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NARRATIONAL DIALECTIC IN JAMES JOYCE'S *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

As far as narrative technique and style are concerned, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is generally assumed to be, in comparison to *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake* and even to *Dubliners*, a fairly traditional novel. There are, however, a number of aspects in this work that have not been explained consistently and comprehensively yet. The most problematical are the apparent inconclusiveness of Stephen's development in the final chapter, the intensely subjective focus of the narrative technique, the ironic and sceptical stance of the narrator at many particular points in the text, the repetition of sentences of earlier chapters in later ones, the process of composing the villanelle in the fifth chapter or the sudden appearance and the strange structural position of the journal at the very end of the novel. The following analysis attempts to elucidate these problematical points in the work. I will rely heavily on F. C. McGrath's most revealing book, *The Sensible Spirit*¹, especially on its final chapter since I think that McGrath's idea of conceiving *A Portrait* as a novel displaying those features of the modernist paradigm that have been partly ignored up till now, i.e. its roots in German idealist philosophy and Hegel's dialectic, has far-reaching consequences with respect to the novel's narrative particularities, too.

After reconstructing the Modernist paradigm from Walter Pater's texts and claiming that Modernist aesthetics and techniques can be explained largely in terms of "the two major philosophical traditions of the nineteenth century," (SS,

¹ McGrath, Francis Charles: *The Sensible Spirit*, Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1986. Henceforth abbreviated as "SS".

236) i.e. German idealism and English empiricism, McGrath, in the conclusion to his book, considers *A Portrait* as "an indisputably Modernist work" and as one that may exemplify and "test the validity" of his ideas which, in turn, shed some new light on *A Portrait*. He does not aim at a traditional source study but wants to demonstrate the common grounds, the common intellectual paradigm, in which Pater as well as Joyce were deeply rooted.

My concern here is less with the general conceptual paradigm they shared. I organize my essay around only one of McGrath's three issues crucial to the interpretation of Joyce's work: the dialectical structure of the novel. But it must be mentioned here that McGrath most convincingly argues that Joyce's immediate intellectual milieu has obscured for decades the role played by the German idealists in Stephen's (and Joyce's) aesthetic theory and that looking beyond Aristotle and Aquinas toward Kant and Hegel may clear up some "white spots", both of general orientation and of specific details, of Stephen's aesthetics.

Stephen's aesthetic theory is, however, not the only manifestation of German thought in *A Portrait*. The structure of the novel also reflects the dialectic fundamental to idealist philosophy and, as McGrath points out, Stephen's development "conforms to the evolution of the human spirit outlined by Hegel." (SS 255) This is a progression from the immediacy of intuitive, unreflected sensory perception through various stages of analytic, reflective mediation to the highest level of cognitive reasoning that includes both the initial sense perception and the various processes by which the mind understands itself. Hegel calls the highest level the realm of the absolute spirit where the progression leads through completed dialectical circles, each of which results successively in a larger one. Joyce renders Hegelian ideas in terms of individual psychology - the growth of a young boy into a young man - but this application is, as McGrath argues, encouraged by Hegel himself, who often used the development of a man from the embryo through the boy to the maturity of adulthood as an analogy for his whole system. While the overall structure of *A Portrait* reflects a completed dialectical movement in Stephen's experience, that movement is not finished by any means; for just as the overall dialectic contains many dialectic circles within it, so it, too, will be contained within subsequent movements in Stephen's life - for instance, in *Ulysses*.

Here I leave McGrath's train of thought since we have arrived at a point where it can be linked to my own particular interest. The problematic character

of the narrative technique of *A Portrait* derives precisely from the dichotomy of two dialectical or *diegetical*² levels: in the first, Stephen is the protagonist of the novel, in the other, he is the narrator of his own story; in the first, we experience the novel as a *product* of creation and the basic narrative relationship is established between the narrator and his character, while on the higher level (which is already our second reading of the novel), we experience the work as a *process* of writing and the relationship we realize is between Stephen's two selves: a more experienced one, the artist we encounter on the title page, who narrates the story of the other, his earlier unexperienced self. It is as if the reader held two different books in his hand at the same time, though at first he is (must be) unaware of the deceptive quality of the work. Thus, to conceive of the novel as one that constructs itself in dialectical circles allows the reader to *redefine* the whole narrative in a new frame of reference that may clear up some of the obscure details of the (chronologically and structurally) prior fiction.

The second, extradiegetic level is not, in this particular case, independent from the diegetic level (as, for instance, it is in the presentation of the pilgrims in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*) but is a consequence of the latter; in other words the two are in a tight *interrelation*: extradiegesis is in a *dialectical* relation to diegesis, which gives way to a simultaneous existence of both narrator and character, creating an insoluble controversy, an oscillation of narrative perspectives that is characteristic of Joyce's every work. Thus, on the one hand the narrator and the character are not separable, they are the two sides of the same coin, the one is organically linked to, and interdependent of the other. On the other hand, it is no worth claiming an absolute identity of narrator and character, and emphasizing the narrator's invisibility, or a narrator "refined out of

2 Cf. Genette, Gérard: *Figures III*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. In English: *Narrative Discourse*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980. 255-56.

Genette gives a both theoretical and descriptive analysis of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. In his theory, according to the narrator's degree of perceptibility and the extent of his participation in the story, Genette differentiates between different (extradiegetic, [intra]diegetic, hypodiegetic, etc.) levels of narration. His term, "diegesis" is roughly analogous to the term "story" that is more frequently used in English letters. According to the definition of the narrative poetics, "story" is one of the three categories of fiction, the one that designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. For further investigation see: Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith: *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, London, New York: Routledge, 1983.

existence"³ since an interpretation of this sort would fail to account adequately for at least two crucial aspects of *A Portrait*: the narrator's recurring presentation of Stephen's consciousness and the various paradoxes of narration that make interpreting the details of the story and its form so difficult. Obviously there can still be disagreements concerning the precise mix of the narrator's attitudes toward the central character at any given moment of the story, but if we accept that Stephen (too) narrates, the large problem of his future as an artist can no longer be at issue.

Many critics who have written on *A Portrait* interpret the work autobiographically, claiming that it is based on details of Joyce's youth. Generally, they adduce the title as an evidence for the link between the life and the work of art: the portrait of the artist who writes the book. Unquestionably strong evidence supports this kind of autobiographical reading, but an autobiographical interpretation of a different kind, the one outlined above, is also possible, according to which Stephen Dedalus, too, is the narrator of his own story. Implicit in the story of Stephen's growth to maturity is the process by which his book emerges from previously existing texts that Stephen knows, some of which he has written himself. *A Portrait* is both the author's autobiographical fiction and the autobiography of the fictional character. It provides the portrait of both artists.

* * *

In the first episode of the first chapter (I.1.) of *A Portrait* Stephen embodies the Hegelian spirit in the embryonic condition. The primary dialectical forces of Stephen's life are, as McGrath has shown explicitly, established as early in the novel as in this very first episode. The episode and the chapter appear as a "microcosm of the whole novel." (SS 259) The scene introduces not only the symbolical and factual oppositions of Stephen's later experiences but it presents the basic narrative controversy of the whole novel as well.

The first paragraph is the first hypodiegesis in the book and the first story Stephen remembers hearing as a child:

³ Joyce, James: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, London: Wordsworth Classics, 1992. 215. Henceforth abbreviated as "AP".

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow
 coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down
 along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...
 (AP 7)

The full implications of this beginning are not evident immediately. The one narrator is Stephen's "father [who] told him that story." (AP 7) Stephen is both inside and outside the father's tale; he is at once his father's listener and part of his father's tale. The tale is told him, but in the third paragraph the reader learns that "he was baby tuckoo." (AP 7)⁴ Stephen's situation here presents in small, comically, the basic situation of the novel. There is a parallel between the (splitted or double) role Stephen plays here in this small narrative (he is at once listener and character in the tale) and the one he plays in the whole book where he is at once character (on the diegetic level) and writer (on the extradiegetic one) of the story. While as child Stephen becomes part of his father's story, as adult he becomes the narrator of a tale in which his father plays a part; here Stephen is the narrator of his father's story. And since (as we learn at the end of the book) Stephen wishes to become this kind of teller (an artist), this small story presents at once the final goal, the (teleological) end of the whole novel, and as such it is at once the very beginning and the very end of the book.⁵

The first chapter as a whole gives many examples of mingling the character's and the narrator's language; the reader encounters indirect and free indirect discourse (FID) in all the four episodes of the chapter, generally emerging in moments when Stephen is alone or in a situation where he can withdraw from the others into his own thoughts. It is interesting to note, however, that there is a strict rhythm of change, a dialectical progression in the intimacy of narration.

4 The technique, analepsis or retrospection, applied at the beginning of *A Portrait* is not new in Joyce. The very first story of his volume, *Dubliners*, "The Sisters" opens similarly: the ambiguity of the first sentence, "There was no hope for him this time; it was the third stroke," (in: Joyce, James: *Dubliners*, New York, Toronto: Bantam Books, 1990. 1) can be understood only in retrospect. It seems to be a straightforward, objective, third-person narration but in the following lines the reader encounters a first-person narration - and his previous mistake.

5 Readers of Joyce do not find this kind of intermingling of beginnings and ends surprising. The device is forced to its extreme in the well-known example of *Finnegans Wake* where the very last sentence ends in the very first one of the book; and it also appears in his oeuvre as early as in the composition of *Dubliners* where the titles of the first and the last narratives ("The Sisters," and "The Dead") are interchangeable (cf. Kenner, Hugh: *Joyce's Voices* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

In the episodes of even numbers (2 and 4) Stephen's feelings, thoughts and consciousness are more tacitly conveyed to us, instances of free indirect speech occur on many pages of the second episode (*AP* 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 20); there are only two in the third (*AP* 35 and 36), while in the fourth we encounter again a number of presentations of inner life (*AP* 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 59). The second and the fourth episodes of the first chapter take place in Clongowes. The dialectic of the chapter is of home/school: Stephen proceeds from family to school, from school to family and back to school, although with an always greater involvement in life – with wider and wider spheres of experience, each with its own dialectic and each overlapping the other. This is made explicit in the style of narration as well, since the instances of immediate thought presentation appear in greater and greater number as we proceed through the episodes. In school Stephen feels extremely lonely and isolated from his mates, which results in his rejection of the outer world; thus, a greater stress is laid upon his consciousness. McGrath considers this dialectic as of cold and of warm, and derives it from the hot and cold flashes Stephen feels as he comes down with a fever. "Coldness is what Stephen associates with Clongowes, where he has been shoved into the urinal ditch by Wells. Opposed to his chilly associations with his school and schoolmates [...] are Stephen's warm memories of the security of home and the even warmer fantasies of the coming Christmas holidays." (*SS* 261-2) It is in the "cold" episodes that Stephen's mind, his inner world is pushed into the foreground by means of narrative techniques. The first chapter leads him through his early boyhood and prepares him for the dialectic of puberty and adolescence which dominate the next two chapters. Narration, too, follows this progression in a way that it turns out to be one of the most essential devices for characterizing the protagonist; his intellectual uncertainties or maturity are conveyed to us by the more or less intimate presentation of his mind.

The dialectical construction of narration is maintained in the following chapters, too, though the structural strictness of the first is never overcome in them. It is only the first and the last parts that have such a privileged status as far as narrative dialectic is concerned. In the second chapter Stephen's thoughts are fewer presented and in a much less intimate style. The narrator's presence is asserted in a more explicit way. Although the mediation of Stephen's inner world is instanced many times, these are presented so that the reader cannot interpret them as Stephen's own words: we encounter verbs of consciousness, such as "felt,"

"thought," "wondered," and the like, all conveying and emphasizing as well the narrator's conspicuous presence and omniscience as Stephen's withdrawal. Another apparent device is to efface Stephen's mental and emotional life, the working of his mind, from the text: instead of the more consciousness-bound verbs, such as the ones above, his thoughts and feelings are mediated as if Stephen's mind was only a passive subject (and not the creator) of emotions and ideas, as if they were independent of him. Instead of reading, for example, "had calmed down," we encounter the formulation that his "moment of anger had already passed," (AP 78) or instead of "wonder," we read "Stephen listened to them in wonderment," (AP 80) instead of "remembered a mocking smile," "[it] came into Stephen's memory," (AP 84-5) instead of feeling no sympathy he only "listen[s] without sympathy." (AP 87) Active verbs of consciousness are replaced by more passive phrases and constructions. Possibly, the only instance of free indirect discourse occurs in a moment of great emotional vexation caused by Stephen's remembering Emma before the beginning of the Whitsuntide play. Even this is retracted by the following sentences where we are informed that his recollections are rather vague: "He tried to recall her appearance but he could not." (AP 83) He can only remember that she wore her shawl like a cowl.⁶ What I want to stress is not that Stephen has no mental life in this and the following chapters (on the contrary, his intellectual efforts are more and more shaped and mature) but that his inner world is conveyed to us in a way that it seems to be pushed to the background, creating the effect of a certain *passivity* or a subordination to another consciousness, that of the narrator.

The middle chapters of *A Portrait*, i.e. the second, third and fourth chapters, form, as a whole, the core of the narrative structure of the book. There are only slight differences in narrative style in them: a certain homogeneity characterizes the middle section of the book. McGrath, too, stresses this homogeneity by describing the chapters as governed by - less a Hegelian progression than - "Schiller's more aesthetically oriented dialectic." (SS 263) He argues that an interpretation of this kind illuminates better the specific patterns and details of these chapters, and that Joyce's idealism leaned more toward Schiller's privileging of aesthetic experience in the reconciliation of sense and spirit than toward

⁶ These words are worth having in mind since they will appear later again in the story, at the time of the composition of the villanelle, where their role will be of a much greater importance.

Hegel's more abstract realms of absolute spirit. Thus, he conceives of the second and the third chapters as being analogous to Schiller's distinction between the "sensuous drive" (*Stofftrieb*) and the formal drive (*Formtrieb*) (SS 263). The two terms, to put it bluntly, stand for, on the one hand, "the physical existence of man", his sensuous nature binding him to the laws of the nature, and on the other, for his moral and psychic life, the level of analytic reflection of his dialectical progression. Both Schiller and Hegel held that the human spirit must pass through the aesthetic phase, in which sense and spirit are equally developed, in order to pass on to the higher phases of religion and philosophy. To pass *directly* from the physical to the moral stage without passing through the aesthetic leads to a false application of reason. McGrath points out that this is precisely what Stephen makes in the third chapter: his response to the sensuous environment is to be found at the very end of the second chapter where we see Stephen in the arms of a prostitute. In the third chapter he makes the false passage from this predominant sensuousness that he finds oppressive even before his retreat sermon, to a predominance of spirit over sense without passing through an aesthetic phase (SS 264).

In the fourth chapter Stephen is on the threshold of an aesthetic phase that will balance the two impulses, the purely sensual and the purely spiritual. After the interview with the director of his school, he rejects to be a priest and returns to the sensual world. This reimmersion in the physical world is, however, different from the one in the second chapter; it is not a regression to a lower dialectical phase. At the end of the fourth chapter, in Stephen's epiphany of the girl on the strand, the two previous levels come to a synthesis, that will predominate the last section of the book.⁷

Narration, too, follows the dialectic of the development of Stephen's spiritual life. The second chapter, as described above, is the narrative representation of the *Stofftrieb* by rendering his consciousness into a certain passivity. In the third chapter of *Formtrieb* the narrator's attitude towards his central character alters: a more striking fusion of inner and outer and of character and narrator emerges in it. As we proceed through the sections of the book it begins to be more and more evident that the progression and alteration of the narrative style in the successive

⁷ McGrath argues that the description of the girl in itself conveys the synthesis: it is "sensuous but not coarse or vulgar, is an idealized sensuality - neither the gross sensuality associated with the prostitute nor the pure spirituality of the vision of the Virgin [...]. She is like the Greek statues that for Hegel embodied the perfect fusion of sense and Idea." (SS 265)

chapters is of a dialectical sort: in the chapters of odd numbers the narrative style is in an antithetical relationship to the style of the chapters of even numbers, in other words, it is always the odd chapters that present the mediation of Stephen's mind in a more intimate way and in greater and greater number, whereas the even chapters are somewhat of a withdrawal and regression of the consciousness-presentation; this alteration results in the synthesis of the fifth chapter which is in this way, on the one hand, the *end*, i.e. it is the representation of a completed dialectical circle, but on the other hand - remembering that Joyce was too much of a sceptic and that Stephen at the end of *A Portrait* is by no means a complete human being - we cannot satisfy ourselves with such a simple answer, and must interpret the last chapter rather as a *beginning* than as an end, as the beginning of a new circle of the continuous and lifelong dialectic and the beginning of a new narrative, too.

As in the case of the Christmas dinner in I.3., in III.2. the narration alternates between the external scene (the sermons) and Stephen's reaction to the outer world. Although the narrator continues to employ narrative devices introduced in the earlier chapters, there are some crucial modifications. These changes suggest the intensity of Stephen's reaction to the external world. Section III consists of an introductory talk and three sermons that take place on successive days. Instances of free indirect discourse begin to appear from the time of Stephen's walking home the first evening after the introductory talk that exercised a great influence upon him. After dinner he sinks into his inner life; he goes to the window (a place generating great intellectual and emotional vexations, as we know from other writings of Joyce, especially his short story, "The Dead") and looking out of it, the first free indirect discourse for already a long time appears: "This was the end. [...] And that was life." (*AP* 111) The device is extremely manifest here, precisely because it has been omitted for a long time already; and it indicates the beginning of a process, that of the fusion of narrator and character: the statements quoted can easily be transformed into the character's speech to himself in first person and present tense.

In the following paragraph, the narrator presents the initial sermon on death and judgement (*AP* 112-15) in a curious way. He renders it not as direct discourse, the technique he uses to report the previous introductory talk (*AP* 109-11) and the two subsequent sermons on hell (*AP* 117-24 and 127-35), but as a speech mediated by Stephen's consciousness. The brief passage of free indirect discourse acts as the preparation for this odd filtering of Father Arnall's words through Stephen's

mind. The first words of the sermon appear in the same paragraph and are intermingled with the last words of Stephen's unpronounced thoughts: there are no orthographical indications (no dashes, nor anything else) of the beginning of Father Arnall's words; it takes some time until the reader understands that he has got outside of Stephen's mind. This intermingling of his and Father Arnall's words throws some shadow upon Stephen's true vocation and may easily be considered as the sign, conveyed by the means of narrative techniques, of what McGrath has pointed out, namely that Stephen's entering the purely spiritual phase of the dialectical progression at this stage of his development is of a false sort, it is not rooted in a determined and mature belief yet. This fusion of voices has the effect that we regard Stephen as a young adult who, in search of his own identity, effaces his personality in favour of another, which, in this way is dissolved in the other's words. These words are not his own ones, he has not found his own authentic voice yet. As we go on with our reading of the novel, this idea turns out to be justified by the emergence of Stephen's real voice that is in a sharp contrast to his earlier words; it is perhaps the *germ* of his later decision to be an artist, though, of course, it is conveyed only in a very opaque and uncertain fashion. Stephen, when wandering in the streets of Dublin in search of a chapel near, wishes eagerly to confess his sins. The confession in itself demands a *creative* articulation of his sins, since the ability to confess them truly demands real emotions, a deep understanding of, and meditation upon, the sins - a process that shows many similarities to artistic creation. This is also emphasized by Stephen's sudden inward exclamation in a state of shame: "To say it in words!" (*AP* 142) In the following two chapters he proceeds toward verbality, toward his own voice; in this cry, his wish to do so is conveyed.

After the lengthy report of Stephen's consciousness during the first sermon, the alternation between the passages focusing on psyche and those focusing on scene is again established, but now the free indirect discourse has become a recurring element of the narration. The narrator employs it briefly but regularly throughout the remainder of Section III (instances occur on *AP* 116, 125, 126, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 146). The sudden recurrence of the technique in the narration is undeniable: these numerous instances of free indirect discourse grouped together in Section III mark a significant shift in the style. In the two remaining parts (especially in the last one) the narrator freely combines the various techniques he has used to present Stephen's mind. It is only after the reader has

become accustomed to the different modes of representing consciousness, that the narrator can begin to shift rapidly from one to the other.

The fourth chapter depicts the process through which Stephen enters the aesthetic phase. After the interview with the director of the school, Stephen rejects to become a priest, oversteps the spirituality of his religious phase and realizes that he "was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others" (*AP* 162). The synthesis of the physical and the spiritual components of his development emerges clearly in his epiphany of the girl on the strand, experienced at a moment when he realizes his artistic vocation. (*AP* 171)

Narration in this chapter presents only very few instances of intimate rendering of Stephen's thoughts: they appear only just before the epiphany where the narrator gives us Stephen's interior exclamations, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" (*AP* 170), followed by his thoughts quoted as if they were direct discourse: "--Heavenly God! cried Stephen's *soul*, in an outburst of profane joy" (*AP* 172, my italics). On the next two pages the reader encounters several examples of free indirect discourse, a result of Stephen's newly acquired intellectual and emotional freedom. Preceding the epiphany, there is no direct mediation of the protagonist's thoughts; some immediacy may be detected in the narration on pages 158 and 159, but the effect is much weaker than before.

The subtly mingled language of the narrator and the character emerges vividly in the book's second half, the free indirect discourse together with the related techniques appear frequently from III.2. Along with the seemingly intimate presentation of Stephen's thoughts, in Section V we encounter longer and more elaborate statements to his companions than he has made earlier. His voices, both internal and external, are pushed to the foreground. At the book's close, it is primarily these voices that determine the reader's overall judgement of both Stephen's possibilities to become an artist and the possibilities of his writing his own autobiography, the portrait of the artist as a young man.

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The fifth chapter is by far the longest and most complex part of the novel, though seemingly Stephen makes little progress toward maturity in either his life or his art in it. Though critics have often been puzzled by this chapter, Stephen's progress is more clear if we compare his relations with his family, peers, and teachers in this part with previous chapters, and, as McGrath argues, if we

perceive these relations in terms of the dialectical paradigms of Schiller and Hegel (SS 266). In this light Stephen still does not emerge as a mature artist or a complete being but we understand better why Joyce leaves him on the eve of his leaving Ireland for an even wider sphere of experience in Europe.

The first episode of Section V, telling a day in Stephen's life as a university student, repeats the second episode of Section I, which describes a day in Stephen's life at Clongowes. The similarities and contrasts of the two chapters are of a dialectical sort: we encounter Stephen's similar relationships with his family, schoolmates and teachers, but his experience of these relations is in a sharp contrast with the previous one. As a young boy, he had seen home and family with warmth; as a young man, however, he expects nothing from home and family but poverty of body and spirit. Likewise, whereas in Clongowes and Belvedere Stephen was persecuted by his mates and teachers, at the university he keeps himself out of their reach. In his own mind, Stephen has superimposed himself on "all the oppressive forces of his physical and mental environment that have threatened, in Schiller's terms, to fetter the aspiring spirit" (SS 267). Thus we find Stephen escaping from a physical world into the intellectual world of the villanelle and the aesthetic theory. Stephen formulates this to Lynch at one point of the chapter: "We are just now in a mental world." (AP 206) Thus, he arrives at the end of the Hegelian evolution: the whole book has been constructed so that, according to a dialectical process, each chapter negates the previous one, not annihilating it entirely, but making it the precursor for the following synthesis.

Even McGrath admits that Stephen's completion of a dialectical circle does not mean that at the end of *A Portrait* he is a complete being or artist. Joyce, as many other Modernists, could not share Hegel's optimism. He insisted that "dialectic is a continuous, lifelong process and that its goal is not to arrive at some foreordained conclusion" (SS 272). The aim is the *process* itself.

This idea is conveyed by the techniques and styles of the narration, too. Apart from the very first paragraph of *A Portrait*, discussed above, it is only in the last chapter that we see the ambiguity both of the narrator-character relationship and – as a consequence – of the relation of the diegetic and the extradiegetic levels of narration, i.e. the possibility of an interpretation according to which the two are interdependent. As in a dialectical relation, where the end is not the completion of the progression but the process itself, in narration, the end of the book is not to be detected on the last page, and in the last words of the book, but in the process of writing the book. Our concern should be less with the

written product than with the process by which it is written, on the one hand by the narrator, and on the other by Stephen. In this latter case, what we should analyse are the means by which the narrator conveys the possibility of somebody else's (Stephen's) act of writing

In the analysis of the fifth chapter I shall limit myself to interpreting only the two most revealing instances: they account for the ambiguities of this section so convincingly that no other parts of the text can compete with them. The most significant and extended example of such a fusion is precisely an act of writing, the composition of the villanelle. Even in *Ulysses* we find nothing quite like it. This part of the novel calls attention to itself with a particular force because it shows us a finished text written by a character and the narrator's curious attempt to present the process by which Stephen writes the poem. It is an extreme application of the free indirect discourse and the related techniques in fiction: to reveal a process of mind that is in itself an aesthetic creation. The attempt to present the producing of a literary text within a literary text is a highly unusual procedure. It draws our attention to the dual status of writing as being *simultaneously* product and process, and thus it presents in small the possible simultaneity of the *whole* novel as process and product. The text of the villanelle is not just the poem but the book itself. The reader's judgement about its value is less important than the role it plays: the villanelle indicates the fusion of the writing as act and the text that is written.

We encounter Stephen Dedalus waking early in the morning after a night of dreams, inspired to write. As he composes his poem stanza by stanza, the parts are presented to us successively until finally the entire poem is printed at the end of the section. In the break in the middle of this writing Stephen remembers some of his past encounters with the girl to whom he writes. The narration that presents the stanzas can be read in two ways: Stephen is involved in the composition of his poem, while the narrator is also producing his *own* texts. The printing of the whole poem at the end of the section indicates that the narrator attains an intimacy with the character in his text like the one Stephen himself experiences; it is the extreme penetration of the character's mind by the narrator.

During the discussion with Lynch in V.1., the episode preceding the writing of the villanelle, Stephen distinguishes between "three forms progressing from one to the next" into which "art necessarily divides itself": the lyrical, the epical, and the dramatic (*AP* 214). One question that has arisen in many discussions of Stephen's lyric-epic-dramatic paradigm is whether *A Portrait* is lyric or dramatic.

The answer depends on how one considers the narrative ambiguities of the novel: in this section a fusion of the two takes place; while Stephen discusses the three forms as distinct from one another, the narration combines two of them by placing the lyrical within the narration (the epical). Lyrical has become epical, when diegesis and extradiegesis are one.⁸

The ambiguity of this section arises from other narrative devices, too. The relationship of the narrator and the character emerges through a network of connections linking Stephen's act of writing to earlier and later sections of the book. While there are close connections to many other sections, the most important links join the poem to Stephen's earlier and later writings: his previous attempt to write a poem to Emma in II.2. (AP 70) and his later writing of the journal. The links backward are obvious: just before he writes the villanelle's first stanza, Stephen "turned towards the wall, making a cowl of the blanket." (AP 221) That here he is imitating Emma's much earlier act of throwing her shawl over her head to form a cowl becomes clear some lines later where we are reminded by Stephen's unpronounced thoughts that Emma "had worn her shawl cowlwise about her head" (AP 222) and by his memories of the details of the scene. The words of his recollection are nearly the same as the words we read in Section II. Sentences are, with the only exception of substituting a semi-colon for a full stop, quoted verbatim from the earlier scene:

It was the last tram; the lank brown horses knew it and shook their bells to the clear night in admonition. The conductor talked with the driver, both nodding often in the green light of the lamp.
(AP 222 and 69)

When the words are repeated, they become allusions that we recollect as the narrator's previous language at the same time as we understand them as Stephen's memories: it seems extremely odd that the narrator's authorial voice and his language of narration become the character's interior language some 150 pages

⁸ This is a more successful attempt at the fusion of literary genres than Virginia Woolf's in *The Waves*. Not long before the composition of her novel, Woolf, in her essay "The Narrow Bridge of Art", argues for the emergence of a new fictional style in which poetry, epic and drama are one.

later. As Stephen recomposes his poem he tried to write earlier the narrator is also involved in the rewriting of his earlier text.⁹

The other link points forward, to the references of time and location at the end of the journal. In order to appreciate the fullness of implications of this link, first we must first consider the ambiguities of the journal itself. At the end of the book, and the journal, the reader encounters the notation of dates and places ("Dublin 1904 - Trieste 1914", *AP* 253), and has to decide whether these references are part of the story or part of the writing (whether they belong to the product or to the process of writing). *Like the title itself*, they refer at once to both product and process, to both character and author as artists. The autobiographical basis of the dates are well-known. Joyce finished *A Portrait* in Trieste just ten years after leaving Dublin. But the autobiographical significance diminishes in no way the relevance that the dates and locations have to Stephen Dedalus's story. There is a complicated, uncanny doubling behind the apparently innocent closing.¹⁰ The strange duplication becomes apparent once the dates and the locations are both understood as referring to the author's process of writing *and* to the story of Stephen Dedalus. Although there are no exact dates provided for Stephen's activities earlier in the book, Dublin is obviously the place of the journal and much of the action and 1904 is also within the limits of probability. 1914 would be the year and Trieste the place in which Stephen completes the transforming of the journal into a book. If we consider the end of the journal as part of the process of writing, on the extradiegetical level, we can regard it no more as the end of the book, but as its beginning: in Stephen Dedalus' fictional life, which includes his life as a writer of fiction, the keeping of the journal *precedes* the completing of the book; it is prior to the book, as well as part of it, and thus it exemplifies and reinforces the already well-known technique where the end is united and continuous with the very beginning of the novel.

The poems and the end of the journal are linked in various ways as repetitions of similar scenes. Section II is joined to the villanelle *and* the journal

9 This is a belated fusion. The device is a highly complex one: it is both analeptic and proleptic. The second chapter anticipates the section of the villanelle whereas the mingling of voices can be fully understood only in retrospect.

10 The doubling has a precedent in Joyce's earlier fiction "A Painful Case", where the central character, James Duffy, has "an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense." (*Dubliners*, 84.)

by the narrator's words in II.2: Stephen "had heard their [Emma's eyes'] tale before" and "he had yielded to them a thousand times." (AP 69) In the journal we read that Stephen wants to "encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience." (AP 253) The specific lapse of time between Stephen's two attempts to write poetry also emphasizes the connection of the poems to the journal. When Stephen composes the villanelle he thinks twice that it had been "ten years since he had written verses for her," "ten years from that wisdom of children to this folly." (AP 222) The time between the composition of Stephen's first poem "To E- C-" in II.2 and his villanelle is exactly ten years. At the end of the ten years, the process of writing as the repetition and transformation of earlier texts and experiences can create a new work. At the end of a similar period of time at the journal's conclusion (1904-14), the villanelle will have been rewritten as part of a later work, the book itself.

The last chapter of the book is, thus, not an end. Our final judgement of Stephen's potentials as an artist and of the book's quality of being only in the middle of a dialectical process, that of a narrative dialectic, are determined by the techniques presented in it. Along with the extremely direct presentations of mind and the fusion of the narrator's and the character's voices, the reader finds in this chapter Stephen's longest and most elaborate statements to his companions. His voices, both internal and public, are in the foreground and are many a times nearly indistinguishable from the one of the narrator. The two, however, are not one. This is the reason why the term *narrational dialectic* is a useful one since it conveys a continuous process by which the two contradictory forces can be united *and* be considered as separate at the same time, i.e. the controversy between the theoretical exclusion of the identity of the narrator and the character in a third-person narration and our recurring experience of encountering them as *not* separate, can be dissolved in a dialectical synthesis of the two.

The term dialectic, of course, works even more straightforwardly on other levels of the story: the dialectical relation of symbols or metaphors, for instance, appears in the novel much more frequently. The reader is, however, provided with enough examples of various narrative techniques that give rise to, and justify the assumption that narrational dialectic is a main element of the work.

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, similarly to its unification of ends and beginnings, establishes the narrator and the character's relationship in a dialectical identity of their difference. The reconciliation of seemingly irreconcilable dichotomies results in a subtly spinned texture of both

diction and ideas that is characteristic of Joyce's every writing. The complex narrative style of *A Portrait*, thus, points beyond itself and is a precursor to the large configuration of narration in *Ulysses*.