

## 4 Joyce's Cultures, the Classical, and the Popular

Classical literature could well be considered to offer the opposite of the ordinariness of daily life, with its focus on events of great importance with significant implications for the welfare and fate of nations and cultures. Joyce's *Ulysses*, with its many allusions to the activities and texture of ordinary life previously discussed, is simultaneously structured on the narrative events of Homer's epic *Odyssey*,<sup>1</sup> a device already evoked in the earlier *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. There Joyce complicates the identity of young Stephen with that unconventional name, for an Irishman, of Daedalus. By connecting Stephen to the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus, Joyce extends the story of oppressive life on an island from modern Ireland to ancient Crete, and traces the ambition (and failure) of artists to fly across the waters to freer environments back to classical mythology. For scholars of literary history the classical frameworks of *Portrait* and *Ulysses* made Joyce one of the premier figures of early twentieth-century Modernism as a movement. Beginning with T. E. Hulme's 1911 essay on "Romanticism and Classicism," such Modernists as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot embraced the concept of Classicism as a modernist principle. Their focus was largely stylistic, urging clean, dry, objective, precise language both in poetry and in prose rather than emotional flights of Romantic aesthetic excess. But Modernists also incorporated classical themes into their poetry and fiction, with *Ulysses* as a premier example.<sup>2</sup> The thematic analogues to various events and adventures in the Homeric epic are of course programmed into the titles of the episodes that Joyce revealed to Carlo Linati, even though they are not listed as chapter titles in the book.<sup>3</sup> Their function is, once again, to enlarge and enhance the story of ordinary and mundane life on a Thursday in Dublin by making it resonate with epic and

heroic adventures. Classical mythology is not Joyce's only fictional intertext, however, and the democratic impulse that spurs his focus on ordinary life in his works also extends to what we now call "popular culture" – the panoply of media productions that ordinary citizens encounter in the course of their daily experiences. The title of *Ulysses* may have been inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*, but *Finnegans Wake* alludes to the popular Irish ballad that recounts the death and resurrection of a fallen man. Joyce's works give us countless allusions to dime novels, operas, songs, magazines, pornography, advertisements, and more. Even in a country as small as Ireland and as long ago as the turn of the twentieth century, popular culture was rich and immense, as the groundbreaking study by Cheryl Herr (*Joyce's Anatomy of Culture*) and the essays in R. B. Kershner's *Joyce and Popular Culture* have shown.<sup>4</sup> By juxtaposing the classical and the popular in *Ulysses*, the immense cultural range of Joyce's imagination as applied to his fiction becomes strikingly visible. And looking at popular culture in *Dubliners* takes us back to the level of the ordinary, in one respect, but in another raises its significance by demonstrating the vibrancy that infuses the visual and auditory ambience of the city. That vibrancy continues to have an impact on readers to the present day. It is one thing to read about Maria singing "*I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls*" (88) at the end of the party in "Clay," but another thing actually to hear the music of that song. Even today, Bloomsday celebrations on June 16 frequently include concert performances of the songs in Joyce's work, which are available not only in songbooks but on CDs and Spotify Classical Playlists.<sup>5</sup> The popular arts in their varied media in Joyce's works enrich and broaden not only the lives of his ordinary populations, but by extension our own as well.

#### CLASSICAL CULTURE IN ULYSSES

The three prominent themes of *Ulysses* – the journey and adventures of Leopold Bloom around the city of Dublin on a single day, Stephen Dedalus's own problems and their negotiation, and the prospect of adultery – are all inspired by and related to the work's intertextual

relationship to Homer's *Odyssey*. But Joyce does not allow the Homeric epic to constrain the character of his protagonists or the development and outcome of his plot. The most dramatic instance of his departure from the classic may be found in the reversal of the significance and outcome of adultery in *Ulysses*. As Keri Ames has pointed out in her study of "The Oxymoron of Fidelity in Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*,"<sup>6</sup> the issue of adultery is not entirely simple even in the earlier work. Penelope's dilemma is complicated by the uncertainty of Odysseus's fate, given that her union with a suitor would be proper for a widow but not for a wife with a living husband. Yet Odysseus's substantial dalliances with Circe and Calypso are given little overt censure in the classic, or by its later critics. Joyce will reverse this situation in *Ulysses*, at least with respect to the adultery. Ames points out that the treatment of fidelity and infidelity is specifically determined by the acceptability of gender roles which are dramatically changed by historical shifts in attitudes over time. "By taking full advantage of this historical shift," Ames writes, "Joyce has manufactured a full inversion of sex roles: the wife now cheats while the husband wanders nearby, instead of the wandering husband cheating afar while the faithful wife waits at home. In some sense, Odysseus has become Molly, and Penelope has become Leopold. The circumstances of cultural and historical context have made this reversal possible."<sup>7</sup> Yet the change in cultural attitudes toward adultery committed by a woman was slow to develop, reaching a watermark only in the nineteenth century in two novels that became modern classics: Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. These works made possible the further liberalizing progress found in *Ulysses* in 1922 and in the 1929 D. H. Lawrence novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.<sup>8</sup> But they did not entirely simplify attitudes toward the valuation of the fictional women and their behavior. Ironically, the trigger to the ban of *Ulysses* in the United States was Bloom's masturbation in the "Nausicaa" episode of the work rather than Molly's adultery or the language of her monologue.<sup>9</sup> Yet the question of whether the pleasure of her sexual affair with Hugh ("Blazes") Boylan made her an "earth mother" or a "whore" perdured into the 1960s and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

So what are the cultural ramifications of adultery in *Ulysses* in relation to both the ancient classic and the modern classics of Flaubert and Tolstoy? The modern works certainly do invert the gender roles entirely. Odysseus is an active adventurer while Penelope is a dutiful domestic figure, weaving and unraveling a shroud in order to deter her suitors. In *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina* the husbands are decent family men while their wives are susceptible to romantic adventure. This premise potentially prejudices readers against the women whose infidelities are not exonerated by a need to escape abusive or otherwise unsuitable husbands, and arguably obliged their authors to have them commit suicide in the end.<sup>11</sup> Joyce clearly follows the modern rather than the ancient model, but not entirely. Bloom can't even manage a rowboat, we learn from Molly. She swears, "Id never again in this life get into a boat with him" (18.954) after his inept steering tilts the craft to one side and swamps it with water. Bloom is clearly not much of an Odysseus in this sense.<sup>12</sup> But even if his heroic deeds are limited to standing up to an anti-Semitic rant in a pub, he is a decent fellow who refuses to drink away the uncertain income he brings in from a variety of jobs and nonetheless manages to provide for his family. Molly Bloom, to give her credit, does not find him boring and uninteresting, and in this respect parts ways with Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina, who derive little satisfaction or amusement from their staid spouses. Bloom's undramatic personality and prosaic activities throughout the day actually create a potential narrative problem in one respect, given that the confirmation of Molly's adultery is delayed until the last chapter of the novel. Had Molly remained a faithful Penelope, the anxiety caused by his unwarranted suspicions would have made Bloom appear to be a fearful weakling rather than a plausibly troubled spouse. Conversely, if Molly's need for sexual excitement and diversion were fueled chiefly by the adventure of romantic novels, much of her depth – and, with it, the reader's sympathy – might have been sacrificed.<sup>13</sup> But although Joyce follows the modern adultery novel in the general plotting of the theme, he digs deeply into the couple's history and personalities to devise a rationale for the adultery and an understanding of its complicated ethical ramifications.

The key to this exploration is the death of little Rudy eleven years earlier and its disastrous effect on the Blooms' sex life. The tragedy is complex because the loss of the newborn son is interpreted by Bloom not merely as a stroke of cruel fate,<sup>14</sup> but as possible punishment for what he fears may have been the child's indecent conception. Molly watched two dogs copulating from her window, a sight that appeared to arouse her. "Give us a touch, Poldy. God, I'm dying for it," Bloom remembers her saying; "How life begins" (6.80). Bloom's inference that Rudy was conceived as a result of his wife's bestial excitement produces not only blame ("it wasnt my fault we came together when I was watching the two dogs up in her behind" [18.1446]) but also a sexual dysfunction that, while not complete, will add up to growing frustration on Molly's part over the course of a decade. Not only is this complicated family dynamic a significant difference from the somewhat simpler adultery triggers in the nineteenth-century novels of Flaubert and Tolstoy, but it actually harks back to Homer's *Odyssey* in fascinating ways that almost function as reversals of Joyce's plot. There, the threat posed by the mother's suitors impels the departure of the son in search of the father, rather than having the departure of the son lead to the mother's eventual pursuit of suitors. In both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, then, the relationships between father, mother, son, and suitors are intricately connected. The significant difference, of course, is that Joyce introduces a surrogate son to imaginatively replace a dead son, thereby retaining the prospect that Bloom's experience with Stephen Dedalus, on June 16 and possibly beyond, may indeed ease a marital conflict and offer a solution for driving off the wife's suitors.

This solution to the Blooms' marital crisis is only adumbrated, rather than achieved, in *Ulysses*. Bloom contends all day with his anxiety over the outcome of Molly's assignation with Boylan, but seeing Stephen Dedalus on the strand in the morning also functions as a reminder of the son's role in his sexual dilemma. His evening meeting with Stephen at a maternity hospital – another link to the theme of newborn Rudy – is therefore imbued with the likelihood that Bloom's earlier connection between Simon Dedalus's son and his own ("Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. He is right. Something to hand

on. If little Rudy had lived" [6.74]) will continue to develop. Molly will learn of this meeting only after the consummation of her affair with Boylan that afternoon, and it is unclear – and perhaps unlikely – that it plays any role in her estimation of the state of her marriage and its prospects for the future. Instead, Molly's bedtime ruminations appear influenced by a need to balance her sexual pleasure with Boylan with her clear-sighted and down-to-earth appreciation of a husband with some sexual quirks, to be sure, but who also possesses many domestic and uxorious virtues. Her appreciation of Boylan wanes as her thoughts progress, and her appreciation of Bloom increases, raising the possibility that the Boylan affair may all along have had a secondary motive besides simply the need for sexual gratification. The clue to this may be found in the curious furniture rearrangement Bloom encounters that night, and to which Hugh Kenner drew attention many years ago.<sup>15</sup> Molly must have asked Boylan to help her rearrange the furniture that afternoon, possibly to put the brakes on his passion for just a bit, according to Kenner. But one could imagine another motive that reflects more directly on another bit of furniture business – this one in the *Odyssey*. Penelope verifies Odysseus's identity as her husband by suggesting that the marriage bed be moved – knowing full well that it cannot be moved because it is constructed out of a living tree. Odysseus's immediate objection on that ground proves that he knows the secret of the bed and confirms him as the legitimate husband. Molly's request that Boylan move some furniture may be designed as a warning to Bloom that her suitor could gain not only sexual but also domestic ground in the household unless the couple's sexual stand-off is dealt with. Molly's affair with Boylan may therefore be partially designed as a wake-up call for her husband, a notice that something needs to be done. She is willing to contribute all she can to that end – "Ill put on my best shift and drawers let him have a good eyeful out of that to make his micky stand for him" (18.1508) – while insisting that "its all his own fault if I am an adulteress" (18.1516).<sup>16</sup>

In cultural terms, the adultery theme in *Ulysses*, like its prototype in the *Odyssey*, prioritizes the importance and significance of family. Adultery threatens the stability of family and this is what makes it such a highly charged issue in the nineteenth-century novels

and in Joyce's work. The threat in Homer's work is focused much more acutely on the tremendous trials and obstacles Odysseus faces in his efforts to return to his kingdom, his home, and his family in Ithaca, and Bloom's external challenges in the course of his day certainly appear minor in comparison. Instead, Joyce internalizes his trials and makes them psychological, obliging us to apply a different metric to questions of his courage and to judgments of his heroic effectiveness. In the process of doing this, Joyce reverses the traditional gender dynamic, as Keri Ames has argued. When Bloom sees Boylan in the Ormond Bar having a drink before heading off late to his appointment with Molly, he could intervene – if not then, a bit later, by showing up at his home unannounced to disrupt whatever activities may be in progress there. But unlike Penelope, who obsesses little about her husband's possible infidelity on his journey, Molly Bloom turns out to be surprisingly jealous of her husband, alluding to a number of women with possible attraction to him and making it clear that if he were to start seeing Josie Breen, for example, she would be willing to take forceful action. "Id just go to her and ask her do you love him and look her square in the eyes she couldnt fool me" (18.193). Bloom's role in resolving his marital problem will probably not come from an insight or a decision on his part. Instead, it may indeed be the external, accidental incident of meeting with a figure who functions, if only provisionally on this night, as a surrogate son in need of protection and nurture, that breaks through the psychological barrier the death of Rudy has erected in his life. Just as Telemachus helps his father slay Penelope's suitors, so Stephen Dedalus may help Bloom – unwittingly, to be sure – to move past the marital dilemma and fend off Boylan by making it possible for him to resume a love relationship with his wife. If so, family is restored and triumphs in *Ulysses* as it does in the *Odyssey* – except for the curious wrinkle introduced into the story by Bloom's daughter Milly. We learn in the "Oxen of the Sun" episode that Bannon, the young man Milly met in Mullingar, may have had unprotected sex with the fifteen-year-old – leading to the dire possibility that she may end up seduced and abandoned when Bannon enlists and goes off to his army life. There is no analogue to this issue in Homer, and its only plausible function in *Ulysses* may be to introduce

the irony that Bloom already has ample outlet for his protective paternal instincts right there in his home. Joyce's play with gender roles and vulnerabilities greatly enriches the cultural dynamic of his work.

When we turn to the travels and adventures of Odysseus, the function of Bloom as the hero's analogue is also seen to display considerable complexity. Bloom will certainly encounter obstacles and conflicts in the course of his day in the city, but they will be imbued with the sense of the ordinary rather than the extravagantly adventurous. Odysseus confronts strange new worlds and strange new figures on his voyage, including cannibals, lotus eaters, and sirens. Joyce reverses this situation in *Ulysses* by having Bloom chiefly encounter more or less ordinary Dubliners, while he himself becomes the anomaly, the stranger, the outsider – a condition consequent to his Jewishness. Scholars exploring this issue point to several factors that may have influenced Joyce's decision to go in this direction, including his experience with Jewish friends and colleagues in the cosmopolitan city of Trieste, as well as his possible influence by the 1902 work of Victor Bérard, which posits the *Odyssey's* derivation from a poem shaped by an early myth of Semitic origin.<sup>17</sup> Making Bloom Jewish has significant cultural ramifications, beginning with its boldness at a time when literary modernism was not above slipping anti-Semitic slurs into its poetry and fiction. In contrast, having Bloom's challenges spurred by the reaction of Dubliners to his race allows Joyce to construct an insightful and penetrating anatomy of anti-Semitism in his work. Odysseus's heroism tends to be necessitated in some cases by disastrous natural conditions such as storms and punishing winds, whirlpools, the improbable wandering rocks, and the hunger that drives his crew to slay the sacred oxen of Helios. In other adventures he encounters monstrous figures such as the many-necked and many-legged Scylla and the one-eyed giant Cyclops, or seductive figures such as the Lotus eaters with their opiate food, the singing Sirens with their entrancing musical lure, and the dangerous Circe who turns his men into swine. Joyce's challenge is to find analogues for these threats and dangers in the course of Bloom's ordinary day, and for the strategies with which he will resist and conquer them. The solution is to make



the Odyssean threats and perils psychological rather than physical, thereby requiring Bloom's responses to them to function psychologically as well.<sup>18</sup>

Joyce's analogues to the Homeric dangers are often metaphorical. The effect of Odysseus's lotus blossoms on his men is to produce literal indolence and somnolence, while Bloom's in "Lotus Eaters" is a more general passivity – relaxation, even – produced by such varied stimuli as his letter from Martha Clifford, his visit to Mass, a trip to the chemist, and ending with a projected soothing immersion in bath water, "a womb of warmth" (5.567). His comments while in church conjure Marx's metaphor of religion as the opiate of the people by observing that the communion wafer functions like a lollipop for the sodality women, and by noticing an old fellow "asleep near that confessionbox. Hence those snores. Blind faith. Safe in the arms of kingdom come" (5.366). Odysseus makes a journey to the underworld of Hades, while Bloom attends Paddy Dignam's burial at Glasnevin cemetery, a journey that conjures memories of his dead father and dead son, a psychological re-visitation of the dead. Homer's Aeolus is the keeper of winds whose dictum is violated when Odysseus's men open a bag containing them and release winds of destructive force. In *Ulysses*, the effect of "Aeolus" is to produce the collective hot air blown off by the men telling stories in the newspaper office. Bloom, rebuffed by editor Myles Crawford, thinks to himself "A bit nervy. Look out for squalls" (7.983). The Lestrygonians in the *Odyssey* are cannibals who eat Odysseus's men. Their corresponding chapter in *Ulysses* therefore takes place at lunch-time and has Bloom think about the problem of hunger: "Underfed she looks" (8.41) he thinks when he sees Dilly Dedalus on the street, and he pities the famished sea gulls sufficiently to buy two Banbury cakes to feed them. The dilemma posed to Odysseus by the six-headed sea monster "Scylla" and the whirlpool of "Charybdis" creates a problem for Stephen Dedalus with respect to how to negotiate the tricky question of Irish estimation of the work and reputation of Shakespeare in his lecture to the intellectuals at the National Library. And Homer's "Wandering Rocks" become the setting of a Dublin population simultaneously

on the move over the geography of their city in *Ulysses*. In the case of "Sirens," there is indeed a bit of flirting by the barmaids in the Ormond bar, although they hardly threaten the men with destruction, like the Sirens in the *Odyssey*. It is actually the men's music that comes to the foreground in Joyce's chapter, with its inventive opening offering a stylistic overture: "Warbling. Ah, lure! Alluring./ Martha! Come!/ Clapclap. Clipclap. Clappyclap" (11.26). The "Cyclops" chapter has Bloom confront not a one-eyed man-eating giant like Homer's Polyphemus, but an Irish nationalist whose aversion to foreigners makes him prejudiced and bigoted, able to see only one point of view, and quick to resort to aggression when riled. "Nausicaa" in *Ulysses* follows the *Odyssey* in having its hero encounter young women on a beach, although Gerty MacDowell and her friends are there to look after young children rather than do laundry. In his chapter on the "Oxen of the Sun," Joyce invokes the significance of the cattle of Helios as fertility symbols by setting the scene in a maternity hospital where a long and painful childbirth is in progress. The young men drinking and carousing in the hospital common room enact the slaying of the cattle with their raucous and ribald joking about the consequences of sexuality, and Joyce further enacts the fertility theme by having the chapter's evolving styles enact the gestation and progression of English literary styles from the Medieval period to the present day of *Ulysses*. Circe, the enchantress who turns Odysseus's men into swine, appears in the setting of a brothel in *Ulysses*, a place where Bloom is transformed into a metaphoric pig indulging in the masochistic fantasies that have loomed under the surface or on the edge of his consciousness at various times of the day. Finally, the last three chapters of *Ulysses* re-enact the return of Odysseus from his long voyage, and the challenge, with the help of his son, of reclaiming his kingdom and his wife from the suitors who have usurped his place during his absence. After stopping in a cab shelter reminiscent of the home of Homer's Eumaeus, Bloom, with Stephen in tow, returns to his house on 7 Eccles Street where he will find signs of the afternoon visit of his rival, "Blazes" Boylan. The slaying of the suitors, if that is the outcome, will take place in the imagination of his Penelope, in the

thoughts of Molly Bloom with her emotional dismissal of her lover and the emotional embrace of her husband that ends the novel.

Even a brief summary of Joyce's adaptations of Homer's *Odyssey* in *Ulysses* demonstrates the impressive variety of techniques at work in his use of the classic. The most prominent of these is, of course, thematic – when a chapter conjures up the story and plot of the epic. “Cyclops” offers the best example of this, with the Citizen in his den, drinking liquor that makes him more and more aggressive while the Odyssean Bloom stays sober and is therefore able to repel his attacks with his clever riposte that “Christ was a jew like me” (12.1808), causing the frustrated giant to hurl a biscuit tin version of Polyphemus's rock at him. Thematically almost all of the *Ulysses* episodes echo the narrative of a heroic, or anti-heroic, voyage in the wanderings of Stephen and Bloom all over the city of Dublin, evoking the notion of incessant movement over a varied and variously populated geography, with “Wandering Rocks” as a premier example. Even when there is a pause in their travels, such as the rest period in the cabmen's shelter conjuring the visits of Odysseus and Telemachus to the home of Eumaeus, the Odyssean journey is still evoked. At other times it is ambience, mood, or memory that become the vehicles for conjuring up the Homeric classic, such as the lassitude in “Lotus Eaters,” the turbulence in “Aeolus,” and the desire for romance in “Nausicaa.” The strategy of adaptation is arguably at its most complex in an episode such as “Oxen of the Sun,” where the metaphorical significance of the cattle as fertility symbols is transposed thematically to the maternity hospital, site of the delivery of an infant, but also stylistically in changing language that signifies a temporal or historical evolution, like the development of a literary fetus. Meanwhile, the violence to the oxen is figured as the violation of sacred aspects of sexuality and reproduction produced by the indecencies in the jokes of Mulligan and some of the other fellows. Stylistic resonances linked to metaphors that conjure up Homeric themes and figures are actually found throughout *Ulysses*, sometimes in fairly subtle form. The classical figure of Proteus, a mythological figure capable of changing himself into a variety of animal forms, is evoked in the “Proteus” episode in a description of the dog Tatters who makes

off "like a bounding hare," with feet described as "stiff forehoofs," who sports a lifted "snout" sometimes lowered in "mute bearish fawning" with its "wolf's tongue" before he lopes off at a "calf's gallop" (3.334–348). Not only metaphors but also changes in narration mark this chapter as protean, as the narration sometimes speaks in the third person, sometimes in the first, by presenting Stephen's thoughts directly, and sometimes in the second, in moments when he appears to be addressing himself. "Cousin Stephen, you will never be a saint. Isle of saints. You were awfully holy, weren't you?" (3.128). And finally we find the structuring of chapters in the shifting modes of a variety of genres, such as the dramatic form of "Circe" with its dialogue and stage directions, and the catechism question and answer form of "Ithaca" whose connections to their Homeric counterparts are no longer entirely clear. The range of devices, thematic and stylistic, for having the novel connected to Homer's *Odyssey* made *Ulysses* – for Joyce's contemporaries, as well as for us – "a literary breakthrough."<sup>19</sup>

#### POPULAR CULTURE IN ULYSSES

Classical culture is, of course, not the only literary manifestation in Joyce's *Ulysses* or in his other works, where popular culture plays a less systematic but nonetheless highly prominent role. R. B. Kershner has argued that "from the beginning of his writing, shop signs, newspapers, playbills, magazines, and popular novels crop up with striking frequency."<sup>20</sup> Such nineteenth-century classics as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* would have provided a precedence for this practice, for the heroine's love of romance novels predict their functional role in creating internalized desire, values, and the expectations we see in such a figure as Gerty MacDowell in "Nausicaa." Cheryl Herr argues that Joyce was acutely sensitive to "the force of culture on the writer, the extent to which what we conceive to be a continuous individual consciousness is composed of materials derived from sources outside the mind."<sup>21</sup> Rather than tracking the role of the less intellectual and traditional manifestations of art consecutively, or episode by episode, it may be helpful to look at a

few categories such as music, popular literature, cinema, and advertising in various segments of *Ulysses* to determine the effects of their appearance in the work. Yet these categories, like the classical allusions previously discussed, are not uniform in their appearance or the roles they play. Zack Bowen makes this immediately clear in his opening discussion of musical allusions in *Ulysses*, when he points out that music can function as a literary reference in one instance, but as a thematic action when it is actually produced and sung aloud by figures in the work, like the men in the Ormond Bar.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, music can trigger or reinforce the personality traits of characters. Bowen relates Bloom's hedonism, irreverence, fatalism, ludicrousness, Jewishness, and other characteristics to musical moments that modify or intensify them. Music is often embedded in other forms of popular literature, as when it crops up in one of Stephen Dedalus's first thoughts about his mother in "Telemachus," remembering that she "heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of *Turko the Terrible* and laughed with others when he sang: *I am the boy/ That can enjoy/ Invisibility*" (1.257). The range of other genres invoked throughout *Ulysses* is immense, covering theater and drama but also fables, poems, sentimental novels, such magazines as *The Princess Novelette* and *Pearson's Weekly*, and, in the case of the Blooms, pornography. As with music, the manifestations of popular literature will vary from simple citations to generic re-enactments like Bloom's fantasies in "Circe." These fantasies are also often cited as being inspired by Joyce's interest in cinema, with Bloom's "costume changes" read "in the light of contemporary film theories and practices" by Marco Camerani, for example.<sup>23</sup> Film is only beginning to blend into the general culture of Ireland at this time in history, but as Milly Bloom's apprenticeship with a photographer in Mullingar makes clear, its visual strategies, which differ from those of pantomime and stage drama, are gaining a foothold. Bloom's interest in having Milly train in a photographic career is undoubtedly influenced by his own current trade as an advertising canvasser. From "Plumtree's Potted Meat" to "Widow Welch's female pills," commercial products are hawked in newspapers, signs, and posters throughout the city, including five men carrying boards to spell out

"H.E.L.Y.S." to advertise Wisdom Hely's stationery and printing business. Popular culture is thriving throughout the city of Dublin on June 16, 1904.

Music is a highly prominent theme in *Ulysses*, and, according to Gifford and Seidman's index count, the work alludes to more than two hundred and fifty songs throughout its pages, including operatic but also popular music. "Telemachus" opens with an array of references to Irish ballads and songs cited or sung by Buck Mulligan. Thinking ahead to getting drunk later in the day, he croons lines from a popular ballad about the anticipated coronation of Edward VIII in 1902 "in a Cockney accent" (1.299), followed by allusions to Mother Grogan and a bawdy Mary Ann, before launching into his own "ballad of joking Jesus," as Stephen calls it (1.608), presumably based on a poem by Mulligan's historical prototype, Oliver St. John Gogarty, according to Gifford and Seidman.<sup>24</sup> Irish ballads and songs are in the air, it seems, breaking into conversations and thoughts without provocation. Leopold Bloom is not a singer, like Mulligan, but his wife Molly is about to go on a concert tour with her impresario, where she will sing an aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* as well as the less classical "Love's Old Sweet Song." Interestingly, Bloom too thinks of "Turko the terrible" (4.89) as he fantasizes about the orient, but music will conjure a more worrisome prospect for him when his daughter Milly alludes to "Boylan's (I was on the pop of writing Blazes Boylan's) song about those seaside girls" (4.408). Songs can acquire painful associations, it seems, as the light-hearted "Seaside Girls" now conjures for Bloom an image of his rival as a dashing fellow, "[h]ands stuck in his trousers' pockets, jarvey off for the day, singing" (4.439). Zack Bowen notes that in this way "Seaside Girls" becomes a song alluding to "the temptations evoked by all women."<sup>25</sup> In the next chapter music will again remind Bloom of the torn envelope peeping from under the dimpled pillow in Molly's bed, the note from Boylan confirming the afternoon's assignation, and as a result even "Love's Old Sweet Song" which Molly will sing at her Belfast concert now acquires ironic and ominous overtones for him (5.156). One might not expect music to come up on the way to a funeral, but the men in the carriage with Bloom mock Tom Kernan's remarks on Ben Dollard's "*trenchant*

*rendering*" of the ballad "The Croppy Boy" about the 1798 Rebellion (6.147) – a song Ben Dollard will actually sing again in the Ormond bar later that afternoon. The "Sirens" episode is predictably alive with music played on the freshly tuned piano, much of it drawn from such operas as Bellini's *La sonnambula* and Flotow's *Martha*. But the allusions become more personal when Simon Dedalus and his friends remember a story involving the Blooms and refer to Molly's background as a "Daughter of the regiment" (11. 507), like the figure in the comic and light operas of Donizetti and Offenbach. Molly is also glossed with reference to the ballad "Irish Molly O" (11.512), and Boylan, who has money jingling in his pockets and who jingles to the Bloom home in a carriage known as a "jingle," evokes the song "Jingle Bells."<sup>26</sup> Some popular songs in *Ulysses* recur with multiple and varied associations throughout. "My girl's a Yorkshire girl," played by "highland laddies," is heard by the rakish Blazes Boylan at the end of "Wandering Rocks" (10.1242), and its pianola version in Bella Cohen's brothel prompts Zoe's desire to dance. Again, a light melody becomes ominous. At first, a surprisingly cheerful Stephen throws his ashplant aside and begins dancing with Zoe, but, as his dancing becomes more frantic, an imagined allusion to his mother now has him refer to the music as the "Dance of death" (15.4139). Joyce loved music, but was not above giving it troubling associations by placing it in emotionally serious and stressful contexts in *Ulysses*.

Popular literature likewise occurs in contexts that allow it to be contextualized by the figures and their specific situations throughout *Ulysses*. The relatively erudite young men in "Telemachus" tend to evoke serious rather than popular literature, some of it surprisingly modern. Talk of Stephen's *Hamlet* theory prompts Haines to evoke Elsinore, but even earlier Stephen and Mulligan banter with allusions to the work of Oscar Wilde, and Mulligan tries to lighten Stephen's spirit with poetic lines from W. B. Yeats: "And no more turn aside and brood/ Upon love's bitter mystery" (1.239). It is the Blooms who tend to be readers of more common literature, enjoying such magazines as *Photo Bits* but also less savory fare. Bloom, given the bent of his masochistic fantasies, likes works of that ilk, as we infer from the books he checks out at the sidewalk display in "Wandering Rocks."

He turns the pages of *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* and glances at *Tales of the Ghetto* by Leopold von Sacher Masoch, but tells the shopkeeper "That I had" (10.593). He has also already read *Fair Tyrants* by James Lovebitch, and remembers that Molly wouldn't like it. Molly's taste, it seems, leans toward the erotic but not necessarily the perverse, like Bloom's, hence the error disclosed that morning when she complains about *Ruby, the Pride of the Ring* that "There's nothing smutty in it" (4.355). Bloom apparently mistook Amye Reade's 1889 work about the abuses of circus life as racier than it was.<sup>27</sup> Molly has, however, enjoyed the novels of Paul de Kock, we gather, a French writer of less provocative works than his name suggests. Bloom, in turn, is intrigued by the title of *Sweets of Sin*, and after reading just a few lines at the sidewalk book display in "Wandering Rocks" he feels its effect as "[w]armth showered gently over him, cowing his flesh" (10.619). We learn in "Penelope" that Molly actually had a promising reading mentor in her childhood in her friend Hester Stanhope, who supplied her with such works as Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, Mrs. Henry Wood's *The Shadow of Ashlydyat*, and *The Trial and Life of Eugene Aram* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Hester Stanhope's taste appeared to run toward mystery and crime novels with sentimental overtones, and may therefore have been more intellectually and less erotically provocative than Bloom's selections for her. Given the romance novel style of "Nausicaa" it is not surprising that Gerty MacDowell is also a reader of popular magazines that have a distinct effect on her life and her appearance: Madame Vera Verity's "Woman Beautiful page of the Princess Novelette" (13.110) advises her on eye make-up, the *Lady's Pictorial* offers fashion advice, and *Pearson's Weekly* offers suggestions for helping alcoholics that her father, sadly, declines. But her most important role model is no doubt the eponymous Gerty Flint in Maria Cummins's 1854 novel *The Lamplighter*, who proves herself a resilient heroine in the face of obstacles. Gerty MacDowell seems to use her reading to more positive effects than either of the Blooms, or at least so the uplifting prose of the episode appears to want us to believe.

Bloom, the voyeur watching Gerty MacDowell expose her leg to him in "Nausicaa," also connects his experience to popular culture,



thinking of a “Peeping Tom” as something he associates with the “Mutoscope pictures in Capel street: for men only” (13.794). John McCourt notes that although no actual movie theaters existed in Dublin before James Joyce’s famous project to open the Volta theater there in 1909, “films had reached Dublin as early as 1896.”<sup>28</sup> The Mutoscope did not project images on a screen, but functioned as a coin-in-the-slot device that allowed single viewers to enjoy a peep-show experience offered by a series of pictures moving from one to the other by the motion of a hand crank. Bloom appears to have seen two Mutoscope films: “Peeping Tom. Willy’s hat and what the girls did with it” (13.794),<sup>29</sup> and, in a sense, Gerty MacDowell’s performance could be thought to unconsciously imitate the “skirt-dancers and high-kickers” (13.704) she learned about from her friend Bertha Supple and whose antics were a common feature of The American Mutoscope & Biograph Company’s skirt-dancing films, according to Cleo Hanaway.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Hanaway suggests that “Nausicaa” may be a consciously cinematic episode given its emphasis on voyeuristic situations that connect seeing and viewing with display. The significance of cinema in *Ulysses* is conditioned not so much by allusions to film but by cinematic techniques in the narration, with “Nausicaa” and “Circe” as the most notable examples. Harry Levin made this point as early as his 1941 *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* when he described Bloom’s mind as “neither a *tabula rasa* nor a photographic plate, but a motion picture, which has been ingeniously cut and carefully edited to emphasize the close-ups and fade-outs of flickering emotion, the angles of observation and the flashbacks of reminiscence.”<sup>31</sup> John McCourt cites a letter written by Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver in which he describes his own thoughts and memory operating in a cinematic fashion: “whenever I am obliged to lie with my eyes closed I see a cinematograph going on and on and it brings back to my memory things I had almost forgotten.”<sup>32</sup> But Bloom not only has a cinematic imagination; he also appears to visualize himself in cinematic scenarios such as those found in the Mutoscope “Peeping Tom” production, for example, when he appears to picture himself as a cuckolded voyeur obliged to view his wife’s love-making with Boylan through a keyhole in “Circe.” Philip Sicker

considers "Circe" in general as offering a cinematic mode where "Bloom's and Stephen's minds operate as film projectors, casting up memories, fantasies and waking dreams from various depths and blending them with external objects of perception to form a fluid continuum of transformative images that coalesce into a fantastic narrative."<sup>33</sup> Bloom is currently, in June of 1904, an advertising canvasser very much attuned to the function of images in commercial life, an awareness that may come from a family background. In "Lestrygonians" he remembers "papa's daguerreotype atelier he told me of" (8.173), a business Gifford and Seidman attribute to Bloom's father's cousin, Stefan Virag.<sup>34</sup> Bloom himself acknowledges that this may have something to do with his daughter Milly's interest in learning the art of photography as an apprentice in Mullingar. "Hereditary taste," he calls it (8.174).

Bloom's job as an advertising canvasser not only draws our attention to the proliferation of advertisements throughout *Ulysses*, but also reminds us of their economic and cultural significance as well. Securing ads is work, as we see in "Aeolus" where Bloom must negotiate with newspaper people at the *Freeman's Journal* on the conditions for promoting the "House of Key(e)s" product. "WE SEE THE CANVASSER AT WORK" (7.120), one of the headlines announces, and in the subsequent chapter we see Bloom calculate his payment: "Keyes: two months if I get Nannetti to. That'll be two pounds ten about two pounds eight" (8.1057). But advertising is also an art, as the slogan for Plumtree's Potted Meat that Bloom sees in the newspaper makes clear: "*What is home without/ Plumtree's Potted Meat?/ Incomplete./ With it an abode of bliss*" (5.144), it reads, offering the consumer an intoxicating satisfaction from a jar of pre-cooked meat. Garry Leonard points out that Joyce's references to advertising do much more than simply introduce evidence of realism into *Ulysses* – they also make the much larger point that "the human subject's 'universe'" is influenced by it with "a dominance and pervasiveness previously reserved for religion."<sup>35</sup> Advertisements abound in *Ulysses*, and sometimes they are given an intriguing role, as in the story told about Ignatius Gallagher's effort to send an account of the Phoenix Park murders to the *New York World*. Trying to explain

the geography of the incident over the telephone, Gallagher tells the reporter at the other end of the line "Take page four, advertisement for Bransome's coffee, let us say. Have you got that? Right" (7.654). He then uses the ad in the *Weekly Freeman* as a map, telling the fellow "B is parkgate" and "T is viceregal lodge" to locate the murder and trace the route of the getaway car. In "Lestrygonians" advertisements become part of the urban visual scene. Bloom sees a rowboat carrying a sign for *Kino's/II-/Trousers* (8.90), and young Paddy Dignam sees posters for Marie Kendall and the Keogh-Bennett boxing match (10.1141, 1133). But it is in "Nausicaa" that the efficacy of advertisement is most in evidence. Gerty MacDowell uses advertised products, finding "iron jelloids" much better than "Widow Welch's female pills" (13.84) for her menstrual problems, and favoring the "eyebrow-leine" advertised in the "Woman Beautiful" page (13.111), as well the "queen of ointments" that Gifford and Seidman trace to the slogan for "Beetham's Larola"<sup>36</sup> to enhance her good looks. Bloom too appears to resort to advertised products for his health and appearance needs. He apparently keeps a prospectus for "The Wonderworker, the world's greatest remedy for rectal complaints" in his drawer, and has clearly availed himself of "Sandow-Whiteley's pulley exerciser" (17.1817). Bloom may have a talent not only for securing newspaper space for business ads, but perhaps also for writing them as well. His purchase of the lemony soap at the chemist's in the morning inspires his fantasy of the soap singing the catchy jingle in "Circe" – "We're a capital couple are Bloom and I./ He brightens the earth. I polish the sky" (15.338). This is a long way from Homer, the *Odyssey*, and other classics as a contributor to the literary complexity of *Ulysses*, but it is a little poem all the same, and popular culture is just as much a part of the literary ambience of Joyce's novel as it is of societies in real life.

#### POPULAR CULTURE IN DUBLINERS

The role of classical culture in Joyce's work does not begin with *Ulysses*, given that Stephen Dedalus had already signaled the structuring function of the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus in *A Portrait*

of *the Artist as a Young Man*. But it is less in evidence, though certainly not absent, in the earlier stories of *Dubliners*, where it is popular culture that will play a more prominent role. R. B. Kershner divides his discussion of popular literature in his book into chapters on "Young Dubliners" and "Older Dubliners,"<sup>37</sup> an evocation of the generational progression of the *Dubliners* stories from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. It may be useful to begin exploring popular culture in *Dubliners* with a sampling from the earlier life stages, and end with an extended discussion of the complex relationship of high and low culture for the mature figures in "The Dead." The young boy in "The Sisters" may register sophisticated terms such as "gnomon in the Euclid and the word *simony* in the catechism" (3), but he is also aware, at least in dreams, of exotic lands such as Persia, "where the customs were strange" (7). Where did the boy hear about Persia and its "long velvet curtains" and "swinging lamp of antique fashion"? We are never told, but might speculate that he was familiar with such Middle Eastern folk tales as those found in the *Arabian Nights*. However, we learn precisely how the boys in "An Encounter" learn about cowboys and Indians in a foreign land: "It was Joe Dillon who introduced the wild west to us. He had a little library made up of old numbers of *The Union Jack*, *Pluck* and *The Halfpenny Marvel*" (11).<sup>38</sup> The copy of *The Halfpenny Marvel* that Father Butler confiscates from him does indeed contain a story about *The Apache Chief*. In addition, we learn that the narrator was also familiar with American detective stories, and together this array of popular literature serves to give the school boys a much broader and more adventurous horizon than does the Roman history their Jesuit teachers ply them with in the classroom. This lively reading material is further internalized to the extent that it stimulates in the boys a desire to experience adventure not just in their reading but in their lives – a yearning that triggers their decision to play hooky for a day and head off to the Pigeon House. Their initial experience on this journey stimulates even more desire for adventure. The barges and sailing vessels on the quays make the boys fantasize about going out to sea, and the narrator feels "the geography which had been scantily dosed to me at school gradually taking substance under my eyes" (15). But once they encounter the old

josser a different kind of adventure unfolds, a nightmare version of a schoolteacher lecturing them first about seemingly high culture books, Thomas Moore, and Sir Walter Scott, and Bulwer-Lytton,<sup>39</sup> but quickly focusing on the need to punish boys with barely concealed sadistic pleasure. The boys have not yet read pornography, but here they encounter a living enactment of a reader's recitation of the genre. The old josser may act out only the narrative, not the actions it relates, but the performance nonetheless functions as a perverse example of popular culture turned inside out – although it is not clear that the boy narrator quite understands this. Only the adult narrator appears to have realized that not only children but also adults internalize popular culture – in this case pornography – and have it infuse and shape their desires.

The title of the story "Araby" points the reader to the role that Orientalism played both in high culture and in popular culture in nineteenth-century Europe. Its specific allusions focus chiefly on a sentimental poem by Caroline Norton and on a bazaar that becomes the disappointing object of the protagonist's romantic quest in the story. But even these limited references evoke a much larger cultural preoccupation with the East found in such works as Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Byron's Turkish tales, the folk tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, and many other popular stories, songs, and pantomimes. Although Edward Said's 1979 study of *Orientalism*<sup>40</sup> exposed the stereotypical representations of the East in western literature and culture, the oriental focus in "Araby" is more emotional than cultural, pointing toward longing and desire for the different, for the exotic unknown. The story begins with an early allusion to three works of literature left behind by the dead priest who had been a tenant in the narrator's home: *The Abbot* by Walter Scott; a book on religious meditation; and an autobiographical work, *The Memoirs of Vidocq*, written by an eighteenth-century criminal and criminal investigator who is ostensibly regarded as the first private detective and the "father of modern criminology."<sup>41</sup> Like the boys in "The Sisters" and "An Encounter," the boy narrator of "Araby" is restless and discontented with the rut of daily life, but unlike the youngsters in the earlier tales his desire fixates on a girl, on

Mangan's sister, and he specifically longs for romance. This desire is given shape by the name of the bazaar from which the girl is barred, and which gives him his romantic quest when he promises to go in her stead and to bring her "something" (23). Ironically, the boy already visits a bustling marketplace on Saturday evenings with his aunt, a place filled with drunken men and cursing laborers, that offers adventurous street music such as the ballad about the Irish rebel leader "Dynamite Rossa." But his own desire for something other turns him into a knight errant searching for a Holy Grail: "I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes" (22). Therefore, when Mangan's sister asks if he is going to *Araby*, the word alone immediately works its magic on him: "The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an eastern enchantment over me" (23).<sup>42</sup> But his way to the bazaar is filled with annoying and frustrating obstacles which his tardy and forgetful drunken uncle tries to remedy by offering to recite another popular oriental work, Caroline Norton's *The Arab's Farewell to his Steed* (24). The boy appears never to hear the poem, but the reader can speculate that it would have spoken well to the boy who would also value riding off on a beautiful steed much more than the gold coins the Arab flings back at his buyers. And yet the *Araby* bazaar, when the boy finally arrives there, is almost closed, and its stalls with their mundane vases and their ordinary salespeople are devoid of romance for him. Popular literature inspires desire for the extraordinary, the exotic, without being able to deliver outside the imagination.

With its emphasis on romance, "Araby" serves as a clever transition to the next *Dubliners* story, "Eveline," with its older adolescent protagonist and her emotional dilemma on the verge of an elopement. Hugh Kenner famously read Eveline's story as a parable about the perils of romance, the danger of a young woman believing in rescue from a relatively safe but nonetheless dreary and oppressive life by a young man willing to take her on a journey to a foreign land that is likely to leave her seduced, betrayed, and abandoned.<sup>43</sup> Such a reading puts "Eveline" into the genre of fictions about women seduced by romantic stories that fuel their desire of the order of Emma Bovary. But although Eveline is elated by a performance of an Irish operetta she

sees with her suitor Frank, there is little to suggest that her desire to elope with him is inspired by the romance of *The Bohemian Girl* rather than by fear of ending up like her exhausted and demented mother: "Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love too" (31). "Perhaps love too" hardly sounds like romantic infatuation. We can therefore read "Eveline" as a counter to Kenner's scenario, as Joyce's tale of the perils of Irish emigration, as Katherine Mullin has argued. Mullin discusses the prevalence of anti-emigration propaganda in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Ireland, offering a different popular writing to young women that served as a brutal antidote to the lures inspired by any romance fiction.<sup>44</sup> "Eveline" also takes on a particular poignancy if we remember that it was published in September 1904, less than a month before Nora Barnacle would make a similarly risky decision to emigrate to the Continent with her lover, James Joyce, on October 8. Did Joyce have insight and sympathy for the dilemma that the risks of elopement posed to a young woman with little or no family support in the event she was abandoned abroad? Since Joyce did not begin writing his first published short story, "The Sisters," until July 1904 according to Richard Ellmann,<sup>45</sup> "Eveline" would have been written during those first months of his courtship of Nora Barnacle. Remarkably, the story is not a wish-fulfilment fantasy but a representation of the anguish a young woman might feel when weighing the dangerous risks of the unknown against the plight of an oppressive known. In its outcome, "Eveline" gives romance no sway.

Interestingly, there are no young women at play in "After the Race," the adolescent story that follows "Eveline," and yet there is romance – of a sort – aplenty. This story shows the relationships of young men as charged with what might be considered chief elements of romance: seemingly mutual admiration, glamorous settings, shared excitement, music, play, dance, an evening of pleasure, and, in the end, the betrayal of disingenuousness, disappointment, and grief. Jimmy Doyle, belonging to the Irish class of the *nouveau riche*, befriends a sophisticated group of fellows from France, Canada, Hungary, England, and America who invite him to a motorcar race, an exquisite dinner at the Frenchman's hotel, and a card game on the

American's yacht. He intends to invest a chunk of his fortune in a motor establishment his friend Ségouin plans to open in Paris, which may be why he is feted so lavishly on this day. But the evening goes awry when Jimmy, intoxicated by both the excitement of the day and large quantities of liquor, loses massively in the game of cards – possibly the result of a gambit by the continentals to defraud the innocent Jimmy of his planned investment by way of a huge gambling debt. Popular culture contributes to this exploitation by giving Jimmy an inviting model of male camaraderie in such fictions as Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers*. R. B. Kershner argues that “a number of details in Joyce's story suggest that Jimmy sees himself as living out Dumas's novel.”<sup>46</sup> But if Jimmy fancies himself a cherished friend of his companions of the order of d'Artagnan in Dumas's novel, he is cruelly mistaken. He appears not even to understand the malice intended by having them sing the satirical French marching song *Cadet Roussel* (37), which champions a young man as a good fellow when it actually denigrates him as a naïve fool. Unlike Eveline Hill, who never really succumbs to romance even when it may be genuinely offered, Jimmy Doyle is betrayed not only by exploitive friends but also by his own surrender to fictions of male bonding and homosocial romance offered by French popular literature and music. Curiously, the sophisticated education at Cambridge offered to Jimmy by his father's wealth does not endow him with cultural sophistication, although his continental friends nonetheless play up to this ostensible quality of his by enlivening the dinner conversation with discussion of the English madrigal and “deploring the loss of old instruments” (36). Culture is intimately related to class, the story subtly suggests, an issue far more significant for young and older adults than for the children in the earlier stories.

The last story in *Dubliners*, “The Dead,” complicates the divisions between high and low culture in order to stress not only their social implications, but also their political significance. It does this by placing a very tight focus on a very specific event that nonetheless opens a large view on the role of art and culture in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Ireland. The event is an annual dinner party and dance at the home of the Morkan sisters, Miss Kate and Miss Julia, and



their niece, Mary Jane, at 15 Usher Island in Dublin. Its function is both social and professional since all three women have been active in the field of music: Julia as a leading soprano in the church choir, and Kate and Mary Jane as music teachers. The company therefore includes not only friends and family but also pupils and musical figures in Dublin, and is clearly designed to promote the women's role in the arts. The guests prominently include the sister's nephew, Gabriel Conroy and his wife Gretta, and it is Gabriel who complicates the social role of art and culture right from the start. He plans to include lines from Robert Browning in the dinner speech he has been charged to deliver, but fears that "they would be above the heads of his hearers" (155). High culture has its perils. It can make ignorant classes feel inferior and in turn lead them to mock or resent cultured fellows such as Gabriel for "airing his superior education." Class is not purely economic and social but also cultural, as Gabriel's dilemma makes clear. Such quandaries require negotiation, and Gabriel considers that the guests might more easily recognize some quotations from Shakespeare, since Shakespeare has made the transition to popular culture, in a sense, as two pictures on his aunts' wall makes clear. They depict the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* and another of the two murdered princes in the Tower of London "which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown wools when she was a girl" (161). Culture is socially fluid, capable of flowing from high art into popular art when it becomes sufficiently distributed and recognized.

But the issue of culture becomes even more complex when, during a dance, Gabriel is paired with Molly Ivors, who begins their conversation ominously with "I have a crow to pluck with you" (163). It turns out that Gabriel publishes a literary column under the initials G. C. every Wednesday in the *Daily Express*, a conservative newspaper at odds with more fervent Irish nationalism, causing Miss Ivors to dismiss it as a "rag." Here we see not only an interesting intersection between high and popular culture, but also its possible political implications. In the most recent issue Gabriel had published a review of Browning's poems, presumably the reason why he is thinking of quoting Browning at the dinner speech on this night. His review represents another version of Gabriel bringing serious art to the

general Irish population, but it runs into a conflict with the not uncultured Molly Ivors on nationalist grounds.<sup>47</sup> Browning is, of course, British, and as her subsequent invitation asking Gabriel to join an excursion to the Aran Isles makes clear, she supports the Irish Revival's focus on reclaiming the Gaelic language, folklore, and other elements of Celtic culture rather than promoting British culture. Gabriel's excuse for declining – that he plans a trip to France, Belgium, or Germany to keep up with their languages – therefore offends her and solidifies her conviction that Gabriel is indeed a “west Briton.” He drives the wedge between them even further when he responds to her urging him to first learn his own language, Irish, by bursting out that if it comes to that, “Irish is not my language” (164). The political grounding of culture is here taken to its most fundamental level – the very origin of the language in which it is produced. The case of Ireland, where the country's native language was ruthlessly suppressed by the British except in the distant and somewhat inaccessible Aran Isles, dramatizes how politically fraught the very question of what one speaks can be. Gabriel is not going to be allowed to be comfortable in his niche of high culture on this particular night, because even among its advocates national differences as well as class differences have surfaced in conflict. Both parties are upset by this, and fortunately for Gabriel Miss Ivors decides to leave the party early, leaving him free to quote his Browning poetry in his speech after all.

Other cultural conflicts arise in discussions along the way to the dinner speech, this time involving not nationalism but issues of gender, age, and race. Julia Morkan sings a song, *Arrayed for the Bridal*, based on an aria in a Bellini opera, whose performance even the narrative voice concedes is stunning: “Her voice strong and clear in tone attacked with great spirit the runs which embellish the air” (167) we are told. “To follow the voice, without looking at the singer's face, was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight.” The qualification urging listeners not to look at the singer's face produces an ageist slap at Aunt Julia, suggesting that an old female singer, however gorgeous her voice, cannot offer an unblemished aesthetic experience. This is not the worst humiliation levied at Julia Morkan,

however. As Freddy Malins enthuses about her singing, we learn that Julia was recently thrown out of the church choir to which she had devoted herself for much of her life as a result of a papal edict banning women from singing in church choirs. This fictional restriction is based on a historical fact, it turns out: the November 1903 directive issued by Pope Pius X called a *Motu Proprio*, which obliged churches to replace sopranos with young boys. Julia's sister Kate is outraged by this act: "it's not at all honourable for the pope to turn out the women out of the choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little whippersnappers of boys over their heads" (169). But their niece intervenes to suggest that her objection is a silly peeve ("when we are hungry we are all very quarrelsome") and so Kate's legitimate protest at this monstrous gender discrimination is deprived of its due. Culture is frequently regulated by religion, and in this case it entails a specific suppression of female cultural activity. At the dinner table, the discussion of opera resumes, and the most distinguished musical guest at the party, the tenor Bartell D'Arcy, offers high praise to the leading contralto currently singing with an opera company at the Theatre Royal. However, Miss Furlong objects that "she had a rather vulgar style of production" (172). Female singers sometimes do not fare well even in the estimation of other women, it seems.

But now Freddy Malins, who had offered ecstatic praise of Julia Morkan's performance before dinner, introduces another issue of discrimination in the political deployment of art, and that is the factor of race: "Freddy Malins said there was a negro chieftain singing in the second part of the Gaiety pantomime who had one of the finest tenor voices he had ever heard" (172). He then asks Bartell D'Arcy if he's ever heard of him and gets a "carelessly" voiced "No" in response. Clearly D'Arcy is not interested in singers of other races. "And why couldn't he have a voice too? asked Freddy Malins sharply. Is it because he's only a black?" (173). The division between high culture and popular culture is given a particularly incisive political edge here because historically a number of African American performers were active in Dublin in early January of 1904, when the story is set, but they were relegated to pantomimes, comic acts, and troubadour troupes at less prestigious venues than the Theatre Royal.<sup>48</sup> As with

Julia Morkan, Freddy's point once again directs us to the significant function of political considerations in the activity of culture – that in the case of singers, the quality of voice and performance is not paramount and can be subordinated to prejudices directed at gender, age, and race. In the case of African Americans it also suggests that access to participation in high culture versus popular culture was indisputably determined by their race in the early twentieth century. Joyce has filled his fictional evening celebration in Dublin with allusion to art and culture, and with lovely performances – only to put them under a microscope obliging us to determine precisely how they operate in the real world, the world of men and women, of Irish and British, of black and white, of old and young. The story then goes on to Gabriel's after-dinner speech, whose aim, it becomes clear, is precisely to transcend divisions, to urge their resolution, to bring together the present group in particular, but also, by implication, arguably the world in general. "We are met here as friends, in the spirit of good fellowship, as colleagues also, to a certain extent, in the true spirit of *camaraderie*, and as the guests of – what shall I call them? – the three Graces of the Dublin musical world" (177). The speech is so moving and affecting that we are inclined to forget Gabriel's earlier intent to offer it as a rebuke to Miss Ivors, and even as a blatant lie given his earlier disrespect for his aunts: "Very good: that was one for Miss Ivors. What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old women?" (167). Arguably this makes the refrain of the celebratory "For they are jolly gay fellows," sung in unison to accompany the toast to the Morkan sisters after Gabriel's speech, somewhat ironic: " – Unless he tells a lie,/ Unless he tells a lie" (179).

Gabriel's speech is an enormous success, however, its erudite allusions to the three Graces and to the judgment of Paris notwithstanding. Even audience members such as Aunt Julia, who "vainly asked each of her neighbours in turn to tell her what Gabriel had said" (178), appreciate his intention to offer his aunts and his niece high praise and admiration, even if they are not familiar with the classical references. His strategy of using high art to bolster the rhetorical value of his tribute is completely successful, and the evening of conflict and discord ends in good humor and jollity for all. In a sense,

then, the further experiences of Gabriel's evening – his romantic excitement produced by watching his wife Gretta listen to Bartell D'Arcy sing the ballad *The Lass of Aughrim*, and the sorrow it triggers in her in their room at the hotel – function almost as a private denouement to his earlier triumph. But once again, high and popular culture will intermix here in curious ways. Gretta's muse on this occasion is a simple ballad, not high art. But as she stands on the stairwell, listening to it, Gabriel, standing below and watching her, turns the moment into a version of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. His passions are kindled, and, as he walks behind Gretta on the way to find a cab, "[t]he blood went bounding along his veins and the thoughts went rioting through his brain, proud, joyful, tender, valorous" (185). When Gretta later tells him that the song makes her cry because it reminds her of a delicate young boy she knew in Galway who used to sing that song, she inadvertently creates a scene of her own that evokes *Romeo and Juliet*. The last time she saw the tubercular Michael Furey, he had stood in the rain throwing gravel at her window upstairs, a Romeo unmindful of his icon as he declares to her that he did not want to live if he was going to lose her. Although it was the lyrics of *The Lass of Aughrim* that triggered Gretta's memory of this scene ("*the rain falls on my heavy locks/ And the dew wets my skin*" [183]), its enactment in her past actually reverses the plot of the ballad. In the song, Lord Gregory refuses the young girl he has abandoned admission to his manor – making him an anti-Romeo. But Gretta responds with loving anguish to the memory of Michael Furey singing the ballad and willing to die for love of her. Neither Gabriel nor Gretta consciously invoke *Romeo and Juliet* in the tableaux of their imagination, but Gretta's is clearly the more genuine and artless. And so *Dubliners* ends with a spirited and complex discussion and demonstration of the functions, effects, and problematic roles culture, both high and popular, can play in the lives of ordinary people. This discussion, running in and out of all the stories, comes to a particularly focused apogee in "The Dead." The allusions to Greek mythology in Gabriel's speech will point us toward Joyce's subsequent productions of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, whose structures and characters will reflect classical culture while frequently continuing to intermix it with popular culture.