

2 Illustration and Portraiture

2.1 Illustrations with a Difference

The illumination or illustration of a canonical text has traditionally been the occupation of artists. This fact colours expectations even when viewers are faced with twentieth-century texts. Some artists with an interest in Joyce have, it seems, illustrated this expectation rather than Joyce's writings. While works covered in this chapter and the next one on portraiture reveal few problems in finding a link between the works and Joyce, far greater issues arise concerning some material. I share Irene A. Martyniuk's surprise at the discovery that "many attempts at illustrating *Ulysses* are [...] attempts at the mimetic",¹ while mimetic illustrations are impossible to achieve – especially with Joyce's later works.² As Renée Riese Hubert has summarized Surrealist book "illustration":

After the close of the nineteenth century, avant-garde book artists favoured literary works that challenged a mimetic approach [...]. The painter implemented a vision metaphorically based on, but not metonymically inscribed in, the text. Indeed, a literal interpretation would have cheapened the poem, in the manner of a prose paraphrase.³

Margot Norris has found in *Finnegans Wake* "that intellectual shift which locates meaning in relationships and structure rather than in content".⁴ In return for the challenges to book illustration and the revolutionary changes that have occurred in the genre, it has also gained. It is no longer an ancillary discipline. Much of the work included in later chapters of this study could be classified as reacting to Joyce's texts metaphorically. Initially, however, valid approaches that can still be described as illustration need to be assessed. The borderlines are fleeting.

The traditional concept of illustration is bound up with didactic intentions. Joyce was, however, specific about his view that art should not be didactic.⁵ Indeed, suggestion rather than information is called for; interpretation rather than translation. Some artists seem to be of the opinion that if Joyce does not provide a clear plot that offers sufficiently detailed descriptions of the protagonists, it was their task to "compensate". It is apparent that this would not only be an audacious claim, but it would also mean missing all the important points about Joyce's works, where the search for meaning is paramount and not its fixation; the path and not the goal. It is all the more alarming then that "Even when

18 Gereon Inger, *Ulysses Stamps* 1994

19 Henri Matisse, "Ithaca" from Limited Editions Club *Ulysses*, 1935

mimetically ‘wrong’ [quite a likely case with Joyce], an image creates a coauthorship between Joyce and the illustrator.”⁶

While the urge on the part of a reader to respond to Joyce visually is understandable, the results will, however, transcend the personal, become meaningful and worthy of the writer only if they relate to more than one “plot” and one reader. They need to reflect some formal innovations present in Joyce’s works, namely art history and literature, and, importantly, their own context: contemporary art practice.⁷

It would be wrong, however, to assume that realism and iconography had no part in this. As Mieke Bal points out in relation to iconography and recognition:

[...] every element [is] an iconographic sign for recognition, and [...] even the most unimportant will do. Once the story is recognised, nothing prevents the reader from using the story in all its complexity to process other elements of the visual work. If understood as reader response, recognition can be helpful, not bedazzling/eye-shutting but eye-opening, a means of enhancing awareness of the cultural process every act of reading or viewing is involved in. Recognition can also trigger a critical response.⁸

That critical response or interpretation is required, since false constructions of unity would be very much in conflict with Joyce’s procedures and the spirit of his work. Bal also asserts:

Primarily under the influence of deconstruction, the assumption that works constitute a unity has been shown to stimulate strongly ideological interpretations, to erase disturbing details that do not fit, and to impose a Romantic conception of organic growth that is not relevant to works unrelated to the Romantic tradition.⁹

Considering the later Joyce’s deconstructive work *avant la lettre*, a tension in the reading process appears, which should not be glossed over, but revealed in the visual work on Joyce.¹⁰ Artworks on Joyce, particularly *Ulysses* illustrations, have so far been almost exclusively read for their realistic, mimetic effect, for iconographical matches and for the “underlying” story. The images should be allowed to tell their own story – if indeed they have one to tell.¹¹ Only a fraction of the existing work can be presented in the text, while I refer further examples to the notes.

Henri Matisse It is generally accepted that Henri Matisse, in his 1935 Limited Editions Club *Ulysses*,^{19, 20} actually illustrated the *Odyssey*. This is for most Joyceans¹² – and was for Joyce himself¹³ – a dismissive statement. But this need not be so if one takes into account what has just

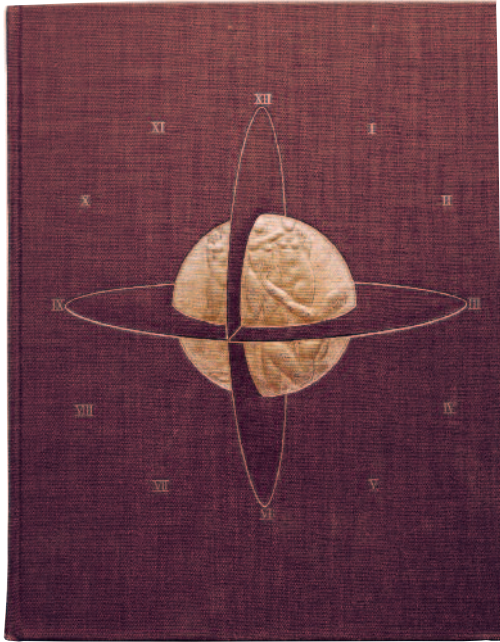
been said – indeed if one has a closer look at the work and considers Matisse’s persona as a Modernist artist.¹⁴ As such – while accepting a commercial commission to illustrate a book and thus compromise his ideally autonomous status – he had every reason to seek some distance between himself and Joyce’s work. To achieve this, he predictably chose to state that he had not actually read *Ulysses*.¹⁵

The illustrations themselves, on the other hand, are remarkably “Joycean”: between the pages of the sumptuously produced volume, we find “sketches” on blue and yellow paper alongside the “final” prints of simplified, abstracted or universal images (like a garden gate for “Ithaca”).¹⁹ Matisse was perfectly capable of drawing a garden gate without a preliminary drawing, especially one that is an even more detailed and specific rendition than the “result”. Although correspondence suggests that it was not Matisse’s idea to include these drawings,¹⁶ the artist (bearing in mind the dismissive Modernist attitude towards preliminary drawings) would not have shown them to anyone if they had not been intended or at least available for inclusion.

Matisse may not have read every line of *Ulysses*, but he was certainly aware of the book’s stylistic features.¹⁷ He provided a complementary tribute by giving several versions of each image for the five episodes that he illustrated, reflecting and multiplying Joyce’s multiplicity of styles. In this light, it is appropriate to have departed from Homer in order to arrive at universal, timeless images. This is what Joyce himself did.¹⁸ Both agreed on this approach when they spoke on the telephone in August 1934.¹⁹

George Macy, the American entrepreneur behind the book venture, listed his own name on the credits page as the edition’s designer. Having had reservations about the lack of an overt relationship between the etchings and *Ulysses*, he uses Matisse’s “Nausicaa” image to provide a framework for an interpretation of the Matisse etchings as part of the volume. The motif on the surface of a golden planet in the centre looks like the three graces from the *Judgment of Paris*,²⁰ designed for “Nausicaa”.²⁰ This motif is surrounded by ellipses, which mark the vertical and the horizontal on a clock face: the numbers one to twelve are placed in a circle around this cosmos.

If the *Odyssey* had been the point of reference, that clock face would be anachronistic and meaningless. Matisse/Macy thus juxtapose modern life – more precisely a day in it (the two ellipses can stand for two sets of hands) – with ancient mythology, just as Joyce did before them. Matisse’s several images for each episode are in various (not always but



20 **Henri Matisse, George Macy, cover design for *Ulysses* 1935**

often successive) stages of abstraction. This is apparently how the artist viewed the stylistic multiplicity of *Ulysses* – a valid and late Modernist interpretation, as the artist reflects on stylistic changes within Modernist visual art, as well as his own oeuvre.²¹ It is fully congruous with Matisse’s work. Indeed, one look at this – as well as Matisse scholarship – will reveal that “in much of Matisse’s [...] painting, [he] portrays a single subject in different stylistic modes [...] a] free movement between artistic conventions – it implies that there can be no single, valid way of seeing a subject.”²²

Considering existing commentaries on this *Ulysses* illustration in that light,²³ one wonders if they may not short-change Matisse. The stylistic multiplicity achieved by enclosing the related drawings is such a vital aspect of the work that it is hardly imaginable without it. Indeed, it would work against the multiplicity developed in Matisse’s other work. That the etchings on their own would not have sufficed, even for the contemporaries involved, is clarified by comments on another artist’s work.

Lewis Daniel/Stuart Gilbert Lewis Daniel presented to the same George Macy of the Limited Editions Book Club *Ulysses* a set of

eighteen illustrative drawings for *Ulysses*.²⁴ Stylistically these very much belong to the 1930s, reminiscent at times of some of Picasso's more Classicist work. They are interesting here, because Stuart Gilbert commented on them at length: an early critical assessment of such work – possibly even mediated by Joyce. Gilbert praises Daniel's draughtmanship and continues:

As illustrations to *Ulysses* they are not, in my opinion, equally successful. The artist knows the text well, has brought in the symbols and suggested the Greek allusions with skill [...] yet I consider that on the whole he has taken a one-sided view of Mr. Joyce's epic. There is for one thing too much *sameness* about the drawings. Each episode has a technique of its own and the artist should have brought out these differences. For 'Nausicaa' he might have used a mid-Victorian technique [...].²⁵

This privileged source's suggestions can be adopted. In relation to Matisse, Gilbert, Joyce and others would have undoubtedly also criticized the unchanging style's one-sidedness, if only the etchings had been included in the publication.

However, there seem to be problems with stylistic multiplicity in twentieth-century art. Visual artists do not present the fruits of ten or seventeen years of work (as the case may be) in portable format and all at once. Each day's or week's work needs to resemble the last in some way – or so market forces lead one to believe. It is a dangerous business for visual artists to forego that familial likeness. Most of the artists who have created Joyce illustrations have indeed adhered to this "law" of their medium and thus sacrificed a degree of relevance.

3.2 →

Richard Hamilton Artworks on *Ulysses* by Richard Hamilton are a special case. Created in the late 1940s and – after a gap of four decades²⁶ – again from the 1980s onwards, the prints are not coherent in approach. What began as one-dimensional, uniformly realistic depictions of Bloom and various scenes from *Ulysses*²⁷ has over time turned into a multi-stylistic array of studies and different versions for each of the seven episodes so far covered. That change in perspective occurred when Hamilton fortuitously abandoned (for financial reasons) the idea for an illustrated volume, which would have duplicated nineteenth-century approaches with little regard for Joyce's innovation or any awareness of the audacity of producing a definitive Joyce illustration that "would be equivalent to declaring 'I understand Joyce' and 'I am better than Joyce'".²⁸

In the new context, even the older illustrations are usable, although they may mislead some viewers. The various prints were (in a 2001-03 exhibition-tour) rightly displayed in clusters. Hamilton places great emphasis on printing techniques, which may be appropriate in relation to *Ulysses*, particularly “Aeolus”, but also *vis-à-vis* the intricate nature of Joyce’s procedures. Thus, Hamilton – although the crafty element yields very different results in his visual medium more than in literature – appropriately places his work within several relevant fields and traditions simultaneously.

One of the ways in which Hamilton follows Joyce, apart from the print medium, is the multiplicity of styles used. Two out of the seven completed images for the individual episodes contain different styles in themselves. This is the case in *How a Great Daily Organ is Turned Out* and *In Horne’s House* ²¹ – with *The Transmogrification of Bloom* as a related image, whose topic is character change. The “Great Daily Organ” is the *Freeman’s Journal* printed in “Aeolus”. Hamilton has juxtaposed and printed together various small plates relating to a variety of episodes, like an adapted image of Joyce’s own funeral for “Hades”. There is also the advertisement for The House of Keys, which Bloom is trying to place in *Ulysses* – the only reference in the illustrations to advertising, Pop Art’s forte.

As a whole, the *Daily Organ* resembles not only Picasso’s compilations of printing plates, but Hamilton’s own poster-cum-catalogue for the Joyce exhibition at London’s ICA, 1950. ³ Simultaneously, both broadsheets refer to the collage and typographical experiments of the Dadaists. Collage (often in the medium of print) has, moreover, been an interest of Hamilton’s throughout his Pop Art-related works.

In his *Daily Organ*, Hamilton includes a print after Patrick Tuohy’s portrait of Joyce’s father. This introduces art-historical references.²⁹ *In Horne’s House* ²¹ contains a multiplicity of styles in a programmatic way. It is the image relating to the “Oxen of the Sun” episode, whose topic is the birth of language, corresponding to a birth in Dublin’s maternity hospital in Holles Street. Joyce’s approach, to give a chronological development of styles within the English language, first pointed Hamilton towards a Cubist image. In the 1980s, this was succeeded by a multiplicity of artistic styles. The figures are taken from the Easter Islands, Egypt, Bellini, Rembrandt, a Napoleon portrait by Baron Gros and a Cézanne. There is also an “Cubist” still life in the centre of *In Horne’s House*. Cézanne’s inclusion in this scene may be programmatic.

Art history credits Cézanne with making the surface of the image opaque in the sense that one does not perceive of the canvas as a clear



21 **Richard Hamilton,**
In Horne's House
1982

window on to a different world. Instead, the artwork presents itself as what it is, an object made with paint by an artist.³⁰ Terry Eagleton focused on exactly this aspect of Joyce's text in his essay on Hamilton's *Ulysses* illustrations completed until 1988: "As the eye strives to penetrate the density of the written text in order to 'see' Molly, Bloom and Stephen [...], it finds itself arrested at the level of the material word – a word which insists on obtruding itself between us and the visual object",³¹ the image conjured up in our imagination while we read.

Hamilton is aware of the fact that it takes that kind of opacity if he does not wish to be called a good illustrator in the derogatory sense: "to categorise an artist as a good illustrator is a put-down",³² he appropriately states in the context of the *Ulysses* prints. The multiplicity and the art-historical references may provide some of this opacity or distance, although all the images for *Ulysses* remain essentially figurative, faithful and ministering to the text. Realism is ultimately counterproductive to letting the prints' materiality send its own message.

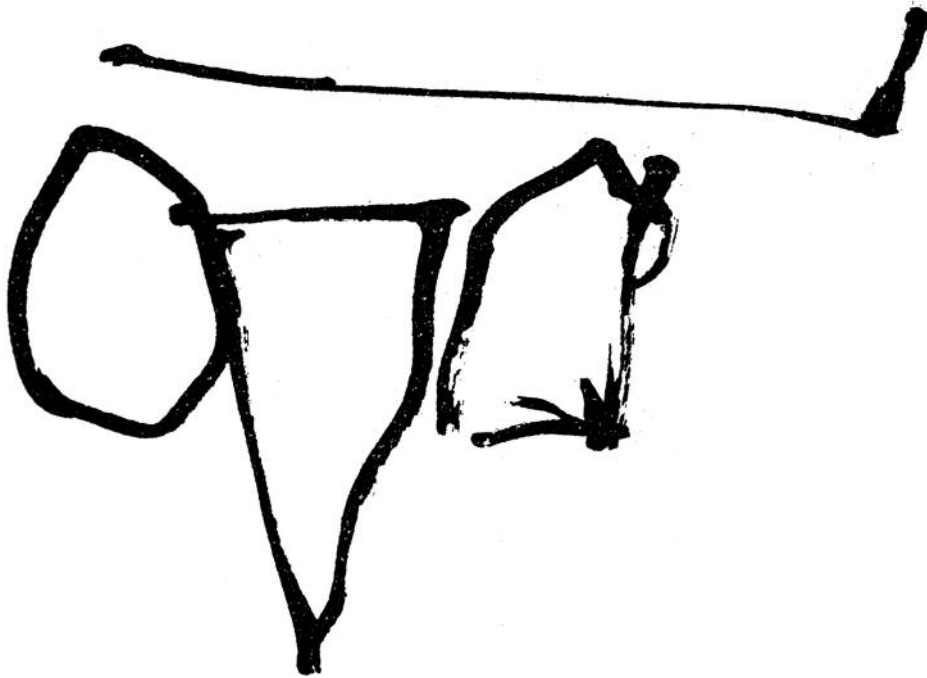
Hamilton's *Ulysses* illustrations, despite their acknowledged merits, are mainly that.³³ They sit squarely in the artist's oeuvre, divorced from the importance of quotidian material in Hamilton's Pop artwork and quite separate from his long-term involvement with the "Typotrans-

lation” of Duchamp’s notes, linked to Joyce by Sarat Maharaj. *Imag-
ing Ulysses* is the most traditional, even conventional, work Hamilton
has created. Although he interprets Joyce, his stance echoes the precon-
ceived notion that illustration automatically privileges tradition over
innovation. This is, I suggest, not how to respond to Joyce’s innovative
approaches. Hamilton’s other work, however, will certainly have to be
considered in terms of its responses to Joyce. In this regard, the *Ulysses*
illustrations serve as proof of Joyce’s presence in Hamilton’s mind for the
duration of his career.

Robert Motherwell, like Matisse, published a series of prints in a lim-
ited edition of *Ulysses*. And also like Matisse, he chose the gouging of
Cyclops as an image for the “Cyclops” episode. Despite these potential-
ly damning facts, Motherwell’s images are illustrations with a distinct
difference – and the artist reflects on this: “The content has always to be
expressed in modern terms: that is the premise. Joyce understood this
perfectly.”³⁴

The *Ulysses* illustrations are the culmination of many years – even
decades – of involvement with the writer.³⁵ As early as 1947, Motherwell
gave a painting the title *Ulysses*. However this already comes twelve years
after he first read the book, which Motherwell had bought as a twenty-
year-old in Paris.³⁶ One of the artist’s own favourite exhibitions of his
work was the one already noted, *Robert Motherwell: Tribute to James Joyce*,
1983, in Provincetown, Massachusetts, which coincided with a Joyce sym-
posium.³⁷ Drawings in two sketchbooks created prior to that exhibition
were subsequently, in 1983, shown at the Guggenheim Museum, New
York. These, as well as sketches in *The Joyce Sketchbook*, 1985, provide the
nucleus for an offer Motherwell made to the publisher Andrew Hoyem
of forty etchings to illustrate *Ulysses*. The project was completed in 1988.

Motherwell was a friend of the Joyce scholars Nathan Halper³⁸ and
David Hayman,³⁹ and he accumulated a scholarly Joyce library. This is
kept at the Dedalus Foundation, the artist’s foundation, renamed in 1990
(from Motherwell Foundation) after Stephen Dedalus. Bernd Klüser
describes this reference as the greatest tribute that the artist has made to
James Joyce. Indeed, it is almost like giving a legacy of one’s life’s work
to the writer. On the other hand, it can also be understood as a gesture
of identification with the older artist, as well as with Joyce’s alter ego.
Although this could be interpreted as that definitive statement of
authorship, in rivalry to Joyce, criticized earlier, the works clarify the
position as one seeking to do justice to Joyce, “while at the same time



22 Robert Motherwell, *Ulysses, tailpiece* 1988

finding a timely and innovative form”.⁴⁰ Motherwell speaks of illustration in the traditional sense: “I’ve always regarded what I have done as being modest illuminations, as many English books had in the early nineteenth century. [...] I happen to like books”.⁴¹ This most emphatically, however, relates to the book as an object, not to the kinds of images he produced – they are only barely figurative and thus open.

The forty etchings include eighteen black Roman numerals as titles for the episodes. Each episode is also accompanied by an image entitled with an element from Joyce’s schema for *Ulysses*. These are in black on a uniformly coloured background of eighteen different colours. The frontispiece is a portrait of Joyce and there are also two geometric designs, one opposite the title page, the other a tailpiece.²²

The nature of the illustrations can most easily be gauged when looking at these two complementary designs. The first shows a rectangle, a triangle and a circle: the “three basic forms of the universe”⁴² between two lines. These are reminiscent of the lines encompassing the Roman numerals at the beginning of each episode. Below the print, one reads the words “Telemachia – Odyssey – Nostos”, referring to the three books of *Ulysses*. At the end of the text, the three elements appear again, now allocated to “Trieste – Zurich – Paris”. This time, one line is distorted,

23 Robert
Motherwell,
Ulysses,
“Proteus”
1988



one missing: the world is not as it was before reading *Ulysses*.

The individual designs for the episodes barely hint at mimesis. *History* as the image for “Nestor” includes a line terminated by two small lines: a diagrammatic way of depicting the fourth dimension. *Hades* shows trees extending downwards from a line: the underworld is imagined as upside down. “Proteus”, the most visual and “artistic” of the episodes, has “Philology” as its art in Joyce’s schema. Motherwell writes “Liebe”²³ since philology can be translated (philologically) as the “love of words”. Moreover, Motherwell’s wife was German – hence *Liebe* (love in German). The visual artist turns into a philologist at the very point where the writer occupied himself with the problems of seeing and visibility – a telling chiasmus.

Motherwell works with metaphors and analogies. I concur with the artist when he thus claims to “be in tune with the way [Joyce] worked”.⁴³ The “crafted” side, however, is missing, giving way to a gestural, chance-guided line. As Bernd Klüser states:

The literary allusions in Motherwell’s titles in no way restrict what the paintings express, but point to the spiritual level of his engagement. As symbolic transformations they lead from the personal to the general and leave ample scope for universal interpretations.⁴⁴

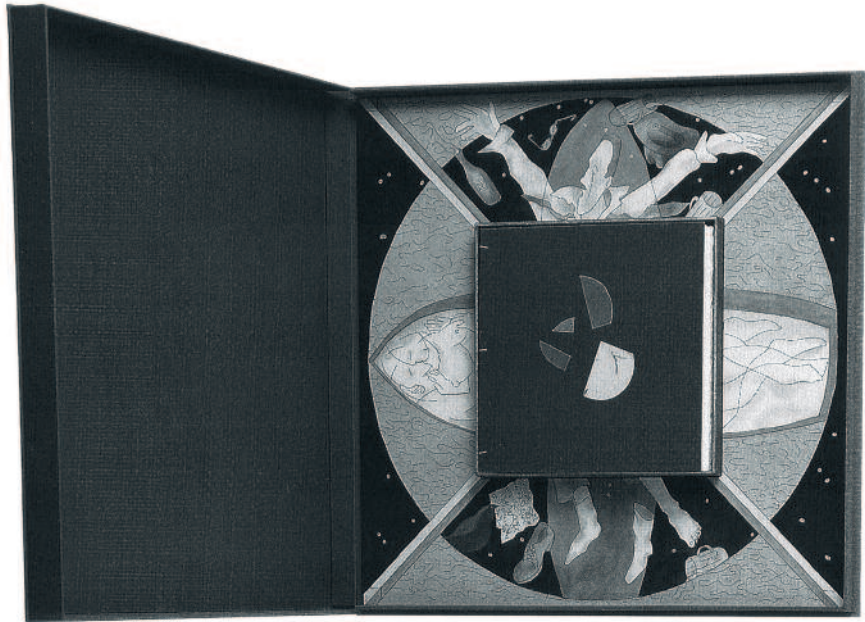


24 Mimmo Paladino, Hades
(2 Banbury caces 0.0.1) from *Ulysses* 16 June, 18 Etchings 1994

The *Ulysses* illustrations take their place among Joyce-inspired work throughout Motherwell's oeuvre. Marcelin Pleynet has assessed these.⁴⁵ A Joycean self-portrait remains here for later scrutiny. However appropriate the *Ulysses* prints are, they do not show the full extent of that inspiration or the fundamental ways in which Joyce has inspired Motherwell. The artist's experience of rereading *Ulysses* and illustrating that book is coloured by his reading of *Finnegans Wake*, which he bought in 1944,⁴⁶ and again in 1968.⁴⁷ The almost abstract, hardly decipherable nature of some of the *Ulysses* images testifies to this.

Mimmo Paladino in 1994 created eighteen etchings to accompany *Ulysses*.⁴⁸ ²⁴ The Italian artist's Campania home region alerted him to both Greek and Roman traditions. It is with this in mind that he approaches the topic by means of realistic black and white figures, hands or heads, almost all with gold leaf background. Joyce was interested in holy texts and made use of their conventions and theological terminology. A secularization of a Joycean kind can be assumed when considering the titles. They consist of the Homeric titles for the episodes, juxtaposed with one of the eighteen entries in Bloom's end-of-day budget. "Nestor" thus appropriately appears beside the cost of one penny for a copy of the

25 Susan Weil,
Brideship
and Gulls
1991



Freeman's Journal, given the conversation about Mr. Deasy's foot-and-mouth letter to the editor in that episode. The title for episode thirteen is *Nausicaa (1 Pig's foot o.o.4)*, humorously reflecting on Gerty McDowell's limp. The figures themselves only vaguely refer to the episodes. When Bloom carries Stephen in "Circe", a black-headed man sits on the shoulders of another man. The "Penelope" etching shows a man with very long hair and a beard. Is this Bloom? One of Molly's lovers? All of them? One needs to stretch one's imagination to link this with Molly Bloom's soliloquy.

This is evidence of an original interpretation on the part of the artist, a way to engage the viewers. I am not sure, however, about the ever-present gold leaf. It is too reverential, stressing the preciousness (and market value) that such a limited or special edition commands. These implications run counter to Joyce's less commercially oriented messages – and to Paladino's own background within Italian *Arte Povera*. Furthermore, as Stuart Gilbert again might say, there is too much sameness about these illustrations. A commentary on Joyce's stylistic multiplicity is not in evidence. Paladino's other works on Joyce, namely his book objects that use various editions for drawings and collages, however, add further appropriate connections.

→ 4.4

A pattern seems to emerge: artists working in a largely realistic and at least partially mimetic mode do not create their strongest work when faced with the (self-imposed) task of illustrating *Ulysses*. In their response to *Ulysses*, they are guided in particular by Joyce's schemata or isolated schematic elements of the novel, such as Bloom's budget. This can be seen as merely an attempt at a partial response, given Joyce's overwhelming multitude of material. It reflects what is realistically achievable, but may also constitute a somewhat impoverished response.

Susan Weil How can the established theoretical frameworks in relation to mimetic and figurative artworks illustrating Joyce's texts be applied to some works and especially: can merits still be found in artwork that takes a less than promising initial approach?⁴⁹

Susan Weil's introduction to Joyce was through her father reading *Finnegans Wake* to her as a child.⁵⁰ Her procedures with regard to Joyce have since varied, always however based on extensive visual, as well as textual, research in notebooks, culminating in several sumptuously produced artists' book on the *Epiphanies*, *Giacomo Joyce*, as well as *Brideships and Gulls* from *Finnegans Wake*. The unusual shape of the work would warrant inclusion under artists' books, but their illustrative nature and presentation alongside the text suggest illustration as another possible framework. It is a bibliophilistic pleasure to open the books, turn pages with representations of individual motifs or constellations of them, while being reminded of Joyce's words. Considering this experience, it may strike one as odd that these are still (only) figurative and even mimetic images.

4.4 →

Susan Weil's approach to the end of *Finnegans Wake*'s book II, *Brideship and Gulls*, 1991,²⁵ is to have the text on square sheets in the centre of a flat box, literally giving it pride of place. The six surrounding square "frames" are interchangeable and can be turned. Thus, they already point to the viewer's or reader's active engagement, especially faced with the central void in these images. The square suits Weil's purpose exceedingly well, as Mamalujo and other multiples of four are central to the structure and design of the *Wake*. Moreover, only in two cases is one encouraged to see the image as one whole – and even then this is in flux (the river Liffey with fish and floating Apostle figures in the universe). In the other four cases, the "frame" is divided and appears as a kaleidoscope. The ship of "Trustan with Usolde" is split in half. Where one finds a seagull, hands, an egg, the fragments are assembled like a puzzle. In one further case, self-referential, painted book objects in the four



26 Erwin Pfrang,
from *Circe cycle*
1988

corners show Joyce's Euclidean diagram. By means of a red triangle, Susan Weil links ALP's Delta with the label on a bottle of Bass beer. She thus supplies active interpretations and renders Joyce's optical connections visible, while providing the viewer with visual puzzles in correspondence to Joyce's text. The "empty frames", when mounted on a wall, also double as a series of shaped canvas works – this is an original approach, if not entirely up to the minute in terms of current art practice. Clearly, the supreme merit of this work lies in the fact that form and content are inseparable, as they need to be in works on Joyce. Weil, while providing recognizable motifs, does not misleadingly affirm a unity. Her work thus displays concurrent use of incompatible readings according to Mieke Bal:

[While] Modes of reading that look for details that do not fit are potentially useful tools for antirealist, critical readings [...] reading for a sense of textuality and of the wholeness this textuality entails, [this] does not necessarily preclude awareness of a fundamental lack of unity, whereas reading for the effect of the real as it is traditionally practiced tends to do so. But although incompatible, making them interact by activating both modes concurrently is in itself a critical endeavour: using them in combination helps us avoid the unifying fallacy.⁵¹

Erwin Pfrang The draftsman Erwin Pfrang created his *Circe* drawings to accompany the text of that episode of *Ulysses* in the late 1980s.²⁶ He is quick to point out, however, that he is not interested in illustration:

It was never my aim to make Joyce's prose readable by visual means [...] it was rather a question of what Joyce did to me. And then: cut and tear, the rubbing in of spittle and pain, the intellectual hair-splitting [...] mix the whole lot with what the day carried to my doorstep.⁵²

"Circe" is an appropriate choice for Pfrang, who juxtaposes little, funny or tragic creatures with blotches of ink and snippets of text.⁵³ The "composition" is highly idiosyncratic, often making it possible to view a drawing from all sides – in one word: an imaginative, "Circe"-like circus. Pfrang thus responds to the already mentioned partly "Expressionist", partly "Surrealist" qualities of *Ulysses'* longest episode in a style that finds its place – despite the privately searching, small-scale and somewhat traditional nature of the work – in the Neo-Expressionist 1980s. It also owes much to Modernist drawing from Beckmann to Artaud.⁵⁴ Although the "Circe" drawings have explanatory subtitles (for example '*Circe' drawing 5: Bloom walks on a net ...*'), such references are there for the viewer to discover and interpret in turn. Pfrang often changes register and tempo. Tentative lines and thick ink traces alternate.⁵⁵ This hints at the artist's pursuit of unfixed meaning, openness and a Joycean complexity. Vasari already considered drawing as something originating in the artist's intellect. Within the realm of his appropriate style, however, Pfrang does not change much. It is thus laudable that he (almost) confines himself to "Circe". The results are figurative with mimetic aspects, but certainly work, enriching rather than impoverishing a viewer's encounter with Joyce.⁵⁶

As Pfrang's work shows, realistic "illustrations" can be appropriate – and worth the comparison with Joyce's texts if they explore the

[...] paradox of realism: that realism as a device undermines the sense of reality. [...] Realism] describes the moments in a representational text that do not cover up the translation of the real into representation, but that show the real as fractured and emphasize that fractured state. In this sense, realism becomes identical with textuality.⁵⁷

Pfrang's palimpsestual style – foregrounding his artistic means – as well as correspondences between drawing and writing (both meant by the Greek word *graphein*) conspire to retain, interpret and highlight Joyce's means in conveying "Circe's" "un-reality".⁵⁸

Ferenc Martyn, Günter Schöllkopf and Darek Ostrowski Other work on Joyce in the medium of drawing also reacts to Joyce's stylistic features in varying ways. Martyn, Schöllkopf and Ostrowski, born in 1899, 1935 and 1959 respectively, have – like Pfrang – all explored Joyce's works through the medium of ink drawings. Martyn created 24 images on *Ulysses* for the Joyce centenary in 1982 and exhibited them in his native Hungary,⁵⁹ where his great-grandfather had emigrated from Ireland. He gives expression to a longing for his ancestral home and his unawareness of Joyce while living in Paris between 1926 and 1939. The title of a 1982 catalogue shows one of the most successful works, a drawing in which a map of Ireland and Britain is incorporated. A sitting figure's arm is visible both inside the space of the map and outside: an anthropomorphic reworking of the landscape – in keeping more with *Finnegans Wake* than with *Ulysses*. Although quotations from *Ulysses* are printed beside some of the images in the catalogue, Martyn only tentatively takes a mimetic approach. Indeed, he sometimes associates quite freely: a horned figure is not Bloom but the Citizen (James White takes this figure to be Joyce/Dedalus/Odysseus).⁶⁰ At other times, however, two rather conventionally portrayed figures of Bloom and Stephen leave little to the imagination. While one ought to applaud the tentatively multi-stylistic approach, the drawings are conventional – especially given Martyn's time at the Bauhaus and in Modernist Paris.

→ 4.2

In the 1960s and 70s, Günter Schöllkopf created numerous images (mostly drawings and etchings) on Joyce. In their totality, these amount to a commentary that is more appropriate than traditional illustration. They are always knowledgeable and often humorously transcend Joyce's works. One example is Stephen's teacher, 1977, a comic-like extension of "Nestor". On the same sheet, there are six small, almost identical images, featuring Stephen's back – with minimal variations of a pointing hand – and two students. Fifteen small images in the bottom half of the work show a similar scene, now without the students. In all the available space beyond the edges of this figure, there are text and some speech bubbles.⁶¹ History is explained, beginning with the setting in "Nestor", quickly changing to details of Joyce's life, as well as political and literary history. This narrative, however, continues far beyond 16 June 1904, including Joyce's entire life and World War II.

→ 5.2

Like Martyn, Ostrowski interprets his own experience with the help of *Ulysses*. He chose the Epiphanies for his figurative, but often not mimetic, drawings. The images are as much informed by early twentieth-century children's books as by collage, Surrealist juxtapositions and



28 **Sean Scully,**
“Alone” from
Pomes Penyeach
1993

mirroring or doubling of images, as well as by current figurative painting. An evocative tension develops between the *Epiphanies* when juxtaposed with the drawings as in Ostrowski’s catalogue *Chamber Paintings*, where he confesses an interest in alienation and the experience of exile in Joyce.

Bernard Moxham, Eighteen Artists One attempt at encouraging appropriate Joyce “illustrations” is Bernard Moxham’s project from the mid-1990s to commission eighteen artists to work on various schemata by means of eighteen pieces of a particular size.⁶² Each artist was to choose a category from a schema with eighteen variations and to illustrate that schema. The result is work of great variety. Exhibitions focusing on individual episodes, rather than individual artists’ contributions (which are usually uniform in style throughout), bring about the desired multiplicity.

Two problems are associated with this approach: commissioning art on Joyce from artists who often have not shown an interest in working on him previously already means reverting to a pre-Modernist state of dependency, while leaving it doubtful how much can actually be learned about Joyce in a short time. Commissions seem to counteract the spirit of Joyce’s work. If this entailed only serving Joyce (who would not let his alter ego Stephen serve), one could be content. However, Moxham

altered and especially expanded Joyce's schemata to include various other realms, most notably medical and sexual in nature. This creative act, based on Joycean research, is what he then asks artists to illustrate. The procedure strikes me as too indirect, despite the fact that other artists have also reacted to Joyce scholarship.

→ 5.3

Sean Scully, the English painter, who was born in Dublin, is different from many of the artists mentioned in that he is not a literary or intellectual artist.⁶³ Responding to his German gallerist's interests in Joyce,⁶⁴ he thus rightly confined himself to illustrating Joyce's *Pomes Penyeach* in 1993.²⁷ He also remained within the confines of his painterly style when creating the thirteen prints. This style consists of planes of somewhat irregular stripes composed in tension with each other. Scully's abstract work has in this case, however, yielded surprisingly evocative, even illustrative, results. The image for "Alone",²⁸ for example, consists of a blurred striped background above which a "lonely" square seems to float over a chessboard ground. "Needleboats at San Sabba" is reminiscent of a pier and ripples on the water receding into the distance. These quasi mimetic elements in Scully's work are surprising and may even go as far as to situate his practice in an Irish context (in which he likes to be seen), since the borderline between figuration and abstraction has long been the hallmark of Irish art – including Joyce's.

→ 3.2

Hannes Vogel As a response to both James Joyce and the Joyce-inspired composer and visual artist John Cage, Hannes Vogel showed eighteen large photographic panels with blurred images in 1991.⁶⁵ As the exhibition title suggests, these are *J & J: Colours in Ulysses – Mirrored by Chance*. Beside the images appeared terms, which denote or evoke colour, taken from the two German translations of *Ulysses*. The photographs – indiscriminate shots from the beginning of film rolls – were allocated to matching notional colour schemes of the episodes. The work does not make any claim other than to provide a commentary on an element of *Ulysses* that is of particular interest to artists. The beauty of everyday life revealed by chance may also be a part of an artist's commentary on what it could have been that attracted John Cage to Joyce.

→ 3.2

Language and translation are also important for *J & J*, since the colours denoting or connoting adjectives and nouns are taken from two German translations, each acknowledged on the panels beneath the text. Sometimes there is just one such reference, revealing the fact that the other translator must have arrived at a different, less "artistically useful",



28 **Michael Kvium and Christian Lemmerz, *The Wake*,**
Dino Raymond Hanson: director,
Sweden 2000

translation. Translations into another language and into images, as well as the element of selection of found material, turn this into a piece that does not illustrate *Ulysses*. It instead comments on it with an artist's eye and chooses relevant topics in relation to Joyce's practice.

Gereon Inger Responding to Joyce's viewer-activating prose in *Ulysses*, Gereon Inger created a set of 90 rubber stamps in 1994.¹⁸ They come in a box with eight inkpads and can be applied to a copy of *Ulysses* or to any other surface. The motifs are Inger's own drawings, images from the turn of the nineteenth century, or what he calls

[...] mischievous visual quotations. They were chosen in order to follow the leitmotifs of *Ulysses*, but simultaneously remain so general that they are usable for letters, pictures, graffiti, and any other book. One thus acquires a good deal of the inventory of images that Joyce collected in the world and can gloss the world with it in turn.⁶⁶

The work's playful and humorous aspects are in keeping with Joyce's practice, as is the irreverent use of sources. Both hope to provide enjoyment through understanding and active engagement. Inger has evaded many pitfalls of illustration and created a work that is furthermore art-historically evocative – as a commentary on Saul Steinberg's stamps, Fluxus

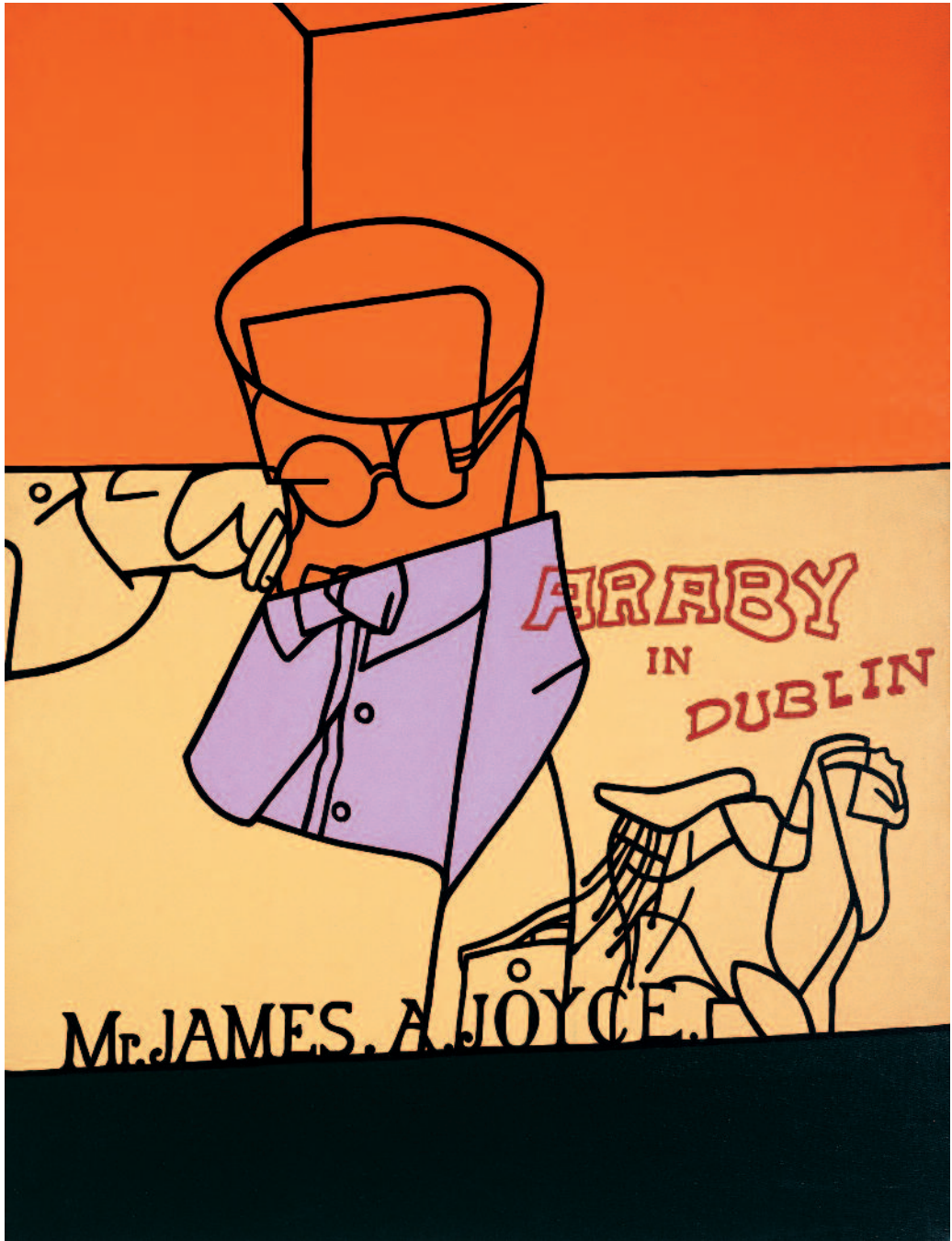
boxes and Duchamp's *boîte-en-valise* to which miniature works of art inevitably refer.⁶⁷ The Conceptual, post-Duchampian aspects also create a witty tension with the realistic, motif-centred images on the stamps.

Michael Kvium and Christian Lemmerz completed in 2000 a multimedia project on *Finnegans Wake*, an eight-hour-long film called *The Wake*.²⁸ It can be viewed in various ways: as a multi-screen video installation at an art museum or gallery, or a one-screen video installation in a bar or pub to be open from 7 pm to 3 am ("conversations, thoughts and dreams taking place every day will mix with the unreal space of the film").⁶⁸ It has also been envisaged to show *The Wake* in nightlong outdoor projections or as a visual dream that is broadcast on the internet.

The film itself clearly retains motifs from *Finnegans Wake* (the sea, earwig, several characters played by actors, including Napoleon, a pub, court trials) and is thus mimetic. But the imagery is suggestive at the same time, using current production and editing methods. Much is foggy, dark or blurred and there is a reduced range of dark colours befitting a night book. *The Wake* attempts to tap into prelinguistic modes of thinking and dreaming. In comparison with Mary Ellen Bute's ambitious *Finnegans Wake* film of 1965, it is much longer, more hallucinatory and dream-like, but similarly well informed. The suggestions for presentation also strike one as appropriate to the material.⁶⁹

All the noted artists have crystallized in their works their vision of what Joyce's writings stand for. They have not merely painted their mental images.⁷⁰ While much remains unsatisfactory with a vast array of work created in an attitude of faithful service,⁷¹ there are, especially in recent art, several original approaches to "illustrating" Joyce. The necessity to reinterpret some earlier work was also an aspect. It emerged that, paradoxically, in order to illustrate Joyce's writings faithfully, one should not illustrate faithfully. Sergei Eisenstein's renunciation of slavish copying should be remembered. He wished to learn from Joyce's underlying principles and make them his own. Where artists thwart viewers' expectations of illustration and question conventions of mimesis, they create work corresponding to Joyce's, while avoiding becoming epigones.

Joycean portraiture now deserves exploration, despite the fact that the limitations of such categories as illustration and portraiture have already become apparent. This renders a more issue-led approach desirable for what is then to follow.





on display:
"Jenny's almost complete
works"

* of art



Filim,
wearing one of Jenny's
articles"

* on his head



Filim wearing one of
Jenny's articles"
(detail)

* wearing also his famous gun



PORTRAIT OF
"THE ARTIST JENNY"

* at the age of 3



Jenny's great friend,
Balkazar,

is also the rival artist
is come to
famous practicing his
daily practice the Great
uncommon

Republic's motto and reason of the
DEVELOP YOUR GENIUS RATHER THAN YOUR TALENT



the whole and

colleagues of the artist Jenny
Leland Filim
Nora Filim
his wife Filim
Marlene
The
Probably someone
large other being
and

205



2.2 Beyond Portraits by Artists

Illustration is bound up with notions of portraiture: “most [...] illustrations focus on depicting portraits of the characters, [...] These illustrations echo Joyce’s own treatment of our ability to see ourselves and others”.¹ It has already been established that illustration by means of realistic and mimetic portraits is neither the only nor the most appropriate option available to artists.² An even more fundamental impediment facing Joyce portraitists is that the writer did not pin down identities. He devised means of incorporating changing views of his characters and by extension ourselves. Indeed, “Joyce’s writing in some ways rejects the longing to see portraits (of the characters, the author, oneself) when reading”.³

Although a portrait of Joyce, one of his characters or anyone else seen in a Joycean vein does not call for the multi-stylistic approach most appropriate to *Ulysses*, the issue of uniform approaches remains, vis-à-vis a portrayed (artist’s) face and the background (if painting is the medium). Maurice Beebe describes Joyce’s “conviction that the artist is inevitably in conflict with his environment”.⁴ One-sidedly mimetic images remain inappropriate: both psychological issues and detachment are impediments. “[Joyce] resolved the conflict between art and life by recognising the divided nature of the artist. [...] In developing his composite artist [Dedalus], Joyce [...] provided for himself a personal model [... , who is] detached even from self”.⁵ Moreover, portraits in visual art tend to affirm authorship. Joyce largely undermined authorship by increasingly involving the recipients, by means of his modes of narration (*arrangeur*, changing and unreliable narrators) and by the creation in *A Portrait* of an author or artist who does not create. Martyniuk has consequently formulated the ensuing predicament for visual artists in Joyce’s wake: “We can never definitively illustrate Joyce because it would mean the deaths of both Joyce and ourselves”⁶ as “Authors” in Roland Barthes’ sense.

Time Magazine, Commodification A complication in this argument arises, however, because Joyce allowed his image to be reproduced and circulated serially, namely on the cover of *Time* magazine, on 8 May 1939. He is thus

[...] contravening one of the crucial imperatives of modernist authorship: the silent elision of the author from the text, the choice to

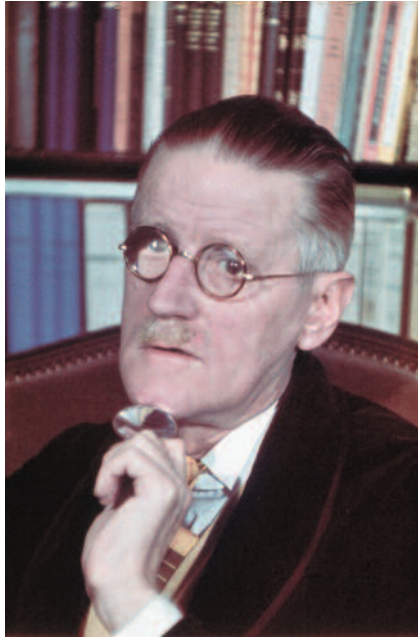
3.2 →

29 **Valerio Adami, Portrait James Joyce**
22.5.71/23.7.71,
1971

30 **Ad Reinhardt, A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala, 1956**

31 **Robert Filliou, Jenny: Portrait of the Artist Jenny, 1972**

32 **Dieter Roth, P.o.t.A.a.Vfb.**
(Portrait of the Artist as Vogelfutterbüste)
1968-70



33 Gisèle Freund,
Portrait
James Joyce
1939

assume to spectatorial position of the indifferent god paring his fingernails created by Joyce himself in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.⁷

Realizing this himself, he “looks for strategies that can defuse and counteract his self-fetishization as a guest star”. He thus adopts the averted gaze and “an auratic reservoir of meaning that Joyce’s accoutrements evoke, so that [...] he can let himself be seen and yet remain detached, not there”.⁸ These “accoutrements” are precisely the previously (for Man Ray’s 1922 photographs) rejected stacks of books. Counter to Joyce’s apparent belief at the time, the averted gaze, “a disengaged presence [...] is the most salient quality of Joyce’s self-fetishization, the true aura of the image”.⁹ The unfocused, empty gaze of Gisèle Freund’s head-on colour portrait,¹⁰ ³³ which the photographer had found too revealing to show to Joyce, paradoxically reveals nothing but this emptiness. Gisèle Freund’s wish – that of every traditional portraitist – becomes apparent: to read her subject physiognomically and show the “real” Joyce.

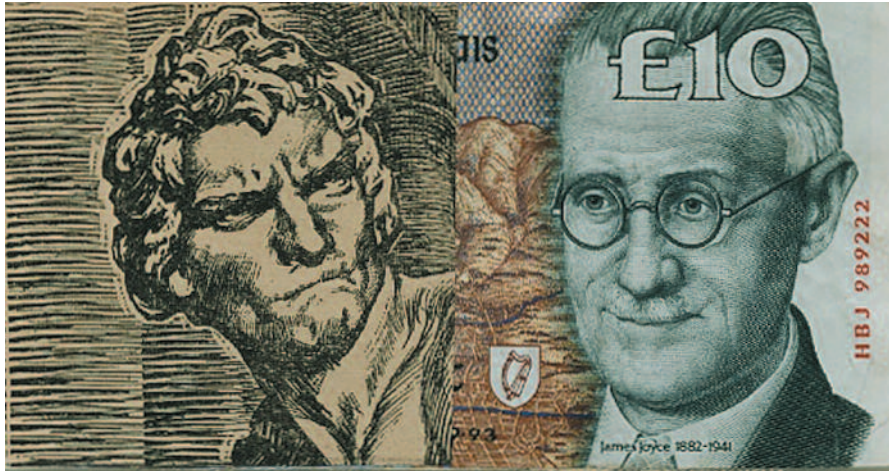
Joyce’s face turns out not to be a text to decipher and make sense of [...] rather it is the representation of the elements that can evoke, in a stylized form, the represented Joyce as a trademark [...] that has appeared, in [...] brochures and publicity materials.¹¹

This process of a loss of signification began early. One example has already been shown to be Abin's mollifying Joyce caricature. Much Joyce portraiture, as traditional portraiture in general, seeks to reflect and enhance the sitter's status, thus establishing or enhancing commodification. Counter to the impression that Joyce's collaboration with *Time* magazine gives, as a writer – parallel to what has been stated in relation to similar issues arising with text-serving illustrations – he was instrumental in changing what these genres need to accomplish. He redefined the notion of authorship and defined character. I will thus not engage with most of the Joyce portraits listed by Richard M. Kain and Alan M. Cohn and shown in other Joycean publications (beyond those already mentioned under early responses).¹² Even such an early and skilful Joyce portrait as Wilhelm Gimmi's could stylistically be that of any accomplished personality in his prime with a love for the sea (background).¹³ As with illustration, most portraitists display both that "naïve naturalness" and stubborn mimesis encountered before and a desire to use Joyce's canonical status for their own (monetary) profit and (supposed) intellectual enhancement. Indeed, many of the images were created with dust jackets of Joyce's works as the intended mode of dissemination. Conditioning the readers' responses to Joyce with such portraits is distorting and disturbing to say the least.

5.1 →

With this background in mind, how can an artist more appropriately approach the writer (or a Joycean character) by means of portraiture? An original approach is Mimmo Paladino's strategy of juxtaposing Robert Ballagh's portrait of a dimly smiling Joyce from the last Irish 10 punt-note (in circulation between 1993 and 2001) with Bernini's grim *David* in a collage. This diffuses Ballagh's underlying intention to facilitate the (Irish) public's wish to mollify and trivialize Joyce, to render him harmless and even to present him as slightly deranged. Simultaneously, Ballagh (an artist with socialist and Irish republican leanings) uses him literally as capital, as commodity and trademark. Paladino's anger at this state of affairs is admirably conveyed.

Apart from Paladino, few artists have in their realistic Joyce portraits taken an approach designed to counteract the commodification of Joyce or to distance the writer from the viewer. Harry Kernoff's Joyce, who looks more like James Dean than James Joyce, does not achieve this, while Paolo Crevi Kervischer's 1998 *Joyce Anamorphosis* does have that effect – albeit possibly unintentionally.¹⁴ The writer's face fills the small painting. It even extends onto the edges of the unframed canvas, with Joyce's chin on the bottom edge. Although an anamorphosis (a



34 **Mimmo Paladino,**
untitled
 (collage on 10 Punt
 note), 1995

distorted depiction that can be “rectified” by viewing it from a particular standpoint) can fully achieve its effect only with a clearer perspective than that which the blurred facial features provide, the title and painted edges make it apparent that the artist at least intends the viewer to look at the portrait from below. If the painting is mounted on the wall at the usual height, this could best be achieved, I suggest, by kneeling – not quite the right approach to a writer who encourages irreverence.

Patrick Collins’ *Stephen Hero* painting from 1950³⁵ is a mimetic Joyce portrait in the guise of an “illustration” of *Stephen Hero*. Nevertheless, it deserves some attention, since it is a very early visible commitment to Joyce put forward by a visual artist from Ireland. In front of a “Cubist” background of black, gold and shades of brown, Joyce/Stephen is seen to turn his back to a window, where a woman stands. His head is turned to the viewers, but he appears as though he was walking left, where his thin, white walking-stick points, leaving the space of the picture. Collins portrays the writer as somebody whose intuition leads him abroad. His path is comparatively light – and golden. Collins’ statement is a brave one, considering the Irish attitude to Joyce at the time. It also subverts mimeticism by choosing to depict the writer in his later years, when he was visually impaired. The work is motivated by the artist’s own



35 Patrick Collins,
Stephen Hero
detail 1950

peripatetic life, including time in Paris, and his friendship with Lucia Joyce there.¹⁵

Puppets, Squiggles, Cravats A recurring strategy has been to show Joyce as the arranger, the author figure removed from his characters, while simultaneously pulling the strings. Theodor Scheel first presented the writer as puppeteer (with a puppet figure of a Greek warrior) in 1929. Henry Sharpe in 1987 showed the older Joyce manipulating a puppet of his younger self, while Robert Ballagh followed by showing a male figure, dressed like a priest (with the head outside of the work, invisible) playing with two puppets, a girl and a boy.¹⁶ The puppeteer analogy is problematical: while focusing on Joyce's great command over his material, it suggests a causal relationship between his life and his fiction, his sources and his work, or even between Joyce as God-like figure and the life of men and women: ordinary readers (just like an artist). The realistic depictions are misleading in terms of how Joyce achieved his effects. This may, however, be telling as regards an "addicted" reader's feelings of being led by Joyce.

Another strategy pursued by artists is to look for previous valid approaches to Joyce(an) portraiture and work on the model of Constantin



36 Sidney Geist,
poster design
 for 1983
 Provincetown
 Joyce Conference

Brancusi, as Felim Egan has done in a painting from the early 1980s.¹⁷ Egan's other work validates that strategy, because it features similar vertical and horizontal lines, isolated on the picture plane. Arthur Power seems to have adopted the same approach in 1938. He created a "black-centred rectangular whirl"¹⁸ with which Joyce was delighted. Sidney Geist, artist and author on Brancusi, added a few thick lines to a reproduction of Brancusi's *Symbol of Joyce*,³⁶ filling in Joyce's hair, moustache and goatee beard. The last two features strongly echo Duchamp's treatment of the *Mona Lisa*. The result is one of the wittier Joyce Symposium announcements.¹⁹ Richard Hamilton in 1951 etched a self-portrait featuring Brancusi's spiral, which interestingly denotes the ear for this visual artist, while Brancusi may have meant Joyce's eye (or this is how Geist understood it), despite the importance of the ear in *Work in Progress*.

Matyniuk contrasts the widespread concern for a sitter's soul (revealed in Freund's case) with the anecdote, which Frank Budgen tells about Joyce and Tuohy's conversation while the last was painting the writer's portrait. "'Get the poet's soul out of your mind' said Joyce 'and see that you paint my cravat properly'."²⁰ Micheal Farrell takes this literally and created in a series of prints with the writer's face in shades



37 Robert Barnes,
James and
Lucia Joyce
1959

of grey, while the tie is brightly coloured and patterned with Celtic knots (see ⁹). Whether intentionally or not, Farrell shows how much at odds a superficial, fashion-conscious attitude is in Joyce’s case. By choosing a pattern that is congruent with aspects of Joyce’s work and strategies, he also points out a contradiction in Joyce’s statement: He had himself explained epiphany, saying “The soul of the commonest object [...] seems to us radiant” (SH 190). “Soul” and a common object like a tie may thus indeed be able to relate to one another. Here Farrell himself justifies his own work’s movement away from abstraction and towards a Pop Art-inspired figuration. He uses Joyce as the locus of a meeting between the two.²¹

3.2 →

“Abstract”, Distorted and Open Portraits While Robert Barnes’ double portrait of *James Joyce and Lucia* (not Nora, as is often assumed)²² from 1959 ³⁷ is not abstract as far as the disengaging figures are concerned, the context gives the viewer some puzzles to solve. The longer one looks at the carpet, the mirror (?) over the sofa and objects around the room, the less clearly readable the image becomes. Both characters eventually seem to be entangled – not quite in a Celtic knot, but certainly in an estranged world, with odd mirror reflections and half-



38 Joseph Beuys,
Warm Time
Machine
 detail, 1958

alive, semi-abstract objects. Barnes thus points out the common ground between Joyce's works, Lucia's state of mind, as well as art in the 1950s, while not rushing to provide a value judgment. He finds visual expression for a state between realism, hallucination and abstraction which we experience as Joycean, while having difficulties pinpointing it.

→ 3.2

Joseph Beuys' *Warm Time Machine* drawing from 1958, ³⁸ part of a reservoir of drawings entitled *The Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland*, was originally taken from one of six exercise books, his *Ulysses-Extension*.²³ Its full title is *Beuys extends James Joyce's 'Ulysses' by 2 further chapters at the author's request*. In this cluster of references to Joyce and Ireland appears the double image of an unidentifiable male. The brain looks chaotic and the mouth, the area that generates speech and language, is a test tube. It would be surprising if Beuys did not think of Joyce's experimental use of language when drawing this. He could also have meant Bloom. A shape in the region of the heart is a flower, a sun and a clock – hence the *Warm[th] Time Machine* of the title. This could relate to Joyce's noted description of *Finnegans Wake* as a machine for squaring the circle.²⁴ While offering a semi-abstract alternative to portraiture, Beuys anticipates also several of the themes that will be of interest later: *portmanteau* shapes (like the sun/flower/clock), fluidly

chaotic drawing, delineating multiple (repeated, but hardly “recognizable”) characterizations as response to Joyce’s later prose.

The term “abstract portrait” may be a contradiction in terms, but as a response to Joyce, there is much to recommend this approach, despite its limitations. Charles Tyrrell, for example, was prompted by the 1982 centenary to entitle a work *James Joyce*. It shows nothing but a diagonal grid in colour graduations over a background of short, gestural or writerly lines.²⁵

Robert Motherwell, on the other hand, painted in 1947/48 what could be called an abstract painting in shades of brown.⁴⁸ On completion, looking for a title, he consulted *Finnegans Wake* randomly (or so the anecdote goes). Having come upon “the Homely Protestant” (FW 071.21) – with “artist” mentioned just three words earlier – Motherwell “suddenly” realized that this painting was a self-portrait.²⁶ He repeated and varied it twice, retaining the title. This work points to Joyce’s importance for Motherwell’s artistic development and his formulation of an identity.

3.1 →

Not abstract, but distorted are Valerio Adami’s two Joyce portraits from 1971.²⁹ In both these rather similar works – one carries the lines “Araby in Dublin / Mr. James A. Joyce” – the artist presents what Marc Le Bot calls “une image codée”.²⁷ The photographic model for the portrait is recognizable, but in his usual fashion Adami brutally “cuts” the head in half. The black painted outlines of head, hand and suit have seemingly collided. Adami reaches a semi-abstract effect by juxtaposing non-mimetic colour fields: red, orange and pink in Joyce’s case. All this could point the viewer in the direction of the later, more “distorted” works. The portrait photograph that is the model also seems to be a late one, taken in Paris. The inscription “Araby in Dublin”, however, as well as the full name “Mr. James A. Joyce” suggest a much earlier time: that of college essays and *Dubliners*. It also conjures up places far away from either Dublin or Paris: by means of that fun-fair magic in the story “Araby”, the reader is transported to hotter climes.

The “portrait” thus unsettles its foundations in many ways. It is a decidedly postmodernist one, reading Joyce “backwards”, even locating him among a non-Western culture, possibly owing to post-colonial allegiances. The painting does not stop short of unhinging portrait conventions. As Le Bot puts it: “C’est le portrait d’un homme, sans aucun doute. Mais c’est un faux portrait, qui triche avec les lois du genre, qui est innomable du nom propre ou personnel de James Joyce, pourtant désigné par le titre”.²⁸ This title remains *Portrait James Joyce*, albeit with the added qualifier 22.5.71/23.7.71.

3.2 →

The style of Eduardo Arroyo is superficially comparable to Adami's. He worked in 1991 towards creating an illustrated edition of *Ulysses*, for which Círculo de Lectores never received permission. The martyred air of the forbidden that this bestows on the book (the would-be publishers were quick to print a documentation under the title *El Ulises Prohibido*)²⁹ does not, however, befit the schematic motifs. The 136 images are varied stylistically and adhere faithfully to the text. Motives like a schematic three-master and what looks like waves for "Proteus" do not stretch the imagination, while others are clearly borrowed from (or inspired by) Richard Hamilton's *Ulysses* works. The silhouette of one of Joyce's well-known photographs, with ghostly cut-out features representing the man in the mackintosh, is one of the more thought-provoking touches among a generally undemanding project.

→ 3.3
Conor Fallon, like Adami, approaches the open qualities of Joyce's writing by means of a "cut-open" portrait, a steel bust. The gaps in the sheets of metal allow "insights" into the dark recesses of the writer's head, an opportunity every reader would appreciate. This strategy may also remind one of Joyce's interior monologue. But there is nothing to see inside the head, nor is the procedure marked out as particularly Joycean: the head of the artist's father is rendered in a very similar way. The openness here is more a motif than an approach: the work does not leave much to the viewers' imaginations or require them to complete it. Joyce's concave face is in fact presented trademark-like, with strands of combed-back hair a more humorous element than one contributing to the work's meaning. Form and content do not match, and that post-modernist awareness noticed in Adami's work is not present.

Louis le Brocquy's well-known *Images of Joyce*³⁹ or studies towards such images also concentrate on openness, an inconclusive quality, and otherness. In oil on canvas or watercolour on paper he achieves this more evocatively than a steel sculpture could do. Joyce's heads, created between 1964 and 1992, seem to emerge from nowhere – a white, undefined space. Again and again, le Brocquy tentatively approaches the features, akin to the way in which Joyce approached his subjects. Relating the same occurrence several times from different perspectives gives increasingly detailed mental images, and only the sum will approach a rounded, realistic effect. Reality remains fragmentary, like our understanding of the world.

Following black and white images for *Dubliners* (for instance, a landscape of roofs), le Brocquy turned not only to Joyce's head, but to writers' and artists' heads in general, treating them all in the same



39 Louis le Brocquy,
Image of Joyce
1991

manner, despite stating: “I often felt it was impertinent on my part to play with the appearances of these men. With Joyce, I confess I felt overawed, even quite literally afraid. His is the most evocative and painful head I have ever attempted.”³⁰ The sameness in approach to each head is however where the problem lies: openness and the evocative stylistic subtlety employed in the images is not the common feature of Shakespeare’s, Yeats’ and Beckett’s writings in equal measure. In fact, the heads’ reductive qualities seem to be better suited to Beckett than to the accumulative Joyce.

Several writers have interpreted le Brocquy’s heads as expressions of Irishness, notably concerning the Celtic head cult.³¹ The artist has embraced that reference.³² There exists a tension in le Brocquy’s career between the international framework, which he originally sought for his paintings in London, and his later readiness to allow the work to be interpreted as distinctly Irish.³³ This has an effect on the interpretation of le Brocquy’s head images of well-known figures in two possible ways: they may provide the artist with an opening to embrace Irishness in his works and thus establish a further career-enhancing set of increasingly canonical references. It seems, however, that Irishness is not the guiding criterion, since Shakespeare and Lorca are included in the panel of those

- 5.1 whose image heads Le Brocquy has attempted. It must thus be the subjects' canonicity. The second possibility to explain this tension is to note a moving away from purely formalist modes of interpretation in the 1960s. Le Brocquy apparently welcomed the new interpretative perspectives, focusing on identity and context, while the work itself remains formally motivated.
- 3.2

Portraits of Artists as ... Any painted portrait of an artist can be reified by reference to the fact that Joyce wrote one. Artists' self-portraits in a Joycean context thus abound. They range from loose juxtapositions of existing work with Joyce's text to witty wordplays on *A Portrait's* title. The *Revue Swetovey* printed partial Czech translations of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1968³⁴ and accompanied them with many artists' self-portraits (including one by Francis Bacon). This editorial decision speaks more of an attempt to compare interdisciplinary approaches to the portrait and less of the audacity of Julien Alberts' mentioned double portrait.

There are artists, however, who have rightly resisted the temptation to understand the title of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to give any painter the license to paint a portrait of Joyce or his characters. "The word 'portrait' in the title of Joyce's text takes the place of the missing object, the 'originally repressed' stable representation of the self: the clear outline and the solid presence",³⁵ as Christine van Boheemen states. Artists have often focused on the word "portrait" by choosing it as part of a work title and attaching to it something other than a realistic portrait of Joyce or of the artist in question.

- 3.2 Ad Reinhardt's *A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala*, 1956,³⁶ **30** one of his "art jokes", is a case in point. In it, he is playing in a *Wakeian* manner with the words of Joyce's title and the names of some protagonists in the American art world of the time. Doing so, Reinhardt refers to a multiplicity of artists' (commercial) strategies and artists' personae within art circles that were steeped in his literature. Reinhardt's title also describes well the mandala-like shape of the cartoon. References to non-Western thought abound, establishing Joyce as a model in that regard. It does not seem likely, however, that Reinhardt knew about Joyce's own mandala-like chapter-design for *Ulysses*,³⁷ (whose concentric almond shapes almost anticipate Brancusi's "self portrait" **12**). Common traits are the mock-cosmology espoused, the inclination to poke fun at people by playing with their names (or wordplay in general), as well as the cultural diversity of the materials used.

Robert Filliou, an artist associated with the Fluxus movement of the 1960s, created in 1972 *Jenny: Portrait of the Artist Jenny*.³⁸ ³¹ The work consists of two shallow cardboard boxes with photographs mounted in them. The photos show the artist, some of his friends and what one could call messy still-lives. Jenny is the artist's dog.³⁹ The implication is that the artist documented the mess that the dog had created. However humorous this is in itself, it can also be significant in relation to Joyce, especially his frequent word plays on the palindrome god and dog.⁴⁰ Fluxus artists wished to rid art of any romanticism and not employ the artist-god analogy, but embrace chance and an anti-art stance. In that vein, Filliou's dog is indeed creative, possibly divinely so, while the anti-artist merely documents.

Fluxus' attitude to Joyce was a mixed one. Whereas John Cage was preoccupied with the writer for the duration of his career, Daniel Spoerri, with whom Filliou devised so-called word traps, was at pains to qualify the mentioning of Joyce in the index of his *Topography of Chance*: "Joyce, James, to whom I owe nothing".⁴¹ Filliou's own presence in *Jenny/Portrait* and his knowledge of the importance of (divine) dogs in Joyce's works point to a more substantial interest. This can perhaps be described as a feeling of kinship with art that secularizes and is concerned with quotidian, rather than precious, material.

Dieter Roth, whose partner, the artist Dorothy Iannone, was one of Filliou's friends who appear in the photographs, was also affiliated with Fluxus and is known for collectibles in cardboard boxes. He commented on Joyce's portrait in a similarly witty and telling way. His *P.O.T.H. A.A.VFB. (Portrait of the Artist as Vogelfutterbüste)*, 1968-70,³² contains exactly that: *Vogelfutter* (bird feed). Roth and Filliou are both, like Joyce, collectors at heart, transformers of everyday detritus – neatly filed or boxed away – into bulky art. The bird feed bust shows a humorously exaggerated face that is to depict the artist Roth – who was then in his late thirties – as an old man.

It consists (or consisted) of a sculpted mix of chocolate and bird feed and was placed on a broomstick, equipped with a "landing ramp" for birds. Reiner Speck, the Cologne medical professor, collector of contemporary art and literary scholar, bought one of the early casts of the work. He honoured the artist's wishes and placed it in his garden, where it was eaten by said birds and mice.⁴² Thus the work itself completed another life cycle. One may be reminded of the cycles of *Finnegans Wake*, as well as Joyce's epiphanies and their (ideal) return to the readers' lives. The material itself points more strongly towards Duchamp and his

→ 4.2 chocolate grinders – or Beuys,¹¹⁷ who had recommended Roth for a professorship in Düsseldorf in 1968. Joyce, Duchamp and Beuys also provide a precedence for the work's humour. There are thus many correspondences between Roth's and Joyce's inclination towards accumulation and a foregrounding of the materiality of objects.

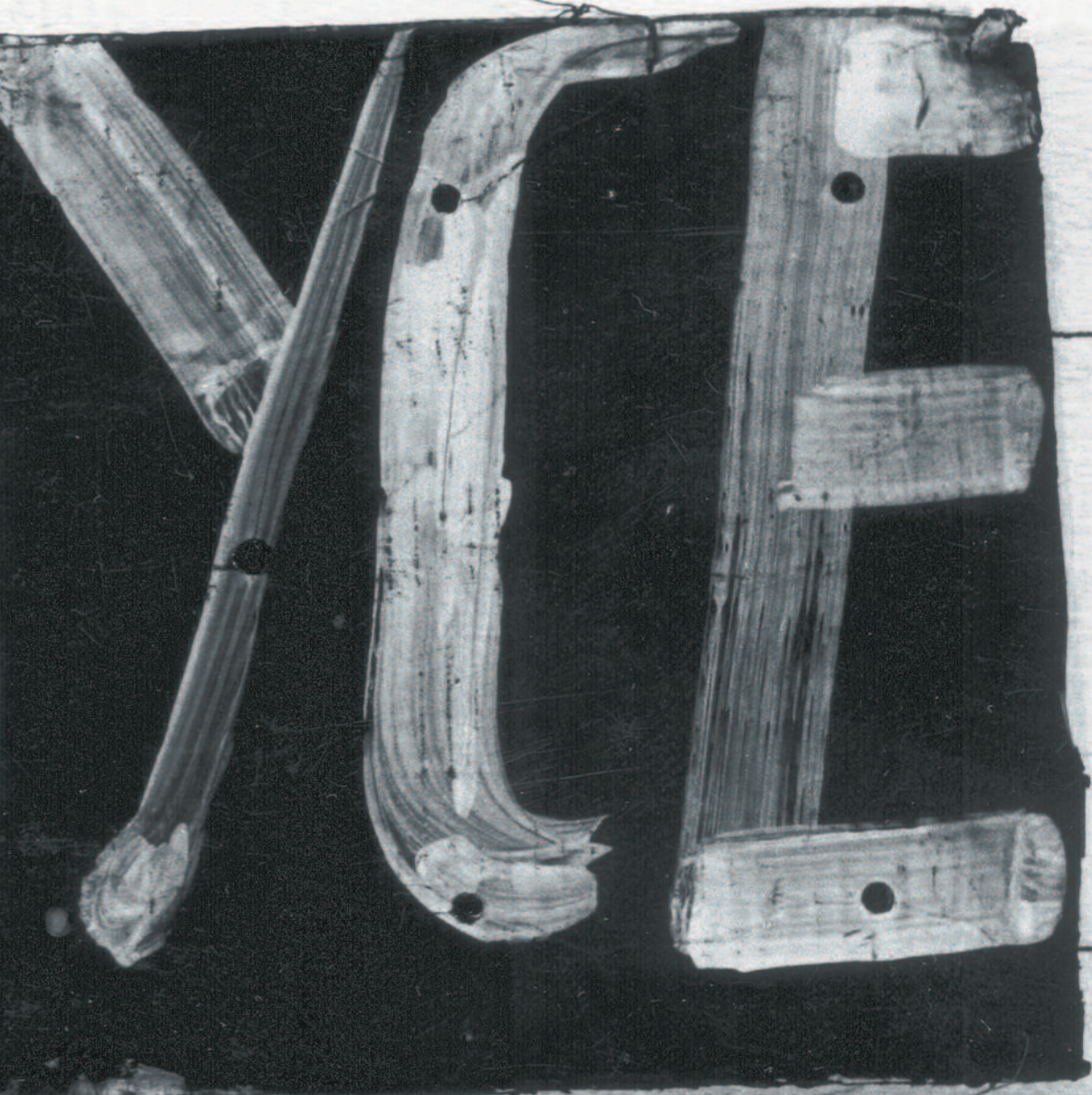
Roth was also a poet, who developed in the 1950s a phonetic, non-capitalized German writing style and made book objects. He created in 1967 and 1968 two artist's books with poems entitled clouds: *246 little clouds*¹³² and *80 Wolken* respectively – in reminiscence of (if not in competition with) Joyce's "A Little Cloud" from *Dubliners*.⁴³ These references hint more at Joyce's later work and cast *Dubliners* in the spirit of *Finnegans Wake*. There seemingly is no space for *A Portrait*. This book is in some ways an annoyance to the literary artist: "With sentimentality, he [Joyce] tried to offer in a literary way his suffering at school [...]. Often, this is so sentimental, so sickly sweet that I'm amazed that nobody has pointed to the fact that this is really kitsch."⁴⁴ While this assessment reveals why *A Portrait* may not be the most popular work with contemporary artists – and the portrait of an old man is a vehicle for this criticism – Roth also knowledgeably picks up on the bird metaphor and bird girl epiphany in Joyce's early works. In all, he leaves no doubt about the general importance of Joyce for his oeuvre.

→ 5.2 *Ulysses*, and again not *A Portrait*, is the clearest point of reference for Bruce Nauman's *Portrait of the Artist as a Fountain*, a photographic self-portrait, featuring Nauman spitting a stream of water in front of a neutral background. The first version of this work, however, 1966/67,⁴⁰ showed the artist similarly engaged in a garden setting. An (inevitable) association with Stephen's (and Bloom's) "fountain(s)" before parting in *Ulysses*, renders the deceptively neutral title *Portrait of the Artist* a likely reference to Joyce. Nauman confirms that he had read Joyce at the time, but, while accepting my interpretation, he does not confirm an intentional connection.⁴⁵ What follows is that descriptively entitled (self) portraits of artists will, in a world post-Joyce, never be the same.

40 Bruce Nauman,
*Portrait of
the Artist as
a Fountain*
1966/67







Ja, es gibt eine Parallellität,
und ich habe mich auf Joyce bezogen,
weil ich meinte, daß diese Dinge,
die von Beckett verändert,
in unser Bewußtsein gehören,
daß man sie hervorheben müsse, denn unterhalb
dieses Anspruchs kann man gar nicht bleiben.
Aber wenn man so etwas will, dann muß
man natürlich auch dafür sorgen,
daß diese Dinge leben
und wirklich etwas von ihnen ausspricht.
Man darf sich nicht im geringsten auf formale
und stilistische Kriterien einlassen,
sondern nur auf das Lebensprinzip der Sache
als lebendigem Stoff.

Wenn es nicht in den lebendigen Stoff geht,
zerfällt das Ding selbst.

~~Alle Punkte können nie im Mittelpunkt stehen.~~

Ich will damit nur sagen,
daß dieses selbstverändernde Prinzip
als Ingredienz,
als Stoff,
man kann auch sagen
als dynamische Medizin,
für mich entscheidend gewesen ist.

Joseph Beuys

1979

(1)