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The Postal State of Being in "Nausicaa"

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Decisively a central minor character in *Ulysses*, Gerty MacDowell's portrait can be correlated to Joyce's own encounter with Marthe Fleischmann in Zurich in 1918 on the account that during their acquaintance Joyce sent her, remaining to date, four letters and a postcard which "consisted of greetings sent to 'Nausikaa' by 'Odysseus,'" albeit the latter fails to be located (see *Letters* II 428, 426-36).[1] The coincidence of the appellations for Fleischmann and the chapter title provides a propitious route to investigating this Ulyssean chapter via a "postal" reading. Elsewhere in *Ulysses*, Bloom's clandestine letter correspondence to Martha Clifford in the false name of Henry Flower already bears witness to Joyce's keen interest in exploring the disguise/disclosure, elsewhere/here, or absence/presence dialectics. Denis Breen's receiving a putative libelous postcard bearing the words of "U.P.: up"

1) Fritz Senn analyzes in detail how Joyce might transform the "concepts and analogies that were in his mind in 1918 to 1919" to practical purposes "to recur in the chapter that was drafted a few months later" (168-70).

readily circulating among Dubliners on June 16, 1904, and the sailor D. B. Murphy in the cabmen's shelter bluffing about South American cannibals on the proof of a postcard from Bolivia are other distinguished examples in *Ulysses* of the prominence of letters and postcards circulating and disseminating occult messages as well as desires in modern cities like Dublin. This paper takes Karen Lawrence's point that "it is tempting to envision this scene [on the beach] as not even a painting but a postcard" ("Joyce and Feminism" 252) as my point of departure. I propose that "Nausicaa" can be read and interpreted/intercepted as a postcard, exposing, circulating, but eventually subverting numerous (including class, gender, social, and political) ideologies-addressed desires stamped on or encoded in it.

I. Textual Desire for Visual/Cognitive Immediacy and Transparency Exposed in Gerty's Section

According to the Gilbert schema, the "art" of "Nausicaa" is painting (in Gifford 384). Frank Budgen also affirms the "essentially pictorial" quality of the scene of "Nausicaa" (213). The first half of "Nausicaa" indeed bespeaks the heroine's strong desire for visual immediacy and transparency. First and foremost, the seascape setting is a delicate set piece "like [in] the paintings" (*U* 13.406); as the time nears dusk, the scene becomes "so picturesque [that] she would have loved to do with a box of paints" (*U* 13.628). To note, not only the circumstantial description is redolent of pictorial references, but the French word "*tableau*" appears twice with the capitalized first letter followed by an exclamation mark (*U* 13.486; 816). This French term meaning living picture is originally a theatrical term known for its highly stylized posturing, employing actors and actresses, characters in existent paintings or dramatic

scenarios for the occasional consumption of the aristocratic and leisured class in nineteenth-century Europe. Its attempt to arrest movement, as does painting, staging a sort of static choreography, and its nature of defying mass consumption due to its limited and costly reproducibility, render the genre the best emblem of the cultural aristocracy. Such aristocratic flavor strategically characterizes Gerty's portrait in "Nausicaa."

Gerty's nobility is explicitly analogized to her possessing "queenly hauteur" (*U* 13.97), the French word specifically elevating her status both text- and class-wise. The narrator resorts to elevated, inflated, or "tumescent" (this being the technique of the first half of "Nausicca"; see Gifford 384) diction in describing her style of make-up, dress, and appearance.[2] The narrator describes her as having "innate refinement" (*U* 13.97), and if fate had been kind to her, she would have been "born a gentlewoman of high degree in her own right" (*U* 13.99-100); being "ladylike in her deployment" (*U* 13.618), Gerty virtually rivals "any lady in the land" (*U* 13.101-2) insofar as "God's fair land of Ireland did not hold her equal" (*U* 13.122). As in the case of "hauteur," the narrator conjures up a "fairy-tale quality of her fantasies" (Henke 133) chiefly by adopting archaism and mock-heroic jargon. Archaism abounds throughout the narrative: e.g., "Many a time and oft" (*U* 13.10); "in sooth" (*U* 13.511); "You would have to travel many a long mile before you formed a head of hair the like of that" (*U* 13.512-3); "her dream of yester eve" (*U* 13.761). Mock-heroic jargon permeates from the beginning of the chapter: the fight over a castle of sand between Jacky and Tommy resembles the mythic story of "The apple of discord" (*U* 13.42); Gerty's rosebud mouth is "Cupid's bow"-like (*U* 13.89); her beauty would surpass "the rest of mortals" (*U* 13.94); patrician suitors would pay "devoirs" to her (*U* 13.103);

2) As a result, according to Fritz Senn, "Nausicaa" "depends on airy distensions" just as much as in "Aeolus" (183).

Tommy and Jack are in turn compared to "Our two champions" (*U* 13.351-2), whereas baby Boardman is "the young heathen" (*U* 13.402).

In line with *Ulysses*'s Odyssean mythic correspondence, the first half of "Nausicca" also features many Greek-like verbal formulae, i.e., kenning-shaped phrasings[3]: "weedgrown rocks" (*U* 13.5); "stormtossed heart" (*U* 13.8); "curlyheaded boys" (*U* 13.13); "truehearted lass" (*U* 13.35); "ivorylike purity" (*U* 13.88); "softlyfeatured face" (*U* 13.105); "wellturned ankle" (*U* 13.168); "finespung hose"; "highspliced heels" (*U* 13.170); "careworn hearts" (*U* 13.375-6); "snottynosed twins" (*U* 13.529). Then, Greek-flavored epithets come in recognizable forms—these are most clear in the appellation of the Virgin Mary: "Mary, star of the sea" (*U* 13.8); "Refuge of Sinners. Comfortress of the afflicted" (*U* 13. 442). "Master Jacky the culprit" (*U* 13.61) and "Madcap Ciss" (*U* 13.270) are the other two characters presented in such formula-like appellations.

Moreover, each of the main characters in Gerty's section is studded with semi-epic-like, formulaic, or fixed portraiture. Gerty is constantly referred to as a gentlewoman, lady, or even an angel (*U* 13.326). W. E. Wylie is "every inch a gentleman" (*U* 13.141). As her would-be husband in her fantasy, Bloom is "a man among men" (*U* 13.207), i.e., a "manly man" (*U* 13.210) who would embrace her "like a real man" (*U* 13.431). To reinforce these fixed impressions of the characters, accompanying stories and narratives are provided. Wylie's is that of a promising medical student; Bloom's is "the story of a haunting sorrow . . . on his face" (*U* 13.422).

The above labeling of the characters concurs with the narrative's underlying conviction in optical transparency and immediacy. Fritz Senn notes

3) Kennings refer to concise compounds or figurative phrases replacing a common noun, a technique widely adopted in Old Germanic, Old Norse, and Old English poetry. Homeric noun-epithet combinations and formulaic phrases are analogous examples of Germanic kennings (see Reece).

that "operative words 'see' and 'how' . . . are prominent in 'Nausicaa'" (171). There is immense faith on the part of the narrator (in proxy of Gerty) to say that "[Wylie] was what he looked, every inch a gentleman" (*U* 13.141). Instinctively Gerty knows that "it was her he [Bloom] was looking at" and "there was meaning in his look" (*U* 13.412); ". . . Gerty could see without looking that he never took his eyes off of her" (*U* 13.495-6); she believes that "he had eyes in his head to see the difference for himself" of her transparent stockings (*U* 13.504). As for circumstantial happenings even off the seaside scene, Gerty also has penetrating eyes or imagination: "Gerty would picture the whole scene in the church, the stained glass windows lighted up, the candles, the flowers and the blue banners of the blessed Virgin's sodality" (*U* 13.446-8). She also can quickly tell that "You could see there was a story behind [the picture of the halcyon day]" (*U* 13.337). When the fireworks are set, which coincides with the height of Gerty's exhibitionism and Bloom's masturbatory climax, the first section of "Nausicaa" also climaxes, as it were, by proliferating into a generous display of the act of looking, with the text literally swarming with the words of "look" and "see": "they all shouted to look, look" (*U* 13.717); "she let him [see] and she saw that he saw . . . that he had a full view high up above her knee where no-one ever not even on the swing or wading and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that . . . and he kept on looking, looking" (*U* 13.726-33). Senn's incisive argument is fitting: "The chapter is . . . a variation on the subject of seeing (with numerous synonyms) and knowing" (171-2).

Such faith in the coincidence between the acts of seeing and of cognition characterizes what Derrida famously critiques as Western logocentrism that unquestionably upholds the immediacy and self-evidence of a transcendent Truth. In the case of "Nausicaa," these unproblematic expressions of the exposition (i.e. "behind"), or restorability (i.e. "the whole scene"), of inherent

truth correspond to Gerty's wishful thinking as regards her gender role either in social or religious imagination. Thus, the text of "Nausicaa" dwells on a strong affiliation between pictorialization[4] and visual transparency to convey belief in cognitive immediacy. To bring out and align with this faith, the significant word "instinct" occurs as a noun, adjective, or adverb four times in her narrative (*U* 13.148; 428; 517; 660-1) — "at each point naturalizing her sense of self and revealing to us the nodes of her social constant" (Weinstein 117). Weinstein elucidates that Gerty's narrative penchant "guarantee[s] the inbred (rather than trained) quality of her clothing choices, the natural (rather than gender-taught) character of her desire for Bloom, and the morally immaculate tenor of her otherwise dubious sexual escapade. In these ways, her vocabulary legitimates her behavior, confirms her unique identity, and arrests her in mystification" (117). By analogy, just as mythical or famous historical events are often favored topics in the selections from which to imitate and thus immobilize in *tableaux vivants*, so the textual choreography in "Nausicaa" is suffused with these dramatizations of mythos, or "hyperbolic generosity," generating as well as "parodying" a mood of "macrocosmic aspirations" with which Joyce wrote his *Ulysses* (Senn 187).

II. The Postal Route Turning Gerty's Section against Itself

The attempt and mood of such parodying, however, will subvert not only the painting genre and its visual faith but the discursive genres of this chapter from being a sentimental romance-cum-Mariolatric text to a disseminating postal discourse. Whereas the first section of "Nausicaa" emphasizes the

4) Significantly, it is "the *Lady's Pictorial*" (*U* 13.251) which Gerty is following as her secular and cosmetic bible.

correspondence between visual transparency and cognitive identity, on the one hand, it nonetheless also problematizes or even defeats such faith in this correspondence on the other. Wishfully, Gerty justifies W. E. Wylie's cooling off his attentions to be "simply a lovers' quarrel" (*U* 13.129) and blames his father for keeping him studying hard indoors. She continues to imagine the great future he has and, by analogy, she would have with him: "he was going to go to Trinity college to study for a doctor"; though "Little recked he perhaps for what she felt, that dull aching void in her heart sometimes, piercing to the core. Yet he was young and perchance he might learn to love her in time" (*U* 13.133; 136-38). Thus even against all odds, she still affirms, "But he was undeniably handsome with an exquisite nose and he was what he looked, every inch a gentleman" (*U* 13.140-41). However, it is self-defeating that she should conceive or "intuit" that he is a gentleman, for this decides the gulf between their classes. Worse still, to her knowledge, "[t]hey were protestants in his family" (*U* 13.138-39). That is to say, such visual transparency, as expressed in her wishful thinking, ironically fails to square with and even deepens their religious and class difference. Thus, the *tableau* (*vivant*), in this case, of W. E. Wylie as a Protestant gentleman only succeeds in representing where Gerty's deficiency is—her working-class and Catholic background at odds with his.

Similar debilitating dissonances also occur in Gerty's (via the narrator's) pictorialization of other characters and events in the chapter. One clear example is the picture of halcyon days from the grocer's Christmas almanac that she tacks up on the wall; it features "a young gentleman in the costume . . . with a threecornerd hat [who] was offering a bunch of flowers to his ladylove with oldtime chivalry through her lattice window." Gerty concludes, "You could see there was a story behind it" (*U* 13.334-37). Interestingly, the same insistence on visual transparency is re-asserted in the conclusion of

Gerty's speculation on the man in the picture: "he looked a thorough aristocrat" (*U* 13.339). Such fantasizing (i.e. "She often looked at them dreamily" (*U* 13.340)) again vies with the reality, for Gerty needs to consult "Walker's pronouncing dictionary . . . about the halcyon days [to find] what they meant" (*U* 13.343-44). The ungrammatical syntax of this passage reveals the gap between Gerty's fantasy of being part of the romantic story behind it and the impoverished reality laying bare her near illiteracy.

The target toward whom Gerty conducts her consummating fantasy, as well as scopophilia and eroticism, is, of course, Bloom. Based on Bloom's wearing a dark suit, Gerty figures "the story of a haunting sorrow . . . written on his face" (*U* 13.422) and imagines that he is "a married man or a widower who had lost his wife or some tragedy like the nobleman with the foreign name from the land of song [and] had to have her put into a madhouse, cruel only to be kind" (*U* 13.656-59), or even "Perhaps it was an old flame he was in mourning for from the days beyond recall" (*U* 13.666-67). From this, she constructs her entire romantic fantasy toward him, transforming herself into his passive object of fantasy. Thus, not only is Bloom equipped with a discerning aptitude that enables him "to see the difference [in Gerty] for himself" (*U* 13.504) and to be "fascinated by a loveliness that made him gaze [at her]" (*U* 13.541), but he becomes an "artist" who "might have dreamed of" her fine throat (*U* 13.583). Indeed, as Patrick McGee comments, Gerty indulges, now literally, in "a painted jouissance, a pleasure," which her painterly text proffers in abundance (*Paperspace* 94).

In appearance, Bloom "was the quiet gravefaced gentleman, selfcontrol expressed in every line of his distinguishedlooking figure" (*U* 13.542-3) (note the long, epic-like compounds reminiscent of those in "Cyclops" in this passage); "His voice had a cultured ring in it" (*U* 13.548). Contributing to her skill at painting "essentially static pictures that constitute the first part of

'Nausicaa'" (Senn 177), Gerty typecasts Bloom as "gravefaced" over the bereavement of his loved one to facilitate her idealization of Bloom "as her fantasy lover," "fits him into the stereotypical role of 'manly man'" (Henke 139) thus in sentimental need to be consoled by her, and, by so doing, fulfills her frustration of lovelessness as a result of—"but for that one shortcoming she knew she need fear no competition" (*U* 13.650)—her lameness. "Ironically, she remains oblivious both of Bloom's Jewishness and of his womanliness" (Henke 139). Not only this, but the readers will also note that the story she comes up with of his being in mourning and widowed goes contrary to the plot of preceding chapters where Bloom was in mourning for Patrick Dignam's decease.

It is evident, then, that Bloom's portrait of a manly man is thus framed by Gerty's desire for romance, courtship, and marriage. So is her reading of Wylie's portrait and the picture of halcyon days. These attest to her being subject to Victorian- and patriarchal-underwritten ideologies of the angel in the house and the aristocratic femme fatale. The formulaic narratives that she attaches to the male characters, in particular, all point to the role she plays in them: not only is her noble quality mock-epically unrivaled among her kind, as shown above, but her sexually attractive appeal is accentuated—"seductive" being the keyword (*U* 13.109). The following description culminates in her femme fatality: "He [Bloom] was eyeing her as a snake eyes its prey. Her woman's instinct told her that she had raised the devil in him" (*U* 13.517). Her femme fatality is mocked even in the second half of the text, narrated from Bloom's reflection on the event on the beach—"Devil you are. Swell of her calf. Transparent stockings, stretched to breaking point" (*U* 13.929-30); "Drained all the manhood out of me, little wretch" (*U* 13.1101-02)—thus, she is "a true Lady of the Rocks: part virgin, part temptress, with the boundaries ambiguously blurred" (Higgins 56). Joyce's "symbol" for "Nausicaa" is

"virgin," after all (Gifford 384). Indeed, the blue color of Gerty's eyes and stockings mocks Mother Mary's emblem color. The "rosebloom" tint creeping into her cheeks (*U* 13.120) evokes the mystical rose image of Mary. To coincide with such Mariolatric association, the ceremony conducted synchronically in the church is also dedicated to the "mystical rose" (*U* 13.374). Even when Gerty knows that she "had raised the devil" in Bloom, this thought adds "a burning scarlet" to her face until it "became a glorious rose" (*U* 13.520), transforming her into an obscene Virgin, as it were. Indeed, Gerty assumes the role with which the Victorian "social constant" (Black 75) endows her: she is "just like a second mother in the house, a ministering angel" (*U* 13.325-26). However, Gerty stays immobile (because of her lameness) "near the little pool by the rock" (13.355) for most of the chapter, which suggests her siren-like sexuality. Such an unstable combination in the codification of the dyad of the whore-like temptress vs. the virgin provokes the male fantasy that Gerty serves and supports unquestionably, as evidenced in her fantasized relationship with other men in the chapter.

In casting Gerty onto the dual roles of the virgin vs. the whore, the narrator, arguably in proxy of Joyce—given his biographical Odysseus-masked desire for Marthe Fleischmann as princess Nausicaa—replicates the male gaze impregnated with visual, erotic desire which frames especially the first half of the narrative of "Nausicaa." Nevertheless, "Nausicaa," though indeed reflects (thus replicating and reciprocating with the male desire), also subverts the authoring stance and authority—thus de-"singular"-izing the name of the author as well as the authorizing, hegemonic discourse dictating a Victorian woman like Gerty herself. The visual transparency and immediacy underlying Gerty's belief and cognition have been shown to convey her desire to *write* herself into the dominant discourses of the time of an angel in the house, the lady (on the rock), and the temptress. The analogy of the writing self is not

a coincidence. Gerty is indeed conscious of her subjective desire to wield the writing pen, not unlike that of the author creating her, albeit of much a lesser sort, which Molly later mocks as "the ladies letterwriter" (*U* 18.742)[5]: "if she could only express herself like that poem that appealed to her so deeply that she copied out of the newspaper she found one evening round the potherbs. *Art thou real, my ideal*?" (*U* 13.643-46) This verse line she copies from a newspaper is actually projected with her double bind, caught between the ideal (or imaginary) stereotypes of the aforementioned angel-lady-temptress trinity into which she molds and encodes herself and its discrepancy with her reality of not neatly fitting into it.

This disabling discrepancy initiates the route to the "postcard" status of her section. The deconstructive insight that Derrida reaches in his *The Post Card* (1987) can have a significant bearing on Gerty's section. Derrida argues that all letters are open letters, and the most typical open letter is the postcard (*The Post Card* 35). However, the condition for a postcard (and inevitably, a letter) to be sent and to arrive is "by not arriving": "This is how it is to be read, and written, the carte of the adestination" (*The Post Card* 29). The non-arrival of a postcard is predicated on hazards on its route of transmission, or to use an earlier Derridean term—"dissemination": the postcard is being "intercepted" "in advance," thereby falling into anyone's hands and pre-empting its reaching any determinable person or place (*The Post Card* 51); the possibility of its going astray is fatally necessary (*The Post Card* 65, 66). To apply Derrida's argument to the first half of "Nausicca," whereas the messages that she (as

5) It is significant that in her first appearance in *Ulysses*, Gerty is already associated with letters, for she is "carrying the Catesby's cork lino letters for her father" (*U* 10.1206-7). Margot Norris accentuates the conspicuous and emphatic literariness of her narration" (169). Giving a useful, detailed analogy between Gerty and Stephen as young artists to be (Bishop 204-6), John Bishop also remarks that Gerty, like Stephen, "might be said to have been contaminated by literature" (204).

well as the narrator expressing the textual consciousness in the same breath) encodes, stamps, and sends mainly for her own sake are meant to typecast herself into the ideal/imaginary angel-lady-temptress trinity easily exposed to the eyes of the beholders, they invariably fail to arrive and take on a wayward route, being intercepted by and subject to the readers' treacherous, disparate wills of reading in actual fact. Gerty's faith in "the story behind" in her reading of Wylie, the picture of halcyon days, and Bloom the gentleman on the beach all bear the hallmark of the presence/absence, disclosure/disguise dialectics, constituting the nature of postcard. Endorsing the true story behind her readings, Gerty insists on the apparent and the present, thus necessitating her belief in the pictorial, the fixed, the immobile, and the visual. However, the culminating assertion informing all of her readings of especially men—"he was what he looked" (*U* 13.141)—ironically turns her underlying belief into, as it were, an open letter, that is, a postcard. The so-called "exposés" on which she hinges her faith in ideal gender and class relationships bear a resemblance to a postcard on which the picture, inscription, and addressee—due to being unguardedly exposed—paradoxically dictate no absolute authorship nor authority.

In addition to her eagerness to believe in the presence of Truth where there is none, which is exposed in the blaring discrepancy between her ideal reading and the cruel reality, the opened-up nature, or postcard-ing, of Gerty's section is echoed in the textual dwelling on clichés. Notably, the first part of "Nausicaa" swarms with sentimental and sugary clichés, befitting the encoded three-in-one image of Gerty as an angel, lady, and temptress. Cloying set phrases such as "the last glow of all too fleeting day" (*U* 13.2-3), "Last but not least" (*U* 13.5), "happy as the day was long" (*U* 13.20), "as good as gold" (*U* 13.34), "a world of good" (*U* 13.85), "Honour where honour is due" (*U* 13.96), "this balmy summer eve" (*U* 13.214-15), "golden opinions" (*U*

13.225), "Everyone thought the world of her" (*U* 13.330) are unhesitatingly attached to the positive portrayal of Gerty. Even when a clear shadow of doubt is cast about her less-than-glorious childhood, it is significant that similar cloying phrases are still visible: "Had her father only avoided the clutches in her demon drink . . . she might now be rolling in her carriage, second to none" (*U* 13.290-92); "the troubles of childhood are but as fleeting summer showers" (*U* 13.381-82). When Gerty fantasizes about her role as an angel to her future spouse, the narrator—on her behalf—is prone to think in clichés: "for riches for poor, in sickness in health, till death us two part" (*U* 13.260); "If he had suffered, more sinned against than sinning" (13.431-32); "he was her all in all" (*U* 13.671); "she knew he could be trusted to the death" (*U* 13.693). These formulaic phrases clearly support the "Needless to say" (*U* 13.48-49) state of Gerty's desire and, in turn, the authoring male desire transferred onto hers.

Though expressing an urgent desire to fix and immobilize her stereotypical impressions on men and women of her times, these cliché phrases, on the contrary, call into question the T/truth behind them for the precise reason of their "citationality," or their susceptibility to endless repetition. In the second part of "Nausicaa," Bloom will develop an important insight that can retrospectively deconstruct the textual faith underlying the first part of the chapter. This is his observation on the awkward (and in effect dangerous) proximity between the disparate pair of religion and advertising: "Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us" (*U* 13.1122-24). In such juxtaposition, the revered hierarchy that religion is supposed to assume is totally disbanded —a deplorable condition consummated in/by the commodification and alienation of the modern world. Thus, we can see that instead of the repetition, which metaphysically reinforces the self-sameness of identity, the repetition

effect actually enacts a dangerous and deconstructive force, destabilizing and finally subverting the substantiality of truth and identity. Randomly borrowed and intercepted—W. J. McCormack affirms that clichés entail "infinite reproduction of any one element in any possible context" and vice versa (327)—clichés are also such destabilizing phrases, questioning the so-called truth behind them (notably as in the above case where Gerty "had copied" the poem out of the newspaper). Fritz Senn makes a lucid remark about Gerty's style, which relies on "the cliché and the shopsoiled charms of stereotyped fiction of commercial slickness"—it is "manifestly unable to characterize anything outside itself. It reflects only its own vacuity, it hardly illuminates or communicates, its glitter is narcissistic, [and] its essence is self-gratification" (184). In the deployment of clichés, Joyce toys with and "flaunts the citationality of its language" (Lawrence, "Paternity" 93). Such susceptibility to repetition as inherent in clichés, according to McCormack's Marxist reading, tends toward "not so much the exhaustion of language" as capitalist "consumerism" (331)—a target clearly mocked and critiqued in "Nausicaa," too.

In effect, the previously discussed narrative desire to immobilize the presentation of scenarios as *tableaux vivants* can be recast as underlined by the desire to repeat without difference the ideal—albeit imaginary—ideologies that inform and condition the characters. Thus, Gerty's ability to see through Wylie and Bloom, who in turn can see through her true colors, and picture the whole scene in the church is ideologically intended to reinforce the sameness of the messages behind—that she is a true angel and lady and a worthy femme fatale. However, these transparent presentations are irreducibly cliché-like. As in Bloom's own self-fantasizing and -fashioning of being "The Mystery Man on the Beach" on which he would write his prize-winning sentimental story (*U* 13.1060), Gerty's imagination of the opposite sex (which shares surprising

telepathy with Bloom's self-imagination) and religion falls into the stereotypical and cliché roles due to which she owes her being and from which she fails to extricate her predicament. Likewise, Margot Norris critiques the same motif of the *tableau vivant* as being "vulnerable to ridicule as pretentious kitsch" (178) in Gerty's "imitative" act (179). In other words, both Bloom's "mystery man on the beach" and Gerty's "angel in the house" form an ideology-ideal complementing pair, cut and tailored (by themselves, by each other, and, of course, by the narrator) from the circulating sentimental imagination as well as clichés of the Victorian time.

Just as Gerty cuts and pastes the cliché—i.e. non-monopolizing, author-less—real/ideal poem from the newspaper, which she deems as her "true" self-expression, so the fate of the characters' reading and interpreting the "truth" of other people and phenomena must be that of gratuitous grafting, of waywardness, of not arriving—like an open letter. "Nausicaa" virtually revolves around the indeterminacy concerning "truth" and "falsehood," or destination and adestination. The issue of true identity looms large throughout the chapter. "But who was Gerty?" (*U* 13.78) is the narrator's self-reflexive question. The answer provided by the narrative that she was "more a Giltrap than a MacDowell" (*U* 13.83) sets the tone of relativity. Gerty's first section, which perpetuates the ideologies informing her entire being, is seriously undermined by Bloom's second half—echoing the important parallactic motif laid ground in "Lestrygonians." In Bloom's section, even when he is made aware of Gerty's name, he still suspects that "Gerty they called her. Might be a false name like my name and the address Dolphin's barn a blind" (*U* 13.944-45). The readers have witnessed that Bloom's false name in his clandestine correspondence with Martha enacts the closure/disguise, presence/absence dialectics from which he derives sexual excitement. Thus he is already equipped with the sensitivity that what is exposed is not necessarily

the truth, the way the purloined letter hangs exposed to the full view of the reader without making its actual content known in Poe's famous and intriguing story "The Purloined Letter." Indeed, the reflection on the "postcard" state of being in "Nausicaa" is mainly engineered in/on Bloom's part.

III. "The Postcard of Being" Attested by Bloom's Section

Whereas the transparent, pictorial, and visual motifs dominate Gerty's section, Bloom's section is wrought with motifs of opaqueness, dissemination, and, ultimately *écriture*. Also partaking in scopophilic eroticism, Bloom reflects on Gerty's exhibitionism and empathizes with her motivation to be similar to that of office girls: "[T]hey want it themselves. Their natural craving" (*U* 13.790-91). However, intuiting the gap between the exhibitionist's desire and the spectator's knowledge of reality, he pities their blindness—"Pity they can't see themselves" (*U* 13.793)—and then recalls and speculates the "Mutoscope pictures in capel street: for men only. Peeping Tom. Willy's hat and what the girls did with it. Do they snapshot those girls or is it all a fake?" (*U* 13.794-96) While the moving pictures are designed to pique men's desire by playing on the girls' appearance/disappearance, Bloom is intuited to the possibility of the fakeness, or emptiness, behind such passion and the (a)destination it aims at.[6] Though Gerty professes knowledge of what people, mostly men, do with pictures—"the gentleman lodger . . . that had pictures cut out of papers of those skirtdancers and highkickers and she [her friend Bertha Supple] said he used to do something not very nice" (*U* 13.702-05);

6) While disagreeing with Bloom's ability to tell the real difference between "snapshot" and "fake," Jules David Law nonetheless acknowledges that both imply different degrees of "'faking' desire" (233).

"Winny Rippingham so mad about actors' photographs" (*U* 13.712-13)—her interpretation of the meaning of such pictures is rather straightforward and less than sophisticated. In contrast, Bloom's parallactic consciousness marks the distinction in his sophistication as to the relativity of truth/falsehood of interpretation from Gerty's. As Patrick McGee concludes, "Bloom has more irony in his voice [than Gerty]" and detects "those self-conscious verbal abruptions in Bloom's discourse in which he seems to recognize the limits of his own language and thus registers the real as that which resists symbolization" ("When Is" 126).

Bloom's suspicion, "is it all a fake?" (*U* 13.796) persists throughout the latter half of "Nausicaa," throwing into relief the metaphysical reflection on the "postcard of Being" (Derrida, *The Post Card* 65) in general. Significantly, direct reference is made on Bloom's part to the sending and receiving of letters and postcards. Reflecting on Boylan's "bold hand" to "Mrs. Marion" on the cover of the letter that Bloom receives in the morning, he continues alerting himself, "Did I forget to write address on that letter like the postcard I sent to Flynn?" (*U* 13.843-44) Bloom has been made aware of the treacherous, though not at all uncommon, possibility to "forget to address" a postcard or a letter, for that matter, naturally making the postcard/writing—which by nature either way, according to Derrida, is anonymous ("*Ulysses* Gramophone" 30)—fail to arrive.[7] A similar reflection occurs when Bloom's thought moves from Gerty's draining all the manhood out of him, Molly's kissing him in her youth, to Milly's burgeoning womanhood. From this train of thought, he concludes, "Returning not the same" (*U* 13.1103-04). Though this clearly designates his prescience of Milly's impending loss of virginity, his thought then connects this with his secret correspondence and fake identity:

7) The other letter that fails to arrive or return with a difference is the "French letter" Bloom has been carrying throughout the day (*U* 13.876).

"Care of P.O. Dolphin's Barn" (*U* 13.1105). On the surface, the connection is made between his daughter's loss of virginity and his secret desire to take away Martha's virginity, thus making both women involved "return not the same." However, with the word "care" turning into a postal jargon or cliché—the technical sign of which is c/o—the letter, or Bloom's letter, does return but not the same, that is, with a difference.

The pun on "letter" here specifically refers to the word/world confusion highlighted in Martha's letter to Bloom. Her unintended misspelling of "word" into "world" gets returned most specifically in "Nausicaa." Gerty's section is marked by surprisingly many appearances of the word "world" in the form of cliché and tumescent phrases—"those iron jelloids . . . had done her a world of good" (*U* 13.84-85); "she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber" (*U* 13.189-90); "Everyone thought the world of her for her gentle ways" (*U* 13.330-31); "She would have given worlds to know what it was [the story of a haunting sorrow behind Bloom]" (*U* 13.422); "Dearer than the whole world would she be to him" (*U* 13.654-55). And in fact, the opening sentence of "Nausicaa" already enunciates and establishes this significant "world-ness": "The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace" (*U* 13.1-2). Even in Bloom's section, the word "world" returns not unlike the clichés as in the examples cited above: "Time enough, understand all the ways of the world [about the seaside girls]" (*U* 13.897); "Who knows? Ways of the world. Young students" (*U* 13.927-28); "June that was too I wooed. The year returns. History repeats itself . . . . Life, love, voyage round your own little world" (*U* 13.1092-94).

"[N]ear her monthlies, I expect, makes them feel ticklish. I have such a bad headache today" (*U* 13.777-79) is the self-propelled connection that Bloom establishes for Martha and Gerty—they are, after all, "Sister souls" (*U* 13.818), though Gerty also shares more apparent sisterhood with Molly, among

other things,[8] in both of their disregard for correct grammar. Indeed, "as long as you didn't do the other thing before being married" (*U* 13.709) in Gerty's train of thoughts and "he could see her other things" written by the narrator (*U* 13.724) much recall Martha's "that other world." In fact, Bloom is also drawn to their sisterhood: "Molly often told me feel things a ton weight . . . . O that way! O, that's exquisite! Feel it myself too" (*U* 13.824).[9] Martha's misspelling gets returned here—with a difference—in Gerty's and Bloom's—also one of her sister's soul's—sections. Though the last example cited above in Bloom's section seems to confirm that "History repeats itself" (*U* 13.1093), Bloom nonetheless reflects, "So it returns. Think you're escaping and run into yourself. Longest way round is the shortest way home . . . . Rip van Winkle we played . . . . Then I did Rip van Winkle coming back . . . . All changed. Forgotten. The young are old" (*U* 13.1110-16). His observation is still that of "returning not the same." The "world" repetition or re-inscription in Bloom's section not only demonstrates but acts out this "returning not the same" observation Bloom reaches. Such same-and-different directions the "letter" takes corroborate Derrida's comment that "the post . . . is . . . as the site of all transferences and all correspondences, the 'proper' possibility of every possible rhetoric" (*The Post Card* 65).

"Postalization" well accounts for Bloom's inciting and insightful interpretation of natural phenomena and human events. Walking on the strand, Bloom spots something on the ground observantly: "Mr. Bloom stooped and turned over a piece of paper on the strand. He brought it near his eyes and peered. Letter? No. Can't read . . . . Page of an old copybook. All those holes

8) See Black for the close ties between Molly and Gerty (78).

9) Fritz Senn remarks that Bloom "lumps" Gerty and Martha together, and "Joyce's affair with Marthe Fleishmann provides a cluster of links external to the text" (176). He affirms that "the Swiss seductress reinforced some of the attractions that were to be attributed to Gerty MacDowell" (168).

and pebbles. Who could count them? Never know what you find. Bottle with story of a treasure in it thrown from a wreck. Parcels post. Children always want to throw things in the sea" (*U* 13.1246-51). Stephen, in "Proteus," earlier in the strand setting, reflected that "these heavy sands are language tide and wind have silted here" (*U* 3.288) and tried to decode the "Signatures of all things I am here to read" (*U* 3.2). Bloom shares with Stephen in perceiving in nature a susceptibility to producing writing and hence inviting interpretation. However, Bloom evinces a greater degree of sophistication in that he is open to interpretation along the postal line—that is, "the fatal necessity of going astray" (Derrida, *The Post Card* 66) —while Stephen was fixated on the authenticity of signatures. Bloom's suspicion that that piece of paper comes from a source not different from a bottle from a wreck, readily rendering a "story" in it at the service of whoever salvages it, suggests an affinity with the nature of the post or the postal nature. Derrida's analysis again can be illuminating: "(there is no metapostal); only a card lost in a bag, that a strike, or even a sorting accident, can always delay indefinitely, lose without return" (*The Post Card* 67). "All those holes" on the page which Bloom observes or intuits literally open up the sent message and render it signature-less, which makes the interpreter, unlike in the case of Stephen's conviction and confidence, "Never know what you find."

Such "loss" of meaning without return is deeply "registered"—another postal metaphor—on Bloom's mind, so much so that it hampers his action and its purpose. At the end of "Nausicaa," Bloom is toying with the idea of writing a message on the sand for Gerty because he thinks it "[m]ight remain" (*U* 13.1257). However, he pauses two times, with his message unfinished and undelivered in the end, leaving space for vigorous critical speculation, like the many conundrums in the novel[10]. At most, he successfully writes three words:

10) Vicky Mahaffey juggles among multiple interpretive possibilities of "a bat," "a

"I. . . . AM. A." While pausing after the word "I," he reflects, "Some flatfoot tramp on it in the morning. Useless. Washed away. Tide comes here . . . . All these rocks with lines and scars and letters . . . . What is the meaning of that other world. I called you naughty boy because I do not like" (*U* 13.1259-61). In the end, "Mr. Bloom effaced the letters with his slow boot. Hopeless thing sand. Nothing grows in it. All fades" (*U* 13.1266-67). It is significant that in the above passage, Bloom makes an unconscious association between Martha's misspelled letter and her letter correspondence to him, which contains this misspelling, hence rendering the reference to the "letters" in "lines and scars and letters" ambiguous. To note, Patrick McGee suggests that Bloom has become "a dead letter surrounded by 'lines and scars and letters'" (*Paperspace* 96), hinting at the postal connection, albeit a dysfunctional one. His final effacing of the letters from the surface of the sand suggests both ways of interpretation/interception of this act: both the letters of "I. . . . AM. A" and Martha's letter (and all that her letter evokes and enacts as in the re-inscription of Gerty, Milly, Molly, and even Bloom himself shown above) are and can be erased. Thus, by inference, Gerty's letter—both the additional letter "l" in her overuse of the word "world" and her chapter, "Nausicaa," as a "parcel post" "thrown from a wreck"—can fade and be effaced. Thereby, the word (contributed by the tongue-in-cheek narrator on her behalf as well as by Bloom reflecting on her and her other female proxies, not excluding himself, again) and "the world it aims" are "at various removes," rendering "textual displacement and instability" as already seen in "the series of [Bloom's] translations that renders the cat's 'Mrkrgnao'" in "Calypso" (Levine 153). It is, as Derrida attests, "the first stroke of a letter" which "divides itself, and must indeed support partition in order to identify itself" (*The Post Card* 53). Thus, Martha's word/world split, partition, or a slip

cuckoo," "a cuckold," and "a bad man" to complete Bloom's sentence (117).

of the tongue, is embedded in "Nausicaa" (consider the name coincidence again of Martha and Marthe Fleischmann).

Interpreting "Nausicaa" succinctly "[i]n the light of Derrida's work on postcards," Karen Lawrence sees "Nausicaa" as "not even a painting but a postcard—a romantic, anonymous, mass-produced fantasy, the caption, perhaps reading 'love loves to love love'" ("Joyce and Feminism" 252). As in the case of the postcard which Denis Breen receives, bearing the open-but-at-the-same-time-occult "U.P: up" message rendering dangerously wayward—to the effect of being offensive and scabrous—interpretations and interceptions of that message, "Nausicaa" in its entirety is both open and occult, ideal and real—"there are nothing but postcards, anonymous morsels without fixed domicile without legitimate addressee, letters open, but like crypts" (Derrida, *The Post Card* 53). The seemingly irreconcilable coexistence of openness/closedness and sameness/difference attests to the partition, or self-dividing effect, ironically constituting the destitute self-identity as Derrida analyses it. Gerty, the character as created by her creator whose desire in turn "gives us our image of Gerty," already paves the way to inventing herself into "an imaginary writing, a creature of paperspace, a figment of our collective imagination" assuming "a semblance of the real, a gaze" (McGee, *Paperspace* 91, 94-95, 94) where there is none. Bloom concludes fittingly that what has gone before is "An optical illusion. Mirage." But his train of thoughts continues without stopping by mentioning, "Land of the setting sun this. Homerule sun setting in the southeast. My native land, goodnight" (*U* 13.1078-80). As befitting the cliché and formulaic technique which exerts to create an ideology-immobilizing effect throughout this chapter, here Bloom's reflection on home rule ironically also turns cliché-like and virtually nullified. Not unlike such sentimental set phrases appearing in Gerty's section as her being a "specimen of winsome Irish girlhood" (*U* 13.81) with "the bluest Irish

eyes" (*U* 13.108) in "God's fair land of Ireland" (*U* 13.122), which catches "the last glimpse of Erin" (13.628), and reminiscent of an earlier more eye-catching bold-faced heading in "Aeolus"—"ERIN GREEN GEM OF THE SILVER SEA" (*U* 7.236) (which Karen Lawrence has categorized as possessing features of a "glossy postcard" (*The Odyssey of Style* 106)), Bloom's nationalism-tinted catchphrases of "Land of the setting sun this" and "My native land" have been likewise reduced to mere textual "spectacles" (as the so-called class-less men's temperance retreat is " a most edifying spectacle" (*U* 13.285) to the naive and illusion-prone Gerty)—i.e., clichés—from which "Onlookers see most of the game" (*U* 13.903).[11]

Thus touching on class, gender, social, and even political ideologies, "Nausicaa" both exhibits and encodes—as in "an immense postcard" of the sort, Derrida affirms, *Ulysses* is as a whole ("Ulysses Grammaphone" 30)—slippery and protean stylistic display and performance, conjuring up Bhabha's mixed metaphor of "a negative transparency" (35)—a carnivalesque, parodic counterpart of Gerty's "transparent stockings."

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11) Mark Schechner gives an unusual political reading of the beginning of "Nausicaa" in his psychoanalytic study. He offers to read the fighting between the twins as a "comic allegory of the fall of Parnell and the defeat of Home Rule in 1891" (see 157).

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Abstract

The Postal State of Being in "Nausicaa"

Li-ling Tseng

Gerty MacDowell's portrait can be correlated to Joyce's own encounter with Marthe Fleischmann in Zurich in 1918. During their acquaintance, Joyce sent her a postcard addressed to Nausikaa by Odysseus. The coincidence of the appellations for Fleischmann and the chapter title provides a propitious route to investigate this Ulyssean chapter via a "postal" reading. Elsewhere in *Ulysses*, Bloom's clandestine letter correspondence to Martha Clifford in the false name of Henry Flower, Denis Breen's receiving a putative libelous postcard bearing the words of "U.P.: up" readily circulating among Dubliners on June 16, 1904, and the sailor D. B. Murphy in the cabmen's shelter bluffing about South American cannibals on the proof of a postcard from Bolivia are other distinguished examples in *Ulysses* of the prominence of letters and postcards circulating and disseminating occult messages as well as desires in modern cities like Dublin. This paper proposes "Nausicaa" to be read and interpreted/intercepted as a postcard, exposing, circulating, but eventually subverting numerous ideologies of desires (including class, gender, and politics) stamped on or encoded in it.

■ Key words : class, gender, political ideologies, visual transparency, the postal route, the postcard of being
(계급, 성, 정치적 이데올로기, 시각적 투명성, 우편 경로, 존재의 우편엽서)

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