

Credible Resonance

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Abstract

Credible resonance in the Joyce oeuvre, what would it be? In *On Eloquence* (2008), Donoghue asks a related question: “How to distinguish eloquence from its strutting cousins—grandiloquence, magniloquence, bombast, cant?”¹ Donoghue’s question and the one raised here ask when a reader finds eloquence or resonance engaging, even moving, and when the same reader says, “How trite,” or “What rubbish.” Donoghue’s answer to his question, “Only in particulars,”² dismisses all simple rules of judgment, and prompts us to develop a typology of particulars designed to answer our question. To identify categories in the typology, we’ll look at two passages in episode 3 of *Ulysses*, a string of fragments in part II of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and several moments in *Chamber Music*, *Dubliners* and *Finnegans Wake*.

Keywords: eloquence, resonance, *Ulysses*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Chamber Music*, *Dubliners*, *Finnegans Wake*.

1. “*the rum tum tiddledy tum*” (U 3.492)

Episode 3 of *Ulysses* records the thoughts of Stephen Dedalus as he walks along Sandymount strand. Kenner clarifies that Stephen has left “his post at Mr Deasy’s school early because it is Thursday, a half-day,” and “would have been borne on the Dalkey tram from Castle Street, Dalkey, to Haddington Road, thence on the Sandymount line to Tritonville Road.”³ Shadowing Stephen as he walks, the episode’s narrator raises his voice now and then to let the reader know where he is or what he does, as when Stephen jots down lines of verse: “Old Deasy’s letter. Here. Thanking you for the hospitality tear the blank end off. Turning his back to the sun he bent over far to a table of rock and scribbled words” (U 3.404-7). Near the end of the episode, we find this train of Stephen’s thought: “Yes, evening will find itself in me, without me. All days make their end. By the way next when is it Tuesday will be the longest day. Of all the glad new year, mother, the rum tum tiddledy tum. Lawn Tennyson, gentleman poet.” (U 3.490-2)

There is more here than one line of argument can follow: a unity of inner and outer worlds; inevitable temporal ends; the dating of the day on which the events of *Ulysses* take place. Let us focus on the phrase germane to credible resonance, *the rum tum tiddledy tum*. What would *that* be? As Stephen thinks of the summer solstice (*next when is it Tuesday will be the longest day*), his mind moves from the unit of the day to that of the year, and from the year to a phrase (*Of all the glad new year, mother*) taken from Tennyson’s “The May Queen” (1832). We need the help of annotators, in the present case Gifford and Seidman, to know that.⁴ Just after the Tennyson quote is the phrase of interest, *the rum tum tiddledy tum*.

Both *rum-tum* and the slightly different *tiddly-pom* are in the *OED* and signify “A regular rhythmic musical sound” in the first case, and “with a simple beat or tune, trite” in the second.⁵ Both entries are onomatopoeic, and both convey

amused belittlement (the latter is derived from the more spectacular *tiddly-om-pom-pom*). So Stephen's *the rum tum tiddledy tum* is dismissive. It mocks the Tennyson quote, as *Lawn Tennyson* mocks the poet, turning him into the child of an English racket-and-ball game. Similar dismissal of Tennyson occurs in part II of *A Portrait*, when Heron and Nash claim him as the best English poet, and Stephen exclaims, "Tennyson a poet! Why, he's only a rhymester!" (*P* 75)⁶

In lieu of praising credible resonance, then, *the rum tum tiddledy tum*⁷ points to specious resonance, or melodious triteness. In this regard, it is important to make three observations. First, Stephen's phrase bears its own resonance, and is meant to be taken seriously, to mock credibly. The phrase doesn't follow "the oblique movement of irony,"⁸ but rather seeks to mock resonantly what is taken to be resonant foolery. Secondly, credible and specious resonance share the same attribute, namely patterned, foregrounded sounds, most often in proximity. These sounds may be phonemes, syllables, or the tone units of intonation. Thirdly, the reader's hearing of sounds in the perceptual field of the text runs up against a quandary taken as a premise: the written text is not a sound-producing entity. We'll face this quandary in section 5 below. At this point, given the shared attribute of foregrounded sounds, it follows that all distinctions between credible and specious resonance must be semantic in nature.

In light of the passage quoted in episode 3, we can begin to identify categories of particulars in a typology designed to distinguish credible resonance from its impostors in the Joyce oeuvre. Three categories are first discerned. Category (1) gathers the particulars of subjective judgment, or a single reader's sympathetic response. Stephen Dedalus makes the call here. Many readers, and several characters in episode 9, find his thought to be *rum tum tiddledy tum*. And the verse he jots down in episode 3, later transcribed in episode 7 (*U* 7.522-5), has elicited a howl or two. In the course of its reception, moreover, Tennyson's poetry has had many readers who have

viewed it with reverence, and who would be offended if it were mocked as melodious triteness.

Category (2) bears the semantics of the resonant language itself, and its specific reference. We have detailed above the sense of *rum-tum* and *tiddly-pom*, and inferred the dismissal of *the rum tum tiddledy tum*. As regards the phrase's reference, it is worth bearing in mind the Joycean lesson that the signifying properties of language are often like the weather forecast: they may or may not be true.

And category (3) holds the particulars of local co-text and its semantics. The language surrounding resonant phrasing may assign it credibility, or take credibility away. Just before *the rum tum tiddledy tum*, Tennyson's *Of all the glad new year, mother* is too glibly cheery for Stephen Dedalus, haunted as he is by his own mother's death, and the apposition after it—*Lawn Tennyson, gentleman poet*—extends the dismissive semantics.

2. “*Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night*” (U 3.273-4)

A second passage in episode 3 lets us identify three other categories of particulars. A semantic tie linking the first passage to the second is their evocation of evening and night. The first passage begins: *Yes, evening will find itself in me, without me*. The second reads: “The cold domed room of the tower waits. Through the barbicans the shafts of light are moving ever, slowly ever as my feet are sinking, creeping duskward over the dial floor. Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night.” (U 3.271-4)

There is a different sort of resonance here, one akin in episode 17 to “The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit” (U 17.1039), or in the *Wake* to “Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me, elm! Night night!” (FW 216.2-3). We hear the resonance in the phonic echoes and percussive cluster of *cold domed room*, in the alliterative *duskward over the dial floor* and in the swaying cadence of *Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night*. This cadence is heptasyllabic, a prosodic pattern

Joyce's ear was often drawn to, as in: "Lightly come or lightly go / Though thy heart presage thee woe" (*CP* 33); "all the living and the dead" (*D* 204);⁹ "All the dark was cold and strange" (*P* 15); "Sea and headland now grew dim" (*U* 1.224-5); "Telmetale of stem or stone" (*FW* 216.3-4). The pattern is so pronounced that Stephen puts his metrical finger on it near the outset of episode 3: "Rhythm begins, you see, I hear. Acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching." (*U* 3.23-4)¹⁰

The second passage in episode 3 leads us to category (4), the source of discourse. Discerning this source can be difficult. In the first passage, the phrase quoted from Tennyson's "The May Queen" starts with the poet, is given to a young female speaker and ends in Stephen's recitation, all without lexical or typographical notice in *Ulysses*. We thus ask: Is the source, as in the episode 3 passages, the inner voice of a character? Is the discourse assigned to a character in dialogue, or spoken by the narrator? Does it owe, as is sometimes the case in episode 7 of *Ulysses*, to a recited instance of oratory? Bloom dismisses in episode 7 an instance of such oratory as "High falutin stuff. Bladderbags" (*U* 7.260), and after muses wryly, "All very fine to jeer at it now in cold print but it goes down like hot cake that stuff" (*U* 7.338-40). In episode 8, Bloom recalls the same recited oratory as "gassing about the what was it the pensive bosom of the silver effulgence. Flapdoodle to feed fools on" (*U* 8.381-2). *Flapdoodle to feed fools on* is like *the rum tum tiddledy tum*. Both phrases mock resonantly what is taken to be resonant foolery.

Category (5) is sudden phonic exuberance. After decades of prodigious observation, Donoghue avers that "a feeling for eloquence is likely to be gratified by sudden gestures, flares of spirit, words breaking free from every expectation, audacities of diction and syntax."¹¹ Hence the attribute *sudden* before *phonic exuberance*. Let us assume, in addition, that credible resonance is a kind of eloquence, one that works the phonology of a language, but is quite willing to consort with its lexis, syntax and semantics. An instance of *phonic exuberance* foregrounds the sounds of the words it inhabits, so they stand

out from those around them. Thus Donoghue: “We normally advert to eloquence when we note the exuberance with which a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a line of verse presents itself as if it had broken free from its setting and declared its independence.”¹² *Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night* evinces this exuberance that breaks free from the words around it.

The partner of category (3), category (6) holds the particulars of global co-text and its semantics. Through these particulars we discern the center of gravity of an episode, or of an entire work, the point around which the elements orbit and spin, and are in balance.¹³ It may also endorse the semantics of credible resonance, or dismiss passages of like formal nature. Simply glossed, the second passage in episode 3 concerns

Stephen’s sense of time as succession and simultaneity, and where he will sleep when night falls. These are important issues.¹⁴ Stephen’s sense of time inheres in the depiction of the Martello tower, viewed from inside its *cold domed room*. Temporal succession explains the motion in *the shafts of light are moving ever, slowly ever and creeping duskward over the dial floor*. Simultaneity guides the depiction of the room six miles away. The interleaving in *Ulysses* of succession and simultaneity—the parallel triads of episodes 1 to 3 and 4 to 6, the temporal structure of episode 10—is enacted here in embryo.¹⁵

The endorsed semantics of the second passage also extend to theme, for *Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night* evokes temporal motion to come. This motion leads Stephen to consider where he will sleep when night does fall. He will not sleep in the Martello tower, where he slept the night before with Mulligan and Haines. Stephen’s decision not to return —“I will not sleep there when this night comes” (*U* 3.276)—arises two lines after the second quoted passage. The decision entails a sort of freedom, the limited variety that Donoghue ties to eloquence, and that Stephen voices in “an eloquence of least means.”¹⁶

3. “*Weakness and timidity and inexperience*” (P 60)

With six categories of particulars in view, designed to identify credible resonance in the Joyce oeuvre, let us move briefly back in the life of Stephen Dedalus to part II of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Looking at a string of fragments in part II will allow us to add two other categories.

A Portrait has its own center of gravity, which sets its elements in balance, and endorses its credible resonance. The center of gravity entails the unfolding ontogeny of a young lyric poet, and the balance is delicate, for as Kenner sees, the novel moves at peak moments “near the brink of parody without detriment to our awareness that something enchanting has happened.”¹⁷ Part II of the novel relates the stages in ontogeny of school age and adolescence, and crucially includes Stephen’s sexual initiation, that delicate moment when sexual desire turns into union with another. Six pages into part II, and at the end of its first section, a leitmotif is introduced to adumbrate the sexual initiation. The last words of the section read: “in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then, in a moment, he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment.” (P 60)

The resonance here is not as spectacular as *the rum tum tiddledy tum* or *Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night*. What most stands out is lexical and clausal repetition, as in the proleptic *that moment . . . in a moment . . . that magic moment* and the twin *he would be transfigured*. We do note, though, the expanding syllables in the leitmotif *Weakness and timidity and inexperience*, whose nouns are of two, four and five syllables, and whose word stress moves forward in each successive noun. The section-ending *magic moment*, in addition, falls in rhythm, thus enacting the sense of the predicate-governing *would fall*, whose subject is *Weakness and timidity and inexperience*.

Thirty three pages later, the leitmotif arises in a second fragment that also adumbrates sexual initiation, and recalls the

first fragment above: “A tender premonition touched him of the tryst he had then looked forward to and, in spite of the horrible reality which lay between his hope of then and now, of the holy encounter he had then imagined at which weakness and timidity and inexperience were to fall from him.” (P 93)

All readers of the Joyce oeuvre know a leitmotif when they hear one. Leitmotifs owe to credible resonance, and let us establish category (7) in our typology of particulars. This category comprises intervals of recurrence, and brings to mind what Donoghue, who quotes Blackmur quoting Augustine, calls a “vital movement, agile with temporal intervals.”¹⁸

When we read in the second fragment above that *weakness and timidity and inexperience were to fall from him*, we recall in the first fragment the nearly identical *Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him*, not because we see it in writing that scrolls before the eye, but because we hear it. Led by the mind’s ear, we hear what we saw before, and only later flip back to find the prior clause. Through category (7), then, we add a correlate to local co-text and its semantics (category [3]) and global co-text and its semantics (category [6]), since we distinguish local resonance, a swirling of sound in proximity, from resonance heard over longer stretches of text.

A third fragment in part II completes the string discussed here, and leads to an eighth and last category of particulars.

Placed at the end of part II, the fragment shows Stephen’s sexual initiation as it gets underway:

He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of a vague speech; and between them he felt an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin, softer than sound or odour. (P 95)

Resonance here is audible in the phonic echoes of *vehicle of a vague speech* and *swoon of sin, softer than sound*, as well as in the more sustained *dark pressure of her softly parting lips . . . pressed upon his brain as upon his lips*. We also hear the lexical repetition of *dark . . . darker, pressure . . . pressed . . . pressure* and *softly . . . softer*. Category (8), textual placement and formal design, enhances the resonance, for the end of part II resounds in the blank space below it. The resonance speaks of ineffable union, known to occur but not told in the prose, obliquely evoked by the synaesthesia *softer than sound or odour*.

4. Exemplary Particularity

Once in circulation, the success of a literary work in large part depends on its capacity to move readers over time. The historical particularity to which the work gives voice, and out of which it rises, has to engage readers in historical settings to come. If the engagement flags, the work falls into oblivion. If the engagement deepens, the work becomes an instance of exemplary particularity.

Instances of this particularity abound in Longenbach's *The Art of the Poetic Line* (2008), whose third chapter, "Poem and Prose," begins: "Whatever else he is, James Joyce is one of the great makers of lines in the English language."¹⁹

Longenbach does not adduce here the lines of *Chamber Music*, but rather the lines that open episode 11 of *Ulysses*. These reveal "a variety of rhythmic and sonic patterns within the compass of the line," and suggest "that the syllables (even the surname of Joyce's protagonist, Leopold Bloom) exist as pure sound to be manipulated as such: 'Jingle. Bloo.'"²⁰ Agreeing with the axiom in section 1 above (all distinctions between credible and specious resonance are semantic in nature),

Longenbach later says that "readers of *Ulysses* ought not to forget narrative context when language is made to seem like nothing but sound. Of course the seduction of sound is

paramount; poetry cannot exist without it. But we ignore the seduction of plain sense, Joyce suggests, at our own peril.”²¹

Bloom, for his part, draws the same conclusion in episode 11, when the plain sense of cuckoldry is imminent, and as Simon Dedalus sings “M’²²appari”: “Words? Music? No: it’s what’s behind.” (*U* 11.703)

As Longenbach implies, the exemplary particularity of the Joyce oeuvre owes much to its linguistic resonance, a fountainhead of Joyce’s art. The resonance is everywhere, from the lean architecture of *Chamber Music* to the phonic commotion of *Finnegans Wake*. And the resonance is often moving—this is one reason why, whatever else it is, the Joyce oeuvre survived its precarious early transmission. As the oeuvre unfolds, though, it gets harder and harder to distinguish credible resonance from its specious impostors. This increasing difficulty, moreover, goes hand in hand with the increasing resonance in the oeuvre. Since this is so, we ought to display in one place the typology of particulars developed, and draw on it to look at moments in *Chamber Music*, *Dubliners* and *Finnegans Wake*. By doing so, we shall trace the increasing difficulty in works not discussed above.

Here is the typology of particulars developed:

A TYPOLOGY OF PARTICULARS
DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY CREDIBLE
RESONANCE IN THE JOYCE OEUVRE

1. the particulars of subjective judgment
2. the semantics of resonant language and its reference
3. the particulars of local co-text and its semantics
4. the source of discourse
5. sudden phonic exuberance
6. the particulars of global co-text and its semantics
7. intervals of recurrence

8. textual placement and formal design

With this typology in view, let us begin with *Chamber Music*, not just because it inaugurates the Joyce oeuvre, but also because Joyce's 1902 and 1905 essays on James Clarence Mangan voice a lyric conception of resonance. Joyce's lavish praise of Mangan —“the man that I consider the most significant poet of the modern Celtic world, and one of the most inspired singers that ever used the lyric form in any country” (CW 179)— owes to an admiration of technique:

Mangan “might have written a treatise on the poetical art for he is more cunning in *his use of the musical echo* than is Poe, the high priest of most modern schools” (CW 80, emphasis added). To Joyce's ear, *the musical echo* in Mangan's verse is most moving when it expresses anguish and pain: “All his poetry remembers wrong and suffering and the aspiration of one who has suffered and who is moved to great cries and gestures when that sorrowful hour rushes upon the heart.” (CW 80)

We shall see in *Dubliners* resonance tied to the expression of anguish and pain. *Chamber Music*, spare thing that it is, often evokes aural experience, as evinced by the verb *hear*, noteworthy in 12 of its 36 lyrics.²³ And the architecture of the sequence is skilled: its lines and stanzas are varied and deftly made prosodic constructions. To my ear, though, there's little worthy to be believed in the lyric sequence. I would point to three credible moments. The first is the line closing poem IX, “Love is unhappy when love is away!” (CP 17), since as Ellmann relates, Joyce had it engraved on an ivory necklace for Nora in 1909.²⁴ Category (1), the particulars of subjective judgment, is germane, as is category (8), textual placement and formal design: the closing line is dactylic, its last foot clipped.²⁵ Category (4), the source of discourse, let us highlight a second moment, the lines closing poem XXI: “That high unconsortable one— / His love is his companion” (CP 29). Joyce portrays himself here with admirable concision. The

third moment bears the most credible resonance in *Chamber Music*, that closing poem XXVIII:

Nor have I known a love whose praise
 Our piping poets solemnize,
 Neither a love where may not be
 Ever so little falsity. (*CP* 35)

Category (3), the particulars of local co-text and its semantics, comprises negated knowledge above in *Nor have I known a love* and *Neither a love*. Set between these negations, the resonance in *praise* / *Our piping poets solemnize* mocks the very diction of *Chamber Music*.²⁶ The couplet rhyme of *be* and *falsity*, in addition, enacts what Kenner calls “a rhyme that seems to validate meaning [. . .] by enforcing some plain congruity.”²⁷ The congruity here, negated *be* with *falsity*, points up Joyce’s penchant for poking holes in idealization. As Ellmann asks, “What other hero in the novel has, like Stephen Dedalus, lice?” (*JJ* 6)

Four moments in *Dubliners* hold resonance tied to anguish and pain. Two of the moments are at story end, and partake of category (8), textual placement and formal design. The first is the end of “Araby”: “Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity: and my eyes burned with anguish and anger” (*D* 27). The phonic echoes in *driven and derided* and reverse rhyme in *anguish and anger* entail category (5), sudden phonic exuberance, and foreground severe self-scrutiny: the narrator bitterly acknowledges his foolish belief that Mangan’s sister will return his love. The frivolous dialogue of “a young lady [. . .] talking and laughing with two gentlemen” (*D* 26) at the bazaar stall where no token of love is bought parallels the dialogue with Mangan’s sister that sparked the journey to Araby.²⁸ The second moment is the end of “Eveline”: “Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition” (*D* 33). Less spectacular, this sentence dovetails eight monosyllables in iambic rhythm (*Her eyes gave him no sign of love*) with three

nouns in syllabic expansion (*love or farewell or recognition*). The latter (nouns of one, two and four syllables) is akin to the leitmotif *Weakness and timidity and inexperience* in part II of *A Portrait*. Category (2), the semantics of resonant language and its reference, also lets us see that the latter sequence has a purpose: the expanding nouns go from what we would most expect Eveline's eyes to convey (*love*) to what we might expect (*farewell*) to what we would expect at the least (*recognition*). This motion of diminishing cognition evokes the bewildered panic Eveline feels —“Her hands clutched the iron [railing] in frenzy” (*D* 32)— and voices: “Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.” (*D* 32)

The two other moments are in “The Dead,” but are not found at its end, where credible resonance abounds. For purposes of contrast, we look here at unassuming moments that show Joyce's subtle handling of sound. As Gabriel, having given up his desire “to lead her whither he had purposed” (*D* 200), asks Gretta about Michael Furey, the prose reads:

—And what did he die of so young, Gretta?
Consumption, was it?

—I think he died for me, she answered.

A vague terror seized Gabriel at this answer as if, at that hour when he had hoped to triumph, some impalpable and vindictive being was coming against him, gathering forces against him in its vague world. (*D* 200-1)

The three iambs *I think he died for me* undo Gabriel, and are a moment of resonance deeply moving to a character. Category (4), the source of discourse, leads from *this answer* to the moment after when Gretta reports Michael Furey's last words: “—I implored of him to go home at once and told him he would get his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live. I can see his eyes as well as well! He was standing at the end of the wall where there was a tree” (*D* 201-2). Also monosyllabic, the report *But he said he did not want to live*

scans as three anapests, and sustains *I think he died for me*. The two moments account for the pain Gabriel feels at the end of “The Dead” when “tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree.” (*D* 203)

If resonance in *Dubliners* tends to be credible, in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* things are more complex. Kenner implied the complexity in section 3 above when saying that *A Portrait* moves toward *parody without detriment to our awareness that something enchanting has happened*. In *Ulysses*, the complexity deepens, and episode 7 is a threshold, after which credible resonance and its specious impostors are increasingly hard to distinguish. We know to dismiss “O, HARP EOLIAN!” (*U* 7.370), since it refers to “a reel of dental floss” professor MacHugh “twanged [. . .] smartly between two and two of his resonant unwashed teeth” (*U* 7.371-3). And like Bloom’s *Flapdoodle to feed fools on* in section 2, Stephen’s interior monologue warns of an instance of recited oratory, “Noble words coming. Look out” (*U* 7.836). But what about the wit of “Monkeydoodle the whole thing” (*U* 7.104), or the caveat “Sounds a bit silly till you come to look into it well” (*U* 7.213), or the ring of “A smile of light brightened his darkrimmed eyes, lengthened his long lips” (*U* 7.560-1)? Episode 7 is disconcerting. It leaves little standing, and asks us to wonder where we stand.

When we reach *Finnegans Wake*, the commotion is such that we do not see two feet in front of us. As the book’s third question asks, “E’erawhere in this whorl would ye hear such a din again?” (*FW* 6.24).²⁹ Or as the prose later asserts, “You can ask your ass if he believes it” (*FW* 20.26). This complicates greatly the axiom that all distinctions between credible and specious resonance must be semantic in nature, since we find it difficult to know what is going on. Whatever else it is, though, the *Wake* demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that the exemplarity particularity of the Joyce oeuvre owes much to its linguistic resonance.

Resonance explains the name of “that patternmind, that pardigmatic ear” (*FW* 70.35), Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, a chimp with an ear, “the father of humanity and symbol of everybody” (*JJ* 319). Since the chemist “H₂ C E₃” (*FW* 95.12) mixes elements across the book, category (6), the particulars of global co-text and its semantics, is germane. Resonance sounds through percussive clusters, such as “Saw fore shalt thou sea. Betoun ye and be” (*FW* 23.11), or “with iridescent huecry of down right mean false sop lap sick dope?” (*FW* 68.20), or “she feel plain plate one flat fact thing” (*FW* 113.5). The second of these moments encodes a major diatonic scale, *doh, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, doh* underlying *down right mean false sop lap sick dope*. And resonance moves in rhythmic designs, like the swaying cadence of “ills and ells with loffs of toffs and pleures of bells” (*FW* 11.24), and “he thought he heard he saw he felt he made a bell clipperclipperclipperclipper” (*FW* 88.10)

There’s no end to this phonic play, a principle of the *Wake*’s construction. When we seek to distinguish the credible from the specious, category (2), the semantics of resonant language and its reference, may be of little help. What do we make of this symmetry bearing percussive clusters: “Some vote him Vike, some mote him Mike, some dub him Llyn and Phil while others hail him Lug Bug Dan Lop, Lex, Lax, Gunne or Guinne. Some apt him Arth, some bapt him Barth, Coll, Noll, Soll, Will, Weel, Wall but I parse him Persse O’Reilly else he’s called no name at all” (*FW* 44.10)? As the heptasyllabic *else he’s called no name at all* concludes, the issue is who is being called what. Category (3), the particulars of local co-text and its semantics, provides a context of song, “the rann that Hosty made” (*FW* 44.7), but “Hosty, frosty Hosty” (*FW* 44.15, 45.25), is also an enigma. Annotators point to scores of allusions, among them to the Irish patriots Patrick Henry Pearse, John Boyle O’Reilly and Michael Joseph O’Rahilly. And the song to close I.ii, “THE BALLAD OF PERSSE O’REILLY” (*FW* 44.24), thrice refers to Earwicker. After all explication, the sounds of the language remain.

We may use most when reading the *Wake* category (1), the particulars of subjective judgment. This leads back in the present study to *Blue dusk, nightfall, deep blue night*, whose splendor opens the night to “our ears, eyes of the darkness” (FW 14.28), hearing “sounds of manymirth on the night’s ear ringing.” (FW 74.11)

5. Whence and Whither Resonance?

In section 1 we noted a quandary taken as a premise: the literary text is not a sound-producing entity. Whence, then, the resonance about which so much has been made? The source can be but one: the reader, following the paths the writer left behind, drawing on phonological knowledge of the languages they share.

This state of affairs raises two further questions. What were the phonological properties of the English Joyce wrote, in Ireland until 1904 and after in Europe as an exile? And to what extent can the reader reproduce these properties? There is a recording of Joyce reading from episode 7 of *Ulysses* and “Anna Livia Plurabelle.”³⁰ It is fascinating to listen to, but its quality is poor, and it hardly serves as a phonetic guide to the English Joyce wrote. Credible resonance begins with agreement that the sounds are there. The questions above are complex, given the nature of Joyce’s life and oeuvre, the dialects of his readers and the diachrony of change.³¹ Yet agreement is possible, and in most cases depends less on phonetic exactitude than on a shared awareness of patterned, foregrounded sounds.

Whither, then, the resonance discussed? It leads at least in three directions. First, it takes us to a principle of selection based on semantic criteria, and designed to identify credible resonance. The typology of particulars developed is a provisional answer to the problem faced, and can be advanced beyond the point at which we leave it. Secondly, the resonance leads to the means of Joyce’s art, and to his “distinctive ways

of moving among words.”³² These ways inform the exemplary particularity of the Joyce oeuvre. Thirdly, the resonance leads to readerly élan. By this I don’t mean a state of blessed enchantment, but rather delight in phrases like “the dark mutinous Shannon waves” (*D* 203-4) and “the sun shines for you” (*U* 18.1571-2). In their contexts, both are credible. The syllabic expansion and reduction in the first move over the surface of language seeking order in existence, as chaos swirls below. The monosyllables in the second ring with an ecstatic finding of love.

Notes

¹ Denis Donoghue, *On Eloquence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 41-2.

² Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 41-2.

³ Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987 [1980]) 14.

⁴ See Don Gifford with Robert J. Seidman, "*Ulysses*" *Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's "Ulysses,"* 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 66. The first stanza of "The May Queen" reads: "You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear; / Tomorrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year; / Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day; / For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May." Alfred Tennyson, *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987 [1969]) 456.

⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, <<http://www.oed.com>>, accessed 23 July 2012.

⁶ I quote parenthetically here and below from the following edition: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler with Walter Hettche (New York: Random House, 1993).

⁷ Eloquence often assigns praise or blame. Donoghue writes: "Eloquence does not allow anything to be merely itself; it enhances it, or condemns it, but in any case, changes it, bringing a larger perspective to bear." Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 103.

⁸ Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Philip Horne (London: Penguin, 2011) 580.

⁹ I quote parenthetically here and below from the following edition: James Joyce, *Dubliners*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler with Walter Hettche (New York: Random House, 1993).

¹⁰ Scanning the verse "*Won't you come to Sandymount*" (*U* 3.21), Stephen mistakes *acatalectic*, which means no initial syllable is lacking, for *catalectic*. For more on heptasyllabic verse, Attridge refers to it briefly in *Poetic Rhythm*, and Giegerich adduces it when discussing eurhythm in *English Phonology*. In the context of Irish letters, Hyde traces the deep significance of *Deibhidh* meter, whose lines are heptasyllabic. In "the peculiar prosody of the Irish," *Deibhidh* meter is "firmly established in their oldest poems," and "was, as it were, the hexametre of the Gael." See Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 103-4, 219; Hans J. Giegerich, *English phonology: An introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 272-3;

Douglas Hyde, *A literary history of Ireland from earliest times to the present day* (London: Unwin, 1899) 483, 530.

¹¹ Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 20.

¹² Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 44.

¹³ An alternative conception of this *center of gravity* is Eliot's *unity of sentiment*. Speaking of Shakespeare's plays, Eliot writes: "we must consider not only the degree of unification of all the elements into a 'unity of sentiment,' but the quality and kind of the emotions to be unified, and the elaborateness of the pattern of unification." T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (London: Faber, 1964 [1933]) 44.

¹⁴ Of succession and simultaneity, Kant sees: "All appearances are in time, in which, as substratum (as persistent form of inner intuition), both simultaneity as well as succession can alone be represented. [. . .] Our apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive, and is therefore always changing. We can therefore never determine from this alone whether this manifold, as object of experience, is simultaneous or successive, if something does not ground it which always exists, i.e., something lasting and persisting, of which all change and simultaneity are nothing but so many ways (*modi* of time) in which that which persists exists. Only in that which persists, therefore, are temporal relations possible (for simultaneity and succession are the only relations in time)." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 300.

¹⁵ There is an added temporal element in the passage. Stephen's depiction in episode 3 relates to a like moment in episode 1, when Mulligan cooks breakfast, and *shafts of soft daylight* meet in pictorial splendor: "Two shafts of soft daylight fell across the flagged floor from the high barbicans: and at the meeting of their rays a cloud of coalsmoke and fumes of fried grease floated, turning." (*U* 1.315-7)

¹⁶ Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 3. For eloquence as a *sign* of freedom: "We value it [eloquence] as a sign of such freedom as we are ever likely to enjoy." And: "it [eloquence] is enjoyed [. . .] as a sign of freedom, if only relative freedom among the conditions that limit its range and duration." Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 3, 153.

¹⁷ Kenner, *op. cit.*, 9.

¹⁸ Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 79. Donoghue adopts this phrase throughout "Like Something Almost Being Said," the fourth chapter of *On Eloquence*. See pp. 72 [2x], 73, 74, 75, 76, 79, 85.

¹⁹ James Longenbach, *The Art of the Poetic Line* (Saint Paul: Graywolf, 2008) 83.

²⁰ Longenbach, *op. cit.*, 84.

²¹ Longenbach, *op. cit.*, 87.

²² The imminent cuckoldry is clearly evoked three lines after Bloom's reflection: "Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup" (*U* 11.706-7)

²³ The inventory of lyrics with *hear* includes: III (*CP* 11), IV (*CP* 12), V (*CP* 13), XI (*CP* 19), XV (*CP* 23), XVI (*CP* 24), XVIII (*CP* 26), XXIV (*CP* 32), XXXIII (*CP* 41), XXXIV (*CP* 42), XXXV (*CP* 43) and XXXVI (*CP* 44).

²⁴ Ellmann writes that in this year Joyce "spent a good deal of money on a present for Nora, which consisted of a chain hung with five ivory dice over a hundred years old, and a little tablet on which was engraved, in fourteenth-century letters, the line from one of his poems, 'Love is unhappy when love is away.'" (*JJ* 288)

²⁵ In discussing this first moment and all that follow, I don't wish to suggest that *only* the categories named are applicable. Other categories will also be, as each reader is free to decide.

²⁶ This lampooning brings to mind Donoghue's observation: "Eloquence does not allow anything to be merely itself; it enhances it, or condemns it, but in any case changes it, bringing a larger perspective to bear. According to eloquence, nothing is what it merely or ostensibly is; it is larger or smaller than that." Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 103.

²⁷ Hugh Kenner, "Rhyme: An Unfinished Monograph," *Common Knowledge* 10.3 (2004) 386.

²⁸ The prior dialogue is the first time the narrator and Mangan's sister speak, and conspicuously includes the verb *love*: "At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said; she would love to go" (*D* 23). Just before the dialogue, the noun *love* appears in this very different sense: "All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *O love! O love!* many times." (*D* 23)

²⁹ Forming a pattern in intonation, the first and second questions in the *Wake* are: "What then agentlike brought about that tragoady thundersday this municipal sin business?" (*FW* 5.13); and "Shize?" (*FW* 6.13)

³⁰ *James Joyce Reading "Ulysses" and "Finnegans Wake," and "Pomes Penyeach," "Chamber Music" and "Ecce Puer" Read by Cyril Cusack* (Caedmon 1340, 1971).

³¹ A good brief history of English in Ireland, with attention to Irish writers, is Michael J. Barry, "The English Language in Ireland," in *English as a World Language*, eds. Richard W. Bailey and Manfred Görlach (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985) 84-133. A study of dialect

phonology contemporary with the Joyce oeuvre is Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905). In his preface, though, Wright alarmingly says of those who helped gather transcriptions: “For some reason, whether political or racial I cannot say, I found it extremely difficult to obtain helpers in Ireland and Wales” (vi). An excellent recent study is Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and present-day forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³² Donoghue, *op. cit.*, 31.