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## Defining the Sentimentalist in *Ulysses*

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Midway through Stephen Dedalus's famous analysis of *Hamlet* in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan appears in Mr. Lyster's office to read aloud from the telegram Stephen sent to him at the Ship: "*The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done*" (U 9.550-51). Stephen has signed the telegram himself, but he does not reveal to Mulligan that he has cribbed the definition from George Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*; moreover, since the cryptic sentence is, in fact, a misquotation, the actual authorship of the quotation becomes further obscured.<sup>1</sup> Even more confusing is the fact that neither Stephen nor the text of *Ulysses* ever bothers to make clear to whom he refers in the telegram. Is the telegram intended to apply to Buck Mulligan, or does it refer to Stephen himself, the acknowledged debtor both to Mulligan and to the poet George Russell?<sup>2</sup> Does it, perhaps, refer to both men simultaneously?<sup>3</sup> Finally, what does the quotation suggest is to be "enjoyed," and what would constitute an "immense debtorship for a thing done"? The more closely we look at the definition of a "sentimentalist" that the quotation offers, the less definitive it truly seems. The term's full meaning remains strikingly still in abeyance.

The definitions not only of a sentimentalist but also of sentimentalism, sentimentality, and sentiment itself have yet to be satisfactorily addressed in Joyce's fiction. In a crucial article, Clive Hart argues, "The Joycean modes of sentimentality require closer and more careful scrutiny than they have hitherto received."<sup>4</sup> While certain Joyceans have given passing attention to the presence of sentimentality in Joyce's corpus in the thirty-five years since Hart's call, a full inquiry into what the term "sentimentality" means with regard to Joyce's position as a modernist has largely remained unaccomplished.<sup>5</sup> This stands as an especially important task for Joyce scholarship in that *Ulysses* questions what constitutes sentimentality and its related terms, a pressing engagement both for the 1904 bourgeois Dublin the novel depicts and for the 1916-1922 modernist milieu in which Joyce composed the text. This essay traces the sentimental novelistic tradition within which *Ulysses* is situated to show why the identification of

the sentimentalist is so problematic in Joyce's novel, particularly for Stephen. Leopold Bloom, in fact, more readily accepts the mantle of the sentimentalist despite the ostracism he is subjected to because of it, as he negotiates the problem of excessive feeling concerning Gerty MacDowell in the novel's "Nausicaa" episode.

As "Oxen of the Sun" makes clear, Joyce specifically conceived of *Ulysses* within the Anglo-Irish literary tradition (and specifically evokes in that episode such particular key sentimental figures as Laurence Sterne, Oliver Goldsmith, and Charles Dickens). It is, therefore, appropriate first to trace that tradition to see how the terms related to sensibility and sentimentality have been historically inflected. The cult of sensibility—which Janet Todd terms "the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering"<sup>6</sup>—grew in large part as a mid-eighteenth-century response to the Enlightenment belief in the innate potential within man for goodness. This cult, which lauded the benevolence, virtue, and delicacy of the sentiments (the moral reflections about the rights and wrongs of human conduct) through its fictional forms prevalent from the 1740s to the 1770s, instructed its followers, as Todd notes, "how to behave, how to express themselves in friendship and how to respond decently to life's experiences" (4). Influential and popular literary characters like Sterne's Yorick, Goldsmith's Reverend Primrose, and Henry Mackenzie's Harley, as heroic "men of feeling" emblematic of this cult,<sup>7</sup> showed their associations with the moral philosophies of sentiment (as limned by figures like the Earl of Shaftesbury, John Locke, and David Hume) by their willingness to recognize human misery in the urban landscape, to suffer with the afflicted, and to render them aid. Such an emphasis on specularly and sympathy became especially important in the wake of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which stressed that moral benevolence arises from our propensity to suffer vicariously with the afflicted and to put his or her interests before our own.<sup>8</sup> The readers of fictions associated with the cult and culture of sensibility also became complicit in the acts of sympathy these novels celebrated by themselves recognizing human affliction and vicariously seeing their fictive heroes tend to it, thus allowing them, too, to join in a celebration of human community.

By the 1770s, when the cult of sensibility came inevitably to be ridiculed for its immoderation, "sentimentality" had begun to enter the Anglo-Irish lexicon as a pejorative term meaning an entanglement within the feminine.<sup>9</sup> By the turn of the eighteenth century, both male and female writers had come to ridicule this involvement, including the young Jane Austen, who thoroughly lampooned feminine sentimentality both in her juvenile story "Love and Freindship" (*sic*) and in her first drafts of *Sense and Sensibility*.<sup>10</sup> Even so, the dynamism

of the cult of sensibility refused to vanish. Excessive sensibilities became equally celebrated and parodied among the Romantic writers, and by Victoria's reign the term "sentimentality" had become hopelessly muddled. As Fred Kaplan argues in *Sacred Tears*, by this time sentimentality continued to be celebrated in the literature of Dickens and Alfred, Lord Tennyson as a rearguard Enlightenment reaction to the inhumanities of industrialism, capitalism, and imperialism.<sup>11</sup> The continued popularity of sentimentality among many Victorian writers, Kaplan argues, formed a defensive vision of the ideal in human nature and community against "the claim that the universe and human history are governed by mechanical, or rational, or deterministic, or pragmatic forces; that we cannot maintain metaphysical or religious ideals; [and] that all human nature is flawed" (6). Simultaneously, however, writers like William Makepeace Thackeray remained ambivalent about this seemingly doctrinaire celebration of idealism that often seemed not merely misguided and ineffectual but at times exploitative and self-glorifying. Sentimentalism, as this "doctrine" of the primacy of feelings was and remains disparagingly known, increasingly prompted an occasion for suspicion and even ridicule as the Victorian century wore on, as Meredith's critique of the sentimentalist in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* reveals. Women writers, particularly, continued to be problematically associated with sentimentalism on both sides of the Atlantic,<sup>12</sup> and writers like Tennyson and Dickens were ridiculed for what was seen as a vulgar and ineffectual willingness to linger over deathbed scenes and exploit human suffering for literary capital gain.<sup>13</sup>

This distaste for the high Victorian luxuriation in emotive expression seemed even pronouncedly distasteful to the modernist writers of the early twentieth century. By this point, sentimentality no longer marked excess moral worth to the literati but rather, as Anita Sokolsky notes,

emotional facility, redundant self-assertion, and mawkish piety. Sentimentality means saying too much, saying everything there is to be said about an emotional state. Such exhaustive ease, the result of an apparent naiveté about the relation of expression to meaning, forms an affront to a generation of writers and readers for whom difficulty was an ethos. The ultimate inexpressible nature of experience, the strain to represent and fail, constitutes the thrill of modernism.<sup>14</sup>

The modernists' professed rejection of Victorian culture—evident in the very name the "modern" movement eventually acquired for itself—necessitated the apparent rejection of that which they saw as most characteristic of the culture: its sentimentalism. Suzanne Clark comments, "From the point of view of literary modernism, senti-

mentality was both a past to be outgrown and a present tendency to be despised.”<sup>15</sup> This seemed especially so given modernist anxieties regarding women’s writing, which was seen as especially entangled in sentimentality during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>16</sup>

Most damning, however, was sentimentality’s concomitant association among the modernists with middlebrow bourgeois culture. As the very title of Aldous Huxley’s 1930 diatribe against sentimentality, *Vulgarity in Literature*, makes evident, many modern writers felt there was something distinctly common about the easy accessibility of excess feeling and sensibility. “It is . . . vulgar . . . to have emotions,” Huxley wrote, “but to express them so badly, with so many too many protestings [*sic*], that you seem to have no natural feelings, but to be merely fabricating emotions by a process of literary forgery” (37). Whereas eighteenth-century writers like Sterne and Mackenzie, and Victorians like Dickens and Tennyson, celebrated sentimental expression as a basis for community, the elitist aesthetic of high modernism eschewed it. Thus, in his influential 1919 essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” T. S. Eliot writes, “Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, *only those who have personality or emotions* know what it is to want to escape from them.”<sup>17</sup> The modernist writer is thus not free of emotion but is rather akin to what E. M. Forster celebrates as “the aristocracy of the sensitive”: only the writer with the requisite depth of fine feeling can produce modern literature.<sup>18</sup> Carefully tuned emotion is no longer the basis for community under this aesthetic formulation but rather a means by which the modern writer may fly by those communal nets cast by nationality, language, and religion.

Yet there is a crucial problem here that speaks directly to the ambiguity of the definition of the sentimentalist that Stephen cribbs from Meredith. If fine feeling is to be celebrated by the modern artist, at what point does earned sentiment—the hallmark of the artist—become excessive, and potentially risible, sentimentality? Eliot himself addresses this problem in his essay on *Hamlet*, wherein he objects to the prince’s excessive emotional display: “The intense feeling, ecstatic or terrible, without an object or exceeding an object,” Eliot argues, “is something which every person of sensibility has known; it is doubtless a subject of study for pathologists.”<sup>19</sup> Eliot proposes that

[t]he only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an “objective correlative”; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory

experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. ("Hamlet" 48)

Yet the absence of an active human subject in this famous formulation points to what a misnomer the "objective correlative" really is: how can making such a determination ever be "objective," given the intense subjectivity of feelings themselves? What expression of feeling might be immune from the judgment that it is either too much, inappropriate, or forged—that is, sentimental—particularly in an era when the reigning aesthetic is so suspicious of sentimentality?

The problem resides in the fact that sentimentality is, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues in *Epistemology of the Closet*, not a fixed structure but rather almost entirely a relational one.<sup>20</sup> That is, its identification and existence depend wholly upon external judgment as to the sincerity of the emotional display and its justifiability according to its circumstances: any expression can become labeled sentimental if the observer deems it excessive, insincere, or vulgar. Sentimentality, in the modernist imagination, thus adheres to the same definition as that proposed for obscenity by the Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart: you know it when you see it.<sup>21</sup> Any representation of emotion could seem unjustifiable, given the right observer; as Sedgwick points out, even the most "anti-sentimental" rhetoric can itself be seen as being emotionally invested in its own system of beliefs (154).<sup>22</sup> In this light, the Meredithian telegram's definition of a sentimentalist is ambiguous because it could equally apply to Mulligan *or* to Stephen (and thus it is directed by each to the other: by Stephen when he sends it to Buck and by Mulligan when he reads it back to Stephen at the library). It could also refer to their roommate Haines, who enjoys others' quotations and verbal realities without being careful to attribute them,<sup>23</sup> or to George Russell, who refuses to admit the corporeal realities his Platonism would eschew.<sup>24</sup> Each of them could be seen as the sentimentalist defined in the telegram, depending wholly upon one's point of view. Joyce's refusal to allow the label to adhere clearly just to one character points to the term's dangerous instability in *Ulysses* as a free-floating signifier: it could signify anyone who reveals inner feelings to a hostile public.

It is little wonder, then, that silence should be one of the "arms" that Stephen, as the modern artist most particularly concerned about his sensibilities, deploys for his defense against the claims made upon him by his milieu (*P* 247). His characteristic response to the jeering baitings of Buck Mulligan, both in "Telemachus" and "Scylla and Charybdis," is not to respond at all; he keeps his own counsel except when drunk. So too, as many critics have noted, does Stephen largely refuse to share his own writings with anyone throughout *Ulysses*: even the poem he composes on the strand in the "Proteus"

episode remains his own private writing (*U* 3.381-84). But Stephen's strongest and most shocking silence comes when demands are made upon him by his family in "Wandering Rocks," as when he meets his starving sister Dilly at the book cart in Bedford Street, for example, and sees her buying a French primer for herself. Here Stephen's deliberate swerving from the sentimental tradition becomes most evident because most strongly evoked with regard to his character.

Laura Jane Riss argues persuasively that Stephen's burgeoning artistic sensibilities in the first two chapters of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* mark him as heir to "the artistic temper [that] arose in [mid-eighteenth-] century sentimentalism" (2). Yet even if he possesses such sensibilities, Stephen, in *Ulysses*, shows that his inheritance from the this tradition extends only to his inner temperament and not to charitable impulses. Joyce shows Stephen in this episode—which Robert Scholes rightly calls "one of the novel's most sentimental moments" (266)—swerving from the tradition of the man of feeling. After Stephen warns the shabbily dressed Dilly that their sister Maggy might pawn the book she wants when her back is turned, he asks whether his own books at home have been sold: "Some," Dilly responds, "[w]e had to" (*U* 10.874). Stephen's horrified realization that his sister is "drowning" in abject poverty occasions his greatest test throughout the novel of his determination not to serve God, country, family, or any obligation other than to his own art (*U* 10.875). "Agenbite of inwit" (or "remorse of conscience"), he thinks to himself when seeing Dilly's horrifically reduced circumstances: "Inwit's agenbite. Misery! Misery!" (*U* 10.879, 879-80).

Whether Stephen's last internal expostulation reflects his own "agenbite of inwit" or whether it is the recognition of his sister's misery that prompts his "remorse of conscience" is, significantly, left uncertain. This ambiguity demonstrates Stephen's ability to sympathize with his sister's poverty and suffering—to share in her misery—despite the dictates of a modernism that requires him to be true only to his art. In this confrontation in the streets, Stephen resembles the heroic "men of feeling" typical of sentimental novels in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and Irish literary tradition, whose fine sensibility is revealed by their ability to empathize with the poor. Were this Goldsmith or Sterne, we might expect the young man to share with his starving sister some of the wages he had received that day or even to express his sympathetic concern for her plight. But *Ulysses* is pointedly *not* that kind of novel, even if this episode is specifically engineered to recall such a work. Throughout this unexpected meeting with Dilly, Stephen is determined not to show any of his inner feelings for his sister: "Show no surprise," he thinks (*U* 10.871). He even sees her as a mermaid figure, ready to "drown me with her" in poverty (*U* 10.876). Indeed, Dilly's



face, with its “lank locks falling at its sides,” initially reminds him of Charles I (*U* 10.858), as if to signal that Dilly’s presence represents a kind of reigning authority over Stephen that his artist’s credo must force him to depose and, indeed, kill in one way or another. But the unexpected appearance of the “Stuart face of nonesuch Charles” also underlines for the reader how at variance Stephen’s obdurate heart is from that of his literary predecessors in the sentimental tradition (*U* 10.858). In Dickens’s 1850 *David Copperfield*, it is Mr. Dick, the protector of another poverty-stricken child, the eponymous hero of the novel, who similarly finds the head of the martyr King Charles I obsessively reappearing to him as an allegorical means of figuring his anguish over the mistreatment of his own sister.<sup>25</sup> Yet, if Stephen contrasts markedly with Dickens’s amiable lunatic in terms of intelligence, so too does he differ from Mr. Dick in his willingness to act upon compassionate feelings. When confronted with a neglected and suffering child, Mr. Dick decides that the child should be “measured for a suit of clothes directly” (186). Stephen, however, extends no such munificence.

Even if Stephen vigorously rejects the sentimentalist’s role through his silence, he is not the eponymous hero of this novel. The character more willing to accept the mantle of the sentimentalist is Leopold Bloom, who shows both Stephen and Buck the way through at the end of the “Scylla and Charybdis” episode by passing between them. As many scholars have noted,<sup>26</sup> the lack of organs assigned to Stephen’s “Telemachiad” episodes in Joyce’s schema for the novel suggests Stephen’s disembodiment in the practical physical world,<sup>27</sup> whereas Bloom (first seen eating “with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls”—*U* 4.01-02) represents the opposite and is thus more willing to assume his public communal responsibilities in *Ulysses*. But, just as the eighteenth-century man of feeling had his sensibilities tested by the cruelties of his urban milieu—where he found the greatest inhumanity of men exacerbated by rough-and-tumble mercantilism—so Bloom finds himself repeatedly mocked for his sentimental expressions by his uncaring fellow citizens.

Much like Stephen does (but to a lesser degree), the majority of citizens in 1904 Dublin find ready tears more often the hallmark of a fool. The Dubliners in *Ulysses* generally behave quite cynically when they observe their fellows luxuriating in feelings they find excessive, inappropriate, or feigned. Bob Doran’s drunken gestures of sympathy for the Widow Dignam, for example, are seen by the narrator of the “Cyclops” episode as “[c]hoking with bloody foolery,” and he is censured for “doing the weeps about Paddy Dignam” (*U* 12.784, 395). But no single figure in the novel suffers more—either externally or internally—from this suspicion of easy emotional expression than its central character, Leopold Bloom, the outsider in almost all aspects



of the novel's social milieu. Joyce's protagonist expresses sympathy and feeling easily, and with less fear of accompanying exploitation or stigmatization, than Stephen Dedalus or most of the other characters in the novel do. Bloom begins his day, for example, by taking it upon himself to arrange help for a poor widow's finances; he visits a suffering mother in labor to offer her solace; and finally, he closes his day by keeping his eye on a starving and melancholic student clearly headed for trouble with the law. Bloom is not only willing to expend money and physical effort but also sympathy to sustain those in need. One of the words he uses most frequently is "poor," which conjoins the senses of being impoverished in spirit as well as in pocket: "Poor Dignam!"; "Poor mamma's panacea"; "Poor Mrs Purefoy"; "Poor girl," in relation to Gerty MacDowell; and so forth (*U* 4.551, 15.202, 1102-03, 13.772).

Bloom's highly cultivated sensitivities sometimes single him out for praise from his fellow Dublin citizens during the day, but they mostly mark him as a marginalized figure of fun. His mourning clothes literally mark him as a melancholic figure who stands out in every crowd. For many of the novel's characters, Bloom's ready sentimentality characterizes him not as kind and loving but rather as ridiculous and contemptuous. The unnamed narrator of "Cyclops," for example, describes him "as limp as a wet rag" (*U* 12.1479-80). He, the Citizen, and the other patrons of Barney Kiernan's pub attack Bloom, in part, for what they see as his hypocritical and mawkishly emotional defense of "[l]ove. . . the opposite of hatred" (*U* 12.1485).

Not only do the characters in *Ulysses* critique Bloom for his excess sentiment, but Joyce scholars do so as well. They have often found him something of a masochist, as Darcy O'Brien notes:

Bloom does in fact seem to "enjoy" the suffering toward which he manifests so much pity; and since he in no way must bear the brunt of this suffering, he can afford to enjoy it vicariously for as long as it continues to give him pleasure. . . . Feeling himself the victim of life's cruelties, Bloom coddles and nurses his emotions through a sentimental participation in the misfortunes of others, putting himself in their place with masochistic pleasure.<sup>28</sup>

Such readings have particularly been prompted by Bloom's propensity towards dishonest displays of emotion calculated to produce effects in onlookers. He is aware, for example, of his own willingness to exploit his mourning attire to garner pity, as he does with Josie Breen in "Lestrygonians": "May as well get her sympathy," he thinks (*U* 8.218). Robin Lee questions whether Bloom is here "indulging himself in his sorrows—[if] that, in the end, his capacity for suffering shades off into a desire for it," and concludes, "We thus feel a certain

ambivalence in Bloom's sympathy with other people, and in our sympathy for him."<sup>29</sup>

Such ambivalence, however, seems to be shared by Bloom as he frequently examines his own emotional behavior. For all of Bloom's ready tears, he also acts as the most persistent critic of sentimentality both within himself and in others. He remains fully aware of his propensities to sigh and suffer for public effect, noting internally that his letter to Martha Clifford composed in the Ormond Hotel bar is "[t]oo poetical that about the sad" (*U* 11.904). He also silently censures Martin Cunningham's kindly explanation to Jack Power about the cause of Paddy Dignam's death, understanding that Dignam more likely died from "[t]oo much John Barleycorn" than from a broken heart (*U* 6.307). Joyce points to Bloom's status as a modern and practical man of science as well as his abject self-positioning as a doleful throwback to the man of feeling. When Bloom first appears in the nightmarish fantasy world of "Circe," we see him reflected in a concave mirror—and hence diminished as "*lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom*," the wet crybaby so despised by the other townspeople (*U* 15.146).

This reflection is immediately counterbalanced, however, by Bloom's convex (and hence enlarged) mirroring as "*jollypoldy* the rixdix doldy" (*U* 15.149), the happy and practical man-about-town. The "*jollypoldy*" aspect of Bloom, of course, is what he sees as his more heroic, and indeed more masculine, aspect: in this persona, Bloom imagines himself in "Circe" elected mayor of Dublin and even as the founder of a new promised land. Simultaneously, as "*Booloohoom*," he is despised and abused throughout the episode and becomes marked as feminine in the most completely abject manner. Joycean critics often credit the episode's whirling gender changes (which largely seem to be manifestations of his subconscious fears) as stemming from Bloom's physical sexual practices and proclivities, but they clearly also originate in his decidedly feminized sensibilities. Bloom's willingness to weep, to sigh, to feel sorry for himself, and to be kind towards others marks him as what Professor Dixon famously calls "the new womanly man": "His moral nature is simple and lovable. Many have found him a dear man, a dear person. He is a rather quaint fellow on the whole, coy though not feeble-minded in the medical sense" (*U* 15.1798-1801). As the professor's diagnosis demonstrates, Bloom's moral and emotional nature marks his gender difference from the Irish and British turn-of-the-century masculine ideal. "Bello," the mannish fantasy avatar of the Nighttown madam Bella Cohen, easily humiliates Bloom by drawing attention to his emasculation after he too has switched his gender. When the she-Bloom laments, "I have sinned! I have suff ....," he is violently chastised by "Bello" for being a "[c]rybabby" given to "[c]rocodile

tears" (*U* 15.3215, 3218). Bloom's crying becomes treated not only as insincere but also as one more abject excretion in this episode, much like his remembered defecation in the plasterer's bucket which keeps haunting him throughout "Circe." Crying becomes the source as well as the physical manifestation of Bloom's shame.

Bloom's hallucinations in the Nighttown episode, however, do not represent the character fully or necessarily as "he is" but rather as he subconsciously may appear to himself. The distortions of the convex mirror (which shows Bloom as he aspires to be seen by others) and concave mirror (which shows him as he fears he is already seen) confronting the reader and Bloom near this episode's beginning insist on the necessity of maintaining multiple views to receive the fullest pictures of the story. Joyce's self-consciously heteroglossic approach in *Ulysses* asks its readers to see the work's characters from as many perspectives as possible. Sentimentality always emanates from a vicarious—and hence invariably distorting—perspective, so that what appears excessive from one point of view might seem mete from another. Bloom might subconsciously remonstrate with himself about his melancholic propensities or be attacked by others like the "Cyclops" narrator, but he might be applauded by still others for those same tendencies. What can seem "wet" and abject from one perspective can be viewed as generous or laudatory from another. Moreover, although the regulars in Barney Kiernan's pub in "Cyclops" revile Bloom for what they see as his excessive lauding of liberal humanism, they seem blind to the way their own jingoistic nationalism could also be seen as sentimental. It is no surprise, then, that "parallax" (meaning the apparent displacement of an object seen from two different perspectives) should be the one word the definition of which Bloom wishes to uncover during his peregrinations. What constitutes both sentimentality and "true" sentiment always depends in this novel on a matter of external vicarious perspective.

This parallactic nature of the sentimental is most fully explored in Bloom's literally climactic encounter with Gerty MacDowell in the "Nausicaa" episode. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the Princess Nausicaa offers Odysseus a respite from his weary travels; just so, Joyce's "Nausicaa" has been understood to offer relief not only for Bloom but also for the reader in that the episode fundamentally disrupts the stylistic progression of the episodes in *Ulysses*.<sup>30</sup> While many readers have observed that the episodes become progressively more difficult for the reader from "Scylla and Charybdis" to the novel's climax in "Circe," Joyce describes the style of "Nausicaa" in a letter to Frank Budgen as "a namby-pamby jammy marmalady drawersy (alto là!) style with effects of incense, mariolatry, masturbation, stewed cocksles, painter's palette, chitchat, circumlocutions, etc etc" (*SL* 246). Karen Lawrence notes that "[t]o begin 'Nausicaa' is to feel that one

has stumbled into a bad Victorian novel,"<sup>31</sup> and indeed the text's stylistic sources have been traced to works that stand quite apart from the more canonical archive of literary styles chronologically parodied in the novel's subsequent "Oxen of the Sun" episode. The sources for "Nausicaa" extend to a decidedly more middlebrow archive (which would include such novels as Maria S. Cummins's *The Lamplighter* and *Mabel Vaughn* and popular magazines such as *The Princess Novelette*<sup>32</sup>) that the episode's heroine Gerty MacDowell would favor.<sup>33</sup> Gerty, indeed, has been critically identified as the wellspring of the episode's excessive sentimentality, in that she allows Bloom to gain emotional relief from the violent reactions of the patrons of Barney Kiernan's bar. Indeed, her expressions of emotion make the charges leveled against Bloom's sentimentality seem relatively trivial. Throughout the previous episodes of *Ulysses*, Bloom has behaved with increasing tearfulness. In "Sirens," he cried into his beer over Simon Dedalus's rendition of the maudlin "M'appari" aria and the emotions it evoked within him regarding Molly's infidelity. In "Cyclops," Bloom gave his earnest defense of love, "the opposite of hatred," which some critical readers have found suspiciously mawkish, as does the Citizen.<sup>34</sup> In "Nausicaa," for once, the burden of sentimentalism is removed from Bloom's shoulders and placed upon those of Gerty, who, by dint of her class, age, and gender, adheres to the twentieth-century remnants of an eighteenth-century cult of sensibility.

Gerty is thus often treated as a foil for Bloom: while she luxuriates in her "borrowed" language of emotional excess, Bloom seems, in comparison, to be pointedly *unsentimental*.<sup>35</sup> Many critics, as Philip Weinstein points out, indeed see "Nausicaa" as Joyce's "comic exposure . . . [of] Gerty's foolishness."<sup>36</sup> To see Gerty in this way, as merely a figure of fun to bring into relief Bloom's superiority misses the very point of the episode and, in particular, its complex treatment of modern sentimentality. For Joyce, Gerty and Bloom are not alternates or foils but rather complements to, or even mirrors of one another: one observes the other observing the other, as if in a kind of sentimental *mise-en-abyme*. What "Nausicaa" demonstrates decisively is that when sentimentality in *Ulysses* is understood in terms of its intrinsically parallaxic nature it becomes not an excuse for further isolation (as it is for Bloom earlier in the novel) but rather the basis for community between outsiders.

Alone among the episodes in *Ulysses*, "Nausicaa" presents a narrating character's thoughts not directly through unmediated discourse but rather indirectly through the third person. Whereas Molly, Bloom, Stephen, and even the unnamed narrator of "Cyclops" speak as "I," Gerty is always presented as "she": indeed, when she first appears in the text, the narrator asks, "But who was Gerty?" (*U* 13.78). The question reverberates throughout the entire episode, as

the reader attempts to comprehend her character. The narrative itself may answer this question by describing the young woman's external features, but its language suggests that the reader look not simply *at* Gerty but rather also *through* her and her pretensions. So too are we encouraged to see through her sentimental rhetoric, which can be recognized (and hence seen through) all too readily. She is at once forever distanced from us as an object of our gaze, even as we are privy to her inmost thoughts.

This distancing is just the sort of thing Gerty, the teasing exhibitionist, would enjoy. Just as Joyce listed the eye in his Linati schema as one of the principal organs identified with this episode (30), so Gerty sees the eye as the body's most important feature:

That strained look on her face! A gnawing sorrow is there all the time. Her very soul is in her eyes and she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber where, giving way to tears, she could have a good cry and relieve her pentup feelings though not too much because she knew how to cry nicely before the mirror. You are lovely, Gerty, it said. (*U* 13.188-92)

Although initially giving credence to the cliché that the eyes are the gateway to the soul, she immediately reverses herself when considering the implications of that statement. Before the mirror, Gerty wants to show herself not as she is but as she would like to be: that is, as crying “nicely” rather than giving way to her true feelings. For Gerty, sentimentality is a mode of excess but one that remains always a carefully regulated and performed excess calibrated exactly for effect.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, to position Gerty simply as a hypocrite is to miss Joyce's point. Gerty's feelings are real to her insofar as they conform to her ideas of what emotions should be. Although she speaks in the clichés of sentimental fiction, these are powerful words to her because they express what she believes she should feel. Fritz Senn notes that when reading “Nausicaa” we cannot ourselves condemn Gerty for falling victim to sentimental platitudes especially since “clichés could not have been popular but for some inherent charm, however cheap.”<sup>38</sup> What we read as excessive in Gerty's displays of feeling—that is, as sentimental—she instead reads as genuine, as the mark of true sentiment.

Gerty sees her willingness to salve “wounds that wanted healing with heartbalm” as the mark of her acquiescence to a prescribed gender role: “She was a womanly woman not like other flighty girls unfeminine” (*U* 13.435, 435-36). Such emotional expressiveness, however, would not be, in her opinion, inappropriate for a man. Indeed, her own “beau idéal” of “a manly man” would be one “who would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the

strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with a long long kiss" (*U* 13.209, 210, 212-14). Naturally, then, she sees Bloom, the figure in mourning opposite her on Sandymount strand, in a very different way than we have become accustomed to others viewing him throughout the novel. He becomes the embodiment of her "beau ideal," the figure of sorrow and sympathy for whom she has waited. Bloom's melancholia renders him not effeminate to Gerty's eyes but rather indicates his masculine eroticism.

Just as Gerty has previously cried before a mirror for pleasure, so too does Bloom's affected melancholia afford her great pleasure. "He was in deep mourning, she could see that," the narrator notes, "and the story of a haunting sorrow was written on his face. She would have given worlds to know what it was" (*U* 13.421-23). Of course, Gerty does not really need to ask him about the story behind his sorrow (and indeed she does not do so, preferring instead to remain in a distant, observing silence), because to some extent she already knows. The pleasure Bloom gives Gerty is largely defined by how he reflects her image of herself as a creature of feeling.

Gerty thus creates a Bloom of her own sentimental imagining by constructing an especially novelistic history for the figure before her: "she was dying to know was he a married man or a widower who had lost his wife or some tragedy like the nobleman with the foreign name from the land of song had to have her put into a madhouse, cruel only to be kind" (*U* 13.656-59). Her favorite poem is Louis J. Walsh's "*Art thou real, my ideal?*" (*U* 13.645-46), and she never allows the question Walsh's title poses to be fully answered. Paradoxically, Bloom can only be "real" to her so long as he remains an ideal. He becomes the "dreamhusband" of her fantasies (*U* 13.431), and Gerty can reciprocate by allowing him the stimulus of his own fantasies of her. Bloom, of course, has been participating in the same process of imaginative projection (as we are to learn in "his" portion of the episode, which mirrors her own), remaking the woman before him as the "[h]ot little devil" of his masturbatory fantasies (*U* 13.776). As Weinstein has argued (117), Gerty is not wholly exploited or objectified by Bloom here, given that she actively participates in the scene's consumption by herself manipulating Bloom's gaze for her own pleasures. In this way, the literal climaxes of his erotic reverie and her sentimental dreaming occur simultaneously:

She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow, the cry of a young girl's love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has rung through the ages. And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind blank and O! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! in raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of

rain gold hair threads and they shed and ah! they were all greeny dewy stars falling with golden, O so lovely, O, soft, sweet, soft! (*U* 13.733-40)

The reiteration of the word “cry” signals that this is not merely a physical orgasm but an emotional one as well, shared by two sorrowful souls who achieve climax in their mutual sentimentalized creations of one another. This reciprocal evocation is itself marked by the repetitions of the word “O,” the signifier both of sexual pleasure as well as a vocative summation of the Other. Sedgwick comments upon the “dangerously similar overlap” of masturbation and sentimentality in the twentieth-century public imagination: both have been viewed with some suspicion because of their perceived unproductive and solipsistic pleasures.<sup>39</sup> Gerty’s and Bloom’s climaxes, however, are depicted as clearly and pointedly interpersonal, despite the fact that they never speak to one another during the episode: “Still it was a kind of language between us,” Bloom realizes later on the strand after parting from her (*U* 13.944). Although Gerty and Bloom perform emotionally before the mirror of each other’s eyes—just as Gerty often likes to cry “nicely before the mirror”—they nevertheless recognize within one another a mutuality of feeling (excessive or otherwise). Thus their momentary sentimental union parallels that praised by the male worshippers in the Our Lady Star of the Sea parish church (as the “Nausicaa” episode begins) as they celebrate their communion with their idealized heavenly intercessor. Sentimentality thus becomes neither isolating (as in the novel’s previous two episodes) nor purely masturbatory, but cohesive: a sympathetic expressive understanding of separate outsiders who would otherwise be strangers to one another.

The third-person narrative of Gerty’s section also implicates the narrator in this mutual commingling of sensibilities. So too does it involve the reader in its moment of communion, in that we also become privy to Gerty from within; yet our ultimate separation from her becomes underscored, as it does for Bloom, when her lameness is revealed (at which moment her monologue significantly ends). The keynote becomes a suspension between sympathy and judgment, the tension upon which Robert Langbaum famously argues the dramatic monologue (the closest poetic equivalent to Gerty’s long soliloquy) is built.<sup>40</sup> The tension of sentimentality in the modern world, Joyce shows us, is that it allows both for such sympathetic commingling and for the alienating and vicarious judging of sentimentalism, so that the idealized moment of communion (“O!”) can only be fleeting.

All the same, Joyce bids us to brave this danger of being judged sentimental. Even Molly Bloom (herself a woman of feeling who engages in the only completed act of charity in the novel, by tossing



the coin to the stripling in "Wandering Rocks") realizes that she must risk speaking to her husband the next day about the possibilities of renewing their vows of love. Her promise to herself of filling the room with flowers—"Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses God of heaven theres nothing like nature" (*U* 18.1557-59)—indicates her realization that she is ready to take the chance of revealing her overflowing sentiment toward her husband. The paradise that Molly envisions for the home fulfills the shared moment of communion between Bloom and Gerty but depends ultimately on risking the externalization of inner feeling before the perspective of another auditor. But this is the way the communal paradise of affirmative love that *Ulysses* holds out by its end may be realized.

All of us, Joyce ultimately warns, are vulnerable to the charge of being sentimentalists ourselves. The telegram containing the Meredith adage might be addressed to each of us just as easily as to Stephen, because none of us can be safe from its charges of solipsistic and unearned excessive pleasure. Yet, if we are ever to realize the promise of communion, we must boldly face this risk and express our feelings, thus possibly transforming such solipsism into the basis for community. Such is the promise that sentimentality still offers us, even beneath the stigmas we have continued to attach to it.

## NOTES

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Thomas Gillcrist, Nathalia King, Ellen Keck Stauder, and Maria DiBattista for reading earlier drafts of this essay and making suggestions for revision.

<sup>1</sup> The actual quotation from the original edition of George Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, ed. Edward Mendelson (1859; London: Penguin Publishers, 1998), p. 226, reads, "'Sentimentalists,' says the PILGRIM'S SCRIP, 'are they who seek to enjoy Reality, without incurring the Immense Debtorship for a thing done.'" In the 1875 B. Tauschnitz revision of the novel (and in later editions brought out during Meredith's lifetime), published in Leipzig, Meredith omitted the word "reality." It remains unclear, however, whether Joyce was actually familiar with the original edition of the Meredith novel and its inclusion of the word "reality" or whether he only knew of the Tauschnitz edition; in either case, however, the quotation has been altered slightly from the plural to the singular.

<sup>2</sup> Those scholars who have identified the sentimentalist as Buck Mulligan include Richard Ellmann, "*Ulysses*" on the *Liffey* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), p. 83, and Brian G. Caraher, "A Question of Genre: Generic Experimentation, Self-Composition, and the Problem of Egoism in *Ulysses*," *ELH*, 54 (Spring 1987), 209. Maria DiBattista, on the other hand, reads Stephen as clearly being the sentimentalist to whom the quotation refers; see DiBattista, *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> See Bernard Benstock, *James Joyce: The Undiscover'd Country* (Dublin: Gill

and Macmillan, 1977), p. 159: "The question remains whether it is he himself who is the sentimentalist or Mulligan: Stephen is certainly Mulligan's debtor."

<sup>4</sup> Clive Hart, "James Joyce's Sentimentality," *Philological Quarterly*, 46 (October 1967), 253, and reprinted as "James Joyce's Sentimentality," *JJQ*, 41 (Fall 2003 and Winter 2004), 25-36.

<sup>5</sup> Other examples of studies that have engaged with the question of sentimentality in Joyce's writing since Hart's article include Johannes Hedberg, "The Lure of Sentimentality in the Young James Joyce," *Moderna Språk*, 81 (1987), 12-20; Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988), p. 125; and Laura Jane Ress, *Tender Consciousness: Sentimental Sensibility in the Emerging Artist—Sterne, Yeats, Joyce and Proust* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002). Douglas Mao, in his essay "Arcadian Ithaca," considers the relationship between sentimental feeling and utopian longing in the "Ithaca" episode of *Ulysses*; I am grateful to him for showing me this unpublished manuscript. Robert Scholes, in his essay "Exploring the Great Divide: High and Low, Right and Left," *Narrative*, 11 (October 2003), 264, argues for considering the emotions *Ulysses* evokes as "central to its power to attract and hold readers." Further references to the Ress and Scholes works will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>6</sup> Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen Press, 1986), p. 7. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>7</sup> See Laurence Sterne, *The Works of Laurence Sterne; Containing the "Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.," "A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy," Sermons, Letters, Etc. With a Life of the Author* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1800); Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield: A Tale* (London: J. Davies, 1781); and Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1787).

<sup>8</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: A. Millar, 1759).

<sup>9</sup> For a more in-depth analysis of the problems of women writers' engagement with sentimentality during this period, see Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 1-19.

<sup>10</sup> See Jane Austen, *Love and Freindship [sic] and Other Early Works: Now First Published from the Original Manuscript* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922), and *Sense and Sensibility* (London: T. Egerton, 1811). The original spelling of "Freindship" was Austen's.

<sup>11</sup> Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987). Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the ridicule of sentimentality in American nineteenth-century women writers, see Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 122-46.

<sup>13</sup> The mockery particularly associated with Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poetic mourning for Arthur Henry Hallam stands emblemized by Max Beerbohm's famous caricature of a laughably tiny Tennyson reading aloud from "In Memoriam" to an equally diminutive Queen Victoria in a Buckingham Palace parlor wherein both figures are dominated by a colossal portrait of the dead Prince Consort; in an unpublished version of this cartoon Beerbohm makes his point even more blatantly by decorating the salon's wallpaper with

enormous skulls and crossbones—see Beerbohm, “Mr. Tennyson reading IN MEMORIAM to his Sovereign” (1904), unpublished caricature in the Robert Taylor Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Libraries. The ridicule of Charles Dickens’s deathbed scenes became especially marked in the 1890s by Oscar Wilde’s oft-repeated remark that one must have a heart of stone to read of the death of Little Nell and refrain from laughing out loud; this comment was first quoted in Violet Wyndham, *The Sphinx and Her Circle: A Biographical Sketch of Ada Leveson 1862-1933* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963), p. 119. See also Aldous Huxley, *Vulgarity in Literature: Digressions from a Theme* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 57: “The history of Little Nell is distressing indeed, but not as Dickens intended; it is distressing in its ineptitude and vulgar sentimentality.” Further references to the Huxley work will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>14</sup> Anita Sokolsky, “The Resistance to Sentimentality: Yeats, de Man, and the Aesthetic Education,” *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 1 (Fall 1987), 68.

<sup>15</sup> Suzanne Clark, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Clark notes, “The gendered condemnation of [the modernists’] condemnation [of sentimental literature] seemed natural: women writers were entangled in sensibility, were romantic and sentimental by nature, and so even the best might not altogether escape this romantic indulgence in emotion and sublimity” (p. 2). Although Clark’s study is one of the most detailed and critically sophisticated commentaries on how modernism constructs the sentimental as a despised and feminized Other, it is too loose in its complete affiliation of the latter with women writers only. Not only were such figures as Mina Loy and Edna St. Vincent Millay subject to such attacks of antisentimentalism, as she describes, but so too were certain modern male writers (such as John Middleton Murry and E. M. Forster).

<sup>17</sup> T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (1919; London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 43, my italics.

<sup>18</sup> E. M. Forster, “What I Believe,” *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: E. Arnold, 1951), p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Eliot, “Hamlet,” *Selected Prose* (p. 49). Further references to this essay will be cited parenthetically in the text as “Hamlet.”

<sup>20</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), p. 150. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>21</sup> See Justice Potter Stewart, *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964).

<sup>22</sup> Sedgwick writes, “[A]ntisentimentality itself becomes, in this structure, the very engine and expression of modern sentimental relations, to enter into the discourse of sentimentality at any point or with any purpose is almost inevitably to be caught up in a momentum of scapegoating attribution” (p. 154).

<sup>23</sup> I am grateful to DiBattista for this observation.

<sup>24</sup> Ellmann discusses this possibility (p. 83).

<sup>25</sup> See Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Jerome H. Buckley (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1990), p. 179: “‘Did he say anything to you about King Charles the First, child?’ ‘Yes, aunt.’ ‘Ah!’ said my aunt [Betsey Trotwood], rubbing her nose as if she were a little vexed.

'That's his allegorical way of expressing it. He connects his illness with great disturbance and agitation, naturally, and that's the figure, or the simile, or whatever it's called, which he chooses to use. And why shouldn't he, if he thinks it proper!'" Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study* (1930; New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 29; Anthony Burgess, *ReJoyce* (1965; New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), p. 106; and DiBattista (p. 185).

<sup>27</sup> For the schema that Joyce sent to Carlo Linati showing the parallels between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, see Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), p. 30. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>28</sup> Darcy O'Brien, *The Consciousness of James Joyce* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), p. 130.

<sup>29</sup> Robin Lee, "Patterns of Sympathy and Judgement in *Ulysses*," *English Studies in Africa*, 14 (March 1971), 44.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide through "Ulysses"*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge Publishers, 1996), p. 134: "This episode offers respite to the 'storm-tossed heart of man'; respite to Bloom after his violent departure from Barney Kiernan's; respite to the reader from the inflated and disorderly stylistic excesses of that interlude."

<sup>31</sup> Karen Lawrence, *The Odyssey of Style in "Ulysses"* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), p. 119.

<sup>32</sup> Maria S. Cummins, *The Lamplighter* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1854), and Mabel Vaughan, *By the Author of "The Lamplighter"* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1857).

<sup>33</sup> For the uncovering of Joyce's stylistic debt in this episode, see Suzette Henke, "Gerty MacDowell: Joyce's Sentimental Heroine," *Women in Joyce*, ed. Henke and Elaine Unkeless (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 132-49, and Kimberly Devlin, "The Romance Heroine Exposed: 'Nausicaa' and *The Lamplighter*," *JJQ*, 22 (Summer 1985), 383-96.

<sup>34</sup> For example, Lawrence terms the "[I]ove loves to love love" passage elsewhere in the "Cyclops" episode "sentimental cant" (*U* 12.1493, pp. 115-16).

<sup>35</sup> See Lawrence (p. 123); Marilyn French, *The Book as World: James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), p. 163; and Wendy Steiner, "'There was meaning in his look': The Meeting of Pictorial Models in Joyce's 'Nausicaa,'" *Studies in Literature*, 16 (1984), 100.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Weinstein, "For Gerty Had Her Dreams that No-one Knew Of," *Joyce in the Hibernian Metropolis: Essays*, ed. Morris Beja and David Norris (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1996), p. 115. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>37</sup> Thus when Edy Boardman mocks Gerty's sorrow by giving voice to it—identifying the source of Gerty's pain as Reggie Wylie—Gerty finds her best defense is to control her distress by performing it: "Gerty's lips parted swiftly to frame the word but she fought back the sob that rose to her throat, so slim, so flawless, so beautifully moulded it seemed one an artist might have dreamed of. . . . Their eyes were probing her mercilessly but with a brave effort she sparkled back in sympathy as she glanced at her new conquest for them to see" (*U* 13.581-88).

<sup>38</sup> Fritz Senn, "Nausicaa," *James Joyce's "Ulysses": Critical Essays*, ed. Hart

and David Hayman (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 310.

<sup>39</sup> Sedgwick, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl," *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 110-11.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 85.