KELLY ANSPAUGH

The Metempsychosis of Ajax: Leopold Bloom as Excremental Hero

> Which assoars us from the murk of the mythelated in the barrabelowther, bedevere butlered table round, past Morningtop's necessity and Harington's invention, to the clarience of the childlight in the studiorium upsturts.
> *Finnegans Wake,* 266.9-13

That James Joyce meant his Leopold Bloom to be seen as an avatar of Homer's *Odysseus* is among the most common of modern literary-critical commonplaces. That Bloom manifests coprophilic tendencies is also widely recognized, at least among insomniac Joyceans. My aim in this paper is to bring these two commonplaces about Bloom together by arguing that this character is also an avatar of Ajax – not Homer's Ajax, but the hero of Sir John Harington's prose mock-encomium *A new Discourse on a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of a A Jax* (1596), wherein the author congratulates himself on the invention of the watercloset. I hope through this analysis to further illuminate both Joyce's allusive technique and his excremental/satirical vision.

In an endnote to his essay "James Joyce as 'Sunny Jim': A Tale of a Tub," Chester Anderson (perhaps the most perspicacious of Joyce's many "foecal analysts"[1]) hints at Joyce's reading of Sir John Harington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax,* that text in which the Renaissance poet, satirist, courtier, soldier and godson of Queen Elizabeth – she called him "Boye Jacke" – recommends to the public his new invention (the metamorphosed "jakes" of the title). Anderson adduces as evidence for Joyce's reading the passage from the "Lessons" chapter of *Finnegans Wake* I reproduce as epigraph above. Upon close inspection this passage turns out to be one of the many that echo the opening lines of the *Wake*: "riverrun [table round], past Eve and Adam's [past Morningtop's necessity and Harington's invention], from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs [to the clarience of the childlight in the studiorum upsturts]."[2] "Commodius vicus of recirculation," then, can be read as among other things Joyce's initial *Wake* allusion to Harington's commode and its cyclical functioning. That Harington's invention is so prominent in the book's overture indicates, perhaps, this precursor satirist's importance in Joyce's imagination.

Anderson goes on in his note to suggest that Harington makes an appearance in Joyce's corpus prior to *Finnegans Wake*: "[Joyce] may also have known the attack on the *Metamorphosis of Ajax* called *Ulysses upon Ajax* (often, probably wrongly, attributed to Harington), which bears such an ob-

vious relation to the introduction of Leopold Bloom on the jakes in the 'Calypso' episode of *Ulysses* that it may well have the quality of a source."[3] If Bloom is, by the logic of metempsychotic transmigration, the avatar of Homer's Ulysses, then Bloom on the jakes is indeed Ulysses upon A Jax. What Anderson does not suggest, however, is that Bloom may also be *an avatar of Ajax* – that is, based upon Harington (who ever after publishing his *Metamorphosis* was doomed to be known as "Sir Ajax" or "M. Ajax"[4]) and/or his narrator Misacmos ("hater of filth").

Again, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* is ostensibly the story of one man's ingenious transformation of a jakes into a watercloset by adding a flush and seal. The text is much more than this, however: it is a two-hundred page Rabelaisian romp; an encyclopedia of suspect learning (like Erasmus's mock-encomium *A Praise of Folly*[5]); a humorous history of all the scatological world. The *Ajax* is divided into a number of parts, including two prefatory letters, a prologue, the "Metamorphosis" proper, an "Anatomie of the Metamorpho-sed Ajax" – in which Harington's servant T.C. provides drawings of the invention in order to facilitate the reader's home improvement – and finally "An Apologie": a dream vision wherein Harington pictures himself on trial for his excremental crimes. The reader can derive a sense of Harington's playful tone from the prologue, where the narrator Misacmos offers a mock etymology of the word "jakes", tracing it back to the Greek hero, Ajax. Ajax, grown mad, commits suicide, and where his blood falls grass grows. This grass is harvested by "one *Monsieur Gargasier*" (Harington's version of Rabelais's Gargantua), who uses it irreverently as an arse-wipe, and as a result is cursed with St. Anthony's fire "in his Posteriorums" (69). The afflicted man travels the world over to find the cure, and upon returning home, in order to expiate his sins against Ajax, builds "A sumptuous privie,"

> and in the most conspicuous place therof, namely just over the doore; he erected a statue of *Ajax*, with so grim a countenance, that the aspect of it being full of terrour, was half as good as a suppositor; and further, to honour him changed the name of the house, and called it after the name of this noble Captaine of the greasie ones (the Grecians I should say) *Ajax*; though since, by ill pronunciation, and by a figure called *Cacophonia,* the accent is changed and it is called a Jakes. (71)

That the appearance of Harington's odd book caused quite a stir among his contemporaries is suggested by a passage in a letter of Thomas Nashe to a friend; "mr Harrington [of] late hath sett vp sutch filthy stinking iakes in pouls [ch]urchyard, that the stationers wold give any mony for a couer [fo]r it. What shold moue him to it I know not, except he [m]eant to bid a turd in all gentle readers teeth."[6] Harington himself in a letter claimed he produced his text only to attract attention at court: "I was willinger to wryte such a toye as this, because, I had layne me thought almost buryed in the Contry

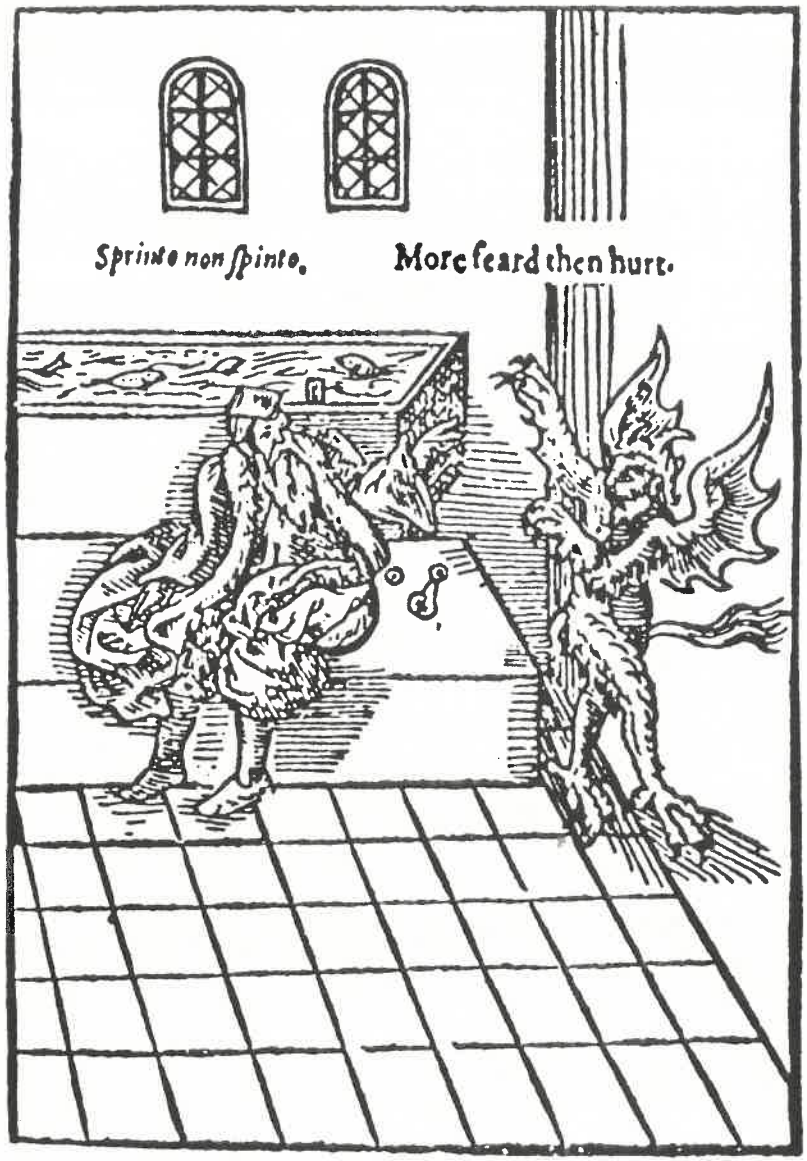
these three or fowre yeere; and I thought this would give some occasion to have me talked of."[7]

In dismissing his text as a "toye", however, Harington is clearly being disingenuous: for the *Ajax* – as some Elizabethan readers recognized [8] – is a powerful piece of satire. Misacmos himself appears to admit this near the end of "The Metamorphosis" proper, where he claims that the "Prologue & the first part" are written "against malcontents, Epicures, Atheists, hereticks & careless & dissolute Christians" (182). The narrator goes on a page later to inquire "may not I as a sorrie writer among the rest, in a merie matter, and in a harmlesse maner, professing purposely, *Of vaults & privies, sinks and draughts to write*, prove according to my poore strength, to draw the readers by some pretie draught, to sinke into a deep and necessary consideration, how to amend some of their privie faults?" (183). Harington clearly begs the gentle reader's leave to write satirical allegory. For those who could not be moved to forgive him his excremental conceit he includes in his text "a short Elegie upon a homly Embleme" (93; *see illustration on p. 142):*

> A godly father sitting on a draught
> To do as need, and nature hath us taught;
> Mumbled (as was his maner) certen prayr's
> And unto him the Devil straight reprayr's:
> And boldly to revile him he begins,
> Alledging that such prayr's are deadly sins;
> And that it shewd, he was devoyd of grace,
> To speake to God; from so unmeete a place.
> The reverent man, though at the first dismaid;
> Yet strong in faith, to Satan thus he said.
> Thou damned spirit, wicked, false & lying,
> Dispairing thine own good & ours envying:
> Ech take his due, and me thou canst not hurt,
> To God my pray'r I meant, to thee the durt.
> Pure prayr ascends to him that high doth sit,
> Down fals the filth, for friends of hel more fit. (94)

This epigram is clearly self-reflexive: Harington is the "godly father," sitting on his allegorical *Ajax* – which textual invention is reflected, perhaps, by the "certen pray'rs" the pious man mumbles. The unsympathethic reader is here figured as the devil, who is forced to eat Harington's shit: "for he gave it him in his teeth," comments Misacmos parenthetically, "take it how he would" (95).[9] Shades of Joycean revenge here (but I get ahead of myself).

Recently a handful of New Historical critics have begun to take notice of Harington's allegory.[10] T.G.A. Nelson, for instance, argues that Harington employs "scatological imagery in an eschatological context," or that the allegory of *Ajax* is essentially a spiritual one.[11] John Leland takes up



Nelson's argument and elaborates, asserting of Harington's "satire" that it is "based largely upon [his] deliberately shocking analogy of Christ and Ajax: of God's creation (the world) and Harington's creation (the privy). Harington's privy serves as an analogue to God's temple, and Harington, as moral physician, becomes a latter-day Christ."[12] Especially illuminating for our purposes is Leland's analysis of the way in which Harington in his prologue tropes satirically upon the *sanctus*, derived from the following passage of Isaiah 6:

> In the yere of the death of King Uzziah, I sawe also the Lord sitting upon a high throne, and lifted up, and the lower parts thereof filled the temple.
> The Seraphim stode upon it; everie one had six wings: with twaine he covered his face, and with twaine he covered his fete, and he did flie.
> And one cryed to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* ye Lord of hostes: the whole worlde is ful of his glorie.
> And the lintels of the dore chekes moved at the voyce of him that cryed, and the house was filled with smoke.
> Then I said, Wo is me: for I am undone, because I am a man of polluted lippes: and I dwell in the middes of a people of polluted lippes: for mine eyes have sene the King *and* Lord of hostes.[13]

Leland claims Harington turns on this Biblical text by describing a cult of stercoraceous monks who offer up a "dirge for Ajax, with a prayer to all their cheif Saints whose names begin with A": "*Sauntus Ablabius/Sauntus Acachius/Sauntus Arrius/Sauntus Aerius*" (76), and so on. This prayer, Leland asserts, parodies "the catalogue of saints whose intercession is sought in the Mass" – the upshot being that in Harington's excremental vision "the temple of the Lord has become a 'sumptuous privie', the throne of God chamber pot, and 'the house… filled with smoke' is now filled with effluvia."[14] As for Isaiah's cry, "I am a man of polluted lippes," Leland asks "do not the brotherhood of Ajax pollute their lips with their 'blacke *Sauntus*'? And is not this brotherhood but a cipher for the [spiritually] corrupt in England?"[15]

What Leland's analysis stresses is the way in which Harington plays free and easy, not only with classical, but with Biblical texts, employing them without fear for his own satirical ends. Such fearless play with venerable precursors is also characteristic of James Joyce, whose allusion in the *Wake* to "Harington's invention" is anticipated in the final chapter of *Ulysses,* where the soliloquizing Molly Bloom recalls with pleasure her use of a watercloset: "that's a very nice *invention* too by the way only I like letting myself down after in the hole as far as I can squeeze and pull the chain then to flush it nice cool pins and needles"[16] "Invention", of course, implies an inventor, and so Molly offers her congratulations to Sir John of the Jakes for his ingenuity.[17] Despite this very high recommendation, Harington comes in for some abuse in the earlier "Aeolus" episode, where professor

Hugh MacHugh, Irish patriot and rhetorician, discourses upon the similarities between Roman and English imperialism:

> –What was their [the Romans'] civilization?
> Vast, I allow: but vile. Cloacae: sewers. The Jews in the wilderness and on the mountaintop said: *It is meet to be here. Let us build an altar to Jehovah.* The Roman, like the Englishman who follows in his footsteps, brought to every new shore on which he set his foot (on our shore he never set it), only his cloacal obsession. He gazed about him in his toga and he said: *It is meet to be here. Let us construct a watercloset.* (*U* 131)

A number of critics have construed this passage as Joyce's revenge on the Englishman H.G. Wells for diagnosing him, in a 1917 review of *Portrait*, as having a "cloacal obsession."[18] While this is certainly part of Joyce's intent, the passage has other functions, including an acknowledgment of Harington. "The closetmaker and cloacamaker," cries the indignant MacHugh, "will never be lords of our spirit" (*U* 133) – Harington, of course, being *the* original (water)closetmaker. Molly and MacHugh, therefore, are diametrically opposed in their attitudes regarding Sir John of the Jakes: the former blesses him for personal (hygienic) reasons, while the latter blasts him (so to speak) for political reasons. Although another critic has suggested that Joyce sides with MacHugh in being critical of English "cloacal imperialism," I tend to believe – as the following analysis will suggest – that he problably leans toward Molly and her positive response to Sir John of the Jakes.[19]

MacHugh's reference to Jews building altars in the wilderness points us back, of course, to *Ulysses*'s resident Jew, Leopold Bloom, and his (in)famous morning defecation in "Calypso". The passage begins "He kicked open the crazy door of the jakes" (*U* 68) – "jakes" functioning, as Anderson suggests, as an intertextual cue, evoking the shade of Harington's Jax. The passage continues, "He went in, bowing his head under the low lintel." Bloom's bow here resembles a gesture of piety, as one might expect of a priest entering a temple. That this is precisely what Joyce intends is indicated by a passage from the "Ithaca" chapter, where Bloom's morning deposition is retrospectively construed, in the course of what Joycean glossolator Don Gifford has identified as a parody of the Hebrew liturgical calendar,[20] as "intestinal congestion and premeditative defecation (holy of holies)" (*U* 728). "Holy of holies", of course , recalls Harington's playful troping on Isaiah 6, his transformation of the "most sacred, innermost part of a Jewish tabernacle"[21] into a toilet – or vice versa. Joyce, perhaps taking his cue from Harington, also transforms the holy of holies into, quite literally, a hole for arse-holies. In "Calypso" Bloom takes the role of the high preist, he who enters the holy of holies but once a year, on the Day of Atonement – in Joyce's universe June 16th, 1904. Bloom also evidently takes on the role of the Lord God, "sitting upon a high throne, and lifted up, and the lower parts

thereof filled the temple" (Molly Bloom will assume the same role when she recalls lowering her lower parts into the W.C.). After Bloom defecates, we are told, "he read on, seated calm above his own rising smell" (*U* 69) – this description perhaps a parodic parallel of the Bibilical "and the house was filled with smoke." Leland, as noted above, remarks in Harington a similar parallel between divine smoke and intestinal gas.

"Holy of holies" is not only the name of a sacred place, but also of a sacred ritual which "replaced the morning sacrifice of the ancient church. One of the prayers refers specifically to the orifices of the body, thanking God for the fact that they exist and are open."[22] Bloom, also, offers a prayer of thanks for his successful bowel movement: "Hope it's not too big bring on piles again. No, just right. So. Ah! Costive one tabloid of cascara sagrada. Life might be so" (*U* 69). This passage may echo Harington as well, whose narrator tells the story of a man who never thanked God for anything, "except it were once at a Jakes, he… thanked God, he had had a good stoole" (92). Misacmos goes on to draw a moral from this story; that "a good stoole might move as great devotion in some men, as a bad sermon: and sure it sutes very well, that *Quoroum Deus est venter, eorum templum sit cloaca*. He that makes his belly his God, I would have him make a Jakes his chappell" (92). Leopold Bloom, as Lindsey Tucker has established at length,[23] is certainly a man who makes his God and, like Stephen Dedalus's uncle Charles in *Portrait*, enjoys immensely his tenure in the jakes ("The king was in his counting house" [*U* 681]). Finally Bloom tears off a bit of his reading matter, *Matcham's Masterstroke,* and masterly strokes his behind with it. This action – interpreted by a number of critics as suggestive of Bloom's creativity ("'There's a touch of the artist in [sic] old Bloom' even as he sits on the pot," remarks Susan Brienza[24]) – may also be meant by Joyce to parody the purging of Isaiah's "polluted lippes" by a seraphim with a glowing coal: "See, this has touched your lips; / your iniquity is removed, / and your sin is *wiped away*."[25] In short, it appears that in "Calypso" Joyce has outAjaxed M. Ajax, producing an even-blacker "*Sauntus*" – an even more blasphemous parody of sacred ritual and writing – than that of Harington's coprophilic monks (*Ulysses* begins, of course, with Buck Mulligan's mocking parody of the Mass: "He held the [shaving] bowl aloft and intoned: / – *Introibo ad altare Dei*" (*U* 3).

That Bloom is indeed a kind of shitty heretic is suggested by his connection with the fourth-century heresiarch Arius (d.336), who denied the Godhead of Christ and died horribly in a public jakes – a death the lurid description of which was circulated by Arius's enemy, Athanasius: "his bowels poured out of him, his liver emerged, covered with blood, and then, suffering the most violent pain, he discharged his heart, the seat of all wickedness. To crown these horrors, Arius's whole body became thinner and thinner until at last the heretic fell through the opening of the privy into the sewer beneath."[26] Arius is first mentioned in *Ulysses* in the episode prior to

that in which Bloom makes his appearance. In "Proteus" Stephen Dedalus is walking along Sandymount strand, thinking:

> Where is poor dead Arius to try conclusions? Warring his life long on the contransmangnificandjewbangtantiality. Illstarred heresiarch. In a Greek watercloset he breathed his last: euthanasia. With beaded mitre and with crozier, stalled upon his throne, widower to a widowed see, with upstiffed omophorion, with clotted hinderparts. (38)

J. Mitchell Morse has suggested that Stephen, because he cannot accept the consubstantiality of Father and Son (Simon and himself[27]), is here meant to be identified with the heresiarch. This identification is supported by the fact that Arius was also, like Stephen, a poet, his principal work, *Thalia,* being half verse ("His songs of sailors and millers were sung by the people" [Niggs, 122-23]). It is difficult to think, however, that Joyce's reference to Arius's death on the toilet does not also anticipate Bloom's defecation in the following chapter. Perhaps Joyce meant to identify *both* Stephen and Bloom with Arius, thus underlining their consubstantiality. One recalls the passage in "Circe" where Bloom and Stephen gaze into the mirror and "*the face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there*" (*U* 567) – a reference preceded in that chapter by Stephen's second recollection of Arius: "the last end of Arius Heresiarchus. The agony in the closet" (*U* 523).

Stephen's employment in "Proteus" of the world "watercloset" – in context clearly an anachronism, the watercloset having yet to be invented in the time of Arius – is, I argue, another allusion to Harington. As noted above, Misacmos in his prologue refers to a group of heretical excrementalists who sing "a dirge for AJAX, with a prayer to all their cheif Saints whose names begin with A." Foremost among these is the Alexandrian heresiarch "*Sauntus Arrius*," who "denied the godhead of Christ" (76). Later, in the "Metamorphosis" proper, we are advised to look to our last ends by considering how "Arrius, that notable and famous, or rather infamous hereticke, came to his miserable end upon Jakes" (92). It is altogether possible, I think, that Joyce's reference to Arius may derive from his reading of Harington. Is Sir Ajax also an "illstarred heresiarch?" (The adjective comes back in the *Wake* when Hosty is referred to as "an illstarred beachbusker…" [who] was setting on a twoodstool [close-stool?] on the verge of selfabyss" [*FW* 40. 21–231]. And is Leopold Bloom an echo not simply of Arius but more preciseley of Arius strained through the guts (so to speak) of Harington/Misacmos/M. Ajax?

Unlike Arius, however, Bloom does not perish in the closet; rather he is preserved to be tried for his excremental crimes in the dreamlike "Circe." In this respect he again resembles Harington/Misacmos, who is tried for his mudslinging ("mud", in this context, functioning euphemistically) in an hallucinatory courtroom. D.H. Craig offers a succinct description of the

third major section of the *Ajax*: "the *Apologie*… takes as its pretext a dream in which a visitor tells the writer of a group of gentlemen who settled down to read his book after dinner, intrigued by its title. Shocked to find the book more satirical than obscene, they decided to arraign the author on ten charges, ranging from idleness to knavish attacks on the authorities. Twelve jurymen are called, twelve of Harington's friends, who are named and described at length. Finally the charges against the book are brought and discharged" (68). Near the beginning of "Circe" Bloom, entering Nighttown, is nearly run down by a sandstrewer, the motorman crying out "Hey, shitbreeches, are you doing the hattrick!" (*U* 435). This is the first charge of copro-crime brought against Bloom in the chapter. He will also be accused of shitting into a bucket of porter (*U* 450), of defacing with "the hallmark of the beast" Beaufoy's *Matcham's Masterstroke* (*U* 459), of asking a distinguished lady "to soil his letter in an unspeakable manner" (*U* 467), and of a number of excremental "*Sins of the past*":

> "By word and deed he encouraged a nocturnal strumpet to deposit fecal and other matter in an unsanitary outhouse attached to empty premises… Did he not lie abed, the gross boar, gloating over a nauseous fragment of wellused toilet paper presented to him by a nasty harlot, stimulated by gingerbread and a postal order?" (*U* 537)

That Bloom is in some sense guilty of all of these crimes is suggested by his inability to pronounce the self-vindicatory word "shibboleth", lisping instead "Shitbroleeth" (*U* 457) – a Freudian parapraxis recalling the motorman's initiatory accusation.

Like Misacmos Bloom offers a spirited if inept self-defense: "I am wrongfully accused. Better one guilty escape than ninetynine wrongfully condemned" (*U* 456). Also like Misacmos Bloom is encouraged by the fact that the jury is made up of what he calls his "comrades in arms" (*U* 457): "*A panel of fog rolls back rapidly, revealing rapidly in the jurybox the faces of Martin Cunningham, foreman silkhatted, Jack Power, Simon Dedalus, Tom Kernan, Ned Lambert, John Henry Menton, Myles Crawford, Lenehan, Paddy Leonard, Nosey Flynn, M'Coy and the featureless face of a Nameless One*" (*U* 469–70). Finally, despite Bello's pronouncing an Arius-like death sentence upon Bloom ("We'll bury you in our shrubbery jakes… We'll manure you, Mr. Flower! [*U* 544]), Joyce's hero, like Harington's, escapes with his life by suing for pardon: Harington from his godmother Queen Elizabeth (265), Bloom from his wife Molly. "Moll! I forgot! Forgive! Moll!… We… Still…" (*U* 541). Given the above parallels, it appears that Harington's "Apologie" should be grouped with the "Walpurgis Night" section of Goethe's *Faust* and Flaubert's *Temptation of St. Anthony* as a structural and thematic source for "Circe."

Finally Bloom resembles Misacmos as well insofar as his genius is

practical as well as poetic. Having published the plans of his invention, Harington facetiously proposes to his fellow inventor and would-be monopolist M. Platt – deviser of "artificiall cole" (1966) – that they join in a partnership:

> I will erect in London & elsewhere, diverse shrines to this new Saint [Ajax], and all the fat offerings shall be distributed to such poore hungrie fellows as for Monapoles, which being joined to the ashes of your cole, will be perhaps not uncommodious for land, and you and I will begge nothing for our reward, but you as I said afore, a fift part of everie chaldron, and I but the sixt part of an assis a moneth, of all that will not be recusants, to do their daily service, at these holy shrines. (170)

This passage finds an echo in Bloom's idea to erect women's restrooms throughout Dublin ("Ought to be places for women" [*U* 162] 28) and also in a passage of the catechistic "Ithaca" chapter, where the question "Was vast wealth acquirable through industrial channels?" is answered in part as follows:

> The utilization of waste paper, fells of sewer rodents, human excrement possessing chemical properties, in view of the vast production of the first, vast number of the second and immense quantity of the third, every normal human being of average vitality and appetite producing annually, cancelling byproducts of water, a sum total of 80 lbs, (mixed animal and vegetable diet), to be multiplied by 4,386,035 the total population of Ireland according to the census returns of 1901. (*U* 718)

Thus Bloom dreams of becoming a wealthy "gongfarmer," as Harington refers to a professional collector of filth (85). Even if the *Ajax* was not the direct source of Joyce's text in this instance, the similarity in idea suggests a similarity in sensibility, even world view, between Joyce's hero and Harington's narrator.

Is Bloom, then, possessed by the transmigrated soul of Ajax? Recall the passage cited above from Harington's prologue, wherein Misacmos is also guilty of a parapraxis: "and further, to honour him he changed the name of the house, called it after the name of this noble Captaine of the greasie ones (the Grecians I should say) *Ajax*." "Greasie", Harington's editor informs us, is Elizabethan slang for "Obscene" (71n28). Bloom is in a sense, of course, a Grecian, since by the logic of Homeric correspondence "Jewgreek is greekjew" (*U* 504) (in "Scylla and Charybdis" Mulligan observes of Bloom "he is Greeker than the Greeks" [*U* 201]). That Bloom is also obscene is suggested by the barmaid/Siren Miss Kennedy, who remarks of him, "O greasy eyes! Imagine being married to a man like that" (*U* 260). These words echo throughout Joyce's fugal chapter: "Married to Bloom, to greaseaseabloom" (*U* 260); "By Cantwell's offices roved Greasebloom" (*U* 260). My argument that "greasebloom" does indeed echo Harington's

"greasie ones" finds support in the decidedly excremental context of the motif's final appearance at chapter's end, where Irish patriot Robert Emmet's dying words are conflated with Bloom's post-prandial farting:

> Seabloom, greasebloom viewed last words. Softly.
> *When my country takes her place among.*
> Prrprr.
> Must be the bur.
> Fff. Oo. Rrpr.
> *Nations of the earth.* No one behind. She's passed.
> *Then and not till then.* Tram. Kran, kran, kran. Good oppor. Coming. Krandlkrankran. I'm sure it's the burgund. Yes. One, two. *Let my epitaph be.* Karaaaaaaaa. *Written. I have.* Pprrpffrrppfff.
> *Done.* (*U* 291).

If Bloom is "greaseabloom", then, by the logic of metempsychotic correspondence, he is also Harington's (not Homer's) Ajax, "Captaine of the Greasie Ones." And if Ajax is also a jakes, Bloom is a shithouse as well – which allows us to answer the interrogatory put to Bloom in the "Circe" chapter; "Are you a god or a doggone clod?" (*U* 507). The ghost of Virag, Bloom's father, answers for us: "Farewell. Fare thee well. *Dreck!*" (*U* 522)[29].

To conclude, it is important to recognize that in Joyce's vision metempsychotic correspondence is identical to *textual* correspondence: the transmigration of souls the same as the transmigration of texts. Just as Homer's *Odyssey* in a sense takes possession of Joyce's *Ulysses,* dictates its episodic structure, so Harington's *Ajax* comes to haunt Joyce's book as well. (And, as Joyce's friend T.S. Eliot observes, often the best part of a writer's work "maybe those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert themselves most vigorously."[30] Joyce is not the only modern satirist to be happily haunted by the *Ajax*, however: Aldous Huxley, in his first novel *Crome Yellow* (published in the same year as *Ulysses,* 1922), invents the English aristocrat Henry Wimbush, who is writing the biography of the builder of his country house, Sir Ferdinando Lapith, who is clearly modeled upon Harington. "In building this house," Wimbush comments:

> Sir Ferdinado was, as a matter of fact, preoccupied by only one thought – the proper placing of his privies. Sanitation was the one great interest of his life. In 1573 he even published, on this subject, a little book – now extremely scarce – called, *Certaine Priuy Counsels* by *One of Her Maiestie's Most Honourable Priuy Counsel, F.L. Knight.* in which the whole matter is treated with great learning and elegance.[31]

Both Joyce and Huxley, as professional satirists, recognize the value of excrement as an instrument of desublimation or deflation. As Mikhail Bakhtin puts it in his analysis of the vision of Harington's Master, Master François

Rabelais: "[excrement] is the most suitable substance for the degrading of all that is exalted"[32]. One should hardly be surprised , therefore, to discover that both Joyce and Huxley allude to Sir John Harington, who in writing his *Ajax* heaped up what Ezra Pound, in referring to *Ulysses,* called a Rabelaisian "monument... in fadeless excrement."[33] Harington's monument still stands, as fadeless as his other invention, that child of Necessity.

Notes

[1] "Foecal analysts" is a reference is to one of Ezra Pound's published defenses of Joyce's *Ulysses*: "[Leopold] Bloom's day is uncensored, very well. The foecal analysis, in the hospital around the corner, is uncensored. No one but a Presbyterian would contest the utility of the latter exactitude" *(Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce with Pound's Essays on Joyce,* ed. Forrest Read [New York: New Directions, 1974], 199).
Anderson's "Sunny Jim" essay appeared in *James Joyce Quarterly* 13 (Fall 1976): 328-49, and the note I cite is #18. Other of Anderson's analyses of Joyce's excrements include "Leopold Bloom as Dr. Sigmund Freud" (*Mosaic* 6 [1972-73]: 23-43; "On the Sublime and its Anal-Urethral Sources in Pope, Eliot and Joyce" (in *Essays in Honour of William York Tindall,* ed. Raymond J. Porter and James D. Brophy [New York: Iona College Press, 1972] 235-49); and a review of the *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (*James Joyce Quarterly* 14 [Summer 1977]: 219–23), wherein Anderson discusses Richard Ellmann's decision to publish Joyce's scatological love letters to his wife as well as his own ambivalent response to these letters.

[2] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (1939; New York: Penguin, 1976): 3, lines 1-3. Hereafter cited parenthetically within my text as *FW* followed by page and line number.

[3] "Sunny Jim", 348n18.

[4] The latter nickname derives from Harington himself; on page 169 of *The Metamorphosis* the narrator observes that "M. A Jax is lineally descended from the ancient house of *Stercuitius*." *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax,* ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (London: Routledge, 1962). Hereafter references to Harington's *Ajax* will appear in parentheses within my text.

[5] Misacmos alludes to both Erasmus and Rabelais (along with a number of other mock-encomiasts) as authorities in order to defend his project (63-64). Henry Knight Miller, in his survey essay "The Paradoxical Encomium, with Special Reference to its Vogue in England, 1600–1800" (*Modern Philology* 53. 3 [1956]), includes analyses of both Erasmus and Harington, labelling the *Ajax* as "one of the most famous (or infamous) of paradoxical encomia" (156).

[6] Cited in D.H. Craig's *Sir John Harington* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), 71.

[7] The letter to Lady Russell is dated 14 August 1596 (*Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington,* ed. Norman Egbert McClure [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930], 66).

[8] Despite his earlier complaints about the *Ajax*, Thomas Nashe would later characterize Harington (in his *Lenten Stuffe* [1599]) as one who "offers sacrifice to the goddesse *Cloaca,* and disportes himselfe very schollerly and wittilie about the reformation of close stooles and houses of office, and spicing and embalming their rancke intrails, that they stincke not" (cited by Craig, 81). Less amused by Harington's satire was his godmother Elizabeth, who reportedly scolded Sir John for what she read as a "shafte" aimed at her friend Leicester (Donno, 41; Craig, 72).

[9] Nashe, then, is borrowing his scatophagic metaphor (see passage cited above) from Harington. The latter would get even with his fellow satirist in one of his epigrams, "To Doctor Haruey of Cambridge": "the prouerbe sayes, who fights with durty foes, /Must needs be soyld, admit they winne or lose./Then think it doth a Doctors credit dash,/To make himselfe Antagonist to *Nashe*" (*Letters and Epigrams,* 199).

[10] The coiner of the phrase "New Historicism", Stephen Greenblatt, in an essay on the excremental vision in general, drops the following note: "for a zany and learned meditation of Elizabethan close-stools, see Sir John Harington, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*" ("Filthy Rites", *Daedalus* 3, 3 [1982]: 16n22).

[11] "Death, Dung, the Devil, and Worldly Delights: A Metaphysical Conceit in Harington, Donne, and Herbert, "*Studies in Philology* 76 (1979): 277.

[12] "A Joyful Noise: *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* as Spiritual Tract, "*South Atlantic Review* 47, 2 (1982): 53.

[13] From The *Geneva Bible,* cited by Leland, 56-57.

[14] Leland, 56-57.

[15] Leland, 57. D.H. Craig makes essentially the same point as Nelson and Leland, that in the *Ajax* Harington "aims to provoke a scandalized reaction to one kind of scurrility – the modern term is lavatory humor – and then contrast it with the truly dangerous obscenity of sin" (75).
That Harington was anxious to underscore the spiritual allegory at the bottom his *Ajax* is suggested by his epigram "Of Cloacina and Sterquitius," in which he essentially washes his hands of the Roman deities of dung he had eulogized – ostensibly – in his *Ajax*:

> The Romanes euer counted superstitious
> Adored with high titles of Diuinitie,
> Dame , *Cloacina* and the Lord *Sterquitius*,
> Two persons in their State of great affinitie.
> But we, that scorne opinions so pernitious,
> Are taught by Truth well try'd, t'adore the Trinitie.
> And, who-so care of true Religion takes,
> Wil think such Saints well enshrined in A I A X .
> (*Letters and Epigrams*, 157).

[16] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922; New York: Random, 1961), 770; emphasis mine. Hereafter cited parenthetically in my text as *U* followed by page number.

[17] In emphasizing the word "invention," Joyce may be echoing Samuel Johnson, who in his play *Epicoene* (1609) alludes to Harington when he has Truewit remark to La Fool that "a stool were better, sir, of Sir Ajax his invention" (cited in Craig, 82).

[18] Wells's review is reproduced in *James Joyce: The Critical Heritage,* Vol. 1, ed. Robert H. Deming [New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970], 86-88). Ezra Pound was perhaps the first reader to recognize Joyce's attack on Wells. Shortly after the publication of "Aeolus" in the *Little Review* (1918) – which review Pound edited – he writes to Joyce: "I trust that he [Wells] has by now read the remarks on the Cloacal Romans (*Pound/Joyce* 148). Wells, therefore may be the repressed "Presbyterian" Pound disparages in his later public defence of Joyce's foecal analysis" (see note #1 above).

[19] Mark Shechner, in his *Joyce in Nighttown: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry into "Ulysses"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), argues that

MacHugh's speech constitutes one of Joyce's personal "political gestures": "among the crimes with which Joyce indicted the Roman and British Empires was cloacal imperialism, the imposition of the watercloset upon their colonial subjects" (137-38). Elsewhere (in an essay presently submitted to another journal) I have argued against Shechner's interpretation, claiming that Joyce, rather than employing MacHugh as his ideological mouthpiece, is in fact ridiculing the character's extremist nativist politics and rhetoric. I go on to read the passage from "Aeolus" as Joyce's playful reading of Swift's playful reading (in his "Panegyrick on the Dean") of Harington's playful reading (in *Ajax*) of Rabelais's "cloacal imperialism" (in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*). It is Schechner's apparent lack of familiarity with Harington – and his consequent lack of awareness of Joyce's allusions to Harington – that prevents him from recognizing Joyce's *comic* intent.

[20] Don Gifford with Robert J. Seidman, *Notes for Joyce. An Annotation of Joyce Joyce's "Ulysses"* (New York: Dutton, 1974), 401.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] See Tucker's *Stephen and Bloom at Life's Feast: Alimentary Symbolism and the Creative Process in James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984).

[24] "Krapping out: Images of Flow and Elimination as Creation in Joyce and Beckett", *Re: Joyce'n Beckett,* ed. Phyllis Carey and Ed Jewinski (New York: Forham University Press, 1992), 134. Tucker also makes this connection: "Bloom establishes the relationship between language and body by wiping himself with Beaufoy's Titbit. His own masterstroke thus becomes the physical recognition of the origin of words in body, a recognition of the analogue of digestive precosses to creation" (52).

[25] This last quotation taken from *The New English Bible: Oxford Study Edition,* ed. Samuel Sandmel et al (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 732 (emphasis mine).

There may also be another echo of Harington in Bloom's fundamental gesture. In his prefatory letter to his cousin Philostilpnos ("lover of cleanliness"), Misacmos pleads that, if all his art cannot make his book "mannerly enough, the worst punishment it can have, is but to employ it in the house it shall treat off, onely craving but that favour… to teare out my name before it be so employed" (65). Queen Elizabeth took her godson at his word and suspended the *Ajax* by a chain in her improved privy at Richmond (see Harington's epigram on this gesture, *Letters and Epigrams*, 165).

[26] Walter Niggs, *The Heretics,* trans. and ed. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Knopf. 1962), 129.

[27] J. Mitchell Morse, "Proteus," *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays*, ed. by Clive Hart and David Hayman (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 38. That the father and son in question are indeed Simon and Stephen is suggested by Stephen's reference to Simon's voice as "my consubstantial father's voice" (*U* 38). Later, in "Scylla and Charybdis", Buck Mulligan in addressing Stephen refers to Simon as "your unsubstantial father" (*U* 199), perhaps echoing Stephen's own word.

[28] Here Bloom may also be an avatar of Jonathan Swift, who in his "A Panegyrick on the Dean" (1730) congratulates himself for erecting a set of his and her outhouses:

> In sep'rate Cells the He's and She's
> Here pay their Vows with *bended Knees*:
> (For, 'tis profane when Sexes mingle;
> And ev'ry Nymph must enter single
> And when she feels an *inward Motion*,
> Comes filled the *Rev'rence* and Devotion.)

(*Poems of Jonathan Swift,* Vol 3, ed. Harold Williams [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958], 893). Elsewhere (see note #19 above) I have argued that Swift's poem is also a playful response to Harington's *Ajax*; consequently Joyce may be echoing Harington *through* Swift.

[29] In this respect Bloom's character anticipates that of Joyce's later hero, Shem the Penman, whose abject shittiness is underscored throughout his *Wakean* biography: "Our low waster" (*FW* 178.12); "this Calumnious Column of Cloaxity" (*FW* 179.13.14); "his penname SHUT" (*FW* 182.32). For an analysis of the abject aspects of Joyce's excremental vision, see my "Powers of Ordure: James Joyce and the Excremental Vision(s)", *Mosaic* 27, 1 (March 1994): 73-100.

[30] "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot,* ed. Frank Kermode (New York, HBJ, 1975), 38.

[31] *Crome Yellow* (New York: Carrol & Graf, 1990), 102.

[32] *Rabelais and His World,* trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 152. Bahktin goes on, however, to observe that Rabelais's shit is highly ambivalent, is also "gay matter… both joyous and sobering matter, at the same time debasing and tender, it combine[s] the grave and birth in their highest, most comic, least terrifying form" (75-76). This is also true of Harington's excrement, which while used to rub man's nose in his sins is also employed to rejuvenate with laughter.

[33] *Culture* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1938), 96.

POETRY – THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

"Warning" – a poem about growing old disgracefully – has been recently voted Britain's favourite post-war poem. It was during this year's National Poetry Week in Britain that viewers of BBC television were asked to choose a top-ten list of poetry published since 1945. Jenny Joseph's poem "Warning" won a clear victory over two other modern favourites – Stevie Smith's "Not Waving But Drowning" and Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gently Into That Good Night". No poem by the present Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, made the list which included two poems each by Philip Larkin, Dylan Thomas and John Betjeman. "Warning" has now acquired the status of a poetic evergreen, together with "If", Rudyard Kipling's Victorian classic, which was also voted the most popular poem of all times.

Ronald Paul