

JAMES JOYCE AND MYTH

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Abstract

This article aims to show the functional use of myth in James Joyce's works. It shows that Joyce's vision of the human existence as a flow of recurring experiences, and his interest in the cyclical theories of life lead him to circumscribe the complex nature of man's changing yet somehow permanent condition. The article proposes the central experiences for Joyce as those dealing with death and resurrection, the reliance on a multiplicity of cross references which, as John Vickery notes, continually underscore the contemporaneity of all time, and the fusion of the human, astronomical, animal and vegetative worlds (1973: 119, 122). This emerges in the archetypal nature of Joyce's approach, which attempts to recapitulate the past and link it to the present. Consequently, this results in, what Northrop Frye calls, the displacement of myth, the dislocation of perspective, and the amalgamation of opposites (1957: 136-137).

As the article shows that Joyce's attempt to integrate disparate, spatial, and temporal orders into a coherent unity based on his functional use of myth which serves his artistic purposes, it considers the myths concerning them such as the myth of the dying and reviving god in addition to others in relation to the aim of bringing out a coherent unity of the disparate elements and the genre of Joyce's works.

The conclusion shows that Joyce creates general archetypes out of individual characters, that the myth of the dying and reviving god is central to him, and that his attempt to approximate the past to the present, to fuse disparate elements, and to amalgamate opposites serves the end of artistic

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purposes, and the emergence of comedy as the genre of Joyce's works, in addition to their connections with the traditional romance.

The article also shows that Joyce has been influenced by Frazer's approach in his book, *The Golden Bough*, and hence I refer, if need be, to the affinities between Frazer and Joyce in the use of myth.

Introduction

Myth is the world of spirit. It speaks of the eternal values that have to do with the centering of our lives. In finding in one's own case where the life is and becoming alive, one brings life to the world. The archetypal adventure of the mythic hero is, thus, the adventure of being alive. He leaves the world that he is in and goes into a depth or into a distance or up to a height. There he comes to what was missing in his consciousness in the world he formerly inhabited. He performs the kind of spiritual deed, in which he learns to experience the supernormal range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message. Hence, out of this given life comes a new life; it is a new way of being or becoming.

Myths are, thus, stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning and, for significance. For each one of us, myth becomes an experience of life. We all need for life to find out who we are. Then, we all need to understand death and to cope with it, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death. Myths help us to understand the world beyond what is seen, and to try to come to terms with the world, to harmonize our lives with reality, and to seek a meaning for life. The individual has to find an aspect of myth that relates to his own life. He has to take it seriously and to let it operate with his life in terms of the mythic motif of human quest; a standard pattern of human aspiration and thought.

Not surprisingly, then, that one of the distinctive characteristics of modern fiction is its preoccupation with myth and archetype. To be sure, much of the fiction in the Western tradition is explicitly concerned with myth, yet the modern sense of the mythic differs from anything that went before. In modern fiction, everyday life is frequently seen as a series of rituals, often acted out unawares, by which mankind expresses its relation to the universal.

In part this distinctively modern awareness of myth and archetype can be attributed to the influence of the new science of anthropology as exemplified in the work of the so-called Cambridge School of Sir James Frazer (1854-1941), Jane Harrison (1850-1928), Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), and F. M. Cornford (1886-1950), which derived from the evolutionary views of E. B. Taylor (1832-1917). Its central contention was that myth had a ritual character; that is, ritual expresses in action an emotion or complex of emotions which in myth is expressed in words. Frazer's pioneering work *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) employed the comparative method in a loose but very wide fashion, which ranged over the globe—from Australia to Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe—and throughout history—from Classic and pre-Classic times to modern customs and beliefs—in its effort to show the universality of myth and ritual and their fundamental similarities despite differences in place and time of occurrence.

This broad approach to recurring figures and forms of action encouraged literary critics to focus on limited but seminal resemblances between aspects of literary texts and subsumptive conceptual patterns rooted—according to Frazer and others—in myth and ritual. Examples of such patterns are the dying and reviving god, the scapegoat, the mother goddess, the sacred prostitute, and the sacrificial virgin.

The work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and Carl Jung (1875-1961), early in the twentieth century further added to the modern writer's interest in myth. Where Frazer examined mythic patterns as cultural phenomena, Freud and Jung demonstrated the ways in which individuals internalize such patterns. As Frazer showed our culture the elements and meanings of its group behavior, generally hidden in the past but often still alive in folk customs and belief, Freud showed man the profoundly significant world of the unconsciousness.

The Freudian view sees myth as representing the basic elements of human existence as developed by the ego of the child and persisting in some measure into adulthood. Occurrences such as urination, defecation, masturbation, menstruation, and copulation, coupled with the feelings of aggression, anxiety, pleasure, disgust, and pride they arouse, are projected into fantasy form. The Jungian view, on the other hand, regards myth as a

function rooted in the structure of the human mind. Freud emphasized libidinal impulse, the unconscious as analyzable, and the psyche as structurally determined in infancy. Jung stresses psychic maturation in response to recurring challenges, the unconscious as an irreducible symbolic structure common to all men but not directly accessible to inspection, and the psyche as capable of continuous development through time. The inclination of the first is to draw the critic in the direction of the individual and hence of psychoanalytic biography, whereas the Jungian emphases push the critic toward conceptual generalities and philosophical resolutions so that the texts become transpersonal mediations of cultural conditions and crises of civilization. Myth and archetype derive their power, then, from their timeless hold on the individual consciousness.

The result of this thinking was a tremendous explosion of genuinely new literature, of fiction in which the quotidian acts of ordinary individuals take on meaning beyond their understanding. Among the fruits of this new flowering was the most important work produced in English in this century, too significant for subsequent writers to ignore and too awesome to copy. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) was the story of a single day in Dublin in 1904, during which the ramblings of an Irish Jew parallel the wanderings chronicled in the *Odyssey* (c. 800 B.C.). In his essay, "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," T. S. Eliot announced that in place of the traditional narrative method, the modern artist could henceforth use the mythic method, that fiction and poetry would gain power not from their isolated stories, but through the connection of the stories to a universal pattern. According to Eliot, Joyce activates the power of myth in *Ulysses* by "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity." In explaining the achievement of myth used in this way, Eliot argues it is "simply a way controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Eliot 1923: 480-83).

Given the pervasive influence of *The Golden Bough* throughout the early years of the twentieth century when Joyce was sharpening his verbal cunning against the whetstone of exile, it would seem intrinsically plausible that much of his interest in what Eliot called the mythic method was stirred and directed by the insights of Sir James Frazer. Dedicated as Joyce was to

examining the intellectual and moral paralysis of his native city and its inhabitants and to couching his personal revelations of daily human behavior in the form of objective research as a means of illuminating reality, it was essential that he should include the larger and more remote worlds of myth, primitive belief and custom, and historical development.

The similarities between Frazer's study and Joyce's fiction, though striking and suggestive, may be essentially analogies, lines of parallel development. What they indicate most sharply is the extent to which Frazer's structural techniques foreshadow those of Joyce. Influence if it enters at all operates almost exclusively below the threshold of consciousness. A somewhat stronger case of influence as well as a partial explanation of the attractions of *The Golden Bough* is its non-chronological method of narration. This method results in a work whose structure is shaped by most of the devices that characterize modern literature. Consider what we may call *The Golden Bough's* macroscopic form. Here is a work dealing with a vast subject which orders its material thematically; which juxtaposes conflicting evidence and scenes for dramatic purposes; which presents its point of view by indirect and oblique means; which sees human existence as a flow of recurring experiences; which employs repetition and restatement as both emotive and intellectual devices; which creates symbolic epitomes of human history out of apparently limited and simple actions; and which makes a unified whole out of an abundance of disparate scenes and topics by an intricate set of references backward and forward in the narrative.

Thus, Joyce, in his works, is largely content to find in Sir James Frazer habits of thought and imaginative methods whose essence he can utilize. His strategy is rather to reproduce Frazer in a dramatic mode, to create his own encyclopedia of myth, folklore, and cultural history informed by the temper and methods of *The Golden Bough*.

The precise manner in which Joyce achieves this can probably best be seen by tracing in more detail some of the patterns in his works. In James Joyce's works, one finds that Joyce sees human existence as a flow of recurring experiences, that he is interested in the cyclical theories of life which enable him to circumscribe the complex nature of man's changing yet

somehow permanent condition, and that the myth of the dying and reviving god² is the core of the process of creation for him as an artist, passionately dedicated to truth and freedom, to gain the wisdom of life.

The purpose of this article is, first, to show that Joyce's major pattern is the generation of archetypes out of specific individual characters; second, to show that the myth of death and resurrection is central to Joyce; third, to explore his ingenuity in constructing the composite—or the encyclopedic—image, which approximates the past to the present, fuses disparate elements, and amalgamates opposites, and fourth, to explore the connections between the conclusion and the subject of Joyce's works as related to comedy, and connected with the traditional romance.

The Archetypal

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce shows—among other things—his ingenuity in constructing the composite—or the encyclopedic—image. As we are going to see, his aim in constructing this image in *Finnegans Wake* was twofold. First, he was writing a comedy of creation to counter the tragedy of annihilation he felt in the finality of death. Secondly, he was attempting to catch a "glimpse of the real" in an ever-changing world.

Joyce observed that changeability—or mutability—was the outcome of the continuous merging of the world's levels of existence. To attain this second aim, Joyce therefore felt that he had to mime the same process of merging in his imagination. That is why Joyce's thinking was constantly in images based on, as Robert Scholes notes, "types and tropes" (Joyce 1981: 475-476): he first applies the displacement of the constituent types through the process of approximation, whereas the second is a displacement of the literal. And both kinds of thinking are intended to make the artist capable of coping with the metamorphic pattern that pertains both in language and in the world.

² The dying and reviving god is a symbol or a personification of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe. It is a mythic motif, which shows the cycle of coming into the world, teaching in the world, dying and then being resurrected. It is a pattern of creation, death and resurrection, rebirth and new life.

It is obvious that an approach to images based on merging and displacement requires the creativity of the artist's imagination. Hence Stephen—Joyce's *alterego* in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—refers to himself as the "priest of eternal imagination," who transmutes "the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of ever-living life" (Joyce 1981: 221). At the same time Stephen condemns the clerical priest as one who is "but schooled in the discharging of a formal rite" (221). Throughout his works, on the other hand, we see Joyce merging levels of existence, fusing opposites, transmuting phenomena from one level to another, and displaying the metamorphic power of language to effect a life-saving transubstantiation.³

Stephen is often Joyce's surrogate in these priestly functions. We see him moving metaphorically, as Harry Levin writes, to link the particular to the general when he, as a particular, consciously fits himself in with the various parts of "The Universe," the general, as he reads a flyleaf (Levin 1960: 24), of his geography book:

Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe (Joyce 1981: 15)

Stephen's fusing of opposites is exemplified in the "Villanelle of the Temptress," where he joins, as Scholes notes, "myth and theology," and thus "upsets chronology and causality as well as theology" (Joyce 1981: 473-474). There, for example, he makes, Scholes writes, "one of the results of Satan's fall function as the prime cause of that fall" (474):

Are you not weary of ardent ways,
Lure of the fallen seraphim? (Joyce 1981: 217)

³ Transubstantiation is the metamorphosis of one substance into another.

Stephen sees the ardent heart of the virgin mother of the redeemer as the cause of the fall of the rebellious angels. In fact, Stephen is practicing his principle of reading things "backwards," as he does when he reads the "flyleaf"—upon which he has fitted himself in with "The Universe"—upwards and downwards, to consider the matter of his existence, verbally at least, from another perspective (1981: 16). Thus, we see approximation and displacement at work.

The aptitude of the artist to transmute is seen in the third tercet of the poem:

*Above the flame the smoke of praise
Goes up from ocean rim to rim.* (1981: 218)

where the smoke from the burning heart of man rises as "incense ascending from the altar of the world" (218). " 'The smoke of praise' and the rimmed ocean," Scholes explains, "further suggest the thurible and the chalice" (1981: 218), adumbrating a relation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The art of Joyce appears clearly when he deals with the metamorphic power of language. For example, when a Joycean guide on a tour of a museum, as Vickery explains, refers to mistletoe saying, "This is mistletropes," his reference is dual: first he refers to the association of the mistletoe as a physical object with the slaying of the Norse god Balder⁴ and to thus the life-conferring properties resident in the mistletoe. Secondly and consequently, he refers to the mistletoe's nature as a "trope," a physical parallel to a figure of speech, for a trope is a verbal displacement of the

⁴ In Scandinavian mythology, Balder the Beautiful is alleged to have been slain by a branch of mistletoe and burned in a great funeral fire. The parasitical mistletoe is strange and magical because it is rootless, and it grows upon oaks; thus both mistletoe and oak are sacred. Frazer supposes that Balder was a personification of the mistletoe, which was worshipped as sacred by the Scandinavians. This mistletoe is considered to be a possible source for the idea of the golden tree bough referred to in the book's title, thereby connecting the ancient Roman ritual practiced in Italy with the religious practices that developed in the countries of northern Europe. The yellow, waxy mistletoe represents the spirit of the oak, the sacred tree, and is the golden bough carried by Vergil's Aeneas through the world of the dead in order to show the power of life available to the hero of myth and epic that enables him to triumph over death. (Frazer 1958: 763-772)

literal that energizes or gives life through language to the object or image. By calling the "mistletoe" "mistletoes," he thus calls attention to a capacity for metamorphosis and to the power of language to encompass life as well as death (Vickery 1972: 216-217).

These examples, which thus show Stephen consciously merging with the universe, fusing opposites, transmuting phenomena and experimenting with language, also show him utilizing his poetic imagination to the full. Had he accepted the vocation of the priesthood, he is convinced, his poetic imagination would have been obliterated by the formalism of the clerical life and its way of thinking. Stephen would have had to renounce the aesthetics of the imagination and to embrace the darkness in which a priest lives. As he contemplates his encounter with the director of the Belvedere College, for example, the imagery corroborates the fears and anxieties awakened in him by the possibility of being himself a priest:

The director stood in the embrasure of the window, his back to the light, leaning an elbow on the brown crossblind, and, as he spoke and smiled, slowly dangling and looping the cord of the other blind. Stephen stood before him, following [. . .] the waning of the long summer daylight [. . .]. The priest's face was in total shadow but the waning daylight from behind him touched the deeply grooved temples and the curves of the skull. (Joyce 1981: 153-154).

The imagery of the passage is a collocation of items of death "the looped cord," "the shadow," "the skull," "the waning daylight," "his back to the light," "crossblind," "blind to the cross," "blinded by the cross," all combine to convey the formalism of the clerical priest, his blind discharging of a formal rite that resembles a hanging, carried out by the director himself, who is "slowly dangling and looping the cord," and in Hugh Kenner's words, "coolly proffering a noose" for Stephen (Joyce 1981: 417). It is no wonder that Joyce elevates the artist to a position above the priest.

Joyce's thinking in types is related to his view of the function of a work of art. In this connection, in *Ulysses*, Stephen disagrees with Russell—a Platonist—to whom the function of a work of art is the revealing of the formless spiritual reality hidden behind our world. To Joyce, this is a fallacy (Joyce 1961: 185).

In order to understand Joyce's view of the function of a work of art we have to consider his early critical writings. In his essay "Drama and Life," Joyce says that:

Human society is the embodiment of changeless laws which the whimsicalities and circumstances of men and women involve and overwrap. The realm of literature is the realm of these accidental manners and humours—a spacious realm; and the true literary artist concerns himself mainly with them. Drama has to do with the underlying laws first, in all their nakedness and divine severity; and only secondarily with the motley agents who bear them out. (Joyce 1959b: 40)

Joyce says that human society is the embodiment of changeless laws. These changeless laws are nothing more than the recurrent and cyclical patterns known as archetypes, which in turn are linked to the mythical. It is these changeless laws which concern the true literary artist. This vision of human society led Joyce to link the whole of human history to a recurring cycle of giant forms ceaselessly rising and falling, dying and reviving.

By now Joyce has rejected the priesthood, embraced the type of life and thinking which will set the creativity of his imagination to work. As artist, he has embraced the mythical as his vocation, and chosen the life of freedom. But it was not only the vocation of the priesthood which threatened to clog Joyce's freedom. There were still other impediments to his freedom—his nation, his religion and his parents—and, if Joyce were to attain his freedom, he had to divest himself of these impediments as well. He disposes himself of them by merging his self with the past and with myth.

Joyce's merging with the past through myth is in fact an attempt to catch a "glimpse of the real." If the artist wants to consider the present, he should not neglect the past, but the past cannot be merely "relevant" to the present, since in Joyce's mind it is not mingled with the present. Hence Joyce considered Irish efforts to reanimate Irish folklore as a distortion of the reality of an ever-changing world, and the attempts of the revivalists as a threat to himself and to the creativity of his imagination. In the declaration

that "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (Joyce 1981: 203),⁵ Stephen portrays Ireland as a cannibalistic female destroyer of the son who is her lover, and links himself with the dying god who is sacrificed to a maternal, cruel, and callous Ishtar.⁶

By doing so, Joyce both intensifies and universalizes the significance of Stephen's highly agony and rebelliousness. The sow image stands with the priest's looping the cord of the window blind into a noose. If the sow image directs its irony at the terrible mother-figure of myth and the Irish nation of history whose lust is for the lover's annihilation, the priest is a divine hangman dedicated, in Stephen's mind, to the obliteration of poetic imagination.

Having exposed the priest, it only remains similarly to expose the masculine Deity for Joyce to have completed his parodic detachment of the Christian religion in Stephen's mind. He does this in the scene following the

⁵ One of the animal embodiments of the corn-spirit is the pig (boar or sow). In European folklore the pig is a common embodiment of the corn-spirit. [T]he pig was sacred to Demeter; in art she was portrayed carrying or accompanied by a pig; and the pig was regularly sacrificed in her mysteries, the reason assigned being that the pig injures the corn and is therefore an enemy of the goddess. But after an animal has been conceived as a god, or a god as an animal, it sometimes happens [...] that the god sloughs off his animal form and becomes purely anthropomorphic; and that then the animal, which at first had been slain in the character of the god, comes to be viewed as a victim offered to the god on the ground of its hostility to the deity; in short, the god is sacrificed to himself on the ground that he is his own enemy. (Frazer 1958: 543)

⁶ Ishtar, one of the great figures in Babylonian mythology, was capricious in love, willful and imperious in action. As the mother goddess, Ishtar was moved to pity and sorrow at the suffering of her earthly children and at the hardships imposed by pestilence and flood, but she was cruel and callous as the goddess of love, her rites being celebrated with such licentiousness by her followers that the name of Ishtar and the centers of her worship became synonymous with wickedness and immorality. As a goddess of war she was so terrible that even the gods trembled at her while warlike people sang her praises. Though it was sometimes said that the death of Tammuz was caused by Ishtar, according to another legend he was killed while hunting a wild boar. The account of Ishtar's descent to the Babylonian underworld to visit Tammuz is one of the most famous Babylonian tales. (Robinson & Wilson 1961: 14)

rector's announcement of the school's religious retreat. Joyce has Stephen appear as helpless and perturbed:

His soul was fattening and congealing into a gross grease, plunging ever deeper in its dull fear into a somber threatening dusk, while the body that was his stood, listless and dishonoured, gazing out of darkened eyes, helpless, perturbed and human for a bovine god to stare upon. (Joyce 1981: 111)

Here, it is obvious that instead of finding consolation in the hands of a compassionate god, Stephen's fattening soul, his darkened eyes, dullness, listlessness, and helplessness present him as a victim whose suffering is indifferently contemplated by a god as bovine as Stephen and his physical father. Joyce thus links Stephen to both his physical father and the Heavenly one as all sharing the same characteristic in common. It is only through myth, as Vickery notes, that Joyce is acquainted with one of the variable symbols that refers to "the bovine as an emblem of the Father-God" (Vickery 1973: 344). With the removal of the Divine Father's image from his consciousness, Stephen ultimately purges himself of the Christian God, who for him is an impotent father immobilized in a past that is dead. Only then is he able to move toward a realization of himself as an artist and recognition of the mythopoeic as his true spiritual vocation.

As Joyce moves away from impediments to the imagination, he merges actual history with a mythical past. An example of this merging with the past occurs in his treatment of the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan. Of Mangan he says:

In the final view the figure which he worships is seen to be an abject queen upon whom, because of the bloody crimes that she has done and of those as bloody that were done to her, madness is come and death is coming, but who will not believe that she is near to die and remembers only the rumour of voices challenging her sacred gardens and her fair, tall flowers that have become the food of boars. (Joyce 1960: 82)

This passage attests to Joyce's familiarity with Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. The mad queen recalls those female rulers of ancient times who, like

Semiramis,⁷ won their position by treachery and preserved it in the same fashion. The queen's sacred gardens and boars refer to the Frazerian dying god, Adonis⁸ and his fate.⁹ Thus, the association of Mangan with Adonis foreshadows Mangan's fate.

The myth of the dying and reviving god appears to have attracted Joyce. He saw Ireland as the rapacious goddesses and himself as the dying and reviving god. The myth's threefold structure of life, death and disappearance, and reappearance lies at the core of his aesthetics. It implies, as Frazer writes, that the god, whatever his name is, annually dies and rises again from the dead (Frazer 1958: 378). On the natural plane the god's death and revival is accompanied by the death and revival of vegetation, but to Joyce the revival after death is less physical than intellectual, a resurrection in greater wisdom. Joseph Campbell also sees a strikingly rigid pattern in

⁷ Semiramis is a mythical Assyrian queen, wife of Ninus, founder of Nineveh, whom she succeeded as ruler. Famed for her beauty, wisdom, and voluptuousness. She is said to have built Babylon with its hanging gardens, and many other cities; conquered Egypt and much of Asia and Ethiopia, and unsuccessfully attacked India. She was queen of Babylon during the days of Pyramus and Thisbe. (Zimmerman 1971: 237)

⁸ In addition to his story being a fixture of the Greek tradition, the legend of the Greek god Adonis, also known as Tammuz, has roots stretching back to Babylonia and Syria. As both Tammuz in Babylonia and Adonis in Greece, he was a god of vegetation and was seen as the embodiment of masculine beauty. He was loved by Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, who hid him in a gold chest, which she gave to Persephone, the queen of the underworld, for safekeeping. When Persephone peeked in the chest and saw Adonis, she was captivated with his beauty and refused to give him back to Aphrodite. Zeus settled the dispute by giving him to each goddess for part of the year. The change of seasons was explained in connection to the place where Adonis was during each part of the year, since Aphrodite, lamenting when he was gone, refused to help plants or animals grow, marking winter in climates where it did not snow. (Frazer 1958: 376-380)

⁹ For example, Adonis, a beautiful youth and hunter, was killed by a wild boar which gored him in the groin. Ritual songs of lament for Adonis were sung each year at the Athenian festival of Thesmophoria. Also, in one the versions of the myth of Osiris, it is said that Seth, in the form of a black boar, tore out and swallowed the Moon Eye of Horus or ripped it to pieces. (Frazer 1958: 380, 404, 546)

the "standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero" as one of "separation—initiation—return." In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he writes:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (Campbell 1949: 5)

Campbell outlines the generic elements of the Quest that all heroes undertake. First there is a Call, which the hero often refuses; then Supernatural aid is often provided to head the hero toward his destiny. The hero crosses a symbolic threshold, beyond which he cannot retreat from his quest, as he begins his initiation into the mysterious world of adventure where he must do one of several things—rescue a maiden, recover a treasure—before returning to his society to receive the adulation accorded to one who braves the various kinds of demons that keep the more faint of heart from undertaking the Adventure. Often he must descend into the underworld, or into some night realm, cut off from society. He may meet with a Goddess or Temptress, or both; he must learn to adjust his feelings toward women in either role. As a result of his adventure, the hero gains some knowledge of the world, and his return to society allows him to share his newfound knowledge with his fellow citizens, thus improving society at large (1949: 10-50). The hero's task, Campbell deduces from his study of the many heroes, is to bring back lost knowledge, to get society moving again toward bettering itself by coming to understand the way nature works and the way man fits into the cosmic scheme (380-82).

Thus, we may guess that Joyce has in view the dying god Odin¹⁰ as a major example. Odin is said to have been sacrificed to himself in the

¹⁰ Odin, the greatest of the gods was the god of war, magic and prophecy, wisdom, and poetry. Odin has close links with the underworld and the dead. As the god of war, Odin was lord or ruler of the Valkyries, warrior maidens who lived with him at Valhalla, the hall of dead heroes, where he held his court. In addition, Odin was a god of magic and divination. The gods were subject to aging, and they rejuvenated themselves by eating magic apples kept by the goddess Idun. However, Odin chose a different, harder way. He freely wounded himself with his own spear

ordinary way, and to have acquired his divine power by learning the magic runes while hung on the tree emphasizing the reflexive nature of the self-sacrifice by, quoting the verses from the *Hávamál* which conclude:

*I know that I hung on the windy tree
For nine whole nights,
Wounded with the spear, dedicated to Odin,
Myself to myself.*¹¹ (Frazer 1958: 412)

Odin provides Joyce with the clearest pattern of self-sacrifice. The sacrifice of the self for the sake of the resurrection of the self in greater wisdom is the mythic essence of Stephen Daedalus's struggle throughout *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. Since Joyce—the artist—too wishes to be like Odin—to gain the

and hung himself for nine days from the cosmic tree Yggdrasil, which was shaken by winds. In this manner he renewed his youth, but he also became the master of the magic runes, inscriptions that could accomplish any mortal purpose, whether beneficial or baneful. He also gave one of his eyes for the sake of knowledge and wisdom. He gained most from his uncle Mimir, the guardian of the fountain—Well of Knowledge—in the lower world, but he had to sacrifice an eye to drink from the Well, and appeared on earth as an old one-eyed man, in a cloak and broad-brimmed hat or a hood. Odin also went to great lengths to acquire the art of poetry, which was contained in a magic potion that was kept in a Giant's underground caldron. Having determined to obtain the potion, Odin put himself in bondage to a Giant, whom he persuaded to blast a hole to the underground dwelling where the substance was kept. Odin then entered the dwelling as a snake, changed back into human shape, made friends with Suttung the Giant, who owned the potion, seduced the Giant's daughter, and obtained the mixture from her. Then he flew back to Asgard as an eagle, destroying Suttung in the process, and dispensed the potion to human poets. (Frazer 1958: 324, 337, 412; Robinson & Wilson 1961: 208)

¹¹ In "Wisdom from the Dead: The Ljóðatal Section of *Hávamál*," John McKinnell focuses on the "*Hávamál*" poem, which he claims is made up of four separate poems. He particularly examines the "Ljóðatal" section of the "*Hávamál*," which is a poem of the Norse god Odin's magic spells. He sees "that there are striking resemblances between the myth of Odin's self-sacrifice and the Crucifixion story: both involve the voluntary death of the god by a common mode of execution, followed by his triumphant return. [...]. Both Christ and Odin are also wounded with a spear, and the cross is a 'tree' with no roots, just as the tree on which Odin hangs has unknown roots. Just as Christ thirsted on the cross, Odin is comforted with neither loaf nor horn, and as Christ cried out at the moment of death, Odin shrieks as he picks up the runes (or 'secrets' [. . .]) before falling back" (2007: 90).

wisdom of life—, he will have Stephen mime the role of the hanged god. And like the legend of the Sumerian sky goddess, Inanna,¹² who descended into the underworld and underwent death to bring her beloved back to life, Joyce will metaphorically undergo death and resurrection for the sake of his beloved, Ireland.

We earlier observed that, for the dying god, death is a transient condition, but Stephen's mother's concern with his salvation is essentially an effort to have Stephen accept mortality as an imaginative fact. Her persistence in trying to break his spirit through her prayers for his salvation from hell affirms his recognition that her love, like that of the voracious mother goddesses and their human representatives, is ultimately destructive and death-like. In so doing he would have to abandon his association, as artist, with the dying and reviving god for whom mortality is a transient not a permanent condition. When he recognizes the nature of his mother's insistence on his repentance, he calls her "The ghou! Hyena!" (Joyce 1961: 581). Both the ghou and the hyena are associated with death. The first is a demon of the woods, and the second is thought to contain the souls of the dead.

By doing so, Joyce clarifies the mother's relation to Stephen as an artist and dying god figure. Not only does she stand against his development of imaginative freedom she also equates herself with the crucified Christ: "Inexpressible was my anguish when expiring with love, grief and agony on Mount Calvary" (Joyce 1961: 582). By his mother's equating herself with

¹² One of Inanna's lovers was the harvest god Tammuz. When he died of her love Inanna wailed bitterly. Thinking to retrieve Tammuz from the kingdom of death, Inanna entered the seven portals to the underworld. At each portal she left one of her garments or pieces of jewelry until at last she stood naked before Ereshkigal, the queen of the dead. Ereshkigal had Inanna imprisoned and assaulted her with sixty illnesses. During this incarceration the earth withered and became desolate, and the gods of heaven mourned. Finally Ea, the god of wisdom, took matters in hand and through his magical intervention Inanna was released. Allowed to leave, she gathered up her garments and jewelry, accompanied by Tammuz, who was allowed to stand guard at the gates of heaven. Upon Inanna's return the earth changed from winter to spring. (Michael 1993: 114-115)

Christ she disclaims his role as the hanged god and clogs his intention of being resurrected in greater wisdom.

Having recognized clearly the nature of the threat his mother poses, Stephen declares his rejection, "[h]e lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier" (Joyce 1961: 583), crying "[n]ot hung!," "the Wagnerian cry," as Harry Blamires writes, "echoing Siegfried's shout as he forges the sword of deliverance, while Joyce's stage direction about 'ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry,' hints at a cosmic cataclysm" (Blamires 1967: 202). With the destruction of time and space, Stephen moves wholly into an archetypal and mythical world.

Having detached himself from the spiritual impediments, which stand against his artistic freedom, Stephen is ready to start the journey of miming the dying and reviving god. But the resurrection of the god must follow his death and disappearance. Life thus appears to be intertwined with death and it is appropriate here to examine the imagery by which Joyce underlines this connection. When Mulligan insists that of all the Martello towers "Ours is the omphalos"¹³ (Joyce 1961: 17), the term invokes Jane Harrison's notion that the center of the world from which sprang the quintessential forms of life was not only a womb emblem but also a tomb symbol (Harrison 1991: 322-362, 556-558, 560). The image of the omphalos as embodying both life and death reappears in connection with Parnell's grave, which is described as standing amid a grove. According to Frazer, the soul of a chief was thought to reside in such a sacred grove. The site was also the tomb or burial ground of a dead hero. From the dead hero

¹³ According to one myth, Zeus released two eagles from opposite ends of the earth to discover the exact centre of the world. They met at Delphi, which became one of the Greeks' most important religious sites and the focus for the worship of Apollo. Zeus marked the spot at Delphi where the eagles met with a large stone called the *omphalos* ("navel"), which was guarded by a monstrous serpent, Pytho. Apollo established his sanctuary there and slew Pytho, an act for which he did penance in Thessaly for nine years before returning to Delphi. The oracle he founded at Delphi was consulted by cities and individuals, and its prophecies feature in both myth and history. (Roy 1993: 138)

emerged the living god (1958: 1).¹⁴ This is observed in the omphalos' inclusion of both Mulligan and Stephen; as such it serves as the ground for the ritual combat between two priest-kings in which one must perish. Joyce's ironic approximation of the myth to fit Mulligan with the role of the old priest-king and Stephen with the role of his successor invokes the mythic scene at Nemi where the new priest wins his position by murdering his predecessor, expecting at any moment to be slain himself by another who will usurp his position.¹⁵ What is worth noticing here, however, is that Joyce unites the modern antithesis of life and death, human and divine, in the prospect of an ancient figure, which links the present with the past in a comic manner. The ritual of the priest-king combat dwindles into a battle of wits in which the verbal weapons of irony and parody replace the sword, though Mulligan and Stephen do clash and part over the issue of Haines and the key to the tower.

The allusion to Nemi evokes destructive power in the image of the omphalos, but reference to its creative life-giving power is evoked in the "Oxen of the Sun," when Mulligan proposes, "to set up a national fertilizing

¹⁴ The King of the Wood is the traditional priest of the Arician grove. Frazer recounts how this position has been handed down, generation after generation, since antiquity. The book's title, *The Golden Bough*, refers to the tradition that states that the King of the Woods must be killed by an escaped slave, hit with a golden bough from a tree that grows there. The person who kills him then becomes the new King of the Wood. He is thought to represent a worldly husband to the goddess Diana. Throughout the course of the book, Frazer speculates about various theories explaining how the king's ritual murder came to be custom. The history of the position, as well as similar rituals in other cultures, is explored. Using this particularly significant ritual, Frazer examines the implications of hundreds of beliefs and their evolution over the centuries (Frazer 1958: 1, 3, 9, 10, 122, 123).

¹⁵ Frazer's quest for the meaning of the life and death of the priest of Nemi took him to present the doomed priest of Nemi stalking the grove of Diana at Aricia on the Italian coast, sword in hand, waiting for his unknown rival who will assail him, murder him, and become the priest in turn. He pursues the meaning in myth and ritual of the sacrifice of the heroic leader, whose people are renewed through his death (Frazer 1958: 1-3).

farm named omphalos," where he is ready to offer his dutiful yeoman services to the fecundation of any female (Joyce 1961: 402).

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce likewise conveys the persistence of life amidst death in the image of the "deadsea dugong," which becomes an emblem of fertility though it symbolically lives in the Dead Sea (Joyce 1959a: 29). Another sign of the persistence of fertility in the midst of death, according to Vickery, derives from the imagery of "the rising trees and poles, which refer to the male sexual organ" (1972: 227). Both Joyce and Frazer habitually equate the one with the other in their imagery. In *The Golden Bough*, the maypoles are regarded as fertility symbols with magical powers to fertilize both women and cattle (138). "[J]ust before the text of 'The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly' is sung over the scapegoat HCE, the leader of the singers lifts his hat as a signal to begin [. . .] [and] the narrator observes [. . .]: 'Our maypole once more where he rose of old' (44), Vickery writes (1972: 227). "The leader's sign," he adds, which heralds "the scapegoat" ritual "is unabashedly phallic: "Ductor Hitchcock hoisted his fezz fuzz at bludgeon's height" (228). What is important here is that HCE is undergoing the ritual of the scapegoat, but at the same time retaining his sexual vigor.

The Golden Bough relates that life in death is central to the myth of Osiris, whose sister and wife Isis, searching for him and fluttering in the form of a hawk over his corpse conceives Horus (Frazer 1958: 422). It recounts how the vegetative fertility of the crops derives from the fructifying presence of the divine mortality of Osiris, who is represented with corn sprouting from his dead body (438). Likewise, the presence of the deceased HCE in his grave is intended "to foster wheat crops and to ginger up tourist trade" (Joyce 1959a: 76). In another instance, Joyce refers to the notion of the fertility of the dying god through the ballad's—of Persse O'Reilly—attack and ritual expulsion and death of HCE. One of the epithets accrued to HCE is that he was "behung" (58) which describes genitality as well as mortality. In both Joyce and Frazer, Vickery states, "the dying god has his phallic and fecundating aspect in addition to his suffering and disappearing form" (1973: 415).

Being aware and convinced of the persistence of life in the midst of death, Stephen is ready to start the journey in which he is going to mime the role of the hanged god. He moves into a world of struggle and death. Meditating by the sea, he feels that he is hedged around with various forms of death. From his walk there arises a whole series of sinister emblems that culminate in the reiteration of his hanged god role:

Unwholesome sandflats waited to suck his trading soles [. . .]. A porter bottle stood up [. . .]. Broken hoops on the shore, at the land a maze of dark cunning nets [...] and on the higher beach a dryingline with two crucified shirts [. . .].

(Joyce 1961: 41)

In the above passage, Stephen's perceptions of Dublin gradually move from sand, bottles, and broken hoops to ones of a maze, and emblematic crucifixion. Stephen also encounters another emblem of death. He endeavors to see whether anyone is observing him. Instead of the watchful eye of an Almighty God, Stephen finds the serene disregard of a human creation, a vessel of trinitarian shape and crucifying function. In silently "homing," it is engaged in a voyage that cannot be other than death and hanging. The imagery reinforces hanging through the connotations of the "threemaster," and the "cross trees" (Joyce 1961: 51).

Now there is still one step for Stephen to reach the phase of the hanged god. Stephen has not yet suffered the mythic defeat of the priest-King of the wood at Nemi that would bring him to the hanged god phase of his existence. Stephen approaches this state on a simple physical level when Private Carr misinterprets Stephen's recognition that "in here it is I must kill the priest and the king" (Joyce 1961: 589). Private Carr first circles warily, as in the grove at Nemi, then knocks Stephen down in a highly ironic defeat of the poet-priest by the warrior-priest. "Carr's misinterpretation of Stephen's recognition," as Vickery puts it, "touches off a farcical inversion of Stephen's real struggle. This last, of course, is with himself and his unconscious desire to remain the artist priest-king, that is, an artist possessing both secret spiritual power and social status beyond the ordinary man" (Vickery 1973: 380). To achieve a complete vision of the artist, who in Joyce's mind is man dedicated to truth, Stephen must realize it as an

enactment of the dying god myth. This alone unites a universal knowledge of mortality with a common participation in the life of mankind.

By now Stephen has mimed the part of the journey of the dying and reviving god, which corresponds, to death. Still he has to undergo the other part, which corresponds to revival. This time, Joyce has HCE to complete the other part of the journey. And like the gods of *The Golden Bough*, Joyce's gods at their revival are heralded by signs of vegetative growth, fertility, and the exercise of vigorous and unabashed sexual intercourse.

Joyce links the reviving god with the day of fertility just as the scapegoat predeceases that of the New Year. In the third chapter of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce has Hosty, the figure of the dying god and the old year, expire just at the moment when the New Year begins. Joyce also brings Tammuz, the dying and reviving god into conjunction with Baalfire's night, which is the popular derivation for *Beltane* or May Day (Joyce 1959a: 13).¹⁶

Fertility is a principal factor in the process of revival. At HCE's pub the plays performed are about the overthrow of the father. At one point Taff makes his comment, "whiles they are bealting pots to dubrin din for old daddam dombstom to tomb and wamb humbs lumbs agamb" (Joyce 1959a: 346). That is to say, everyone is engaged in the ritual noise-making, that Frazer suggests may accompany both the burial of the god and the efforts to purify the area and encourage fertility.

Archetypally and historically, it is known that in the eyes of a female the virility of the male is the basis of her respect. Issy sees HCE, Vickery notes, as a "representative of the Frazerian deity of crops," but her view of him is "less august and magisterial" (Vickery 1972: 220): "the rubberend Mr. Polkingtone, the quonian fleshmonger who Mother Browne solicited me for unlawful converse with, with her mug of October (a pots on it!), creaking around on his old shanksaxle like a crosty old cornquake." "Issy's view of HCE," Vickery explains, "is obviously qualified by his

¹⁶ Halloween and Beltane night were the two chief fire-festivals of the ancient Celts. Halloween was the festival of the Celtic New Year as well. (Frazer 1958: 715-720)

identification with aged lechers." Indeed, "his genuineness as a corn god," Vickery writes, "is the basis for her savage sexual contempt of him. Her anger is largely that he is not the young virile revived fertility figure, the god of the young girl's dreams, but is only a crusty old crow or corncrake" (1972: 220).

The fertility of the crops is related to human fertility. In order to assure the fertility of the crops people once participated in orgiastic ceremonies; hence, the origin of Joyce's reference to HCE as "Sower Rapes" (Joyce 1959: 72). Thus, following the major role of fertility as it appears to HCE, he finds, as Vickery notes, the truly "sacred to lie in woman [. . .]: 'in spite of her beavers she is a womanly and sacred (537)'. What makes her so is her sexuality and fertility" (1972: 223).

Joyce heightens the importance of fertility to an extent that leads him to equate sexual fertility with revival. The Four Old Men inquire into HCE's death at which he once again stirs toward life while they endeavor as usual to restrain him. His attempts at revival are recognized to be the result of his retention of sexual vigor, for one says: "But there's leps of flame in Funnycoon's wick. The Keyn has passed. Lung lift the keying" (Joyce 1959a: 499). According to Frazer, as Vickery notes, "the key is often held to be a symbol of birth, while locks are thought to prevent sexual consummation" (1972: 232). So, Vickery explains that "[w]hen one also finds Frazer pointing out that the mistletoe is regarded as a "master-Key which opens all locks," Joyce's reasons for making HCE a 'Keying' becomes obvious" (232). Moreover, HCE's retention of sexual vigor links him with Osiris, who also retains the same in his death. At Philae, Osiris is portrayed lying on his bier in an attitude which indicates that even in his death his generative virtue was not extinct, but only suspended, ready to prove a source of life and fertility to the world when the opportunity should offer (Frazer 1958: 280, 442, 768).¹⁷

¹⁷ Osiris is an ancient Egyptian god whose death and resurrection were celebrated each year. Osiris was the most popular of Egyptian deities, and he was worshipped for centuries. As an Egyptian king, he is credited with having taught the Egyptians how to cultivate fruit from trees, while Isis, who was both his sister and his wife, taught the people how to plant and harvest grains. Osiris traveled the

As we have seen, it is fertility in all its forms that occupies Joyce's notion of revival. It is no wonder that sexuality, as a form of fertility, plays a principal role in the process of revival. In this respect, when Russell says: "the earth is not an exploitable ground but the living mother" (Joyce 1961: 186-187) and, when we look on to Molly's section of *Ulysses* and the giant natural forms of *Finnegans Wake*, we see that the metaphor uniting the maternal figure with the earth is a central one for Joyce. In Molly Bloom's final soliloquy, reminiscences superimpose and then unite into a mirror image of her ultimate role of fertility goddess dedicated to sexuality as the integral motivation and persistence of life. She represents the shape and character of the fertility figure as an orgiastic deity of life. There is a great temptation, as Walton Litz notes, to see Molly Bloom as an archetypal image of the Great Mother (Litz 1974: 403), for at the end of "Ithaca," Joyce has her "reclined semilaterally, left, left hand under head, right leg extended in a straight line and resting on left leg, flexed, in the attitude of Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbent big with seed" (Joyce 1961: 606). Gea, or Gaea, or Ge emerged from Chaos, "[a]t the beginning of all things," Robert Graves says.

world, teaching people of foreign lands how to grow crops. When he returned to Egypt, though, he was persuaded by Seth, his brother, to step into an exactly fitting sarcophagus during a drunken party. The coffin was nailed tight and thrown into the Nile. It was washed ashore at Byblos in the Lebanon where it became encased in the trunk of a growing tree. Eventually, the trunk was cut down and incorporated as a pillar in the palace of the local ruler. After years of searching, Isis found Osiris and brought his body home. She breathed life into it and impregnated herself with Osiris's semen. She bore his son Horus. Meanwhile Seth found the body and once more destroyed it by hacking it into fourteen pieces and scattering them along the Nile valley. With the exception of Osiris's penis, which Seth had thrown to a crocodile, Isis found all the pieces and buried them at the sites of various sanctuaries. She restored the penis with a replica that subsequently became a focus of the Osirian cult. The scattering of the body was allegorized with the winnowing and scattering of grain in the fields.

As a grain god, Osiris was worshiped in the form of a sack filled with seed that sprouted green. He is also depicted by models with articulated members that women paraded through the streets at festivals and manipulated to demonstrate the god's virility. His relationship with the Egyptian kingship was crucial. Each king was the divine embodiment of Horus in life, but became Osiris on his death. (Frazer 1958: 420-447)

He calls her Mother Earth (Graves 1959: 31).¹⁸ The most interesting aspect of Joyce's description of Molly as "reclined [. . .] in the attitude of Gea-Tellus" is the phrase "big with seed." "Normally," Erwin Steinberg notes, "one would take the word *seed* to mean a fertilized rather than an unfertilized egg: the first meaning of *seed* is usually something like 'fertilized and mature ovule' " (Steinberg 2001: 122). In *Finnegans Wake*, it is "only when HCE experiences sexual intercourse with ALP towards morning," Vickery notes, that he is "prepared for the man-god's revival, in which he awakens to reenter the world of shared dependency with others" (1972: 219).¹⁹ The conquest of the fear of death is the recovery of life's joy. The conquest of fear yields the courage of life. That is the main initiation of this journey—fearlessness and achievement. Consequently, the journey of the hanged god amalgamates the opposites of life and death, makes the matter of death imperative in the logic of creation rather than a fortuitous by-product of personal history, and thus paves the way for Joyce's synthetic technique. The dying/reviving god myth provides the degree of illumination or action that enables him to search for the truth, and to show us what the shape of the universe is and, how to live a human life under the impact of death.

The Encyclopedic

In the quest for truth, Joyce was convinced that no single phenomenon can be considered in isolation, but must be seen by its countering and fusing with its opposite, as Richard Ellmann writes (1972: 54, 89).²⁰ This countering and fusing extends even to his treatment of

¹⁸ Tellus is Gea's Roman counterpart.

¹⁹ In *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, Joseph Campbell and Henry Robinson similarly reach that conclusion (1966: 336).

²⁰ To get more about the fusion of opposites, See Richard M. Kain, *Fabulous Voyager: James Joyce's Ulysses* (1959: 214); Campbell and Robinson (1966: 106, 108, 120, 122, 154, 157-158, 160, 162, 165-166, 194, 199, 204, 209, 250, 271, 297, 299, 305, 307, 312); Anthony Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader* (1968: 205); James S. Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* (1959: 36, 108); W. Y. Tindall, *James Joyce: His Way of*

archetypal events in time where he carefully mingles the present with the past to demonstrate the perdurability of the archetype, and at the same time its mutability. This intrusiveness of the past into the present is exemplified in Joyce's reference to the persistence of mythical rites in more civilized expressions when Stephen says, "Queens lay with prize bulls. Remember Rasiphae for whose lust my grandoldgrossfather made the first confessional box" (Joyce 1961: 569). Thus, Joyce counters the Roman Catholic confessional with the labyrinth, and sees the act of confession to be an extension to, what Robinson and Wilson report, the devouring of the Athenian maidens and youths in the labyrinth by the Minotaur (1961: 133, 139). He thus portrays the Christian ritual as a tortuous confrontation with death and the Christian priest—and, by extension the Christian God—as a monster that destroys heroes and victims alike, a creature that is an intensification of the bovine god met by Stephen earlier (Joyce 1981: 11).

In *Ulysses*, for example, Bloom at the funeral of an old friend, Paddy Dignam, who had died suddenly of a stroke, contemplates the treatment of the body after death: "Never know who will touch you dead. Wash and shampoo. I believe they clip the nails and the hair. Keep a bit in an envelope. Grow all the same after. Unclean job" (Joyce 1961: 87). Here Joyce is dedicated to the study of man. He vents anthropological curiosity on the custom of preserving nail- and hair-clippings and the feeling that a dead body contagiously pollutes or defiles those who come in physical contact with it. In much the same way, Vickery notes, "Bloom touches on the ancient custom of offering food sacrifices to the dead: 'Cakes for the dead. Who ate them? Mourners coming out' (100)" (1973: 355-356). This

Interpreting the Modern World (1950: 81, 83, 103, 107); Harry Levin (1960: 124, 132); Elizabeth D. Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (1983: 19); Stanley Poss, "A Portrait of the Artist as Hard-Boiled Messiah" (1966: 70-71, 77); Garold Sharpe, "The Philosophy of James Joyce" (1963: 120); Darcy O'Brien, "The Twins that Tick Homo Vulgaris-A Study of Shem and Shaun" (1966: 183, 186); William Y. Tindall "James Joyce and the Hermetic Tradition" (1954: 23-26); Bernard Benstock, "Every Telling has a taling: A Reading of the Narrative of Finnegans Wake" (1969: 15); John White, "Ulysses: The Metaphysical Foundations and Grand Design" (1969: 27); Philip F. Herring, "The Bedsteadfastness of Molly Bloom" (1969: 49, 59); and James Joyce "Ecce Puer," *Collected Poems* (1960: 63).

leads Vickery to write that "the ancient custom of offering cakes for the dead has dwindled into absurdity, since it is the mourners who now eat them" (355-356).²¹ In another example, Joyce treats the metamorphic character of human consciousness. The doctor announces that Bloom is "a finished example of the new womanly man" (Joyce 1961: 493), and "about to have a baby" (494). In *The Golden Bough*, the circumstances of men's simulating the roles of women differ widely from Joyce's. Frazer refers to the customs of men's dressing as women in the rites of Dionysus, at marriage ceremonies, circumcision rites, and ritual efforts to avoid demons or ghosts. Similarly, women near term were frequently mimed by their husbands, who took to their beds in simulated labor.

Joyce also employs his synthetic technique to cast Bloom as a modern scapegoat. In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer explores the use of the dying god as a scapegoat to free his worshipers from the troubles of all sorts with which life on earth is beset. The ritual consists in subjecting the scapegoat to verbal assaults and beating as a means of purification and as a way of increasing his generative capacities, which then are realized in a brief marriage with a bride, after which he is taken to his death by hanging, drowning, stoning or the like (1958: 655-660, 672-673, 712-714). Vickery explains that Joyce reflects the scapegoat's beating and abuse in the Citizen's contemptuous epithets, which are poured on Bloom (Joyce 1961: 300). Joyce makes Bloom participate in what amounts to a fertilizing ritual, which is enacted through the silly adolescent fantasies of Gerty MacDowell (356, 366). Then, he makes Bloom appear panting, with a stitch in his side, in a scene which is an appropriate approximation of the ritual pursuit and hunt which precedes his arrest (435), after which he is sentenced to death by hanging. Mrs. Mervyn Tallboys says that (however metaphoric her language) she is prepared to treat Bloom as ancient scapegoats were treated. She will "scourge the pigeonlivered cur as long as," she can stand over him,

²¹ For the perdurability and the metamorphosis of the archetype, consult Terrence Doody, "Don Quixote, Ulysses, and the Idea of Realism" (1979: 204-205); Bernard Benstock, "Every Telling has a Taling [. . .]" (1969): 4-7, 13-16; Ralph Jenkins, "Theosophy in Scylla and Charybdis" (1969: 41); Philip Herring, "The Bedsteadfastness of Molly Bloom" (1969: 53-54); and William D. Jenkins, "It Seems There Were Two Irishmen" (1969: 76).

she will "flay him alive" (466, 467), and the subsheriff identifies him with Judas Iscariot, thus suggesting the implicit alignment of both Bloom and Judas with the scapegoat (470-471) (Vickery 1973: 388-91).²²

Joyce uses the same synthetic technique to humanize deities. In *Ulysses*, the milkwoman attributes the beauty of the day to God, but Mulligan's comment is: "—The islanders, [. . .] speak frequently of the collector of prepuces" (Joyce 1961: 13). Mulligan thus renders the milkwoman's religious faith and the nature of her deity quaint, yet wholly natural. Mulligan sees God, as Richard Ellmann puts it, not as a supernatural transcendent being of enormous power, but as an amasser of useless bits of foreskin" (Ellmann 1972: 19). Stephen, on the other hand, equates "the hanged god" with the limits of human possibility. God, in the words of both Marilyn French and Stuart Gilbert, as "dio boia" (French 1982: 6, 25; Gilbert 1950: 109, 217, 333) takes care of his creatures and also destroys them and, whatever he does to or for himself, he does to or for his creatures (Joyce 1961: 213).

Joyce, likewise, links Finnegans' death with the Frazerian dying and reviving god. Finnegans, as Vickery explains, is aroused by the whisky spilled on him, and one of the Four Old Men treats him as if he were the image of death and revival: "Now be aisy, good Mr. Finnimore, sir. And take your laysure like a god on pension and don't be walking abroad. Sure" (Joyce 1959: 24). Joyce intensifies the Frazerian impact when Finnegans is told to take his "laysure like a god." Just as the speaker urges the ease of leisure on Finnegans, so is sexual intercourse, for "Sure," is the Irish expression which suggests the easy, assured casualness of divine copulation, of the sort that Zeus indulges in so frequently (Vickery 1973: 412). In another example, Joyce de-Olympianize the dying god and his consort—Osiris and Isis—when Shem remarks in one of his twelve questions to Shaun, "theer's his bow and wheer's his leaker and heer lays his bequiet hearse, deep; [. . .]" (Joyce 1959a: 137). The hidden issue in the middle of the excerpt is, Vickery writes, "a burlesque of Osiris' dismemberment and Isis' search for

²² See also Harry Blamires, *The Bloomsday Book* (1967: 146).

the parts of his body" (Vickery 1973: 417). As Frazer emphasizes, the only part not recovered were his genital organs (1958: 424).

Joyce also employs his synthetic technique to mingle the sacred and the profane. After his encounter with Gerty MacDowell, where Bloom muses on the physical and emotional changes in women at their menstrual period: "Wonder if it's bad to go with them. Safe in one way. Turns milk. Makes fiddlestrings snap. Something about withering plants I read in a garden" (Joyce 1961: 369). According to *The Golden Bough*, menstruous women are forbidden to handle milk or to come near crops and growing vegetation (Frazer 1958: 241-44, 698-703). Bloom appears, Harry Blamires notes, to be respecting these taboos, and this aligns him with primitive man in his fear of menstruous women, but at the same time, he regards such women as an attraction because they are "safe in one way" (1967: 142-145).

Joyce also uses his synthetic technique to mingle the human and the divine and the literary and the imaginative. Joyce has Stephen argue that Ann Hathaway seduced Shakespeare: for Stephen, she is the archetypal love goddess who, Frazer, Robinson and Wilson, and Jessie Weston report, transports and mortally wounds the handsome young man doomed as Adonis and Tammuz to shuttle endlessly between the worlds of darkness and light (Frazer 1958: 376-380; Robinson and Wilson 1961: 14-15, 112, 117; Weston 1957: 43). This association leads to the metamorphosis of Ann Hathaway's characteristics. In this way, she is both Ann and Venus, both "a boldfaced Stratford wench" and a "greyeyed goddess" "who tumbles in a cornfield a lover younger than herself" (Joyce 1961: 191).

At another level, Joyce employs his synthetic technique to blend into a single form the noticeable contradictions in the character of the archetypal woman. If Stephen's relations with woman, in the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, are examined, it will be discovered that he is moving among virgin, mother and harlot, with no clear sense of their connections with one another. Beginning, for instance, with his mother as the foundation of his eventually complex female principle, he adds the Blessed Virgin and later, as he reads more courtly love and romance, the figure of Mercedes from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, finally adding the temptress figure as he reaches pubescence. His earlier association with Eileen merges with his infatuation

for E. C., and subsequently they both blend with their archetypal literary and religious counterparts, until at the end of the fourth chapter an inspiration figure emerges in the all-encompassing vision of the girl on the beach, both a sign and a symbol of Stephen's art. Through myth, Joyce gains access to a dramatic integration of these evidently disparate roles of woman. In the course of discussing the cult of Adonis, Frazer and Weston refer to the custom of sacred prostitution, when female worshippers of the goddess linked with Adonis were required at some points in their lives "to prostitute themselves to strangers at the sanctuary of the goddess" (Fraser 1958: 384-385; Weston 1957: 48). This custom included both virgins and married women. Thus, all three roles—virgin, mother, and harlot—are unified in a single sexual ritual that is both a sacrificial and creative mystery. When Stephen enters the brothel district of Dublin, Vickery writes, it appears to him maze-like, but he imaginatively metamorphoses the gasflames of the street lights to be "burning as if it before an altar." Then he sees himself, "in another world," where he awakens "from a slumber of centuries" (Joyce 1981: 100). Stephen thus comes to see that the Dublin whore is not simply a streetwalker, but a woman functionally similar to the sacred prostitute of *The Golden Bough* (Vickery 1973: 341-42).

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce uses the synthetic technique to construct the composite image, which includes reference to several levels of existence and, which is based on cyclical and simultaneous structure. Thus, the three children urge HCE to participate in his hanging and rejoice in its achievement: "Isn't it great he is swaying above us for his own good and ours. Fly your balloons, [...]. He's doorknobs dead! [...]. We could ate you, par Buccas, and imbabe through you, [. . .]. One fledge, one brood till hulm culms evurdyburdy" (Joyce 1959a: 377-378). Joyce uses the image of the bird to draw into a single complex figure HCE's components as dead man, dying god, scapegoat victim, and guardian of intoxication. Joyce has HCE suffer the death by hanging in order to point up his scapegoat role as the hanged god. Then, with his death announced, Joyce modulates him into a more specific form of the dying god, Bacchus²³ or Dionysus.

²³ Bacchus is modeled closely on the Greek god Dionysos. In Roman mythology his parents are Jupiter and Semele, the daughter of Kadmos, who

Joyce's aim here is fivefold. First, he wants to link the human HCE, the drunken tavern-owner, with the mythic guardian of the vine—Bacchus—to show, as Terrence Doody writes, the perdurability and, at the same time, the metamorphosis of the archetype (1979: 214). Secondly, HCE, in assuming the form of Bacchus, also blends with Dionysus.²⁴ Thirdly, Bacchus is associated with an Athenian festival of swinging. Fourthly, "the ritual sacrifices of Dionysus sometimes involved not only dismemberment but also devouring of the god or his representative" as well as "children," as Vickery notes (1973: 421-22). The inclusion of children in these sacrifices explains why in anticipating the ceremonial drinking of the god's blood, the celebrants should speak of it as an "imbabe through you." Fifthly, the association of Dionysus with Osiris leads to the former association with a flock of birds. According to *The Golden Bough*, the bird was a creature known as "the soul of Osiris," and was traditionally regarded as the seat of a dead person's soul as well as representing the corn spirit and serving as a scapegoat.

Joyce uses the composite image to achieve a unity of mankind and a reconciliation of its opposites, exemplified in his description of HCE:

But Oom Godd his villen, who will he be, this mitryman, some
king of the yeast, in his chrismy greyed brunzewig, with the snow

became deified only after her death by fire on Olympus. Bacchus [. . .] is depicted as a youthful figure wearing an ivy or grape crown and carrying a wand or *thyrsus*. He is also frequently drawn riding in a chariot pulled by leopards.

As god of wine and intoxication, his court includes the female Bacchantes, nymphs, fauns and satyrs. Bacchus was worshiped extensively and commanded a number of festivals including the *Liberalia* and *Bacchanalia*. These possess strongly phallic connotations and on occasions the god was represented by a model phallus. (Jordan 1993: 38)

²⁴ Dionysus is the god associated with the grape and, by extension, with wine and drunkenness. A religion was formed around the worship of him, celebrating the irrational over the rational, countering the focus on reason that characterized Greek culture. He is related to the book's focal story about the golden bough because, in addition to being god of grapes, he is considered god of all trees. Moreover, the practice of sacrificing goats in ceremonies to honor Dionysus resembles the ritual sacrifice of the King of the Forest in the golden bough tradition. (Frazer 1958: 449-454)

in his mouth [...]. Can thus be Mithra Norkmann that keeps our hotel? Begor, Mr. O'Sorgmann, [...]. But a jolly fine daysent form of one word. (Joyce 1959a: 578)

"Among other things," Vickery writes, Joyce identifies HCE "with the vegetative cereal deity, [. . .] the Persian god Mithra"—identified with the Unconquered Sun, for his birthday was December 25²⁵—and "an ordinary Dublin tavern or hotel owner returning to bed. [. . .]. By embracing in his own person the corn god of the earth and the sun god of the sky, HCE subsumes not only aspects but regions of the natural order necessary to revival and the continuance of life" (Vickery 1972: 224-225). Joyce describes "[o]ne of his garments [. . .] as 'chrismy,' which, as Vickery notes, [. . .] 'suggest[s] the birthday of both' Christ and Mithra. Furthermore, Joyce calls HCE a 'daysent form of one word,' which, Vickery indicates, 'that he is a solar-produced Logos, a miracle immanent in [. . .] the natural world. HCE 'is 'daysent,' that is, the product of rather than a metaphor drawn from, the diurnal cycle" (1972: 225).

Ultimately, Joyce uses the composite image to merge the identities of sex, exemplified, as Vickery writes, in Shaun's talking of his brother and himself as Browne and Nolan (1972: 230):

"O Tara's thrush, the sharepusher! [. . .]. Who you know the musselman, his musclemum and mistleman? [. . .] Feel

²⁵ Perhaps the best-known Persian deity is Mithra. Originally, he was the personification of mitra ("contract") and so the preserver of law and order. He was also a god of war, described as riding in his four-horsed golden chariot against the demons and their worshippers, and closely associated with the sun. He eventually became the object of a mystery cult under the Roman Empire.

Originating in India, Mithra is a god of light who was translated into the attendant of the god Ahura Mazda in the light religion of Persia; from this he was adopted as the Roman deity Mithras. He is not generally regarded as a sky god but a personification of the fertilizing power of warm, light air. According to the Avesta, he possesses 10,000 eyes and ears and rides in a chariot drawn by white horses. In dualistic Zoroastrianism, which effectively demoted him, Mithra is concerned with the endless battle between light and dark forces; he represents truth. He is responsible for the keeping of oaths and contracts. (Frazer 1958: 415-416)

Phyllisitations to daff Mr. Hairwigger who has just hadded twinned little curls!" (Joyce 1959a: 491)

Shaun declares that HCE has given birth to twin girls and thus has been metamorphosed from man to woman. The process of metamorphosis, as Alan Dundes and Terrence Doody and Wesley Morris explain, moves from a muscular fishman to a maternal mistletoe. Instrumental in this metamorphosis is perhaps the expletory "Tara's thrush," for the thrush was generally regarded as the chief means of transmitting the mistletoe seeds from one tree to another (Dundes 1962: 137-138; Doody and Morris 1982: 230).²⁶

Thus far we have been considering the process of mingling and countering opposites, which takes place in the artist's imagination. In this connection, Robert Scholes notes that Joyce equates "artistic creation and the divine begetting of the Son of God" when he describes "the moment of inspiration as that instant when '[i]n the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh' " (1981: 473, 217). Language is the means through which the process of mingling and transmutation is conveyed. It is through language also that the artist is capable of coping with a metamorphic world. In the natural world "the act of naming is [. . .] connected with identification," as Vickery writes, but throughout Joyce's works and especially in *Finnegans Wake*, "Joyce [. . .] names the elements of his universe in his own. [. . .]. Consequently, the 'naming' becomes a way of affirming the vegetative, natural world as human and vice versa" (Vickery 1972: 214). "HCE, for example," Vickery explains, "is told,"

'your hair grows wheater' (26). And later his demise is set in a ritual context of cycles of sorrow and resurrection that makes him vegetative as well as human: 'on the bunk of our breadwinning lies the crops of our seedfather' (55). Moments later, tourist-like watchers of the cyclical context of life find it equated with a Frazerian symbol of the deity as fertility figure: 'their convoy wheeled encirclingly about the gigantig's lifetree. Our fireleaved loverlucky blomsterhohm' (55).

(1972: 214)

²⁶ Both writers treat the wish of males to conceive.

When Joyce fuses "white hair" and "wheat" or "corpse" and "crops," Vickery observes, this means that "in the verbal realm of the artist, the act of allusion is from word to word rather than from word to thing. This means that language [. . .] encompasses the reality of [. . .] [*Finnegans Wake*] so that the character of the one is the character of the other (1972: 214). In Vickery's words, "the dominant feature" in *Finnegans Wake*'s language "is metamorphosis whereby the words, persons, and objects of one reality level [. . .] merge with all others" (1972: 214).

As we have seen, Joyce's synthetic technique is based on the fusion of opposites and the outcome is comedy, which arises from antithetical responses to a single situation. Comedy also provides Joyce with the escape from the finality of death. "As if to drive home the point that life's ever-changing pattern is" predestined, Vickery writes, Joyce begins [. . .] [*Finnegans Wake*," for example, "with the significance of trees" as symbolizing "man's thrust toward revival of a ceaseless order: 'The oaks of old now they lie in peat yet elms leap where ashes lay. Phall if you but will, rise you must: and none so soon either shall the pharce for the nunce come to a setdown secular phoenish' (4)" (Vickery 1972: 217). According to Vickery, Joyce says that "though the ancient oaks have been reduced to peat and ashes, their vegetative natures persist as growing elms replace dwindling ash trees" (1972: 217). It is clear that Joyce, Philip Herring notes, is "impressed by the cyclical character of nature" (1983: 387-388) and myth alike. "Oak, ash, and elm are all forms of the dying and reviving HCE and hence sacred in *Finnegans Wake* [. . .]. The reason for this [. . .] lies in their reproductive capacity, which though it is [. . .] a free disposition and so carries overtones of religious sin and downfall," Vickery notes, "also carries with it the natural imperative to flourish and rise again." (1972: 218).²⁷ One result of this is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light. So, embodied in the "course of organic life is the comic release from the essentially tragic notion of finality and termination of 'phoenish'," as Vickery puts it (1972:

²⁷ In the same vein, Stanley Poss discusses that idea in "A Portrait of the Artist as Hard-Boiled Messiah" (1966: 69).

218). "What is a farce for the moment," Vickery observes, "is also a perennial comedy because grounded in recurrence, whether of trees or of mankind" (1972: 218), and the latter is exemplified in Mrs. Purefoy's annual producing of a child (Joyce 1961: 397). Yet in all these, what is established is not mortality but divinity. That is to say, reproduction conquers death and thereby introduces the resurrection which, in turn, promulgates regeneration. Thus, the cyclic form of existence completes itself and is capable of self-perpetuation on all its levels, seasonal, vegetative, human, mythic, and religious. Therefore, as *Finnegans Wake* has been insisting all along by its dramatic metamorphoses, to recognize death and mortality and to live fully with that awareness is to know the only true idea of the holy available to man in this or any other century.

Having considered the connection between Joyce's technique and comedy, there is still the question to why Joyce's technique is superior among writers of his time. The answer lies in the genre or literary mode of his works, for in essence it is less a summary of facts than an immense romance of quest stated in the form of objective research. It is this basically archetypal consideration that is based on the techniques of rhetorical questions, alliterations, allusions, metaphors, inversions, puns, that figure so prominently in Joyce's works, and which are all enlisted to create a genuine literary experience. The obvious affinity between his technique and the technique of archetypal romance, however, could well be suggested by surveying the main features of archetypal romance. The main features of archetypal romance, according to Frye and Pound, include: the quest motif, the presence of two central characters: a protagonist, and an antagonist, the use of conflation and linking by means of central leit-motifs, the merging of incongruous materials, the readiness to hint at possible meanings without spelling them out in detail, the continual recurrence of the same or similar incidents, the development of themes out of a substratum of Nature, myth and fertility ideals, and the three-fold structure (Frye 1957: 136-37; Pound 1952: 82).

Thematically, the romance pattern consists of the gradual accumulation of meaning as the reader follows a trail of hints and artistically incomplete bits of information. Structurally, it provides the idea of pattern piece by piece. This is based on a dislocation of perspective which brings us

too close to the scene or immerses us in detail so that only when we stand back and regard the whole work does the pattern emerge. An instance of this which comes readily to mind is *Finnegans Wake*, which achieves precisely the same thing, both thematically and structurally, when Joyce forces us to follow him through a tangle of magician's arts, species of customs, and perils of the soul before coming upon one of his central topics—the dying and reviving god—which he considers to be at the core of the process of creation as an artist.

The romance quest has three main stages: the conflict or the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary adventures; the death struggle or the stage in which either the protagonist or the antagonist or both must die; and the discovery or the stage in which the protagonist proves himself to be as such even if he does not survive the conflict. Traditionally the three-stage quest of the romance is directed to the slaying of a dragon and the finding of buried treasure (Frye 1957: 187). As a result, the real hero or protagonist of *A Portrait*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake* proves to be the civilized mind which explores uncharted paths to uncover new facts about man's way of life, facts which may be simultaneously horrifying, and revolutionary. With Joyce, as hero, his aim from the very beginning is to attain artistic freedom, to "catch a glimpse of the real," and to find an escape from the finality of death whereas, his enemies, Daiches notes, were the distortion of reality and predestined life (1973: 84, 86).²⁸ Earlier we have seen Joyce miming the wisdom-seeking journey of the dying and reviving god, after which he employed his synthetic technique, which is based on the amalgamation of opposites and thus has an obvious affinity with the romance technique of conflation and merging. But this merging of the incongruous leads to what is known as displacement, which can be attained through any kind of simile (Frye 1957: 137).

Thus, Joyce takes the romance as a model and associates through simile some of his characters with some of the dominant archetypes. In this connection, for example, Joyce attaches Mulligan and Stephen to the

²⁸ See also S. L. Goldberg, *The Classical Temper* (1963: 208); Richard Kain, *Fabulous Voyager* (1959: 194); Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (1972: 13, 93); and William Tindall, *James Joyce* (1950: 95).

archetype of the priest-King of the wood at Nemi, Bloom to the scapegoat, Stephen and HCE to the dying and reviving god, Stephen's mother and Ireland to the voracious mother goddesses. By so doing, he creates the pattern of the generation of archetypes out of specific individual characters. Concerning the continual recurrence of the themes and their development, it is observed that the dominant theme in Joyce's is that of life, death and revival and that fertility is the basic element in the process of revival. Both Joyce's technique and the myth of the dying and reviving god as well involve a three-fold structure. In the latter the structure consists of life, death and disappearance, and revival, and in the former of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

The foregoing discussion sufficiently establishes the functional use of myth in James Joyce's works. It is only through myth that Joyce attains his freedom as an artist, and forms his aesthetics. By miming for himself the myth of the dying and reviving god, Joyce resurrects himself in what he feels to be greater wisdom; brings something for the world; forms the metamorphic image, which is based on the synthesis of opposites; constructs the composite image, in which several levels of existence are intertwined; achieves a sense of the unity of mankind and of the reconciliation of opposites, including even the identities of sex, and experiments with language to reveal its metamorphic power.

The technique Joyce adopted results in achieving what he aimed at. What further emerges out of this survey, however, is the affinity not only between his technique and those typical of comedy and romance, but also between Joyce's use of myth and the use of myth in Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

Comedy and Romance are Joyce's means of illuminating his quest for truth. Joyce's principal tool, by the aid of which the transmutative process is accomplished, is displacement. His imagination works through either analogy, as when he transfers the processes of the quest motif and the dying and reviving god from the realms of romance and myth to that of literature, through approximation, as when he shows that present archetypes no longer retain the characteristics of the originals, or through synthesis, as when he uses language to show the multiplicity within a single image. And

in all cases the direction of the displacement is either towards approximation or idealization, or towards de-idealization of the elements that constitute the image.

Indeed, the structure of *The Golden Bough* is, in a limited sense, that of Joyce's work turned inside out. That is, Frazer, from the dramatic opening scene of the quest for the secret of the life and death of the haunted priest in the grove at Nemi, begins with a secular, human voyager who moves out into the larger uncharted seas of myth, ritual, and primitive custom to pursue the meaning in myth and ritual of the sacrifice of the heroic leader, whose people are renewed through his death, then composes his theories about the relations of myth to ritual, magic to religion, hero to god, leader to people. He studies the information thus acquired for its symbolic meaning, tracing the relationship between myths and religious rituals to the cultures which produced them and to those cultures that came later, and then after a series of adventures returns to his homeport and the commonsense empirical realm from which he set out. The movement is from the ordinary to the mythical and back again, whereas in Joyce's work the pattern is one of unrelieved and intensifying progression from one world to another. It does so not simply by constant attention to the minutiae of ordinary daily existence but by interpenetrating those present acts with ones from the past, with beliefs, attitudes, and actions that are immemorially Irish. The result, in effect, is a reconstitution of the relevance of what is truly folklore not only to literature but to life as well. This fact substantially explains that Joyce's major anthropological pattern is the generation of archetypal figures, characters who are simultaneously individual persons and anthropological archetypes, that is, general human functions which recur throughout many times and places.

Concluding this article, it specifically seems that Joyce has not only afforded amusement to his readers, but has also succeeded in handling the problems of truth, of determinism, of the perdurability and the mutability of the archetypal, and has emerged as the "priest of eternal imagination" who "transmutes the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of ever-living life" (Joyce 1981: 221).

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