feelings, and intuition—becomes more visible, making literature an even more important part of human life because it mirrors not just what we think, but how we think.

Chapter Four

Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*:

Allusion and Linguistic Construct in the Slavery Hegemony

In her essay entitled “Joyce’s ‘Araby’ and Imaginative Freedom” Susan J. Rosowski argues that “the primary conflict of the story is not between the child’s and the adult’s visions, but between psychological and factual realities,” where the “concrete, factual world is filtered through the transforming mind of the narrator” (183-4). It is this idea of a dual reality—one factual, one perceptual—that Herman Melville uses to structure *Benito Cereno*, a novella concerned with exploring the paradox of civilization participating in slavery. Told around the character of Amasa Delano, *Benito Cereno* employs a structure of parallelism and divergence, where both Delano and the reader pass through the textual world assessing the facts concurrently, in effect creating a double narrative that can be compared and contrasted. Mary Rohrberger points out that

Melville had to construct the story in such a way that the omniscient narrator practice just such trickery upon the reader as the Negroes on board the *San Dominick* practice on Captain Amasa Delano, but with the difference that the reader must be led to understand more than Delano ever does—or could. (542)

What emerges from the divergent readings of the story is the utter corruptibility of the reading and reasoning processes. Delano, after repeated clues concerning the true disposition of the *San Dominick*—a slave ship which has been taken over by its displaced African cargo—continues to rationalize the gnawing inconsistencies in the behavior of its captain and crew. What keeps him in the dark is not the superior acting skills of the

slaves and crew—the sensitive reader notes the inconsistencies—but Delano’s reading or construct of blackness. It never enters his mind that the displaced Africans would be capable of organizing a takeover and then “passing” as a legitimate sea-going slave trader. His allusive mechanism, which associates blackness with inferiority, has been corrupted by pejorative definitions for blackness. By focusing on how Delano reads and/or misreads his world, Melville is able to suggest through *Benito Cereno* that slavery is in part maintained through the allusive process, where the associative mechanism of the brain has been conditioned by a cultural environment permissive of racial subjugation. Furthermore, because the mechanics of racism mirror allusion and the act of reading, Melville can also suggest that the reader is also a potential Delano, passing through the world, caught in the act of reading and/or misreading and not knowing it, thus making *Benito Cereno*, at least structurally, a call for or resignation to ambiguity, where reader is caught between the acts of reading and misreading, never knowing which is which..

It is very difficult to separate the act of reading from the act of allusion because they are both acts of signification. The matter is further complicated by Iser’s observation that the way literature communicates “does not seem to be determined by merely historical circumstances, but by the specific aesthetic structure inherent in it” (5), suggesting that *Benito Cereno* was written to be considered not only in terms of the problem of slavery but in terms of the structure of slavery. In other words, Delano’s concepts of slavery—or more to the point, Delano’s allusion to blackness—should contain at least some of the constructs which reinforce slavery within a culture. For example, when Delano reads Babo’s care of the Spanish Captain as the “affectionate zeal

which transmutes into something filial or fraternal acts in themselves but menial; and which has gained for the negro the repute of making the most pleasing body servant in the world” (245), he reinforces the structure of slavery because his language controls the interpretative mode in which Babo and the other Africans can be considered, suggesting that slavery is maintained, in part, through linguistic construct. The content and structure of slavery can also be studied in terms of the elements Babo considers necessary in order to “pass” as legitimate. For example, when Babo has Atufal humble himself in chains before Captain Benito (255-56), Babo is playing to the belief that the most dangerous slave is the biggest, most muscular slave, that physical strength is the only strength, strength being a permitted currency of the slave.

The “specific aesthetic structure” (Iser 5) in *Benito Cereno*, with its dual cohabitating narratives (the contrast of Delano’s reading versus the reader, and the juxtaposition of plot versus structure), is a destabilizing narrative structure. This is extremely important because it is the final posture of Don Benito, the displaced captain of the *San Dominick*. When Delano visits his retired friend at the end, Don Benito’s speaks as someone who has had his world-view destabilized:

. . . you were with me all day; stood with me, sat with me, talked with me, looked at me, ate with me, drank with me; and yet, your last act was to clutch for a monster, not only an innocent man, but the most pitiable of all men. To such degree may malign machinations and deceptions impose. So far may even the best man err, in judging the conduct of one with the recesses of whose condition he is not acquainted. But you were forced to it; and you were in time undeceived. Would that, in both respects, it was

so ever, and with all men. (314)

This is the most significant moment in the story because of the double entendre. If understood in terms of plot and action, the “innocent man” to whom Don Benito refers is himself, for Delano thought him a Spanish renegade, a “plotting pirate meaning murder” (294), instead of the puppet on Babo’s evil string. If understood in terms of structure, however, the “innocent man” is Babo. He is “the most pitiable of all men” because of the “malign machinations” of slavery that drove him to become a “monster,” using his gifts to deal out vengeance and death to Don Aranda and the other Europeans instead of escaping. It is this second reading that seems to be confirmed by Don Benito’s final words in the story. When Delano asks him “what has cast such a shadow upon you?” Don Benito’s reply is “The negro” (314). Don Benito understands in his heart that Babo was an equal. Why else would he plea “. . . and you were in time undeceived. Would that, in both respects, it was so ever, *and with all men* [my emphasis]” (314). Don Benito seems to be saying that the West is deceiving itself in thinking that slavery and civilization can coexist. He understands that slavery is evil, and that anyone condoning it must also be evil. There are heroes in *Benito Cereno*.

When Don Benito makes his prayer that all men be undeceived, it should be an important moment for Amasa Delano. He has to choose between accepting Don Benito’s covert thesis that slavery is evil or rejecting the premise that Africans are people, but he doesn’t even understand that the choice exists. He never has that moment in *Huckleberry Finn* when Huck is holding the letter in his hand telling Miss Watson where she can find Jim:

I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I’d got to

decide, forever, betwixt two things , and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

“All right, then, I’ll *go* to hell”—and tore it up. (Twain 297)

The difference between Huck and Delano is that Delano *doesn’t know it*. He doesn’t understand that the decision exists at all. The only thing he can say to his friend is “You generalize, Don Benito; and mournfully enough. But the past is passed; why moralize upon it? Forget it. . . You are saved” (Melville 314). How is this possible? After all the empirical evidence presented aboard the *San Dominick*, after the solemn testament of a friend, how can Amasa Delano, who is described at the beginning of the story as a “person of a singularly undistrustful good-nature” (239), think so poorly? This is the central question of the text because it questions the consciousness of a culture. How can a person and by extension, a people, look the other way by refusing to engage in the central question of the time?

While discussing the human-as-fiction-maker work of Robert Coover in *The Metafictional Muse*, Larry MacCaffrey observes that “in most of Coover’s fiction there exists a tension between the process of man creating his fictions and his desire to assert that his systems have an independent existence of their own” (26). This distinction applies very well to Amasa Delano, for it is the conflict between Delano’s fiction-maker—which is in constant motion trying to make sense of the world—and Delano’s allusion to blackness—which itself is a fiction, but a fiction that has become established—that troubles the good captain while aboard the *San Dominick*. The first example of this occurs when Delano first boards the ship:

Climbing the side, the visitor was at once surrounded by a clamorous

throng of whites and blacks, but the latter outnumbering the former more than could have been expected, negro transportation-ship as the stranger in port was. . . . The scurvy, together with the fever, had swept off a great part of their number, more especially the Spaniards. (Melville 242)

The overall posture of Delano is one of unexpectedness. The ratio of slaves to crew is beyond expectation, and it is the “beyond expectation” aspect of the moment where Delano’s personal allusion of blackness conflicts with his fiction-maker. If Melville did encode the elements of slavery into *Benito Cereno* through Delano’s allusion of blackness, then one element emerges here—that a proper ratio exists between master and slave, presumably to maintain order and obedience through the threat of force.

Of course, the construct of blackness in Delano’s mind is not limited to what is revealed by the conflict between his fiction-maker and his allusion to blackness. There are several moments in the text where the fiction-maker creates a text which agrees with Delano’s construct of blackness.⁸ For example, when Delano first sees Don Benito and Babo, he sees Babo and thinks “By his side stood a black of small stature, in whose rude face, as occasionally, like a shepherd’s dog, he mutely turned it up into the Spaniard’s, sorrow and affection were equally blended” (Melville 243-44). He has no clue that Don Benito is being held hostage. This is the beginning of what Richardson calls the “labyrinth,” where the text “reveals little to the first-time reader that is not also being revealed to Delano” (73). When Babo “gave his master his arm, or took his handkerchief out of his pocket for him,” Delano interprets the actions as the behavior of a “devoted companion” (Melville 245), thus casting Babo in the role of adoring servant. There is no thought process here, only the confirmation of what is already believed to be true.

The contrast Melville creates between Delano's allusion to blackness and his fiction-maker's narrative is very important because it reveals the promise that the established allusion is not all-powerful. If the hold of Delano's allusion to blackness over his fiction-maker was complete, there would never be any doubt at all because the fiction-maker could never generate a narrative that exceeded the bounds permitted by the allusion. Even so, Delano's allusion to blackness holds tremendous sway over his judgment. When Delano hears Don Benito tell how the blacks saved the ship after the storm, how they didn't need to be fettered and were permitted to run freely aboard the ship, and how Babo has kept "his more ignorant brethren" in line, he responds with praise and envy:

"Faithful fellow!" cried Captain Delano. "Don Benito, I envy you such a friend; slave I cannot call him."

As master and man stood before him, the black upholding the white, Captain Delano could not but bethink him of the beauty of that relationship which could present such a spectacle of fidelity on the one hand and confidence on the other. (250)

The inconsistencies to this point in the story should create a modicum of doubt in the mind of Captain Delano, but the power of his allusion of blackness is so great that he cannot yet assess the moment within itself.⁹ He assumes that the existence of the "regularizing collectivity" (Said 677) of the Western hegemony is present aboard ship. It never occurs to him that the "blacks, like whites, could have both the capability and the desire to shrewdly force their will on others" (Richardson 79). The possibility of a structure of power with the color other than white existing aboard the *San Dominick*

never enters his mind until he is presented with the irrefutable evidence of Babo's attempt on Captain Cereno's life on the rowboat:

That moment, across the long-benighted mind of Delano, a flash of revelation swept, illuminating, in unanticipated clearness, his host's whole mysterious demeanor, with every enigmatic event of the day, as well as the entire past voyage of the *San Dominick*. (295)

When Babo stabs at Captain Cereno, Delano finally understands his day aboard the *San Dominick*. He understands the liberty of the slaves and the many faces of Captain Cereno. But why does it take him so long? What keeps Delano from extending cleverness and intelligence to the Africans? Why does Delano embrace a posture of deferment?

From the point of view of allusive mechanics with emphasis on a character-oriented value system for signifiers, Melville presents at least two portraits of slavery, each with its own content and structure. One construct emerges from Delano and how he perceives and produces slavery, and then there is the construct of Babo and how he perceives and reproduces slavery. This juxtaposition is critical because it gives Melville the opportunity to explore the slavery dynamic from the point of view of both master and slave. Delano and his reactions to events aboard the *San Dominick* reveal the content of his allusion of blackness., while Babo, in a similar fashion, betrays his impressions of slavery through the act of passing. Whether in terms of reactions to specific events or the use the language, Delano and Babo reveal a hegemony that is anything but civilized.

After Delano boards the *San Dominick*, he witnesses several events that shed some light on the hegemonic structure that maintains slavery, a structure that is more

often than not revealed by Delano's expectations. There was the aforementioned ratio of slaves to crew which gives Delano pause (Melville 242). There was also a lack of fetters on the slaves (250). But what really gets Delano's attention is when a Spanish boy is cut by an African one:

Presently, while standing with his host, looking forward upon the decks below, he was struck by one of those instances of insubordination previously alluded to. Three black boys, with two Spanish boys, were sitting together on the hatches, scraping a rude wooden platter, in which some scanty mess had recently been cooked. Suddenly, one of the black boys, enraged at a word dropped by one of his white companions, seized a knife, and, though called to forbear by one of the oakum-pickers, struck the lad over the head, inflicting a gash from which blood flowed. (253)

The act of insubordination "previously alluded to" was the noise made by the hatchet-polishers while Captain Benito was telling his story. Delano could not understand how "such an interruption should be allowed" (253). This suggests that the slaves should be seen and not heard. When Captain Cereno doesn't discipline the black youth for striking the Spanish boy, Delano retorts "Had such a thing happened on board the *Bachelor's Delight*, instant punishment would have followed" (253). Delano's expectation is that the young slave should be punished immediately for striking his better. This suggests that part of the structure of slavery is immediate punishment in the psychological sense of the word, where "an event following a response weakens the tendency to make that response" (Weiten 211). Later, when Delano watches one of the Spanish sailors violently pushed aside by two blacks, he expects immediate punishment for this breach of

conduct (Melville 264).

Delano's allusion of blackness is not confined to those moments in the text where his expectations are not fulfilled. His dialogues and his internal monologues also reveal elements of the master/slave dynamic operating in his mind. One of the most revealing racial moments in *Benito Cereno* occurs when Delano is deliberating the possibility of a conspiracy aboard the *San Dominick*:

Was it from foreseeing some possible interference like this, that Don Benito had, beforehand, given such a bad character of his sailors, while praising the negroes; though, indeed, the former seemed as docile as the latter the contrary? The whites, too, by nature, were the shrewder race. . . . But if the whites had dark secrets concerning Don Benito, could then Don Benito be any way in complicity with the blacks? But they were too stupid. Besides, who ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguering in against it with negroes? (Melville 270)

It is clear that Delano considers the Africans as another species entirely; in other words, not human at all. This, in part, explains why “a person of a singularly undistrustful good-nature” (239) could think so poorly. If he doesn't even consider Africans human, how can he be expected to cognate that “the slaves are not only intelligent, but alert and shrewd” (Gray 79), let alone consider the wisdom of his friend. At one point Delano even offers to buy Babo from Captain Cereno (Melville 264-65), further suggesting that, to the American, the African is nothing more than a commodity. Dehumanization can now be added to the growing list of elements in the master/slave dynamic. Any

remaining doubt of this hegemony is swept away when Delano reveals to Captain Cereno what can only be described as the-white-man's-burden view of the world:

For I thought it strange, indeed, and not very creditable to us white-skins, if a little of our blood mixed with the African's, should, far from improving the latter's quality, have the sad effect of pouring vitriolic acid into the black broth; improving the hue, perhaps, but not the wholesomeness. (284)

The fact that Delano associates unwholesomeness with blackness reveals an almost Biblical equation, where white is the color of the shepherd and black is the toiler of the earth. How could Delano think so simply? He wasn't born this way. Something in his culture had to teach him the dualism.

Babo is an interesting character from the point of view of allusive mechanics, because it is his perceptions of the master/slave paradigm that allow the *San Dominick* to pass as a legitimate sea-going vessel. What is interesting about the act of passing in *Benito Cereno* is that the content and structure of slavery can be studied from the point of view of the slave. When Atufal is presented in chains, for example, Babo creates the impression of control and order (Melville 255-56). This is an attempt at manipulation through allusion, similar to Mangan's sister twirling the bracelet in "Araby." The image of Atufal in chains carries with it—in the proper context—the suggestion of hegemony. When Babo cuts himself after nicking Captain Cereno while shaving, he is again creating the impression of hegemony:

“Ah, when will master get better from his sickness; only the sour heart that sour sickness breeds made him serve Babo so; cutting Babo with the

razor, because, only by accident, Babo had given master one little scratch; and for the first time in so many days, too. Ah, ah, ah,” holding his hand to his face. (283)

The cut on the face is exactly the kind of punishment Delano has been looking for on the *San Dominick* for the acts of insubordination he has witnessed. Delano’s reply is quite ironic: “Ah, this slavery breeds ugly passions in man.—Poor fellow!” (283) The words in the thought are right, but the context makes them a tragic joke on Delano in several ways. His humanistic impulses toward Babo, for example, occur only through the construct of slavery. Then there is the complete disconnect between the institution of slavery and its constituents. For Delano, it is not slavery that is ugly but the behavior of its parts, suggesting an almost Roman (Severan-period) attitude where slaves were “protected from arbitrary exercise of paternal authority” (Garraty and Gay 215). Finally, there is the irony of the play itself, where Delano’s feelings toward the slave are the result of Babo’s self-mutilation, and not the hand of Captain Cereno. Between the allusive invitations that Babo creates and Babo’s demonstration of ‘loyalty,’ Delano, with his master/slave paradigm, has very little chance of seeing the truth.

Even though the content and structure of Delano’s and Babo’s allusions of blackness thus far suggest that slavery functions more or less as an institution with visible checks and balances, the real culprit here—the great force which maintains the status quo—is not the white master standing over the African, ready to whip or chain him at the first sign of disobedience. Nor is it the slave Babo who orders his owner stripped to the bone and roped to the figurehead. The real monster is not even the racist Delano who views Africans as a commodity to be bought and sold. Nor is it the Spanish court who

sentences Babo to be beheaded and his body burned. The real monster in *Benito Cereno* is the mechanism that makes Delano possible. The strong, visceral imagery employed by Melville is subordinate to the greater thesis of language. From beginning to end it is the very language of slavery which creates slaves out of both the Africans and Delano. The Africans are slaves to language because it is through language that they are permitted to exist. Words or phrases that carry with them the pejorative energy of downward displacement—such as “slaves,” (Melville 240), “negro,” (240), “oakum pickers” (243), “unsophisticated Africans” (243), “like a shepherd’s dog” (244), “body-servant” (245), “good conduct” (245), “faithful personal attendant” (246), “servant” (247), “the belittered Ghetto” (251), “hatchet-polishers” (253), “flock of black sheep” (253), “privy-counselor” (261), “black” (265), “performing the inferior function” (266), “natural valets and hair-dressers; taking to the comb and brush congenially as to the castanets” (278), “as though God had set the whole negro to some pleasant tune” (279), “as to Newfoundland dogs” (279), “Nubian” (283), “steward” (284), “mulatto” (284), “devil” (284), “black broth” (284), “intermixtures” (285), “uncommonly intelligent” (285), “sculptured porters” (287), “the cabin steward, of a good person and voice” (301), “grave-digger” (301), and “master” (303)—occur throughout *Benito Cereno*, and several of them more than once. The Africans are not allowed to be considered outside this linguistic framework. Furthermore, Delano is also a victim of language, but a different kind. Instead of being cast in a predetermined role that is reinforced through coercion, Delano matured in an environment where slavery is acceptable. There is predetermination, but it’s not coerced. As Lowery Nelson Jr. notes in “The Fictive Reader and Literary Self-Reflexiveness,” “the literary work of art [or hegemony] is a communication and that the communicant is

thereby guided and controlled, though not coerced, by its totality” (189-90). Delano is not tortured into becoming a racist, but the totality of an environment permissive of slavery would certainly encourage the members of its community to think accordingly. At the very least the reference points of a slavery-promoting society would be available to all intertextually, whether they believed in slavery or not. The problem here, of course, is that there is no mechanism to determine how much of the creation and maintenance of slavery is linguistic and how much is the result of choice. With Delano’s posture of non-engagement, Melville points out to his readers the possibility that men can choose evil. Don Aranda was evil for choosing to be a slave trader, just as Babo is evil for choosing vengeance over freedom. Furthermore, Captain Delano represents an evil of a different kind. By refusing to ask the moral question, he shirks his responsibility to both man and God. Not once does Delano question slavery in “Benito Cereno,” and that is damning. How much of that refusal is Delano and how much of that refusal is linguistic is impossible to calculate, but it seems likely that the language of slavery does play a role in both the creation and maintenance of its structure.

The final posture of *Benito Cereno* is a kind of ambiguity mingled with a little hope. The fact that Delano refuses to engage with the problem of slavery speaks to the strength of his cultural environment, and to the simple fact that *he doesn’t have to*.¹⁰ There is no threat of death hanging over his head to clarify his thinking. Given that *Benito Cereno* was published six years before the Civil War, it comes as no surprise that Melville does not openly condemn Delano at the end. The touchy artistic problem for Melville that emerges from *Benito Cereno* is how to write an anti-slavery narrative without enraging half the country. Melville’s brilliant solution, of course, was to cloak

his argument within the structure of the text rather than in the content of the plot.

Melville recognized that it is the pervasive power of the linguistic construct that helps create and maintain slavery, and so lies the hope—a new language and, consequently, a new allusion.

Chapter Five

Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark*: Allusion and the Art of Unification

A year before Melville published *Benito Cereno*, another artist was trying to make sense of the ambiguity and melancholy of his time. In “Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse,” Matthew Arnold was wrestling with the four dead faiths that once animated and directed Western society: the ancient German, the Greek, the medieval Christian, and the liberal Protestantism of his father. His famous lines “Wandering between two worlds, one dead/The other powerless to be born” (477) captured the spirit of his age and set the stage for the birth of modernism and its feelings of cultural dissolution and schizophrenia. Naturally, modern artists were faced with the huge problem of making art in a lonely world disconnected from the past. One solution was allusion. As noted earlier by Thornton, allusion, with its ability to import the past into the same cognitive space of the present, offered modern artists the opportunity to re-value the past: “The point is not that we should sacrifice the present to eternity or to the past, but that we should put the past to its proper use as a basis and enhancer of the present; not disparage our present life but get the fullest possible value from it” (247). This idea of synthesis appealed very much to Willa Cather, for in *The Song of the Lark* it is the unification of time and space into the container that makes art what it is, whether that container is a jar of pottery in the bottom of Panther Canyon or the throat of Thea Kronborg. Unification makes art possible.

The idea of unification must have been very important to Cather because it is an integral element in the development of Thea Kronborg as an artist. The structure of *The*

Song of the Lark is developmental, where Thea begins as a talented young girl. This talent, however, as the novel clearly indicates, is not enough for Thea to become a great opera singer. Several specific events had to happen—Mrs. Kronborg had to allow Thea to take private lessons, Thea had to get her own bedroom, Ray Kennedy had to die so Thea could afford to study in Chicago, Fred Ottenburg had to take her to Panther Canyon, Dr. Archie had to be rich enough to lend Thea the money to study in Germany, and so on. The image of talent coupled with people, places, and events suggests that, for Cather, art has both an essence and a process. When Dr. Archie visits the famous Thea Kronborg after a performance, the author reveals her glue and the organizing principle of the novel:

I began the world on six hundred dollars, and it was it was the price of a man's life. Ray Kennedy had worked and been sober and denied himself, and when he died he had six hundred dollars to show for it. I always measure things by that six hundred dollars, just as I measure high buildings by the Moonstone standpipe. There are things we can't get away from. (Cather 393)

The emergent theme in Thea's observation is the intertextual nature of self. The Moonstone standard, for example, will always be a part of Thea. It is her allusion to which her present is contrasted. Furthermore, because Dr. Archie also has experience in Moonstone, Thea's words act as an allusion for him as well: "I don't believe we should be any happier if we did get away from them" (393). The fact that Cather has her characters communicate allusively changes how allusion can be studied. What appears on the surface to be an expositive conversation between characters is really a dynamic exchange between minds. Like an author Thea uses allusion to communicate on a more

personal and level, and like an informed reader, Dr. Archie derives meaning from her allusion. It is this capacity towards dynamism that makes allusion a promising study in *The Song of the Lark*. Not only does Cather give her characters the ability to participate allusively in their textual world, she uses allusion's capacity to bring the past into the present as a mechanism for Thea Kronborg to keep in touch with the vital places and people in her life. In effect, Cather, by expanding the possibilities for allusion through the use of character-oriented valuations, repositions the relationship between reader and text.

Cather massages the connection between allusion and memory throughout *The Song of the Lark*. After the Byron example mentioned in the introduction, the next time Cather uses an allusion rhetorically to energize character instead of referentially to describe character occurs when Thea brings a Latin passage that she copied from a book of Dr. Archie's to Professor Wunsch for translation: "Lente currite, lente currite, noctis equi" (25). After Wunsch translates the line, he has an allusive experience:

He put the pencil back in his pocket and continued to stare at the Latin. It recalled the poem, which he had read as a student, and thought very fine. There were treasures of memory which no lodging-house keeper could attach. One carried things about in one's head, long after one's linen could be smuggled out in a tuning-bag. (25)

Clearly, Thea's inquiry prompted Wunsch to relive a memory. We do not know the specific content of Wunsch's recollection, but we can recognize through the narrative that he is experiencing something from his past. His character is made vital in such a way that goes beyond simple description, but that is not the end.

After Thea's lesson finishes for the day, ending with the line, "Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal," Wunsch tells her "That is a good thing to remember" (26). Interpreted from a narrative point of view, the advice seems mildly significant if not out of place because Cather just finished describing Fritz Kohler's piece picture of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. But if we interpret the line allusively, that is, with Wunsch still in the recollective mode, then it does not seem out of place or insignificant. This is all but confirmed by Wunsch' behavior later in the evening:

That line awoke many memories. He was thinking of youth; of his own, so long gone by, and of his pupil's, just beginning. He would even have cherished hopes for her, except that he had become superstitious. He believed that whatever he hoped for was destined not to be; that his affection brought ill fortune, especially to the young . . . (27)

By viewing the text dynamically, that is, by granting Wunsch the mental vitality he needs, we get a sense of cohesion that goes beyond plot. Whatever happened to Wunsch when he was younger was clearly on his mind for the rest of the evening, coloring his mood, just like any other human being who takes an unsolicited trip down memory lane. By making Wunsch dynamic through the use of character-oriented allusions, Cather brings the element of character even closer to humanity.

After establishing that her characters participate allusively in their textual world, Cather expands allusion's dynamism into place by creating spaces that lend themselves to active consciousness and vital imagination. Mrs. Kohler's garden, Mrs. Tellamantez' house, Pedro's Cup, the half-story bedroom in Moonstone, the Art Institute in Chicago, the sunny pool in the bottom of Panther Canyon, and finally the stage itself, are all spaces

where Thea's mind is engaged. As an example, take Pedro's Cup, a great desert amphitheater to which Ray Kennedy frequently brought Thea. Besides having a good time hunting for crystals and agates and listening to music, Thea would listen to Ray tell stories about adventure, which conjured up her own memories:

Thea, stirred by tales of adventure, of the Grand Canyon and Death Valley, was recalling a great adventure of her own. Early in the summer her father had been invited to conduct a reunion of old frontiersmen, up in Wyoming, near Laramie, and he took Thea along with him to play the organ and sing patriotic songs. There they stayed at the house of an old ranchman who told them about a ridge up in the hills called Laramie Plain, where the wagon-trails of the forty-niners and the Mormons were still visible. (48)

The significance of Pedro's Cup is that Thea's mind is in an active mode. Ray's stories serve as bridges to her own past experiences. Under a more historical concept of allusion, that as referent, Ray's adventures and Thea's remembrances would never be considered allusive because they are not extra-textual. In fact, most allusive constructs would disregard the allusive dynamism of Thea's memory, treating it passively as narrative rather than actively as a reflection of Thea's engaged consciousness.

Another space that is key to Thea's development is her half-story bedroom in Moonstone. It is the first place that she can call her own, the first place where she can create her space, and like Pedro's Cup, her bedroom is conducive to mental activity:

When Thea plunged in between her red blankets, the cold sometimes kept her awake for a good while, and she comforted herself by remembering

[my emphasis] all she could of *Polar Explorations*, a fat, calf-bound volume her father had bought from a book-agent, and by thinking [my emphasis] about the members of Greeley's party: how they lay in their frozen sleeping-bags, each man hoarding the warmth of his own body and trying to make it last as long as possible against the oncoming cold that would be everlasting. . . . The acquisition of this room was the beginning of a new era in Thea's life. (52)

Again, the dynamic approach to allusion with its character-oriented value system opens the door to the text and to the inner workings of Thea's mind. When she experiences the cold, Thea uses a recollection of the cold to help her get to sleep. By moving allusion away from the referential and towards the dynamic, Cather repositions the relationship between reader and text.

As we pass through *The Song of the Lark*, Cather's allusive method becomes so inextricably linked with Thea Kronborg's development as an artist as not to be distinguishable. So far, Cather has established dynamic association and a place that promotes it as critical elements in Thea's artistic progress. By the time Thea leaves for Chicago, Cather has informed her readers as to how Thea's mind works. When she moves in with Mrs. Lorch and Mrs. Andersen, for example, Thea notices "a large coloured print of a brightly lighted church in a snowstorm, on Christmas Eve, with greens about the stone doorway and arched windows. There was something warm and homelike about this picture, and Thea grew fond of it" (155). Obviously there is something "warm and homelike" about the picture! Considering the text as a potentially allusive environment for character allows readers to treat Thea's mind dynamically.

Consequently, the church in the painting reminds Thea of the church where she gave her first performance (55), and the “greens about the stone archway” remind her of the “moonflowers on the vine that ran over [Mrs. Tellamantez’] house” (39). Cather’s repositioning of the relationship between reader and text through allusive dynamism permits her readers to enjoy a depth and richness of character that goes beyond action or description.

It is clear from the beginning of the novel that Thea has always had a strong desire to become an artist, but she did not know what that meant. She has the natural gifts of a dynamic mind and she understands the power of place, but she does not yet understand the power of art. That changes when she attends a concert in Chicago:

When the first movement ended, Thea’s hands and feet were cold as ice. She was too much excited to know anything except that she wanted something desperately, and when the English horns gave out the theme of the Largo, she knew that what she wanted was exactly that. Here were the sand hills, the grasshoppers and locusts, all the things that wakened and chirped in the early morning; the reaching and reaching of high plains, the immeasurable yearning of all flat lands. There was home in it, too . . .

(181)

For the first time in her life, Thea understands the true power of art. Everything that she is at that moment is contained within the moment: Pedro’s Cup, Mrs. Kohler’s garden, the rancher’s story about the Laramie Plain, her bedroom in Moonstone, everything. That is the true power of art and that is what Thea wants to possess.

Whatever it was in the concert that triggered Thea’s dynamic allusive response, it

is clear that this epiphanic moment affected her greatly. Never before had her mind traveled so far away. It was like being “sunk in twilight” (182). Unfortunately, Thea’s romantic epiphany comes to an end:

When Thea emerged from the concert hall, Mrs. Forch’s predictions had been fulfilled. A furious gale was beating over the city from Lake Michigan. The streets were full of cold, hurrying, angry people, running for street-cars and barking at each other. . . There was some power abroad in the world bent upon taking away from her that feeling with which she had come out of the concert hall. (182-3)

This is one of the most significant moments in the text because it is here that Thea surrenders the child and becomes an adult. The dynamism of Thea’s mind allowed her to see and experience the full potential of human existence through music. After such a flight, however, there is nowhere to go but down.

Thea’s fall is hard, so hard, in fact, that she becomes disoriented. She cannot remember how to get home, and even worse, her dynamic mind, which has never failed in the past, cannot connect her up to the feeling she had before. She could not “remember how the violins came in after the horns” (183). It has taken Thea several years to figure out what she wants, the feeling of art, but now she does not know how to get it. All she can do is want. Once she gets her bearings outside of the concert hall, Thea vows to “have it [again], what the trumpets were singing! She would have it, have it—it” (183). Thea’s problem is that she cannot yet reconcile her dynamism and power of place with the feeling of art. If she is ever going to become an artist, then she must figure out a way the three can coexist simultaneously. The mechanism Thea requires, of

course, is allusion/intertextuality, or as Miller puts it, “the perception by the reader of relationships between a focused text and others, which have both chronologically preceded it and followed it” (30). When Thea can perceive the relationship between the dynamic allusive spaces in her life, then she can make her art. Thea does not find the answer in her return to Moonstone nor in her return to Chicago, but she does find it in another space conducive to dynamism, the bottom of Panther Canyon:

One morning, as she was standing upright against the pool, splashing water between her shoulder blades with a big sponge, something flashed through her mind that made her draw herself up and stand still until the water had quite dried upon her flushed skin. The stream and the broken pottery: what was art but an effort to make a sheath, a mould in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose? The Indian women had held it in their jars. In the sculpture she had seen in the Art Institute, it had been caught in a flash of arrested motion. In singing, one made a vessel of one’s throat and nostrils and held it on one’s breath, caught the stream in a scale of natural intervals. (273)

In a flash of insight, which is Thea’s approach to learning and always has been, she understands that she had formulated the problem of reconciliation incorrectly. Art is not a matter of possession, but a matter of transmission. The memory cannot hold what exists only in the now, namely the dynamic exchange between art and the observer. The exchange exists only when it is being transmitted, experienced, vitalized. It is clear that Cather feels that the experience Thea had in the concert hall, the feeling of being totally

alive, is the true test for art. As Cather remarked in her famous essay “The Novel D meubl ,” “It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well to poetry itself” (240). Through the mechanics of dynamic exchange between art and patron, Cather has given us a third element in her theory of the artist.

At this point in the novel, the only thing remaining for Thea to accomplish is for her to join dynamism, place, and instrument in order to create a unified moment capable of producing a dynamic exchange with her audience. We get such a moment near the end of *The Song of the Lark*:

While she was on the stage she was conscious that every movement was the right movement, that her body was absolutely the instrument of her idea. Not for nothing had she kept it so severely, kept it filled with such energy and fire. All that deep-rooted vitality flowered in her voice, her face, in her very finger-tips. She felt like a tree bursting into bloom. And her voice was as flexible as her body; equal to any demand, capable of every nuance. With the sense of its perfect companionship, its entire trustworthiness, she had been able to throw herself into the dramatic exigencies of the part, everything in her at its best and everything working together. . . . Thea Kronborg’s friends, old and new, seated about the house on different floors and levels, enjoyed her triumph according to their natures. (410)

The thing that had been eluding Thea, keeping her from realizing her dream, was the

space of the stage. Never before this had Thea been able to consider the stage as one of those places that promoted dynamism. Before, the stage contained “every sort of distraction and mischance” that kept her from the best (410). But this time she understood that the stage is Pedro’s Cup, is Mrs. Kohler’s garden, Mrs. Tellamantez’ house, the half-story bedroom in Moonstone, the Art Institute in Chicago, the sunny pool in the bottom of Panther Canyon. In each one of these places Thea’s experiences were vital, immediate, and true. She was alive. With this stage appearance, Thea Kronborg joins dynamism, place, and instrument in order to create a completely unified moment capable of producing a dynamic exchange between her and her audience.

The dynamic exchange that is at the heart of the allusive process is so close in nature to the exchange between art and patron that they are, for all practical purposes, indistinguishable. It is clear that Cather’s allusive method goes far beyond the limits of traditional allusive scholarship, requiring an interpretive mechanism that not only repositions the relationship between reader and allusion, but between reader and text. Cather moves beyond the referential, where allusion contributes to the elements of narrative, to the rhetorical, where allusion becomes narrative. With the Epilogue to *The Song of the Lark*, Cather takes it step a further, turning narrative into allusion. The townsfolk of Moonstone remember Thea as a successful artist: “A boy grew up on one of those streets who went to Omaha and built up a great business, and is now very rich. Moonstone people always speak of him and Thea together, as examples of Moonstone enterprise. They do, however, talk oftener of Thea. A voice has even wider appeal than fortune” (417). With this last admission, Thea has come full circle. She has become an allusion.

The use of allusion as a synthesizing force in *The Song of the Lark* is a great artistic achievement for Willa Cather. Like her contemporary Joyce, Cather expanded the reading experience by giving her allusions a character-oriented value, even to the point of giving allusion, like Joyce, the power to heal. After a long day at rehearsal, Thea Kronborg returns home in a poor frame of mind. Her throat is sore, and Madame Necker, an artist Thea respects, had been “chilly and disapproving.” Thea ends up ordering two dinners and then chastises the housekeeper about some missing laundry. Thea was, as the narrator puts it, “too tired to control her thoughts” (Cather 403). In order to meet the challenge of her restless mind, Thea decides to take a bath, which does succeed in inducing “pleasant reflections and a feeling of well-being” (Cather 404). Unfortunately for Thea, her mind is still racing, not with the negative images from earlier in the day, but with positive ones of Dr. Archie, Fred Ottenburg, and Harsanyi. Still unable to sleep, Thea tries “an old device” (405):

She entered her father’s front door, hung her hat and coat on the rack, and stopped in the parlour to warm her hands at the stove. Then she went out through the dining room, where the boys were getting their lessons at the long table; through the sitting room, where Thor was asleep in his cot bed, his dress and stockings hanging on a chair. In the kitchen she stopped for her lantern and her hot brick. She hurried up the back stairs and through the windy loft to her own glacial room. . . . Once between the red blankets there was a short, fierce battle with the cold; then, warmer—warmer. She could hear her father shaking down the hard-coal burner for the night, and the wind rushing and banging down the village street. The

boughs of the cottonwood, hard as bone, rattled against her gable. The bed grew softer and warmer. Everybody was warm and well downstairs. The sprawling old house had gathered them all in, like a hen, and had settled down over its brood. They were all warm in her father's house. Softer and softer. She was asleep. (405)

In this example Thea reaches back into her own past allusively to a place of warmth and comfort in order to get control of her restless present and eventually go to sleep. Like Gabriel Conroy creating an allusion to his dying Aunt Julia with the song "Arrayed for the Bridal," Thea Kronborg is not only an allusion-maker, but an allusion-user.

Vital spaces such as Thea's room in *Moonstone* play an important role in Thea's development as an artist, and, in fact, become a significant element in her practice of art. *The Song of the Lark* can be read and understood in terms of the discovery and use of vital spaces, or places conducive to dynamic thought. While place plays an important role in Thea's development, the mechanism by which she can use her vital spaces is also important, and that mechanism is allusion. *The Song of the Lark* demonstrates how an artist can use the connective ability of allusion to keep possession of those spaces vital to life and art, making it, like *Dubliners*, a manual for managing the mind.

Chapter Six

Jessie Redmon Fauset's *Plum Bun*: Allusion and the Act of Passing

In her introduction to *Plum Bun*, Deborah McDowell observes that the novel “eludes classification” (xxii). The reason for this is because Fauset uses many literary themes and forms to make her point. In her profile of Fauset’s life and work, Carolyn Sylvander argues that the author used “traditional *Bildungsroman* and family novel patterns and [adopted] them to study the peculiar confusion, learning, and ultimate understanding of American Blacks” (168). In her introduction to *The Sleeper Wakes*, Marcy Knopf describes *Plum Bun* as a “story set at the crossroads of race, class, and gender oppression, and offers a preview of the themes of passing, interracial marriage, and the search for economic security” (xxv). Finally, Jacquelyn McLendon argues in *The Politics of Color in the Fiction of Jessie Fauset and Nella Larsen* that “The metaphorical coding of the narrative, through the use of the fairy-tale motif and the nursery rhyme that structures the novel, is the means by which Fauset attempts to dismantle hegemonic constructs of color, race, class, and gender” (29).

After reading the numerous critical responses where race, class, and gender dominate the conversation, one might conclude that those were the only challenges facing a black American woman of the 1920's--a period that had witnessed the destruction of humankind on an unprecedented scale, the “growing size and mechanism of society with its tendency to depress the value of the arts” (“Expressionism” 195), the flourishing of psychology and its opening-up of the human mind for all to see, and the sense of the individual “being lost in a mass society” (195). It seems mind boggling to assume that such powerful forces were limited to the dominant cultures and artists of the

period. In her 1995 Forward to *The Chinaberry Tree*, Marcy Knopf tries to bring Fauset into the modern movement by suggesting that she “‘masters’ past literary canons such as the nineteenth-century sentimental novel or Greek tragedy and ‘deforms’ or modifies them as she generates her own version of ‘modern’ black culture” (xi). If this manifestation of modernism was the only aspect of the movement pursued by Fauset, then critics are justified in limiting their inquiries to race, class, and gender. But what if Fauset were doing more than just reworking past literary canons. Suppose, for a moment, that she was actively engaged in bringing the psychological inner life into focus. Suppose that Fauset was “subversive of the realist or the romantic” (Bradbury and McFarlane 23). That would make her a full participant in the flowering of the modern age and not just an intellectual bystander.

The suggestion that Fauset was a modernist seems reasonable. To begin, she was by all accounts a highly educated woman. Fauset was “well read in British, French, and African-American literature and history” (Knopf “1995 Forward” xi). She was a Phi Beta Kappa at Cornell and an editor for *Crisis Magazine* for several years (Davis xvi). The fact that she was highly educated suggests to me that she must have been aware of at least some of the goals of mainstream modern artistic thought:

to objectify the subjective, to make audible or perceptible the mind’s inaudible conversations, to halt the flow, to irrationalize the rational, to defamiliarize and dehumanize the expected, to conventionalize the extraordinary and the eccentric, to define the psychopathology of *everyday* life, to intellectualize the emotional, to secularize the spiritual, to see space as a function of time, mass as a form of energy, and uncertainty as

the only certain thing. (Bradbury and McFarlane 48)

Laying aside considerations of race, class, and gender for the moment, and focusing instead on how Fauset conducts her inquiries, then her modernism becomes clear. She interrogates racism, class discrimination, and gender bias, not by proclaiming their immorality, but by revealing how they work. By focusing on the mechanics of consciousness, Fauset is able to demonstrate—like Melville—how racism, though irrational, functions in a permissive environment. By illuminating the allusive nature of prejudice, Jessie Redmon Fauset offers a way out in a world seemingly governed by a cultural chaos. More than anything else, *Plum Bun: A Novel without a Moral* is a how-to manual for constructing a viable identity in an unstable, modern world. Fauset’s primary method for exploring race, class, and gender involves how the main character views the world. By focusing on how this character-oriented view is formed, Fauset—like Joyce—makes visible the invisible, thus allowing an opportunity to study how phenomena such as racism and gender bias are created and perpetuated, even by reasonable people. Once Fauset brings the mechanics of prejudice into the light, she can then offer suggestions that can help real people live their lives.

Plum Bun begins with a clever image of an opal “that is no jewel” (11), suggesting what will become the prevailing theme of the novel: appearances are often different from reality. This is the lesson of *Plum Bun*, and the main challenge of the protagonist, Angela Murray. Set primarily in Philadelphia and New York, the novel describes how a young middle class black woman “passes” through various levels of American society in search of happiness, only to discover that happiness depends on how one circumscribes it, i.e., happiness is a frame of mind.

Within the first few pages of the novel, we learn that Angela has already constructed a world-view where appearance forms reality. Through a combination of observation and romanticism, Angela thinks that

certain fortuitous endowments, great physical beauty, unusual strength, a certain unswerving singleness of mind,--gifts bestowed quite blindly and disproportionately by the forces which control life,--these were the qualities which contributed toward a glowing and pleasant existence.

(Fauset 12-13)

This is not a completely unreasonable conclusion for a young woman to make. Beauty, intelligence, and strength have always been qualities people have coveted for one reason or another. Where Angela begins to go astray is when she adds race to the equation:

Colour or rather the lack of it seemed to the child the one absolute prerequisite to the life of which she was always dreaming. One might break loose from a too hampering sense of duty; poverty could be overcome; physicians conquered weakness; but colour, the mere possession of a black or a white skin, that was clearly one of those fortuitous endowments of the gods. (13-4)

The association that Angela is making here is that color inhibits existence while the lack of color promotes it. This association is reinforced by her mother when the two of them “pass” on Saturdays together. Angela doesn’t understand that her mother “passes” to have fun and not because she wants to be white. Fauset describes psychological association:

[Angela] drew for herself certain clearly formed conclusions which her

subconscious mind thus codified:

First, that the great rewards of life—riches, glamour, pleasure,
—are for white-skinned people only. Secondly, that Junius and Virginia
were denied these privileges because they were
dark . . . (17-8).

Through her own observations of her family Angela has “learned” that coloured people are different than white people. And even though she views whites and blacks differently, she doesn’t associate colour pejoratively. Unfortunately for Angela, other people do.

Up till now Angela has only observed racism, and as such the concept remains in the realm of ideas. There is no depth, no emotion to attach to the idea. Mary Hastings changes this when she discriminates against Angela because of her color: “Angela, you never told me you were coloured!” (43) It is at this critical moment in the text that racism becomes more than just an idea:

‘Coloured!’ This was a curious business, this colour. It was the one god apparently to whom you could sacrifice everything. On account of it her mother had neglected to greet her own husband on the street. Mary Hastings could let it come between her and her friend. (44)

This is an important event in the text because Angela is given the ability to know what it’s like to be discriminated against, to feel discrimination. She could empathize with Matthew when he was denied entrance into the theater on the basis of his color. She could also empathize with Miss Powell when she was denied the opportunity to study abroad because she was black. Ever since the Mary Hastings incident, racism became an

experience for Angela, not just a concept.

Even though the Mary Hastings experience gave Angela the ability to empathize with other characters in the novel who are discriminated against—Matthew, the three in the restaurant in New York, Anthony Cross, Miss Powell—it is important for another reason: Angela discovers that white people who discriminate against black people do so because they are black. Now the appropriate question becomes what does this have to do with Fauset’s modernist project of exposing the psychological mechanics of racism? It all goes back to what Fauset said earlier about Angela: “She drew for herself certain clearly formed conclusions which her subconscious mind thus codified” (17). The Mary Hastings experience is the first of many similar experiences that will also be codified by Angela’s subconscious mind, namely, that part of being white is discriminating against the black. What Fauset is suggesting is that racism is the result of a subconscious codification of similar experiences, in other words, the “established allusion” of Captain Delano.

When Angela goes to New York to seek her fortune, she clearly believes that she will find happiness in whiteness because she “passes” in order to be successful. She meets a wealthy white man named Roger Fielding who is clearly a racist bigot of the first grade. But even in the face of Roger’s overt bigotry (the three in the restaurant), Angela still believes that he is her savior because of another subconscious codification: that wealth equals happiness.

The problem for Angela is that in her quest to become wealthy, she tolerates Roger’s *repeated* racism. It is in this repetition that Angela actually becomes racist herself. The bizarre thing is that she came to New York to succeed, not to discriminate.

But by the mechanics of subconscious codification, Angela Murray, daughter of Junius and Mattie Murray, becomes a racist herself. Of this there is no doubt:

For the first time in the pursuit of her [Angela's] chosen ends she began to waver. Surely no ambition, no pinnacle of safety was supposed to call for the sacrifice of a sister. She might be selfish,--oh, undoubtedly she had been selfish all these months to leave Jinny completely to herself-- but she had never meant to be cruel. (159-60)

When Angela “cuts” own her sister at the train station so as not to offend Roger, there is no doubt that Angela is acting out a racist script. In other words, “passing” involves accepting the entire racist package.

The problem Fauset articulates so well is that if subconscious codification is powerful enough to cause a sister to discriminate against her own flesh and blood, then how can pejorative allusions be undone? Angela Murray came to New York with a keen artistic mind and she still fell into the trap. The answer, according to Fauset, is subconscious de-codification. There are two events in life of Angela Murray that help reformulate her allusion of blackness: the lecture of Van Meier and the termination of her relationship with Roger.

When Angela visits Harlem upon arriving in New York, she is astonished to see “coloured life so thick, so varied, so complete” (96). But it isn't until Van Meier's lecture that Angela saw and felt the pride and possibilities of being black:

And again she sensed that fullness, richness, even thickness of life which she had felt on her first visit to Harlem. The stream of living ran almost molten; little waves of feeling played out from the groups within the

audience and beat against her *consciousness* [my emphasis] and against that of her friends . . . There sat the advanced coloured Americans, beautifully dressed, beautifully trained, whimsical, humorous, bitter, impatiently responsible, yet still responsible. (216)

The charged atmosphere in the lecture hall was something Angela had never seen before. People of many backgrounds, although most were black, had come to listen to a black speaker. There was beauty and culture. People were happy. Angela's experience was intensified when Van Meier gave his speech:

He began to speak on a clear, deep, bell-like note. Angela thought that she had never heard its equal for beauty, for resonance, for culture. . . His English was the carefully sifted language of the savant, his periods polished, almost poetical. He was noted on two continents for his sociological and economic contributions, but his subject was racial sacrifice. (218)

For the first time in her life Angela sees a colored man competing successfully in what she had thought was a whites-only world. Van Meier is obviously a black man of international status and just as educated as any white person. This is a critical point in the text because Angela sees for the first time that black people can be happy and successful and be "coloured" at the same time. In short, black people could be proud.

Clearly Van Meier's lecture is a turning point for Angela, but it is not the only thing that helps her out of the darkness. Remember, subconscious codification works by reinforcement, which means her relationship with Roger must end if Angela is going to reposition herself to blackness. And this is exactly what happens. After Roger gradually

cuts back his affections, Angela begins to experience loneliness. She tries harder to be kind to Roger, but he is indifferent. No matter what she does, Roger isn't pleased. When she eventually confronts him about it, Roger protests that it is not okay for Angela to call him. She makes the point that he can call upon her whenever he feels like it. Roger says that it's okay for him to call upon her because he's a man. This is an important moment in the text because Angela is forced to confront the truth, namely, that "the rules that govern life . . . represented fundamental facts; a sort of concentrated compendium of the art of living and therefore as much to be observed and respected as warm, vital impulses" (228).

With Roger out of the picture, Angela has the opportunity to experience subconscious re-codification. Realizing that whiteness and wealth are not necessary prerequisites to happiness, Angela searches for the one man in the world that she knows can make her happy: Anthony Cross. When she finds Anthony, he reveals to her that he is of mixed parentage, and that no matter what happens in life, the two of them cannot be together because he is black and she is white. Anthony feels strongly about this issue because if his own father could be lynched for marrying a light-skinned woman, then Anthony could too, even though he appears Spanish. In any case, he certainly wouldn't want to subject Angela to the possibility of a similar fate.

Learning about Anthony's past reminds Angela about the effects of racism, but even more importantly, Anthony's revelation that he would never marry Angela because she was white causes her to entertain the notion that "she might be glad to be coloured" (296). Later, when Miss Powell is rejected by the American Committee for the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts on the basis of her color, Angela is incensed. She goes

to comfort Miss Powell and finds a cadre of reporters hounding her instead. It is at this moment in the text that Angela proclaims her pride in being black, rising above the petty questions of the press:

Do you [the press] really think that being coloured is as awful as all of that? Can't you see that to my way of thinking it's a great deal better to be coloured and to miss—oh—scholarships and honours and preferments, than to be the contemptible things which you've all shown yourselves to be this morning? Coming here baiting this poor girl and her mother, thrusting your self-assurance down their throats, branding yourselves literally dogs in the manger?" (347)

Without a doubt Angela Murray is proud to be exactly who she is—a young black woman. Subconscious re-codification has been completed.

Even though Angela Murray has found herself and even Anthony in the end, there is the sense on Fauset's part that the two of them cannot live as honestly as they could in another country. The "granite-like coldness and precision" (228) of the conventions of the world suggest that all of the pride in the world is not going to save you if you find yourself in the wrong place at the wrong time, just as Anthony's father did. If Van Meier found himself in the deep South in a similar situation, there is no doubt that he would be lynched just as quickly. The point of Fauset's entire narrative is not to sway the bigoted minds of the world into giving up their hate. Fauset realizes that prejudice will always be with us in one form or another because it functions through the allusive mechanics of the human mind, and any pejorative association creates a pejorative allusion. Short of completely eliminating negative structures of thought, Fauset argues for an awareness

that the brain will connect things all by itself, even if the connections being made are not wanted. *Plum Bun* suggests what *Benito Cereno* could not openly; namely, is that racism or any other negative mental construct is not a permanent construct.

Even though Fauset's chief concern in *Plum Bun* was demonstrating how a young woman of color in the modern age could construct a viable identity in a racist, class-conscious, and gender-biased world, the value of her work goes beyond explicit issues of culture towards a psychological account of human behavior. With *Plum Bun*, Jessie Redmon Fauset demonstrates that she is a modern artist.

Chapter Seven

Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*: The Allusive Process
and the Prison of Referentiality

In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* the main character, Scout, has an interesting exchange with Mr. Dolphus Raymond, the town drunk. When Jem asks Scout to take Dill outside so as not to hear the brutal cross-examination of Tom Robinson, Dolphus Raymond—a white man who prefers the company of the black community—offers Scout and Dill a drink out of his paper bag to calm their nerves. When Scout discovers that old Dolphus has nothing but Coca-Cola in his bag, she asks him why he pretends to be a drunk, to which he answers “I try to give ‘em a reason, you see. It helps folks if they can latch onto a reason” (229). From the point of allusive mechanics, this exchange is interesting for two reasons. First, by “passing” as a drunk, Dolphus is using the associative power of allusion to manipulate the townsfolk into leaving him alone. Second, when Dolphus says that it helps people to have a reason, it reveals the human need for textual closure. Dolphus without the sack spending his time with the black community would be an open text, a story without an ending. With the introduction of the proverbial paper bag, Dolphus is able to create the opportunity for the drunken-man explanation in the minds of some of his racist viewers. It is this impulse for textual closure that Thomas Pynchon uses to structure *The Crying of Lot 49*, a “novel” about a woman who attempts to determine the meaning or connection of the ubiquitous trystero, a mysterious horn-shaped symbol that appears in the strangest of places. What makes *The Crying of Lot 49* a “novel” instead of a novel is that it has no climax or resolution, no gestalt to bring closure to the text. In fact, Pynchon goes out his way to prevent a text

from being formed. It is this mode of de-textualization, where the goal is to point out the fictive nature of writing by destabilizing the elements of narrative, that is at the heart of *The Crying of Lot 49*. It could even be argued that *The Crying of Lot 49* subtitled, “A Novel,” is the first or one of the first novels ever written because it does not hide what it is—a completely artificial construct.

From the point of view of allusive mechanics, *The Crying of Lot 49* is a very interesting study and quite different from the other texts I have examined in where it locates the problem. In *The Song of the Lark*, for example, the problem is how to create art in a fragmented world, while in *Plum Bun* the problem is how a young African-American woman could construct a viable identity in a racist, class-conscious, and gender biased world. In both cases allusion is presented, for the most part, as a problem solver. Thea Kronborg is able to use allusion as a container to unify the positive creative forces throughout her life, while Angela Murray uses allusion as a tool to “pass” in a white world, allowing her to disassociate the cultural prerogatives of equating whiteness with success and blackness with failure. *Benito Cereno*, in yet another manifestation, shows how racism uses allusion to maintain the status quo by both prescribing and proscribing the reading process, effectively managing consciousness. The one commonality in each of these cases is that a character-oriented textual object—an allusion—is created and present and functioning in some capacity within the text. In *The Crying of Lot 49*, however, the problem is not with noun of allusion—the object—but with the verb of allusion; i.e., the process that creates the object. Pynchon does not allow the creation of a character-oriented textual object. Rather, Oedipa Maas is caught within the act of signification while pursuing the trystero. Instead of being trapped by an

allusion as in the case of Amasa Delano, where the reading process is altered by allusive connections, Oedipa Mass is trapped inside the reading/allusive process itself. Every new manifestation of the trystero invites a rereading of the trystero, and so that textual object—the allusion—never gets formed.

In “Force and Signification” Jacques Derrida suggests that the “force” or movement of consciousness prevents the possibility of the formation of meaning, that the structuralist enterprise of object creation must fail because totality can never be understood (26-28). Of course, this does not prevent the attempt. It was the structuralism of Amasa Delano, for example, that kept him from assessing the disposition of the *San Dominick*, just as the structuralism of Gabriel Conroy kept him from seeing Gretta and the other women as human beings. It is the tension between the desire for structure and the impossibility of it that forms the organizational basis for *The Crying of Lot 49*, a tension that operates on two levels, one reader-oriented the other character-oriented. The reader-oriented tension is created through the manipulation of narrative elements towards an obvious artificiality, while the character-oriented tension is created from Oedipa’s desire to know the meaning behind the trystero and how each subsequent manifestation of it destabilizes the chance for meaning. Together, the two levels of tension produce a kind of writing which might be called untext, where an overtly artificial linguistic environment complicates textual formation by constantly calling attention to itself. *The Crying of Lot 49* does not pretend to be anything but what it is—a fabrication. It is what Derrida calls *writing*, and any attempt to view it otherwise only betrays the strength of the metaphysical chains that bind the patron.

In order to create an atmosphere of de-textualization conducive to promoting

tension on the part of the reader, Pynchon manipulates the elements of narrative of which there are, according to Jeremy Hawthorn, eight: narrative technique, character, plot, structure, setting, theme, symbol, and dialogue. Each element is meticulously destabilized so as confound the formation of a narrative structure and promote fictivity . Narrative technique, which can include the other elements of narrative, is manipulated in itself by the style of narration. Take, for example, the description of the intersection between Mucho Maas and one of his jobs as a used-car salesman:

Yet at least he had believed in the cars. Maybe to excess: how could he not, seeing people poorer than him come in, Negro, Mexican, cracker, a parade seven days a week, bringing in the most godawful of trade-ins: motorized, metal extensions of themselves, of their families and what their whole lives must be like, out there so naked for anybody, a stranger like himself, to look at, frame cockeyed, rusty underneath, fender repainted in a shade just off enough to depress the value, if not Mucho himself, inside smelling hopelessly of children, supermarket booze, two, sometimes three generations of cigarette smokers, or only of dust—and when the cars were swept out you had to look at the actual residue of these lives, and there was no way of telling what things had been truly refused (when so little he supposed came by that out of fear most of it had to be taken and kept) and what had simply (perhaps tragically) been lost: clipped coupons promising savings of 5 or 10¢, trading stamps, pink flyers advertising specials at the markets, butts, tooth-shy combs, help-wanted ads, Yellow Pages torn from the phone book, rags of old underwear or dresses that already were period

costumes, for wiping your own breath off the inside of a windshield with so you could see whatever it was, a movie, a woman or car you coveted, a cop who might pull you over just for drill, all the bits and pieces coated uniformly, like a salad of despair, in a gray dressing of ash, condensed exhaust, dust, body wastes—it made him sick to look, but he had to look.

(13-14)

The use of the second person destabilizes the text all by itself, but Pynchon is interested in establishing an unmistakable presence of artificiality. His solution through manipulating narrative technique is to put barriers in between the reader and the text. The large sentence quoted above accomplishes this by overloading the reader with information, like a rapid data stream where there are no large breaks or pauses in the lines of code. The sheer amount of information decays any text or structure that tries to form by overloading MacCaffrey's fiction-maker. It can't keep up.

After narrative technique, the next element in Hawthorn's categorization of narrative is character. In *The Crying of Lot 49* Pynchon challenges character formation by endowing his players with unbelievable names, names like Oedipa Maas, Mucho Maas, Dr. Hilarius, Pierce Inverarity, Mike Fallopian, Manny Di Presso, Tony Jaguar, Randolph Driblette, Stanley Koteks, Bloody Chielitz, John Nefastis, Mr. Thoth, Genghis Cohen, Arnold Snarb, Jesús Arrabal, and Edna Mosh, which filtered through the distortion of the audio equipment at the radio station would come out properly, according to Mucho. In addition to endowing his characters with names that seem randomly picked from a data stream, Pynchon manipulates character formation by giving them quirky personality traits—Dr. Hilarius and his self-stated ability to make faces that can cure

patients, or Pierce and his late-night phone calls reciting lines from a television show, or Nefastis wanting to have sex while watching television programs about Viet Nam or China, or Mucho and his ability to separate chords, timbres, and words into pure tones, leading to his conclusion that identity is a peculiar collection of sounds from the data stream. Even Oedipa is given a quirk, which is a belief in connections leading to an origin or hierophany. For example, when she is driving in to San Narciso to execute the will of Pierce Inverarity, Oedipa makes a connection between the layout of the city and the organization of an electronic circuit board:

She looked down a slope, needing to squint for the sunlight, onto a vast sprawl of houses which had grown up all together, like a well-tended crop, from the dull brown earth; and she thought of the time she'd opened a transistor radio to replace a battery and seen her first printed circuit . . . there were to both outward patterns a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, an intent to communicate. (Pynchon 24)

For Oedipa the coincidence is pregnant with revelation, with promise of a hidden structure that can be discovered with the tools of the reasonable person—"grit, resourcefulness, [and the] exemption from hidebound cops' rules" (124). She doesn't understand that the "intent" comes from her, and that any attempt to uncover the origin of structure must fail because it can never be isolated from the phenomenon of intertextuality. As Morgan notes, "We are left with the uncomfortable implication that any set of intertexts will always be only those intertexts noticed by the individual analyst" (19). Oedipa cannot see that she is the structure, the "religious instant" linking the trysters together. There is no escape from the tower (of subjectivity).

In 1862 the critic Gustav Freytag posited a plot structure for a typical five-act play. This structure, otherwise known as Freytag's pyramid, was a rhythm consisting of an introduction, inciting moment, rising action, climax, and falling action and can be used to organize many literary products. In *Benito Cereno*, for example, the introduction would be all the information leading up to the first complicating moment, whether that moment is the overall appearance of distress of the *San Dominick* or the unrest of Captain Cereno or the first breach in crew and slave behavior, depending on the interpretive context of the reader. The rising action would be the long list of inconsistencies between Delano's expectations and the behavior of the Spanish crew and the African slaves, leading up to the climax when Captain Cereno jumps off the boat into the skiff. The falling action or dénouement occurs during the deposition through the end of the text. The Freytag rhythm works well for much of Western literature, but not for *The Crying of Lot 49*. Pynchon destabilizes the Freytag rhythm by not allowing a plot to be formed in the first place. There is no novel-encompassing climax or dénouement, only a series of inciting moments and rising actions. When Oedipa sees the trystero lapel pin worn by Arnold Snarb, for example, she begins her inquiry all over again: "Look, you have to help me. Because I really think I am going out of my head" (111). Pynchon complicates plot formation by equating the climax with the inciting moment, anticipating what Derrida accomplishes in "Structure, Sign, and Play" when he erases the "difference between signifier and signified" by showing how language both *means something* and *cannot possibly mean anything* because the system through which it functions is never closed (281). Oedipa gets excited at each new manifestation of the trystero because it holds the promise (in her mind) of revelation. Freytag's pyramid never gets built.

The structure of *The Crying of Lot 49*, in keeping with the spirit of artificiality, is impossible to articulate with other than a few key observations. Hawthorn describes structure as the “sense of a novel’s overall organization and patterning” (99). Because Pynchon is interested in destabilizing all narrative structures in his text, the only overall sensibility allowed to emerge would have to be chaotic. Pynchon solves the representational problem of chaos by introducing the corollary of psychological instability into the subtext of the story. The long list of odd character names certainly contributes to the sense of madness, as well as Oedipa’s fixation upon the trystero. But the subtext of *The Crying of Lot 49* has a clinical air about it. Take, for example, the second part of the first paragraph:

She thought of a hotel room in Mazatlán whose door had just been slammed, it seemed forever, waking up two hundred birds down in the lobby; a sunrise over the library slope at Cornell University that nobody out on it had seen because the slope faces west; a dry, disconsolate tune from the forth movement of the Bartók Concerto for Orchestra; a whitewashed bust of Jay Gould that Pierce kept over the bed on a shelf so narrow for it she’d always had the hovering fear it would someday topple on them. Was that how he’d died, she wondered, among dreams, crushed by the only ikon in the house? That only made her laugh, out loud and helpless: You’re so sick, Oedipa, she told herself, or the room, which knew. (10)

The phrases “door had just been slammed, it seemed forever” and “That only made her laugh, out loud and helpless” have the air of the sanitarium about them, and the

admission “You’re so sick, Oedipa, she told herself, or the room, which knew” strikes it home. The name “Oedipa,” apart from suggesting the great Greek tragedy, also hints at one of the cornerstones of Freudian psychology. The Oedipal Complex is said to occur when “children manifest erotically tinged desires for their opposite-sex parent, accompanied by feelings of hostility toward their same-sex parent” (Weiten 432). The lack of female characters in the story coupled with the long list of older, male characters who want have sex with Oedipa does lend weight to the supposition that Edna Mosh was horribly cracked as a child by her father, and that *The Crying of Lot 49* is an attempt by a broken woman to regain some measure of sanity. It’s as close to a structure as Pynchon allows his readers to get. The muted horn suggesting a muted person and the “tryst” of the Tristero combine to create a subtext of sexual abuse.¹¹ The clinical language which pervades the novel would be exactly the kind of overheard dialogue a person might pick up if she were raised in an asylum. By placing clinical psychology in the linguistic background of *The Crying of Lot 49*, Pynchon undermines the formation of a textual structure by selecting a field of human endeavor that deals exclusively with disorganized or dysfunctional states of mind. In short, the only constant is insanity.

Even though *The Crying of Lot 49* takes place in California during the drug culture of the early 1960s, Pynchon destabilizes setting in a couple of ways. First, many of the places and names are, like the element of character, unbelievable, names like KCUF radio, Sick Dick and the Volkswagens, San Narciso, Yoyodyne, Echo Courts, the Nefastis machine, Inamorati Anonymous, the Hilarius Psychiatric Clinic, and the National Automobile Dealers’ Association or N.A.D.A., a real organization but in the context of the story a person cannot help but think the Spanish “nada.” The movie

Cashiered, the play *The Courier's Tragedy*, and the book *An Account of the Singular Peregrinations of Dr Diocletian Blobb among the Italians, Illuminated with Exemplary Tales from the True History of That Outlandish And Fantastical Race* also contribute to an air of artificiality. Taken independently, that is, divorced from their context, the three serve as mild distractions from the novel. But when considered within the context, the movie, the play, and the book destabilize the immediate setting by presenting corollaries between the work of art and the novel. For example, when Oedipa is watching *The Courier's Tragedy*, she discovers that many of the narrative elements of the play mirror the intertextual environment of San Narciso—the bones in the lake, Thurn and Taxis, and, of course, the trystero, appear in both the play and the quest. When the setting comments on the setting, it can't help but destabilize the narrative. Add to that the subtext of clinical psychology and *The Crying of Lot 49* reads as having two possible settings—southern California or a sanitarium. The simple fact that both readings are arguable destabilizes the background and the larger narrative.

The final three elements in Hawthorn's reduction of narrative—theme, symbol, and dialogue—are destabilized by the forms they take. The theme of *The Crying of Lot 49* is indeterminacy in the act of reading, what Barthes calls an “anti-theological activity,” where meaning refuses to be fixed, thus rejecting any kind of structure (157). All of the tristeros come to Oedipa in Oedipa's time, and so any attempt to organize the tristero historically or otherwise must necessarily be a construct. Likewise, the great symbol of the novel—the tristero or muted postal horn—never symbolizes the same thing twice. The manifestations can *appear* similar, which is the driving force of the novel—the appearance of similarity between separate bytes in the data stream—but there is no

connection, only data compounds forming individual stories. The many characters in *The Crying of Lot 49* naturally destabilize dialogue and the greater narrative. In *Studying the Novel* Hawthorn states that “novels tend not to have one center of authority—the narrator’s or the author’s voice—but many such centers, centers which typically are in conflict with one another” (109-10). What makes Pynchon’s novel different from other authors in this regard is that even though Oedipa is the main character in the text, her dialogue or point of view is not privileged above the others in the text. Everyone in the story is dysfunctional. This lack of privilege destabilizes the narrative. Readers like a winner and there are none in this story.

From a reader-oriented point of view, Pynchon destabilizes the elements of narrative in order to produce an overall posture of indeterminacy and ambiguity. This effect is magnified through yet another avenue of communication available to Pynchon—the point of view of character. If *The Crying of Lot 49* is considered through allusive mechanics, that is, from Oedipa’s viewpoint, then an entirely different pathway for communicating indeterminacy emerges from the text. Rather than destabilizing the elements of narrative to create ambiguity, Pynchon can suggest the tension of indeterminacy by allowing a character to experience it. Oedipa Maas never finishes her search for the explanation or structure that accounts for the ubiquitous presence of the trystero. She gets trapped within her process of signification, her allusion machine. The textual object, the allusion itself, never gets created because Oedipa becomes ensnared in the allusive process. She experiences recognition, acquisition of allusive contents, importation of allusive contents, and comparison of allusive contents with host context, but she never reaches a conclusion. In short, the phenomenon of intertextuality makes

allusion impossible.

The process that entangles Oedipa begins early in *The Crying of Lot 49*. After learning that she had been named executor for the mysterious Pierce Inverarity, she decides to travel to San Narciso to learn a bit more about her ex-boyfriend and escape her life in Kinneret for a time. The need for escape is the prime mover in Oedipa's psychology:

What did she so desire to escape from? Such a captive maiden. Having plenty of time to think, soon realizes that her tower, its height and architecture, are like her ego only incidental: that what really keeps her where she is is magic, anonymous and malignant, visited on her from outside and for no reason at all. Having no apparatus except gut fear and female cunning to examine this formless magic, to understand how it works, how to measure its field strength, count its lines of force, she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disk jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else? (Pynchon 21-22)

The prison Oedipa desires to escape could be many things—her own subjectivity, the impossibility of communication, her awareness at being separated from God. In the spirit of indeterminacy, Pynchon leaves that decision to the reader. What is clear is that Oedipa has feelings of separation and abandonment, and she thinks or hopes that by solving the mystery of the Trystero, she will touch the Other, whatever that might be.

The quest for the Trystero begins when Oedipa and Metzger, a lawyer for Pierce Inverarity's estate, go to a bar called the Scope, near the town's Yoyodyne plant. While

using the restroom, she notices a message amongst the lipsticked obscenities: “Interested in sophisticated fun? You, hubby, girls friends. The more the merrier. Get in touch with Kirby, through WASTE only, Box 7391, L.A.” (Pynchon 52). Oedipa is curious about “WASTE,” but she was even more intrigued by the symbol under the message that resembled “a loop, triangle, and trapezoid” (52). In terms of allusive mechanics, this moment is the inciting moment, the discovery, the recognition of surplus content. Oedipa believes that the horn means something, although she does not know what. When Mike Fallopian tells her that she wasn’t supposed to see that, it confirms the validity of Oedipa’s impression that the trystero means something more than just a symbol on the wall. She perceives the trystero again when her and Metzger attend the play *The Courier’s Tragedy*. When Oedipa wants to go backstage to talk to the director, Metzger asks why, to which she replies, “It just has me uneasy. The two things, so close. . . I want to see if there is a connection” (75-76). Oedipa is, of course, referring to the similarities between the play and the Beaconsfield cigarette research into bone charcoal, as well as the presence of the horn and the underground postal system in relation to the trystero. When Oedipa admits that she wants “to see if there is a connection,” it is the thesis of the novel. She has the allusive contents from both The Scope (the Yoyodyne employee bar) and the play, and so she compares them towards the promise of revelation:

Though she saw Mike Fallopian again, and did trace the text of *The Courier’s Tragedy* a certain distance, these follow-ups were no more disquieting than other revelations which now seemed to come crowding in exponentially, as if the more she collected the more would come to her, until everything she saw, smelled, dreamed, remembered, would somehow

come to be woven into The Tristero” (81)

The process Pynchon describes—the follow-up—is repeated again and again throughout *The Crying of Lot 49*. Oedipa’s notebook records the manifestations of the trystero in the hope of adding it all together to, as Oedipa puts it, “*project a world* [sic]” (82). With each new trystero the allusive process begins again—recognition, acquisition, importation, and comparison. Oedipa is caught within the allusive process. A telling moment when after a long day in the Bay area she sees a man wearing a trystero pin:

In the lapel of which she spied, wrought exquisitely in some pale, glimmering alloy, not another cerise badge, but a pin in the shape of the Trystero post horn. Mute and everything.

All right, she told herself. You lose. A game try, all one hour’s worth. She should have left then and gone back to Berkeley, to the hotel. But couldn’t. (111)

The fact that Oedipa could not pass by the trystero signals that she is hopelessly trapped within her process of signification, an entanglement fostered by a hopeless belief in revelation. This is confirmed at the end of the novel: “She heard a lock snap shut; the sound echoed a moment” (183). There is no escape.

Even though Oedipa can never generate a narrative (an escape) that explains all the occurrences of the trystero (she’s in an open system, intertextually infinite), her fiction-maker does formulate four narrative possibilities: that she has discovered an underground mail system thoroughly dedicated to thwarting the government; that she is hallucinating; that she is the victim of a vast conspiracy orchestrated by Pierce Inverarity; or that she is fantasizing the whole thing (Pynchon 170-71). Apart from the tension

generated at each new manifestation of the trystero, the four explanations bring with them their own kind of insubstantiality. From her character-oriented point of view, the only certainty in an uncertain world is the data stream whirring above, the energy of a living god:

For it was now like walking among the matrices of a great digital computer, the zeros and ones twinned above, hanging like mobiles right and left, ahead, thick, maybe endless. Behind the hieroglyphic streets there would either be a transcendent meaning, or only the earth. (181)

The image of mobiles hanging above suggests a metaphor of the crib, where the child plays and sleeps, free to view the world but not participate in it. Oedipa can make all the connections she wants—enjoy them, delight in them and her own cleverness, read whatever she wishes, but she cannot escape the crib. The act of reading is not up to that challenge. It is what it is.

To be sure *The Crying of Lot 49* is not an easy novel to explicate. The overall posture of indeterminacy and linguistic open-endedness complicates any attempt to locate a stability within the text, and even though Pynchon uses the conventional elements of narrative to form his novel, there is nothing stable in *The Crying of Lot 49*. Pynchon overcodes the text to the point that the well-read reader will get lost in a near-endless sea of referentiality, becoming, like Oedipa herself, a prisoner of intertextuality. Because the main character in the story mimics the act of reading, *The Crying of Lot 49* is like *Benito Cereno*, a fractal novel, where the act of reading is layered upon itself, self-reflexive, self-referential.

Even though allusive mechanics is primarily concerned with adding a character-

oriented value to the allusive conversation, the real gain is to the act of reading itself. Once a character is treated as capable of signification, then art becomes a much more dynamic activity. Narrative elements once thought marginal could be significant factors in character formation. Certain psychological processes that have remained hidden from view can with the help of allusive mechanics be brought closer to the light, perhaps revealing, as Joyce does in *Dubliners*, some of the conditions for knowledge, or as Pynchon does in *The Crying of Lot 49*, the impossibility of knowing anything through language. Joyce makes the tremendous suggestion that people have the ability to manage their own minds in the face of a swimming chaos. Pynchon, on the other hand, reveals that words are cheats, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing. Because the intertextual field is never closed, meaning is, at best, transitory, and at worst, impossible, but that doesn't really matter. What does matter is that allusive mechanics has the potential of de-marginalizing the world of the literary character, and by extension, the character herself. Like other critical postures, the kind of information revealed by allusive mechanics will depend on the style of the text and the cleverness of the scholar. A novel like *The Great Gatsby*, for example, emerges as a passing novel of class while something like *On the Road* defuses Cather's thesis about the "treasures of memory" by showing how the allusive process can take one to hell just as easily as it can take one to heaven, making allusive mechanics an act of humanization, the ultimate thesis of *Dubliners*.

Appendix

To be sure, all allusions are ultimately reader-oriented in their values because it is the reader who supplies the cognitive energy for the allusive process. What allusive mechanics brings to the table is an expansion of the potential ways in which an allusion and the greater narrative can be valued and organized. The following sections record the first steps in allusive mechanics, forming an allusive concordance of sorts from which the thesis was born. The *Dubliners* section records all of the allusions I could find, regardless of the distinction between character- and reader-oriented valuations. The critical application of allusive mechanics in the case studies is more tailored to the specific arguments, and so the allusive taxonomies are not fully inclusive.

Allusive Taxonomy: *Dubliners*

What emerges from a catalogue of the allusions in *Dubliners* are James Joyce's narrative experiments with allusion, moving from an overall posture of experimentation—the teasing-out of both the strengths and weaknesses of the allusive process—to the crowning achievement of allusion as a method for managing the mind. Reader-oriented describes allusions that potentially hold a primary value for the reader, while character-oriented describes allusions that seem to hold value for character.

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
"The Sisters"		
9	Euclid	reader-oriented
	Catechism	reader-oriented
11	Rosicrucian	reader-oriented
12	the card	character-oriented
13	Napoleon Bonaparte	reader-oriented
	Mass	reader-oriented
	Eucharist	reader-oriented
"An Encounter"		
19	Wild West	reader-oriented
	<i>The Union Jack</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	<i>Pluck</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
20	<i>The Halfpenny Marvel</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Wild West	reader-oriented
	American detective stories	reader-oriented/character-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
	<i>The Apache Chief</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
25	Thomas Moore	reader-oriented
	Sir Walter Scott	reader-oriented
	Lord Lytton	reader-oriented
“Araby”		
29	<i>The Abbot</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>The Devout Communicant</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>The Memoirs of Vedoc</i>	reader-oriented
31	O’Donovan Rossa	reader-oriented
	Araby	reader-oriented/character-oriented
32	turned a silver bracelet	character-oriented
34	<i>The Arab’s Farewell . . .</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
35	counting money on a slaver	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“Eveline”		
37	Blessed Margaret Mary	reader-oriented
39	<i>The Bohemian Girl</i>	reader-oriented
40	street organ	character-oriented
	Derevaun Seraun!	unknown and open ¹²
“After the Race”		
47	<i>Cadet Roussel</i>	reader-oriented
“Two Gallants”		
52	Lothario	reader-oriented/character-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
54	plucked at the wires . . .	reader-oriented
	<i>Silent, O Moyle</i>	reader-oriented
	. . . a blue dress	reader-oriented
“The Boarding House”		
62	<i>The Madam</i>	reader-oriented
	naughty girl	reader-oriented/character-oriented
66	<i>Reynold’s Newspaper</i>	reader-oriented
“A Little Cloud”		
72	Atalantas	reader-oriented
73	Ignatius Gallaher	reader-oriented/character-oriented
74	the Celtic School	reader-oriented/character-oriented
81	rich Germans and Jews	reader-oriented/character-oriented
83	Byron’s Poems	reader-oriented/character-oriented
84	narrow cell	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“Counterparts”		
93	liberal shepherds	reader-oriented
98	<i>O, Pa!</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“Clay”		
100	present from Belfast	reader-oriented/character-oriented
101	Hallow Eve	reader-oriented
106	<i>I Dreamt that I Dwelt</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“A Painful Case”		

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
107	Wordsworth	reader-oriented
108	<i>Maynooth Catechism</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>Michael Kramer</i>	reader-oriented
109	Mozart	reader-oriented
112	Nietzsche	reader-oriented
113	<i>Mail: Death of a Lady . . .</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“Ivy Day in the Committee Room”		
119	ivy leaf	reader-oriented
	sixth of October	reader-oriented
122	ivy leaf	reader-oriented/character-oriented
125	Major Sirr	reader-oriented/character-oriented
132	Parnell	reader-oriented/character-oriented
134	<i>The Death of Parnell</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
“A Mother”		
137	Turkish Delight	reader-oriented
142	<i>Maritana</i>	reader-oriented
147	Killarny	reader-oriented
“Grace”		
154	Napoleon	reader-oriented
158	Sacred Heart	reader-oriented
	Holy Ghost	reader-oriented
159	all’s well that ends well	reader-oriented/character-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
161	65, catch your cabbage	reader-oriented/character-oriented
163	Jesuit	reader-oriented/character-oriented
165	Orangeman	reader-oriented/character-oriented
167	Pope Leo XIII	reader-oriented/character-oriented
169	John McHale	reader-oriented/character-oriented
171	Get behind me, Satan	reader-oriented/character-oriented
172	The Freeman's Journal	reader-oriented
173	For the children o/t world	reader-oriented
"The Dead"		
176+	Gabriel	reader-oriented
178	Christmastime	reader-oriented/character-oriented
179	Robert Browning	reader-oriented
	Shakespeare	reader-oriented/character-oriented
179	the Melodies	reader-oriented
186	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	two princes murdered	reader-oriented/character-oriented
188	West Briton	reader-oriented/character-oriented
192	Wellington Monument	reader-oriented
	Three Graces	reader-oriented
	Paris	reader-oriented
193	<i>Arrayed for the Bridal</i>	reader-oriented
196	<i>Beannacht Libh</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
199	<i>Mignon</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>Let Me Like a Soldier Fall</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>Dinorah</i>	reader-oriented
	<i>Lucrezia Borgia</i>	reader-oriented
204	Three Graces	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Paris	reader-oriented/character-oriented
208	King Billy's statue	reader-oriented/character-oriented
210	<i>Distant Music</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
212	<i>The Lass of Aughrim</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
219	<i>The Lass of Aughrim</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
221-22	died for me/garden/wall	reader-oriented/character-oriented
222	<i>Arrayed for the Bridal</i>	reader-oriented/character-oriented

Allusive Taxonomy: *Benito Cereno*

From the point of view of allusive mechanics, *Benito Cereno* is about slavery and the judgement that permits it. It is clear allusively that Delano's construct of blackness is a negative one, and Babo's reconstruction of slavery in the act of passing is also pejorative, although they differ in focus: Delano's is linguistic while Babo's is primarily physical. Together, the two constructs of reveal how slavery operates within "civilized" society. What emerges from the list below is the powerful role language plays in the formation and maintenance of slavery. Even though it is impossible to divorce a signifier from its environment, the terms "black" and "negro" are left out because they are too numerous and in themselves do not suggest a relationship. It is enough to say that "black" and "negro" are pejoratives within the slave-promoting environment of the story. Curiously, however, there does seem to be a linguistic attempt to equate "black" and "negro" with slave, but it does not stick.

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
240	negro slaves
241	<i>Seguid vuestro jefe</i> (follow your leader) unsophisticated Africans
244	like a shepherd's dog authority
245	body-servant good conduct of Babo
246	his faithful personal attendant body-servant

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
248	servant parcel of negroes
248	servant master
249	master
250	their owner master slave master and man
251	the belittered Ghetto servant master
253	instant punishment hatchet-polishers flock of black sheep Ashantee conjurers
254	owner (Cereno)
255	iron collar chain band of iron servant mulish

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
255	<p>master</p> <p>servant</p> <p>will you ask my pardon</p> <p>master</p> <p>servant</p> <p>master</p> <p>he will bend to master</p> <p>chains</p>
256	<p>chains</p> <p>scourge</p> <p>must ask my pardon</p> <p>obedient</p> <p>respectful</p> <p>servant</p> <p>attendant</p> <p>master</p> <p>docility</p> <p>penalty</p> <p>master</p> <p>The slave there carries the padlock, but master here carries the key.</p>
257	<p>servant</p> <p>So, Don Benito—padlock and key—significant symbols, truly.</p>

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
257	lordship over the black slave servant
259	attendant
261	counselor servant master black wizards of Ashantee
263	then every soul on board, down to the youngest negress
264	servant dutifully remaining attendant servant master's
265	I should like to have your man here, myself—what will you take for him? Master strange vanity of a faithful slave master valuation master performing the inferior function
268	There's naked nature, now; pure tenderness and love

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
270	The whites, too, by nature, were the shrewder race. But they were too stupid whoever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize for his very species
273	cringing submission to their master
274	servant servant's
275	master
276	master's Master servant
277	master master master master servant master master servant's anxious fidelity
278	servant master's good pleasure servant

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
278	master's Most negroes are natural valets and hair-dressers
279	as though God had set the whole negro to some pleasant tune Captain Delano took to negroes . . . as other men to Newfoundland dogs servant
279	master master's
280	master master master master master
281	master master master master
282	master master master and man
283	master's servant master

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Language of Slavery in <i>Benito Cereno</i></u>
283	<p>master</p> <p>cutting Babo with his razor</p> <p>this slavery breeds ugly passions in man</p> <p>master and man</p> <p>servant</p>
284	to us white-skins
285	<p>master's</p> <p>master</p>
286	<p>servant</p> <p>servant</p> <p>slaves</p> <p>attendant and companion</p>
287	<p>master</p> <p>servant</p> <p>master's</p>
289	<p>servant</p> <p>the faithful fellow</p> <p>the servant moved before his master</p> <p>a bitter hard master</p>
294	<p>servant</p> <p>master</p>
295	servant

Allusive Taxonomy: *The Song of the Lark*

Since there are over two hundred allusions in *The Song of the Lark*, I thought it might be helpful to distinguish those allusions that locate their dynamic energy within the text.

The traditional allusion is represented by the pathway author-to-reader. All other pathways represent those moments in the text where Cather creates the opportunity for dynamic exchange. It excludes potentially allusive categories like names, nationalities, flora, fauna, gemstones, colors, places, holidays, months, seasons, religions, and allusively powerful words, except where they are significant. More than anything, the list is intended to represent the range of Cather's allusive method, and is therefore, not meant to be exhaustive.

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
4	Napoleon III	reader-oriented
5	“See-Saw”	reader-oriented
8	Czerny's “Daily Studies”	reader-oriented
11	Tower of Babel	reader-oriented
13	Byron's poems	reader-oriented
14	“My native land, good night”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Maid of Athens”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“There was a sound of revelry”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	the infant savior	reader-oriented
	our Heavenly Father	reader-oriented
18	<u>Standard Recitations</u>	reader-oriented
19	“And it was Summer, beautiful Summer”	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
24	Clementi sonata	reader-oriented
	“Invitation to the Dance”	reader-oriented
25	Ovidius	reader-oriented/character-oriented
25-26	piece-picture of Napoleon’s retreat	reader-oriented/character-oriented
26	Murat	reader-oriented
	“Come, ye Disconsolate”	reader-oriented
27	“Lente currite, lente currite, notis equi”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
34	Farrier’s Addition	reader-oriented/character-oriented
36	<u>A Distinguished Provincial in Paris</u>	reader-oriented
38	“La Golandria”	reader-oriented
43	Pedro’s Cup	character-oriented
46	Prescott’s histories	reader-oriented
	Washington Irving	reader-oriented
	Robert Ingersoll’s speeches	reader-oriented
	<u>The Age of Reason</u>	reader-oriented
47	Bridal Chamber	reader-oriented/character-oriented
48	“Ultimo Amor”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Fluvia de Oro”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Noches de Algeria”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
49	“Westward the course of Empire”	reader-oriented
52	<u>Polar Explorations</u>	reader-oriented
54	Ancient Mariner’s	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
55	“Ballade” by Reinecke	reader-oriented/character-oriented
56	“Selections from Erminie”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“The Polish Boy”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Beloved is the Night”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Thy Sentinel Am I”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
57	“Rock of Ages, cleft for me”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“She sang the song of Home, Sweet Home”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“When Shepherds Watched”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
58	<u>Musical Memories</u> of Reverend Haweis	reader-oriented
60	<u>Among the Breakers</u>	reader-oriented
	<u>The Veteran of 1812</u>	reader-oriented
62	<u>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</u>	reader-oriented
	“Just Before the Battle, Mother”	reader-oriented
64	little sonata of Mozart’s	reader-oriented
	Gluck’s “Orpheus”	reader-oriented
66	Gluck	reader-oriented
67	“Euridice, Euridice!”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
68	von Heine’s <u>Im leuchtenden Sommermorgen</u>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
69	Jacob	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Im leuchtenden Sommermorgen . . .	reader-oriented/character-oriented
75	<u>My Musical Memories</u>	reader-oriented/character-oriented
79	old Flint’s <u>Physiology</u>	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
79	Oliver Wendell Holmes	reader-oriented
80	Balzac	reader-oriented
	the Waverley Novels	reader-oriented
	Scott	reader-oriented
	Constance de Beverley	reader-oriented
	the minstrel girl in <u>The Fair Maid of Perth</u>	reader-oriented
	not the Duchesse de Langeais	reader-oriented
	Robert Burns	reader-oriented
	“Death and Doctor Hornbook”	reader-oriented
	“The Jolly Beggars”	reader-oriented
	“Reply to His Taylor”	reader-oriented
	“Tam o’Shanter”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	“Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
83	Napoleon	reader-oriented/character-oriented
86	“Orpheus”	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Gluck	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Einst, O Wunder	character-oriented
94	Caesar	reader-oriented
	“Thanatopsis”	reader-oriented
	Hamlet’s soliloquy	reader-oriented
	Cato on “Immortality”	reader-oriented
98	<u>Little Barefoot</u>	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
101	“The Odalisque”	reader-oriented
105	“Impressions on First Viewing the Grand Canyon, Ray H. Kennedy”	reader-oriented
106	turquoise bead	reader-oriented/character- oriented
112	“the youth who bore”	reader-oriented/character- oriented
115	the Bible	reader-oriented
	Psalm	reader-oriented
116	Saviour	reader-oriented
	a divine Presence	reader-oriented
	Saviour	reader-oriented
	Christ	reader-oriented
117	the Doxology	reader-oriented
	Jules Verne	reader-oriented
118	<u>Anna Karenina</u>	reader-oriented
122	Naaman the leper	reader-oriented/character- oriented
	Blue Danube waltzes	reader-oriented/character- oriented
123	“Marching Through Georgia”	reader-oriented/character- oriented
124	merde (described)	reader-oriented/character- oriented
125	“The Soul Awakened”	reader-oriented
126	the Commandments	reader-oriented/character- oriented
127	old Dumas	reader-oriented
132	Christ	reader-oriented
141	our Heavenly Father	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
150	<u>Devotional and Kindred Poems;</u> <u>by Mrs. Aurelia S. Larsen</u>	reader-oriented
	Jephthah's Daughter	reader-oriented
	Rizpah	reader-oriented
	David's Lament for Absalom	reader-oriented
	Homestead Act	reader-oriented
152	"The Lament of Mary Magdalen"	reader-oriented
153	Mozart Society	reader-oriented
154	Queen Anne neighbors	reader-oriented
155	Christmas Eve	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	Naples bust of Julius Caesar	reader-oriented
	Caesar's Commentaries	reader-oriented
158	Beethoven	reader-oriented
	Chopin	reader-oriented
	Bach	reader-oriented
159	Schumann	reader-oriented
	<u>Kinderszenen</u>	reader-oriented
	Mozart	reader-oriented
	Clementi	reader-oriented
	Czerny	reader-oriented
	Hummel	reader-oriented
	Stuttgart method	reader-oriented
161	<u>Anna Karenina</u>	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
161	like Christian fleeing from the City of Destruction	reader-oriented
165	Noah's Ark village	reader-oriented/character-oriented
169	"Come, Ye Disconsolate"	reader-oriented/character-oriented
	"The Ninety of Nine"	reader-oriented/character-oriented
173	"Die Lorelei"	reader-oriented/character-oriented
175	"Die Lorelei"	reader-oriented/character-oriented
178	Corots	reader-oriented/character-oriented
179	the Dying Gladiator	reader-oriented
	"Childe Harold"	reader-oriented
	the Venus di Milo	reader-oriented
	the Apollo Belvedere	reader-oriented
	a great equestrian statue of an evil, cruel-looking general	reader-oriented
	a painting by Gerome called "The Pasha's Grief"	reader-oriented
	a picture of some boys bringing in a newborn calf	reader-oriented
	The Corot	reader-oriented
	"The Song of the Lark"	reader-oriented
	Dvorak's Symphony in E minor, "From the New World"	reader-oriented
	Walhalla	reader-oriented
	Wagner	reader-oriented
	"Rheingold"	reader-oriented
202	<u>Im leuchtenden Sommermorgen</u>	reader-oriented
205	"Rosa de Noche"	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
211	“El Parreno”	reader-oriented
212	“Trovatore”	reader-oriented
	“Lucia”	reader-oriented
227	Bach	reader-oriented
	Handel	reader-oriented
229	“Rejoice Greatly”	reader-oriented
232	“The Messiah”	reader-oriented
235	Schumann	reader-oriented
	“On Mighty Pens”	reader-oriented
237	Gounod’s “Ave Maria”	reader-oriented
240	“I Know that my Redeemer Liveth”	reader-oriented
242	Mozart	reader-oriented
	“Gioconda”	reader-oriented
	Grieg	reader-oriented
	“Thank for Your Advice”	reader-oriented
246	Sousa	reader-oriented
247	“O, Promise Me”	reader-oriented
248	Nietzsche club	reader-oriented
	Rousseaus and Corots	reader-oriented
	a painting of a woman eating grapes out of a paper bag	reader-oriented
251	“Gioconda”	reader-oriented
	Schumann	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
251	“Tak for dit Rad”	reader-oriented
253	Grieg	reader-oriented
	Wagner	reader-oriented
255	“The Kreutzer Sonata”	reader-oriented
284	Apollo	reader-oriented
287	Zorn etching	reader-oriented
305	Lord	reader-oriented
314	“Flow Gently, Sweet Afton”	reader-oriented
333	“Einst, O Wunder”	character-oriented
336	“Ach, ich habe sie verloren”	character-oriented
342	Arabian Nights	reader-oriented/character-oriented
347	Mahler	reader-oriented
349	Elizabeth	reader-oriented
352	Elizabeth in Tannhauser	reader-oriented
355	piece picture	reader-oriented/character-oriented
356	Gothic vaultings and greeting the Hall of Song	reader-oriented
357	Lohengrin (3)	reader-oriented
	Adler’s <u>German and English</u>	reader-oriented
	Lohengrin	reader-oriented
359	“Red Ridinghood”	reader-oriented
366	visions of Grail knights	reader-oriented
	Mahler	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
366	Lohengrin	reader-oriented
	Woglinde	reader-oriented
368	Wie im Traum ich—	reader-oriented
370	bath	character-oriented
	“Ah, Fuyez, douce image”	character-oriented
374	Venus	reader-oriented
	Elizabeth	reader-oriented
376	Tannhauser	reader-oriented
377	Sieglinde	reader-oriented
378	Walkure	reader-oriented
	Ring 2	reader-oriented
	Volsung	reader-oriented
379	Brunnhilde	reader-oriented
380	Siegfried	reader-oriented
383	Rheingold	reader-oriented
384	Fricka (3)	reader-oriented
	Trovatore	reader-oriented
	Rheingold	reader-oriented
	Ring	reader-oriented
385	“Ring of the Niebelings”	reader-oriented
386	Rheingold	reader-oriented
	Fricka (3)	reader-oriented

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Value</u>
387	Wotan (2)	reader-oriented
	Fricka (3)	reader-oriented
	Elizabeth	reader-oriented
389	Sieglinde	reader-oriented
390	“Du bist der Lunz”	reader-oriented
396	“Ca’ the yowes to the knowes”	character-oriented
402	“But there passed a bright-eyed taxi”	character-oriented
	Beethoven	reader-oriented
403	“Walkure”	reader-oriented
	“Gotterdammerung”	reader-oriented
404	Sieglinde	reader-oriented
	Philamon	reader-oriented
	Umberto	reader-oriented
	Waterloo	reader-oriented
406	Sieglinde (2)	reader-oriented
	Siegmund	reader-oriented
407	Walhalle	reader-oriented
	the Volsung pair	reader-oriented
417	Thea Kronborg	reader-oriented/character-oriented

Allusive Taxonomy: *Plum Bun*

What follows is a detailed list of the psychological associations made by various characters in the novel *Plum Bun*. Because Fauset's chief concern in *Plum Bun* was demonstrating how a young woman of color in the modern age can construct a viable identity in a racist, class-conscious, and gender-biased world, the associations are limited to these areas. This list is not exhaustive, but enough examples exist to demonstrate the trends in Angela's development. In "Home" for example, "coloured" is associated pejoratively while in "Market" the association is much more hateful. "Plum Bun" presents the seeds of change while in "Home Again" change is clearly taking place for Angela when she finds her sister and herself. Finally, with "Market is Done," the world is still as racist as was before, it is Angela that is different. Brackets indicate the sentiment of the situation rather than actual text.

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Association</u>
Home (Philadelphia)		
12	Angela Murray	fortuitous endowments, great physical beauty, unusual strength, a certain unswerving singleness of mind = qualities which contributed toward a glowing existence
13	Angela	lack of colour = break loose from a too hampering sense of duty; poverty could be overcome
14	Angela	mere whiteness = possibilities for joy and freedom
17	Angela	white-skinned people only = the great rewards of life—riches, glamour, pleasure
27	young Mattie	poverty for a coloured girl = going out to service, working as ladies' maid, or taking a genteel but poorly paid position as seamstress with one of the families of the rich and great

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Association</u>
27	rich family	nigger = [someone who steals or is lazy]
29	the actress	coloured people = streaked with immorality
38	Mary Hastings	coloured = [different, pejorative]
39	school girls	Angela = [someone to be shunned]
43	Esther Bayliss	coloured girl = untrustworthy
43	Mary Hastings	coloured = [different, pejorative]
44	Angela	coloured = the one god apparently to who you could sacrifice everything = [total failure]
46	Angela	not coloured or the fact of your racial connections was not made known = [the good things in life will come to you]
48	Philadelphia	coloured instructors = [incapable of teaching white children]
59	white female hospital attendant	black people = not exactly human, no place for them in the scheme of life
60	interne	white women with nigger servants = placed in a psycho-pathic ward and the niggers burned
70	Gertrude Quayle	darkies = not Americans coloured = unhappiness
71	Esther Bayliss	coloured girl = [pejorative]
72	Mr. Shields	coloured = [pejorative] white = good taste
72	Mrs. Shields	coloured = [pejorative]
72	Mr. Shields	coloured = [problematic]
73	Angela	white = good things

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Association</u>
75	theater attendant	coloured = [pejorative]
82	Mrs. Hallowell	coloured = [greedy for money]
Market (New York)		
87	Angela	coloured people = independence of carriage
88	Angela	free, white, and twenty-one = owning the world
96	Angela	Harlem = a coloured life, so thick, so varied, so complete
123	Angela	my appearance [white] = having everything a girl ought to have
131	Angela	poor, coloured–coloured in America = unknown, a nobody
132	Roger Fielding	coloured = [pejorative, hateful]
133	Roger	‘coons = [pejorative, offensive] darkies = [pejorative] Negroes = [pejorative] darkey up in Harlem = [will betray his own people for money]
134	Roger	niggers = [pejorative]
137	Angela	colour = a fettered life lack of colour = freedom
142	Angela	Roger and his wealth = beauty and ease and decency
143	Angela	Roger = [wealth], light and gladness Anthony = poverty and privation and secret vows
150	Roger	niggers = [pejorative]
152	Angela	coloured porters = [nosey]
157	Angela	Jinny = coloured

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Association</u>
157	Angela	Roger = hates Negro
168	Virginia	white = [pejorative]
171	Virginia	black blood in America = inconvenience
Plum Bun (New York)		
209	Angela	Virginia = 'best' coloured people = happy
216	Roger	nigger = no brains
217	Angela	[Van Meier and the lecture hall] = fullness, richness, thickness of life
229	Angela	men = [empowered] women = [dependent]
235	Miss Powell	white = chance at everything
Home Again (New York)		
261	Philadelphia	coloured = [pejorative, okay to insult]
262	man in charge of appointments	Agnes = coloured = [below white]
275	Angela	white blood = selfishness = Nordic supremacy
285	Anthony	American = [pejorative]
285	American (implied)	murderer, card sharp, criminal = forgivable back blood = unforgivable
286	Anthony	white American = [capable of any dastardly behavior]
287	South	nigger = [pejorative]
288	South	nigger wench = [pejorative]
289	South	nigger husband = obliged to teach his wife her duty to the white man

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Association</u>
291	Anthony	white = [must be hated, evil] Nordic people = savage lust for power
304	Angela	coloured = [normal]
312	Rachel Salting's father	Catholic = [scum of the earth]
313	Rachel	nigger = [pejorative]
Market is Done (New York, Philadelphia, Paris)		
335	American Committee for the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts	coloured = [pejorative]
338	Martha Burden	coloured people = quitters
346	reporter	[discrimination] = natural law
347	Angela	coloured = pride = worth
352-3	employer	coloured = [pejorative]
354	newspapers	black blood = [sin]
358	Clarke Otter	coloured = [pejorative]
363	Matthew's sister?	Angela looking at the house = poor white trash

Allusive Taxonomy: *The Crying of Lot 49*

Because intertextuality is a critical element in Pynchon's thesis of indeterminacy, a complete analysis of all the character- and reader-oriented allusions in *The Crying of Lot 49* would be too extensive for this exercise. From the point of view of allusive mechanics, Oedipa's belief in revelation through signification is her dysfunction and the primary cause of her becoming trapped within her process of allusion. Although *The Crying of Lot 49* contains several examples of linguistic quicksand, Oedipa's quest for the trystero is the obvious choice as a model of development.

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Location/Source</u>
52	WASTE with symbol	The Scope
54-54	history of private mail delivery	Mike Fallopian's book
60	bone charcoal	Manny Di Presso
63	<i>The Courier's Tragedy</i>	Miles
74	<i>Thurn and Taxis</i>	<i>The Courier's Tragedy</i>
78	<i>Jacobian Revenge Plays</i>	Driblette
84	muted-horn symbol	Stanley Koteks at Yoyodyne
85	John Nefastis	Stanley Koteks
87	W.A.S.T.E.	Stanley Koteks
89	bronze historical marker	postal attack
89	<i>Jacobean Revenge Plays</i>	Zapf's Used Books
90	<i>Plays of Ford, Webster . . .</i>	<i>Jacobean Revenge Plays</i>
91	Mr. Thoth	Vesperhaven House
92	WASTE symbol on ring	Mr. Thoth

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Allusion</u>	<u>Location/Source</u>
94	WASTE symbol on stamp	Inverarity's stamp collection
96	<i>Thurn und Taxis</i>	stamp/Genghis Cohen
101	<i>Plays of Ford, Webster . . .</i>	Lectern Press
105	Nefastis machine	John Nesfastis
111	Trystero lapel pin	Arnold Snarb
115	muted postal-horn	Snarb's mail
117	image of Trystero	Chinatown
	chalk trystero	children's sidewalk game
119	Tristoe, Tristoe	children's song in Golden Gate Park
121	the postal horn	on a bus
122	post horn	airport
123	write by waste	passenger at airport
125	post horn tattoo	vagrant
129-30	W.A.S.T.E.	old green can under freeway
151	a pornographic <i>Courier's Tragedy</i>	Emory Bortz/Vatican library
156-57	Torre and Tassis	Bortz/ <i>Peregrinations</i>
158-60	Thurn and Taxis	Motley's <i>Rise of the Dutch Republic</i>
167	W.A.S.T.E.	Mike Fallopien
168-69	WASTE and symbol	Cohen/stamp
172-73	Marquis de Tour et Tassis	Cohen/ <i>Bibliothèque des Timbrophile</i>

Notes

1 Even though allusive mechanics is interested in establishing a character-oriented thread of interpretation for allusion, it is possible for the bracelet in “Araby” to possess both author-and reader-defined values. Rossini’s *Le Cenerentola*, with the libretto by Giacomo Ferretti, opened on January 25, 1817, at the Teatro Valle in Rome (Peck), and even though it was “received with hostility” the play would “soon [become] popular throughout Italy and beyond; it reached London in 1820 and New York in 1826. Through most of the 19th century, its popularity rivaled that of the *Barber*” (Wikipedia). Given the widespread play of the opera, it’s very possible that Joyce saw *Le Cenerentola* at some point, either in Ireland or Britain, or even in Paris or Trieste.

There is an interesting coincidence about Trieste that may shed some light on a possible connection between Joyce and Rossini. The great operatic polymath Michael W. Balfe was a contemporary of Rossini. In 1827 the young baritone was introduced to Rossini, “who took a personal interest in him and his musical talents” (Walsh). The following year at Rossini’s invitation Balfe made his debut in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and a few short years later would be performing in operas all over the world. Following his success as a singer, Balfe began writing his own operas in the 1830's while continuing to perform with his wife Lina Roser, a Hungarian soprano. But it wasn’t until 1843 that Balfe became internationally recognized as great composer with the debut of *The Bohemian Girl* at the Theatre Royal, in London (Walsh). With a libretto by Alfred Bunn, *The Bohemian Girl* is a tale about a young noblewoman who is kidnaped by gypsies, matures into a beautiful young woman in the pastoral setting, and then is rediscovered by her father the Count after falling in love with a displaced Polish nobleman. The opera

ends with the young woman enjoying the best of both worlds, the pastoral and the noble life (Gifford 50).

What is interesting about Balfe and Joyce and *The Bohemian Girl* are the connections between the two. Textually, Joyce references Balfe and *The Bohemian Girl* in each of his principal works—*Dubliners*, *Portrait*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegan's Wake*—suggesting that Joyce had a great affinity for his fellow Irishman. What is even more suggestive are the biographical similarities between Balfe and Joyce. According to Basil Walsh both men were born in Dublin (74 years apart) and had fathers who were interested in music. Balfe and Joyce had a deep interest in Italian opera, and both could sing. Joyce was a tenor and Balfe a baritone. Even better is the connection to the city of Trieste. Thirty-four years to the day that Balfe died (October 20, 1870) Joyce at the age of twenty-two arrived in Trieste where he would live for many years, writing *Portrait*, most of *Dubliners*, and some of *Ulysses* (Walsh). It doesn't mean that Joyce is referencing the bracelet scene from *Le Cenerentola* in "Araby," but Balfe was obviously an important figure to Joyce, perhaps even a hero, and the path that Balfe took through Rossini and Trieste likely made an impression.

2 It could be argued that "misreading" is in itself an impossibility if viewed apart from the binary moral context of the West. Under this line of consideration Delano cannot be anything but Delano, like a rock or a tree, he just is. It could also be argued that "misreading" is just another form of reading, itself a linguistic construct, like hot and cold. Cold does not really exist, of course, it is merely the absence of heat. I use the terms "read" and "misread" in this study because they suggest a kind of health or progress that most writers are trying to advance in their work. Otherwise, the written

word is pointless, or at its worst, a tool for making and keeping slaves.

3 One of the rhetorical strategies Joyce uses in *Dubliners* to unify the collection is self-referentiality, where one story in *Dubliners* is suggested by another story in *Dubliners*. It does not matter if the reference is textually accurate, the intertextual machine that is the human brain only needs similarity to make the association:

“I remembered that I had noticed long velvet curtains and a swinging lamp of antique fashion. I felt that I had been very far away, in some land where the customs were strange—like Persia, I thought. . . . (13-14). Sounds like “Araby” but is in “The Sisters.”

“The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. . . . He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister” (29). Sounds like “The Sisters” but is in “Araby.”

“Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full they are of passion, of voluptuous longing!” (83). Sounds like “Counterparts” but is in “A Little Cloud.” There are several more examples that link “A Little Cloud” with “Counterparts.” Little Chandler and Farrington are both married, both are made to feel excluded from life by their friends because of marriage (“A Little Cloud” 81, “Counterparts” 94) both fantasize about another life (“A Little Cloud” 83, “Counterparts” 95), both resent their lives (“A Little Cloud” 83, “Counterparts” 95), both are viciously angry at their perceived fate (“A Little Cloud” 84, “Counterparts” 96) and both abuse their children because of alcohol. Little Chandler verbally abuses his infant son for crying by screaming “Stop” at him (84), and Farrington physically abuses one of his children, a son (98). There can be little doubt

that alcoholism is the study here.

“The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you” (178). Sounds like “Two Gallants” but is in “The Dead.”

“You ought to come. Mr Clancy is coming, and Mr Kilkelly and Kathleen Kearney” (189). Sounds like “A Mother” but is in “The Dead.”

4 There is a distinction that needs to be made here about the source of Gabriel’s feelings of dislocation. It is easily demonstrable that a significant part of Gabriel’s dissociation with his environment comes from differences in culture. Gabriel has a British education. His quotes for his speech come from the cream of British literature. He writes book reviews for a newspaper that is opposed to Irish nationalism. He admits to Miss Ivors that he does not like Ireland. Clearly, there are political and cultural differences between Gabriel and his audience. One could even argue that gender is a significant issue because Gabriel’s missteps in “The Dead” all involve women. However, by focusing on the cultural or the gender element as the reason for Gabriel’s continued missteps is to miss what I think is the more salient issue in *Dubliners*, and that is the operation of cognition. If Gabriel’s problem was simply a matter of content, then all Joyce would have to do is to locate a solution in Irish history and culture. Gabriel would save himself (and others) by discovering his Irish roots; basically, a manifestation of representationalist criticism which argues that every content has value and is capable of solving problems. Fortunately, Joyce avoids the pitfall of replacing one hegemony with another and focuses instead on cognition. It is not what Gabriel thinks but *how* he

thinks that is important. There is no solution here, but there is a peek at the criteria for judgment. Joyce obviously recognized that the *how* precedes the moral imperative, which ultimately makes *Dubliners* (and *Portrait*) an artistic attempt to reposition the human race to its experiences. Yes, culture, gender, and identity are significant quantities, but they serve another master.

5 In his book *James Joyce* Ellmann suggests that the cold snow of the universe falling “upon all the living and the dead” is a textual reflection of Joyce’s own difficulties in dealing with the grip that dead people continue to hold over the living. *Dubliners* itself can be read as an attempt to portray and perhaps negotiate this handicap. It begins with the death of Father Flynn and ends with the dying Aunt Julia, and by extension, the human race. The snow falls equally on both the living and the dead, meaning that the dead are capable of impacting reality just as much as a living person. Nora Barnacle’s fondness for the memory of the young Michael Bodkin was, according to Ellman, a heavy influence on Joyce’s creativity. It can be argued that only when Gabriel Conroy accepts his mortality does he accept the other people in his life: “The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland” (Joyce 223).

6 As stated earlier, it is possible to interpret “The Dead” as an attempt to negotiate the death metaphor. The “impalpable and vindictive being” could very well be understood to be Michael Furey under that line of inquiry, where the dead have power over the living, but that being is a construct not a ghost, and so it must originate from Gabriel’s consciousness. It is the jealous self who creates a “vindictive” Michael Furey. Any doubt of this is swept away by Gretta. Her Michael Furey is not “vindictive,” and so

any ill-effects Gabriel experiences because of Gretta's story come from Gabriel.

7 Given the highly biographical nature of Joyce's work, it comes as no surprise that much of the scholarship has been about the connections between Joyce's life and Joyce's fiction. According to the scholar Richard Ellmann, "The Dead" is based on Joyce's relationship with Nora Barnacle, and the themes of death and jealousy come from Joyce's own jealousy over a young man who courted Nora in Galway. Michael Bodkin, who is Michael Furey in the story, stole out of his sick bed and went to Nora in the rain, singing to her under an apple tree. Of course, he passes away, and it was the memory of "Sonny" Bodkin that stayed with Nora throughout her life. Joyce, apparently, was bothered that the recollection "still moved" Nora years later (252). He didn't like competing with the dead. It is this tension between "the living and the dead" (Joyce 224) that forms, according to Ellmann, the "linchpin of Joyce's work" (261).

8 There is another way to characterize the moments in the text where the fiction-maker and the allusion agree. Instead of employing the distinction suggested by MacCaffrey, one might argue that the two cannot be separated, that both exist simultaneously in what Miller describes as a place of "spatial proximity" (24). If this is the case, then the allusion could potentially hold sway over the fiction-maker, coloring the act of production, which casts allusion in the role of reader and fiction-maker in the role of text. It seems that the fractal nature of cognition which is present in both the reading and allusive processes is also present in Miller's place of "spatial proximity." No wonder why Coover is so concerned with "breaking the hold" of "unconscious mythic residues" MacCaffrey 27), or why Derrida wants to do away the notion of metaphysics. As "long as we believe that language is mainly a representation of something else, we

cannot see what language does," i.e., writing is impossible (Said 689). And so as long as the allusion holds sway over the fiction-maker, thinking is impossible.

9 When Delano states that Babo is no longer a slave, it is one of the great ironies of the text. It is interesting to note that the path to freedom Delano articulates for the slave is unquestioned obedience, bordering on an almost religious faith, to his master. It is a description of total subduction.

10 The name of Delano's ship, the *Bachelor's Delight*, suggests a kind of happiness at not being wedded. Perhaps Melville is inferring that the hegemony at the time was delighted at not being "wedded" to the rest of the human race.

11 The spelling of the trystero oscillates in *The Crying of Lot 49*, suggesting a kind of de-stability in form.

12 According to Scholes and Litz, the exclamation of "Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!" although appearing Gaelic hasn't been thoroughly explained by scholars and is therefore designated "unknown and open." It is possible that Joyce is anticipating the postmodern observation about signification, where signifying replaces sign.

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