

CHECK IMPULSE: TRAVERSING HADES

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ABSTRACT. *Check Impulse: Traversing Hades.* The paper considers the “Hades” episode in Joyce’s *Ulysses* with a view towards the concepts of mobility, urban space and impulse interwoven therein. A traverse of the city as pre-modern and modern arrangement of space and social dynamics, from street to cemetery the chapter gathers the various meanings of social mobility, together with their socialised impulses and checks. Outer mobility and inner impulsivity are analysed in their interrelation in macro- and micro-contexts.

Keywords: *James Joyce, Ulysses, urban space, mobility, socialised impulse*

REZUMAT. *Verifică impulsul: traversând Hades.* Articolul discută episodul “Hades” din *Ulise* de James Joyce, din perspectiva conceptelor de mobilitate, spațiu urban și impuls, care se întrepătrund în text. O traversare a orașului ca aranjament pre-modern și modern al spațiului și dinamicii sociale, din stradă la cimitir capitolul înmănușează sensurile varii ale mobilității sociale, împreună cu impulsurile și obstacolele lor socializate. Mobilitatea exterioară și impulsivitatea interioară sunt analizate în interrelația lor în macro- și micro-contexte.

Cuvinte cheie: *James Joyce, Ulise, spațiu urban, mobilitate, impuls socializat*

The immense mobility of *Ulysses* is overdetermined and overanalysed terrain, chiefly on the *macro-scopic* scale; it has been scoped copiously, usually in relation to its Homeric architext and to formulations of modern urban space and its ensuing urbanities. These two major axes are not as far apart as one might assume; they are convergent in intention, and co-present in the fabric of the fictional Dublin of *Ulysses*. The macroscopic mode of symbolic super-imposition

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that criticism has accustomed us to² can be reshaped so as not to separate generically between action and canvas, or between archetypal myth and modern mythologies. As David Pierce puts it, “Joyce uses Homer as his civilising guide to life in the modern city. Bloom never confronts the city as some huge backdrop to his fate” (2006, 62). The urban make-up of the novel is Bloomian, that is, urbanely intersectional rather than oppressively super-impositional:

As a result, a certain modification in the relation between the built city and the human city occurs, with Joyce at once reflecting and conveying the imprint of human consciousness on the city. (Pierce 2006, 64)

This looping structure creates the spaces of the novel and their ambivalence. Of course, stylistic mobility accompanies physical and phantasmal mobility throughout, it grows, peaks and wanes with the characters. The main purpose of this essay, however, is to analyse the articulations of mobility and space, where space – with Joyce almost exclusively *urban* space – is not conceived as mere “background”, “container” or “scene” for aspects of mobility, but as that which is continuously being created and effaced. Not a “one-way street” but pockets of coalescence. This interpretation occurs at the intersection of mobility as impulse – that is, in the dynamics of *impulsivity* – and a matrix of checks.

Joyce was perhaps the first Irish writer in what was - before and a while after him – a predominantly rural imaginary landscape, to grasp the complexity of the city as the site of the modern, with all its pre-modern anachronisms packed in. One trait of the city as modern *arrangement* is its domineering quality, as an image of the enabling “totality”; and, as Joyce’s faultless intuition told him, this was true for “every city in the world”. The city as modern dominant disseminates its dominance into the matrix of what it allows. The “city dominates”, as one accurate critical diagnosis states, before anything else, by its “chief work”, that is, architectonically:

[T]he city appears architectonically to dominate the lives of its inhabitants, whose conscious agency is repeatedly revealed to be subordinate to the requirements of the city as a rationally integrated system. (Lanigan 2011, 91)

As Liam Lanigan shows³, this domination connects arranged space(s) – which the city *is* – with behaviour, a relation whose implicit intent is that most modern of intentionalities: control. Still, this should not lead one merely to the

² “The myth of the Odyssey is superimposed upon the map of Dublin” (Levin, 1960, 76).

³ The apt example in this line of thought is Le Corbusier, where the geometry of a planned city “instills” behavior, see (Lanigan, 92-93).

thoughts of *restraining, forbidding, channelling* and the like, that is, not to the mere negation of free mobility. Rather, as a paradigm of inhabitation, the city as matrix makes possible behaviour *within which* inhibited mobility is one of its poles, an extreme that makes little sense without its own challenging opposites: *freedom of movement, disobedience, wandering or loitering*. No wonder most modern cities abhor loiterers, although it is only in cities that one encounters them. Subversion, with its plethora of urban possibilities, occurs within this matrix and has no real sense outside it; just as the sea and the archipelago grant the possibility of Ulysses' wandering, the city and its fixed land-marks enable Joycean perambulation. Between trajectory and wandering, and the revenant of destination, the city is not only space, nor mere place, map, structure, or expression of power, but it a ceaseless "reading", a never-ending interpretation. Pierce notes:

In a parallel way, Joyce's city functions independently of the reader, but at the same time it is dependent on the reader for the flow to be noticed and information processed or retrieved. All these are ironies, asymmetries, stretched comparisons, even points of contradiction, an example of an economic base at variance with its ideological superstructure. (2006, 67)

The city and its phenomenal presence are readings within readings: the reader's interpretation of the character's reading or misreading of place, an idea consonant with what Roland Barthes, applied to Joyce by Lanigan, calls "the signifying role of the city", ever at odds with the "rational" arrangement of structured space. It is by the constant irritation of private observation against general rationality that the *meaning* of the city is formed. It is the urban if not always urbane friction of the *syntagmatic* observation (critics usually call it "consciousness") against the *paradigmatic* model of the city that is interesting to the writer:

[T]he process of signification in which the urban dweller engages each day necessarily creates conflicting and constantly shifting understandings of the city. [...] In Barthes' interpretation, therefore, one's experience of the city emerges not from the functional designation of its spaces according to an abstract logic, but through the interaction of the perceiving consciousness with that logic. (Lanigan 2011, 100)

It is worth noting, although the observation is to us rather self-evident, that both "functional" and "rational" – or their "harmony" as thought of, say, by Le Corbusier – are, with one word, euphemisms. The visible hand behind the curtain, the mover and the shaker, is the historical deployment of power, the politic in the polis, the ghost in the city-machine, which has since been distilled and identified:

In Joyce's case, subjective consciousness is often defined in terms of a spatial environment created both by the myriad forces of modernity and by the specific system of authority represented by the British imperial presence in Ireland at the turn of the century. (Spurr 2002, 18)

The sweeping, large-scale forces of "reason", "harmony", "modernity", "ideology" or "colonial power", or whatever one might want to call them, act as exteriority, the outside of the city, formatting it from without ceaselessly, but also from within as they are imprinted, unseen, in internalised behaviour. This inflow and outflow of the within and the without, which Joyce pursues in "Hades" and elsewhere in *Ulysses*, this inextricable co-presence, takes the place beyond the distinction between the "city" and the "country", the metropolis and the province, the street and the interior of the house or the grave. When detected in characters, it also presents a peculiar problem for the reading of impulses: our habitual conjecture that they arise from within becomes tenuous. So does the *impulcity* they create.

Four men enter a carriage

"Hades" is stylistically austere and dynamically restrained. Joyce's prose holds back from excess for the sake of precision. Its mobility is at least doubly hindered: by the destinal *finis* of the final destination, and by the confined coffin of the carriage as vehicle and "vicus". In this chapter, Joyce's style in motion has all the drawing restraint of the samurai sword used only for single lethal cuts. Unpropitious terrain for effusions – not that some don't try – it is however excellent ground for the micro-impulses to be detected in the fading background radiation. Its opening move, its own little *introibo*, juxtaposes entry into immobility, confinement and mock-hierarchy:

Martin Cunningham, first, poked his silkhatted head into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself. Mr. Power stepped in after him, curving his height with care. (6. 1-3)⁴

"First", "height", and, why not, Mr. Power "after" are all the check-marks of social ritual *in actu* – hierarchy honed and *observed* in the high note just short of the ridiculous. The verbs affixed to each gentleman range from a vaudevillian gesture of indiscretion ("poked his head") to caricatural majestic pose ("curving his height") to puzzling ambiguity, perhaps recovery from due reverence ("Mr. Dedalus covered himself quickly"). They enact mobility *already* fused with the

⁴ All references are to the Gabler edition, 1984.

social prescription so finely that the impulse for each motion is at once personal and generic: Cunningham is cautious about the language and the mores but sometimes indiscrete, Mr. Power is careful to not bump his head but also affects required gravitas, Mr. Dedalus has shown enough respect at the house of dead Dignam and his impulsive nature breaks through in his impatient gesture and in his hasty repetition, “yes, yes”. These are readings, but also misreadings – different meanings could be found for each – but the point is that the impulse is at the limit of the perceivable, and there’s a high risk of it being misinterpreted, by the reader, but also by other characters.

Impulse is deadened by social checks, one assumes, as too is often the action that might have followed; but the evacuation of impulsiveness in an urban environment (our carriage is a test tube in this regard) results contrapuntally in behaviour which is highly ambiguous. The solidity of macro-social prescriptions such as “reverence” or “care” is lost on the micro scale of impulse-into-action. The dissolution of the paradigm makes the roles and the role-playing relatively uncertain. Social readability, which is crucial, is constantly on the verge of failing (“Hades”, after all is also composed of a series of failures of understanding).

Bloom is initially neutral and blank, an empty occupant – “Mr Bloom entered and sat in the vacant place” – but he is silently pushed into subservience here. In fact, critics have long discussed his position as an outsider in the episode, as well as elsewhere in the novel. Still he suddenly fills the available spot by action and attitude: he completes the closure of the micro-environment by dutifully slamming the door “until it shut tight” (Joyce emphasises “tight” by firing the word twice in rapid succession). He then assumes a position that is again difficult to read: with an arm through the armstrap, he “looked seriously from the open carriage window at the lowered blinds of the avenue”. Does he anchor himself into the situation, adapting his countenance to the sombre occasion, after having *slammed* the door? The imponderable legibility of the character at the nodes where impulse and social mark coalesce is generally a consequence of the urban paradigm and of its complexity: unsurprisingly, the tighter the focus the more improbable one’s reading becomes.

Traverse

Similarly, the city outside becomes improbable through the screens of the carriage windows: repeatedly characters will see or fail to see someone of particular interest to them (Mr Dedalus will not see Stephen, Bloom will not see Boylan), yet their presence is announced and reconstructed inside the carriage or the mind. The course will also appear uncertain (“What way is he taking us”?, Mr Power asks), as will the reasons for stopping. The outside turns ghostly yet

present, and the gentlemen strain to see in order to ascertain the space and the place; the disquiet Mr Power asks his question “through both windows”, a gesture that compresses time into something more ardent than casual curiosity: the urgency of the desire to see instantaneously.

The journey to Glasnevin cemetery is mobility channelled; its course is checked by its end from the very beginning, by the inevitable landmarks of the city as well as by the ghost-marks of the Homeric parallel, and the lingering, rekindled spectrality of the dead and the past. It is social observation staged, with more than a passing ironic nod to the Stendhalian “passing a mirror down the street”, the mirror is here the see-through; an outdated class act in a de-classed vehicle. Yet it is also a *traverse*: it does not merely follow but moves, seemingly at all times, across and against the city, and also across and against Hades, and while checking the myth by correspondence, it irritates the shadowy gloom of “Hades” with the material resistance of metal and stone: the carriage creaks and clatters, the wheels chatter and rattle, the felly – famously – “harshes against the curbstone”. The traverse is a *versus* – movement against the grain and across and beyond material or ethereal barriers. The *versus* is harsh: a grating soundscape and a ripped up, uneven cityscape. Bloom repeatedly fantasises in this chapter about flow as a possibility of motion, a more fluid transport, when imagining for instance a journey down waterways or cycling to Mullingar to see Milly, or when thinking about tram carriages to take people to the cemetery and cattle down to the ship. Potential but unrealised (i. e. *dynamis* in the etymological sense) ghost-flows that are only legible *versus* the actual city, against its arrangement, and destined for places afar and outside.

The figment of the fast and fluid, of an almost frictionless glide (itself modern), stumbles against the anachronisms of the pre-modern (of which the carriage is itself an instance). The spectre of the Gordon Bennett automobile race over on the continent, in Germany, is itself traversed by the mental image of a race of corpses “upset” from their coffins, hurrying to be the first to turn the corner at Dunphy’s pub. A constant physical and mental rubbing against the fabric of the city (its buildings, its stories), of city life, the abrasion of the living dead, as Joyce says, reversing the meaning in Bloom’s correct misreading, “in the midst of death we are in life” (6.759). If one of the traits of the modern city is to keep death and its immediate materiality out of sight, whereas the town exposes the anachronistic passage of the hearse and cortege to elicit predetermined reverence (“a fine old custom”, as Mr Dedalus calls it), Joyce through Bloom explodes exposure by imagining Paddy Dignam “shot out and rolling over stiff in the dust” (6.422), grey-faced, mouth open, insides quickly decomposing. Black humour and dark satire of the resurrection, no doubt, but the most graphic among all the images in “Hades” – a *versus* in relation to the

mere shadows of Homeric gloom – is part of a larger effort in the chapter to traverse the limits set to what is visible or displayed as if they weren't there.

Visibility, legibility, and the "through" impulse

What I call the "through" impulse is widespread in "Hades". It aims at accessing "insides" through walls, partitions, separations that are, more often than not, opaque and impenetrable. It may be an impatience of frustrated vision, a sought reprieve from abrasive materiality and the numbing immobility of postures. A drive is active everywhere in this chapter, looking to turn matte surfaces into ghostly translucence and then into traversable airy nothing. The first occurrence of this starts from direct but partial visibility, the quintessentially urban visibility of the window and the blind:

... the lowered blinds of the avenue. One dragged aside, an old woman peeping. Nose whiteflattened against the pane. Thanking her stars she was passed over. Extraordinary the interest they take in a corpse. Glad to see us go we give them so much trouble coming. Job seems to suit them. Huggermugger in the corners. Slop about in slipper-slappers for fear he'd wake. Then getting it ready. Laying it out. (6.12-17)

This is the (already) familiar Bloomian monologue, the assemblage of fragmentary observation, thought, surmise, interpretation, evaluation and judgment, the simulation of "mind". The social prescription of the "lowered blinds" is in place, blinding the inside to the cortege, death marched down the avenue with all its sombre pomp and dynamics, and the fearful *dynamis* of its return, but its transgression is also present, spurred by another's impulse to see ("an old woman peeping"). The opaque gaze of the other stops at street level visibility, at what the cityscape provides, whereas the through impulse meets it at an angle, observes it, becomes overpowering conjecture and pierces the zombie-like alterity – Declan Kiberd spoke of a "city of the walking dead" in relation to "Hades" (2009, 101) – injecting it with (im)plausibilities of interiority, being not at once but in extremely quick succession within and without ("Slop about in slipper-slappers for fear he'd wake", for instance). Kiberd is right in see these scenes as a cinematic rendition, but I'd add the note of an ectoplasmic cinematics created by the impulse to traverse all barriers – walls, blinders, flesh, thought – the all-piercing gaze of the dead and the gods.

Hades – and, indeed, the entire novel – are rhythmically populated with short-circuits of the through-impulse, in repeated gazes that render the opacity of the face, or even of one single detail, legible as presumed sociability:

Mr. Bloom glanced from his angry moustache to Mr Power's mild face and Martin Cunningham's eyes and beard, gravely shaking. Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. (6.72-74)

His eyes passed lightly over Mr Power's goodlooking face. Greyish over the ears. *Madame*: smiling. I smiled back. A smile goes a long way. Only politeness perhaps. Nice fellow. (6.242-44)

Joyce marks the casual nature of these gazes (glanced, passed lightly); but they make short work of collapsing the trait and the meaning into a simultaneous perception (angry moustache, mild face, goodlooking face). This first-sight legibility of the face is always traversed towards a surmised meaning, with various degrees of certainty: selfwilled man, full of his son, only politeness perhaps. Such perceptions seem "judgments" of others in the never-ending play of available sociability. They may be conceived, however, as a peculiar mode of mobility, an ever mobile *dynamis*, the dynamic of potentiality ever collapsing into punctual judgmental crystallisations. As readings of sociability, they are opposed to socially sanctioned readings such as remembrance, gossip, the eulogy or the obituary. They are, so the speak, the "living" impulse against the impulse deadened and are, as such, inscribed contrapuntally in the larger dynamics of "Hades".

The corresponding check to this impulse is staged for good measure in the episode, in explicit relation to the social haste of judgment, but Joyce makes it help along the expression of an impulse:

— It is not for us to judge, Martin Cunningham said.
Mr Bloom, about to speak, closed his lips again. Martin Cunningham's large eyes. Looking away now. Sympathetic human man he is. Intelligent. Like Shakespeare's face. (6. 342-45)

We don't know what Bloom would have said, possibly something along the same lines, as the mention of sympathy would suggest, but that is not really the point. In this moment, Joyce renders sociability (within its concentric shells: the individual, the carriage, the journey) in its free-flows and barriers, in a traverse from the generic to the *entre nous*. The pairing of the invitation to non-judgment and the sudden impulse to silence are channelled into a "sympathetic" communication by gaze only, itself shying away from directness. The moment traces and forestalls two social grey areas: judgement, of course, generically, and another social, unspoken, rule of silence regarding suicides, revealed explicitly later in the chapter ("I was in mortal agony with you talking of suicide before Bloom", 6.527), but shared in the retraction of the gaze ("He looked away

from me”, Bloom reads Cunningham’s visibility, judging it. “He knows”, 6.358). The partiality of sympathy, the limit it checks but won’t traverse, are legible in the looking away. Secret and condemnable knowledge is shared, but not empathetic understanding; only the mere form of “human” sympathy, but not perhaps the content of compassion.

“Seeing through” another and “getting through” to another are distinct functions of the impulse, and both socialised in their respective ways, although they may superimpose in socialisation, sometimes to indistinction. The former (“seeing through”) runs the gamut from rushed judgment to insult (“bastard”, “coward”, “coon”), and ends in the impenetrable grey surface of M’Intosh. The latter – a failure here in “Hades”, achieved, as critics have argued, later in the novel between Bloom and Stephen – is associated by Joyce with an enigmatic, almost tautological doubling: “sympathetic human man”. A silent prefix sounds perhaps in Bloom’s thought, as an indirect reflection on the others in the carriage.

The terms of the distinction may be connected also to the dichotomy in “Hades” and elsewhere in the novel between *evocation* (e.g. “Great card he was”, 6.57; “Poor Dignam” etc.) and *invocation*, a modality of the (making) visible which is closer to the sense of the Odysseic *nekya*, bringing out the dead. To conclude the example above, even a short-lived sympathetic encounter triggers in Bloom something more of an invocation (rather than an evocation) of the scene of his father’s death. A powerful, ineluctable saccade of flashes (“The room in the hotel with hunting pictures. Stuffy it was. Sunlight through the slats of the Venetian blind.”, 6.359-60), it conjures the haunting place bereft of the father’s ghost, traversed by that of the “son Leopold”. A reversed haunting in the midst of still life.

Ghost/Monument

“What is a ghost?”, Stephen asks in “Scylla and Charybdis”, “with tingling energy”, and he immediately answers: “One who has faded into impalpability, through death, through absence, through change of manners.” (9.147-9) Stephen circumvents the spiritual “nature” of ghosts, rejecting the penchant for dodgy spiritualism he mocks A.E. for in “Scylla and Charybdis”. The definition is impersonal and engages the perceptual impossibility of the living, the senses of seeing and touch⁵.

⁵ “Yet, Stephen’s definition is more complicated than it may first appear; to begin with, it subverts the commonplace notion that a ghost is the soul of a dead person. [...] The ghost is that which is ambiguous, that which cannot be touched, that which cannot be immediately experienced. In its “fading”, the ghost joins the many metaphors of incompleteness that suffuse *Ulysses* and Joyce’s other writings” (Weinstock 1997, 347).

The dead are to be evoked, blandly. In invocation, as seen above, it is the subject that becomes ghostly and, as Luke Gibbons shows, haunted (2015, 37)⁶. In “Hades”, the city as the place of the travelling *nekya* appears devoid of the ghosts of the dead and populated with the spectres of the living; no dead arise and the living fade to remote impalpability. Opaque materiality of the mineral (the curbstone grating against the wheel, the “mounds of rippedup roadway”, 6.45-6) or the biological (such as Bloom imagining decomposition, 6.776-96) abides, but worked upon by ceaseless disintegration. The array and disarray of “all that was mortal”, as Hynes says towards the end of the episode, the level of the remnant and the residue, of the putrefied, the liquified and the gaseous (treacle and the “gas of graves”, or the “running gravesores”, 6.999).

The dead – who answer to no impulse and, as such, traverse “Hades” merely as corpses – aren’t simply missing in action as ghosts; Joyce employs a sleek substitution and sublimation by the statuary:

Crowded on the spit of land silent shapes appeared white, sorrowful, holding out calm hands, knelt in grief, pointing. Fragments of shapes, hewn. In white, silence: appealing. The best obtainable. (6.469-62)

Dark poplars, rare white forms. Forms more frequent, white shapes thronged amid the trees, white forms and fragments streaming by mutely, sustaining vain gestures on the air. (6.486-9)

The statue and the spectre: opposites. The statue is all-palpable, the essence of remote palpability, but Joyce, sly Aristotelian that he is, uses another word, a single term *via* two synonyms: shapes, forms⁷. Palpability is taken away from the statue, not merely pushing it closer to a spectrality that haunts not, but “morphing” it *back* to an original *eidos*. Angelic, hieratic forms, the petrified yet immaterial order that intersects the material city, almost at a single point (“hewn”). Since form is *eidos*, it is in a very true, yet unreal, sense “the best obtainable” though not the real form of the dead. In the double-entendre of this syntagm, the spiritual-philosophical meaning and the stonemason’s advert collapse together hopelessly.

Some twenty lines apart, these two fragments say the same things, in the same order, with the same cadence, in Joyce’s authorial high-modernist pitch, which isn’t perceptual, nor is it descriptive, but rather a fixing of the formal features of the place, the non-place between “Dublin” and “Hades”. There

⁶ I cannot expound here on the hauntology of *Ulysses*; Gibbons’ study is a good spectro-meter in that respect. I am merely concerned with the dynamic that creates ghosting effects in the narrative of the episode.

⁷ A statue is called a statue in the joke about Mulcahy from Coombe (6.717-31).

is a single difference: the ghostly forms, once moved across the wall to Prospect, move: they throng and stream and gesture, as if their translation from hewn form to “rare” ghost form were complete.⁸ Joyce injects motion into the statuary to achieve this ghosting effect, and he also places the source of motion *beyond* “the eye of the beholder” (e.g. “The high railing of Prospect rippled past their gaze”, 6.486), *past the observer*, as it were, as if the space itself moved. The motion effect is there, I would contend, to sustain the dynamic of dematerialisation in the episode, to render the monumental – and within it the entire register of the memorial – ghostly.

The monumental impulse is one of the “sweeping forces” that shape the city, as we see time and again in *Ulysses*. The resulting monument is the knot twisting the strands of life/death on the one hand, place/memory on the other; also the material sign by which fixation on all sides of these distinctions is socially fixed. Joyce proceeds to untie the knot, to undo a very “human” and a very Irish fixation, the latter, for instance, by casually replacing the contents of Parnell’s grave with the very material phantasm of “stones” – the matter of monuments –, which would keep him not really “alive”, but a “living ghost⁹. Elsewhere, as shown above, the ghost supplants the dead and the statue the ghost; the statue is then rendered ghostly, yet Joyce is not done. Once within Prospect, and the burial complete, the effect itself dissipates and the morphology crumbles back to stone:

Mr. Bloom walked unheeded along his grove by saddened angels,
crosses, broken pillars, family vaults, stone hopes praying with upcast
eyes, old Ireland’s hearts and hands. (6.928-30)

“Grove” is odd here, especially “his grove”, as Bloom is an intruder in terms of faith, and also “unheeded”. “Along his grove” would make him a minor (psychopomp?) deity in a grove of crumbling statues and hopes, a very Greco-Irish allegory, and maybe he is played up by Joyce ironically only to be brought low at the end of the episode. Still, “groove” sounds behind “grove”, “along his groove”, the dynamic of *Ulysses*, the mobility propelling the character along pre-established trajectories that gather and channel impulses (even those which directly irritate it, such as, at this point Bloom’s impulse of imagining a ghost future bereft of the monumental knot and with only a minimal memorial moment: “Plant him and have done with him. Like down a coalshoot. Then lump them together to save time”, 6.932-3).

⁸ As commentators have noted this passage is reminiscent of a vision of the underworld in the *Aeneid* (Gifford & Seidman 2008, 115).

⁹ Gibbons discusses the disseminated spectrality of Parnell, a familiar Joyce ghost, in *Ulysses* (2015, 207-25).

“Old Ireland’s hearts and hands” is a song (Gifford & Seidman 2008, 123) of “straying” and memory (“Oh, Erin” etc.). Bloom’s free association, in its Joycean groove, connects them to the statuary (“stone hopes”), the statues from which all that is ghostly has been removed. The song also mentions “love knots years have made/ With Ireland’s hearts and hands”¹⁰. All along the groove, an unseen hand has been reaching into “Hades” and patiently, silently, untying.

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¹⁰ It would take another article to unpack the many uses of “heart” in “Hades” and the traverse of its potentialities, from the reductively physiological to ghostly symbolic.