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Anti-Hero as Promise of a Future New World: Interpreting the Image of Bloom in *Ulysses*

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I. Introduction

On September 21, 1920, before the publication of *Ulysses,* James Joyce describes his work's "more than enormous complexity" (*SL* 271) in his letter to his Italian friend Carlo Linati as follows. He begins his letter by calling this work "my damned monster-novel" and in the letter's P.S. even calls it "the horrible book" (*SL* 271). This indicates clearly that this epic by the Irish bard James Joyce[1] is no longer what Hegel calls "epic proper" (Hegel 1044) with

1) This identity as his nation's bard has been declared at the end of *A Portrait* when he concludes his diary by writing that he is going "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (*P* 196). Though self-claimed and so mocked by Mulligan in Chapter 1 of *Ulysses* ("The bard's noserag!" (*U* 5), "dreadful bard" (*U* 6)) and denied by the cultural leaders in Chapter 9 ("Our national epic has yet to be written, Dr. Sigerson says. Moore is the man for it" (*U*

the Homeric epics as its models, but a mock epic. Yet this very mock epic is exactly what Joyce wants to be "the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland)" (*SL* 271), that is, an epic for his race that, just like the Jewish, was banished from home into exile, with the only difference that his race was in exile on its own homeland because of British colonization that lasts for nearly 8 centuries! Such a historical "Odyssey" is also full of struggles and rebellions but have all ended up with failures, humiliations, more severe colonial suppression and domination, and subsequently more sufferings. What is even worse, to Joyce, is that, in addition to this *external* colonization of the nation, the even longer *internal* or *spiritual* colonization of people's mind by the Catholic morality and discipline and, in his time, by the obscurantism of the nationalist ideology, have been equally harmful to the nation, for they together have made the Irish people stereotypically stubborn, narrow-minded and xenophobic to the extent that they have become intolerant not only of anything foreign or unfamiliar but also of anything different from their established tradition and thinking. As a result, the nation, while suffering from foreign colonization, is also frequently deep in moral-religious-political civil strife as well as in its longtime social-economic backwardness.

It is obvious that to write an epic for such a nation, the unified, grand, sublime, and eulogizing style of the "genuine epic" (Hegel 1045) will not fit. Therefore, to write against the grain, namely both against the Homeric "genuine epic" and against his contemporary European and especially Irish literary trends, Joyce creates his own "unknown arts" as he has already indicated in the line quoted from Ovid as the aphorism of his autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Thus we find that his epic adopts a kaleidoscopic perspective from chapter to chapter, each with "its own

192).), Joyce is, nonetheless, the genuine Irish bard, for, throughout his life, all his works narrate his nation.

technique" (*SL* 271), to replace the unified style of the Homeric epic. Then in contrast to the latter's grand and sublime narrative, Joyce's epic is saliently characterized by a kind of Bakhtinian "laughter,"[2] namely, a sarcastically comic style, producing a radically sharp, penetrating and bitter criticism of his nation instead of eulogizing or praising it. All these deviations from the "genuine epic" are just because Joyce's epical concern is not to memorize the past that has been nostalgically glorified and sublimated by his contemporary revivalist writers, but to confront and criticize the problematic present reality of his time which he has diagnosed as suffering a 'spiritual paralysis.' By the name of this malady, he refers to his nation's spiritual inertia and eventually inability to realize their own problems, let alone to solve them.

With this thematic focus and artistic purpose to stimulate his nation to get out of their dilemma, Joyce's epic actually assumes the Bakhtinian "novelistic spirit" (Bakhtin 22), in which "there is no epic distance" (Bakhtin 23) to hold him in awe as an author in depicting his object. Thus liberated, he is bold enough to use "the lancet of my art" which is his "cold steel pen" (*U* 7) to do his artistic or literary "vivisection"[3] on the body of his nation. This literary "lancet" of his is just the Bakhtinian art of "laughter" which "demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it. Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness

2) David Lodge even describes *Ulysses* as "a kind of thesaurus of Bakhtinian discourse types" (qtd. Booker 8).

3) In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen (Joyce's alter ego) says: "—The modern spirit is vivisective. Vivisection itself is the most modern process one can conceive. The ancient spirit accepted phenomena with a bad grace. The ancient method investigated law with the lantern of justice, morality with the lantern of revelation, art with the lantern of tradition. But all these lanterns have magical properties: they transform and disfigure. The modern method examines its territory by the light of day" (*SH* 186).

without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically" (Bakhtin 23). That is why his epic, as Joyce goes on to tell his friend in the above mentioned letter, is also "at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life). . . . It is also a kind of encyclopaedia" (*SL* 271). That means through the schema to let every chapter correspond to an organ of the body,[4] Joyce also deliberately highlights the legitimacy of human bodily desire against Catholic repression of it.[5] To some extent, this can be said to be an echo to what Havelock Ellis says in his *The New Spirit*[6] that the "Fall" "raised us onto our hind legs and enabled us to drink the cider of paradise" (qtd. Brown 137), namely, making us healthy and complete in our humanity instead of being maimed, alienated and deformed. Then, "a little story of a day (life)" is just the Irish Ulysses, Leopold Bloom's "post-Odyssean wanderings" (Ellmann, *Ulysses* 34) that lasts only 18 hours through Dublin. Apparently this journey consist of nothing grand or heroic but just some common or even trivial daily routines. Actually through the routines, Joyce reveals all the social problems and conflicts that confront, threaten and try to capture Stephen and Bloom, especially the latter. It is these problems that Joyce has made to correspond to the dangers on Odysseus's journey. In

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4) Before the publication of *Ulysses*, Joyce provides his two friends Carlo Linati (in 1920) and Stuart Gilbert (in 1921) each a schema to help them understand the fundamental structure of this complex work, as he says in the same letter mentioned in this section of the essay: "My intention is not only to render the myth *sub specie temporis nostri* but also to allow each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the somatic scheme of the whole) to condition and even to create its own technique" (*SL* 271).

5) Think about the mental and psychological suffering of Stephen in Chapter 3 of *A Portrait*.

6) Richard Ellmann, in his *The James Joyce*, includes an "Appendix: Joyce's Library in 1920" in which we find "Ellis, Havelock, *The New Spirit* (London etc.: Walter Scott, n.d., Preface dated 1892)" (107).

this sense, "it is also a kind of encyclopaedia," namely, through Bloom's one-day experience, Joyce presents nearly all aspects of Irish life in his time.

Thus is this epic's great incompatibility with the Homeric epic both in content and in style. All this is embodied with the characterization of its protagonist or the Irish Ulysses, Bloom. Compared with the Homeric epic hero Odysseus, Bloom is a complete anti-hero, both in the sense that he is not at all a "conquering hero" (*U* 264) and in the sense that, contrary to the epic hero's status as an integral part of his community, Bloom appears to be a radical alien. Joyce exaggeratedly highlights the second sense not only by giving him a different ethnic and religious identity from his fellow Dubliners, but especially by making him a different voice or a heteroglossia and essentially a critical outsider. By this radical incompatibility Joyce wants to make this anti-hero as a real hero, for the image of Bloom as a radical difference from the stereotypical Dubliners or the Irish as a whole provides a brand-new perspective and embodiment for Joyce's narration of his nation with the purposes first to deconstruct the established and cliched national ideology of his time and then ultimately to create the "uncreated conscience of my race" (*P* 196) who will in turn, as Joyce aspires, be able to construct a new world which is symbolized in Bloom's Utopia.

To achieve the above triple purposes—namely, the image of Bloom as an anti-hero through being a big difference or vice versa and thus, for Joyce, representing both radical criticism or deconstruction and utopian construction—through his art of laughter within a metaphorical epical structure, Joyce demonstrates such candor and audacity in his writing that, as he tells his friend in the same letter, "No English printer wanted to print a word of it. In America the review was suppressed four times. Now, as I hear, a great movement is being prepared against the publication on behalf of puritans, English imperialists, Irish republicans and Catholics—what an alliance! Golly,

I deserve the Nobel peace prize" (*SL* 271). But Joyce is not scared, since as early as in his writing of his first collection of stories, *Dubliners*, he already declares that "I have come to the conclusion that I can not write without offending people" (*SL* 83). That means in order to reveal the Ibsenian "awful truth" (*CW* 42), he is even not afraid of being condemned as "an enemy of the people."[7] He regards this courage to be his intellectual-writer's "literary conscience" (*SL* 110) which is fully demonstrated in *Ulysses*.

II. Bloom: Anti-Hero and Big Difference

Bloom as an anti-hero is manifested just through his image of being a big difference not only from his prototype Odysseus, but also from his fellow Dubliners, particularly from those narrow-minded and prejudiced citizens. Actually Joyce makes him a radical anti-hero solely by highlighting and exaggerating his differences from them in almost every aspect in order to make him completely a heteroglossia among them.

Thus we find that, in terms of ethnic identity, he is not a native Irish, but a Hungarian Jew. More intolerable to his fellow Dubliners is that his mindset is always at odds with theirs.' So in the eyes of both the ultra-nationalistic and the generally anti-Semitic Irish, he is suspicious and even dangerous for them. But this is just what Joyce wants in order to make him a wedge into the homogeneity of status quo and eventually to disrupt it.

Then, in terms of his religious identity, although he was twice baptized

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7) *An Enemy of the People* is a 1882 drama by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whom Joyce has regarded as his spiritual mentor ever since he was a college student. In the drama the protagonist Dr. Thomas Stockmann insists on telling truth in resistance against all other people's objection, besmearing, condemnation and declaring him to be "An Enemy of the People."

first into Protestantism and then into Catholicism (Budgen 276, 279), he is neither a devout Catholic nor a committed believer in any other religion. That also makes him an outsider among the pious Catholic population of Ireland at that time. With the ambiguity of his identity as such, he always arouses hostility and suspicion. This can be seen in the provocative and malicious questioning by Ned in Chapter 12, "—Is he a jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he? Or who is he?" (*U* 337). Again, this ambiguity implicates Joyce's intention to make Bloom as one who cannot be assimilated by any of the current ideologies, nationalistic or Catholic or whatever. In this sense, his very existence is already a threat to all the established and therefore fixed modes of life and could, as Joyce intends, eventually subvert all of them.

Furthermore, in terms of sexual or gender identity, he is not only impotent and cannot satisfy his wife as a husband, he actually lacks masculinity as a man, but has a woman-like physical sensation. In correspondence with this inner quality, he is depicted in appearance as a middle-aged man with a slightly fat body and an aunt-like face.[8] He is thus called a "a finished example of the new womanly man" by medical student Dixon (*U* 493), "bisexually abnormal" by Mulligan (*U* 493), and is especially maligned by the "Citizen" as "Half and half," "A fellow that's neither fish nor flesh" (*U* 321). All these qualities, in a male chauvinist and patriarchal society, make him an utter alien, a marginalized and degraded figure. But this is also Joyce's strategy to exaggerate and radicalize Bloom's difference in order to highlight his different response to the people and world around him.

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8) Joyce's portrait of Bloom from David Pierce, *James Joyce's Ireland*. Yale UP, 199 5, p. 134.

Thereby we find that, in spite of being thus discriminated, yet, in contrast to the militant and aggressive nationalist citizens in their hullabaloo, or to the eloquent and arrogant press men and professor in their empty talks, he is always a modest, quiet and even mostly silent person. Besides, since throughout the whole day in *Ulysses*, he remains dressed in black after the funeral he attends in the morning, he is made even more inconspicuous as he appears and disappears at the relevant places such as the national library and newspaper office for his business as an advertisement agent. The reason why he cannot return home to change clothes further reveals Joyce's indication of his personality: The reason is that his home in that day is occupied by an "invader" (his wife's lover Boylan). But since he does not want to be a rival, least to say an adversary to any one, so he chooses to remain in black in his wanderings the whole day long. To this so called or virtual "confrontation" between Bloom and Boylan, Joyce's verdict is that Boylan is the "conquering hero" but Bloom is the "unconquered hero" (*U* 264), winning Molly's, but ultimately, Joyce's "yes" at the end of the novel.

In connection with the above characteristics, Joyce goes on to highlight his emotional difference. Again, instead of being stern or tough like a hero, he is full of tender feelings and love. At home. he ponders the feelings of cats and the misfortunes of rats, misses his son who died at the age of eleven days, worries about his adolescent daughter who is out on her own, and cares for his wife who has not yet got up from bed. Outside the home, he extends these tender feelings not only to stray children, orphans, pregnant woman in distress, blind young man and the depressed Stephen, but also to a calf-bearing cow sent to the slaughterhouse, a seagull feeding at sea and his father's dying old dog. To summarize by borrowing the narrator's exaggerated description of him in Chapter 14: "And sir Leopold that was the goodliest guest that ever sat in scholars' hall and that was the meekest man and the kindest that ever laid

husbandly hand under hen and that was the very truest knight of the world" (*U* 388). This is actually Joyce's affirmation of Bloom's personality and humanity.

As such a person, it is natural that in behavior, he is even less in keeping with the traditional image of a hero. He makes his first appearance in Chapter 4 as a mere mortal or common man, enjoying eating, drinking, and dwelling on his passions and desires. Joyce deliberately describes in detail his love for animal offal:

> Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.
>
> Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray. Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish. (*U* 55)

Such is the Irish Ulysses. So there is no surprise that his "post-Odyssean wanderings" (Ellmann, *Ulysses* 34), within 18 hours from 8 o'clock June 16th 1904 to 2 o'clock next morning, has nothing grand but just some trivial daily routines, such as making his own and his wife's breakfast, attending a funeral, going to various places in the city for his job as an advertisement salesman, and finally back home. But Joyce has embedded all the happenings in that single day into the framework of the *Odyssey*, with the people or things Bloom encounters wherever he goes corresponding to the various perils and adventures on Odysseus's journey. Thus, it seems, in Richard Ellmann's words, that "*Ulysses* is a great joke on Homer" (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 360), but just as Richard Ellmann has also noticed:

> But jokes are not necessarily so simple, and these have a double aim. The first aim is the mock-heroic, the mighty spear juxtaposed with the two-penny cigar. The second, a more subtle one, is what might be called the ennoblement of the mock-heroic. This demonstrates that the world of cigars is devoid of heroism only to those who don't understand that Ulysses' spear was merely a sharpened stick, as homely an instrument in its way, and that Bloom can demonstrate the qualities of man by word of mouth as effectively as Ulysses by thrust of spear. (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 360)

By this interpretation of Bloom's image confronted by and therefore also in contrast to the violent and tyrannical Citizen, or the Irish Cyclops in analogy to that of the Homeric epic, Chapter grasps or summarizes the very essence of Joyce's characterization of Bloom, namely, a mock-hero or anti-hero as real hero. This implication lies just in the symbolic meaning of the two-penny cigar. On the surface, the cigar is used by Joyce seemingly as a comic analogy to the mighty spear used by Odysseus to blind the single eye of the gigantic monster Cyclops in order to escape his cave. But in depth, the cigar symbolizes Bloom's sober, rational, intellectual and contemplative character, which is again the very opposite to the manic, irrational, aggressive and parochial mentality of the Citizen in particular and those similar Dubliners around him in general. In this actual confrontation, Bloom is again the "unconquered hero," but his victory is not a Homeric one, that is, not by force, but through his spirit and character as manifested in the above aspects. Together they constitute his unique humanity.

Such humanity has already been foreshadowed in Joyce's design when he tells his friend Frank Budgen that Bloom is intended by him to be a "complete all-round character" and "a good man" (Budgen 15, 17, 18, 65. *U* 235). But in this explanation to Budgen why he has chosen Odysseus as Bloom's prototype, the "complete all-round character" mainly refers to the multifaceted

identity of Odysseus as "son to Laertes, . . . father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy and King of Ithaca" and his rich experiences as well as his "wisdom and courage" (Budgen 16). Once in the novel, just because Joyce appropriates Odysseus for his own purposes mentioned previously, he exaggerates his "complete all-roundness" to extremes by making his image overflow or erupt the framework of the classic epic hero and completely transfigures the archetypal hero into an anti-hero, but real hero intended by Joyce.

We thereby find before us a character in whom extremes meet instead of opposing each other. That is: as a humiliated "cuckold," he is still the most tender husband; as a most common and practical advertising salesmen, he is also what M'Coy said in Chapter 10: "He's a cultured allroundman, Bloom is, (he said seriously). He's not one of your common or garden . . . you know . . . There's a touch of the artist about old Bloom" (*U* 235). In life, though he belongs to the discriminated, the marginalized, and even the hated, yet that does not prevent him from showing concern to everything around him in Dublin. That's why Mulligan in Chapter 14 doubted: "But with what fitness, let it be asked of the noble lord, his patron, has this alien, whom the concession of a gracious prince has admitted to civic rights, constituted himself the lord paramount of our internal polity" (*U* 409)? To this question, the answer is already given at the beginning of Chapter 14 when Bloom arrived late in night at the National Maternity Hospital: "Some man that wayfaring was stood by housedoor at night's oncoming. Of Israel's folk was that man that on earth wandering far had fared. Stark ruth of man his errand that him lone led till that house" (*U* 385). Just because of his "Stark ruth," so though as a victim of anti-Semitism, he is not a revenger. His principle is "Love . . . the opposite of hatred" and he regards human life under this

principle to be "really life" (*U* 333).

It is the 'complete all-roundness' in the above aspects that finally makes Bloom 'a good man' in the real sense of the word. Then, in turn, this further increases Bloom's complete all-roundness, that is, Joyce, through the Citizens' mouth, calls him "the new Messiah of Ireland" (*U* 337).

III. Bloom: Critical Perspective and Force of Deconstruction

Why is such an anti-hero exactly real hero for the Joycean national epic? This is because Joyce's epic, unlike the Hegelian "epic proper" or "genuine epic" (Hegel 1044, 1045), does not celebrate a "national heroic past" composed of "a world of 'beginnings' and 'peak times' in the national history, a world of fathers and of founders of families, a world of 'firsts' and 'bests'" (Bakhtin 13), but rather intends to diagnose the present condition of a people still under external and internal colonization and therefore full of historical nightmares, social problems and national maladies, yet without their own all these problems. So the Joycean Odyssey is actually an expedition to explore ways to change the status quo, and eventually to open a new future for the Irish people. As such, the hero of this journey must be a different adventurer, whose perspective can enable Joyce to deconstruct and construct at the same time.

What Joyce wants to deconstruct is not only physical or external colonization under Great Britain but also spiritual or internal colonization under Catholic restriction and nationalist narrowmindedness, and especially the latter. Thus, Bloom, as interpreted above, can be said to be a 'wedge' for Joyce to break into a closed space of stubborn consciousness and eventually a 'blasting force' from within, exploding the cliched ideology and preparing

for a new nation to come. In this sense, it can be said that through the image of Bloom, Joyce is carrying out the literary action he has been planning ever since he was "the artist as a young man."[9]

As is known to Joyce's readers, as early as in his autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce, or, his alter-ego Stephen Dedalus, has already been determined to write against his contemporary writers' style of cheap flattery, romantic sentimentality and provocative propaganda, which Joyce calls 'the cracked looking-glass of a servant' (*U* 16). Contrary to them, Joyce wants to make sober analysis and sharp criticism. In *Ulysses*, besides in Stephen's defiant and iconoclast gestures and speech, this is mainly achieved through the sober-minded, rational, contemplative and scientific-practical Bloom's streams of consciousness and soliloquizes. His different character and thinking always produce de-familiarized or even grotesque perspectives that have unexpected power of deconstruction. But powerful as his remarks are, none of them has any empty rhetoric or high-sounding words. Instead, they are all seemingly casual or unintentional idea or comment, sometimes just in a few words or even a fragmentary imagery. But once juxtaposed together, they could have an instant subversive effect with seemingly the slightest touch on its target. In this way, from nationalist politics to imperialist occupation, from Catholic ritual to Revivalist movement leader's mysticism, from the Zionist fantasy by Irish men of letters to even Parnell's arrogance and so on, none can escape his critical gaze and subversion. Just a few examples will be enough to demonstrate the effect of his critical power.

Let's first see how Bloom criticizes nationalism in his unique or even eccentric but very effective way. In Chapter 4, Bloom makes his first appearance and begins his "post-Odyssean wanderings" of that day (Ellmann,

9) See Joyce's autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Ulysses 34). After careful preparation of his wife's breakfast, he goes to the street to buy kidney for his own breakfast. Seeing the rising morning sun, the free association in his stream of consciousness leads his mind to the title of a book in his library, *In the Track of the Sun: Diary of a Globe Troller,* and then to the book's title page with a picture of sunburst. This free association, in turn, naturally leads to another sunburst picture, namely, the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader, a pro-Home Rule daily morning newspaper in Dublin. But Bloom is especially reminded of "what Arthur Griffith said about the headpiece": "a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the Janeway behind the bank of Ireland" (*U* 57). The headpiece does depict a sunburst over the Bank of Ireland. Under the headpiece is the motto "Ireland a Nation," indicating that Ireland is an independent nation instead of a geographical fragment of Great Britain. The decoration is no doubt familiar to every Irishman at the time and already taken for granted: the rising sun represents the hope of homerule, and the Bank of Ireland building was the seat of the independent Irish Parliament before the Act of Union, so the symbolic meaning of the decoration is self-evident. But given the position of the bank, the sunrise would be in the northwest. Bloom is especially interested in this comment by Arthur Griffith. And then he "prolonged his pleased smile" knowingly and made his own comment: "Ikey touch that: homerule sun rising up in the northwest" (*U* 57). This comment, though short and simple, yet very sharp and to the point, that is, there is something wrong in the very orientation or direction of Irish nationalism.

Then in Chapter 8, as he walks in Dublin through its buildings that chronicle its colonial past, he sees "a squads of constables debouched from College street" (*U* 162) to patrol the city, but in his eyes, they are "let out to graze. . . . bound for their troughs" (*U* 162), that is, he mentally compares these drunken occupiers to a herd of cattle (cf. John Bull). At the same time

he is also critical of the nationalists' instigation of the Irish youth against England while they themselves are full of corruption, betrayal, etc. Then, all of a sudden, his thoughts return to Griffith, regarding his want to "gas about our lovely land" (*U* 164) as just some ballyhoo. Immediately, next in his mind, he juxtaposes the image of nationalists at debates claiming that the revival of the Irish language is more important than economic development with their image of gorging on food and drink, and finally, again back to Griffith's ideal: "The not far distant day. Homerule sun rising up in the northwest." At this point, "His smile faded as he walked, a heavy cloud hiding the sun slowly" (*U* 164). Here we may use Donald T. Torchiana's words to summarize Bloom's, actually Joyce's, deconstructive operation with words: "innocent but loaded . . . He does so much with so little" (Torchiana 13).

This kind of operation as Bloom's style of thought and way of criticism can be found throughout *Ulysses*. The following operation in subverting the British empire is even more simple but also more powerful. On seeing the British garrison soldiers marching on the streets arrogantly, and through thinking of their corruption, drunkenness and debauchery, Bloom, seemingly without even realizing it, has a phrase pop out from his mind: "an army rotten with venereal disease: overseas or halfseasover empire" (*U* 73). This brilliant and sharp description of the empire, with the second modifier reversing the first in front of 'empire', creates the deconstructive effect within language structure itself, that is, overseas empire is already subverted by the halfseasover (intoxicated/ drunk/ corrupt) empire.

Examples such as these are readily available throughout the novel, and together they constitute the deconstructive power of Bloom and bring him one victory after another. But "this kind of victory is not Homeric" (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 360), that is, to borrow Ellmann's words again, it is not victory through "the mighty spear," but through "the two-penny cigar" (*James Joyce*

360), namely, sober analysis and contemplative reflection. This means that Bloom's victory is not by military force, but by the force of his spirit, which is the radical difference embodied both in Bloom's anti-hero image and his anti-stereotype image.

IV. Bloom's Utopian Aspiration for National Future

To some extent, Joyce's above deconstructive literary action through the characterization of Bloom's perspective and personality can be compared to that of "The Destructive Character" in Walter Benjamin's sense. For Benjamin: "The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred." According to Benjamin, as such a personality, "the destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rejuvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age; it cheers, because everything cleared away means to the destroyer a complete reduction, indeed a rooting out, of his own condition" (Benjamin, *Selected* 541). But though "What exists he reduces to rubble," yet his ultimate goal is "not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it" (*Selected* 542). So destruction here is a kind of double operation, corresponding exactly to Joyce's literary intention. This intention is made more and more manifest in Bloom's journey, which can be said to be going along two parallel lines: one is "love, the opposite of hatred" (*U* 333), a principle for construction of a new life, the other is critique on both ideological and social levels. Just because of this double operations, his aim of deconstruction is not to harvest the ruins, but to find the way through them towards a new space different from the present.

This is nowhere more clear than in Chapter 15. In the magic-realist space

of this chapter, Bloom is metamorphosed into the King of "the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (*U* 484), which represents the coming of a new era as he declares to his subjects: "My beloved subjects, a new era is about to dawn. I, Bloom, tell you verily it is even now at hand. Yea, on the word of a Bloom, ye shall ere long enter into the golden city which is to be, the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (*U* 484).

This Utopia, though fantastique, is based on Bloom's ideal of future Ireland, for "Nova Hibernia" is Latin words for "New Ireland". "Bloomusalem" is a parody of Jerusalem, symbolizing not only the Jerusalem as a promised land for Jews, but also what Bloom said in the previous page (*U* 483):[10]

> [In response to Parnell, Bloom] (embraces John Howard Parnell) We thank you from our heart, John, for this right royal welcome to green Erin, the promised land of our common ancestors.
> (The freedom of the city is presented to him embodied in a charter. The keys of Dublin, crossed on a crimson cushion, are given to him. He shows all that he is wearing green socks). (*U* 483)

Here "green Erin" is Ireland. "Erin" is a poetic name for antient Ireland before foreign invasions. "Green" is the Irish national color, also an allusion to "Erin, Green Gem of the Silver Sea", an image that embodies Irish people's love and proudness of their beautiful homeland. Next, this Bloomusalem will be "built in the shape of a huge pork kidney" (Bloom's breakfast, *U* 484), indicating its connection with Bloom's ideas elaborated above.

Then Bloom describes this new world:

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10) Remember Joyce declares that *Ulysses* "is the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland)" (*SL* 271).

> New worlds for old (plural). Union of all, jew, moslem and gentile. Three acres and a cow for all children of nature. Saloon motor hearses. Compulsory manual labour for all. All parks open to the public day and night. Electric dishscrubbers. Tuberculosis, lunacy, war and mendicancy must now cease. General amnesty, weekly carnival with masked licence, bonuses for all, esperanto the universal language with universal brotherhood. No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical impostors. Free money, free rent, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state. (*U* 489-90)

It is noteworthy that in this utopian idea there is not only an idealistic socialist aspiration, but also a context-specific reform of Ireland, and the focus is especially on the latter, no wonder that in order to build this "new Bloomsalem," the old landscape has to be demolished and cleared:

> Thirtytwo workmen, wearing rosettes, from all the counties of Ireland, under the guidance of Derwan the builder, construct the new Bloomusalem. It is a colossal edifice with crystal roof, built in the shape of a huge pork kidney, containing forty thousand rooms. In the course of its extension several buildings and monuments are demolished. Government offices are temporarily transferred to railway sheds. Numerous houses are razed to the ground. The inhabitants are lodged in barrels and boxes, all marked in red with the letters: L.B. Several paupers fall from a ladder. A part of the walls of Dublin, crowded with loyal sightseers, collapses. (*U* 484)

This paragraph comes immediately after Bloom's declaration of this new world. This is actually Joyce literary act to destroy the old world in order to build a new world. For Joyce, again, just like for Benjamin, "construction presupposes destruction" (Benjamin, *Arcades* 470). Bloom as the extreme image of difference and critical perspective ultimately represents both Joyce's critical perspective and aspiration for a new world.

This double literary purposes or functions have been Joyce's pursuit throughout his life as a writer. While his critical perspective is obvious in all his works, his utopian aspiration seems less noticeable. But actually as early as in his 1904 "Goblin Portrait," namely, his short essay "A Portrait of the Artist," he already defines himself as "the fantastic idealist" (*PSW* 212). His enthusiastic utopian appeal, with which he ends his essay, seems to be the very early foreshadow of Bloom's utopian dream:

> To those multitudes not as yet in the wombs of humanity but surely engenderable there, he would give the word. Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted; and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action. (*PSW* 218)

Then in his novel *A Portrait*, he again declares no less enthusiastically at the end: "Welcome, O life, I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (*P* 196). But his last sentence is "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (*P* 196). That is, in order to change reality, he must first transcend the labyrinth that entrapped him, this in reality, is Ireland of his time.

His lifelong literary pursuit in its double operation and function can be in nowhere so extravagantly staged as in *Ulysses*, specifically in its Chapter 15, just because here the magic realist space enhanced also by Bakhtinian laughter gives his imagination and aspiration full play.

V. Conclusion

James Joyce's brother Stanislaus Joyce in his book *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years* judges that "the two dominant passions of my brother's life were love of father and of fatherland. . . . love of his country, or rather of his city, that was to reject him and his work; love of his father, who was like a mill-stone round his neck" (Stanislaus Joyce 238). This remark accurately summarizes Joyce's ambivalence towards his nation and his father, a typical Dubliner, as well as his nation's misunderstanding of him during his life time. This is just because the deeper he loves the two, the sharper he criticizes them. To appropriate the German Frankfurt School critic Adorno's logic, we can call his love a "negative love," namely, he hopes to make his nation to be on an equal footing with all other European nations by stimulating it with radical criticism into changing itself. This purpose is epitomized in the anti-hero Bloom in *Ulysses*. Through making this image a big difference from his fellow Dubliners, Joyce fulfills his double literary functions of criticism and construction at the same time, expressing his truly sincere love for his nation.

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Abstract

Anti-Hero as Promise of a Future New World: Interpreting the Image of Bloom in *Ulysses*

Guo Jun

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a mock epic that parodies the Homeric epic *Odyssey*, therefore, not only its style is no longer grand, its content is also trivial. What is most striking is that its protagonist Leopold Bloom, the Irish Ulysses, compared with his prototype Odysseus, is a radical anti-hero, devoid of any heroic quality, but just an apparently most common man. But at the same time, he is also a most uncommon man not only because of his deviation from an epic hero but especially because of his great difference from the stereotypical Dubliners of his time. He is thus a heteroglossia among his fellow citizens and provides Joyce a critical perspective both to deconstruct the status quo of that time and to imagine a new future for his own nation.

■ Key words : *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom, anti-hero, new perspective, critique, aspiration
(율리시스, 레어폴드 블룸, 반영웅, 새로운 관점, 비평, 열망)

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