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# Dedalus And Icarus: The Influence of James Joyce on the Poetry of Hart Crane

Ayman F. B. Hussein

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DEDALUS AND ICARUS:  
THE INFLUENCE OF JAMES JOYCE ON THE POETRY OF HART CRANE .

by  
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A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the  
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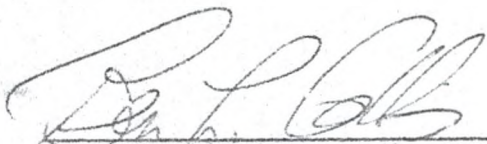
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Grand Forks, North Dakota

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This dissertation submitted by Ayman F. B. Hussein in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

  
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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Date 25 April 1984

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For my mother, father, Debbie, Billy, and my unborn child

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an attempt to study the influence of James Joyce on Hart Crane by studying the impact of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses on White Buildings. As such, it is both an influence study and a close reading of Crane's best work in a new light.

Crane read and was influenced by Joyce. And while some scholars and critics pointed out the possibility of a Joycean influence in some of Crane's poems, no one ventured fully into that risky and unexplored area of Crane's career. The present study examines that important influence in detail.

The first part of the essay (the introduction and the first three chapters) tackles the question of influence on Crane, the authors who helped shape Crane's literary make-up, and the extent and limitations of their influence as compared to the permanent and thorough-going influence of Joyce. In these chapters I make a distinction between the parallels (which indicate affinities of temperament between the two authors) and the influences (which point to the impact of Joyce's work on Crane's). I also examine the role played by Joyce's aesthetic theories, in Portrait and Ulysses, in shaping Crane's aesthetic concepts.

In the last four chapters of the study I start my close



reading of the poems in White Buildings, pointing out in the process Crane's indebtedness to Joyce. It becomes clear there that Joyce's influence on Crane manifests itself thematically and technically and in various forms. In that second part of the study, the poems of White Buildings are divided into three main groups: first, poems that deal with aesthetic questions ("Legend," "Black Tambourine," "My Grandmother's Love Letters," "Sunday Morning Apples," "Praise for an Urn," "Chaplinesque," "Possessions," "The Wine Menagerie," and "At Melville's Tomb"); second, poems that tackle ontological, philosophical, and religious themes ("Emblems of Conduct," "Garden Abstract," "Stark Major," "Lachrymae Christi," and "Recitative"); and third, poems that treat the Materna archetype ("Voyages" and "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen").

In all the poems, and all through the study, the various aspects of Crane's debt to Joyce--affinities of temperament, subconscious and conscious influences, and direct borrowings, both thematic and technical--are explored in detail. In exploring them my objectives have been, first, to make a case for a very important but overlooked influence on Crane, second, to present a new and close reading of Crane's finest poems, and, third, to "relocate" Crane critically by undermining the label of Romanticism which has been attached to his name.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to explore the influence of James Joyce on Hart Crane with special emphasis on White Buildings (1926), Crane's first collection of poems. In a study of this sort, three things have to be clarified at the outset: first, Crane's susceptibility to literary influences and the reasons behind it; second, the presence, and extent, of Joyce's influence on Crane; and third, the grounds for choosing White Buildings--and not Crane's other major work, The Bridge--to illustrate the Joycean influence.

Allen Tate, who was a close friend of Crane for ten years, maintains that "Crane was not an educated man; [and] in many respects . . . an ignorant man" but who "With the instinct of genius . . . read the great poets" (Tate , p. 311). Haskell M. Block agrees with Tate and argues that "Few poets have been as susceptible as Crane to literary influences. From the very beginning of his discovery of his poetic vocation, Crane read avidly in the classics of ancient and modern literature, and especially in contemporary poetry" (Block, p. 86). Lacking in formal education and life experiences (starting his literary career in his early teens), Crane seemed to derive his philosophy of life, his aesthetics, and his literary identity from these "literary influences."

The question of influence suggests itself in the case of almost every artist whenever the line between "tradition and individual talent" needs to be distinctly drawn. In the case of Hart Crane, the question of influence assumes a paramount importance. Crane was a poet "dedicated to and possessed by his poethood" (Scannell, p. 233), whose discovery of "his poetic vocation," according to M. D. Uroff, was "coincident with his discovery of self" (Uroff, p. 6). Philip Horton, Crane's first biographer, tells us that throughout Crane's short life, "despite family complications, unemployment, friendships, betrayals, drunkenness and debauchery--through all the excessive turmoil of his life--his devotion to poetry was his one constant lodestar" (Horton, p. 25). And by the same token, it was his devotion to his art that played a decisive part in his suicide; Horton asserts that "there is little doubt that the most immediate factor in determining Crane's suicide was his conviction that his creative powers were exhausted, or at least seriously diminished" (Horton, p. 306).

Crane was totally devoted to his art (in fact, it would not be an overstatement to assume that Crane lived for his art and died for fear of losing it), hence, the importance of the role played by the "literary influences" on him can hardly be exaggerated. In a letter to Gorham Munson, Crane reveals not only his awareness of the literary influences on him but also his intention to develop them: "I have come to the stage now where I want to carefully choose my most congenial influences and, in a way, 'cultivate' their influence" (Letters 1965, p. 71).

Realizing the vital importance of the literary and philosophical influences on Crane, critics and scholars seem to suggest a wide spectrum of influences: Plato, Nietzsche, Ouspensky, Mary Baker Eddy, Rimbaud, Whitman, Eliot, and Pound. At one point or other, Crane fell under the influence of every one of them; however, he rebelled and eventually broke loose from the grip of every one of these influences. The only influence he fell under and never seemed to repudiate (at least consciously) was that of Joyce.

Before he turned twenty, Crane had already read A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and a good portion of Ulysses which was serialized (starting 1918) in The Little Review before its eventual publication, in book form, in Paris in 1922. When Ulysses was published Crane wrote Gorham Munson, who was living in Paris at the time, asking him to smuggle him a copy of the banned book so he could savor it further and fathom its hidden treasures.

There are several reasons behind Crane's acceptance of Joyce's influence and his endeavor to "cultivate" it. In form as well as in content Joyce's Ulysses brought about a literary revolution, the far-reaching impact of which was felt by the ordinary reader and the man of letters alike, and the desire to bring about a similar revolution in the world of poetry may have been one of the reasons impelling Crane to follow in Joyce's footsteps. Also, being a novelist, Joyce provided little or no grounds for professional jealousy on the part of Crane whose medium was poetry.

But there are more important reasons for Crane's need to "cultivate" Joyce's influence on him. Joyce's optimistic endorsement of

the modern world and his unqualified acceptance of all of life seemed to appeal to Crane who, as an artist, sought to restore faith in the modern world and dissipate the sense of despair created by The Waste Land, and who, as a man, strove to break loose from the grip of despondency and pessimism which were a second nature to him, and which finally destroyed him. S. L. Goldberg reveals the note of optimism and affirmation which pervades Ulysses; he contends that in Ulysses Joyce "achieved his youthful ideal of 'the perfect manner in art'---what he had called 'comedy' because it embraced the whole of life, including even its tragedy, and because it contemplated steadily, in a spirit of 'joy'" (Goldberg 1962, p. 69).

Anthony Cronin agrees with Goldberg and affirms that "Ulysses executes a complex movement of reconciliation and acceptance towards the world of its author's father, towards the 'sordid and deceptive' world of ordinary living" (Cronin, p. 94). And although Joyce's early works, Dubliners and Stephen Hero (the earlier version of the Portrait), smack of Dublin's "moral paralysis"---"betray," according to Joyce, "the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city" (Ellman 1959, p. 169)---and give voice to Joyce's "temper of social rejection and personal vindication" (Goldberg 1962, p. 13), Ulysses breathes a different air. Anthony Cronin notes that most of the characters in Dubliners feature in Ulysses, but while the characters in the former give "the reader bitter and mordant amusement . . . there is scarcely anyone," in the latter work, "who does not bear himself with panache, with gaiety, with scurrility or with pride" (Cronin, pp. 90-1). And Maurice Beebe notes that in

Ulysses

Affirmation of life--not the life of Dublin, 16 June 1904, but that transcendent life which includes the life of Dublin, 16 June 1904--must be found on the symbolic rather than the narrative level; and even then, it is not affirmation in the customary life-is-good sense so much as it is simply a restatement and an acceptance of the fact that life is. (Beebe 1956, p. 311)

Joyce's aesthetic theories, both in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, seemed to provide Crane with the two things he needed most: a viable and coherent world-picture wherein the positives and negatives of life are reconciled and assimilated in one uniform ontological pattern, and a set of aesthetic ideas which endows art with a mystical function comparable, if not superior, to that of religion.

But most important of all is the intimately personal impact of Joyce's two aesthetic theories on Crane's mind and psychological make-up. With their equation of the artist with "the God of the creation" (Joyce 1962, p. 215) and their insistence that the artist is "an old dog licking an old sore" who "passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed" (Joyce 1961, p. 197), and that "A man of genius makes no mistakes," that "His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery" (Joyce 1961, p. 190), Joyce's aesthetic theories in the Portrait and Ulysses seemed to provide Crane with the rationale he needed for his shortcomings (or his awareness thereof); his incompetence in the competitive world of business, his alcoholism, and his homosexuality. In short, Joyce

seemed to furnish Crane not merely with an awareness of his role as an artist but also with an acceptance of his mundanities. Anthony Cronin notes that Ulysses is "an act of acceptance and an act of pietas" wherein "man takes on a new poetic interest for his complex mundanity rather than as an actor of greater or lesser strength and tragic resonance" (Cronin 1974, pp. 100-1). John Unterecker sums up the impact of Ulysses on Crane:

It [Ulysses] was, he felt, a book of "marvellous oaths and blasphemies," of "sharp beauty," of "sensitivity." And yet its author, he was told by both Munson and Anderson, rarely talked about books ("I like him for that," Crane wrote Underwood), sometimes got drunk, dressed "quietly and neatly," was "very quiet in manner," and, as Crane hoped to be, was "steeped in the Elizabethans, his early love." Like Crane, also, Joyce was "still very poor." But primarily, above and beyond personality and the circumstances of life, Joyce, who in a chaotic world ended his great book with a triumphant Yes, was for Crane a symbol of what the modern artist could and should be: a man who could present the grimness of reality as something shot through with significant light. "He is," Crane said, "the one above all others I should like to talk to." Munson, who had talked to Joyce, seemed, so far as Crane was concerned, to have chatted with God. (Unterecker 1969, p. 246)

In a review of L. S. Dembo's Hart Crane's Sanskrit Charge, Unterecker states that "L. S. Dembo's is the fullest and, in many ways, the best study that has yet been made of Hart Crane's The Bridge" (Unterecker 1961, p. 345). Unterecker, nonetheless, argues that Dembo's approach "threatens to throw the entire work just slightly out of focus" by turning "a sensuous poem into the story of a young man's pursuit of 'the Absolute'" (Unterecker 1961, pp. 346-7). Unterecker then suggests that

the most direct influence [on Crane] were perhaps craftsmen of his own time rather than the nineteenth-century

philosophers. One is reminded, for instance, of the way Joyce puts together Ulysses (a single day's event--dawn to dawn--in a single city act as a commentary on a nation's history; each section's style is appropriate to its principal action; an affirmation arises in spite of, and in part because of, omnipresent corruption). (Unterecker 1961, p. 347)

In a subsequent study ("The Architecture of The Bridge"), Unterecker further elaborates on the Joycean influence on Crane. The Bridge, Unterecker believes, is constructed like Moby Dick, The Waste Land, and Ulysses (see "The Architecture of The Bridge," p. 6). He goes on to point out Crane's indebtedness to Joyce in The Bridge:

The "plot" of the poem [The Bridge], for example, sounds almost like a digest of Joyce's Ulysses. A young man awakens in the early dawn, gazes out over harbor and city, spends a day wandering through the streets of his metropolis, gradually becoming involved in its corruption, and, after agonizing disillusionment and drunkenness--a kind of spiritual descent to Hades--comes, at the very end of the poem, in the pre-dawn hours of the next day, to an illuminating vision of order in which he can accept himself and his world. (Unterecker 1962, p. 8)

Also, like Stephen and Bloom, the young man in The Bridge wanders "in his city, its sights and sounds trigger memories both of his own youth and of the youth of his country, its history and its mythology." "Like Joyce's young man," Unterecker observes, "Crane's young man is also concerned with the writers and artists who have significantly shaped his world" (Unterecker 1962, p. 8).

Unterecker concludes that in The Bridge both "plot and a good deal of the organization seem to hint of a careful reading of



Joyce,' and, with the authority of a biographer, he recounts "that Crane not only read Ulysses but that he even went so far as to prepare a gloss of parts of it, a gloss which he copied out with passages from the text for a friend who had not yet seen a copy" (Unterecker 1962, p. 8).

In an interview with Karl T. Piculin, John Unterecker reiterates his conviction that there is a palpable Joycean influence in The Bridge. To the question whether The Bridge can be considered an "American Epic," Unterecker answers that Crane's model for The Bridge was Ulysses--another modern epic. He then proceeds to explain:

That is, Ulysses gave him [Crane] an image of the way he could put together a big structure out of stylistically incompatible elements. If you look at Ulysses, what you've got is a book in which there are more than a dozen different styles. Each section of Ulysses is deliberately written in a stylistically different manner. And the tour de force of Ulysses is that they add up to a single book, because the characters link them. I think what Crane did was to write a book that was stylistically in a great many modes and link the units by a series of interrelated images. Instead of plot linkage or character linkage, his linkage was time--the coherence of time--and these interconnecting images. The idea of a mythic structure for America is parallel, I think, to what Joyce was doing in Ulysses. (Piculin 1982, p. 186)

As we shall see in the course of the study, many of Crane's recent critics (such as Sherman Paul, R. W. B. Lewis, and Herbert Leibowitz) point out some Joycean traits in certain poems in White Buildings; it is only John Unterecker, Crane's biographer, who speaks with any consistency of the possibility of a pervasive Joycean influence on Crane, and only with reference to The Bridge. However, if we take into consideration that Crane's knowledge of Joyce's work came early

in his life, that he read A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses while he was composing most of the poems that make up White Buildings, that White Buildings was written and published before the writing of The Bridge, and that Crane's copy of Ulysses was mysteriously removed from his home in Cleveland in the autumn of 1923 (thus interrupting his contact with Joyce's banned masterpiece) right after The Bridge was conceived, we may justifiably conclude that White Buildings evinces more of Joyce's influence than The Bridge.

This leads us to the third question: Why White Buildings and not The Bridge? Taken by the length of the poem, by Crane's declared intention before the publication of The Bridge that he was writing an epic (Letters, p. 309), "a new cultural synthesis of values in terms of our America" (Letters 1965, p. 223), and by his plan to use a mythical parallel in The Bridge, a parallel "showing the continuous and living evidence of the past in the inmost vital substance of the present" (Letters 1965, p. 305), scholars like Unterecker were led to believe that The Bridge might be the most conspicuous example of Joyce's influence on Crane. However, the truth of the matter is that while Crane was getting closer to Joyce in form--composing an epic poem (or what he hoped to be an epic poem) with an ambitious scope and a mythical parallel, thus shifting from the lyrical to the epical--he was moving further from Joyce aesthetically and technically.

Unterecker himself does not exclude the possibility that Crane's claim that The Bridge is an "American Epic" may be an

attempt on his part "to sell his poem, or the idea of his working on the poem, to Otto Kahn" (Piculin, p. 186). Allen Tate tells us that in the summer of 1930, following the publication of The Bridge, Crane had written to him "that he feared his most ambitious work, The Bridge was not quite perfectly 'realized,' that probably his soundest work was in the shorter pieces of White Building, but that his mind, being once committed to the larger undertaking, could never return to the lyrical and more limited form" (Tate, p. 312).

Sherman Paul agrees with Allen Tate and adds that Crane created his own dilemma unintentionally. In December 1925, Crane wrote to Otto Kahn, the philanthropist millionaire, asking him for a loan. "On the basis of a personal interview with Crane . . . Kahn presented him with a thousand dollars and the promise of another thousand for a year's work on his poetry" (Weber, p. 257). "By accepting Kahn's stake," Paul holds, Crane "staked his life on this poem" (Paul, pp. 166-7). To show Kahn that his money was spent on a good cause, Crane wrote him a letter sketching the structure of the entire poem, section by section, before it actually materialized in his mind. Paul claims that

Intense pressure of commitment had prompted the premature account of the poem to Otto Kahn, and this, in turn, had blocked him. "I'm afraid," he told Munson, "that I've so systematically objectivized my theme and its details that the necessary 'subjective lymph and sinew' is frozen." (Paul, p. 168)

This "impasse," coupled with the fact that Crane "worked in fear of failure--in fear of failing to countervail Eliot's 'poetic determinism of our age'" (Paul, p. 168), contrasts sharply with the

relaxed meticulousness with which he worked on the poems in White Buildings, and call into question Crane's claim for The Bridge to be an epic.

Crane's declared intention in The Bridge--"to enunciate a new cultural synthesis of values in terms of our America" (Letters 1965, p. 223)--though it sounds similar to Joyce's intention in Ulysses--"to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (Joyce 1962, p. 253)--is diametrically opposite to it. "The uncreated conscience" of a race is its moral and cultural make-up, its inner psyche, which comprises not only its social and communal traits but also its taboos, fears, and traumas: its darker side, as it were. The "new cultural synthesis," on the other hand, is a deliberate attempt on the part of the artist to present to his "race" a shiringly romantic and sentimental image of itself; an image aimed to reconcile the "race" to the status quo, ignoring the recalcitrant elements that may threaten this mystical reconciliation.

The difference between Joyce's "uncreated conscience" and Crane's "new cultural synthesis" is the difference between subtle art and subtle propaganda. And no one can understand the difference better than the artist himself. Realizing Otto Kahn's interest "in the creation of an indigenous American poetry" (Letters 1965, p. 222), and fully aware of his own financial straits and his desperate need of cash, Crane sought to inject a strong romantically patriotic element in his poem to satisfy Otto Kahn, and thus get the money he badly needed. (It is worthwhile, though perhaps futile, to speculate what The Bridge would have been like had Crane failed to secure the

financial assistance of Otto Kahn.)

At any rate, it is clear that Crane was aware of the romantically patriotic strain he injected in his long poem to satisfy Otto Kahn's patriotic sentiments. Crane writes to Kahn likening himself to Virgil and the Bridge to The Aeneid; "The Aeneid," he writes Kahn in 1927 hoping to keep the cash aflow, "was not written in two years--nor in four, and in more than one sense I feel justified in comparing the historic and cultural scope of The Bridge to this great work" (Letters 1965, p. 309). R. W. B. Lewis maintains that "Crane felt at times, or at least tried to feel, that his subject really was the greatness of his contemporary America, an objectively and historically realized greatness, just as Virgil's subject was the achieved greatness of his contemporary Rome" (Lewis 1967, pp. 222-3). It is needless to say that this kind of patriotic presentation is the polar opposite of what Joyce (and Crane prior to his contact with Otto Kahn) sought to achieve in his artistic output.

To move from the realm of theory to the realm of practice, it becomes evident that Crane's thematic break with Joyce in The Bridge, under the pressure of financial want, is paralleled by a similar break in technique and structure. The structure of Ulysses is centrifugal; Joyce explores the Dublin (and the world) of his day through the minds and actions of his three main characters whose world (a microcosm of the world) emanates from them like the petals from the calyx of a flower. The structure of The Bridge, on the other hand, is centripetal; Crane explores his contemporary America by making its divergent elements (social, cultural, historical, and geographic-

al) converge on the speaker in the poem.

It is also worthwhile to notice that Joyce closely observes the classical unities of place and time and action; Ulysses takes place within less than twenty-four hours and in one city (Dublin), and the action in the novel, being patterned after the Odyssey, maintains consistently its unity and congruity. The Bridge, on the other hand, does not maintain the unities of place and time; we move freely in the vast American Continent from east to west to south, from modern times to Columbus's, to Pocahontas's, to the nineteenth century, and back again to modern times. As for the action, were it not for the intermittent appearance of the young man (a loose link) there would be no unity at all except perhaps for the fact that The Bridge takes place in, and is about, America.

There is no narrative plot in The Bridge and the use of myth is rather muddled. Instead of using a solid classical myth like the Odyssey, a myth with a large body of archetypal and mystical interpretations, Crane opted for indigenous American folk tales which do not have the stature of myths: Pocahontas, a historical figure who later became a folk-tale figure, and Rip Van Winkle, a fictional character created by Washington Irving, who also became a folk-tale figure. The problem with Pocahontas and Rip Van Winkle is not only that they are not mythical figures in the classical sense, but also that their stories do not cohere and the relation between them in The Bridge does not materialize. Crane, in other words, failed to secure a solid mythical parallel or pattern for his poem.

Alert to the defects in the poem, and the disparity between

Crane's declared intention and his actual achievement, almost all of Crane's early critics (Tate, Winters, Drew, Wilder, Matthiessen, and Weber), who hailed White Buildings as a break-through in modern American poetry, regarded The Bridge as a failure. Tate claims that "The Fifteen parts of The Bridge taken as one poem suffer from the lack of a coherent structure, whether symbolic or narrative" (Tate, p. 315). In his review of The Bridge, Yvor Winters maintains that "The book cannot be called an epic, in spite of its endeavor to create and embody a national myth, because it has no narrative framework and so lacks the formal unity of an epic" (Winters 1930, p. 153). Elizabeth Drew acknowledges the grandeur of Crane's proposed plan in The Bridge but asserts that "he was not equal to the mastery of the thing," that is why "the poem remains a muddle" (Drew, p. 14). Amos Wilder argues that The Bridge is "an attempt to give America a religious epic" which does not quite materialize due to Crane's subjectivity and "escapism" (Wilder, p. 124). Matthiessen says that Crane's attempt to create a great American epic failed because Crane's "awareness of American history was hardly more than of a romantic spectacle" (Matthiessen, p. 38). And Weber imputes the failure of The Bridge to the fact that "Crane made no effort to grasp the meaning of American history" (Weber, p. 323).

For over twenty years the attitude of Crane's critics toward The Bridge remained unchanged; they regarded it as a failure, sometimes "magnificent" but still a failure. In the late fifties there occurred a change of critical attitudes toward The Bridge with the emergence of new critics and scholars who, unlike the earlier

critics, did not know Crane personally and, consequently, were less susceptible to the circumstances of Crane's life and the interaction of those circumstances with his literary output. Starting with L. S. Dembo's Hart Crane's Sanskrit Charge: A Study of "The Bridge" (1960), book-length studies--such as Richard Sugg's Hart Crane's "The Bridge": A Study of Its Life (1976) and Helge Nilsen's Hart Crane's Divided Vision: An Analysis of "The Bridge" (1980)--started to emerge, studies intended to refute the charges of failure, obscurity, and fragmentariness levelled against The Bridge; to point out the elements of unity in the poem and the subtlety of its symbolism, and to present a compromise between Crane's declared intentions and the final version of the poem by asserting that "The Bridge is a romantic lyric given epic implications" (Dembo, p. 10).

We are indebted to Crane's new critics for their brilliant explications of The Bridge. Yet the fact remains that these studies of Crane's long poem, subtle as they may be, fail to account for Crane's failure to come up with a solid mythical synthesis as he did in "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," where he subtly amalgamates classical and medieval mythology in his exploration of the modern scene, or in "Lachrymae Christi," where he blends harmoniously mystical Christianity with pagan mythology in an attempt to probe the Hegelian dialectics in Nature; or to explain Crane's romantic patriotism and his sudden fascination with the machine and technology, two interests that do not materialize in White Buildings, or Crane's own feeling that The Bridge "was not quite perfectly 'realized,' that probably his soundest work was in the shorter pieces of



White Buildings" (Tate, p. 312), and his suicide less than two years afterwards.

The truth of the matter is that under the pressure of his need for money he committed himself to an approach to his "epic" which was more patriotic and transcendental and platonic than the Crane of White Buildings would tolerate--he became a Faustus compromising his poetic identity and integrity for mammon. However, before Crane became a Faustus he was an Icarus. In an insightful remark in his article "Hart Crane and Poetry," Allen Grossman contends that Crane "spoke from the point of view not of the Daedalian survivor but of the Icarian over-reacher, spoke not as the survivor in retrospect but as the mariner in course of the unsurvivable voyage" (Grossman, p. 224). Crane is certainly an Icarus whose Daedalian father is Stephen Dedalus, James Joyce, "the deliberate artificer." From his first acquaintance with Joyce's work (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man) Crane seems to have identified with Joyce and to have followed his lead--identifying him as a spiritual father-figure, much like Stephen identifies with Bloom in Ulysses.

This spiritual paternity between Joyce and Crane, as we shall see in a following chapter, is due in large part to an affinity of temperament between the two artists. Dealing with "The Moth That God Made Blind," Paul claims that it is "an Icarian fable that Crane wrote in his sixteenth year" and, realizing that the poem was written before the publication of Joyce's Portrait, Paul writes: "Unless the dating is wrong, the poem was not influenced by Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), a novel Crane later

praised" (Paul, p. 10).

This Joycean influence, based in the first place on an affinity of artistic temperament, started from the unknown date of Crane's first reading of Joyce and it lasted from that date through late December 1925 when he received Otto Kahn's \$1000 grant which committed him to a course of action in his amorphous and newly conceived poem (The Bridge), a course of action that was incompatible with his temperament and his previous poetic achievement in White Buildings, to say the least. The fruit of these Joyce-influenced (and truly Cranesque) years is to be found in White Buildings, Crane's first published collection of poems, which Tate warns us against taking for "early experimental writing" (Tate, p. 313), and which Alfred Hanley calls "the major theme of Crane's entire poetic work" (Hanley, p. 2).

This truly Cranesque, and Joyce-inspired, output continues uninterrupted until Crane received Otto Kahn's \$1000 grant, whereupon two dominant but mutually exclusive urges began to tear Crane apart: a utilitarian urge to become the spokesman of the machine age (to put his poetic talent to practical use), and a suicidal urge to explore the absolute, not as it manifests itself in "the now, and here," but per se, as it may exist in the beyond. Though indigenous to Crane's nature, both urges did not (until the writing of The Bridge) manifest themselves with any strength in White Buildings, the fruit of the most productive and artistic stage of Crane's career, midway between his early experimental poems, on the one hand, and The Bridge and Key West poems on the other. This produc-

tive, midway stage falls neatly in between the parentheses of "The Moth That God Made Blind," an early poem that "tells us of the young poet's 'world' and his attempt to understand and come to terms with it" (Paul, pp. 10-11), and "The Broken Tower," Crane's last poem composed only a few weeks before his death in 1932, which "dramatizes, once and for all in our time, the pathetic gesture of a man dying into his work," a poem that "renders not apocalypse but the failure of vision" (Riddel, p. 473). It is this fecund, essentially Cranesque, and Joyce-inspired stage of Crane's career that this study is meant to explore.

The present dissertation is an attempt to study the influence of James Joyce on Hart Crane, and as such, it is both a study of the Joycean influence and a close reading of the poems in White Buildings. In the course of this study it will become clear that the presence of Joyce and his ideas (his influence, as it were) falls under three main categories: first, affinities of temperament between Joyce and Crane; second, unconscious influences wherein Crane's close reading of the Portrait and Ulysses seems to bring about minor but significant Joycean elements, and, third, direct and conscious influences in which Crane takes a theme from Joyce and deals with it in his own way as in "Lachrymae Christi," "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," and "Voyages."

The importance of the present study lies in the fact that it not only seeks to explore the poetry of Hart Crane in terms of his close reading of Joyce---thus shedding a new light on Crane's art and, to a certain extent, undermining some misconceptions about him,

misconceptions that result from overemphasizing his romanticism, misjudging the priority of influences on him, or overstressing the importance of his homosexuality in his poetic output--but also to provide answers to questions about certain words, lines, and ideas which baffled many critics in their explications of the poems of White Buildings.

Chapter II in the dissertation explores the main influences on Crane, the reasons for his falling under them and for eventually rejecting them, the durability of Joyce's influence, and the reasons behind it. Chapter III deals with the parallels and similarities between the careers and oeuvres of Joyce and Crane. Chapter IV maps out the Joycean influences on Crane and lays the theoretical grounds for the study. Chapter V explores the influence of Joyce's aesthetics (as stated in the Portrait and Ulysses) on Crane's "aesthetic" poems in White Buildings--the poems that deal with artistic questions. Chapter VI traces some of Joyce's ontological, philosophical, and religious themes in the poems which deal with the nature of being. Chapters VII and VIII study the impact of Joyce's conception of Mother Nature (as personified in Molly Bloom) on Crane's "Voyages" and "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen."

In the course of the study it will become clear that the metaphor in the title (Joyce as Dedalus and Crane as Icarus) is more than rhetorical; it approximates adequately and accurately the master-disciple, father-son relation (in the Ulyssean sense) between Joyce and Crane. (Joyce identifies himself with Dedalus in the Portrait, and Crane identifies himself with an Icarian moth in "The

Moth That God Made Blind.") Under the influence of Joyce, Crane's melancholic nature, his self-destructive urge, and his overpowering depression seemed to subside, giving way to optimism and equanimity. In White Buildings Crane-Icarus seemed to be on his self-liberating flight inspired by his father Dedalus-Joyce; he seemed to be flying side by side with his mentor. However, as Crane progressed toward The Bridge, his commitment to Otto Kahn, his exultation in his poetic powers (his wings), and his fascination with the absolute (the sun) seemed to impel him higher toward the burning disc. Like Icarus, who fell to his death and drowned in the sea, Crane drowned himself in the Caribbean. And while Crane in committing suicide seemed to be heedless of the Joycean influence on him, his choice of death by water seemed to be heedful of one of Joyce's ideas in Ulysses: "Seadeath, mildest of all deaths known to man. Old Father Ocean" (Joyce 1961, p. 50).

## CHAPTER II

### THE QUESTION OF INFLUENCE

The problem of accurately documenting the different influences that helped shape Crane's poetic sensibility, aesthetic theory, and artistic personality is augmented by his lack of formal education--many critics uphold the notion that Crane was self-educated and consequently imply the difficulty of pinning down exact influences--the scarcity of his critical writings (and their relative ambiguity), the unavailability of many of the books he owned, the disagreement among his friends as to his preferences and allegiances, and, of course, his premature death.

When critics and scholars started to deal with the question of literary influences on Crane, they seemed to turn to all sources but the most significant of all--James Joyce. They studied the influence upon Crane of as divergent sources as Plato, Friedrich Nietzsche, P. D. Ouspensky, Mary Baker Eddy, Arthur Rimbaud, Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot, all of whom exerted some form of influence upon Crane, yet none with the same strength as Joyce.

As for Plato, Crane read him early in his life and was impressed with his Theory of Forms, his belief in the divine madness of poets, and his ideas on the possibility of progression from earthly to absolute beauty. But in spite of Crane's great admiration

for Plato's ideas, he was also aware of his serious limitations, which are also the limitations of philosophy in general. Being primarily philosophical, Plato's ideas depend on their intrinsic logic for truth, on their "harmonious relationship to each other in the context of his organization of them." The poet, on the other hand, deals with experience and cannot depend for truth merely on the inner harmony of congruous philosophical ideas away from human experience. Unlike philosophy, poetry is "the concrete 'evidence' of the experience of a recognition ('knowledge' if you like)"; it is capable of providing "a ratio of fact and experience, and in this sense it is both perception and thing perceived." Plato banished poets from his utopia because "their reorganizations of chaos on basis [sic] perhaps divergent from his own threatened the logic of 'his' system, itself founded on assumptions that demanded the very defense of poetic construction which he was fortunately able to provide" (Letters 1965, pp. 237-240).

Crane read and was influenced by Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy when he was in his late teens. "Crane's faith in the myth, his desire to transmute music into his poetry, his disregard for cause-and-effect logic, his affirmation of life's joy coupled with an affirmation of suffering and tragedy, his belief in metaphysical inquiry as the artist's task" (Weber, p. 18) may be directly traced back to Nietzsche. He also wrote an article, entitled "The Case Against Nietzsche," which was published in The Pagan and in it he defended the German philosopher against the accusation that his philosophy was directly responsible for the rise of Prussianism and

German militarism. "Nietzsche, Zeppelins, and poisoned-gas," Crane writes, "go ill together" (Crane 1966, pp. 197-8). But we should not exaggerate Nietzsche's influence on Crane; apart from The Birth of Tragedy and a brief quotation from Human-All-Too-Human, there is very little evidence, Weber tells us, that "Crane actually read any of Nietzsche's other works" (Weber, p. 19). Nietzsche's ideas were a literary commonplace in America in the twenties, his ideas were in fashion, in the air, and without reading his books, many people were aware of them through magazines, periodicals, and books written on them and their originator by followers and enthusiasts.

Crane read P. D. Ouspensky's book, Tertium Organum, in its English version in 1921 and was so enthusiastic about the book that he urged all his friends to read it. In his book Tertium organum (which is a peculiar blend of philosophy, theosophy, and popular science), Ouspensky points out the inherent inadequacy of empirical knowledge to reveal to us the ultimate realities (the noumenal world) behind and beyond natural phenomena, and the need to turn to mysticism and Neo-Platonism in order to approach that transcendental realm wherein all opposites are reconciled and time is eternal. What appealed to Crane the most in Ouspensky was his consecration of poetry as an adequate tool of mystical knowledge (superior, in its efficacy and divinity, to both science and philosophy) and his predication as to the emergence of a new race of supermen heralded by poets. Ouspensky's book may have left an imprint on Crane's mind, but it was more the imagery than the argument of the book that left a lasting effect. (Terms such as "the higher consciousness" which



Crane mentions in his letter to Gorham Munson in reference to his experience in the dentist's chair is one example of Crane's borrowings from Ouspensky.) "Ultimately, Crane abandoned Ouspensky's 'philosophy,' as, indeed, he abandoned every other formal system that he gave brief allegiance to" (Unterecker 1969, p. 249).

As early as 1916, Crane read Mary Baker Eddy's Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, whose influence was something of a family affair: both his mother and grandmother were ardent advocates of Christian Science. Monroe K. Spears notes that

His training in this faith, with the influence and example of the two people to whom he was closest, had a lasting effect on him. Born out of the union of American transcendentalism and American hypochondria, Christian Science holds that states of consciousness are the only reality, that matter is unreal, that all causation is mental and apparent evil the result of erring belief. Crane's predisposition to optimism and irrationalism and his later pseudo-mystical strivings for the "higher consciousness" undoubtedly owe much to this early background. (Spears 1965, pp. 8-9)

Before long Crane turned his back on Christian Science, admitting its efficacy as far as healing mental and psychological disorders was concerned; "it is only the total denial of the animal and organic world which I cannot swallow" (Letters 1965, p. 16).

It was through Ezra Pound's articles in The Little Review, in 1918, that Crane first learned about Arthur Rimbaud. Crane did not know French, and it was not until J. Sibley Watson's translations from Rimbaud's Une Saison en Enfer and Les Illuminations were published in three successive issues of The Dial, during the summer of 1920, that Crane's ideas about Rimbaud and his work assumed clear

dimensions. In 1924, Edgell Rickword published his study, entitled Rimbaud, which helped further his knowledge of Rimbaud in whom he was already greatly interested. Two points made by Rickword in his book may have had a lasting effect on Crane's mind: "One of them may have started, or at the very least confirmed, a belief in Crane that he was one of those poets who Rimbaud had predicted would arise after him to carry on the work he had begun. . . . The second point made by Rickword was an approving reflection on Rimbaud's disregard for logic in his letter of the seer" (Weber, p. 148). However strong Rimbaud's influence upon Crane might have been, it was substantially weakened by Crane's lack of knowledge of French; and whatever influence there was, was filtered through the critical appraisals of Ezra Pound, J. Sibley Watson, and Edgell Rickword.

Whitman's importance in Crane's career was paramount: it was not only that Crane identified with Whitman's alleged homosexuality, his free spirit, his pantheism, his optimism, his mysticism, but also because he marked the beginning of Americanism in American poetry and symbolized a usable American literary tradition and a point of reference with which the present could be judged and evaluated. "Whitman was to Crane what Virgil was to Dante" (Hazo, p. 99); he was his seer and guide in his exploration of the spectacular maze of twentieth-century America in The Bridge. In a letter, dated July 13, 1930, Crane defends Whitman against Allen Tate:

But since you and I hold such divergent prejudices regarding the value of the materials and events that W. [Whitman] responded to, and especially as you, like so many others, never seem to have read his Democratic Vistas and other of his statements sharply decrying the materialism, industrialism, etc., of which you name him the

guilty and hysterical spokesman, there isn't much use in my tabulating the qualified, yet persistent reasons I have for my admiration of him, and my allegiance to the positive and universal tendencies implicit in nearly all his best work. (Letters 1965, pp. 261-2)

But the main problem with Whitman's influence on Crane is that, unlike Crane, Whitman lived and wrote during the formative years of the United States, an era that--despite such setbacks as the Civil War--was teeming with patriotism, optimism, and faith in God and the future. The America Crane knew was past those early years, a country with definite borders and a dogmatic belief in progress, on its way to becoming a world power aided by a huge industrial and economic base, a tremendous military power, and a host of social problems and cultural ailments that usually accompany fast progress--it was a country with limitless resources and a poor sense of identity. It was the America that repelled an entire generation of its finest writers such as Henry Adams, Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the Fugitives. About that America, Crane writes to Waldo Frank:

If only America were half as worthy today to be spoken of as Whitman spoke of it fifty years ago there might be something for me to say--not that Whitman received or required any tangible proof of his intimations, but that time has shown how increasingly lonely and ineffectual his confidence stands. (Letters 1965, pp. 261-2)

It is in views like this that we see where, in Crane's mind, Whitman's influence ends and Eliot's and Pound's starts, where we sense Crane's awareness of the inadequacy of the optimistic attitude

of the nineteenth century in dealing with the contemporary scene and the need for the skeptical attitude of the twentieth, of which Eliot and Pound are renowned masters. Pound's influence on Crane started as early as 1917, and Eliot's around 1918 or 1919. "Both as critics and as poets, they form his taste, stimulate and provoke him, and teach him the craft of poetry. It is through them that he discovers the Elizabethans and Metaphysicals . . . Dante . . . and most overwhelmingly the French poets from Baudelaire on" (Spears, p. 11). In a letter to Allen Tate (June 12, 1922), Crane candidly admits Eliot's strong influence upon him: "You see it is such a fearful temptation to imitate him [Eliot] that at times I have been almost distracted" (Letters 1965, p. 90). But as Eliot started to turn from *Prufrock* to the *Fisher King* and *Tiresias*, and as his tone became more conservative, Anglican, and condemnatory, his grip on Crane began to loosen, as easily demonstrable from Crane's letters. Around 1922-- after the publication of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* and his thorough, and comparative, reading of both works--Crane had a change of heart and direction. In a letter to Gorham Munson (January 5, 1923), Crane sums up his attitude toward Eliot and his intention to break loose from the grip of his influence:

There is no one writing in English who can command so much respect, to my mind, as Eliot. However, I take Eliot as a point of departure toward an almost complete reverse of direction. His pessimism is amply justified, in his own case. But I would apply as much of his erudition and technique as I can absorb and assemble toward a more positive, or (if [I] must put it so in a sceptical age) ecstatic goal. . . . I feel that Eliot ignores certain spiritual events and possibilities as real and powerful now as, say, in the time of Blake. Certainly the man has dug the ground and buried hope as deep and direfully as it can ever be done. (Letters

1965, pp. 114-5)

Many critics failed to see the connection between Crane's taking Eliot as a "point of departure" and his turning to Joyce for inspiration and guidance. But before we get into the reasons that prompted this change of direction in Crane's career and the effect it had on his subsequent output, let us first examine one additional influence.

The exact date of Crane's first reading of any of Joyce's works is not known. From his letters and articles, however, we may assume that it must have taken place some time between 1916 and 1918; it could have been in 1916 (the year A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man was first published), or in 1917 (his first acquaintance with Pound), or in 1918 when he wrote his friend William Wright a letter that, not long afterwards, was published in the July issue of The Little Review under the caption "Joyce and Ethics," wherein he defends Joyce against the uninformed attacks of a critic who, in the previous issue of the magazine, lumped Joyce together with Wilde, Swinburne, and Baudelaire and classified them as decadent writers. Crane starts his letter by ranking Swinburne and Wilde as inferior to Baudelaire and Joyce whom he puts on equal footing on the grounds that "the principal eccentricity evinced by both is a penetration into life common to only the greatest." He then proceeds to point out that Baudelaire is inferior to Joyce whom he defends against his detractors:

The most nauseating complaint against his work is that of immorality and obscenity. The character of Stephen

Dedalus is all too good for this world. It takes a little experience,--a few reactions on his part to understand it, and could this have been accomplished in a detached hermitage, high above, he would no doubt have preferred that residence. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, aside from Dante, is spiritually the most inspiring book I have ever read. It is Bunyan raised to art, and then raised to the ninth heaven. (Crane 1966, pp. 199-200)

Crane's letters tell a very interesting story about his knowledge of Joyce's later work. He read some parts of Ulysses when it was published in installments in The Little Review prior to its publication, in book form, in Paris in 1922. Ulysses was banned in England and the United States, and the only way to obtain a copy was to have it smuggled from France. On July 14, 1921, Crane wrote a letter to Gorham Munson (who was living in Paris at the time) asking him to smuggle him a copy of Ulysses, which was scheduled for publication in the fall, and telling him that he had already subscribed for a copy (Letters 1965, p. 62). A few months later, he wrote another letter to Munson reminding him of his previous request: "The Ulysses situation is terrible to think on. I shall be eternally grateful to you if you can manage to smuggle my already-subscribed-for copy home with you. If this will in any chance be possible, please let me send you the cash for purchase, etc., at the proper time. I 'must' have this book!" (Letters 1965, pp. 72-72).

On July 26, 1922, Crane finally had his long-awaited copy of Ulysses when Munson came back to the United States for a two-week vacation. "I feel like shouting EUREKA!" (Letters 1965, p. 94), Crane writes to a friend the day after, and over the next few months

an effusive "flow of powerful feelings" continues uninterrupted in his letters to his friends. On August 7, 1922, he writes Munson: "Joyce is being savoured slowly--with steady pleasure" (Letters 1965, p. 96). A week later he writes Charmion Wiegand: "Since Munson brought me my copy of Ulysses I have been having high times. A book that in many ways surpasses anything I have ever read" (Letters 1965, p. 20).

Unterecker, who spent over ten years collecting material for his monumental biography, has plenty to say about Crane's knowledge of Joyce's work. Stanley Patno, a friend and an employer of Crane, tells Unterecker that Crane "was wild about Joyce. In fact, he persuaded me to buy a blue-paper-cover 1922 Ulysses through Laukhuff" (Unterecker 1969, p. 254). Unterecker tells us that Crane regarded Joyce as "the supreme genius of twentieth-century literature" (Unterecker 1969, p. 222), that he used to study Ulysses "as if he were in fact studying a sacred book," and that, having finished reading it, to him it became "a kind of Bible" (Unterecker 1969, p. 246). Unterecker also tells us that for a while Crane "toyed with an article on Joyce, but he felt that his lack of formal academic training incapacitated him for the broad historical criticism that a Joyce piece might demand" (Unterecker 1969, p. 210). As a matter of fact, nothing shows Crane's great interest in Joyce and his work more than his hysterical rage when he found out, in the summer of 1923, that his Ulysses copy had been "mysteriously removed" from his mother's house in Cleveland. "Hart went wild with indignation. Convinced that a friend had stolen the book, he managed, before he was

through, to alienate half his Cleveland friends and persuade the other half that they had in their midst a 'crooked,' 'dishonest,' 'unbalanced,' 'nutty,' 'abominable snake'" (Unterecker 1969, p. 312).

Crane's turning from Eliot to Joyce for influence and guidance is documented in the letters he wrote to his friends in 1922 following his reading of Ulysses and The Waste Land. "What do you think of Eliot's The Wasteland [sic]?" he writes Gorham Munson on November 20. "I was rather disappointed. It was good, of course, but so damned dead. Neither does it, in my opinion, add anything important to Eliot's achievement" (Letters 1965, p. 105). On the other hand, he writes to a friend about Ulysses on July 27: "You will pardon my strength of opinion on the thing [Ulysses], but it appears to me easily the epic of the age. . . . The sharp beauty and sensitivity of the thing! The matchless details!" (Letters 1965, p. 94). In a letter to Gorham Munson (November 26, 1921) he writes: "I have come to the stage now where I want to carefully choose my most congenial influences and, in a way, 'cultivate' their influence" (Letters 1965, p. 71).

Crane's turning from Eliot to Joyce for influence has much to do with Eliot's poetic vision and Crane's awareness of both its negative psychological impact on him personally, and the bleak pessimism of its cultural implications. On the personal level, Crane was not the optimist his poems portray: he often experienced periods of melancholia and feelings of betrayal, abandonment, and paranoia. He lacked all sense of order in, and control over, his life and failed to maintain a wholesome equilibrium between the contradictory ele-



ments in his life and inner nature--a fact that contributed to an overwhelming feeling of helplessness that haunted him all his life, except for the times he spent writing poetry. To him, the act of composition was the only part of his life he could fully control and in which he could play God, reconcile opposites, create order out of chaos, and engender a vision of absolute beauty from earthly images. Poetry, in short, was the main sustenance in Crane's unhappy and doomed life (Horton, *passim*). It stands to reason that Crane, with his kind of psychological make-up, would be temperamentally inclined toward Eliot's brand of poetry ("the poetry of negation," as he calls it), but if he was to use poetry for emotional sustenance, he had to turn to a more positive kind of poetry. In a letter to Allen Tate (May 16, 1922), Crane writes: "The poetry of negation is beautiful--alas, too dangerously so for one of my mind. But I am trying to break away from it" (Letters 1965, p. 89). And in another letter to Charlotte Rychtarik (September 23, 1923), he writes: "I want to keep saying 'YES' to everything and never be beaten a moment, and I shall, of course, never be really beaten" (Letters 1965, p. 148). It is not difficult to identify Eliot with "the poetry of negation," and Joyce (whose Ulysses ends with Molly Bloom's positive and eternal "Yes" to all of life) with "saying 'YES' to everything." Brom Weber argues that in Crane's "obsession with death, literally a wish for death, is to be found the secret of his disagreement with Eliot, who overtly welcomed death in his poetry, as well as Crane's almost frenzied efforts to convince himself and others that he had a deep and abiding pleasure in life, that he was

not pessimistic and self-destructive" (Weber, p. 211).

Unlike Eliot, whose pessimistic vision of contemporary life seems to touch a soft spot in Crane's fragile psychological make-up, Joyce and his works seem to provide him with emotional sustenance even in the most mundane way. After his return to Cleveland in May of 1918, Weber tells us, it was the inspiration of Joyce's ideas in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man that morally supported Crane as he performed his monotonous job on an assembly line in the munition factory where he worked. "At first he undoubtedly fancied himself as another young Joycean artist enmeshed in a cycle of social and personal relationships conspiring to thwart his artistic development" (Weber, p. 26). Weber also tells us that the prose Crane wrote during that period (the review of Ridge and Bodenheim) smacks of the influence of the Portrait.

In a very personal way, Eliot and his poetry seemed to objectify in Crane's mind all the inner, negative impulses he was trying to suppress and overcome. Moreover, Eliot's aloofness, snobbishness, bookishness, and erudition seemed to sound an unhappy note in Crane's mind (perhaps by reminding him of his lack of academic training), and to turn him, unconsciously in Crane's mind, into an enemy to be challenged, not a master to be followed. "I have been facing him for four years," Crane writes about Eliot to Allen Tate in the summer of 1922, "and while I haven't discovered a weak spot yet in his armour, I flatter myself a little lately that I have discovered a safe tangent to strike which, if I can possibly explain the position,-- goes through him toward a 'different goal'" (Letters 1965, p. 90).

Joyce, on the other hand, seemed to stand for what Crane wanted to become and achieve as an artist--a figure to identify with, so to speak. He was told by Forham Munson and Sherwood Anderson that Joyce

. . . rarely talked about books ("I like him for that," Crane wrote Underwood), sometimes got drunk, dressed "quietly and neatly," was "steeped in the Elizabethans, his early love." Like Crane, also, Joyce was "still very poor. . . . He is," Crane said, "the one above all others I should like to talk to." Munson, who talked to Joyce, seemed, so far as Crane was concerned, to have chatted with God. (Unterecker 1969, p. 246)

It is self-evident that Crane's reasons for admiring and identifying with Joyce are the same reasons for renouncing and breaking with Eliot.

Crane's awareness of the cultural pessimism of Eliot's poetic vision is just as influential in his shift from Eliot to Joyce for influence as his awareness of its psychological impact on him personally. It was not hard for Crane, having read thoroughly both Eliot and Joyce, to notice that they were as different as opposites are. Eliot's progress, as man and artist, was toward Catholicism, conservatism, conformity, and antiquity; Joyce's progress was in the opposite direction: toward humanism, liberalism, non-conformity, and contemporaneity. Both authors were faced with the sense of frustration and disillusionment that dominated the Western world after the tragedy of World War I, and both turned to the past in order to understand the chaos of the modern scene. But while Eliot used the past to condemn the present, Joyce used the past to illuminate the present and shed retrospectively a modern light on the past.

There is very little doubt that Eliot's technique in The Waste

Land was inspired by Joyce's in Ulysses. In his article "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," Eliot writes, "In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him" (Eliot 1970, p. 270). And pursue it Eliot did in The Waste Land. But the problem with Eliot's interpretation of Joyce's method--and his subsequent application of it in The Waste Land--is that it does not go far enough. In explaining why the modern writer must use Joyce's method, Eliot writes: "It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Eliot 1970, p. 270). That may very well be, but it is only half the truth: Eliot here seems to be expounding his adaptation of Joyce's method not Joyce's method per se, as it stands in Ulysses. When Eliot describes contemporary history as "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy," he seems to be giving us a justification for his own Christian beliefs rather than a critical account of a complex work of art. There is no doubt as to the legitimacy of Eliot's reading of Joyce's work, but it is only one among many the book invites and allows for.

It was in accordance with his limited understanding of the function of the Homeric parallel in Ulysses that Eliot employed mythology in The Waste Land. Taking it for granted that Joyce's use of the Odyssey as an archetypal model for his novel was for the purpose of condemning the contemporary scene by juxtaposing it to a heroic and idyllic past, Eliot seemed to have taken it upon himself to

create a poetic counterpart to Ulysses. He justified his practice on the grounds that an imitating Joyce's method he would not be an imitator "any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations" (Eliot 1970, p. 270).

But Joyce's purpose in modelling his novel after the Oydssey is far more complex than Eliot's simplistic understanding of it. On the one hand, the Homeric parallel serves a structural function that was determined by Joyce's ambition to write the ultimate Symbolist-Naturalistic novel. To achieve maximum realism, Joyce set out to reproduce reality instead of simply "imitate" it like traditional realists. The main methods he employed to create that effect were to dispense with customary narrative techniques, to present his characters directly through their interior monologues, to scatter a vast amount of disparate and ostensibly irrelevant materials that flow in the book in a fashion very close to that in which life projects itself on human sensibility, to discard logic as a means of unifying these materials, and in its stead, use the less palpable Homeric parallel. It was for Joyce a "scaffolding" or, to quote A. Walton Litz, "a part of the rigid discipline he had to undergo in order to control his disparate material" (Litz, pp. 39-40).

Very few critics agree with Eliot's interpretation of the function of the Homeric correspondence in Ulysses. Even such critics as S. L. Goldberg, who does not exclude the possibility that the parallel may imply a discrepancy between a "noble ideal and sordid Reality," affirms that "it draws our attention to the recurrences

and continuities of human experience" (Goldberg 1961, p. 151). Most of the Joycean scholars, however, agree with David Daiches that

There is here [Ulysses] no satirical contrast between the heroic past and the insignificant present; the two are not contrasted but identified. Ulysses the Greek wanderer is not set against Bloom the modern advertisement canvasser, for Ulysses is Bloom: so--to paraphrase Donne--to one neutral thing both heroes fit. (Daiches, p. 113)

The tremendous body of Joycean scholarship accessible to us nowadays was not available to Eliot and Crane, but while Eliot failed to see the complex function of the Homeric parallel, Crane managed, with a remarkable, critical insight, to comprehend the multiple functions of the Homeric parallel and the philosophical overtones implicit in it and in the work as a whole. And while we do not have record of anything written by Crane to that effect, the very fact that he so liked Ulysses and denounced The Waste Land--at a time when many people thought of both works, being both ambiguous and erudite, written by two exiles belonging to the same generation, and teeming with mythology and classical references, as kindred works--makes it likely that Crane was fully aware of the fundamental differences between the two works. It was that awareness that consequently led Crane to take Eliot as a point of departure toward "other positions and 'pastures new'" (Letters 1965, p. 90), and to take Joyce as "a symbol of what the modern artist could and should be: a man who could present the grimness of reality as something shot through with significant light" (Unterecker 1969, p. 246).

But Crane's shift from Eliot to Joyce had deeper, artistic and

philosophical reasons than Joyce's positive affirmation of contemporary life and his optimistic vision. R. W. B. Lewis tells us that "Crane had at his poetic disposal no sort of systematic interpretation of the universe, neither an inherited one nor (like Blake's) a privately assembled one" (Lewis 1967, p. 26). It was Joyce, however, who provided him not only with a systematic interpretation of the universe, but also with a very subtle aesthetic theory as I shall try to show in Chapters V and VI of the present study.

CHAPTER III  
PARALLELS AND INFLUENCES

Anyone familiar with the biographies and careers of both James Joyce and Hart Crane is likely to encounter a sizable number of documentable influences as well as parallels and coincidences that sometimes seem to be merely hard-to-prove Joycean influences. (One of the interesting coincidences in the careers of Joyce and Crane is that both writers died within two years of finishing their last major work: Joyce in 1941 after the publication of Finnegans Wake in 1939, and Crane in 1932 after the publication of The Bridge in 1930. Their physical existences somehow seemed to be bound up with their artistic creativity; when the latter seemed to run out the former followed suit.)

Another resemblance between the lives of Joyce and Crane may be found in the fact that both of them were subject to irreconcilable forces (familial, social, religious, and cultural) pulling them ruthlessly in opposite directions. Early in his life, Joyce was torn between irreconcilable polarities: between his love for his parents and their continual fights that ripped the family apart; between his patriotic feelings for his country and her repudiation of "his loving denunciations," between provincial Ireland and cosmopolitan Europe; between "his own profound moral and religious sense and the



visible manifestations of Irish Catholicism" (Goldberg 1962, p. 3). Likewise, Crane was caught between contending worlds: between his business-oriented father and his sentimental mother; between Garrettsville and New York, the East and the Middle West, America and Europe; between his homosexuality and puritanical morality, the actual and the ideal, the "quotidian," and the "abstract" (Lewis 1967, pp. 4-12). These polarities in the lives of both artists necessitated the paradoxical and inclusive approach to art they became famous for.

Both Joyce and Crane were keenly aware of the hostility of their social milieu toward them as artists. Joyce writes about himself in the third person singular: "His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. . . . He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world" (Joyce 1970, p. 162). Crane, in the same vein, writes to Gorham Munson in 1920: "The modern artist has got to harden himself, and the walls of an ivory tower are too delicate and brittle a coat of mail for substitute" (Letters 1965, p. 31). It is such awareness that prompts the self-protective escapism that characterizes both authors' attitudes toward society. Stephen Dedalus says to his friend Davin in A Portrait: "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (Joyce 1970, p. 203). And Crane seems to echo Joyce in a letter to Gorham Munson: "I am learning, just beginning to learn,--the technique of escape,

and too often yet, I betray myself by some enthusiasm or other" (Letters 1965, p. 35). (Crane wrote this letter on March 6, 1920, approximately four years after the publication of A Portrait.)

Yet the indignation both men show toward their social milieu is not to be mistaken for a resentment of their native cultures. The feelings Joyce and Crane have for their native lands is somewhat ambivalent: a subtle blend of love and disillusionment. Joyce who declares with outspoken rebelliousness: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church" (Joyce 1970, p. 247), writes a few pages later in the same book: "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (Joyce 1970, p. 253). Joyce who, in a sneering tone, calls Ireland "the old sow that eats her farrow" (Joyce 1970, p. 203), says to Frank Budgen about his masterpiece Ulysses: "It is the work of a sceptic, but I don't want it to appear the work of a cynic. I don't want to hurt or offend those of my countrymen who are devoting their lives to a cause they feel to be necessary and just" (Budgen, p. 152).

Crane evinces the same kind of ambivalent attitude toward his own country; in a letter to Gorham Munson he writes:

The "march of events" has brought upon us Cleveland's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with all its fussy and futile inanities and advertisements to make hideous the streets. Blocked and obliged to wait while the initial "pee-rade" went by today, I spent two hours of painful rumination ending with such disgust at America and everything in it, that I more than ever envy you your egress to foreign ports. No place but America could relish and applaud anything so stupid and drab as that parade. (Letters 1965, p. 62)

But at the same time America, according to Crane, is a country with a spiritual uniqueness and moral potential all her own:

I am concerned with the future of America . . . because I feel persuaded that here are destined to be discovered certain as yet undefined spiritual quantities, perhaps a new hierarchy of faith not to be developed so completely elsewhere. And in this process I like to feel myself as a potential factor; certainly I must speak in its terms and what discoveries I may make are situated in its experience. (Crane 1966, p. 219)

Their attitude toward religion is another ambivalent paradox both artists share in common. As young men both Joyce and Crane evinced strong religious sentiments and attachment to some form of Christian faith: Joyce to Roman Catholicism (he even contemplated joining the clergy), and Crane to Christian Science, of which both his mother and grandmother were ardent supporters. And both of them turned against their former religious beliefs as their awareness of their artistic talents began to emerge and develop. As we have seen earlier, Joyce declares his unshakable determination not to serve that in which he no longer believes: his home, his fatherland, and his church. Crane writes to his friend William Wright admitting the psychological efficacy (the secular aspect) of Christian Science but objecting to its religious aspect: "as a religion, there is where I balk," he protests (Letters 1965, p. 16).

But in spite of this ostensible rebellion against their religious backgrounds, neither writer could slough off his religious nature nor fundamentally alter his intrinsically mystical outlook and mode of interpreting the contemporary world--their art became

their religions. Anthony Burgess writes about this aspect in Joyce:

It is typical of Joyce that, creating a religion of art to replace his Catholicism, he has to formulate his aesthetic [in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man] in terms of the schoolmen, and that his very premises come out of Aquinas. . . . In Ulysses he is obsessed with the mystical identity of Father and Son, in Finnegans Wake his only real theme is that of the Resurrection. (Burgess 1965, p. 31)

Professor Tindall argues that, in A Portrait, "during the discussion with Lynch, it becomes clear that for Stephen art has taken the place of religion and that the artist has taken the place of God" (Tindall 1979, p. 19).

In his review of R. W. B. Lewis's The Poetry of Hart Crane, Professor Unterecker describes Crane as "a man of 'visionary' nature who, without the benefit of religious institutions, approached life in a 'religious' mood" (Unterecker 1968, p. 457). (Notice the significance of the date and its possible link with the publication of Ulysses.)

Both writers (in a very self-conscious manner) conceived of their artistic creations in religious terms; as a replacement for religion in the skeptical, godless, and faithless world of the twentieth century. Stanislaus Joyce recalls that his brother said to him one day, as they made their way to Dublin's National Library:

Don't you think, said he reflectively, choosing his words without haste, there is a certain resemblance between the mystery of the Mass and what I am trying to do? I mean that I am trying in my poems to give people some kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own . . . for their mental, moral, and spiritual uplift. (Joyce 1958, pp. 103-104)

Crane shows a similar belief in the religious function of art:

That "truth" which science pursues is radically different from the metaphorical, extra-logical "truth" of the poet. . . . Similarly, poetic prophecy in the case of the seer has nothing to do with factual prediction or with futurity. It is a peculiar type of perception, capable of apprehending some absolute and timeless concept of the imagination with astounding clarity and conviction. (Crane 1966, pp. 262-3)

He goes so far as to claim for poetry not only the mystical and transcendental quality of religion, but also the analytic objectivity of science. According to Crane, both poetry and painting have "analogous tendencies toward abstract statement and metaphysical representation," and both were prompt in their response to the "shifting emphasis of the Western World away from religion toward science. Analysis and discovery, the two basic concerns of science, became conscious objectives of both painter and poet" (Crane 1966, p. 261).

The belief in the religious function of art that both writers shared may account for three basic features in their careers: their dedication to art, their interest in myths, and their belief in the moral and spiritual role of the artist in society.

Both Joyce and Crane showed a life-long dedication to their art, and here the evidence of direct influence seems stronger than that of coincidental parallel. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Crane read A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and thought very highly of it; this fact coupled with the other fact that he read the novel during a very impressionable age (his late teens), and at a time he was desperately looking for a literary figure to

identify with and emulate, seems to lead us to the logical conclusion that Crane's life-long dedication is the direct outcome of his reading of Joyce's Portrait. And if we doubt the fact that Joyce's writings nurtured Crane's artistic impulse and talent, the other fact that Joyce's example (as given in the Portrait) may have encouraged him in his ways can hardly be doubted.

The effect and inspiration of some of Joyce's statements in the Portrait on an impressionable young mind obsessed with art can hardly be exaggerated. Imagine the effect upon adolescent Crane of Joyce's description of the call of art to his soul: "This was the call of life to his soul not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair. . . . An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain" (Joyce 1970, p. 169). Or the awareness of the maturity and freedom art brings about: "His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul" (Joyce 1970, pp. 169-70). Or the sense of predestination and inevitability in Joyce's adolescent awareness of "a prophecy of the end he had been to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being" (Joyce 1970, p. 169).

But more important than his reading of A Portrait (in determining Crane's dedication to art) is the evaluative comparison he may

have drawn between Joyce's life and artistic output, and his awareness of the intimate interplay between them. Joyce's career demonstrates a remarkable fusion between his life and art; "His attitudes to art were an inseparable part of his life" (Goldberg 1962, p. 11), and that may be attributed to the fact that "for Joyce life and art, fact and feeling were never widely separate," and hence his ability to "confuse them deliberately, and therefore meaningfully, in his art" (Goldberg 1962, p. 13). As one critic remarks, Joyce's career can be described as the process of "living his books and writing his life" (Garvin, p. 2). But Joyce's unswerving dedication of his life to his art was far from easy and required immense sacrifices. Stanislaus Joyce writes about his brother:

He was determined to be the same in act as he was in his fixed desire; and, though he progressed from merciless dogmatism to merciful scepticism, he was temperamentally capable of absolute devotion to a mission to which he felt called by the accident of having been born with talent, even if, as he foresaw from the beginning, that mission should make him an outcast. He understood . . . how inexorably an inner necessity can turn son against father and against mother. (Joyce 1958, pp. 108-9)

In a letter he wrote to his mother when he was twenty-four, Crane evinces his devotion to art, a devotion that is reminiscent of Joyce's. He writes:

One can live happily on very little, I have found, if the mind and spirit have some definite objective in view. . . . If I can't continue to create the sort of poetry that is my intensest and deepest component in life--then it all means very little to me. . . . But so far, as you know, I only grow more and more convinced that what I naturally have to give the world in my own terms--is worth giving, and I'll go through a number of ordeals yet to pursue a natural course. . . . I, too, have had to fight a great deal just to "be myself" and

"know myself" at all. (Letters 1965, pp. 163-4)

The interest in myths is the second aspect of the belief in the religious function of art which both writers have in common. And again, while there is no clear-cut evidence of an influence in Crane's writings, the possibility of a Joycean influence (as I will show in the following chapter) is certainly a strong one. Professor Tindall tells us that Joyce "was foremost among those who, reviving myth, have used its insights for modern art" (Tindall 1979, p. 97). Joyce used myths (Greek, Judaeo-Christian, Irish and otherwise) very subtly in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake, for structural and thematic purposes. T. S. Eliot gives credit to Joyce for being a pioneer in that field: "In using the myth . . . Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him." He maintains that Joyce's method "has the importance of a scientific discovery" (Eliot 1970, p. 270). Crane used mythology on a small scale in his collection White Buildings (in such poems as "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," "Lachrymae Christi," "Garden Abstract," and "The Wine Menagerie"), and on a larger scale in The Bridge. Sherman Paul points out Crane's indebtedness to Eliot and Joyce for his use of the "mythical method" (Paul, p. 64). Allen Tate remarks that "Crane was a myth-maker, and in an age favorable to myths he would have written a mythical poem in the act of writing an historical one" (Tate, p. 318).

Commenting on Joyce's use of myth, Tindall insightfully remarks (in a manner that makes his statement apply just as much to Crane)



that myth, according to Vico, is "a primitive way of knowing." He then goes on to say:

Before man became capable of generalizing, he saw things through the imagination. Poetry, the language of imagination, preceded prose, the language of reason. By myth and metaphor early man, incapable of logic, conceived and described reality as best he could. Myth is reality as it appears to the primitive mind. It is poetic allegory, corresponding to external reality but distorting it. (Tindall 1979, pp. 99-100)

Tindall's remark draws our attention to a very significant feature Joyce and Crane have in common--their tendency toward primitivism. By using mythology, both authors aim to base their work on the shadowy but universal ground of human subconsciousness: the main-spring of all myths and religions. Both of them are aware of logic as the father of science and philosophy and of its irrelevancy to the world of truth, beauty, ethics, the absolute, and the abstract. Their use of myth, in other words, was a deliberate attempt to approximate their works to the authority, status, and permanence of religion.

The belief in the moral and spiritual function of art is the third aspect of their conception of their art (and art in general) in religious terms. Stanislaus Joyce tells us that his brother "believed that poets in the measure of their gifts and personality were the repositories of the genuine spiritual life of their race, and that priests were usurpers" (Joyce 1958, p. 107). Joyce himself writes in Stephen Hero: "The poet is the intense centre of the life of his age to which he stands in a relation than which none can be more vital. He alone is capable of absorbing in himself the life that surrounds him and of flinging it abroad again amid planetary

music" (Joyce 1956, p. 85). Joyce writes to Grant Richards in 1905 about Dubliners claiming that the collection represents "a moral chapter of the moral history of my country" and "the first step toward the spiritual liberation of my country," and that by declining to publish it, Richards is "preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass" (Magalaner, pp. 54-55). S. L. Goldberg argues that in A Portrait Joyce is "advocating art that combines an imaginative 'criticism of life,' with a technique firmly based upon a realistic fidelity to ordinary experience," and that "by static art he meant that which affirms all the moral values it engages and orders them as it does so. 'Stasis' is a balance of moral attitudes, not their absence" (Goldberg 1962, pp. 60-61, 229). Tindall writes about Joyce's Ulysses: "Clearly, the theme of Ulysses . . . is moral. Like the Church he rejected, Joyce condemns pride, the greatest of sins, and recommends charity, the greatest of virtues" (Tindall 1959, p. 125).

Crane shows a keen awareness of the moral dilemma in the contemporary world; in "General Aims and Theories" he writes: "It is a terrific problem that faces the poet today--a world that is so in transition from a decayed culture toward a reorganization of human evaluations that there are few common terms, general denominators of speech that are solid enough or that ring with any vibration or spiritual conviction" (Crane 1966, p. 218). It follows that the poet is to lead the moral and spiritual life during that transition period. Crane writes to Yvor Winters in 1927: "I strongly second your wish for some definite ethical order"; he then proceeds to

affirm: "I have a certain code of ethics. I have not as yet attempted to reduce it to any exact formula. . . . I reserve myself the pleasant right to define these standards in a somewhat individual way" (Letters 1965, pp. 298-9). In a letter to Waldo Frank Crane argues that the spiritual and moral functions of poetry do not change from age to age and that is due to the fact that "its capacities for presenting the most complete synthesis of human values remain immune from any of the so-called inroads of science" (Letters 1965, p. 261). Crane tells us that in his poetry "there may be discoverable under new forms certain spiritual illuminations, shining with a morality essentialized from experience directly, and not from previous precepts or preconceptions" (Crane 1966, p. 221). Allen Tate describes Crane's poetry: "Crane's poetry has incalculable moral value: it reveals our defects in their extremity" (Tate, p. 320). And to Otto Kahn he writes that his aim in The Bridge is "to enunciate a new cultural synthesis of values in terms of our America" (Letters 1965, p. 223).

The most interesting of parallels, however, are the ones wherein the possibility of influence is minimal, for in them we can detect the similarity in temperament between the two literary geniuses--a feature which no amount of conscious influence could have brought about. Their progress as artists, their fascination with words, and their methods of composition are three parallels that may fall under this category.

Joyce started his career with a simple but ambitious goal: to tell the truth about himself and his world. Basing his theory on the

assumption that the world around him was a part of him as much as he was a part of it, Joyce came to the conclusion that telling the truth about himself equalled telling the truth about his world. But in the process of development, young Joyce began to realize that reality was far more complex than he first supposed it to be: the difference between what he saw and what he felt, between what is objective and what is subjective, was becoming harder and harder to discern or determine. He also started to realize that there can be no art without an artist or objective reality divorced from a subjective, human sensibility to comprehend it.

Thus he came at last to realize that the central thing he had to tell the truth about was his own attempt to tell the truth, to search for the meaning of his own experience. The subject of his art became the nature of art and its tangled relations with life, personal and social. (Goldberg 1962, p. 1)

Brom Weber has a very similar story to tell us about the development of Hart Crane as an artist:

The expression of emotion was the purpose urging Crane on to write poetry. It might be his emotional reaction to the atmosphere of a boxing match. . . . Or it might be his response to a package of old letters, as in "My Grandmother's Love Letters." Unfortunately for the completeness of his realization, it was only his own emotions that he understood. When he tried to convey another's feelings objectively, he failed. . . . But he finally realized that his greatest successes in the capture of emotion were achieved when he explored his own depths. The "interpretation of modern moods," with himself as protagonist, became his aim. (Weber, pp. 128-9)

Both Joyce and Crane had a great fascination with words, a common obsession that underlies their virtuosity and experimentation

with language. Joyce writes in A Portrait about his interest in words:

Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose? (Joyce 1970, pp. 166-7)

In the same vein, Crane writes to Harriet Monroe in 1926 defending his style:

To put it more plainly, as a poet I may very possibly be more interested in the so-called illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness (and their combinations and interplay in metaphor on this basis) than I am interested in the preservation of their logically rigid significations. . . . (Weber, p. 417)

Both authors have similar notions on the function of words in literature as a violation of their logical or lexical meanings. Joyce thought of words as having "a will and life of their own and are not to be put like lead soldiers, but to be energised and persuaded like soldiers of flesh and blood" (Budgen, p. 175). According to Maria Elisabeth Kronegger "Joyce maintains that combinations of words take on values apart from their specific meaning and produce a pleasure which has nothing to do with comprehension of the expression" (Kronegger, p. 142). And Horton remarks that Crane "gloried in words aside from their meaning as things in themselves, prizing their weight, density, color, and sound; and gloated over the subtle multiplicity of their associations . . . very much as a painter would gloat over the 'values' of certain textures" (Horton,

p. 170). In an insightful observation, Brom Weber points to the affinity between Crane's and Joyce's attitudes toward words:

Much like James Joyce, he understood that language is connotative as well as denotative, fluid as well as solidified, and there have been few other poets in whom a word could assume the very essence of life, the plasticity of protoplasm, flowing in all directions with an enriching multiplicity of meanings. (Weber, p. 332)

One of the surprising---though in a way trivial---aspects of the two authors' similar interest in words is the absolute faith both men had in their luck when it came to words and material they needed for their works. Frank Budgen tells us that Joyce was "always looking and listening for the necessary fact or word; and he was a great believer in his luck. What he needed would come to him" (Budgen, p. 171). Crane writes to Gorham Munson in 1921: "One must be drenched in words, literally soaked with them to have the right ones form themselves into the proper pattern at the right moment. When they come . . . they come as things in themselves; it is a matter of felicitous juggling; and no amount of will or emotion can help the thing a bit" (Letters 1965, p. 71).

The parallel between the methods of composition used by Joyce and Crane is another very interesting story. The objection that Joyce is a novelist and Crane a poet seems irrelevant for two reasons; the first is that Joyce was a poet before trying his talent at fiction; the second is that his method of composition did not change with the change of his medium from poetry to fiction. Anthony Burgess holds that Joyce is one of the novelist-poets in whose work "it is important that the opacity of language be exploited, so that

ambiguities, puns and centrifugal connotations are to be enjoyed rather than regretted" (Burgess 1973, pp. 15-16). Budgen seems to agree with Burgess. "Joyce's method of composition," he writes, "always seemed to me to be that of a poet rather than that of a prose writer. The words he wrote were far advanced in his mind before they found shape on paper" (Budgen, p. 171).

James Joyce, Frank Budgen tells us, was a collector of words. He used to carry with him at all times a waistcoat-pocket notebook in which he used to jot down words and expressions which he came across, and it did not make much difference if they came from a scholar, a linguist, a priest, a businessman, a cab driver, a beggar, or a prostitute. He also used to jot down bits and pieces of information from all walks of life and all branches of human knowledge. Budgen recalls:

I have seen him collect in the space of a few hours the oddest assortment of material: a parody on the House that Jack Built, the name and action of a poison, the method of caning boys on training ships, the wobbly cessation of a tired unfinished sentence, the nervous trick of a convive turning his glass in inward-turning circles, a Swiss musichall joke turning on a pun in Swiss dialect, a description of the Fitzsimmons shift. (Budgen, p. 172)

Nobody knows exactly how all this material found its way into Joyce's works, yet, somehow, and in a very subtle way, it managed to.

Frank Budgen tells us that during the writing of Ulysses, a visitor to Joyce's apartment in Zurich was likely to notice several big, orange-colored envelopes in which Joyce kept his little slips of paper. One evening Budgen met Joyce on the Bahnhofstrasse and inquired about the progress of Ulysses. Joyce told him that he had

been working hard on it all day but all he wrote were two sentences. When Budgen wondered if he was seeking the mot juste, Joyce answered: "No. I have the words already. What I am seeking is the perfect order of words in the sentence" (Budgen, pp. 19-20). Joyce wrote the "Wandering Rocks" episode of Ulysses with a map of Dublin spread before him, a stop-watch, and a pair of compasses in order to calculate to the second the time necessary for his characters to cover a given distance of the city.

The methods of composition of both Joyce and Crane have been described in very similar terms by two different critics. Frank Budgen argues that the closest parallel for Joyce is "the mosaic artists of Rome and Ravenna" who "built up with inexhaustible patience their figures of saints and angels out of tiny pieces of colored stone" (Budgen, p. 174). Weber tells us that at an early point in his career, Crane began to develop "his mosaic work," which he explains as "his habit of constructing new poems interlaid with fragments rescued from older poems. Whenever Crane discarded a poem for any reason whatever, he made it a point to extract therefrom lines and phrases which he thought worthy of preservation, and these he used in some new composition" (Weber, pp. 47-8). A good example of this practice may be found in his poem "Fraise for an Urn," an elegy written in honor of his Norwegian friend Ernest Nelson who died prematurely in 1922. The first stanza of the poem reads: "It was a kind and northern face / That mingled in such exile guise / The everlasting eyes of Pierrot / And, of Gargantua, the laughter." The last two lines in the stanza are salvaged, almost verbatim, from an



earlier poem titled "The Bridge of Estador" in which the last stanza reads: "And you others---follow your arches / To what corners of the sky they pull you to,--- / The everlasting eyes of Pierrot, / Or, of Gargantua, the laughter."

The "mosaic" technique is not the only feature the methods of composition both authors have in common. Much like Joyce, Weber tells us, Crane was in the habit of drawing an outline for each of his poems "which served as a compilation of ideas and a guide in the completion of the poem. . . . Accompanying the outline of a projected poem, Crane jotted down words, phrases, and lines of poetry which he thought might be used in the poem" (Weber, p. 342). To illustrate his point, Weber quotes one of the manuscript sheets containing rough drafts of "The River" section of The Bridge in which Crane jotted down the following words: "buckskin mare---corral---harness---footing---snort---rump---ford---bridle reins---haunches---leash---tiers---shale---clotted with sumach" (Weber, p. 343).

And again, like Joyce, he used to collect disparate material from different sources for his poems. After examining a considerable number of Crane's worksheets, Weber maintains that "Crane appears to have prepared himself for writing by reading books pertaining both directly and indirectly to the theme of his projected poem" (Weber, p. 341). Among the books he read in preparation for The Bridge were William Prescott's History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, Waldo Frank's Virgin Spain, D. H. Lawrence's The Plumed Serpent, A. N. Whitehead's Science and the Modern World, Herman Melville's White Jacket, Aeschylus' Oresteia, an edition of Columbus's journal, and a

book on whaling and whaling ships. Weber concludes his discussion of Crane's method of composition saying:

Although many of Crane's poetical effects were the products of mental synthesis before actual writing commenced, others took form after a rough substance had been poured on the page and refined. . . . My purpose in violating Crane's workshop privacy, however briefly, was to break down a myth, more widely accepted than Crane's own "Bridge," in which Crane is viewed as composing his poetry in a state of hysteria heightened by artificial stimulants. Undoubtedly Crane did find it easier to set his initial versions on paper while gripped by "the logic of ecstasy," and this inspirational tension could be and was often induced in his case by alcohol, sometimes by love. Yet this relates only to the composition of first drafts. Thereafter, like most poets, he went through the painful process described by Poe, revising and polishing until he had attained a version satisfactory to him in every respect. (Weber, pp. 346-7)

It is in such views that we can catch a fast glimpse of the real Crane many critics failed to understand or come to terms with. There is almost a unanimous agreement among Crane's early critics that he was a visionary poet half-crazed with the absolute who could write his brand of mystical poetry only under the influence of alcohol and the stimulus of erotic experience. All of Crane's early critics (in the twenties, thirties, and forties) concede to his first-rate poetry--not all of them were willing to grant that status to The Bridge though all of them gladly attribute it to White Buildings--and to his extraordinary lyrical talent. They stressed his talent to deny him the hard-won artistry and earned craftsmanship which were truly his, and the essentially lyrical nature of that talent to disqualify any ambition to epical grandeur he might have nursed regarding The Bridge. It was as if his early critics wanted

to keep his poetry shrouded in myth and mystery: admitting the greatness of the poetry yet refusing to see (in anything but madness, alcoholism, and homosexuality) the source of that "mysterious" greatness. However, the critics and scholars of the fifties, the sixties, and the seventies, took a skeptical attitude toward Crane's early critics, and a whole new body of scholarship began to evolve around Crane and his poetry, a scholarship far removed from its precedent. Full book-length studies devoted to The Bridge and Crane's other poems came out with a totally different viewpoint toward the man and his work. Yet what most of the studies, old and new, failed to establish is the tradition to which Crane truly belonged and the strongest influence on his poetry. Crane is still placed in the Romantic tradition whose chief mentor is Whitman. Yet I believe (and hope to prove) that Crane belongs in the Modernist tradition with such figures as James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Wallace Stevens; and that his chief mentor is James Joyce who provided him with an aesthetic theory and a world-picture of the first order. James Joyce, I believe, gave Crane's literary identity what it needed most: "a local habitation and a name."

## CHAPTER IV

### JOYCEAN INFLUENCES

Joyce is neither a philosopher nor an aesthete; he is a novelist first and foremost; yet the kind of novel he writes hinges on the realms of philosophy and aesthetics. Two complementary aesthetic theories (with larger ontological implications) form an integral part and occupy a central place in Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses. Out of these two theories Crane seems to have extracted his rather vague aesthetic theory, some of his techniques, a world-picture and an ontology. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to take a glance at Joyce's two aesthetic theories before we move on to consider their influence on Crane.

Joyce expounds his aesthetic in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in a conversation in the fifth chapter in which Stephen Dedalus unravels to his interlocutor the intricacies of his views on art. Stephen distinguishes between two kinds of emotions: "kinetic" emotions urging us to possess or avoid something, they consist in desire or loathing, and form the basis for pornographic and didactic art; and "static" emotions that consist in "a contemplative poise of the mind" in which "the mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing." The first kind of emotion is physical and therefore makes for improper art; the second kind is spiritual and is the only kind

suitable for proper art, whether tragic or comic (Joyce 1962, p. 205).

Stephen proceeds to give his definition of art as "the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an esthetic end." Going to Aquinas to explain what he means by "an esthetic end," he says: "that is beautiful the apprehension of which pleases" (Joyce 1962, p. 207). (The pleasure is to inhere in a static apprehension of static emotions.) He goes to Aquinas again for a further analysis of beauty and the process by means of which it may be apprehended: "Three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance" (Joyce 1962, p. 211). These three requirements closely correspond to the phases of aesthetic apprehension whether in art or elsewhere. Wholeness is the first phase in which the apprehended object is separated from the rest of perceived data (in which "a bounding line [is] drawn about the object to be apprehended") (Joyce 1962, p. 212) and considered as "one" integral unit. In the second phase, harmony, the mind analyzes the apprehended object and realizes that it is "complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious" (Joyce 1962, p. 212). In the third phase of radiance (which is spiritual and the sum total of the two previous phases) the mind perceives the "whatness" radiating from the perceived object; "that it is that thing which it is and no other thing." Radiance, in other words, is 'the artistic discovery and representation of the divine purpose in anything' (Joyce 1962, p. 213).

Much like beauty and its three requirements and the corresponding aesthetic apprehension and its three phases,

. . . art necessarily divides itself into three forms progressing from one to the next. These forms are: the lyrical form, the form wherein the artist presents his image in immediate relation to himself; the epical form, the form wherein he presents his image in mediate relation to himself and to others; the dramatic form, the form wherein he presents his image in immediate relation to others. (Joyce 1962, pp. 213-4)

In a corresponding fashion, the personality of the artist goes through three stages of development progressing from one to the next:

The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic like that of material creation is accomplished. The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails. (Joyce 1962, p. 215)

The most remarkable aspect of Joyce's theory in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is the subtle use of parallels to unify all the threads of the argument into one harmonious whole. At the outset Joyce gives us a succinct definition of art that leads him to a definition of beauty which, adapting Aquinas, he is able to provide. He then argues that there are three requirements for beauty which correspond to the three phases of aesthetic apprehension, thus establishing an identity between beauty as an absolute and universal quality and the relative human apprehension of it. Using the three phases of aesthetic apprehension as guidelines, he constructs three parallel stages in art, and three corresponding parallels in the development of the artist, the highest of which is the dramatic,

wherein the artist becomes an alter ego to God. In this theory, Joyce manages not only to establish a unity between the worlds of art, of man, and of God, but also to suggest a cyclic pattern for his theory: he begins it with universal beauty and concludes it with the creator of that beauty, God.

In the aesthetic theory found in Ulysses, Joyce proceeds along the same lines, but on a much larger scale and with wider ontological implications. Facing a fictionalized version of the poet George Russell (A. E.), and the three librarians, John Eglinton, Mr. Lester, and Mr. Best (also biographical characters) in the National Library in Dublin, Stephen Dedalus tries to undermine the four men's ideas on literature. The argument starts when Eglinton remarks: "Our young bards have yet to create a figure which the world will set beside Saxon Shakespeare's Hamlet." To that Russell adds: "Art has to reveal to us ideas, formal spiritual essences . . . the words of Hamlet bring our mind into contact with the eternal wisdom, Plato's world of ideas" (Joyce 1961, p. 185). To this flagrant Platonism Stephen rejoins: "The movements which work revolutions in the world are born out of the dreams and visions in a peasant's heart on the hillside . . . . The rarefied air of the academy and the arena produce the six-shilling novel, the musichall song" (Joyce 1961, pp. 186-7). Stephen does not deny the existence of the world of ideas, he merely tries to reestablish the connection Russell severs between that world and the everyday world.

Challenged jokingly by Eglinton to prove that Hamlet is a ghost story, Stephen pretends to take him seriously and proceeds to

prove it. He defines a ghost as "one who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners" (Joyce 1961, p. 188). Shakespeare became a ghost through his absence from Stratford, his home. Stephen proceeds:

Is it possible that the player Shakespeare, a ghost by absence and in the vesture of buried Denmark, a ghost by death, speaking his own words to his own son's name (had Hamnet Shakespeare lived he would have been prince Hamlet's twin) is it possible, I want to know, or probable that he did not draw or foresee the logical conclusion of those premises: you are the dispossessed son: I am the murdered father: your mother is the guilty queen. Ann Shakespeare born Hathaway. (Joyce 1961, p. 189)

Stephen treats Hamlet as an autobiography. He argues that Shakespeare had been raped, physically as well as psychologically, by Ann Hathaway when he was eighteen (she was a mature woman of twenty-six) in a rye field. Shakespeare married Ann Hathaway, had children by her, but shortly afterwards he fled to London to start his career, leaving her behind him in Stratford where in Stephen's scenario she betrayed him with his three brothers, Richard, Edmund, and Gilbert. "The world believes that Shakespeare made a mistake [by marrying Ann Hathaway] . . . and got out of it as quickly and as best he could," retorts John Eglinton. "A man of genius makes no mistakes," Stephen hastens to maintain. "His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery" (Joyce 1961, p. 190).

According to Stephen, the concept of error is entirely uncalled for here: Shakespeare made what appeared to many to be a mistake by surrendering to the wrong woman, by letting himself be chosen by that woman, and finally by marrying her. But actually Shakespeare



chose his agony, chose to be chosen, suffered consequently and then, like a mollusk, turned his agony into pearls of great art. Shakespeare translated his life-long agony into plays that bore (though not always directly) the stamp of his tormented soul. It was not until the birth of his daughter's daughter that he started to make peace with life and reconcile himself to his burdensome agony. That explains the spirit of reconciliation and resignation his last four plays breathe.

Stephen proceeds to elaborate on the relation of Shakespeare's life to his artistic output. He argues that no fame, worldly recognition, prosperity, Don-Giovannism could make up for the bleeding wound inside of him caused by Ann Hathaway.

The soul has been stricken mortally, a poison poured in the porch of a sleeping ear. . . . He goes back [to Stratford] weary of the creation he has piled up to hide him from himself, an old dog licking an old sore. But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or the laws he has revealed. (Joyce 1961, pp. 196-7)

Unlike Eliot who always stresses the separation between the man who suffers and the artist who creates, Joyce not only affirms their identity, but also consecrates personal experiences as raw material for art. Furthermore, artistic creation is less a matter of voluntary luxury than a psychological need necessitated by self-defense tactics on the part of the artist, against traumatic experiences. Having delineated the broad outlines of his Shakespearean theory, he proceeds from creation in art to creation in nature identifying both processes:

He who himself begot, middler the Holy Ghost, and Himself sent himself, Agenbuyer, between himself and others, who put upon by His fiends, stripped and whipped, was nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree, who let Him bury, stood up, harrowed hell, fared into heaven and there these nineteen hundred years sitteth on the right hand of His Own Self but yet shall come in the latter day to doom the quick and the dead when all the quick shall be dead already. (Joyce 1961, pp. 197-8)

The analogy Stephen draws between God and Shakespeare cuts both ways: it endows Shakespeare's (and every artist's) output with theological authority and, in the meantime, humanizes God's divinity by secularizing the most sacred of His attributes: material creation. From that analogy Stephen surprisingly turns to the dark side of Shakespeare's personality: he was a moneylender and a usurer ("He sued a fellowplayer for the price of a few bags of malt and extracted his pound of flesh in interest for every money lent"); a hypocrite and a time-server (he wrote The Merchant of Venice following the execution of Lopez, the Portuguese Jew, who made an attempt on Queen Elizabeth's life), and wrote Hamlet and Macbeth "with the coming to the throne of a Scotch Philosophaster with a turn for witch-roasting. The lost Armada is his jeer in Love's Labour's Lost. His pageants, the histories, sail full-bellied on a tide of Mafeking enthusiasm" (Joyce 1961, pp. 204-5).

Stephen then returns to the analogy he drew between God and Shakespeare attributing to the English dramatist the spiritual fatherhood of his race: "he was not the father of his son merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson" (Joyce 1961, p. 208). Shakespeare is both the ruthless,

miserly moneylender, who extracted his credits to the last farthing, and the spiritual father of his own people and the creator of the "uncreated conscience of his race." "He is," Eglinton remarks, "the ghost and the prince. He is all in all" (Joyce 1961, p. 212). Stephen then concludes his theory:

Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves. The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly (He gave us light first and the sun two days later), the lord of things as they are whom the most Roman of Catholics call him dio boia, hangman god, is doubtless all in all in all of us, ostler and butcher, and would be bawd and cuckold too but that in the economy of heaven, foretold by Hamlet, there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgenous agent, being a wife unto himself. (Joyce 1961, p. 213)

Professor Harry Blamires succinctly sums up the implications of Joyce's Shakespearean theory in Ulysses as follows:

Joyce puts himself in Ulysses as both Father (Ghost-Father) and Son. Shakespeare puts himself in Hamlet as both Ghost-Father and Son. God enters His own world as Holy Ghost and Son. As son, God is crucified, then raised up by the Father: and this, too, is to be the pattern of Stephen's day. Joyce's created world, Ulysses, is like God's world--a world which one explores, seeking a pattern and a meaning, finding clues and threads which hint at an overall design and purpose, and ultimately realizing that it is a world into which its creator has entered, in which he has suffered, and from which he has been raised up. (Blamires, p. 84)

In The Classical Temper, S. L. Goldberg points out four major conclusions that a reader of Ulysses is likely to arrive at after a thorough reading of Joyce's epic. First, although the artist, like any human being, is subject to "moral predicaments and spiritual

strains," his "poetic" personality is not to be equated with his personality as a man, it is to be equated with his entire artistic output. Second, art is both a personal expression of the writer's inner self and, at the same time, an articulation of the objective reality outside the self. There is no real distinction in the work of art between the perceived object and the perceiving subject. Third, a work of art is an autonomous and autotelic world with a life all its own, yet it depends for substance on the outside world, and although the artist may be the seer who puts our mind in contact with the world of ideas, he is the product of his time and hence bound to start from his "now and here." Fourth, the man who suffers and the artist who creates are not widely separate inside the same artist, yet a certain equilibrium must be successfully maintained between both of them for the artist to create real art. In other words, the artist has to immerse himself wholly in the life of his time, but in the meantime, he has to detach himself morally from it in order to recreate it meaningfully into permanent and static forms in his art. (Goldberg 1961, pp. 87-96).

The influence of Joyce's two aesthetic theories in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses is very conspicuous in Crane's aesthetic theory, his artistic concepts, and his technical devices. Crane's aesthetic theory--if we may so call it--is not to be found in one specific article or work; the question refers us to some of his letters to Gorham Munson, Waldo Frank, Allen Tate, Yvor Winters, Harriet Monroe, Otto Kahn and others, as well as to his two articles, "General Aims and Theories," and "Modern Poetry."

In a letter to Gorham Munson (March 17, 1926), Crane gives his definition of poetry and its function:

Poetry, in so far as the metaphysics of any absolute knowledge extends, is simply the concrete "evidence" of the "experience" of a recognition ("knowledge" if you like). It can give you a "ratio" of fact and experience, and in this sense it is both perception and thing perceived, according as it approaches a significant articulation or not. This is its reality, its fact, "being." When you attempt to ask more of poetry,--the fact of man's relationship to a hypothetical god, be it Osiris, Zeus or Indra, you will get as variant terms even from the abstract terminology of philosophy as you will from poetry; whereas poetry, without attempting to logically enunciate such a problem or its solution, may well give you the real connective experience, the very "sign manifest" on which rests the assumption of a god-head. (Letters 1965, p. 237)

Joyce's influence on Crane manifests itself in more ways than one. Crane's definition of poetry as "the concrete 'evidence' of the 'experience' of a recognition" echoes what Joyce says about Shakespeare's play as an evidence of his knowledge of life, and "a record," according to Richard Ellman, "of what was possible for him, and so are his experiences" (Ellmann 1972, p. 84). Also, Crane's argument that poetry provides "a 'ratio' of fact and experience, and in this sense it is both perception and thing perceived" sounds like a paraphrase of Joyce's idea that Shakespeare's (and every artist's) art is simultaneously an articulation of his subjective self (experience or perception in Crane's words), and objective reality (fact or thing perceived).

Another aspect of Joyce's influence upon Crane may be seen in Crane's refusal to force upon poetry the role of exploring "man's relationship to a hypothetical god" and his assertion nevertheless

that poetry provides "the real connective experience, the very 'sign manifest' on which rests the assumption of a god-head." Here we see an illustration of Crane's final repudiation of Eliot (who forces poetry into the service of "a hypothetical god": Jesus Christ) and his conclusive endorsement of Joyce who draws an analogy between the artist and the god of the creation in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and who, in Ulysses, employs the Trinitarian mystery, along with a host of diverse religious motifs and myths, to suggest the presence of a non-dogmatic, cyclic, omnipresent teleology.

Proceeding along the same lines, Crane rejects using poetry for moral, didactic, scientific, or philosophical purposes: "When you ask for exact factual data (a graphic map of eternity?), ethical morality or moral classifications, etc. from poetry--you not only limit its goal, you ask its subordination to science, philosophy" (Letters 1965, pp. 237-8). The echoes of Joyce's theory in A Portrait are very clear; Joyce says:

The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The aesthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing. (Joyce 1962, p. 205)

Here Crane is advocating the same kind of static emotions as Joyce, and he believes them to be the only proper emotions for art.

Joyce's influence goes so far as to comprise Crane's own definition of art. Joyce defines art as "the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an esthetic end"; and his progress as an

artist: "to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of beauty we have come to understand--that is art" (Joyce 1962, p. 206). In his letter to Munson quoted earlier, Crane, showing Joyce's influence upon him, points out that poetry and philosophy are the two intellectual activities most concerned with what he calls "reorganizations of chaos," but while the philosopher performs that task "in the name of rationality," the poet does it "in the name of beauty." The philosopher, in other words, seeks to impose upon reality forms and categories the truth of which lies in their inner logical coherence not in their faithfulness to reality, and in the process, he has either deliberately to overlook or ruthlessly to subdue the elements of reality that may undermine his initial premises. The poet, on the other hand, in his attempt to reorganize the world for an aesthetic end--emulating God who created the world according to His own concept of order and beauty--is decidedly more open than the philosopher to the complexity and diversity of life and hence more able to present life in a fashion that is faithful to its very nature (as conceived, say, by God), as well as to man's perception of it. Crane shows his awareness of the radical difference between art and philosophy in his March 17, 1926, letter to Gorham Munson:

The tragic quandary (or "agon") of the modern world derives from the paradoxes that an inadequate system of rationality forces on the living consciousness. I am not opposing any new synthesis of reasonable laws which might provide a consistent philosophical and moral program for our epoch. Neither, on the other hand, am I attempting

through poetry to delineate any such system. (Letters 1965, p. 238)

It is out of this understanding of the marvellous ability of art to create an adequate picture of the world that is faithful in both its objectivity (life as it is) and its subjectivity (life as it projects itself on human sensibility) that both Joyce and Crane insist on the objectivity of the artist. "The artist," Joyce writes. "like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (Joyce 1962, p. 215). In the same vein, Crane writes: "It is my hope to go 'through' the combined materials of the poem, using our 'real' world somewhat as a spring-board, and to give the poem 'as a whole' an orbit or predetermined direction of its own. I would like to establish it as free from my own personality as from any chance evaluation on the reader's part" (Crane 1966, p. 220).

Deep at the heart of Joyce's aesthetic theory--and in a more implicit manner, in and behind his entire literary output--lies a belief in literature as the proper science of man and a summation of human knowledge: like history, it is a record of human experience; like religion, it reconciles man to life; like philosophy, it is an attempt to understand life, and like psychology, it is an attempt to understand man. And in order to serve all these purposes, literature has to maintain a delicate balance between the here and the beyond, the subjective and the objective, the real and the ideal, the relative and the absolute. That is what Joyce manages to do in his



art and that is what Crane attempts to do in his poetry with varying degrees of success. The insistence on objectivity both writers advocate is one of the precautionary measures taken by them to preserve that delicate balance.

Joyce's image of life and its relation to art is a realistic one; he realizes that life is far from ideal yet is still the only soil wherein values and ideals can be sown, and from which art can grow. "If life . . . is always less than ideal," writes Professor Goldberg, "it is more than a chaos of impulse and delusion" (Goldberg 1962, p. 72). And if life does not always correspond to certain human notions of perfection, it may be perfect in a superhuman or divine manner--life may possibly have idealism in its sordidness, purpose in its chaos, and perfection in its imperfection. Therefore, art must present reality not perfect it; it must present it as it is not as it ought to be. In an essay entitled "Drama and Life," written in 1900, Joyce states:

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. (Joyce 1959, p. 40)

According to Joyce, the artist has to live in a state of unresolved tension between his Platonism (attracting him to the "changeless laws") and his Aristotelianism (drawing him toward the mighty, chaotic flux of "the whimsicalities and circumstances of men and women" of everyday life). The artist has to maintain a stable equilibrium between the two forces if he is to create a proper and

perfect--and most important of all, life-like--art. The artist, according to Joyce, represents, "in a particularly clear and heightened way, the universal human effort to find genuine order and meaning in experience" (Goldberg 1961, p. 91). The main reason for the paramount importance Joyce awards the artist is due to his belief that "the human spirit is always embodied in a particular 'now' and 'there,' and therefore unable to comprehend itself fully. Hence our need of the artist" (Goldberg 1962, p. 71).

Brom Weber tells us that early in his career, Crane begins to write poems in which sense and technique are organically fused, in which content transcends the mundane while form maintains it, in which the corporeality of matter as well as the spirituality of universal forms are equally confirmed, in which the "here" and the "beyond," history and eternity, man and God are completely integrated (Weber, pp. 41-3). Like Joyce, "Crane could remain attached to the reality of matter while passing beyond it to join in harmony with a superior world of universal forms" (Weber, p. 43). Crane himself writes about the artist's unresolved tension between his Platonism and Aristotelianism:

It seems to me that a poet will accidentally define his time well enough simply by reacting honestly and to the full extent of his sensibility to the states of passion, experience and rumination that fate forces on him, first hand. He must, of course, have a sufficiently universal basis of experience to make his imagination selective and valuable. His picture of the "period," then, will simply be a by-product of his curiosity and the relation of his experience to a postulated "eternity." (Crane 1966, p. 218)

Much like Joyce, who is no alien to the fact that "no one can ever apprehend the forming 'spirit,' the inner 'drama,' of life directly, but only as he apprehends everything else---as it is embodied in the given concrete particulars of 'the now, the here,' in 'what you damn well have to see,' in the society you 'damn well' have to live in and understand" (Goldberg 1962, p. 17)--Crane understands that "the poet should in as large a measure as possible adjust himself to society" (Letters 1965, p. 298), that "the poet's concern must be, as always, self-discipline toward a formal integration of experience" (Crane 1966, p. 260), that poetry is capable of "presenting the most complete synthesis of human values" (Crane 1966, p. 261), and that "the validity of a work of art is situated in contemporary reality" (Letters 1965, p. 260). And like Joyce again, he believes that it is only through "the now, the here" that the artist may come into contact with the transcendental and the eternal. "We must," he writes, "somehow touch the clearest veins of eternity flowing through the crowds around us--or risk being the kind of glorious cripple that has missed some vital part of his inheritance" (Horton, pp. 19-30).

When we move from the realm of aesthetic theories to the more practical realm of technical devices and their relation to each other, we find still more evidence of Joyce's influence. One of the most remarkable features of Joyce's art is its ultra-faithful presentation of life; and in order to achieve that, Joyce combines Naturalism and Symbolism and employs several techniques. Joyce abandons traditional narrative for the sake of an innovative narrative which

"recreates" reality instead of simply "imitating" it; in other words, he presents reality in such a way as to make the reader feel as if he were perceiving life directly and first-hand without the mediation of the author. David Daiches contends that

Joyce's procedure in Ulysses, as in Finnegans Wake, does not involve mimesis at all; it is recreation, not imitation. . . . Joyce seems to intend his work to have a validity quite independent of our knowledge of the world he presents to us. He recreates it complete, in all its dimensions, with no attempt to exploit the traditional ties provided by sympathy and recognition. (Daiches, p. 93)

There is no way to ascertain whether Crane was conscious of Joyce's intentions behind his use of that subtle narrative or not, yet, from his letters and critical writings, we can safely assume that his thorough reading of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses provided him (as we shall see later) with enough knowledge of the subtleties and devices of that method of narration to be able to use it to his own advantage and to serve his artistic purposes.

One of the aspects of Joyce's "recreational" method of narration is the "indirect" style: his use of suggestion rather than direct statement. Maria Elisabeth Kronegger notes that Joyce bases his "aesthetic theories not on description but on suggestion," and that he does not "depict things as they are, but the effect they produce in the observer" (Kronegger, pp. 120-1). And Vincent Quinn argues that Crane believed that "the poet was not to tell about an experience but to convey it to the reader in the sensual terms in which he had received it" (Quinn 1963, p. 31). Crane admits to

Gorham Munson his use of that style, saying that his poetry "would avoid the employment of abstract tags, formulations of experience in factual terms, etc.,--it would necessarily express its concepts in the more direct terms of physical-psychic experience" (Letters 1965, p. 239).

But that kind of "suggestive" style cannot work in the absence of an attentive reader who is more of an active participant in the artifact than a passive recipient of it. Both Joyce and Crane expect that kind of reader for their works of art. Like Debussy and Ravel in music, Monet and Whistler in painting, Kronegger argues, Joyce leaves "as much as possible to the imagination of the beholder, who thus becomes an artist himself, for he must help to create the poem or the piece of prose . . . which is adumbrated for him" (Kronegger, pp. 130-1). In the same vein, Crane, who is just as much an avid user of the "suggestive" style as Joyce, takes the active participation of the reader in his poems as a matter of course:

If we can't count on some such bases in the reader now and then, I don't see how the poet has any chance to ever get beyond the simplest conceptions of emotion and thought, of sensation and lyrical sequence. If the poet is to be held completely to the already evolved and exploited sequences of imagery and logic--what field of added consciousness and increased perceptions (the actual province of poetry, if not lullabys) can be expected when one has to relatively return to the alphabet every breath so so? (Weber, p. 419)

Inclusiveness is another major aspect of Joyce's technique intended to recreate, rather than imitate, reality and to place Joyce beyond his handiwork like the God of the creation. There is no limit to the wide variety of styles, techniques, and linguistic

devices that form the texture of Joyce's works, a fact that places him in the company of Shakespeare and other masters of the English language. Anthony Burgess remarks that "James and Conrad and Hardy found their mature style and stuck to it; what Joyce wanted was the ability to create any number of different styles, each appropriate to its own subject-matter and to that only" (Burgess 1965, pp. 62-3). Harry Levin describes the form of Ulysses as "an elusive and eclectic 'Summa' of its age: the 'montage' of the cinema, impressionism in painting, 'leit-motifs' in music, the free association of psychoanalysis, and vitalism in philosophy" (Levin, p. 89); and the technique of Joyce's later works as "dizzying shifts between mystification and exhibitionism, between linguistic experiment and pornographic confession, between myth and autobiography, between symbolism and naturalism" (Levin, p. 29). Influenced by Joyce, Crane became a devotee and a master of the inclusive style although, due to the conciseness of his poetic medium, not on the same large scale as Joyce. Commenting on Crane's style, Weber remarks: "Because words were not mechanical counters to him but living organisms, there was no language which he did not make use of in his poetry" (Weber, p. 332). Crane himself argues that "the poet has a right to draw on whatever practical resources he finds in books or otherwise about him" (Crane 1966, p. 218), and that the expression of a poetic vision "may often be as well accomplished with the vocabulary and blank verse of the Elizabethans as with the calligraphic tricks and slang used so brilliantly at times by an impressionist like Cummings" (Crane 1966, p. 219).

Nowhere is Joyce's influence upon Crane's use of the inclusive style clearer than in Crane's attempt to make the language of poetry "inclusive of all readjustments incident to science and other shifting factors related to that consciousness" (Crane 1966, p. 260). In his attempt to make poetry susceptible to the demands of contemporary life, he seems to be advocating the adaptation of Joyce's techniques to poetry--what he himself is trying to do. Like Joyce, whose technical innovations and aesthetic theories usher the English novel into the twentieth century and establish a literary tradition from which no post-Joycean novelist can escape, Crane tries to modernize poetry in a fashion different from Eliot's and establish a new poetic tradition. He is aware that "new conditions of life germinate new forms of spiritual articulation" (Crane 1966, p. 222) of which poetry should keep abreast or run the risk of obsolescence. "Unless poetry," he writes, "can absorb the machine, i.e., 'acclimatize' it as naturally and casually as trees, cattle, galleons, castles and all other human associations of the past, then poetry has failed of its full contemporary function" (Crane 1961, p. 262). Herbert Leibowitz insightfully acknowledges Crane's debt to Joyce:

Joyce was as syncretic a writer as Crane, roaming through the verbal universe and mingling slang and the scientific, the lyrical and the didactic, the journalistic and the language of dreams. This must have bolstered Crane's already strong faith that language might perform any feat. Perhaps most instructively, Joyce was an inventor and magical manipulator of words--puns, palindromes, anagrams, and portmanteau words testified to Joyce's bravura gifts. That Crane learned from these devices and assimilated them into his poetry is hard to doubt. (Leibowitz, p. 101)

That Joyce's influence extends to Crane's choice of subjects, the method of expressing them, and the ambiguity that ensues as a result, is also hard to doubt. In a letter to Yvor Winters, Crane writes about his choice of subjects:

I write damned little because I am interested in recording certain sensations, very rigidly chosen, with an eye for what according to my taste and sum of prejudices seems suitable to--or intense enough--for verse. . . . One should be somewhat satisfied if one's work comes to approximate a true record of such moments of "illumination" as are occasionally possible. (Letters 1965, pp. 301-2)

In that kind of poetry, which is "at least a stab at a truth and to such an extent may be . . . called 'absolute,'"

. . . there may be discoverable under new forms certain spiritual illuminations, shining with a morality essentialized from experience directly, and not from previous precepts or preconceptions. It is as though a poem gave the reader as he left it a single, new "word," never before spoken and impossible to actually enunciate, but self-evident as an active principle in the reader's consciousness henceforward. (Crane 1966, pp. 220-1)

Joyce again seems to hold a clue to Crane's choice of subjects; in defending his poetic themes, Crane sounds as if he were paraphrasing Joyce's conception of epiphany. Joyce gives his famous definition of epiphany in Stephen Hero:

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (Joyce 1956, p. 216)



Joyce used to record those epiphanies with tremendous care and incorporate them in his fiction. Likewise, Crane used to choose subjects for his poems from his epiphanies though he referred to them as "spiritual illuminations" rather than epiphanies. The importance of that concept (no matter by what name it is referred to) lies in the light it throws on the near-identical ontologies and art philosophies of both artists as well as the extent of the Irish novelist's influence upon the American poet.

The concept of epiphany implicitly entails the belief in everyday life as the mainspring of genuine art and as an embodiment of Plato's realm of ideas and pure spiritual essences. William York Tindall tells us that by epiphany Joyce is referring to "something that random vulgarities, rising above themselves and transfigured, can yield" (Tindall 1959, p. 10). And Anthony Burgess defines epiphany as "the belief in the power of ordinary life to burst forth--suddenly and miraculously--with a revelation of truth" (Burgess 1965, p. 20). Levin claims that the evocation of epiphany arises from the inability of the modern writer "to comprehend modern life in its chaotic fullness" and hence his need to search for "external clues to its inner meaning." Therefore, the modern writer, "like the mystic, must be peculiarly aware of these manifestations. What seem trivial details to others may be portentous symbols to him" (Levin, p. 28-9). Glauco Cambon points out the importance of epiphany to Crane and his indebtedness to Joyce for it: "Like Joyce, Crane seeks epiphany, the paradox illuminating the quotidian with a lightning from other skies; and that in itself is a 'bridge' between

workday reality and the purest dream. This does much to connect the particular passage with the total network of the poem" (Cambon, p. 160).

The stream-of-consciousness is one of the most important techniques of Joyce's "re-creational" method which provides a clue to Crane's major stylistic device: the logic-of-metaphor technique. Edouard Dujardin, the French Symbolist who was the first to use the stream-of-consciousness technique (also known as the internal or interior monologue), defines it as follows:

The internal monologue, in its nature on the order of poetry, is that unheard and unspoken speech by which a character expresses his inmost thoughts (those lying nearest the unconscious) without regard to logical organization--that is, in their original state--by means of direct sentences reduced to the syntactic minimum, and in such a way as to give the impression of reproducing the thoughts just as they come into the mind. (Levin, p. 90)

Joyce borrowed that technique from Dujardin, refined and developed it to a state of unprecedented, artistic perfection. It afforded Joyce what he wanted most in his narrative; a maximum of realistic presentation of his characters. Burgess describes Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique as "an endless commentary from the main characters thrown at them by life, but unspoken, often chaotic, sometimes reaching the thresholds of the unconscious mind" (Burgess 1965, p. 84). Goldberg, on the other hand, believes that Joyce's internal monologue is "the artistic rendering of a mind engaged in apprehending its world, and 'enacting its values' in the very process of apprehending" (Goldberg 1962, p. 89). He also argues that

Clearly this is far from the random, unorganized chaos it was once thought to be. It is certainly no mere record of a stream of passively registered "impressions" or "associations." The verbal echoes, the juxtaposition of images, the loose and flexible syntax, and the other devices of suggestion, are all subordinate to the shaping, relating, interfusing process of the imagination. (Goldberg 1961, p. 252)

After reviewing the "Proteus" and "Hades" episodes of Ulysses, as an illustration of Joyce's handling of the interior monologues of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, Goldberg comes to a very interesting and illuminating conclusion:

In short, the real artistic (and dramatic) unit of Joyce's "stream-of-consciousness" writing is the epiphany. What he renders dramatically are minds engaged in the apprehension of epiphanies--the elements of meaning apprehended in life. By apparently getting down to "raw" experience, he discovers the attitudes and values that give it form even as it is experienced. (Goldberg 1961, p. 253)

Beside its remarkable verisimilitude, the stream-of-consciousness technique has another very important advantage: it affords the writer the latitude of temporal and spatial expansion. The writer, in other words, can move back and forth in time and place through the interior monologue of his characters with absolute freedom and total disregard for the Aristotelian unities, and hence reveal layers of meaning that are inaccessible through first-person and omniscient methods of narration.

In a letter to Harriet Monroe, answering her objections to his poem "At Melville's Tomb," Crane reveals the nature of his distinct style:

To put it more plainly, as a poet I may very possibly be interested in the so-called illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness (and their combinations and interplay in metaphor on this basis) than I am interested in the preservation of their logically rigid significations at the cost of limiting my subject matter and perceptions involved in the poem.

This may sound as though I merely fancied juggling words and images until I found something novel, or esoteric; but the process is much more predetermined and objectified than that. The nuances of feeling and observation in a poem may well call for certain liberties which you claim the poet has no right to take. I am simply making the claim that the poet does have that authority, and that to deny it is to limit the scope of the medium so considerably as to outlaw some of the richest genius of the past. (Weber, p. 217)

In rejecting surface logic and endorsing "the illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness," Crane seems to be defending the basis, not only of his style (the logic of metaphor), but also of Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique, namely free association. (And in spite of the scarcity of reference to Freud in the writings of Joyce and Crane, there is very little doubt that both of them are fully aware of the discoveries of the father of modern psychology.) Also, in Crane's reference to "the nuances of feeling and observation," we notice echoes of Joyce's aesthetic theory in Ulysses where Stephen argues that art is an articulation of the artist's subjective self and objective milieu. And in Crane's advocacy of the artist's right to take "certain liberties" so far as his style is concerned, he seems to consecrate his and Joyce's innovative techniques that revolutionized their literary media with amazing results.

In "General Aims and Theories," Crane sheds further light on

his own style, its rationale, and (perhaps inadvertently) his indebtedness to Joyce for both:

As to technical considerations: the motivation of the poem must be derived from the implicit emotional dynamics of the materials used, and the terms of expression employed are often selected less for their logical (literal) significance than for their associational meanings. Via this and their metaphorical inter-relationships, the entire construction of the poem is raised on the organic principle of a "logic of metaphor," which antedates our so-called pure logic, and which is the genetic basis of all speech, hence conscious and thought-extension. (Crane 1966, p. 221)

In his letter to Harriet Monroe, he explains that "the logic of metaphor is so organically entrenched in pure sensibility that it can't be thoroughly traced or explained outside of historical sciences, like philology and anthropology" (Weber, p. 418). He goes on to explain what he means by "emotional dynamics":

It all comes to the recognition that emotional dynamics are not to be confused with any absolute order of rationalized definitions; ergo, in poetry the "rationale" of metaphor belongs to another order of experience than science, and is not to be limited by a scientific and arbitrary code of relationships either in verbal inflections or concepts. (Weber, p. 419)

Much like Joyce, Crane is alive to the dichotomy that exists between the extrinsic artificiality of "pure logic" and the primordial spontaneity of the "logic of metaphor" (and the stream of consciousness), to the origin of the former in the conscious, rationalizing reason and the latter in the subconscious mind, and to the intimate link of science and philosophy to the former and of art and literature to the latter. And like Joyce once more, he bases his

logic-of-metaphor concept on the same grounds Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique is based on: free association which is the most primary, natural, primeval, and spontaneous function of the human mind, and in which subject and object, self and surroundings, intuition and observation intermingle in myriad configurations and in a complex fashion only a complex technique---such as the logic of metaphor or the stream of consciousness wherein "the transition from one impression to another is made with the bewildering rapidity and irregularity of a dream" (Kronegger, pp. 130-1)---can adequately capture.

Crane's insistence on the ability of the logic of metaphor--and consequently the stream of consciousness--to create the most consummate representation of the interaction of objective reality and subjective mind, and the relation of both to the realm of ideas, pure spiritual essences and absolute beauty and truth, contribute to his belief in the inferiority of both science and philosophy (and their basis in logic) to the literary art and its viability as an epistemological tool---a fact that augments his debt to Joyce. L. S. Dembo holds that "Crane could not talk about the language of poetry without getting involved in metaphysics" (Dembo 1960, p. 33). "That 'truth' which science pursues," Crane writes, "is radically different from the metaphorical, extra-logical truth of the poet" (Crane 1966, p. 262). The difference between the two truths is understandably not in favor of science. Emulating Joyce, Crane goes so far as to undermine logic, the very basis upon which science and philosophy stand: "try and see if you get such logical answers always from

Nature as you seem to think you will!" (Letters 1965, p. 301) he writes to Yvor Winters in 1927.

Both Joyce and Crane use the stream of consciousness and the logic of metaphor respectively to reveal the interplay of mind and milieu just as much as to explore the relation of life to a "postulated eternity." Goldberg affirms that "the real artistic (and dramatic) unit of Joyce's 'stream-of-consciousness' writing is the epiphany. What he renders dramatically are minds engaged in the apprehension of epiphanies--the elements of meaning apprehended in life" (Goldberg 1961, p. 253). Elizabeth Drew observes, with regard to Crane's logic of metaphor, that "the essence of the logic of the imagination is that it can make abstractions concrete, by testing and interpreting them through the senses" (Drew and Sweeney, p. 218). And attempting to paraphrase Crane's logic-of-metaphor theory, Dembo remarks:

By "implicit emotional dynamics," Crane probably meant the process in which the poet apprehended the Absolute as revealed in the images used. The "associational meanings" or "the connotations of words upon the consciousness" was the "spiritual illumination" brought to the reader by the word of the poem. The "logic of metaphor" was simply the written form of the "bright logic" of the imagination, the crucial sign stated, the Word made words. (Dembo 1960, p. 34)

The logical conclusion that seems to suggest itself at this point is that Crane has borrowed his logic-of-metaphor technique from Joyce, or to put it in a different way, Crane's technique is a poetic adaptation (or approximation, if you will) of Joyce's fictional stream-of-consciousness technique. Both techniques are based on Free Association and both achieve similar artistic effects. The

only significant difference between the two techniques is in the adaptation of free association; while Joyce adapts his technique to the traits of his main characters, Crane adapts his technique to the subject of his poem.

Like many artists, the techniques both Joyce and Crane use result in ambiguity; a part of this ambiguity may be attributed to the nature of the techniques themselves, another part may be due to the two authors' similar artistic temperaments, but there is a part that is definitely attributable to the influence of one author on the other. About Joyce's ambiguity Arnold Kettle writes:

More perhaps than any writer of English since Shakespeare Joyce was aware of the richness of content and significance behind the ambiguities of language and the literary possibilities involved in this realization. . . . The ambiguous nature of language is its glory in so far as it expresses the actual complexity, the dialectical sense of growth and change which are the very core of life and which a static, mechanistic, dead use of language cannot capture. (Kettle, pp. 149-50)

Emulating Joyce, Crane seeks the rich complexity and the infinite potentialities inherent in the language of ambiguity. Brom Weber notices that

. . . additional light can be thrown on Crane's obscurity by virtue of the existence of several versions of some of the poems written in this first period. It would seem that the revisions which he made, while they undoubtedly improved the lines in which the changes occurred, often shrouded the original meanings, and invoked ambiguity. (Weber, p. 46)

In a moment of despair and self-reproach Crane writes: "I have never, so far, been able to present a vital, living and tangible,---a



positive emotion to my satisfaction. For as soon as I attempt such an act I either grow obvious or ordinary, and abandon the thing at the second line" (Letters 1965, p. 71). It is evident that Crane (like Joyce) equates clarity and mediocrity of expression with artistic failure, and logically, ambiguity and subtlety with artistic achievement and technical accomplishment.

Equal to Crane's indebtedness to Joyce for his aesthetic theory, his choice of subjects, and his techniques, is his indebtedness for his world-picture. Joyce seems to provide Crane with a world-picture remarkable, not only for its optimistic attitude toward life, but also for a viable ontology that makes life possible for art. Ulysses is a work of art not a philosophical tract, but the unavoidable conclusion a Joycean reader is likely to come to is that a very subtle, cyclic world-picture is being adequately portrayed in the book. By means of the Homeric parallels and the leitmotifs in Ulysses, Joyce's characters and their story become re-enactments, not only of the Odyssey, but also of a host of other mythical, religious, artistic, and actual figures and their stories. In the middle of his exposition of his Shakespearean theory, Stephen Dedalus inadvertently refers to the cyclic pattern of human life:

And as the mole on my right breast is where it was when I was born, though all my body has been woven of new stuff time after time . . . that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be. (Joyce 1961, p. 194)

There are two ways of looking at the cyclism of Ulysses:

either as an artistic device by means of which Joyce manages to organize structurally his ample, disparate materials and symbolically to turn his novel into history's "little day" that epitomizes all of life, or that cyclism is the very mode of history through which it repeats itself and recapitulates its elements as it progresses in time. In Ulysses, as in Finnegans Wake, Joyce seems to suggest that cyclism is the very mode of history and not just an artistic device.

On a purely psychological level, cyclism (as opposed to "linearism") invests history with a reassuring optimism by subjugating the awed unpredictability of "tomorrow" to the warm familiarity of "yesterday"--it creates the positive feeling that whatever the future brings is bound to be a "déjà vu." But apart from any psychological reassurance, cyclism (or what Mircea Eliade calls the Myth of Eternal Return in a book by the same name) has other very fascinating aspects. As anthropologists aptly proved, the myth of eternal return is as old and as common to the collective subconsciousness (regardless of race, time, or geographical location) as the Fall of Man and is a logical supplement of it. The fall-of-man archetype helps account for the presence of evil in life by laying the responsibility for it on Satan and Man instead of God, the Creator. The eternal-return concept, on the other hand, helps alleviate the brunt of evil by locating evil in the very nature of things and investing history with a pattern of teleological repetition. But does eternal return imply that history is a monotonous cycle wherein the same old story is retold anew ad infinitum? Arnold Goldman provides an interesting answer:

The notion of cyclic experience is double-faced. That nothing is ever "new," that every action is destined to be repeated over and over again may suggest on the one hand Sisyphus at his eternal task. . . . On the other hand, cyclic return can be taken, as does Mircea Eliade, to represent a flight from "the terror of history," towards "the 'staticization' of becoming toward annulling the irreversibility of time." In this view of "archaontology," the reintroduction of the new cycle brings a "regeneration." (Goldman 1966, p. 118)

Mircea Eliade argues that, with all its deep roots in Oriental and Eastern mysticism, the cyclic theory of history is not peculiar to the Eastern hemisphere; since pre-Christian times through the seventeenth century, Europeans never ceased to believe in cyclic evolution. The coming of Christianity into the scene did not shake the European belief in cyclism: the new religion had to accommodate the old belief in its very texture. With the coming of the seventeenth century a new theory, known as linearism or progressivism, started to take roots in the European cultural scene in opposition to cyclism. With all its authority and influence, the new theory failed to obliterate the older theory; both of them continued to co-exist side by side (Eliade, pp. 141-5).

In the eighteenth century, the cyclic theory found an eloquent spokesman in the person of Giambattista Vico, the Italian philosopher, who, in his book The New Science, managed to rationalize it into an elaborate theory of history. Starting from the premise of divine guidance in history, Vico remarks that every human society emerges, grows in power, achieves maturity, then starts to decline. To put it in Viconian terms, human societies start with a Theocratic regime, then develop into an Aristocratic social structure, then

become Democracies after which they undergo a "Ricorso," or a relapse into anarchy, to start the cycle all over again. Through this cyclic pattern God pushes history forward--progress through repetition (Vico, p. xxxi). The two theories of cyclism and linearism continued to co-exist, in a state of tension (each gaining momentum and influence), from the seventeenth century on.

We must wait until our own century to see the beginnings of certain new reactions against this historical linearism and a certain revival of interest in the theory of cycles; so it is that, in political economy, we are witnessing the rehabilitation of the notion of cycles, fluctuation periodic oscillation, that in philosophy the myth of eternal return is revived by Nietzsche or that, in the philosophy of history, a Spengler or a Toynbee concern themselves with the problem of periodicity. (Eliade, pp. 145-6)

Eliade proceeds to say that the revival of interest in cyclism in all branches of human knowledge (including literature) has its important significance, for it points to the failure of the two most influential, linear theories of history in modern times: the Hegelian and the Marxian.

Joyce used the cyclic theory of history in both Ulysses and Finnegans Wake not only because it harmoniously accommodates, more than any other theory of history, the two patterns of progress and recurrence, but also because it provides the most subtle reconciliation between the notion of divine guidance (order) and the negative aspects of history (chaos) in an organic unity that far surpasses any interpretation of the universe provided by the mechanistic and linear theories of history.

The problem with all the linear theories of history, whether

they presuppose the existence of God (Hegel) or completely deny His existence (Marx), is that they either put the element of guidance (God) in control of but outside and beyond the historical process, or completely deny its existence claiming for history an open-ended structure directed by the human principle of trial and error (Marxism and Existentialism). The greatest achievement of cyclism is its organicist aspect: it locates the element of guidance within the historical process not outside, behind, or beyond it. With its insistence on the identity between the creator and the created and the existence of the former in every single particle of the latter, the cyclic theory gives the most plausible explanation for the question of evil in life without laying the responsibility for its existence on either God or man. In the light of the cyclic theory, history becomes the sum total of the combined and continual efforts of man and God (both "residents" of the universe though with varying degrees of power and ability) to overcome the innate imperfections of things, eliminate further negatives, achieve more progress, and create a higher form of order. Evil becomes the natural and innate attribute of matter, and good becomes the spiritual and intellectual endeavors of God and man to refine and reorganize nature.

Another great--though more esoteric--aspect of cyclism is its implicit endorsement of metempsychosis, metamorphosis, and the unity and interchangeability of all forms of life. Joyce was no alien to this aspect of cyclism. In his book James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses," Frank Budgen tells us that "Joyce saw life in Ulysses much as an atomic chemist sees the world, as a thing of myriad forms

but few elements, and the same holds good of Work in Progress [Finnegans Wake]" (Budgen, p. 309). It is this use of Metamorphosis in Ulysses that enables Joyce to identify his characters with Homer's characters as well as a host of other mythical, religious, artistic, and historical figures. Crane learned about the metamorphic technique from Joyce and applied it as a connective and unifying device in his poems instead of logic. His poems, according to Sister M. Bernetta Quinn, proceed in accordance with "the logic of the imagination--akin to that of dreams and hence metamorphosis" (Quinn 1955, p. 166). In The Bridge (which she examines thoroughly together with Eliot's The Waste Land), she aptly remarks that

Crane carries this technique [metamorphosis] even further in The Bridge, as he meticulously and subtly converts one image into another, the poem itself becoming its subject: a bridge from one insight into another until the reader reaches the bank of final illumination, opposite the bank of uncertainty on which is built the terrestrial hell of Manhattan. (Quinn 1955, p. 89)

Having outlined Crane's indebtedness to Joyce for his aesthetic theory, his choice of subjects, his technique, his world-picture and ontology, it remains for us to practically apply these theoretical guidelines to Crane's poetic output and see what new light they may be able to shed on it.

## CHAPTER V

### PORPHYRO AND DEDALUS:

#### ART AND ARTIST IN WHITE BUILDINGS

Despite the relative absence of book-length studies on White Buildings--an advantage The Bridge, though still controversial, seems to have over it--a large majority of critics unanimously agree that the 1926 collection of poems is Crane's greatest achievement which, notwithstanding the relative paucity of his entire canon, places him squarely in the first ranks of America's greatest and most accomplished poets. The eminence accorded White Buildings is due in large part to the fact that in it Crane manages to blend harmoniously and give voice to his major artistic concerns: everyday life as an embodiment of eternal and immutable laws, the poet's oracular function in society, the relation of art to life, the roots of poetic expression in the subconscious, the irrational as an expression of the transcendental, and mythology as a viable tool in understanding history. These concerns turn the poems in the collection into coherent poetic statements that collectively form the corpus of Crane's Joyce-inspired, aesthetic theory.

In "Legend," the opening poem of the collection, Crane announces "the theme of the entire volume: artistic intuitions occasioned by suffering point the way to a higher positive view" (Quinn

1963, p. 42). The poem starts with a Platonic statement ("As silent as a mirror is believed / Realities plunge in silence by") that seems reminiscent of what Joyce calls the "changeless laws" which underlie "the whimsicalities and circumstances of men and women" (Joyce 1959, p. 40). Commenting on these two lines, Sister M. Bernetta Quinn observes that

A thoroughly logical account of the grammar in the first two lines probably cannot be worked out; possible ellipses are: "As silent as a mirror [which] is believed" and "As silent as a mirror is believed [to be]." A third version might result from supplying a mental comma after "is," thus making "believed" an attributive adjective modifying the first word in line two. The rearrangement nearest to the syntax of prose would be: "Realities, as silent as a mirror [which] is believed, plunge by in silence," "believed" in the sense of accepted as true, though not satisfactorily proved. The notion of reality and its reflection is thus set up in the beginning, to be developed throughout the lyric. (Quinn 1951, p. 85)

Sister Quinn is indirectly pointing out Crane's debt to Joyce, not only for the effective use of ellipsis (which is the hallmark of Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique), but also for making the technique of his poem expressive (not just communicative) of the theme: reality and its reflection on the mind.

In the following stanza, Crane stresses the impersonality and ineluctability of these realities, man's helplessness toward them, and hence the absurdity and uselessness of remorse: "I am not ready for repentance; / Nor to match regrets." In a letter to Yvor Winters, Crane reiterates the same attitude: "I have never been able to regret--for long--whatever has happened to me. . ." (Letters 1965, p. 299). Both statements sound like a logical conclusion to Joyce's



idea in Ulysses, with regard to Shakespeare, that "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery" (Joyce 1961, p. 190).

Emulating Joyce--this time in the use of correspondences--Crane draws a parallel between himself (the artist), the moth, and the lover:

... For the moth  
 Bends no more than the still  
 Imploring flame. And tremorous  
 In the white falling flakes  
 Kisses are,--  
 The only worth all granting.<sup>1</sup> (p. 3)

What the three have in common is the inescapable inevitability of their essential functions despite the hazards involved; the moth seeks the light of the flame despite the danger of burning, the lover seeks the emotional gratification of love regardless of the potential pain involved, and the artist seeks to metamorphose his life experience notwithstanding the agony inherent in the process. According to R. W. B. Lewis, "Legend" deals with the relation of "the continuing experience of physical and emotional love" to artistic creativity, and as such "it is a clarification of moral attitude, a poetic re-thinking of the complex relation between the sexual and the artistic life" (Lewis 1967, p. 136). This connection between sexuality and artistic creativity seems to link Crane directly to Shakespeare who, according to Joyce's Shakespearean theory in Ulysses, transformed his personal experiences and emotional traumas into fine dramatic art. By recreating his personal experiences into

art, "by the repeated poetic act," Sherman Paul argues, "the poet survives his experience and achieves his highest being-in-the-world" (Paul, p. 102).

Commenting on stanza two, Sister Quinn unintentionally points out another aspect of Joyce's influence upon Crane: the use of portmanteau words. "In the second stanza," she writes, "Crane unites 'tremulous' and 'timorous,' getting from the coinage 'tremorous' the joint idea of hesitancy and an experience characterized by a nervous thrill" (Quinn 1951, p. 85).

Having drawn his analogy between the artist, the moth, and the lover, Crane proceeds in the opposite direction pointing out the difference:

It is to be learned--  
This cleaving and this burning,  
But only by the one who  
spends out himself again. (p. 3)

If the artist's drive to transform his life experience into art is as natural and spontaneous as the lover's love and the moth's urge toward the light, the process by means of which this transformation is brought about is far from natural or spontaneous; it is hard-won, "it is to be learned."

Twice and twice  
(Again the smoking souvenir,  
Bleeding eidolon!) and yet again.  
Until the bright logic is won  
Unwhispering as a mirror  
Is believed. (p. 3)

Then, drop by caustic drop, a perfect cry  
 Shall string some constant harmony.--  
 Relentless caper for all those who step  
 The legend of their youth into the noon. (p. 3)

Margaret Uroff points out Crane's subtlety in drawing the analogy between the poet and the moth: fire is an important ingredient in the lives of both of them. Unlike the moth, however, "the fire does not destroy the poet; it burns him and torments him and never ceases to allure him. Yet it is by enduring this repeated ritual of burning that he will win the prize, the poetic image." She goes on to apply that theme on Crane's life and career claiming that "the legend of Crane's art is one of purification, of the cleaving, burning, and spending of life in order to produce art" (Uroff, p. 27). And here we may add that that is also the legend of Joyce's art and life.

Several critics agree with Herbert Leibowitz that "Legend" deals with the inevitability and necessity of suffering for artistic creativity (Leibowitz, pp. 8-9). The theme of suffering as a positive element in life and art links the poet to the moth and the lover, and art to religion--Christianity to be specific. "Legend," Uroff says, "is not the story of a saint's life; it is the story of the poet's life. But, like the saint, the poet's suffering is purposeful, and, like the saint too, the poet lives for that purpose" (Uroff, p. 25). Samuel Hazo agrees with this viewpoint and finds in the poem larger religious and mythological symbolism; according to Hazo the images of "smoking souvenirs" and "bleeding eidolon" suggest the Phoenix and Jesus Christ respectively as parallels for the artist"

(Hazo, p. 19). Here it is worthwhile to remember the relation Joyce establishes, in the ninth chapter of Ulysses, between material and artistic creations, God and Shakespeare. The Joyce influence is also self-evident in the theme of the poem which, according to Hazo, "evolves from the tension between death and renewal, giving and receiving, immolation and transfiguration" (Hazo, p. 18).

In spite of the fact that the theme of "Black Tambourine" is ostensibly the plight of the Negro in America, Crane's main concern in the poem seems to be the status of the poet in modern times. R. W. B. Lewis claims that "It is a poem about the American Negro in the modern world that becomes a poem also about the American poet in the modern world---and about the destiny of poets generally" (Lewis 1967, p. 26).

The poem begins with a statement on the miserable condition of the American Negro, a statement which smacks of condemnation of mankind and history:

The interests of a black man in a cellar  
 Mark tardy judgment on the world's closed door.  
 Gnats toss in the shadow of a bottle,  
 And a roach spans a crevice in the floor. (p. 4)

In an artistic detachment worthy of Joyce himself, Crane seems to lay the blame for the Negro's miserable lot equivocally on the Negro himself just as much as on the historical circumstances over which he has little or no control. "A propagandist for either side of the Negro question," Crane writes, "could find anything he wanted to in it" (Letters 1965, p. 58). Not only the technique but the philosoph-

ical viewpoint portrayed in the poem is Joycean. The regrettable state of the black man and his wish to transcend it mark a judgment on the dark side of life, the Hegelian negatives of historical dialectics, "the nightmare" from which Stephen Dedalus is trying to escape in Ulysses (Joyce 1961, p. 34). But the judgment is tardy and behind time, a fact which seems to indicate the Negro's inability to understand the dialectics of history and respond timely to them, hence his partial responsibility for his plight. (It really does not make much difference to whom the tardy judgment belongs--the Negro, or the world, or someone else--for in all cases there is that sense of passive helplessness on the part of the Negro.)

In the following stanza, "the connection between Negro and poet comes unmistakably into being . . . when the black man of stanza one is quietly juxtaposed to the archetypal poet and fabulist Aesop" (Lewis 1967, p. 28).

Aesop, driven to pondering, found  
Heaven with the tortoise and the hare;  
Fox brush and sow ear top his grave  
And mingling incantations on the air. (p. 4)

Sudden and unexpected as it may seem, the shift of focus from the Negro to Aesop is relatively smooth and strictly governed by the concept of free association--the common basis for Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique and Crane's logic-of-metaphor theory. Like Aesop, the Negro is a slave and, like the Negro, who is "physically surrounded by gnats and roaches, Aesop is poetically surrounded by those animals through fables about whom he expressed the highest

truths about man . . . and his grave, somewhat like the black man's tomb-like altar, is littered with animal remains" (Lewis 1967, p. 28).

R. W. B. Lewis and Sherman Paul believe that the black man's cellar "seems to suggest the womb or the grave" (Paul, p. 60). The identification of the black man's cellar with Aesop's grave seems intentional on Crane's part; it conveys the central paradox of the poem: the Negro's death-in-life versus Aesop's life-in-death.

The black man does not find in these insects the heaven Aesop found in small animals--in writing fables about them. He has not found, like Aesop, a way to transform his suffering. Where Aesop, "driven to pondering," found a way, he "wanders" in a mid-kingdom of forlornness. (Paul, p. 60)

The influence of Joyce's Shakespearean theory is evident here: the origination of art in human suffering, the ability of art to transform suffering into aesthetic forms, and art as a means of finding meaning and significance in history and imposing form upon its amorphous flux. Unlike Aesop who "found / Heaven"

The black man, forlorn in the cellar,  
Wanders in some mid-kingdom, dark, that lies,  
Between his tambourine, stuck on the wall,  
And, in Africa, a carcass quick with flies. (p. 4)

Art is not only a truth-finding but also an identity-finding activity. Contrary to Aesop, who found his identity by transforming his misery into art, the black man fails to transform his suffering, and hence falls short of realizing his identity. He is "arrested, trapped. His tambourine, the instrument with which he might have transformed his torment into song, is 'black,' 'stuck on the wall,'

silent" (Uroff, p. 21). He wanders between his "civilized" present in America as a slave-clown, symbolized by the tambourine hanging on the wall, and his savage and primitive past in Africa, represented by the "carcass quick with flies." "The predicament of the black man," Leibowitz affirms, "is dramatized by juxtaposing words that connote geographical and historical space with words that signify his claustrophobic world, his being immured in the slum cellar" (Leibowitz, p. 53).

There are two ways of looking at the total meaning of the poem--both of which the poem invites and allows for--depending on whether Aesop (and every artist) is to be totally or partially identified with the Negro. If the artist is to be wholly identified with the black man in the cellar, his fate becomes identical with the black man's. Uroff favors this reading of the poem:

The black man is an outcast and a victim of the world's injustice, but he is even more a silenced musician, and in both roles his situation is close to the modern poet's. The restriction and enclosure of this poem describe both the victimization of the black man and the paralysis of the creative spirit. (Uroff, p. 21)

This is a legitimate reading with a firm basis in the poem. However, the other reading--which is more in line with Crane's conception of poetry as his life-long vocation, Joyce's influence upon him, and the structure of the poem itself--seems more plausible. According to this reading, the artist may be faced with the same agonizing circumstances as any other human being, but unlike any other human being, the artist is able to rationalize his agony and sublimate his suffering to the permanence, teleology, wisdom,

and beauty of art. The black man, in the light of this reading, becomes a symbol for non-artistic, average humanity living indifferently from day to day and enslaved by petty ambitions, vain aspirations, and materialistic drives. The artist, on the other hand, symbolizes the supreme human endeavor to transcend personal suffering and the pettiness of everyday cares in order to find meaning in life and purpose in human agony; this artistic endeavor is truly the most altruistic of all human inventions and activities.

Crane's focus in "My Grandmother's Love Letters" shifts from the function of art and the artist to one of the main components of the artistic talent: empathy. In this nostalgic poem, Crane faces the same artistic problem Joyce confronts in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, namely the artistic presentation of personal and biographical data. In this poem it is his own grandmother that Crane seeks to portray. "Against the then current belief in 'impersonality' in poetry, and the then current tone of wry and witty detachment," Lewis argues, Crane seeks in this poem to transform an autobiographical experience into an objective work of art" (Lewis 1967, p. 30). (The example set in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man--where Joyce turns his life story into an ingenious autobiography by the artistic detachment of which is a literary landmark---and its influence can hardly be ignored when dealing with "My Grandmother's Love Letters.")

In this poem we see a classical example of Crane's conscious attempt to break loose from the grip of Eliot's influence and his famed Impersonal Theory and to emulate Joyce's method whereby utmost



objectivity is paradoxically achieved through contemplating and manipulating autobiographical material with the detachment of "the God of creation." Like Joyce, Crane has to preserve the balance in this poem between his familiarity and personal involvement with his grandmother on the one hand, and the impersonal, aesthetic distance required for proper art on the other. To use Crane's own words, his dilemma is to present "that dear old lady" in a realistically balanced fashion so that she does not appear "too sweet or too naughty" in the final product (Letters 1965, p. 22). Solving the artistic problem involved in the poem under consideration in a satisfactory manner is extremely vital to Crane. R. W. B. Lewis notices in the poem "a sort of lingering urgency; for if Crane can compose the poem (or song) about his grandmother that he wants, if he can harmonize her past and present through the resources of art, he can then touch directly upon her intimate reality" (Lewis 1967, p. 31). He, therefore, can touch directly upon the reality of his own experience and human experience in general. The poem begins with an assertion of the vital role of memory:

There are no stars to-night  
 But those of memory.  
 Yet how much room for memory there is  
 In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough  
 For the letters of my mother's mother,  
 Elizabeth,  
 That have been pressed so long  
 Into a corner of the roof  
 That they are brown and soft,  
 And liable to melt as snow. (p. 6)

Commenting on these two stanzas, Vincent Quinn takes "the loose girdle of soft rain" for the poem's setting: a rainy evening at home where the poet, all alone, attempts "to draw closer to his grandmother by sharing in her youthful experience of love" (Quinn 1963, p. 36). Yet there is another interpretation; in its rhythmic fall and its formation of rivers, rain may be taken to stand for the passage of time as well as the flux of life as contrasted with the fixity (both in time and place) of the grandmother's love-letters. This reading is justified by Hazo's interpretation that "My Grandmother's Love Letters" is "not only a poem of nostalgia but one which confronts the impossibility of man's attempts to revoke the onrush of time" (Hazo, p. 20).

The intensity of the poet's desire, in the first two stanzas, to share his grandmother's love experience is counterbalanced, in the following stanza, by his awareness of the enormity of the task involved in his desire to understand and share in the emotional experience of someone else:

Over the greatness of such space  
Steps must be gentle.  
It is all hung by an invisible white hair.  
It trembles as birch limbs webbing the air. (p. 6)

"The very act of probing into the past," Hazo asserts, "requires as much reverence as it does delicacy" (Hazo, p. 20). Sherman Paul observes that "this desire-moving memory creates, in turn, the vast 'space' (or time) that memory itself must span and fails to span because it is checked, in the attempt, by the poet's knowledge of

fragile connection and difficult repression" (Paul, p. 40). The poet starts to doubt his ability to span the big gap of space and time that stands between him and his grandmother's experience:

And I ask myself:

"Are your fingers long enough to play  
Old keys that are but echoes:  
Is the silence strong enough  
To carry back the music to its source  
and back to you again  
As though to her?" (p. 6)

Lewis, Paul, and Hazo take the stanza for an admission of Crane's inability to span the gap between his time and his grandmother's, and hence his failure to break loose from his subjectivity to express the truth about another human being. The three scholars seem to take the question posed in the stanza literally whereas it is possible that the question is rhetorical, aimed to create an effect rather than state a doubt. In this respect, it is akin to the doubt Joyce may have shown if he were to write a poem, during the writing of Ulysses, about his problem in identifying with Leopold and Molly Bloom, trying to reproduce their innermost thoughts by means of his stream-of-consciousness technique. The last stanza in the poem seems to support this reading:

And I would lead my grandmother by the hand  
Through much of what she would not understand;  
And so I stumble. And the rain continues on the roof  
With such a sound of gently pitying laughter. (p. 6)

If Crane is admitting his failure to identify with his grandmother's world and, subsequently, to be able to recreate it artistically, and

therefore meaningfully, how can he possibly lead her "through much of what she would not understand"? Again, does not the fact that he can lead his grandmother "through much of what she would not understand" imply that he can understand certain aspects of her experience that she cannot--being an artist, he is endowed with an insight into human experience that lay humanity lacks. Crane reconstructs his grandmother's experience in much the same way Joyce reconstructs Shakespeare's life and career in the Scylla-and-Charybdis chapter of Ulysses. Most of Crane's critics seem to brood over "And so I stumble" overlooking the cause-and-effect connection it has with the preceding two lines and their self-confident tone: "Yet I would lead my grandmother by the hand / Through much of what she would not understand." Crane's "stumbling" is very reminiscent of the attitude Stephen Dedalus evinces having brilliantly expounded his Shakespearean theory. Stephen constructs a very subtle theory taking into account a great deal of the sparse biographical facts available on him yet presenting a new and extraordinarily subtle understanding of Shakespeare's oeuvre, psychology, and times. When asked by Eglinton if he believes his own theory, Stephen answers promptly: "No." And then we hear his interior monologue: "I believe, O Lord, help my unbelief. That is, help me to believe or help me to unbelieve? Who helps to believe? Egomen. Who to unbelieve? Other chap" (Joyce 1961, p. 214). Stephen's theory is logically consistent but cannot be historically verified. The theory in itself is almost flawless and coherent; every detail in it is supported by a historical proof of some kind and it may very well be historically true, yet its

authenticity cannot be verified. But this is also the case with human history in general; events occur and may be recounted in a way no two people would contest, but when human mind attempts to understand the inner mechanism of the historical event, to find out its moral significance, to relate it to previous historical events, to consider it as a part of a larger historical trend, or to locate it in the context of human history in general, it is then that we may end up with myriad interpretation of one and the same historical event. Therefore, the absolute truth about any historical event, we may conclude, "is the sum total of all the given interpretations and the potential ones that have not materialized yet--only the super-human mind of God can comprehend such absolute complexity. And since the artist in Joyce's terms is the closest human approximation of God, he is able to reconstruct new interpretations of already extant events and facts. (What makes the work of the artist unique--compared to that of the historian, for instance, whose field is also mankind--is that he is not required to produce a historical fact for every statement he makes or to limit his understanding to actualities rather than potentialities.)

Crane, who read Ulysses as if it were the Bible, seems to have absorbed Joyce's influence regarding the artist's ability to reconstruct human history. The similarities between the Scylla-and-Charybdis episode and "My Grandmother's Love Letters" are too numerous to be merely coincidental. In both we have two young artists trying to understand and reconstruct the experience of someone else. The experience in both is a love experience which seems to have far-

reaching and long-lasting effect. The two artists are removed, both in place and time, from the experiences they are trying to fathom. The two artists are familiar with one side of the personality whose experience they are trying to reconstruct--Joyce with Shakespeare's canon and Crane with his grandmother as a sweet old woman--yet the side they are trying to understand is the one they are least familiar with--Shakespeare as a young, betrayed husband and Elizabeth, Crane's grandmother, as a young woman in love. Both Joyce and Crane arrive at interpretations of the experiences of Shakespeare and Elizabeth that do not seem to conform with the estimates both of them have of their own experiences--Crane leads his "grandmother by the hand / Through much of what she would not understand," and Shakespeare could have hardly agreed with Joyce's idea that his wife's unfaithfulness to him was the main motive behind his great dramatic art or, for that matter, of Joyce's calling him a "cuckold," "a cornjobber and moneylender" who, like Shylock, "exacted his pound of flesh in interest for every money lent" (Joyce 1961, p. 204).

Joyce's influence also shows in the technique of the poem, in Crane's subtle attempt to recreate, rather than present, the character he is trying to portray. Like Joyce, Crane uses indirect evocation rather than direct statement to present his character--he does not describe, he merely suggests--and by so doing he, like Joyce again, turns his reader into an active participant rather than a passive recipient. John Unterecker writes about this characteristic of Crane's style:

He had also learned how to produce poems that were not about people but rather that were in a way equivalent

for people. "My Grandmother's Love Letters," for instance, evoked the grandmother rather than described her, defined her by assigning her qualities to remembered stars, to soft rain, to insubstantial snow; to gentle steps, to "invisible" white hair, to webbed birch limbs, to gentle laughter, to music thought about--not played. (Unterecker 1969, p. 153)

In "Sunday Morning Apples"--which is more than a simple tribute to the art and talent of William Sommer, a famous painter and a friend of the poet--Crane picks up where he left off in "My Grandmother's Love Letters": he explores the nature of the relation of art to life. "In content," Lewis argues, the poem is a summation, almost an abstract, of the themes that had hitherto preoccupied Crane: primarily, the subtle and shifting relation between art and the actual" (Lewis 1967, p. 41).

The leaves will fall again sometime and fill  
 The fleece of nature with these purposes  
 That are your rich and faithful strength of line. (p. 7)

In this first stanza, Crane seems not only to equate the art of William Sommer (whose paintings fascinate him) with nature, but also to claim for art the ability to invest nature with aesthetic values and purposes. Commenting on the first three lines, Sherman Paul observes:

The dependence of the artist on nature is not one of imitation, though Sommer uses natural objects, but of inspiration: of contact with nature and the steady influence that moves through nature in her seasons. The first stanza provides this condition of art, and evokes the equanimity, confidence, and quiet hope that come of relying on this ultimate resource. The organic rhythm of nature--the poet recognizes inevitable seasonal change ("the leaves will fall")--this rhythm also renews life

and fulfills the artist's "purposes." For this purpose, the work of art; is to bring life out of death, movement out of stasis: to create, to transform one condition into another. (Paul, pp. 85-6)

This leads us to the second stanza where Crane moves a step further claiming for art superiority over nature:

But now there are challenges to spring  
 In that ripe nude with head  
   reared  
 Into a realm of swords, her purple shadow  
 Bursting on the winter of the world  
 From whiteness that cries defiance to the snow. (p. 7)

Art poses a challenge to nature. The rule in nature is flux, one season yielding to another in an incessant serenade of death and rebirth, destruction and construction. "At the heart of the poem," Unterecker claims, "'spring' gives way to summer ripeness (the 'ripe nude'), which itself merges unobtrusively into autumn's 'purple shadow' to burst finally 'on the winter of the world.'" Art provides an aesthetic stasis to the amorphous kinesis of changing seasons; it "does not so much imitate nature, faithfully, as outdo it," remarks Lewis (Lewis 1967, p. 42). Notice how art, symbolized by the "ripe nude," is ominously surrounded by threatening aspects of nature (her head is "reared / Into a realm of swords"). Yet in spite of her vulnerable beauty and apparent weakness, she is stronger than the threatening aspects of nature surrounding her ("her purple shadow / Bursting on the winter of the world / From whiteness that cries defiance to the snow"). Here we are dealing with the same idea we



have dealt with in "My Grandmother's Love Letters," the role of human mind in interpreting nature and history. Man may be a product of nature yet he has the ability, in spite of his short span on earth, to arrange and rearrange the elements of nature in so many different ways to conform with one premise or another. (That is probably why we have so many philosophies and ontologies despite the fact that nature has always been the same.)

A boy runs with a dog before the sun, straddling  
Spontaneities that form their independent orbits,  
Their own perennials of light  
In the valley where you live

(called Brandywine).

(p. 7)

In this "scene"---which is a verbal rendering of one of Sommer's paintings---Crane points out the contrast between the "spontaneities" of man and the predetermined, fixed cycles of nature (symbolized by the sun), between art (the product of the former) and the actual (the outcome of the latter). Nature provides a seemingly static backdrop of recurrent phenomena against which the dynamic human drama is being acted. Yet in actual fact, both nature and mankind are in a state of perpetual flux and interplay continuously generating aesthetic spontaneities which, being fleeting, call for the worked-out artifice of art for a faithful and truthful reproduction. The boy and the dog, according to Lewis,

compose an artistic masterpiece; but a masterpiece that is not only happening in actuality; it is a happening characterized not by artifice but by spontaneity. It is the very essence of the boy's and the dog's experience

that they inhabit--more actively, as they run, they "straddle"--a world that is spontaneous, uncontrived, free. . . . That is what nature offers the artist, whose task it then is to capture on canvas both the beauty of the natural design and the sense of the unplanned which is a part of it. (Lewis 1967, p. 43)

This life-art paradox is brought to a climax in the last two stanzas of the poem wherein Crane describes an actual painting by William Sommer:

I have seen the apples there that toss you secrets,--  
Beloved apples of seasonable madness  
That feed your inquiries with aerial wine.

Put them again beside a pitcher with a knife,  
And poise them full and ready for explosion--  
The apples, Bill, the apples! (p. 7)

Art depends on nature for subject-matter; it has to submit to the dictates of the real world, so to speak. "Such submission," Lewis tells us, "is in fact art's way of making an interpretive addition to nature" (Lewis 1967, p. 44). Unterecker, on the other hand, seems to provide a slightly different interpretation of the poem laying more stress on the contrast between the fixity of nature and the spontaneities of mankind, rather than on their interplay. He says:

Dealing with man's "spontaneities," his free gestures in a world of fixed, recurrent cycles, both Crane and Sommer celebrate the "explosion" of delight an artist's "inquiries" can produce when, with understanding eyes, he arranges a still life or abstracts from the moving pattern of life the design joy scrawls on time--as when, for instance, "A boy runs with a dog before the sun." (Unterecker 1969, p. 261)

In "Sunday Morning Apples," as in "My Grandmother's Love Letters," we perhaps can see how Crane adapts to his own work Joyce's

aesthetic theory and practice where art is both a representation and an addition to nature. Joyce's influence upon Crane in this poem cannot be pinned down to any particular work by Joyce but is rather to be sought in the Joycean fiction as a whole. All of Joyce's fiction--with the possible exception of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man--follows closely the three unities of action, place, and time. All the stories in Dubliners take place in Dublin, all show unity of action which is always based on a simple incident in the life of a certain Dubliner, an incident that culminates in self-revelation and a sense of paralysis (which is the common theme that unifies the fifteen stories in the collection). "Coming to awareness of self-realization," Tindall says, "marks the climax of these stories" (Tindall 1959, p. 4). The moment of self-realization in all of the fifteen stories seems to be an epiphany, a revelation, a microcosmic representation of a lifetime. Again, almost every one of the fifteen stories takes place within less than twenty-four hours--usually during the course of an afternoon or an evening.

Even A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man which--due to its selective and eclectic covering of the milestones of the first twenty-two years of Joyce's life--does not seem to conform to the unity of time, closely observes the unities of place and action. Not only does the novel take place in Dublin, it proceeds consistently and uniformly toward its logical climax: "to show how for a potential artist to grow up is to move steadily toward the recognition of the necessity of exile" (Daiches, p. 85).

In his two great works Joyce closely observes the three unities; both take place in Dublin and within less than twenty-four hours--Ulysses covers the events of eighteen hours, and Finnegans Wake covers one night. And although Joyce's theme in Ulysses seems to be modern life, and in Finnegans Wake the history of the world, his scope in both works is rather limited--in Ulysses it is a rather eventless day (16 June 1904) in the life of three Dubliners, and in Finnegans Wake it is the dream (or rather nightmare) of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, a publican and a family man of Scandinavian stock.

In all his fiction Joyce manages to cover large vistas of human life through a small number of ordinary people with everyday actions against the backdrop of early-twentieth-century Dublin, a fact that Crane could not have missed during his thorough readings of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses. Also Joyce's use of the Homeric parallel--with its implication that a work of art (the Odyssey) is capable not only of providing a model for another work of art, but also of interpreting history adequately--must have been a source of inspiration in writing "Sunday Morning Apples." We know for a fact from a letter he wrote to Gorham Munson that he wrote the poem on August 6, 1922 (Letters 1965, p. 96), eleven days after Gorham Munson brought him his copy of Ulysses on July 26, 1922 (Letters 1965, p. 94). In the same letter in which he informs Munson about the poem, saying: "I have a homely and gay thing to show you that I did yesterday out of sheer joy," he tells him in the sentence immediately following that "Joyce is being savoured slowly--with steady pleasure" (Letters 1965, p. 96). It is not hard to see the

connection in Crane's mind between his poem and Ulysses--free association may be of great help in this respect. (It is important to remember that Crane's acquaintance with Ulysses started a few years prior to his possession of a copy of the book in the summer of 1922; Crane read the novel when it was published in installments in The Little Review.)

Joyce's musings on history and reality (the "Nestor" and "Proteus" episodes) and his Shakespearean theory (with its infringements on art and its connection with theology, epistemology, philosophy, and history) in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode seem to have a direct bearing on the theme of "Sunday Morning Apples." In a similar fashion, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man seems to provide a clue to another Crane poem, "Praise for an Urn," which deals with the victimization of the artist by adverse circumstances. Written as an elegy for Ernest Nelson--a Norwegian immigrant, lithographer, painter, poet, and a friend of Crane's--whose premature death and cremation in 1922 touched Crane deeply, most critics seem to agree with Vincent Quinn that "Praise for an Urn" is "one of the most successful elegies in American poetry" (Quinn 1963, p. 37). And because of its deep emotional roots in Crane's personal and emotional life, many critics tend to dwell more on the autobiographical than any other element in the poem. Hazo, for instance, claims that "Crane saw in Nelson a symbol of his own condition as an artist" (Hazo, p. 28), and Leibowitz favors the view that the poem "is a simple, delicate tribute to Nelson" (Leibowitz, p. 198). Yet there is more to that poem than meets Hazo's and Leibowitz's eyes.

The opening stanza of the poem provides a description of Ernest Nelson that blends his traits with Crane's memories of him:

It was a kind and northern face  
That mingled in such exile guise  
The everlasting eyes of Pierrot  
And, of Gargantua, the laughter. (p. 8)

The "exile guise" is the key to this stanza. Coming closer to the mark than either Hazo or Leibowitz, Margaret Uroff notes that "the artist as exile is actually the subject of 'Praise for an Urn'" (Uroff, p. 21). Nelson is an exile in more than one sense: he is a native Norwegian in America and an artist living in a society unresponsive to his art. (For most of his life Joyce was an exile in both senses, living in Trieste, Paris, and Zurich, facing the skepticism and indifference of others.) Joyce's influence is self-evident not only in endorsing exile and its indispensability to the artist but also in Crane's stressing the extrinsic nature and externality of exile (it is merely a guise) --much like Joyce who considers exile an "arm," a self-defense tactic against the claims of family, fatherland, and church, rather than an essential artistic tool (Joyce 1962, p. 247).

Crane's recalling of Nelson's physical features (his face, eyes, and laughter) in the first stanza leads to a recall of his intellectual traits in the second stanza:

His thoughts, delivered to me  
From the white coverlet and pillow,  
I see now, were inheritances--  
Delicate riders of the storm. (p. 8)

Posthumously, the thoughts of moribund Nelson appear to be a spirit-

ual legacy that is bound to survive the test of time. The image portrayed in the second stanza--the artist's thoughts as "delicate riders of the storm"--is very significant, for it sums up the theme of the entire poem. The contrast between the fragile thoughts of bed-ridden, dying Nelson and the raging storm embodies the antithesis between the artist's physical weakness and mortality and nature's vigor and immortality. Yet, while time brings an end to the artist's physical existence, it carries his spiritual existence, artistic influence, and intellectual legacy down the ages to posterity. Nature, on the other hand, is physically immortal: it repeats itself cyclically and consistently down the ages in a monotonous symphony of futility--it is only through the talent and technique of the mortal artist that nature can aspire to any form of immortal, spiritual existence and moral and aesthetic significance. Unlike the storm, the poet's thoughts are "delicate," nonetheless they are "riders" (and in that sense, tamers) of "the storm." Nature defeats the artist physically (by terminating his life) and the artist defeats nature by squeezing certain meanings out of it, or by imposing an aesthetic form upon its amorphous flux. The following stanza reinforces that effect:

The slant moon on the slanting hill  
 Once moved us toward presentiments  
 Of what the dead keep, living still,  
 And such assessments of the soul. (p. 8)

"The slant moon"--with its association with Apollo, poetry, art, music, and divine madness--and "the slanting hill," with its artistic

(Parnassus) and mystical and religious connotations--Moses and Mount Sinai, Jesus and his Sermon on the Mount, and Muhammad and his Mountain Cave--seem to establish an association between art and mysticism, and to blend them both in one entity antithetical in essence and function to nature. And as the poet and his "delicate" thoughts are contrasted with nature and the storm, the moon as a symbol for art and beauty is contrasted with the sun--which appears in the last stanza--as a symbol for nature and time. A prose equivalent of this stanza would be: art and its mysticism have led Crane and Nelson to ponder the exclusive immortality artists achieve through their art though physically they are subject to nature and time.

As, perched in the crematory lobby,  
 The insistent clock commented on,  
 Touching as well upon our praise  
 Of glories proper to the time. (p. 8)

Here we are back from the realm of memories to the real world. The ticking of the clock in the crematory lobby is a constant reminder of the preponderance of time and the insignificance of man's life-span on earth. The clock keeps the time as Nelson's body is being cremated and as the customary word of praise, by which the living eulogize the dead, are being uttered in an ironic assertion of time's predominance and control as well as man's helplessness confronted with it. Yet, as we read this stanza in the light of the previous one we unmistakably realize the immortality Nelson's thoughts and artistic achievements are destined to, an immortality that defies human mortality.



Still, having in mind gold hair,  
 I cannot see that broken brow  
 And miss the dry sound of bees  
 Stretching across a lucid space. (p. 8)

Crane cannot accept the fact of Nelson's death; whenever he remembers Nelson's gold hair---which according to Lewis is "always for Crane a symbol of spiritual as well as physical beauty" (Lewis 1967, p. 39) and a reminder of Nelson's healthy days before his illness and death---Crane feels unable to accept the "broken brow" of Nelson's last days. By contrasting Nelson's "gold hair" (life) with his "broken brow" (death) and juxtaposing both to "the dry sound of bees / Stretching across a lucid space" (nature's timeless presence), Crane is able to point out nature's immortality, the transience of the artist, and nature's total indifference to human destiny.

Scatter these well-meant idioms  
 Into the smoky spring that fills  
 The suburbs, where they will be lost.  
 They are no trophies of the sun. (p. 8)

In the last stanza Crane seems to assign sensory attributes to non-physical things and haziness to physical things. For instance, instead of Nelson's ashes, it is his "well-meant idioms" that are to be scattered---a very succinct way to describe the union of the artist and his art and the consequent transformation of both, through death, into one immortal entity immune to the encroachments of time and the elements. And while "these well-meant idioms" seem to possess the concreteness of the physical ashes, the suburbs into which they are to be scattered are indistinct and hazy, being filled with a

"smoky spring." The idioms will be lost in a physical sense but--in the world of the poem where the noumenal, the spiritual, and the abstract are more real than the phenomenal, the physical, and the concrete--loss may be a gain. (Joyce's ideas in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode may throw a valuable light in this respect. Describing the return of Shakespeare from his self-imposed exile in London to Stratford, Joyce writes: "But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed") (Joyce 1961, p. 197). Nelson's "well-meant idioms" are "no trophies of the sun"; they are trophies of the moon, and if we recall the associations of the moon in stanza three, we can imagine the destiny of Nelson's "scattered idioms"--in the realm of artistic immortality, Platonic idealism, and Apollonian beauty.

"Chaplinesque," which is a tribute to the art and genius of Charlie Chaplin, shows what happens when the artist does not die at a young age but rather lives on to suffer the slings and arrows of an unsympathetic and unresponsive milieu. In this fine poem, Crane brings together three of Joyce's main concerns: art as an expression of "the sane and joyful spirit," the role of the artist as a clown and a redeemer, and the indifference and hostility of society toward the artist. (These three aspects of the Joycean influence on Crane will be dealt with later in the present chapter.)

We make our meek adjustments,  
Contented with such random consolations  
As the wind deposits  
In slithered and too ample pockets. (p. 11)

Crane writes to William Wright, on October 17, 1921, identifying the plural pronoun in the first line: "I am moved to put Chaplin with the poets (of today), hence the 'we'" (Letters 1965, p. 68). Hazo argues that the "we" stands for "man in the collective sense" (Hazo, p. 37). R. W. B. Lewis, on the other hand, points out that there is no contradiction between the two identifications; the archetype in the poem, Lewis argues, is "that of the clown: that is, of the poet as clown, or more exactly, as I shall want to suggest, of the poet, perhaps of Everyman, as Fool" (Lewis 1967, p. 45).

Frank Porter aptly observes the antithesis, in the first stanza, between the randomness of the consolations and the deliberateness of "deposits" (Porter, p. 191). This antithesis--which seems to suggest the disparity between the concept of order in life and mankind's inability to discern it--is what the first stanza purports. A possible interpretation of the stanza would be, unable to comprehend fully, the absolute order that informs life, we (both artists and non-artists) seek our own personal concepts of order ("We make our meek adjustments") which are conditioned by, but not fully truthful to, the realities of life. Another interpretation would be: unable to cope with the cruelty and indifference of life, we (the artists) seek shelter in our inner worlds where compassion and love abound.

For we can still love the world, who find  
 A famished kitten on the step, and know  
 Recesses for it from the fury of the street  
 Or warm torn elbow coverts. (p. 11)

The artist loves the world in spite of its cruelty, and nothing exemplifies this cruelty better than the indifferent attitude the world displays toward a helpless and vulnerable kitten left out in the cold. Only artists, with their empathy and compassion, "know / Recesses for it from the fury of the street"--knowing does not always mean being able to provide--"Or warm torn elbow coverts," which are sometimes all the artists--being poor and outcast themselves like the kitten--can provide by way of protection for the kitten "from the fury of the street." Explaining the symbol for which the kitten stands, Crane writes William Wright: "Poetry, the human feelings, 'the kitten,' is so crowded out of the humdrum, rushing, mechanical scramble of today that the man who would preserve them must duck and camouflage for dear life to keep them or keep himself from annihilation" (Letters 1965, p. 68). Hazo believes that "the kitten is an appropriate symbol of those things which beguile our affection and thus implicate us in their plight by an appeal to our sympathy and love. It stands for everything which forces us to be 'human' whether we will or not" (Hazo, p. 37). The association of the kitten with the Chaplin-artist-clown-tramp figure is given a higher pitch in the following stanza:

We will sidestep, and to the final smirk  
 Dally the doom of that inevitable thumb  
 That slowly chafes its puckered index toward us,  
 Facing the dull squint with what innocence  
 And what surprise! (p. 11)

Crane is here transcribing a typical scene in Chaplin's movies (in which the mean big-city "cop." who stands for authority and

society, harasses the tramp) in order to embody the status of the artist in the modern world and to point out parallels between him and a helpless kitten. However, the kitten is luckier than the artist-clown-tramp, for while the kitten finds a recess from "the fury of the street" in the "warm torn elbow coverts" of the artist-clown-tramp, there is no refuge for the outcast from "the doom of that inevitable thumb": his only arms in the face of harassment are innocence and surprise, two of the components of the artistic talent.

And yet these fine collapses are not lies  
 More than the pirouettes of any pliant cane;  
 Our obsequies are, in a way, no enterprise.  
 We can evade you, and all else but the heart:  
 What blame to us if the heart live on. (p. 11)

Commenting on the first three lines of this stanza, R. W. B. Lewis notes that "If . . . Crane was aware of the falsehoods into which cultural circumstance, as well as the very nature of poetic discourse, might seem to force a poet, he nonetheless affirms that the tactic of verbal trickery and the pose of self-abasement ('these fine collapses') only conceal, they do not violate, the truth perceived" (Lewis 1963, p. 747). He goes on to remark that "obsequies" reinforces the impression that "Chaplinesque" is "ultimately a poem about death: that the doom the poet-clown seeks to postpone is death itself; and that the inevitable thumb, the puckered index and the dull squint, add up to a grim portrait of death personified." Lewis proceeds to point out another possibility for "obsequies": that "what Crane really meant was 'obsequiousness'" (Lewis 1963, p. 748). And by the same token we may also add that the word "enterprise" may

mean either a bold and courageous undertaking or a business in the commercial sense. The double meanings of these two words seem to generate several layers of significance in a fashion reminiscent of the style of Finnegans Wake.

In the last two lines of the stanza the heart seems to stand for love, compassion, art, the artist, the kitten, the spiritual as opposed to the material, and all that make man human. The heart, as the source of these values, is indispensable and delightfully unavoidable in human life in the face of "the fury of authority, institutionalized religion, and jingoism--all that Joyce considers as nets flung at human soul to prevent it from flight.

In the last stanza of the poem, Crane succinctly recapitulates the diverse elements and threads:

The game enforces smirks; but we have seen  
The moon in lonely alleys make  
A grail of laughter of an empty ash can,  
And through all sound of gaiety and quest  
Have heard a kitten in the wilderness. (p. 11)

The first thread is that the survival of art in modern times enforces self-defense tactics on the artist who is constantly surrounded by a skeptical, indifferent, and hostile social milieu ("The game enforces smirks"). Secondly, art is capable of transmuting the most sordid and mundane aspects of life into sublime, aesthetic forms: the moon--here again, as in "Praise for an Urn," with its suggestiveness of Apollo, poetry, music, art, and divine madness--makes (in the Greek sense of "poesis") "A grail of laughter"--a blend of religion and the comic art in the Joycean sense of "the

sane and joyful spirit"--out of "an empty ash can." (This is one of Crane's most successful feats wherein a physical and literal image translates unobtrusively into a metaphor.)

The stanza closes with "a kitten in the wilderness" who is heard "through all sound of gaiety and quest"--again the subtle blend of religion and the comic art--which is a very apt image, not only because it adequately illustrates the weakness and helplessness of art and the indifference and hostility of society toward it--a paradoxical relation reminiscent of the two metaphors of the naked babe and the cloak of manliness which Cleanth Brooks finds to hold the principal clue to the meaning of Macbeth (Brooks, pp. 21-46)--but also because it successfully points out the manner in which art, weak and fragile as it is, manages to impose its centrality by bestowing form and meaning on its recalcitrant and irrelevant surroundings--much as the jar does to Tennessee in Wallace Stevens's poem "The Anecdote of the Jar."

As stated earlier, Crane's indebtedness to Joyce in "Chaplinesque" has three major aspects. First, the poem seems to advocate the Joycean concept that art is an expression of "the sane and joyful spirit" in more than one location. R. W. B. Lewis notices that the poem projects "the artist as comedian," that it "warrants special attention among the writings of Crane's first phase just because, on one level, it is a product of the comic spirit," and that "it is also a product of the rueful spirit" (Lewis 1967, p. 46). And we may add that it is an expression of "the comic spirit" as an all-encompassing spirit enveloping "the rueful spirit," or to

put it more accurately, of the comic spirit as the spirit of true art that transforms not only the rueful spirit but also all the woes, miseries, agony, and chaos of life into a contemplative, transcendental, and joyful beauty.

In his Paris Notebook, Joyce throws some light on his concept of art as an expression of the sane and joyful spirit; he writes:

All art which excites in us the feeling of joy is so far comic and according as this feeling of joy is excited by whatever is substantial or accidental in human fortunes the art is to be judged more or less excellent: and even tragic art may be said to participate in the nature of comic art so far as the possession of a work of tragic art (a tragedy) excites in us the feeling of joy. From this it may be seen that tragedy is the imperfect manner and comedy the perfect manner in the art. (Joyce 1959, p. 144)

And in Stephen Hero, Joyce evinces the same attitude, declaring his intention to follow "the classical temper" and

to bend upon these present things and so to work upon them and fashion them that the quick intelligence may go beyond them to their meaning which is still unuttered. In this method the sane and joyful spirit issues forth and achieves imperishable perfection. (Joyce 1956, p. 83)

S. L. Goldberg considers Ulysses a product of this "sane and joyful spirit" and Joyce thinks of his novel as a comedy. There is no doubt that Laforgue, Eliot, and Stevens (among other poets, English and French) have helped shape this concept of the artist as comedian in Crane's mind; however, Joyce's influence seems to be conspicuously stronger than any of theirs because it involves the very nature of art itself--not just the artist's.

Secondly, "Chaplinesque" stresses the Joycean notion of the



artist as a sufferer and a redeemer (beside being a clown and a fool). Sherman Paul argues that Crane "accepts the romantic notion of the poet as outcast, sufferer, and redeemer" (Paul, p. 62). And Leibowitz observes that beside other things, "Chaplinsque" is "a comment on the poet's indestructible power of transforming neglect, misunderstanding, poverty, and even the sureness of death into the triumphs of art" (Leibowitz, p. 39). This is the very crux of Joyce's Shakespearean theory. According to Joyce, Shakespeare's art is a record of his transformation of the agony of his life into the glories of art. (In that sense, Stephen's Shakespeare is very similar to Charlie Chaplin in "Chaplinsque"---a typical artist---a sufferer living the defeats and frustrations of his life, and a redeemer constantly transforming them into works of art.) "He goes back," Joyce writes in Ulysses, describing the return of Shakespeare to his native Stratford toward the end of his life, "weary of the creation he has piled up to hide him from himself, an old dog licking an old sore. But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed" (Joyce 1961, p. 197). Both Shakespeare and Joyce were---much like Chaplin and Crane---social outcasts and exiles of sorts all through the most productive years of their artistic careers, Shakespeare in London and Joyce in Trieste, Paris, and Zurich. (It is noteworthy that in pointing out Shakespeare's opportunism, Joyce uses an image reminiscent of clowns and magicians: "He drew Shylock out of his own long pocket.") (Joyce 1961, p. 204)

The third concern in the poem, which pertains to the place of

the artist in society and its hostility and indifference to him is another Joycean influence upon Crane. R. W. B. Lewis believes that "the necessary elusiveness of the poet in the contemporary world [is] the poem's very subject" (Lewis 1963, p. 746). Lewis holds that in "Chaplinesque," Crane shows that "the figure of the poet . . . is the alter ego of the slippery, impoverished and obscurely [sic] outlaw tramp; for the poet, too, has to seek refuge for his insufficiently nourished sensibility from the fury of contemporary life" (Lewis 1963, p. 747). In support of his hypothesis, Lewis quotes from Crane's letter to William Wright: "Poetry . . . is so crowded out of the humdrum, rushing, mechanical scramble of today that the man who would preserve [it] must duck and camouflage for dear life to keep [it] or keep himself from annihilation" (Lewis 1963, p. 747).

Expressing his willingness to sacrifice all for his art, Joyce writes in the passage we cited more briefly above: "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use--silence, exile, and cunning" (Joyce 1962, p. 247). Notice the association in Joyce's mind between dedicating his life to art and his need to adopt self-defensive measures against society in order to survive--the innate hostility of society to the artist and his art is implicit in this association. And in the face of that indifference and hostility he flings his acceptance of the status of the outcast: "I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake, and perhaps as

long as eternity too" (Joyce 1962, p. 247). Of the need to evade societal institutions he writes about himself in the third-person: "His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders" (Joyce 1962, p. 162). And of his awareness of the restrictions society imposes upon the artist, he writes: "when the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight" (Joyce 1962, p. 203).

At the beginning of the chapter on A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in his book James Joyce, S. L. Goldberg gives us an account of the dilemma of the artist versus his society. Although Goldberg is speaking of Joyce, his remark can be applicable to Crane; he writes:

The individual grows to consciousness within a specific social environment and is partly moulded by its pressures; but as he grows, he increasingly finds his society too fragmented, too materialistic, and too restrictive to sustain him. It offers him neither spiritual nourishment nor a usable culture, yet it is too powerful to be resisted or easily changed. If the individual is an artist his problem is especially acute. Just because of his greater sensitivity, he is forced apart from his society; just because of his alienation, he comes to represent its general condition in the clearest possible form. His position is riddled with the familiar paradoxes of much nineteenth- and twentieth-century art: he is at once a member of his society, a rebel, a martyr, and the possible saviour in whose imagination "the spirit of man makes a continual affirmation." (Goldberg 1962, p. 47)

Like "Chaplinesque," "Possessions" deals with the adverse circumstances which encumber the artist and his creative urge; but while the impediment in "Chaplinesque" is social, in "Possessions" it is psychological--the artist's own libidinous lust. The theme of the poem, Lewis tells us, is "the agonizing threat to creativity of

the fleshly impulses" (Lewis 1967, p. 133).

Witness now this trust! the rain  
 That steals softly direction  
 And the key, ready to hand--sifting  
 One moment in sacrifice (the direst)  
 Through a thousand nights the flesh  
 Assaults outright for bolts that linger  
 Hidden,--O undirected as the sky  
 That through its black foam has no eyes  
 For this fixed stone of lust... (p. 18)

The poem does not lend itself to easy paraphrase, and Crane acknowledges that fact when he writes that "'Possessions' really cannot be technically explained. It must rely (even to a large extent with myself) on its organic impact on the imagination to successfully imply its meaning" (Crane 1966, p. 222). According to Hazo, this "reliance on the 'organic impact' of a poem on a reader's imagination can easily lead to a relativistic criticism" (Hazo, p. 42).

Almost all the critics who attempt to explicate the poem feel compelled by the paraphrastic inaccessibility of the poem to pick up certain images from the poem and use them as critical skeletons on which to hang their readings of the poem. "The first stanza," Spears holds, "contrasts the rain, which has direction, and the key, which finds its proper lock and turns its bolts, with the poet's 'undirected' condition and his phallic 'fixed stone of lust' which is no key" (Spears, p. 26). And Lewis suggests that "through the 'black foam' of rain, the poet has 'no eyes' for the sky (in Crane's modernistic device, it is the sky that has lost direction and has no eyes for the stone of lust--whatever, by the way, that 'stone' is intended to be; perhaps only a symbol of immobilizing heaviness)"

(Lewis 1967, p. 135). Paul's reading of the poem seems to center on the first line of the first stanza:

The love for whose lack only death is an adequate measure is the "pure possession of 'Possessions'". . . . This is the spiritualization of love his trust in which he now asks us to witness in a poem relating to possession (madness) of wayward homoerotic desire, or lust. "Trust" may also refer to expectation of response with which the driven sexual adventurer sets forth, and in view of this and the pitiful outcome, the imperative ("witness now this trust!") has an accent of mocking bravado. Yet trust is tested by failure, and the poet does trust--believe in--the spiritual efficacy of desire. (Paul, p. 110)

The common denominator among these three readings of the poem is the use of one element to the exclusion of all others. There is, however, another reading that tends to provide a more adequate critique by taking all the elements into account. The first stanza provides a contrast between stasis and kinesis, motion and inertia; all the elements in the stanza, with the exception of the "fixed stone of lust," seem to suggest motion--"the rain," "the key," and "the sky." "This fixed stone of lust" seems to suggest Sisyphus at his eternal task, rolling a rock uphill which forever rolls back upon him.

To Sisyphus--who until the end of time is duty-bound to his rock in a perpetual upward and downward mobility--everything must seem paradoxically in motion except for his rock which, by always going back to its point of origin, seems to be completely static. Like Sisyphus, the poet attempts to sublimate (an upward movement) his libido; he succeeds temporarily but soon finds himself tumbling behind his lust in a new attempt to re-sublimate it anew.

Accumulate such moments to an hour:  
 Account the total of this trembling tabulation.  
 I know the screen, the distant flying taps  
 And stabbing medley that sways---  
 And the mercy, feminine, that stays  
 As though prepared. (p. 18)

In the second stanza, which Spears considers a recital of "the total of such past experiences" (Spears, p. 26), Crane seems to reinforce the connection not only between his continual wrestlings with his lust and Sisyphus at his tireless task--"Accumulate such moments to an hour: / Account the total of this trembling tabulation"--but also between this Sisyphus-like endeavors to sublimate his libido and his poetic output (the "trembling tabulation"). "The screen, the distant flying taps" may be references to the psychological ordeal Crane (and the artist in general) has to go through in order to filter (screen) and transform his emotions and libido into "a stabbing medley"--Crane once called his brand of poetry "a stab at a truth"--which is the work of art which, in turn, generates and inspires in both its creator and its recipient "the mercy, feminine, that stays"--the sense of compassion and human solidarity and understanding which great art leaves behind.

And I, entering, take up the stone  
 As quiet as you can make a man...  
 In Bleecker Street, still trenchant in a void,  
 Wounded by apprehensions out of speech,  
 I hold it up against a disk of light--  
 I, turning, turning on smoked forking spires,  
 The city's stubborn lives, desires. (p. 18)

Here more than anywhere else in the poem, Crane clearly becomes Sisyphus: not only does he go about his Sisyphean task unhesi-

tatingly ("And I, entering, take up the stone"), he also accepts his lot in a resigned manner ("As quiet[ly] as you can make a man..."). Like Bloom in his re-enactment of the story of Ulysses in modern-day Dublin, the poet re-enacts the Sisyphus myth in the middle of a modern American city (Bleecker Street). Like Sisyphus, whose sin and consequent punishment set him heroically apart from the rest of mankind, the poet, "wounded by apprehensions out of speech," is alienated from the inhabitants of the city. The poet holds up his Sisyphian stone of lust against the sun ("disk of light"), and starts his upward turning of the stone; and in a typically Joycean metamorphosis, the turning of the stone fades, by sheer free association, into "turning on smoked forking spires"---an image of himself "being roasted as on a turnip" (Spears 1965, p. 26). There are two ways of looking at the stanza; either that the poet is being turned and roasted---like a lamb of sacrifice or for eating---over the fire of "the city's stubborn lives [and] desires," and as such he is to be viewed as a Christ figure, or that the poet is turning "the city's stubborn lives [and] desires" on a purgatorial fire of his own making, and as such he is to be viewed as a seer, a prophet, a redeemer and a leader.

Tossed on these horns, who bleeding dies,  
Lacks all but piteous admissions to be spilt  
Upon the page whose blind sum finally burns  
Record of rage and partial appetites.  
The pure possession, the inclusive cloud  
Whose heart is fire shall come,--the white wind  
    rase  
All but bright stones wherein our smiling plays. (p. 18)

In this beautiful last stanza, Crane seems to be in favor of

the view of the artist as a sacrificial figure. He also manages in the same stanza to wrap up the threads of his poem and to bring to the limelight Joyce's influence upon him. M. D. Uroff observes that

In this poem Crane describes the source of his imaginative powers and the way in which it works. It derives from his constant submission to suffering and from his unwillingness to be completely destroyed by it. His trust in the regenerative power of the imagination wins in the end a victory over suffering. (Uroff, p. 29)

Hazo, on the other hand, tells us that in "Possessions" Crane "recognizes that it is only his poetry that will record the 'blind sum' of his 'rage and partial appetites'" (Hazo, p. 42). In other words--apart from the Joycean influences manifest in Crane's use of a mythical parallel (Sisyphus)--Crane shows us that art originates in the artist's suffering and emotional traumas, thus betraying the influence of Joyce's Shakespearean theory.

The first two lines of the stanza seem to sum up the theme of the poem. The first line epitomizes the life of the artist as emotional traumas ("Tossed on these horns"), suffering and agony on their account ("bleeding"), and finally death ("dies"). The second line illustrates that all the poet has (his "possessions" that is) whether in life or after his death is his art, the record of the misery of his soul, the "piteous admissions" that are "spilt / Upon the page whose blind sum finally burns / Record of rage and partial appetites." In other words, art is the purgatory in the cleansing fire of which "rage and partial appetites," love and hate, fear and desire, are sublimated and metamorphosed into the wisdom, the beauty, the glory, and the immortality of art.



The last three lines of the last stanza, which Spears claims have no "logical and rhetorical relation" to the rest of the poem (Spears 1965, p. 26), prove the Joycean influence upon Crane. If one looks at Shakespeare's metamorphosis of his personal agony into art, and unites it with Unterecker's observation that the "fixed stone of lust" in stanza one becomes transformed to the "bright stones wherein our smiling plays" in stanza four (Unterecker 1969, p. 334), we can see a Joycean influence. This is how Joyce describes Shakespeare's agony:

Belief in himself has been untimely killed . . . and he will never be a victor in his own eyes after nor play victoriously the game of laugh and lie down. . . . No later undoing will undo the first undoing. The tusk of the boar has wounded him there where love lies ableeding. . . . A life fate awaits him and the two rages commingle in a whirlpool. . . . The soul has been before stricken mortally. . . . He goes back [to Stratford toward the end of his life], weary of the creation he has piled up to hide him from himself, an old dog licking an old sore. (Joyce 1961, pp. 196-7)

And again in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Joyce reveals to us "the wasting fires of lust" which "sprang up" in his youth:

His blood was in revolt. He wandered up and down the dark slimy street peering into the gloom of lanes and doorway, listening eagerly for any sound. He moaned to himself like some baffled prowling beast. He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him from the darkness, a presence subtle and murmurous as a flood filling him wholly with itself. (Joyce 1962, pp. 99-100)

And describing his first sexual encounter (which was the direct result of this lustful longing), Joyce successfully shows the dangerously overwhelming effect of sexual indulgence on the creative urge:

With a sudden movement she bowed his head and joined her lips to his and to read the meaning of her movements in her frank uplifted eyes. It was too much for him. 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. (Joyce 1952, p. 101)

"The wasting fires of lust" give birth to a need for the fire of the purgatory. In the following chapter in the Portrait Stephen is alarmed by the thought that "Hell has enlarged its soul and opened its mouth without any limits" (Joyce 1962, p. 117), and he feels awed that, by his erotic adventure with the prostitute, "his soul lusted after its own destruction" (Joyce 1962, p. 103).

In "The Wine Menagerie" Crane shifts from his own lust--as an impediment to the artistic creativity--to the lust of other people which forces the poet into his protective shell and his self-imposed exile (or alientation) far from the madding crowd: one of Joyce's favorite themes. Lewis remarks that the poem

has a distinct if simple little plot: an actual incident, in a clear setting, with visible characters, and progressing from a meandering meditation to a moment of clear decision, needless to say, about the exercise of the poet's visionary power and touching upon his creative resolve. The scene is a speak-easy, the time apparently early winter: snow lies on the street outside. (Lewis 1967, p. 193)

The poem begins with the poet's description of his own drunkenness and the imaginative vistas it opens before his eyes:

Invariably when wine redeems the sight,  
Narrowing the mustard scansions of the eyes,  
A leopard ranging always in the brow  
Asserts a vision in the slumbering gaze.

Then gloazing decanters that reflect the street  
Wear me in crescents on their bellies. Slow  
Applause flows into liquid cynosures:  
--I am conscripted to their shadows' glow. (p. 23)

In both stanzas Crane paints a paradoxical picture of drunkenness: wine which, in intoxication, dims the sight, here not only clears the sight but redeems it and sharpens poetic perception ("Narrowing the mustard scansions of the eyes"). And in spite of the ostensible "slumbering gaze" it causes, wine sets free "A leopard ranging always in the brow." The second stanza embodies with startling faithfulness the status of the intoxicated poet for whom wine is an aid in interpreting life ("gloazing decanters that reflect the street"), in focusing poetic attention on beauty ("Slow / Applause flows into liquid cynosures"), and, consequently, in enslaving him to its "shadows' glow." Aware of the faithfulness of the description of intoxication, Sherman Paul points out that "the poem, of course, is about intoxication but is not necessarily the result of intoxication" (Paul, p. 121). Armed with the weapons wine has equipped him with--the redeemed sight, the leopard ranging "always in the brow," and interpretive ("gloazing") ability--Crane sets out to understand his surroundings:

Against the imitation onyx wainscoting  
 (Painted emulsion of snow, eggs, yarn, coal,  
     manure)  
 Regard the forceps of the smile that takes her.  
 Percussive sweat is spreading to his hair.  
     Mallets,  
 Her eyes, unmake an instant of the world... (p. 23)

A man and a woman are sitting close by and Crane can detect, under the surface of love and affection, a belligerence that is reminiscent of the battle between the sexes: the man's smile is a forceps and the woman's eyes are mallets--both suggestive of violence and hatred. The "heterosexual relation," in Lewis's words, is "reduced to mere percussion: the striking of one body against another" (Lewis 1967, p. 195).

What is it in this heap the serpent pries--  
 Whose skin, facsimile of time, unskeins  
 Octagon, sapphire transepts round the eyes,  
 --From whom some whispered carillon assures  
 Speed to the arrow into feathered skies? (p. 23)

In the fourth stanza, which Lewis considers a "jumble of symbolism" with "much uncertainty of syntax and reference," Crane seems to "penetrate through the junkheap of the actual toward the ideal" (Lewis 1967, p.197). The snake, which is usually a symbol of time, seems here to stand for man in his attempt to reconcile the anarchy of history to the principle of divine guidance; the two theories of history presented in the "Nestor" episode in Ulysses: Stephen's idea of God as "a shout in the street" and of history as a "nightmare" from which he is "trying to awake," on the one hand, and Mr. Deasy's view that "all history moves towards one great goal, the

manifestation of God," on the other (Joyce 1961, p. 34).

Crane's musing over the nature of human life in the fourth stanza is followed by a return to reality (the speak-easy) in the fifth stanza:

Sharp to the windowpane guile drags a face,  
 And as the alcove of her jealousy recedes  
 An urchin who has left the snow  
 Nudges a cannister across the bar  
 While August meadows somewhere clasp his  
 brow. (p. 23)

As the jealousy of the woman we encountered in stanza three recedes and her male companion heads for the window of the place where the guile on his face attracts the attention of a passer-by, a young boy walks in with a cannister in his hand, apparently to have it filled with beer for his father. The obvious innocence and naivete contrast sharply with the guile of the man, the jealousy of the woman, and the licentious drunkenness of the whole place; and in a similar fashion, the snowy winter outside the speak-easy recalls, by contrast, "August meadows" that "clasp" the little boy's brow. The juxtaposition of the boy's innocence to the drunkenness of the speak-easy's customers--much like the contrast between the two theories of history in stanza four--invites a new musing and a new insight into life:

Each chamber, transept, coins some squint,  
 Remorseless line, minting their separate wills--  
 Poor streaked bodies wreathing up and out,  
 Unwitting the stigma that each turn reveals:  
 Between black tusks the roses shine! (p. 24)

Commenting on this stanza, Lewis notes that

the poet's glance had turned to other couples in the speak-easy, with their "poor streaked bodies"--"streaked" like "striated" in "Faustus and Helen II" meaning morally or otherwise tainted--and their unspecified "stigma. . . ." The poet is seized with compassion for these soiled or bellicose characters because he has begun to see through them; and doing so, he transfigures them in the very force of his visionary gaze. He is thus able to detect, behind the animal faces in the menagerie-bar and behind the bestial conduct . . . some promise of moral and spiritual beauty. (Lewis 1967, p. 196)

Although Lewis's subtle paraphrase is interesting and instructive, I disagree with his assessment that "Between black tusks the roses shine" carry "some promise of moral and spiritual beauty" (emphasis mine). The promise is of beauty per se, beauty in the Joycean sense of the beautiful as "that the apprehension of which pleases" far beyond loathing or desire, morality or pornography. What Crane is celebrating in the last line of the stanza is the transformative power of art which turns the sordid and evanescent moments of life into glorious and immortal art. The description of the frequenters of the speak-easy is a rendering of a modern Hell--similar to Dante's in the Inferno and Eliot's in The Waste Land--where people's "separate wills" (which make them individual human beings) are minted in the fires of lust and the fumes of alcohol into a homogenous mass of molten lust. Crane describes the people in the speak-easy as "poor," and in so doing he seems to express his compassion for their plight; and the reference to their "stigma," in spite of its obscurity, seems to suggest the original sin and thus reinforces the atmosphere of doom. The only redeeming quality in

this infernal setting is the implied ability of art (personified in the poet) to turn the sordidness of the scene into artistic and aesthetic significance. This redemptive ability of art accounts for the ecstatic elation that permeates the following stanza:

New thresholds, new anatomies! Wine talons  
Build freedom up about me and distill  
This competence--to travel in a tear  
Sparkling alone, within another's will. (p. 24)

Here Crane is celebrating the power of wine to liberate, sharpen, and purify artistic perception and empathy: the ability to "travel in a tear . . . within another's will." "He is able, thanks to wine," Unterecker maintains, "to escape his own skin and experience the menagerie of animal lusts that drive other men and women" (Unterecker 1969, p. 405). A closer look, however, would show that what Crane is celebrating in this stanza is the empathetic and transformative powers of art irrespective of alcoholic stimulation. "It is important," Paul cleverly reminds us, "to recognize that the poet . . . is not saying that drunkenness is a necessary condition of writing poetry; poetry, rather may be for him an intoxication like drunkenness (Paul, p. 126).

The ecstatic dwelling in the power and glory of art leads to an anticlimax in the following stanza:

Until my blood dreams a receptive smile  
Wherein new purities are snared; where chimes  
Before some flame of gaunt repose a shell  
Tolled once, perhaps, by every tongue in hell  
--Anguished, the wit that cries out of me: (p. 24)

Out of the poet's empathetic identification with other people (his

"travel in a tear . . . within another's will") comes the poem, the work of art (the "receptive smile") born out of the poet's artistic agony (the dream of his "blood"); in that work of art, fresh insights into human life and dilemmas are revealed: "new purities are snared." Crane then attempts another definition of a work of art: "a shell" that "chimes." The work of art as a shell is reminiscent of Shakespeare (in Joyce's theory) whose great art was a protective shell intended "to hide him from himself." The shell, Crane tells us, "chimes / Before some flame of gaunt repose" and this invites two readings of the stanzas depending on which of the two aesthetic theories--expounded by Stephen Dedalus in A Portrait and Ulysses--we employ in interpreting the poem. The flame may stand for the kinetic feelings which in A Portrait Stephen regards as improper for art and, by the same reasoning, the shell may be representative of the static emotions which are the only ones proper to art. But the fact that the shell chimes before the flame creates a connection between them--the chime may be caused by the circulation of air, heated by the fire, through the shell--which is reminiscent of Shakespeare's transformation of his frustrated love into art that protected him in its shell and gave him immortal fame--and this concept takes us to the aesthetic theory in Ulysses. Both readings are complementary in a way and depend on whether a relation or antithesis or identification is to be deduced between the fire and the shell--the poem definitely allows for both. Commenting on the last line of the stanza ("--Anguished, the wit that cries out of me"), Lewis puts his finger on another Joycean influence:



No doubt this is Crane's adaptatin of the "inwit," the moral conscience, whose "agenbite" Stephen Dedalus felt in Joyce's Ulysses, a book Crane revered. But if so, it is here very definitely the poetic rather than the moral conscience. "The Wine Menagerie" is . . . an impenitent song. . . . The moral "inwit" had been slyly denied in the closely related words "unwitting" and "remorseless" in the sixth stanza--both, like "relentless" in "Legend," being left-handed ways of saying "impenitent." (Lewis 1967, pp. 199-200)

Aesthetics seem to inform the eighth stanza:

Alas,--these frozen billows of your skill!  
 Invent new dominoes of love and bile...  
 Ruddy, the tooth implicit of the world  
 Has followed you. Though in the end you know  
 And count some inheritance of sand,  
 How much yet meets the treason of the snow. (p. 24)

The relation between the shell and art (for which it stands) which we suggested in the previous stanza seems to be reinforced by the reference to the "billows of your skill" and its sea connotations: both billows and shells are sea products. "Billows" may also be a pun on "bellows," and as such it might establish another connection between the fire (kinetic emotions) and the shell (art)--that may also account for the chiming of the shell. Besides the thematic Joycean influence (manifest in the exploration of the relation of the artist's emotions to his art), the stanza reveals the influence of Joyce's wordplay.

The "billows" of the artist's skill are frozen on account of the "Ruddy, the tooth implicit of the world," and in face of these hostile and adverse circumstances the poet is compelled to "Invent new dominoes of love and bile"--dominoes both in the senses of

"game" and "masking cloak." This musing over the artist's alienation and lamentable lot leads to a pessimistic feeling:

...Though in the end you know  
And count some dim inheritance of sand,  
How much yet meets the treason of the snow. (p. 24)

Crane here is contemplating his (and every artist's) life and death and wonders for how long he is to endure alienation ("the treason of snow") imposed upon him by an indifferent and hostile society before he dies and thus becomes heir to "some dim inheritance of sand." Another possible reading may be that, by pursuing an artistic career, the artist dedicates himself to serving mortal human beings ("dim inheritance of sand"), and despite this artistic abnegation and self-sacrifice, the artist's reward from society seems to always be rebuffs and alienation ("the treason of the snow").

"Rise from the dates and crumbs. And walk away,  
Stepping over Holofernes' shins---  
Beyond the wall, whose severed head floats by  
With Baptist John's. Their whispering begins.

"--And fold your exile on your back again;  
Petrushka's valentine pivots on its pin." (p. 24)

The poet here feels out of place amidst the frequenters of the speak-easy: the "'crumby' individuals and their shabby 'dates'" (Lewis 1967, p. 193). He realizes that "the world is a 'tiger' and the poet a helpless Petrushka" (Dembo 1966, p. 144). Spears accounts for Crane's mention of three beheaded figures (John the Baptist, Holofernes, and Petrushka) at the close of the poem in terms of betrayal; a theme the poet has in common with the three slain

figures. "The poet," he says, "is betrayed, his head separated from his body like those of Holofernes and John the Baptist; and he is as ineffectual as the puppet Petrushka's valentine" (Spears, p. 20). Lewis, on the other hand, accounts for the same fact in terms of the quarreling couple Crane mentions in the third stanza:

Their conduct leads the poet . . . to think of certain classical instances of the slaying of a man by a woman: Holofernes, whose head was cut off by the sternly patriotic maiden Judith; John the Baptist, decapitated at the demand of Salome; Pierrot or Petrushka, in Stravinsky's ballet, slain in turn for daring to pursue his elusive "valentine." All these actual and remembered instances convince the poet that, for his own creative life, he must strenuously avoid an involvement with woman-kind. (Lewis 1967, pp. 195-6)

No matter what the reasons are, the poet is surrounded by adverse circumstances and a hostile society, hence his need to complement his involuntary alienation with a self-imposed and voluntary exile. Sherman Paul notices "the posture suggested by the Daedalean-Joycean connotations of winged flight and exile. These better fit the determination we hear in the cadence of the concluding lines and the resolution to endure suffering that 'Again,' reminiscent of 'Legend,' declares" (Paul, p. 129).

"At Melville's Tomb"--which is, in one aspect, a tribute to the art of the great American novelist and poet--confronts the darker side of life and celebrates the artist's ability to assimilate it and transform it into the stuff great art is made of.

The poem begins with what Lewis calls (with reference to the word "often") "the note of a recurring action" (Lewis 1967, p. 204):

Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge  
 The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath  
 An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,  
 Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured. (p. 34)

Crane imagines Melville standing on a ledge--Leibowitz suggests "some solid projection, perhaps the bridge of a ship or a promontory" (Leibowitz, p. 129)---watching the message ("embassy") the crushed bones of drowned and shipwrecked sailors impart ("bequeath"). Paul suggests that "dice" is a key word in the first stanza, "not only evoking an image of white rolling bones ('bones' is slang for 'dice') but suggesting the gamble of voyaging." He goes on to remark that the words "bequeath" and "embassy" "contribute to the ceremonial and funeral quality of the poem" (Paul, p. 135). And Leibowitz maintains that "their number" may mean "both the multitudes who underwent a watery death and the numbers on the dice" (Leibowitz, p. 130). (Numbers may be considered a reference to death in another sense: in the sense of one's number coming up.) If we keep these comments in mind, along with Lewis's remarks that "Crane's attention was focused of necessity . . . upon individual metaphors and even individual words taken in isolation, without regard for the organic development of the poem as a whole" (Lewis 1967, pp. 207-8), we may conclude that the atmosphere in the first stanza is one of death, blind fortune, human helplessness, and life mysteries which only the artist can decipher.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,  
 The calyx of death's bounty giving back  
 A scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph,  
 The portent wound in corridors of shells. (p. 34)

The second stanza alleviates to a certain extent the sense of senseless doom that looms over the first stanza. The wrecks of ships and the drowning of their sailors mark an unceremonial ("without sound of bells") but not a totally meaningless death ("death's bounty giving back/ A scattered chapter"). Just like the vortex that takes a ship down to the bottom of the sea sending flotsam up to the surface, the death of sailors at sea has a significance which--just like "a scattered chapter" of a book (formless and meaningless as long as it remains scattered yet assumes a meaningful structure once put in correct order) or a hieroglyph that has a meaning only to those who know hieroglyphic--only those equipped with wisdom and knowledge (artists that is) can perceive. Then Crane transforms the metaphor until we are aware of the 'calyx' as a huge conch which yields its 'portent' to the hearer" (Hazo, p. 33). It is only Melville (and the artist in general) who can reassemble the "scattered chapter" into a meaningful entity, decode the mystery of the "livid hieroglyph," and perceive the message which is "wound in corridors of shells."

Then in the circuit of one vast coil,  
 Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,  
 Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;  
 And silent answers crept across the stars. (p. 34)

In this third stanza of the poem, which Lewis describes as

"one of the great religious statements of modern poetry" (Lewis 1967, p. 208). Crane describes the quiet calm that follows the sinking of a ship: the "circuit calm" that follows the destructive "calyx." In that "circuit calm" there show the "frosted eyes" of drowned sailors and their diverse religious beliefs. The mention of the religious beliefs of the dead recalls the religious beliefs of the living which seek in vain to impose a human concept of order upon the recalcitrant complexity of the universe which, in turn, remains indifferent and silent. Melville, on the other hand, by reconciling himself to the diverse complexity of life, seems to provide a more faithful picture of reality than religion. "The lashings of the sea and of Melville's mind," Leibowitz maintains, "have been miraculously calmed; for Melville is able to accept the malice of the sea and, by analogy, his own awareness of the proximity of chaos" (Leibowitz, p. 131).

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive  
 No farther tides...High in the azure steeps  
 Monody shall not wake the mariner.  
 This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps. (p. 34)

Commenting on the last stanza, Hazo notes that in it "the dirge reaches its climax"; he goes on to say that

The poet claims that in death the conventional instruments of navigation can "contrive / No farther tides." This metaphor has a dual meaning. The first and most apparent meaning is that all earthly boundaries are nullified by death; therefore, "compass, quadrant and sextant" are simply no longer useful. The second meaning is that such nautical instruments can chart no tides "farther" than those of eternity itself. From the eternity of the "azure steeps" no poem of mourning can call the dead back to life ("Wake the mariner"). (Hazo, p. 34)

Herbert Leibowitz offers us a better way of fathoming the deeper meaning of this stanza. "The compass, quadrant, and sextant," Leibowitz tells us, "are nautical instruments used, respectively, for measuring distance, altitude, and latitude" (Leibowitz, p. 134). What Crane seems to be saying is that none of these nautical instruments--and all the empirical sciences invented by man--can fathom the depths and mysteries of the sea as efficiently as Melville's artistic sensibility because it goes beyond the physical surface to the metaphysical symbol. And while monody--both as a dirge or elegy and as one of Melville's poems--cannot bring the dead back to life, it can embody the spiritual and metaphysical significance behind their deaths. Then comes the final tribute to Melville:

The last line ends the poem on a note of serene mystery: the sea alone is the worthy keeper of the visionary records and the transcendental intimations that are Melville's great achievements. Melville is the fabulous spirit (shade) casting the long shadow. (Leibowitz, p. 134)

Because Melville in life fathomed the secrets of the sea, it is only befitting that after his death only the sea should keep his "fabulous shadow."

The Joycean influence in "At Melville's Tomb" is the "Proteus" episode of Ulysses in which we see Stephen Dedalus strolling down Sandymount strand and tussling with intellectual questions similar to those which occupied Melville's mind and art. If one compares the first stanza of "At Melville's Tomb" to the following excerpt from

Stephen's monologue, it becomes possible to discern Joyce's as well as Melville's influence, for Crane's real theme in the poem is the role of the artist as seer:

Signature of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: colourful signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them, sure. Go easy. (Joyce 1961, p. 37)

Dealing with Crane's imagery, in his book Hart Crane: An Introduction to the Poetry, Leibowitz remarks that

the sea is probably Crane's most multitudinous symbol. Treacherous and seductive, the giver of life and the bringer of death, it is the perfect emblem for Crane's paralyzed self. The sea is somber and cruel, the occasion for tragedy . . . but it is also majestic and iridescent, the occasion for idyll. . . . Crane early perceived the sea's dualistic nature: destroyer and preserver . . . the sea is painted, worshiped as a god, despaired of, and of course preferred to land . . . in spite of his recognition of the sea's terrors, hope quickens. (Leibowitz 1968, pp. 151-2)

In other words, the sea in Crane's mind (just as in Joyce's) is a perfect symbol of life, all of life with its staggering complexity, with its positives and negatives, life which no set of religious creeds could pin down.

"The dice of drowned men's bones" and "their numbers" which "beat on the dusty shore" may be related to Stephen's thoughts on "the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame. What's left us then?" (Joyce 1961, p. 24) (Notice the word "livid" here in and in the second stanza of



Crane's poem.) Melville on the ledge watching "the dice of drowned men's bones" beat on "the dusty shore" reminds us of Stephen on his walk down Sandymount strand reading the "signatures of all things" and observing "seaspawn and seawrack"--notice the way both Joyce and Crane associate the sea with life and death, destruction and regeneration--and in the classroom contemplating "the ruin of all space."

In the second and third stanzas, Crane's description of the sea (life) seems to echo the structure of Ulysses. The sea does not yield clues to its meanings easily, they are scattered everywhere in it, in its beauty and cruelty alike, and it is up to the perceptive mind of the artist to find and reassemble them into a meaningful order. In his attempt to make Ulysses as life-like as artistically possible, Joyce employs a technique that emulates life. Stuart Gilbert describes this technique:

One of the simpler aspects of this technique--a device which for all its apparent artificiality, [sic] exactly resembles Nature's method--is the presentation of fragments of a theme or allusion in different parts of the work; these fragments have to be assimilated in the reader's mind for him to arrive at complete understanding. . . . It is for the reader to assemble the fragments and join the images into a band. (Gilbert, pp. 33-4)

In the second stanza the "calyx," with its spiral movement ("giving back," whirlpool-like, "The portent wound in corridors of shells"), seems to suggest the progressivistic theory of history which claims for life an open-ended structure. The third stanza, on the other hand, with its "circuit calm" seems to suggest, by means of the implied circular movement, the cyclic theory of history which

claims for life an enclosed and repetitious structure. Joyce managed to reconcile both theories in Ulysses. Moreover, a great deal of Ulysses' worth as a great work of art depends largely on this reconciliation: the story of Bloom's day as an everyday-life story, a tiny event in the infinite progress of history in time; and as a modern-day re-enactment (and repetition) of the Odyssey.

The last stanza upholds the superiority of art to all other fields of human knowledge. Art is capable of providing the most adequate interpretation of life and of reconciling the positives and negatives of history ingeniously. And while art cannot bring the dead back to life, it can point out the significance of their death, thus reconciling man to his lot in a manner far more efficient than religion which seems always to forward the ultimate metaphysics of paradise whenever confronted with absurdities in history, and the sordid finality of death. It is for this reason that the figure of the artist towers above all other humans combining in his mortal garb the functions of the seer, the prophet, and the philosopher. That is why he is likened to the God of the creation, equated with all of life, and his "fabulous shadow" kept only by the sea---"this great wink of eternity."

## CHAPTER VI

### ULYSSES AND FAUSTUS:

#### JOYCE'S ONTOLOGICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS THEMES

#### IN WHITE BUILDINGS

Joyce's influence upon Crane in White Buildings is not confined to the poems which deal with the nature of art, the artist, and aesthetic questions (as I have tried to point out in the preceding chapter), it also extends to other poems in the collection: poems that confront ontological, philosophical, and religious issues. Poems such as "Emblems of Conduct," "Garden Abstract," "Stark Major," "Lachrymae Christi," and "Recitative" portray a world-picture that is like Joyce's in Ulysses. (It is important at this point to keep in mind that being influenced by Joyce does not in any way belittle Crane's originality as a poet: Crane somehow managed to assimilate the authors who influenced him into his artistic make-up and to express these influences in his own individualistic style in his poems. It is also important to remember that, thanks to Ulysses--"the book of the century," as Unterecker calls it--Joyce became one of the most influential literary figures in the West (Unterecker 1962, pp. 5-20).

In "Emblems of Conduct," Crane's focus is Mother Nature with her awe-inspiring presence that predates Man and his various attempts

throughout history to understand, tame, arrest, and compartmentalize it. The last episode of Ulysses ("Penelope") seems to provide a very important clue to that poem. In one of their symbolic aspects, Joyce's three main characters in Ulysses, Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom, stand for average humanity, the artist, and Nature respectively. By reserving the last chapter for Molly's punctuation-free, eight-sentence interior monologue, Joyce seems to give Nature the last word and assert its superiority over Man and all his knowledge, inventions, and institutions. In her last sentence Molly says:

I love flowers Id love to have the whole place swimming  
in roses God of heaven theres nothing like nature the  
wild mountains then the sea and the waves rushing then  
the beautiful country with fields of oats and wheat and  
all kinds of things and all the fine cattle going about  
that would do your heart good to see rivers and lakes  
and flowers all sorts of shapes and smells and colours  
springing up even out of the ditches primroses and  
violets nature it is as for them saying theres no God I  
wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their  
learning why dont they go and create something. . . .  
(Joyce 1961, pp. 781-2)

Crane too sets out to create his own Nature-is-all concept in  
"Emblems of Conduct":

By a peninsula the wanderer sat and sketched  
The uneven valley. While the apostle  
gave  
Alms to the meek the volcano burst  
With sulphur and aureate rocks ...  
For joy rides in stupendous coverings  
Luring the living into spiritual gates. (p. 5)

M. D. Uroff contends that in that poem Crane is giving vent to "his frustration with traditional religious patterns." To prove her point, she draws attention to the contrast between "the good deeds of the apostle, giving alms to the meek," and "the magnificent power of nature manifested in the volcano that burst 'With sulphur and aureate rocks.'" She then concludes that "the notion is Emersonian in its contrast between the lifeless institutionalization of religion and the glory of natural phenomena" (Uroff 1974, pp. 196-7). Crane's frustration, however, is far more complex and inclusive than Uroff realizes: it is a frustration not only with traditional, religious patterns, but also with scientific, philosophical, and other epistemological patterns imposed by the human mind upon the recalcitrant and multi-faceted complexity of Nature. The contrast in the first stanza is not only between the "apostle" and the "volcano" but also between the "living" and the "spiritual gates," even between the "wanderer" and the "peninsula"--between the human and the Natural. This Man-Nature antithesis is carried further with more vigor in the following stanza:

Orators follow the universe  
 And radio the complete laws to the people.  
 The apostle conveys thought through discipline.  
 Bowls and cups fill historians with adorations,--  
 Dull lips commemorating spiritual gates. (p. 5)

Orators in their speeches, apostles in their sermons, historians in their archeological finds, and scientists in their discoveries constitute a sharp contrast to the universe: their compartmentalizations falsify the diverse complexity and the subtle intricacies

of Nature. Commenting on this stanza, R. W. B. Lewis notices that "the emblems of contemporary belief and behavior include radios and the laws of physics, ancient and hollow incantations. It is a world submissive to science, mechanical devices, and rationalism" (Lewis 1967, p. 185). "In this poem," Uroff claims, "the pattern that the poet sees being imposed upon experience is altogether deadening; it is something that he can neither understand nor yield to, although his escape from it is sadly in vain" (Uroff 1974, p. 197).

The first two stanzas in the poem expose man's fruitless endeavors to arrest Nature and enforce man-made patterns on its recalcitrant versatility. The third and last stanza, on the other hand, presents us with the mighty and awe-inspiring presence of Nature with its eternality, complexity, power, and glory in a low but sustained key:

The wanderer later chose this spot of rest  
 Where marble clouds support the sea  
 And where was finally borne a chosen hero.  
 By that time summer and smoke were past.  
 Dolphins still played, arching the horizon,  
 But only to build memories of spiritual gates. (p. 5)

The wanderer who, according to Lewis, is the poet himself robbed of his visions by the contemporary world (Lewis 1967, p. 185), finds the "spot of rest" he is looking for in Nature (symbolized here by the sea) but only at the end of human history ("By that time summer and smoke were past"), at which point Nature is still continuing its pre-historic existence undisturbed and untouched by the disappearance of mankind from the scene--Nature has been there before man and will be there long after he is gone. "Emblems of Conduct," Lewis proceeds

to say, "concludes on the note of rest and death and meditative sadness, as though some greatness had departed. The landscape, at the end, is emptied of human content; nothing is left but sea and sky, and dolphins playing" (Lewis 1967, p. 185). But if we accept Lewis's interpretation we are likely to question his premise that the wanderer is to be identified with the poet; he is rather to be identified with humanity at large and his "spot of rest" for the passing away of mankind.

One of the interesting aspects of "Emblems of Conduct" is the handling of time. In the last stanza of the poem, Crane seems to indicate man's passing away from Nature in a very subtle manner: "and where was finally borne a chosen hero." The key word in this line--and to a certain extent, in the entire stanza--is "borne": it may be a reference to the chosen hero being borne in his mother's womb or simply being born (the beginning of life), it may also be taken to indicate being carried by his supporters and followers (the peak of his career), or being carried to his grave after his death (the end of his life). Crane seems to have intended "borne" to suggest all three meanings: the economy of form (the condensation of three verbs into one) best exemplifies the content (the brevity of man's span on earth). The "chosen hero" is a reference to humanity both in an individual and a collective sense: he may be a prophet chosen by God, a political leader elected by his people, a scientist or a philosopher or an artist--a pioneer in his field whatever it may be--or he may be an archetype for mankind in general chosen by God to be "the crown of life."

The passage of time is also indicated in the entire poem by means of a poetic device; each of the three stanzas ends with "spiritual gates" that seem to keep the rhythm of the poem and provide a backdrop of fixity against which the flux of human life is projected. The first stanza depicts the early beginnings of man in ancient times and appropriately ends with man feeling attracted to the ultimate significance behind natural phenomena: "For joy rides in stupendous coverings / Luring the living into spiritual gates." The second stanza is more or less about life in modern times (the peak of human civilization on earth) with its characteristic materialism and the accompanying lack of faith in spiritual values still in existence only as vestiges of time past and vacant symbols of religious creeds: "Dull lips commemorating spiritual gates." In the last stanza, dedicated to Nature after the passing away of mankind, the spiritual gates are still there but only as "memories" built by dolphins, the intelligent animal species that antedated man by hundreds of thousands of years: "Dolphins still played, arching the horizon / But only to build memories of spiritual gates." Dolphins played before the emergence of the human species and may continue to play after its disappearance from the surface of the earth--the dolphins are a symbol as well as a part of Nature whose eternality defies man's transience. But dolphins and their "arching" of the "horizon" are important to Crane. Like Brooklyn Bridge and the seagull in "To Brooklyn Bridge," the dolphins arch the horizon thus bridging (much like religious beliefs) two different worlds: the actual and the ideal, the "quotidian" and the "abstract," the "pen-



insula" and the "spiritual gates." Like the "chosen hero" who, in one word, is portrayed at the beginning, middle, and end of his life, human history is presented in the same stages in the three stanzas of the poem.

Like other critics, R. W. B. Lewis falls short of perceiving the subtle, cyclic structure of the poem and, consequently, of apprehending its total significance. He seems to regard the poem as Crane's Waste Land. He argues that in "Emblems of Conduct":

Crane's theme is that of a world gone spiritually dead: that has, so to speak, become a spiritual graveyard. To define that deadness, Crane offers an image of its opposite, in a combination and contrast of spiritual meekness and spiritual explosiveness not unlike the alternating tears and consuming flames of the godhead in "Lachrymae Christi." (Lewis 1967, p. 184)

The problem with this interpretation (and others like it) and the reason why it misses the mark is that it places Crane under the wrong influence: Eliot's instead of Joyce's. What Crane is out to depict in this poem is not the contemporary world as a waste land awaiting the second coming of Christ, but rather the world of Nature which antedated and will survive our human civilization; Nature as an eternal presence and an embodiment of the spiritual forces which exist within and behind and beyond physical phenomena: Nature that exists in its own right, including its own cause and effect, and hence, that has no use for man-made redemptions. The theme of the poem, in other words, is the interstellar, non-human Nature a glimpse of whose complexity Joyce attempts to reveal in the "Ithaca" episode of Ulysses:

With what meditations did Bloom accompany his demonstration to his companion of various constellations?

Meditations of evolution increasingly vaster: of the moon invisible in incipient lunation, approaching perigee: of the infinite lattiginous scintillating uncondensed milky way, discernible by daylight by an observer placed at the lower end of a cylindrical vertical shaft 5000 ft deep sunk from the surface towards the centre of the earth: of Sirius (alpha in Canis Major) 10 lightyears (57,000,000,000,000 miles) distant and in volume 900 times the dimension of our planet: of Arcturus: of the precession of equinoxes: of Orion with belt and sextuple sun theta and nebula in which 100 of our solar systems could be contained: of moribund and of nascent new stars such as Nova in 1901: of our system plunging towards the constellation of Hercules: of the parallax or parallactic drift of so-called fixed stars, in reality evermoving from immeasurably remote eons to infinitely remote futures in comparison with which the years, threescore and ten, of allotted human life formed a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity. (Joyce 1961, p. 698)

"Garden Abstract" uses an archetypal technique (much like Joyce's). Hazo argues that the poem "shows how he [Crane] was beginning to move in the direction of mythmaking and how his imagery was starting to move beyond the limits of the simple impressionistic lyric" (Hazo, p. 22). The poem is about a woman in a garden (Eve in the Garden of Eden):

The apple on its bough is her desire,---  
 Shining suspension, mimic of the sun.  
 The bough has caught her breath up, and her  
     voice,  
 Dumbly articulate in the slant and rise  
 Of branch on branch above her, blurs her eyes.  
 She is prisoner of the tree and its green fingers. (p. 9)

The phallic symbol is conspicuous: the bough and the apple are suggestive of the penis and testicles. As has been indicated else-

where, the first version of the poem was in the first person singular, which made it smack of homosexuality to its first reader, a friend of Crane's, at whose advice Crane changed the poem to its present form. Yet, apart from any homosexual connotations that may exist in the poem, there is little doubt that the poem portrays the archetypal experience of the Fall of Man through the surrender to the temptation of the Tree of Knowledge which anthropologists take for a symbol of sexual experience. Lewis aptly remarks that "if 'Garden Abstract' is in one perspective a symbolic sexual act, it is also, in Crane's phrase, a piece of 'pantheistic aestheticism'" (Lewis 1967, p. 34).

In the second stanza, the mystical overtones of the sexual experience start to shine forth:

And so she comes to dream herself the tree,  
 The wind possessing her, weaving her young veins,  
 Holding her to the sky and its quick blue,  
 Drowning the fever of her hands in sunlight.  
 She has no memory, nor fear, nor hope  
 Beyond the grass and shadows at her feet. (p. 9)

The sexual experience and its eroticism lead to a state of mystical transcendence; the desire for "The apple on its bough" leads the woman in the poem to "the sky and its quick blue." And the mystical experience, in turn, culminates in an ecstatic, paradisiacal state of awareness wherein time (past, present, and to come) is totally annulled—"She has no memory, nor fear, nor hope / Beyond the grass and shadows at her feet."

If we endorse this reading of the poem we find ourselves subscribing to a new interpretation---much like Joyce's of the Trini-

tarian mystery--of the Fall of Man: there is no fall involved in the Fall. The woman experiences the erotic temptation of the tree and she surrenders to it wholeheartedly, but instead of feeling guilty at the loss of her innocence, she experiences a spiritual elation diametrically opposite to the feverish and unconsummated lust of the first stanza.

The pattern this poem suggests seems to be intrinsically incompatible with the pattern which the Biblical account of the Fall of Man provides. In the Biblical account, the surrender to the temptation of the tree is immediately followed by a deep sense of guilt, a severance from the rest of nature, acute self-consciousness, and a heart-felt awareness of the loss of innocence. The first stanza in the poem, dealing with the woman's unfulfilled desire, presents the woman as separate from Nature surrounding her; she is being acted upon by the tree. This effect is imparted to the reader in the last line of the first stanza ("She is prisoner of the tree and its green fingers") which clearly illustrates the entrapment and antagonism which characterize the seducer-seduced relationship. In the second stanza (which deals with the fulfillment after the seduction), the consummated desire leads to a harmonious union between the seducer and the seduced in a spiritual ecstasy ("And so she comes to dream herself the tree"); a complete fusion between the woman and the tree is effected. In other words, while the Bible stresses the dire consequences of the surrender to carnal desires, "Garden Abstract" emphasizes the importance of that surrender for spiritual awareness and mystical transcendence.

Crane's manipulation of concrete, everyday details, creating a symbolic as well as a realistic effect, is in the spirit of Joyce's "symbolism-via-realism" as described by Edmund Wilson:

Joyce's characters are not merely the sum of the particles into which their experience has been dissociated; we come to imagine them as solidly, to feel their personalities as unmistakably as we do any characters in fiction; and we finally realize that they are also symbols. (Wilson, p. 178)

And commenting on Crane's poem, Lewis notes that "it gives us the rapturous aesthetic experience of physical nature, and in doing so it gives us a real tree, a real bough, a real apple, a real wind, a real sun--and a real girl" (Lewis 1967, p. 34). He then proceeds to say:

And just because the poem is so vividly concrete, it takes on the dimension of a modest archetype, a created entity susceptible of many meanings, emotionally within many contexts: as it could hardly do if its content were restricted to the sexual. Crane was blessed with an archetypal imagination, though up to this time (1920) it had lain half-dormant. But as we step back a little from "Garden Abstract," the garden in it becomes any garden whose nature can be felt to the quick of body and spirit--and any garden thus celebrated in poetry. . . . It even, perhaps--though this was clearly not a conscious intention--becomes the first of all gardens where the first woman was tempted by the first of all apples. (Lewis 1967, p. 35)

The following poem in White Buildings, "Stark Major," seems to be a sequel to "Garden Abstract": in "Garden Abstract" we find an account of the Fall of Man and in "Stark Major" we witness one of its immediate results: reproduction as a substitute for immortality. According to Hazo,

The poem's central situation is a moment of leave-tak-

ing. A lover is making his departure from a woman described in unspecified but nonetheless unmistakable stage of pregnancy. . . . The "lifting spring" of approaching daylight prompts the departing lover to speculate upon the vivisectioning torpor of the day ahead before his return in the evening when he and his beloved will again be united. (Hazo, p. 27)

The first stanza seems to suggest that the poem is about the death of the lover in the physical sense:

The lover's death, how regular  
 With lifting spring and starker  
 Vestiges of the sun that somehow  
 Filter in to us before we waken. (p. 10)

Yet, as we shall see later on in the poem, what is intended is death in the metaphorical sense. The first stanza performs more than one function efficiently in the poem. The lover's departure--literally from the house or figuratively from his woman's heart--is rendered in terms of death and described as "regular" which evokes both its inevitability and its recurrence and casts a shadow of doubt as to whether the lover's death is literal. The season of year ("lifting spring") as well as the time of day ("vestiges of the sun that somehow / Filter in to us before we waken") are accurately provided in the first stanza. The setting of time details helps give a realistic air to the poem and indirectly associates the regularity of the lover's death with recurrent elements in Nature, the sun and spring.

The second stanza seems to introduce a tone completely different from the first stanza's:

Not yet is there that heat and sober  
 Vivisection of more clamant air  
 That hands joined in the dark will answer  
 After the daily circuits of its glare. (p. 10)

Commenting on the difference in tone between the first and the second stanzas, Brom Weber observes that "the opening stanza introduces the idea that the arrival of each new day heralds the parting of lovers. The second stanza is reassuring, offering the information that lovers will be reunited at the close of day" (Weber, p. 118). Yet a closer look at the second stanza may reveal that it is not that reassuring after all; it points to mankind's dual inheritance from the Fall: the need for work for physical subsistence, and the need for sexual love for emotional sustenance and psychological well-being. The outside world, where the lover like all people makes his living, is described in hostile terms. Like an oasis in the desert, physical love provides a respite--through the "heat and sober vivisection" of passion--from the outside world and "the daily circuits of its glare." This idea is reminiscent of God's command to Adam after the Fall: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19).

The following stanza supports this reading as it deals with the inheritance of womankind from the Fall:

It is the time of sundering...  
 Beneath the green silk counterpane  
 Her mound of undelivered life  
 Lies cool upon her--not yet pain. (p. 10)

The woman is in her early months of pregnancy. Notice the overtones

of God's command to Eve after the Fall: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conceptions; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16).

One of the direct results of the Fall is the "division of labor" that occurred between the two sexes: women perpetuating the human race physically and men perpetuating it culturally and socially. Commenting on the "Oxen of the Sun" episode of Ulysses, Frank Budgen remarks that in it "each sex is about its most specialized function. One is producing bodies and the other making societies" (Budgen, p. 217).

In the following two stanzas from "Stark Major" we see one of the negative aspects of this sort of division of labor:

And she will wake before you pass  
 Scarcely aloud, beyond her door,  
 And every third step down the stair  
 Until you reach the muffled floor--  
 Will laugh and call your name; while you  
 Still answering her faint good-byes,  
 Will find the street, only to look  
 At doors and stone with broken eyes. (p. 10)

The physical separation of the lovers has a longer duration than their physical union; it always seems to occur quickly. And while Crane stresses the fact that the lover's separation is not final, that the man is probably going to work and will be back again to his woman, that "every step down the stair" the woman "will laugh and call [his] name," that as he leaves he answers her "faint good-byes," he also emphasizes the pain involved in this temporary separation especially for the man who has to go out to face the cold streets



"only to look / At doors and stone with broken eyes." In these two stanzas there is an implication that the daily physical separation of the lovers may not necessarily entail a comparable emotional separation, a note of solace that seems to be dispelled by the abrupt finality of the last stanza:

Walk now, and note the lover's death.  
Henceforth her memory is more  
Than yours, in cries, in ecstasies  
You cannot ever reach to share. (p. 10)

The beginning of a baby's life in the womb is the death of his father. Through pregnancy, a woman knows "cries" and "ecstasies" that no man can "ever reach to share"; they are the secrets of Mother Nature and Molly Bloom.

The ideas of this poem and the "Oxen of the Sun" episode of Ulysses are similar enough thematically to suggest a Joycean influence.

Apart from the "Oxen of the Sun" episode, which is devoted to the mystery of maternity and child-birth, Ulysses teems with details related to motherhood and delivery which shed light on many aspects of "Stark Major." In the "Hades" episode, outside of Glasnevin Cemetery where Paddy Dignam's funeral takes place, Bloom notices an old woman peeking at the hearse:

One dragged aside; an old woman peeping. Nose white-flattened against the pane. Thanking her stars she was passed over. Extraordinary the interest they take in a corpse. Glad to see us go we give them such trouble coming. Job seems to suit them. (Joyce 1961, p. 87)

In the "Proteus" episode, a similar thought occurs to Stephen Dedalus as he spots two midwives coming his way during his scroll down Sandymount Strand:

Creation from nothing. What has she in the Bag? A mis-birth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back, strandentwining cable of all flesh. That is why mystic monks. Will you be as gods? Gaze in your omphalos. Hello. Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville. Aleph, Alpha: nought, nought, one. (Joyce 1961, pp. 37-8)

It is in the last stanza of "Stark Major," however, that we can see the congruence of Crane's theme with Joyce's. In "Scylla and Charybdis" Stephen says: "The son unborn mars beauty: born, he brings pain, divides affection, increases care. He is a male: his growth is his father's decline, his youth his father's envy, his friend his father's enemy" (Joyce 1961, pp. 207-8). He goes on to draw a comparison between paternal love and maternal love:

Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. . . . Amor matris, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. (Joyce 1961, p. 207)

Again, we know, both from Bloom's and Molly's interior monologues in Ulysses that they have not had full sexual intercourse since their son Rudy died. Bloom remembers the exact date of that intercourse (27 November 1893) because Molly said to him then that she "could never like it again after Rudy" (Joyce 1961, p. 168).

In "Lachrymae Christi," which Lewis calls "the most overtly religious poem Crane had yet written" (Lewis 1967, p. 140), Crane

"deals with death and resurrection in several areas of reality and, as it were, on several levels" (Lewis 1967, p. 140). Crane has dealt with this theme in "At Melville's Tomb," but while his focus there is the artist's role in transforming the death-resurrection pattern into art forms, his focus here is that dialectic pattern per se, as it exists meaningfully in life and as it relates to mythology and religion.

Whitely, while benzine  
 Rinsings from the moon  
 Dissolve all but the windows of the mills  
 (Inside the sure machinery  
 Is still  
 And curdled only where a sill  
 Sluces its one unyielding smile) (p. 19)

The scene in this first stanza is a mill town at night as the moon--which, as in "Chaplinesque" and "Praise for an Urn," stands for the artistic imagination--washes the whole landscape, except for "the windows of the mills," in benzine--a fluid that is both a solvent and a highly inflammable fuel. Commenting on this stanza, Lewis argues that "the poetic imagination is transforming ugliness into beauty," and goes on to say:

In this instance, it is a technological ugliness of mills and machinery . . . which is dissolved, or rinsed away, till only the windows remain visible; while the adverb "whitely" hovers disjointedly nearby to reinforce the notion of transfiguration; and the machinery's hard or unyielding smile. (Lewis 1967, p. 142)

Insightful and illuminating as Lewis's interpretation may be, it is based on a mistaken premise. It is true that in some of Crane's poems the moon, with its Apollonian connotations, does symbolize

artistic imagination and humanism, yet in this instance the moon seems to stand for Nature and its power to assimilate in its texture man's inventions and creations.

Having established Nature's supremacy over the "unnatural," Crane proceeds to show Nature in her own domain:

Immaculate venom binds  
The fox's teeth, and swart  
Thorns freshen on the year's  
First blood. From flanks unfended,  
Twanged red perfidies of spring  
Are trillion on the hill. (p. 19)

In these condensed lines, Crane gives us his poetic version of the Hegelian dialectics of history and the Darwinian Nature. The scene here is "the springtime hillside where some form of sacrifice is going on" (Uroff 1974, p. 31). Most critics seem to take the "fox's teeth" literally, agreeing with Lewis that the "fox's teeth are venomous, but the venom is 'immaculate' and somehow it restrains or 'binds' those teeth" (Lewis 1967, p. 143). Martin Shockley, on the other hand, has a more interesting interpretation which seems to take into account the mill of the first stanza. "The fox's teeth," he maintains, "are the small, sharp needles which weave or knit the cloth on the machines. The needles are white and sharp like fox's teeth, and they shuttle in and out as they weave the cloth. 'Immaculate venom' is the threads or strands which are being woven" (Shockley, p. 33).

Shockley also draws the attention to "the ironic tone" of the first stanza and proceeds to explain:

The imagery is deliberately contradictory to the usual sentimental tone of "welcome sweet springtime." Instead

of flowers, there are thorns; instead of gamboling in the meadow, the lambs are lacerated with thorns; instead of sweet songs, we have twanged red perfidies. (Shockley, p. 33)

He aptly points out the prevalence of "pastoral and industrial imagery" in the stanza, and that "the relation between the sheep which produce the wool and the mills which knit the yarn serves to unify the pastoral and industrial imagery" (Shockley, p. 33). But Shockley falls short of following up on the implications of his discovery. The pastoral imagery associates effectively the lambs in the poem with Jesus Christ: not only is Christ known as the Lamb of God, he is also, much like the lambs, "lacerated with thorns." Again, the mention of the "red perfidies of spring" and "the hill" seems to reinforce the Christ symbolism: Christ was crucified in the spring and on a hill (Golgotha). The fact that Crane concentrates on the element of suffering in Nature is a subtle device by means of which he manages to sanctify life's negative aspects by projecting on them a religious myth wherein agony assumes a positive quality. Like Christ whose crucifixion leads to the redemption of mankind, Nature's death in the winter brings about a new life in the spring. The subtlety of the stanza lies in Crane's dexterity in handling the words in such a way as to create two parallel layers of meaning: one literal, the other symbolic. Words such as "immaculate," "the fox," "thorns," "first blood," "red perfidies of spring," "flanks unfenced," and "the hill" help create a natural landscape as they symbolically suggest Christ's story: his "immaculate" birth, the treachery and sinfulness of the world (fox and venom) Christ came into, his sacrificial death on the Cross, and the redemptive poten-

tiality it brought about for mankind.

In the following stanza, Crane turns from the mill town and the surrounding landscape to the night that engulfs both:

And the nights opening  
 Chant pyramids,--  
 Anoint with innocence,--recall  
 To music and retrieve what perjuries  
 Had galvanized the eyes. (p. 19)

Many critics felt baffled by the complexity of these lines. R. W. B. Lewis, for one, notes that

The language of those helpful but hesitant lines is entirely connotative, and it is the most radical example we have yet encountered of Crane's use of "the logic of metaphor"--the process Crane would describe as "the so-called illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness." (Lewis 1967, pp. 143-4)

The stanza is paraphrasable nonetheless. The nights, which are a symbol of Nature, radiate music--a symbol of harmony and a modern equivalent to the Elizabethan concept of the Music of the Spheres--which emanates from all of Nature and moves pyramidally upward toward one divine source. (Pyramids are very important in esoteric mysticism because they provide a palpable geometric approximation of the monotheistic concepts of unity-in-diversity and teleology.) This harmonious, "natural" music can "anoint" not with oil but with "innocence," and "recall to music and retrieve" (rectify and assimilate) the "perjuries" (the traditional, institutionalized concepts about Nature) which "had galvanized the eyes" of mankind (hardened people to the true essence of the story of Christ which is also the pattern of Nature's dialectics).

In the following stanza--a long sentence, the subject of which comes belatedly at the very end--the relation between Christ and Nature comes unmistakably into being:

While chime  
Beneath and all around  
Distilling clemencies,--worms'  
Inaudible whistle, tunneling  
Not penitence  
But song, as these  
Perpetual fountains, vines,--

Thy Nazarene and tinder eyes. (p. 19)

The tinder/tender eyes of Jesus Christ seem to create a violence--compassion suggestion--Christ is both the "tender," docile Lamb of God and the man whose eyes are inflammable "tinder." (The inflammability of Christ's "tinder eyes" seems retrospectively to suggest that the "benzine rinsings" of the first stanza are none but Christ's tears which are also the Lachrymae Christi, the Neapolitan wine, whose source is Christ's "tender" eyes. And while Crane uses the word "tinder," thus tilting the tinder/tender balance more toward "benzine," he describes Christ's eyes as "distilling clemencies," thus restoring the balance back to "Lachrymae Christi.") Commenting on the stanza, Shockley observes that

the eyes of Christ are like tinder because they kindle with beauty, a beauty which chimes beneath and all around as the eyes distill, or produce in its purest form, the gentleness and mercy which translates into music the inaudible whistle of tunneling worms, perpetual fountains and vines. (Shockley, p. 33)

Interesting as this reading is, it fails to take into account

the connection "while" which invokes a certain measure of independence between the "worms" and the Nazarene's "tinder eyes." In other words, while Christ's tinder eyes "chime," the worms (a death and time symbol), and the "fountains" and "vines" (symbol of life, place, and regeneration) "whistle" "not penitence / But song." Both Christ, through his crucifixion and resurrection, and Nature, in its death-regeneration cycle, seem to follow the same pattern and contribute harmoniously to the same universal music of the spheres.

In the following stanza, Crane continues his exposition of some of the religious fallacies and misconceptions that surround the sacrifice and teachings of Jesus Christ:

(Let sphinxes from the ripe  
 Borage of death have cleared my tongue  
 Once and again; vermin and rod  
 No longer bind. Some sentient cloud  
 Of tears flocks through the tendoned loam:  
 Betrayed stones slowly speak.) (p. 20)

Combining a serpent's tail, eagle's wings, the body of a lion, and the head of a man, the sphinx seems to blend symbolically not only the two dimensions of space and time but also the might of Nature and human intelligence. The sphinx is a common myth in Egyptian, Greek, and other Near and Middle Eastern cultures, and in this stanza the sphinx seems to stand for the ancient wisdom of pre-Christian civilizations.

In the fifth stanza, Crane is invoking the memory of ancient civilizations (symbolized by the sphinxes) from oblivion--"the ripe borage of death" which Shockley takes for "the sweet liquor of



oblivion" (Shockley, p. 34), the cordial which seems to suggest and blend smoothly with Lachrymae Christi--to clear his "tongue / Once and again" in order to give utterance to "song" not "penitence." Shockley draws the attention to the similarity between "Not penitence / But song" and "vermin and rod / No longer bind," and goes on to argue that "Crane is saying that the old monastic practice of mortifying the flesh with vermin and rod is no longer binding. Christ wishes man to glorify God not through penitence, but with song" (Shockley, p. 34).

The "sentient cloud / Of tears" is Jesus Christ; not only does the cloud recall the "benzine / Rinsings from the moon," it also reinforces the association of the "benzine / Rinsings" with the tears of Christ. "Tendoned loam," Shockley affirms, is "the human flesh. Man's body comes from dust, and the loam of the rich earth is held together by tendons; hence the human body is 'tendoned loam'" (Shockley, p. 35). Shockley also points to another potential meaning for "tendoned loam." "The phrase," he says, "also suggests the tendoned earth, earth that is bound together by foliage, vines, roots, even the tunnels of the worms are tendons holding the soil together" (Shockley, p. 35). In other words, the tears and sacrifice of Jesus Christ--as distinct from the institutionalized religion--run through man and Nature ("tendoned loam" both as mankind and as earth) testifying to the common source of the physical and the metaphysical. Man's religious sentiment and loyalty, however, seems to be more with Christianity, the organized religion, than with Christ, the

man, and his teachings and sacrifice. This attitude constitutes a betrayal on the part of humanity, not only of Christ but also of man's nature, Nature, and the wisdom of ancient civilizations: "Betrayed stones slowly speak." The stones are those of Nature, of the sphinxes and pyramids, and of Golgotha.

In the following stanza, Christ's eyes--as he undergoes the throes and agony of Crucifixion as well as the triumphs of Resurrection--seem to give "a local habitation and a name" to the cycle of destruction and regeneration in Nature:

Names peeling from Thine eyes  
 And their undimming lattices of flame,  
 Spell out in palm and pain  
 Compulsion of the year, O Nazarene. (p. 20)

Explicating this stanza, Shockley notices that "the phrase 'lattices of flame' recalls the 'tinder eyes' mentioned previously. 'Palm and pain' refer, of course, to the triumph commemorated in Palm Sunday and the pain of the crucifixion. 'Compulsion of the year' means that each is inevitable in its own time" (Shockley, p. 35). And Vincent Quinn calls the stanza "a prayer to Christ, who symbolizes the suffering by which the world is saved. He animates nature whose throes in spring are epiphanies of His passion" (Quinn 1963, p. 41).

The mention of "palm and pain" leads logically to a recall of the crucifixion scene in the last two stanzas:

Lean long from sable, slender boughs,  
 Unstanch'd and luminous. And as the nights  
 Strike from Thee perfect spheres,  
 Lift up in lilac-emerald breath the grail  
 Of earth again-- (p. 20)

Thy face  
 From charred and riven stakes, O  
 Dionysus, Thy  
 Unmangled target smile. (p. 20)

Ambiguity plays a very important role in these beautiful and condensed lines that summarize subtly the whole poem. Notice how, in "Lean long from sable, slender boughs," Christ seems to fade unobtrusively into the cross on which he is crucified, and how the sharp contours of the cross are transformed into the "sable, slender boughs" of a tree. The word "lean" creates most of the ambiguity in the seventh stanza; it can be read either as an adjective or as an imperative verb; as an adjective, the sentence ends without a subject for that adjective to qualify; as an imperative verb, the sentence sounds more complete grammatically--a prose equivalent would be: "lean long," O Christ, "from sable, slender boughs." Lewis believes that the "sable, slender boughs" "suggest, or are intended to suggest, both the branches from which the tree-god, Dionysus, might be expected to lean, and the cross on which the Nazarene was crucified" (Lewis 1967, pp. 146-7).

...And as the nights  
 Strike from Thee perfect spheres,  
 Lift up in lilac-emerald breath the grail  
 Of earth again-- (p. 20)

As in the first stanza, "the nights" stand for Nature which derives ("strikes") from the tears of Christ interpretation, inspiration, and a concept of metaphysical order ("perfect spheres"). Crane then invokes Christ to "lift up in" his "lilac-emerald breath"--lilac being a spring and a funeral flower, and emerald being green,

Christ's breath seems to suggest both life and death--"the grail of earth," which combines the celestial (grail) and the terrestrial (earth), once more in a symbolic re-enactment of the cycles of Nature.

Thy face  
From charred and riven stakes, O  
Dionysus, Thy  
Unmangled target smile. (p. 20)

In this last stanza we realize that Crane's invocation is directed toward Christ and Dionysus alike, and that Christ is identified with and metamorphosed into Dionysus; both are transfigurations of the myth of the Slain God whose sacrifice brings life, fertility, and resurrection to man and land. The face of Christ extracts a smile from Dionysus, and both seem to fade into one another in an affirmation of the spirit of life. Shockley notes:

Although the smile is the target of death, of all evil and destructive forces, it survives, unmangled, the charred and riven stakes. It is this smile, this image of suffering and sympathy, of compassion and love, of resurrection and life, which is the grail of earth, the goal of life. (Shockley, p. 36)

R. P. Blackmur relates Joyce with "Lachrymae Christi." Commenting on the relationship between the first three lines of the first stanza and the separate line that follows the fourth stanza ("Thy Nazarene and tinder eyes"), R. P. Blackmur observes:

It is, I think, the carried-over influence of benzine which gives startling aptness to Nazarene. It is, if I am correct for any reader but myself, an example of suspended association, or telekinesis; and it is, too, an example of syllabic interpenetration or internal punning as habitually practiced in the later prose of Joyce. The influence of one word on the other reminds us that Christ the Saviour cleanses and solves and has, too, the

quality of light. (Blackmur, p. 281)

Of all Joyce's works, Ulysses seems to provide several clues to Crane's poem both thematically and technically. In the "Lestrygonians" episode of Ulysses, we come across the theme of "Lachrymae Christi": a young man, belonging to the Y. M. C. A., hands Bloom a throwaway; Bloom glances over it and his eye catches the letters "Bloo" and subconsciously expects to find an "m" to follow. Astonished, he re-reads the throwaway.

Bloo...Me? No  
Blood of the Lamb

His slow feet walked him riverward, reading. Are you saved? All are washed in the blood of the Lamb. God wants blood victim. Birth, hymen, martyr, war, foundation of a building, sacrifice, kidney burnt offering, druid's altars. (Joyce 1961, p. 151)

The same idea is expressed by Stephen in the context of his Shakespearean theory when he says:

The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly (He gave us light first and the sun two days later), the lord of things as they are whom the most Roman of Catholics call dio boia, hangman god [my emphasis], is doubtless all in all in all of us, ostler and butcher. . . . (Joyce 1961, p. 213)

In both statements, we find the source not only of the theme of the poem but of individual lines such as "the year's / First blood" and "Twanged red perfidies of spring." As a matter of fact, the entire second stanza, which is vital to the meaning of the poem as a whole, is closely related to Ulysses. "The fox's teeth"---as opposed to

Christ, the Lamb of God--can be traced back to Stephen's description in "Scylla and Charybdis" of Shakespeare's love life in London after his traumatic emotional experience with Ann Hathaway in his native Stratford-on-Avon. Stephen says:

Christfox in leather trews, hiding, a runaway in blighted treeforks from hue and cry. Knowing no vixen, walking lonely in the chase. Women he won to him, tender people, a whore of Babylon, ladies of justice, bully tapsters' wives. Fox and geese. (Joyce 1961, p. 193; emphasis added)

"Christfox" is Joyce's condensed way of pointing out the victim-victimizer antithesis in Shakespeare's prolific character. As the Lamb of God, Christ's innocence and docility contrasts sharply with the fox's slyness and deception; and by combining them in his description of Shakespeare--whose life and career are likened to the Trinitarian mystery--Joyce seems to summarize life's death-resurrection dialectics. And while Crane does not use "Christfox," his poem employs both Christ and a fox, and the underlying theme and purpose of "Lachrymae Christi" seem to be the reconciling of the Lamb of God to the fox, and of Christ to Dionysus in a comprehensive understanding of life. (Notice how the word "treefork" sheds light on the association of Christ with Dionysus in Crane's poem; not only does "treefork" provide the common grounds between Christ on the cross and Dionysus hanging on the tree, it also stresses the duality of the tree as both a source of life and a tool of death.)

The "Thorns" which "freshen on the year's / First blood" may also be traced back to Ulysses. In the "Lotus Eaters" episode, Bloom receives a letter (with a flower pinned inside it) from Martha

Clifford with whom he has a secret correspondence. He puts the letter in his pocket.

Fingering still the letter in his pocket he drew the pin out of it. Common pin, eh? He threw it on the road. Out of her clothes somewhere: pinned together. Queer the number of pins they always have. No roses without thorns. (Joyce 1961, p. 78; emphasis added)

It is not only in the use of the word "thorns" in Crane's poem that we can detect Joyce's influence, it is rather in the entire statement: "no roses without thorns" which is, in a way, the very theme of "Lachrymae Christi."

"Not penitence / But song" is a reiteration of the same theme Crane expresses in "Legend" ("I am not ready for repentance: / Nor to match regrets"; and in both he seems to be echoing Stephen's rejection in Ulysses of the "Agenbite of Inwit" (the pangs of conscience), and Joyce's celebration of "the sane and joyful spirit" which encompasses even tragedy, and whose true expression in the art of literature is comedy. Here we may add that the theme of "Lachrymae Christi" is just as much about the need to tolerate the thorns as the need to celebrate the pleasure the rose gives.

A Joycean influence upon Crane in this poem may be seen in the use of metamorphosis. Commenting on this aspect in Crane's poem, M. D. Uroff remarks:

The "unyielding smile" of the machine in the modern world has become by the end of the poem the "Unmangled target smile" of Dionysus-Christ, and the process of the poem has been one of transformation and releasing the meaning dormant in the world. By associating the mill with the wool it spins and the wool with the sheep and the sheep with the sacrificial lamb and the lamb with Christ and Christ with the symbol of suffering and dying

and rebirth, the poet unmangles the machine world. The whole process in the poem is one of absorbing the complex and multiple meanings of the words into one permanent meaning, of purifying life into art. (Uroff, p. 31)

This transformational process is the ontology to which Ulysses subscribes and the means by which it becomes a re-enactment of the Odyssey. Dublin becomes the earth, and the three main characters in the book get identified with a host of historical, mythical, religious, and artistic figures. Giving his reader a hint as to the presence of this metamorphic ontology in his book, Joyce writes, transcribing Stephen's interior monologue as he walks down Sandymount Strand thinking about drowned men:

Bag of corpse gas sopping in foul brine. A quiver of minnows, fat of a spongy titbit, flash through the slits of his buttoned trouserfly. God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead. (Joyce 1961, p. 50)

And S. L. Goldberg tells us that

Ulysses does not merely retrace or re-enact the pattern of traditional myths. Its more difficult and more valuable achievement has been to rediscover their living sense, to recreate them. . . . What Joyce does affirm is this spirit of life, which is manifest not merely in traditional myths but also in the very creation of myths. (Goldberg 1962, pp. 98-9)

All of which leads us to a very important aspect of this poem, and that is the combining of the myths of Dionysus and Christ (in Crane's exploration of the death-resurrection pattern in Nature), which may have been the influence of Joyce's use of the Homeric



parallel and a variety of myths in Ulysses.

In "Recitative," which Crane calls "complex, exceedingly," and on which he "worked for weeks, off and on . . . trying to simplify the presentation of the ideas in it" (Letters 1965, p. 176), Crane seems to confront the dual nature of man.

Regard the capture here, O Janus-faced,  
As double as the hands that twist this glass.  
Such eyes at search or rest you cannot see;  
Reciting pain or glee, how can you bear!

Twin shadowed halves: the breaking second holds  
In each the skin alone, and so it is  
I crust a plate of vibrant mercury  
Borne cleft to you, and brother in the half. (p. 25)

When Allen Tate complained to Crane about the difficulty of these two stanzas and the obscurity of the whole poem, Crane wrote to him explaining:

I imagine the poet, say, on a platform speaking it [the poem]. The audience is one half of humanity, Man (in the sense of Blake) and the poet the other. ALSO, the poet sees himself in the audience as in a mirror. ALSO, the audience sees itself, in part, in the poet. Against this paradoxical DUALITY is posed the UNITY, or the conception of it (as you got it) in the last verse. (Letters 1965, p. 176)

In the same letter, Crane says that "the poet is talking to himself all the way through the poem" (Letters 1965, p. 176; emphasis added), therefore, the address in "regard" is by the poet to himself. "The capture" is a reference to humanity at large or to the poet himself, in the sense of being entrapped within space and time. Janus is a Roman god with two heads---a symbol of duality. To attempt a paraphrase, the poet is inviting himself and his audience to

ponder the plight of man in life: imprisoned in space and time, and heir to a dual legacy pulling him in opposite directions. Weber remarks that the poem

is an expression of "the terrible fear which his [Crane's] dualism evoked in him. This dualism was far more than an abstract conflict between ideal and reality, between matter and spirit, good and evil, lust and love. It was a dualism that extended through every fiber of his being, sending him in agony from one extremity to another, always in turmoil and never at rest. (Weber, p. 233)

In the second line this duality--both the poet's and his man-kind-audience's--is as conspicuous as the poet's two hands which hold up the mirror of art ("this glass") to his audience to see itself and its duality. This mirror reflects the dialectics of human life ("eyes at search or rest... / Reciting pain or glee"), even if humanity fails to perceive them ("such eyes...cannot see").

In the second stanza, Crane expounds and expands on the duality of human nature:

Twin shadowed halves: the breaking second holds  
 In each the skin alone, and so it is  
 I crust a plate of vibrant mercury  
 Borne cleft to you, and brother in the half. (p. 25)

In spite of the ambiguity of the stanza, we can still identify the main elements of the poem: the dualities ("Twin shadowed halves"), the divisions ("the breaking second") which "split man from man, man from himself, the poet from his audience, the body from the mind" (Uroff, p. 35), and art as a mirror that reflects life ("I crust a plate of vibrant mercury").

The third stanza seems to augment even further the ambiguity

of the two previous stanzas:

Inquire this much-exacting fragment smile,  
 Its drums and darkest blowing leaves ignore,--  
 Defer though, revocation of the tears  
 That yield attendance to one crucial sign. (p. 25)

In their explications of "Recitative," almost all of Crane's critics seem to avoid the first three stanzas and to explicate the poem starting from the fourth stanza onwards. Speaking for Crane's scholars and critics, Spears admits that the poem is "so very difficult" and that "the situation itself is so ambiguous, with so many alternative interpretations (as Crane indicates), that visualizing it is not much help" (Spears, p. 22). Lewis finds Crane's explanation of the poem to Allen Tate "at once a helpful and a baffling explanation" (Lewis 1967, p. 128). And Paul, without attempting to explicate the early stanzas of the poem, argues that "everything in the first two stanzas insists on our double nature and experience: on duality, division, and separation, on appearance and reality, on polarities and contraries" (Paul, p. 130).

Look steadily--how the wind feasts and spins  
 The brain's disk shivered against lust. Then  
     watch  
 While darkness, like an ape's face, falls away,  
 And gradually white buildings answer day. (p. 25)

Commenting on this much-explicated fourth stanza, M. D. Uroff remarks:

The wind, the inspiring power of the imagination, is again curative as it sets the brain in motion once more. It is also purifying and light giving. Under its power "the ape's face," that aspect of man which is merely bestial and stupid, "falls away," and with it goes darkness and creative paralysis. In its place the "white buildings" of the created object are revealed. (Uroff, p. 34)

The next two stanzas take us from the dualities of human life to the artist's dilemma in the contemporary world:

Let the same nameless gulf beleaguer us--  
Alike suspend us from atrocious sums  
Built floor by floor on shafts of steel that grant  
The plummet heart, like Absalom, no stream.

The highest tower,--let her ribs palisade  
Wrenched gold of Nineveh;--yet leave the tower.  
The bridge swings over salvage, beyond wharves;  
A wind abides the ensign of your will ... (p. 25)

Lewis considers the fifth and sixth stanzas "wedged into the poem," and complains that they "deflect the poetic movement" and are "only tangentially relevant to the main theme." He goes on:

Paraphrasing bluntly, we may say that Crane reverts in these stanzas to another major obstacle to creativity--his need for money and the dangerous appeal of great wealth. Into an already congested little poem, Crane intrudes images of powerful but deadly worlds of commerce and industry. These worlds are represented here, as in The Bridge, by the urban skyscrapers . . . and by the tower, which seems to be entirely constructed of gold. These worlds, these buildings, stifle poetry and shut the poet off from inspiration. (Lewis 1967, p. 130)

The last stanza--which, according to Spears, evokes "a final vision of unity" (Spears, p. 23)--provides a polar opposite to the dualities encountered throughout the poem:

In alternating bells have you not heard  
all hours clapped dense into a single stride?  
Forgive me an echo of these things,  
And let us walk through time with equal pride. (p. 26)

Thrown by Crane's letter to Tate regarding the poet and his audience, most critics seem to take "Recitative" for a statement about art. And although in the second stanza Crane seems to find the "raison d'être" of art ("and so it is / I crust a plate of vibrant mercury") in the dualities of mankind, his main focus in the poem is the co-existence of these dualities in the human psyche, rather than the evolution of art from these dualities. It is in this aspect that Joyce's influence sheds a very useful light on the ambiguities of the poem. Commenting on "Recitative," Unterecker writes:

Interesting not only because it uses bridge-tower imagery but also because Crane designed it as a deliberate self-portrait, the poem mirrors the essentially opposed halves of man's nature: that of the lust-driven, darkness-seeking animal, the ape, bestial and corrupt, whose parted lips break into a "fragment smile" of certain innuendo; and the ape's opposite, the "white buildings" of day that transform phallic imagery into imagery appropriate to the soul. What the poem asserts, then, is nothing less than the naked truth about Hart Crane--and, he believed, the truth about every man. Each part of man's body participates in his double nature: and a single smile can be both the "crucial sign" of his lust, his "blowing leaves," and simultaneously the "crucial sign" of an entirely spiritual communion. For the body bridges spirit and flesh, and man must learn to "walk through time" in the single stride which incorporates into one action his double nature. (Unterecker 1969, p. 333).

Crane's two references to art as a mirror ("this glass" and "a plate of vibrant mercury") also have their counterparts in Joyce. To the publisher who refused to publish Dubliners for moral reasons, Joyce wrote accusing him of precluding progress in Ireland by preventing "the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass" (Magalaner and Kain, p. 55). In

Ulysses Stephen Dedalus describes the art of the Irish Revivalists as "the cracked lookingglass of a servant" (Joyce 1961, p. 6). (It is interesting to notice that both Joyce and Crane refer to art as a cracked mirror and both use the past participle "cleft" in allusion to the mirror, though in different senses. In the "Telemachus" episode of Ulysses Joyce writes: "Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked crack" (Joyce 1961, p. 6; emphasis added); and Crane writes: "I crust a plate of vibrant mercury / Borne cleft to you, and brother in the half" (emphasis added).

Again, Crane holds up the mirror to the dual-natured, Janus-faced mankind. Looking at his face in the mirror, Stephen wonders: "As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It acks me too" (Joyce 1961, p. 6). Notice the estrangement Stephen feels toward his face as if it were not his, the stress on the difference between his reality and his appearance, and his conception of himself as a "dogsbody"--a servant managing his master's affairs--an idea that assumes a special significance when Stephen later admits: "I am the servant of two masters . . . an English and an Italian" (Joyce 1961, p. 20)--the divided loyalties of a Janus-faced.

Another interesting aspect of Joyce's influence may be found in the relation between looking in a mirror and perceiving the face of a beast, which we encounter both in the "Telemachus" episode and in "Recitative." Crane writes: "Then watch / While darkness, like an ape's face, fall away" (emphasis added). And in "Telemachus," Buck Mulligan takes the mirror away from Stephen and says to him when he

shows a sign of irritation: "The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror" (Joyce 1961, p. 6).

It seems to me that Joyce's choice of Ulysses as an archetype for Bloom may have been a factor in inspiring Crane to write "Recitative." When Frank Budgen asked Joyce about his reasons behind choosing Ulysses, and not Hamlet or Faustus, as an archetype for Bloom, he said that it is because Ulysses is "the complete man in literature." By completeness Joyce meant duality and versatility rather than moral perfection. Joyce went on to say that Ulysses is a paradoxical character; he is both a loving husband and a licentious lover, a war dodger and a war hero; he is courageous and sometimes cunning, honest and sly, sometimes tactful and sometimes blunt, prudent and sometimes impetuous (Budgen, p. 16).

This concept of duality is reflected in Ulysses not only in the main characters but also in the very structure of the book. Both Stephen and Molly display paradoxical qualities throughout the book. In the middle of his musing over the nature of reality and the "ineluctable modality of the visible," Stephen picks his nose and wipes his picking on a rock. As a matter of fact, what Stephen's stroll down Sandymount strand boils down to are a philosophical contemplation and a poem, on the one hand, and a nose-picking and a urination on the other. In the last episode of Ulysses, as Molly menstruates and urinates in her chamber pot, her mind asserts the existence of God and the teleological nature of the universe:

The very structure of the book--as it pertains to character presentation--helps maintain the dualistic nature of the characters.

Stephen's seriousness of purpose, his philosophical and historical musings in the Nestor and Proteus episodes, and his critical insight and artistic genius in "Scylla and Charybdis" are counterbalanced by his intoxicated, blasphemous iconoclasm in "Oxen of the Sun," and his riotous revelry in "Circe."

The presentation of Bloom's character clearly illustrates this dualistic trait in the structure of the book. Bloom's submissiveness to his wife---illustrated by his bringing her breakfast in bed---in "Calypso" is countered by his firmness toward her and his order to her, in "Ithaca," to bring him breakfast in bed the morning after. Bloom's erotic thoughts and behavior in "Circe" and the "Lotus Eaters" is balanced by his sentimentally adolescent, speechless eye-communication with Gerty MacDowell in "Nausicaa." Bloom's skeptical cynicism toward death in "Hades" is outweighed by his reverent and deferential attitude toward motherhood and child-birth in "Oxen of the Sun." His kidney breakfast and his relish for the inner organs of beast and fowl in "Calypso" are contrasted by his decline in "Lestrygonians" to eat meat and opting for a cheese sandwich and a glass of burgundy instead. His passive submission to the furious outburst of Councillor Nannetti, the business manager of the Free-man's Journal in "Aeolus," is balanced by his moral courage and his brave stand to the fanatic Citizen in the "Cyclops." His submission to the domineering temptation of Bella Cohen, the brothels' Madam in "Circe," is countered by his indifference to the erotic appeal of Miss Kennedy and Miss Douce, the two barmaids in the bar of the Ormond Hotel in the "Sirens."



It is also noteworthy that while episodes such as "Nestor," "Proteus," and "Scylla and Charybdis" seem to be devoted almost entirely to philosophical, theological, artistic, and critical questions (the superhuman part of man's nature), other chapters, such as the "Lotus Eaters," "Lestrygonians," "Oxen of the Sun," and "Penelope," are dedicated to animal lethargy, eating, human reproduction, and human sexuality, respectively (the subhuman or animal part of man's nature).

Apart from their deep roots in Crane's personal life, the dualities of man find their best and most adequate illustration in Ulysses, a book Crane loved and revered and read as if it were the Bible. And the note of reconciliation on which "Recitative" closes seems to be Crane's way of emulating Molly's monologue, in Ulysses, which ends where it starts, like a snake with its tail in its mouth, with an all-encompassing, life-asserting "Yes."

## CHAPTER VII

### MOLLY AND HELEN:

#### CRANE'S TREATMENT OF THE MOTHER-NATURE ARCHETYPE IN

#### "FOR THE MARRIAGE OF FAUSTUS AND HELEN"

When Crane started to write "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," he wrote Gorham Munson: "Certainly it is the most ambitious thing I have ever attempted" (Letters 1965, p. 92). Almost all critics agree with him. Paul calls it "the most ambitious poem Crane had yet undertaken" (Paul 1972, p. 62). Lewis suggests that the poem "occupies a key position in Crane's career" (Lewis 1967, p. 80). David Clark holds that it is "Crane's first major poem" (Clark, p. 56). Hazo claims that, with a handful of other poems, it stands "at the apogee of Crane's lyrical achievement in White Buildings" (Hazo, p. 48). Philip Horton maintains that the poem is "a milestone . . . marking the step from minor to major intention" (Horton, p. 139). And Leibowitz appends his admiration with an explanation:

"Faustus and Helen" marks a turning point in Crane's career, for in it he establishes the lineaments of his idiom, and in a large sense invents a flexible language to encompass the great themes of poetry--war, love, death, beauty, knowledge. (Leibowitz, p. 43)

These contemporary critics resound the note of great admiration with which Crane's earlier critics (Allen Tate, Gorham Munson, Waldo

Frank) hailed the poem as Crane's greatest contribution to poetry. (To these critics The Bridge, which came out about six years later, was by all criteria a failure.)

The accolade accorded "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" is warranted; yet, the critics, it seems to me, fail to see that the excellence of the poem is partly attributable to Crane's adoption of Joyce's mythological parallel. Lewis falls short of tracing the mythological structure of the poem back to James Joyce's Ulysses; and while he correctly observes that the poem reflects "Crane's growing escape from his artistic bondage to Eliot" (Lewis 1967, p. 87), he interprets that "escape" as a "shifting" of "his poetic allegiance from Eliot to William Blake" (Lewis 1967, p. 89). Sherman Paul comes closer to the mark, "Faustus and Helen," according to him, is Crane's "showpiece of an education in Eliot, Joyce, and the Elizabethans" (Paul, p. 63).

In a letter to Gorham Munson, Crane makes it very clear that in "Faustus and Helen" he intends to "take Eliot as a point of departure toward an almost complete reverse of direction," to make his poem aim "toward a more positive, or . . . ecstatic goal," and that "the persisting theme" of the poem be to "affirm certain things" (Letters 1965, pp. 114-5). Couple this statement with the following from Crane's "General Aims and Theories":

When I started writing "Faustus and Helen" it was my intention to embody in modern terms (words, symbols, metaphors) a contemporary approximation to an ancient human culture or mythology that seems to have been obscured rather than illumined with the frequency of poetic allusions made to it during the last century. . . . I found that I was really building a bridge between so-called classic experience and many divergent realities

of our seething, confused cosmos of today, which has no formulated mythology yet for classic poetic reference or for religious exploitation. (Crane 1966, p. 217)

And it becomes self-evident that Crane is describing unintentionally the Homeric parallel, the technique Joyce pioneered and successfully employed in Ulysses, and that, as an embodiment of that Joycean technique, "Faustus and Helen" marks Crane's final break with Eliot and his turning to Joyce for technique as well as subject matter.

In an insightful remark, Sherman Paul seems to point indirectly to Crane's indebtedness to Joyce for the mythical parallel.

Commenting on the title of the poem, Paul writes:

And though accurate enough, the title seems pretentious. It advises us, of course, of the "mythical method" Eliot had employed in The Waste Land and explained in a review of Joyce's Ulysses, the method of continuous parallel between past and present that Crane himself commented on later in speaking of "Faustus and Helen" in "General Aims and Theories." (Paul, p. 64)

Paul goes on to point out that Crane's "stake in tradition, as one sees in his rejection of dada, has a different rationale than Eliot's." He then proceeds to put his thumb on Joyce's influence:

He [Crane] did not set the present so radically against the past as Eliot did. . . . His use of "Faustus" and "Helen" neither controls nor condemns the present, but, in keeping with profound needs of his own, serves, as he said, as a "bridge" to connect him with past experience. (Paul, p. 64)

What Professor Paul overlooks is that Crane's acquaintance with the "mythical method" came first-hand through his intimate reading of Ulysses, and not through Eliot's review of Joyce's novel.

It is highly probable that Crane read Ulysses about the same time that Eliot did. And if we remember Arnold Kettle's remark about Ulysses that "There is here no satirical contrast between the heroic past and the insignificant present; the two are not contrasted but identified" (Kettle, p. 123), it becomes clear that not only did Crane (like Eliot) borrow the mythical-parallel technique from Joyce, but also applied it (unlike Eliot) to the same end: to bridge the gap between, and identify, the past and the present, not to set them in opposition.

John Unterecker sheds some light on the Joycean influence in "Faustus and Helen." He tells us that in the summer of 1922,

Tying in both Joyce's book and Joyce himself with his own recent preoccupations, Crane, at that moment exactly halfway through his "Faustus and Helen" poem, decided that Ulysses could best be compared to Goethe's Faust, "to which it has a distinct resemblance in many ways. . . ." Joyce, who in a chaotic world ended his great book with a triumphant "Yes," was for Crane a symbol of what the modern artist could and should be: a man who could present the grimness of reality as something shot through with significant light. (Unterecker 1969, p. 246)

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"For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" opens with an epigraph from Ben Jonson's The Alchemist (IV,5):

And so we may arrive by Talmud skill  
And profane Greek to raise the building up  
Of Helen's house against the Ismaelite,  
King Thogarma, and his habergeons

Brimstony, blue and fiery; and the force  
 Of King Abaddon, and the beast of Cittim;  
 Which Rabbi David Kimchi, Onkelos,  
 And Aben Ezra do interpret Rome. (p. 27)

Critics differ as to the significance of the epigraph and its relation to the poem. Lewis calls the passage "bothersome" and "pure Jabberwocky." "In the play," Lewis goes on to say, "it is spoken by Dol Common, a lively whore with a talent for chicanery, who is pretending to a religious fit as part of a scheme to gull Sir Epicure Mammon, a gentleman of awe-inspiring erotic fancy" (Lewis 1967, pp. 90-1). Leibowitz and Clark, on the other hand, seem to disagree with Lewis and to be of the same mind: both take the epigraph for a statement of Crane's intention in the poem. Leibowitz argues that the Jonson passage "hints at the stylistic medley Crane will try in the poem. . . . Against the barbarian hordes, with their materialistic forces and babel of voices, the Faustian poet . . . will rescue poetic beauty from the confusions of modernity" (Leibowitz, p. 60). And Clark tells us that "there is gaiety in the title and in the epigraph" and that "the epigraph cannot help but imply that Crane refuses in this poem to take himself entirely seriously" (Clark, p. 57).

Paul and Hazo come closer to the question of Crane's shift from Eliot to Joyce as reflected in Crane's choice of the epigraph. Paul remarks: "Were it not for its appropriateness we might take the epigraph from Jonson's The Alchemist for a parody of Eliot's practice" (Paul, p. 64). Hazo argues that "the theme of the poem can be gleaned from the first three lines" of the epigraph; he goes on

to say:

It is not difficult to show by a few transpositions that "Talmud skill" can be equated with Hebraism, and "profane Greek" with Hellenism. If "Helen's house" is suggestive of beauty, and the "Ismaelite" of Philistinism, it would seem logical to deduce that Jonson's meaning (and Crane's as well) is that the fusion of Hebraism and Hellenism--the two most fundamental cultural forces in Western civilization--is capable of defending and sustaining beauty against those Philistine forces that would destroy not only beauty but knowledge as well. (Hazo, p. 49)

It may be a commonplace to note that Ulysses, with its Jewish hero re-enacting the story of a Greek mythical figure, and the abundance of Greek mythological and Biblical references in it, is a prominent precedent in the fusion of Hebraism and Hellenism. also, being the art of transforming dross into gold, alchemy is an apt metaphor for art: the metamorphic process by means of which the ordinary is transformed into the precious, the modern into the "classic," the "quotidian" into the "abstract."

Part I of "Faustus and Helen" begins with a description of the plight of the human mind in modern times:

The mind has shown itself at times  
 Too much the baked and labeled dough  
 Divided by accepted multitudes.  
 Across the stacked partitions of the day--  
 Across the memoranda, baseball scores,  
 The stenographic smiles and stock quotations  
 Smutty wings flash out equivocations. (p. 27)

As the bread man eats--the nicely baked, sliced, and wrapped loaves--so the mind is divided by "accepted multitudes" which "calls up 'platitudes'" (Paul 1972, p. 65). "The stacked partitions of the day" are the skyscrapers of New York, Cleveland, or any modern

American city.

The skyscraper, the temple of business, a frequent symbol of both the degradation and aspiration of modern civilization (as in the work of Marin and Stieglitz), is evoked by the multiple association of words and the catalog of what goes on there: the paperwork, talk of baseball, mechanical flirtations and response ("stenographic smiles"), the ticker tape (and "stock quotations"), the smutty jokes. (Paul, p. 66)

In this efficient, mechanized, and business-like (but hollow and sordid) modern world, unity and harmony are all but lacking. "It is a world which is crowded and confused (multitudes, stacked, numbers, crowd)," Lewis observes, "but where relationship is lacking (divided, partitioned; by later implication, fragmentary). . . . It is, in fact, a world that has become one huge stock market" (Lewis 1967, p. 92). But even in this world of fragmentation and lack of communication, the possibility of finding the "abstract" manifest in the "quotidian," though small, still exists: "Smutty wings flash out equivocations." "Though inured to routine and though divided," Hazo holds, the mind "is capable of winging its way out of the oppressive world to freedom" (Hazo, p. 50).

"Wings" is the link between the first and second stanzas; but, while the "wings" in the first stanza comes at the very last line, thus assuming minor importance, in the second stanza it occurs in the first line, thus acquiring primary significance:

The mind is brushed by sparrow wings;  
 Numbers, rebuffed by asphalt, crowd  
 The margins of the day, accent the curbs,  
 Convoying divers down on every corner  
 To druggist, barber and tobacconist,  
 Until the graduate opacities of evening  
 Take them away as suddenly to somewhere  
 Virginal perhaps, less fragmentary, cool. (p. 27)



The human mind is "brushed by sparrow wings"--a symbol of transcendence and freedom that contrasts with the earth- and work-bound "Numbers"--as the city dwellers get up in the morning and rush to work in undifferentiated masses. "Numbers, rebuffed by asphalt, crowd / The margins of the day, accent the curbs" is a very apt image which renders not only the actual scene of people going to work, keeping away from the street ("rebuffed by asphalt") and walking on the sidewalks ("accent the curbs"), but also its moral significance: the irrelevancy, insignificance, and marginality of the life of these people ("Numbers . . . crowd / The margins of the day"), as well as the antagonism between the city and its inhabitants ("rebuffed by asphalt"). Also, being stock-market terms, "margins" and "curbs" seem to underlie the predominance of business in modern life. As every individual in this undifferentiated, work-bound mass of people goes to his place of work, he or she assumes his or her daytime identity, becoming "druggist, barber and tobacconist," "Until the graduate opacities of the evening" engulf the horizon, at which time they slough their daytime identities and join the mass of people, unidentifiable one from another, in their march back to their homes--"somewhere / Virginal perhaps, less fragmentary, cool."

There is the world dimensional for  
those untwisted by the love of things  
irreconcilable. . . . (p. 28)

In these lines (borrowed from his poem "The Bridge of Estador") Crane seems to suggest his impatience with the monotonous rhythm of

modern life, so uninspiringly divided between work and sleep, and his intention to turn away from it. This "world dimensional" is for those immersed in their daily struggle for survival, those who cannot see beyond their noses, those "untwisted by the love of things irreconcilable."

In the middle of this hectic and "quotidian" world, the poet, though a part of it, is capable of salvaging an image of the ideal and the abstract from the ostensible anarchy and purposelessness:

And yet, suppose some evening I forgot  
 The fare and transfer, yet got by that way  
 Without recall,--lost yet poised in traffic.  
 Then I might find your eyes across an aisle,  
 Still flickering with those prefigurations--  
 Prodigal, yet uncontested now,  
 Half-riant before the jerky window frame. (p. 28)

On his way home from work (like the "multitudes" and "Numbers" of stanzas 1 and 2) one evening, the poet sees Helen of Troy incarnated in a female passenger in a street car sitting across the aisle from him. Commenting on this stanza (and the mythological parallel in the poem as a whole), Crane writes: "So I found 'Helen' sitting in a street car; the Dionysian revels of her court and her seduction were transformed to a Metropolitan roof garden with a jazz orchestra; and the katharsis of the fall of Troy I saw approximated in the recent World War" (Crane 1966, p. 217). And to Waldo Frank he writes:

The street car device is the most concrete symbol I could find for the Transition of the imagination from quotidian details to the universal consideration of beauty,--the body still "centered in traffic," the imagination eluding its daily nets and self consciousness. (Letters 1965, p. 120)

Crane manages to manipulate his language both denotatively and connotatively. "The fare and transfer" is a denotative reference to the bus fare and the poet's ride; it is also a connotative reference to the metamorphosis of the girl in the bus into Helen. (Notice that Crane uses "transfer," in the above-quoted passage from "General Aims and Theories," in the sense of "metamorphose." "Her court and her seduction," he writes in reference to Helen, "were transferred to a Metropolitan roof garden.") "Lost yet poised in traffic" may be taken literally, or connotatively as a reference, either to "some mind-freeing sensation as if under the influence of alcohol or drugs" (Clark, p. 59), or to the metamorphic device by means of which, while retaining their modern-day identities ("poised"), the poet and the bus girl become re-incarnations of Faustus and Helen ("lost")--much like Bloom who does not lose his contemporary identity as he re-enacts the adventures of Ulysses. The phrase "your eyes . . . Prodigal, yet uncontested now" reinforces this reading; Helen's eyes (now re-incarnated in the face of the street-car girl) are "Prodigal," retaining all their past charm and beauty, but, being set in a modern-day context, they are far removed from the stormy circumstances surrounding them; they are "uncontested" by either Paris or Menelaos. (One of the major characteristics of the metamorphic technique is that both constants and variants equally issue forth in the re-enactment of an old myth.) Helen evokes in the poet (who, in turn, has been metamorphosed into Faustus) a wide

spectrum of nostalgic feelings:

There is some way, I think, to touch  
 Those hands of yours that count the nights  
 Stippled with pink and green advertisements.  
 And now, before its arteries turn dark  
 I would have you meet this bartered blood.  
 Imminent in his dream, none better knows  
 The white wafer cheek of love, or offers words  
 Lightly as moonlight on the eaves meets snow. (p. 28)

The poet yearns to touch Helen's hands which "count the nights," bearing witness to the history of man--much like Tiresias in The Waste Land. "Stippled with pink and green advertisements" is a reference either to "the nights" or to "those hands"--as a reference to "the nights," the predominance of commerce and business in human life seems to be stressed; as a reference to Helen's hands, what seems to be stressed is the present's attempt to impose upon, and disintegrate ("stipple") the past. The colors "pink and green" carry sexual and renewal connotations. Crane's plea to Helen to meet "this bartered blood" "before its arteries turn dark" with death seems to sustain the poet's metamorphosis into Faustus whose thirst for knowledge and lust for love and life is matched only by his awareness of the imminent encroachments of death. The Faustus-poet, whose blood "is bartered for something more precious than money . . . for his dream of her" (Paul, p. 70), is eager to enter a spiritual communion with Helen: "The white wafer cheek of love" as opposed to "the baked and labeled dough" of the first stanza.

The communion concept, coupled with Crane's reference to "those prefigurations," seems to suggest that the street-car girl is a re-incarnation of other figures than Helen: female deities such as

Gea Tellus and Virgin Mary, as we shall see later. Patricia McClintock aptly remarks that "it is highly significant that he [Crane] never calls her beautiful, or even speaks of her physical appearance at all: she is present here as a spirit unencumbered by the limitations of the flesh" (McClintock, p. 40). There is, however, a more important reason for Crane's abstention from describing Helen's physical appearance; he wants to make his Helen as open to symbolic associations as Molly Bloom. Professor Paul suggests that Crane

chooses not to flee . . . but to explore the world; he enters night neither to escape in dreams nor to find a haven but to search the present for Beauty. He seeks the vital principle, the eternal feminine upon which the city of man is built. He wishes to know the fertile darkness from which day springs. (Paul, p. 68).

In the following stanza, we see Helen being conspicuously identified with Mother Earth:

Reflective conversion of all things  
At your deep blush, when ecstasies thread  
The limbs and belly, when rainbows spread  
Impinging on the throat and sides . . .  
Inevitable, the body of the world  
Weeps in inventive dust for the hiatus  
That winks above it, bluet in your breasts. (p. 28)

"Reflective conversion of all things" is a reference to the Platonic concept that the physical world is a reflection of the world of ideas. "The world of phenomenal objects," Leibowitz argues, "is seen as an emanation from the radiant center of Helen's 'deep blush'" (Leibowitz, p. 64). But Helen also becomes identified with the body of the world not just the Ideas of which the body of the world is a

"reflective conversion." Helen's sexuality--manifested in her "deep blush," in the "ecstasies [which] thread / The limbs and belly," and in the "rainbows [which] spread / Impinging on the throat and sides"--becomes the life force which animates all living things. And as Helen's body becomes "the body of the world," the cleavage between her breasts becomes an objective correlative to the cleft (the "hiatus") that separates the actual and the ideal, the "quotidian" and the "abstract." "Bluet" is a flower associated with innocence; and in a subtle pun, "bluet" becomes the blue of the sky. "The blue sky, the separation between the actual and the ideal," Clark suggests, "becomes the bluet in the breasts of Helen, the ideal" (Clark, p. 60). This "hiatus" between the actual and the ideal--which is translatable in Biblical terms into the Fall of Man--causes "the body of the world," represented here by mankind (the "invenlive dust") to weep in lamentation.

Crane seems to turn Helen into a figure charged with symbols, "at once sensuous and spiritual," in order to deepen the "awareness that the world is feminine and that the restoration of vital culture in our time depends on our awareness of this" (Paul, p. 70). Crane seems to be creating his own Molly Bloom in his Helen, so to speak. Like Helen, Molly symbolizes not only "the teeming earth with her countless brood of created things" (Budgen, p. 262), but also "the Mystical Body" (Blamires, p. 246). Like Helen, whose "limbs," "belly," "throat and sides" are both realistically and symbolically functional, Molly conveys her symbolic stature in terms of her female organs. Joyce writes to Budgen about Molly's monologue:

Her monologue turns slowly, evenly, though with variations, capriciously, but surely like the huge earthball itself round and round spinning. Its four cardinal points are the female breasts, arse, womb and sex. (Budgen, p. 263)

Both women appropriately wear some kind of flower: Helen has a "bluet" in her breasts, and Molly a rose in her hair---"when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls. . .," we read in the context of her last sentence (Joyce 1961, p. 783).

The following stanza seems to reinforce the association suggested earlier between the Platonic ideal-versus-actual concept and the Biblical Fall-of-Man archetype:

The earth may glide diaphanous to death;  
 But if I lift my arms it is to bend  
 To you who turned away once, Helen, knowing  
 The press of troubled hands, too alternate  
 With steel and soil to hold joy endlessly.  
 I meet you, therefore, in that eventual flame  
 You found in final chains, no captive then--  
 Beyond their million brittle, bloodshot eyes,  
 White, through white cities passed on to assume  
 That world which comes to each of us alone. (pp. 28-9)

In this rather ambiguous stanza, Crane liberates all of Helen's potential significances and suggests further associations with Molly Bloom. By embedding Molly squarely in Nature, and by reserving the last chapter for her monologue, Joyce seems to point to the supremacy of Nature and the futility of all human attempts to pin her down to preconceived ideas and intellectual systems. Likewise, Crane seems to point out the discrepancy between Nature as it actually is (Helen's true essence) and man's attempts (mainly religious) to understand her, which always culminate in falsifying, oversimplify-

ing, and humanizing her superhuman complexity. (In "Lachrymae Christi," Crane's task has been to refute and dissipate the legacy of shame and anguish falsely associated with Christ's sacrifice by institutionalized Christianity; his task here is to dispute the Fall of Man and its implications.) "The earth" which "may glide diaphanous to death" is the earth according to those who believe in it as the abode of Satan to which mankind was banished as a punishment for Adam's sin; those who divorce Nature from Helen; those who "lift" their "arms" either in supplication or to avert evil. That earth, however, is not the earth the poet conceives of and identifies with Helen; that is why he clarifies the nature of his prayer to the spirit of Nature (symbolized and embodied in Helen), and its difference from the prayers of conventional religionists: "But if I lift my arms it is to bend / To you who turned away once, Helen"---the poet's prayer, in other words, is an expression and celebration of the "sane and joyful spirit" of Nature, not a remembrance of the legacy of sin and agony. Helen "turned away" on account of her knowledge of man's allegiance to religions that are not true to her real nature and his occupation ("The press of troubled hands") with life's necessities (the "steel and soil" of industry and agriculture) which are at the heart of the human failure to "hold" Helen "endlessly" in a mystical embrace.

Realizing that Helen fell "no captive" to man's "final chains" (the scientific, philosophical, theological endeavors of man, meant to arrest the complex fluidity of Nature), the poet decides to meet her in the "eventual flame" (both infernal and purgatorial) into



which she had turned the "final chains." The realm in which the poet pledges to meet Helen is beyond history ("beyond their million bloodshot eyes"), a realm which, in contrast with the redness of the "bloodshot eyes," is "White." But this realm of "white cities" is not the place of final consummation of the marriage of Faustus (artist) and Helen (Nature); it is only a transitory (purgatorial) stage which Helen, accompanied by the artist, passes through on her way "to assume / That world which comes to each of us alone"---the world of everyday life, of history, of "smutty wings" and "bloodshot eyes" which Helen manages to repossess eventually as her own, notwithstanding the resistance of the "multitudes" and the "million brittle, bloodshot eyes." Besides the supremacy of Nature, the stanza also stresses two important points: first, the superiority of the artist to the rest of humanity by dint of his ability to perceive what others cannot; second, the relativity of human knowledge ("That world which comes to each of us alone") which entails the absolute-ness of Nature per se.

In the last stanza, the poet pays homage to Helen and pledges his unswerving allegiance to her:

Accept a lone eye riveted to your plane,  
 Bent axle of devotion along companion ways  
 That beat, continuous, to hourless days--  
 One inconspicuous, glowing orb of praise. (p. 29)

Emulating Joyce's use (in the twelfth chapter of Ulysses) of the Cyclops, the one-eyed monster, as a symbol of one-sidedness and single-mindedness, Crane uses the "lone eye" device to describe his single-minded and steadfast devotion to Helen; a devotion which--much

like Ulysses' reverence toward the Oxen of the Sun and Bloom's deference for labor and childbirth---seems to set him apart from the rest of sacrilegious mankind. Crane uses a mechanical metaphor (the "axle") to describe his devotion to Helen. Unlike the straight and mechanically efficient axles of industry, the poet's "axle of devotion" is "bent"---unsuitable for industry but appropriate for love---toward Helen; and like industrial axles, it will resound rhythmically though unlike them, "continuous[ly]" and "to hourless days," "One inconspicuous, glowing orb of praise."

\* \* \* \* \*

In Part II, we move from Helen's eternal realm of "hourless days" to the realm of history and everyday life. The scene in this poem, as Crane explains, is "a Metropolitan roof garden with a jazz orchestra" (Crane 1966, p. 217), in an American city in the 1920s:

Brazen hypnotics glitter here;  
 Glee shifts from foot to foot,  
 Magnetic to their tremulo.  
 The crashing opera bouffe,  
 Blest excursion! this ricochet  
 From roof to roof---  
 Know, Olympians, we are breathless  
 While nigger cupids scour the stars! (p. 30)

Lewis gives us an explanation for these lines which seems to corroborate the reading I suggested for the last two stanzas of "Part I." "Here," Lewis says, "the fallen world is explored---not as a domain of tears and death, but of dance and laughter; if not a world redeemed, at least a world redeemable" (Lewis 1967, p. 102; emphasis added). Crane renders the scene vividly but economically; the glitter-

ing brass instruments blaring loud jazz music which seem to hypnotize the dancers who gleefully shift "from foot to foot."

Paul suggests that the "Brazen hypnotics" may be a reference to the "Negro," or "copper-colored" members of the jazz orchestra (Paul, p. 74). The dance is a "blest excursion" which seems to "ricochet / From roof to roof" as the scene of "breathless" dancers dancing, frantically and hypnotically, to jazz music played by black musicians ("nigger cupids"), whose music excites passion, seems to repeat itself in all the roof-garden speakeasies all around the metropolis.

Sherman Paul suggests that "Part II" "presents another stage in the journey through the poet's day. it may be considered as Crane's equivalent of the night-time episodes of Joyce's Ulysses, the book that may have suggested to him the structure of the poem" (Paul, p. 74; emphasis added). The Ulysses episode which seems the likeliest to have suggested the technique of the poem is the "Sirens." In a letter to Allen Tate, Crane writes: "Let us invent an idiom for the proper transposition of Jazz into words" (Letters 1965, p. 89; emphasis added). Crane's intention in "Faustus and Helen" is almost identical to Joyce's in the "Sirens" episode. "'The Sirens,'" Budgen tells us, "is a fugue in counterpart" (Budgen, p. 133). And Blamires holds that in the "Sirens"

. . . the style represents an elaborate attempt to imitate musical form in words. The musical devices parodied include: structural development of small figures and phrases; a continuous symphonic manipulation of sharply identifiable themes; the use of emphatic rhythmic figures and patterns; varied tonal contrasts; rich onomatopoeic orchestration which mimicks the interplay of strings, brass, and woodwind; repetition and partial

repetition; echo and semi-echo; contrapuntal play of phrase against phrase, percussive explosions; recaptulations in different "keys," and so on. (Blamires, p. 108)

To see how far the "Sirens" influenced the style of Part II, compare the first eight lines in the poem with the following lines from the opening passage in the "Sirens":

Bronze by Gold Heard the Hoofirons, steelyringing  
 Imperthnthn thnthnthn.  
 Chips, picking chips off rocky thumbnails, chips. Horrid!  
 And gold flushed more.

A husky fifenote blew.  
 Blew. Blue Bloom is on the  
 Gold pinnacled hair.  
 A jumping rose on satiny breasts of satin, rose of Castille.  
 Trilling, trilling: Idolores. (Joyce 1961, p. 252)

Notice the closeness of Joyce's "Bronze" and Crane's "Brazen," the paucity of verbs in both pieces, and their ambiguity.

In the second stanza, Crane continues his description of the dancers and their frenzied dance:

A thousand light shrugs balance us  
 Through snarling hails of melody.  
 White shadows slip across the floor  
 Splayed like cards from a loose hand;  
 Rhythmic ellipses lead into canters  
 Until somewhere a rooster banter. (p. 30)

In their gravity-defying, jerky dance, the dancers balance themselves with "a thousand light shrugs" as the "snarling hails" of jazz music blare and flare. The dancers are described as "white shadows" which "slip across the floor / Splayed like cards from a

loose hand." Being described as "white shadows" stresses the unreality and superficiality of the dancers as well as their race and the color of their costumes, and being likened to "cards" suggests blind fortune, the element of haphazard fate, in their lives (a notion that seems to get re-inforced by the "loose hand").

The wild, horse-like dance ("Rhythmic ellipses lead into can-  
ters") last all night long until the crack of dawn ("Until somewhere  
a rooster banter"). The animal imagery--the horse-like "canters"  
and the "rooster banter"--seems to bestow a Dionysian, irrational,  
and driven coloring to the dancers and their hysterical dance. Also,  
apart from being a time-setting device, the rooster adds a rural  
tinge to an otherwise demonically urban setting, and, more important-  
ly, injects a religious dimension to the contemporary scene by  
indirectly recalling the rooster to which Christ referred in his  
address to Peter prior to his arrest by the Roman soldiers.

But unlike Eliot whose use of the mythical parallel leads to a  
condemnation of the modern scene, Crane does not proceed to condemn  
contemporary life; instead, in what Lewis calls "a frame of mind at  
once innocent and daring, Crane issues his invitation to join him in  
yielding to temptation" (Lewis 1967, p. 105):

Greet naively--yet intrepidly  
New soothing, new amazements  
That cornets introduce at every turn--  
And you may fall downstairs with me  
With perfect grace and equanimity.  
Or, plaintively scud past shores  
Where, by strange harmonic laws  
All relatives, serene and cool,  
Sit rocked in patent armchairs. (p. 30)

In this stanza, Crane seems to resound Stephen's musings over his own future as an artist; compare the above stanza with the following:

He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant. Not to fall was too hard, too hard; and he felt the silent lapse of his soul, as it would be at some instant to come, falling, falling, but not yet fallen, still unfallen, but about to fall. (Joyce 1962, p. 162)

Crane invites Helen to "sin with grace" (Lewis 1976, p. 105), to fall innocently ("naively") but dauntlessly ("intrepidly"), to "fall downstairs with [him]" and enjoy the "New soothing, new amaze-ments"—that the Fortunate Fall affords. He invites her to seafare with him—the sea as mature experience as opposed to the bland Innocence of land which is the theme of "Voyages"—and leave behind, and be heedless of, "all relatives" (Crane's version of Joyce's "home," "fatherland," and "church" in the Portrait), who are "serene and cool" (the serenity and coolness of death) sitting "rocked in patent armchairs," and who are symbols of "something opposite to the absolute nature of Crane's trust into life" (Lewis 1967, p. 106). Lewis argues that in this section of the poem, Crane

. . . announces his attitude toward the life of conventional and self-protective piety. In so doing, he presents his exhilarated version of the "fortunate fall" . . . namely, that what orthodox morality regards as sinful conduct and a re-enactment of the Fall of Man is in fact the necessary and hence the fortunate experience that begets genuine human maturity. (Lewis 1967, p. 106).

In the following stanza, Crane maintains the same attitude, dissociating himself completely from the traditional Christian stand

regarding "Felix Culpa":

O, I have known metallic paradises  
 Where cuckoos clucked to finches  
 Above the cleft catastrophes of drums.  
 While titters hailed the groans of death  
 Beneath gyrating awnings I have seen  
 The incunabula of the divine grotesque.  
 This music has a reassuring way. (pp. 30-1)

The "metallic paradises" is a reference to the jazz orchestra's brass instruments. Clark suggests that "cuckoos" and "finches" tie in with the "canters" and "banTERS" of a "rooster," and adds that "all of course being sounds from the orchestra, give a background of animal lusts to these 'metallic paradises'" (Clark, p. 62). Paul, on the other hand, argues that "This paradise is a hedonist hell; the dancers are devils, grotesques out of the earlier world of Grünewald and Bosch" (Paul, p. 75). And if we project Clark's reading on Paul's, we come closer to Crane's multiple intent, implicit in the "metallic paradises," to counter Eliot and emulate Joyce: the modern world (the jazz roof-garden), while it may look like a hell, is actually a paradise. The "metallic paradises" are our world, both paradisial and infernal, sublime and ridiculous, where opposites co-exist, where "the groans of death" are "hailed" by "titters," where the dialectics of history (the "gyrating awnings") reveal divine teleology ("The incunabula of the divine grotesque"), where the "divine" is "grotesque" and the "grotesque" is "divine": it is the world of Ulysses, so to speak.

In the last stanza, Crane embraces Helen--now referred to as "The siren of the springs of guilty song"--once and for all:

The siren of the springs of guilty song--  
 Let us take her on the incandescent wax  
 Striated with nuances, nervosities  
 That we are heir to: she is still so young,  
 We cannot frown upon her as she smiles,  
 Dipping here in this cultivated storm  
 Among slim skaters of the gardened skies. (p. 31)

The mention of the "siren" points directly to the "Sirens" episode in Ulysses and reinforces the Joycean-influence hypothesis. The "springs" may be taken for water wells, or the blooming season of the year, or simply the elastic mechanical contrivance whose spiral shape suggests the vortex, "The calyx of death's bounty," the "one vast coil" ("At Melville's Tomb")---Joyce-inspired symbols for the destruction-regeneration dialectics of history. All three meanings are relevant. The sirens' song is "guilty" because it is sung in praise of our fallen world (human history) which started with Adam's sin in paradise, what is known as the Fortunate Fall without which history would have been impossible. The guiltiness of the song is ironic: it recalls "Not penitence / But song" ("Lachrymae Christi"); it is a song that derides guilt not celebrates it. Crane invites himself and mankind to dance with Helen ("Let us take her")---a subtle, sexual, and Dionysian symbol---to the record of Helen's song ("the incondescent wax") whose grooves like the "calyx" and the "spring," are spiral, being played on the gramophone. Helen's song is also our song, and as such it smacks of our human idiosyncrasies (the "nuances, nervosities / That we are heir to"). Despite her pre-historic roots, Mother Nature ("the siren of the springs of guilty song") is "still so young" and full of sexual ("fallen")





"Capped arbiter" is a direct reference to the academic cap, typical of such scholars. The critic is pictured as shooting down other writers as he himself will in time be, figuratively speaking, killed. He is the religious gunman who arrives home at dawn with the poet. (Anderson and Walton, p. 603)

Paul agrees with Lewis that in this section, "Death is the central figure: death seated close beside the poet in the darkness, and addressed in three successive images. Death is the 'capped arbiter of beauty in this street'--the force (capped like a gunman or a soldier)" (Lewis 1967, p. 109). Paul aptly adds that "As the 'capped arbiter,' Death is the hanging judge who arbitrarily decides the fate of 'beauty,'" and that the "'delicate ambassador' is not an unrecognized risen god" (Paul, p. 77; emphasis added).

However, "Capped arbiter," it seems to me, is Crane's adaptation of the Joycean concept of God as "dio boia, hangman god" (Joyce 1961, p. 213). The hangman is usually "capped" and, of course, God is the ultimate "arbiter." Lewis tells us that "this street" is a reference to "this temporal and mortal world" (Lewis 1967, p. 109); this is a borrowing from Ulysses--Stephen defines God as "a shout in the street" (Joyce 1961, p. 34; emphasis added).

Both "delicate ambassador" and "religious gunman" are two antithetical references to God; and if we accept the diplomacy-war (or peace-war or destruction-regeneration) antithesis implicit in the "ambassador"--"gunman" antithesis, we get an approximation of Joyce's conception of God (and Shakespeare) as "ostler and butcher" (Joyce 1961, p. 213), and of history as both a "nightmare" and a "manifestation of God" (Joyce 1961, p. 34).

Paul suggests that the opening lines, with the "street / That narrows darkly into motor dawn," "situate us within a confining perspective, in the corridor of a tomb or in a tunnel" (Paul, p. 77). But the tomb is also a womb, that of Helen and Molly Bloom and Gea Tellus. Critics were also dumbfounded by "the sixteen thrifty bridges of the city"; Lewis suggests that Troy was never known "to have sixteen bridges; it sounds more like New York" (Lewis 1967, p. 111). At any rate, there is no substantial evidence to indicate that the city with "the sixteen thrifty bridges" is Troy, or New York, or even Cleveland. (Is it possible that "sixteen" is a subconscious allusion to the date of Bloomsday: 16 June 1904?) In "Voyages IV" Crane refers to "our June," confusing the critics once more.

Most of Crane's critics believe that the addressee in the first stanza is Death; yet, I believe that it is God, the purveyor of both Life and Death. And the proof of that is in the poem itself. Starting from premises opposite to Eliot's, Crane seems to reject the Christ-Satan duality of the Christian faith in favor of Joyce's monolithic, optimistic, Satan-free ontology. The God addressed in the apostrophe is Joyce's "dio boia, hangman god," a Mars-like god ("Capped arbiter," like a soldier, an "ambassador of intricate slain numbers," and a "religious gunman"); the God who, Bloom believes, "wants blood victim. Birth, hymen, martyr, war, foundation of a building, sacrifice, kidney burnt offering, druid's altars" (Joyce 1961, p. 151). But He is also the Christian God "Who faithfully . . . will fall too soon"; the God who, Stephen says,

Himself begot, middler the Holy Ghost, and Himself sent himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others, Who, put

upon by his fiends, stripped and whipped, was nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree, Who let Him bury, stood up, harrowed hell, fared into heaven and there these nineteen hundred years sitteth on the right hand of His Own Seif. . . . (Joyce 1961, pp. 197-8)

God's fall is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and, being violent, it manifests itself in ways more violent than the way the wind customarily "settles / On the sixteen bridges of the city." The fall is that of God---not of Death, as Lewis suggests (pp. 110-111)---and if God submits to ~~his~~ own laws by undergoing the death-resurrection cycle (the Crucifixion) which He predestined for His creation, then death becomes the expression of God's will in history; not an end but a prelude to a new form of life. Therefore, let us do away with tragedy ("Let us unbind our throats of fear and pity," the two emotions evoked by tragedy), let us, instead, celebrate the true spirit of life, the non-tragic "sane and joyful spirit," and let our attitude toward life be "Not penitence / But song."

From this metaphysical plane Crane shifts, in the following stanza, to the physical and human plane:

We even,  
 Who drove speediest destruction  
 In corymbulous formations of mechanics,---  
 Who hurried the hill breezes, spouting malice  
 Plangent over meadows, and looked down  
 On rifts of torn and empty houses  
 Like old women with teeth unjoyful  
 That waited faintly, briefly and in vain: (p. 32)

Crane is here describing one of the frightful hallmarks of World War I: the use of aircraft in warfare, and the resultant air-raids that demolished cities and villages, killed people, and destroyed mile-

stones of Western civilization. According to Lewis, the stanza

. . . presents a ruthlessly concentrated and imagistically agitated account of a machine-gun attack by a World War I fighter aircraft, from the perspective of the pilot. Phrases stammer like bullets: "corymbulous formations of mechanics," "spouting malice / Plangent over meadows." (Lewis 1967, p. 111)

"Corymbulous" means "clustering," and it describes the formations of aeroplanes in a raid. Leibowitz notes that in this stanza, "We are given a sharp sense of being in the plane and contemplating the wreckage and feeling the ~~speed~~" (Leibowitz, p. 76). But what captures the attention most is the sexual (or homosexual) imagery: with the phallic machine-gun "spouting malice" on virgin "meadows" (the body of Helen), war destruction assumes the form of a sexual act or rape. Stressing the resemblance between the "rifts of torn and empty houses" and the "old women with teeth unjubilant," underscores the repulsiveness and ugliness of the air raids, their rape-like nature, and the unwillingness of the ravished cities. The rape image is carried over in the following lines:

We know, eternal gunman, our flesh remembers  
The tensile boughs, the nimble blue plateaus,  
The mounted, yielding cities of the air! (p. 32)

The cities are described as "mounted" (a crude sexual image), and "yielding," an easy but unwilling victim of the attacking planes. "The tensile boughs" and "plateaus" are sexual images; and by addressing the "eternal gunman" (the hangman god), Crane seems to associate him with the devastation of air raids, either directly as a source, or indirectly as a seer-like witness to them.

That saddled sky that shook down vertical  
 Repeat play of fire--no hypogeum  
 Of wave or rock was good against one hour.  
 We did not ask for that, but have survived,  
 And will persist to speak again before  
 All stubble streets that have not curved  
 To memory, or known the ominous lifted arm  
 That lowers down the arc of Helen's brow  
 To saturate with blessing and dismay. (pp. 32-3)

"No hypogeum"--a hypogeum is an "underground or underwater vault" (Lewis 1967, p. 113)--of sea or land ("of wave or rock") could withstand for "one hour" the "down vertical / Repeated play of fire" showered down from the raiding planes. Nature (the body of Helen) is being destroyed by one of her creations, man, who saddles the sky (with an aeroplane) behaving recklessly. Man "did not ask for that" massive destruction, though his actions have caused it--the dialectics of history, and the conflicting wills of peoples and nations, are the direct cause of war--and whether man has asked for it or not, his responsibility in causing war is undeniable. Whatever the cause and effect of war, and regardless of its colossal devastation, people "have survived" and will sound their opposition to it ("will persist to speak again" against it) in their endeavor to transcend the horrors of war and move forward amidst the horrible vestiges of destruction, the "stubble streets"--that have been mowed down like harvested fields, of death not life--that "have not curved / To memory" (have not been forgotten) "or known the ominous lifted arm" (of religionists and pessimists like Eliot, who "lift" their "arms" (not to "bend" to Helen like the poet but to pray in

fear not in love) which drowns "the arc of Helen's brow" (the fecundity of Nature) in "blessing and dismay"--two typical religious sentiments closely allied to the two tragic emotions of "fear and pity" of which Crane wants to "unbind" the "throats" of mankind.

The following, five-line stanza is rather obscure; most of Crane's critics refrain from venturing into it:

A goose, tobacco and cologne--  
 Three winged and gold-shod prophecies of heaven,  
 The lavish heart shall always have to leaven  
 And spread with bells and voices, and atone  
 The abating shadows of our conscript dust. (p. 33)

Samuel Loveman tells us that Crane "used to get his lines in the oddest ways. . . . He once showed me a clipping, saying, 'I'm going to use this.' A Negro was arrested for stealing a goose, tobacco and cologne" (Loveman, pp. 21-2). Loveman's story sheds light, not only on the source of the first line in the stanza, but also on Crane's method of composition. David Clark offers a conjecture as to the meaning of the stanza:

Perhaps Crane wanted a tone of boisterous, defiant assertion, of a ridiculous but heroic challenge--all the more heroic for being ridiculous--thrown in the face of loss and death. The mood is perhaps the one of "gaiety and quest" in "Chaplinesque" which does not prevent the sensitive clown from hearing "a kitten in the wilderness." (Clark, p. 65)

This technique is very much like Joyce's depiction of his characters (mainly Bloom) in Ulysses wherein the most ridiculous of acts assume sublime and heroic proportions--the encounter with the Citizen in the "Cyclops" is a case in point.

"The lavish heart" may be a pun on the poet's own name, Hart. It may also be a reference to the heart of Jesus Christ; but instead of using the more common "Sacred Heart" or "Bleeding Heart," Crane chooses an adjective that describes generosity, and is more akin to "the baked and labeled dough" of "Part I" and to the mystery of the Eucharist in the Holy Communion. Crane's metaphor, however, reverses the Eucharist; instead of the unleavened wafer, we have leavened dough; and instead of the wafer becoming transubstantiated into the body of Christ, the heart of Christ ("The lavish heart") becomes consubstantiated into bread--it "leaven[s] / And spread[s] with bells and voices." Unlike Christianity which celebrates the transubstantiation of the wafer into the body of Christ, Crane seems to concentrate on consubstantiation, the metamorphosis of God into man: God the Father becoming God the Son "middler the Holy Ghost"; the "Three winged and gold-shod prophecies of heaven" Crane refers to in the second line of the stanza. Christ's sacrifice (the apex of God's consubstantiation) robs death of its finality and gives "a local habitation and a name" to the destruction-regeneration cycle in Nature; it rids "our throats of fear and pity" and replaces them with hymn and song ("bells and voices") as well as reconciliation to reality ("atone / The abating shadows of our conscript dust").

In the following stanza, which Clark calls "an eloquent hymn to the modern spirit" (Clark, p. 65), Crane sounds a Joycean note of optimism and affirmation:

Anchises' navel, dripping of the sea,--  
The hands Erasmus dipped in gleaming tides,  
Gathered the voltage of blown blood and vine;



Delve upward for the new and scattered wine,  
 O brother-thief of time, that we recall.  
 Laugh out the meager penance of their days  
 Who dare not share with us the breath released,  
 The substance drilled and spent beyond repair  
 For golden, or the shadow of gold hair. (p. 33)

Lewis suggests that the choice of Anchises and Erasmus is meant to give an example of mortal men "who had restored what had been destroyed (had regathered the 'blown blood and wine,' presumably of shattered Troy and the shattered Catholic and Eucharistic culture)" (Lewis 1967, p. 117). The pattern of death and resurrection, destruction and regeneration, in Nature and human history is very much Crane's main concern here, like Joyce's in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. The reference to "Anchises' navel" is very significant as it may be directly traced to Joyce; the Omphalos motif is one of four major leitmotifs that recur incessantly in Ulysses, associating Bloom with Ulysses, Moses, Elijah, Christ, Shakespeare, Don Juan, and a host of other figures. A good example of Joyce's use of that motif occurs in the "Proteus" episode. Stephen's mind wanders when he sees two midwives, one of them carrying a bag:

A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back, strandentwining cable of all flesh. That is why mystic monks. Will you be as gods? Gaze in your omphalos. Hello. Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville. Aleph, alpha: nought, nought, one. (Joyce 1961, pp. 37-8)

As he strolls down Sandymount Strand, Stephen's mind is "tussling with the problem of the changing face of the world in relation to the reality behind it" (Blamires 1970, p. 13)--flux versus fixity,

so to speak. He is first pondering change ("I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space"), and then permanence ("See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end"). And it is quite obvious that this fixity-flux antithesis is inspired by the sea which is as old as eternity, and whose tide is the very pulse of change; "Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?" He wonders as he walks.

Crane assimilates Joyce's ideas; not only does he associate the navel with the sea ("Anchises' navel, dripping of the sea"), he also associates the sea and its tide with the fixity-flux antithesis. Again, the permanence and enclosure of mythology ("Anchises' navel") are associated with those of the sea ("dripping of the sea") just as much as the change and dialecticality of history (the hands of Erasmus) are associated with those of the tide ("dipped in gleaming tides"). And if we supplement that with the Joycean connotations of the navel--be it Eve's or Anchises'--what we get is the pattern of Ulysses and "Faustus and Helen," and the common ontology to which Joyce and Crane subscribe; life as an arena wherein antithetical forces clash and then unite into new syntheses which always push history forward.

"Anchises's navel" and Erasmus's hands--fixity and flux, or the sea as fixity and the sea as flux--are a demonstration of the life force and its death-resurrection cycle which are also illustrated in the moral ("the voltage"; electricity both as life and as death) of the life of Christ and the myth of Dionysus ("blood and

vine")--the theme of "Lachrymae Christi." And since "all history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God" (Joyce 1961, p. 34), the contemporary man, "the young man of the present (who is also the recalled 'brother-thief' Paris), is urged to 'Delve upward' into the air for the wine of the new age" (Clark, p. 65). In the brave new world of modern times, humanity should revel in "the sane and joyful spirit" which informs everything in life, including tragedy; after all, had it not been for Christ's crucifixion, redemption would have not been possible. Crane writes about "Part III" to Waldo Frank saying: "It is Dionysian in its attitude, the creator and the eternal destroyer dance arm in arm. . ." (Letters 1965, p. 121). And Clark subtly reads Crane's message in terms of the American scene:

Just as Paris took Helen in spite of what would happen and caused the destruction of Troy, which in turn caused the building of Rome (through Aeneas), so America chose to create a great mechanical civilization out of which came the World War. Nevertheless this new, though also transitory society is worth the cost, and we shall go on to build it laughing in the face of pessimism. (Clark, p. 65)

In the last stanza--which Lewis calls the poem's "Final Declaration," a "music . . . that overpowers analysis," and "one of the finest passages in twentieth-century poetry" (Lewis 1967, p. 118)--Crane seems to sanctify history and identify it with paradise:

Distinctly praise the years, whose volatile  
Blamed bleeding hands extend and thresh the height  
The imagination spans beyond despair,  
Outpacing bargain, vocable and prayer. (p. 33)

The addressee in this stanza is Everyman, mankind at large, and all

living things, though Paul seems to limit the address to Death (Paul, p. 81). "The years" are history, life as it progresses in time; the "quotidian" as distinct from the "abstract," the mundane as distinct from the sublime, the relative as distinct from the absolute, the human and natural as distinct from the divine. Quotidian, mundane, relative, human, and natural as it may be, history embodies and illustrates perfectly the abstract, the sublime, the absolute, and the divine. History embodies the spiritual significance of Christ's life (the "volatile / Blamed bleeding hands"), and as such, transcends "beyond despair" (preached by those who fail to see the progress involved in the dialectical process of history); its essence cannot be pinned down in the realms of business ("bargain"), pleasure ("vocable"), or religion ("prayer") because, like all branches of human knowledge, they fragment, compartmentalize, and falsify the complex, superhuman reality by humanizing it and reshaping it after the preconceived notions of the human mind (which is "Divided by accepted multitudes") instead of vice versa. Lewis tells us that "What is singled out for praise is just that transitoriness, that culpability and woundedness that Section I had established as characteristic of the temporal world. That blamed and bleeding world, that world bloodied by war and condemned by man, is worthy of praise" (Lewis 1967, p. 118).

\* \* \* \* \*

In "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" we come very close to the very essence of Joyce's influence on Crane, for in it

Crane was willing to risk the last danger. He was unwilling to sacrifice the multitudinousness of his kind of poetic statement. Beginning in "the realm of the obvious," "Faustus and Helen" wins for his poetry, as he had planned, "new sensations, humeurs," a natural idiom that he "unavoidably stuck to in spite of nearly everybody's nodding, querulous head." (Leibowitz, p. 79)

In other words, to use a Joycean analogy from the Portrait, Icarus-Crane decided in "Faustus and Helen," at all costs, to follow in the footsteps of his great father, Dedalus-Joyce, shunning on his way to the glory of the sun, wealth, fame, family, fatherland, incomprehension, misunderstanding, and unsympathetic audience and contemporaries; he accepts, so to speak, the full responsibility of becoming an artist forging in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race: a Sacrificial Lamb whose agony points, unmistakably and unequivocally, toward ecstasy.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### MOLLY AND THE SEA:

#### THE JOYCEAN INFLUENCE IN "VOYAGES"

"Voyages," which Lewis calls "Crane's lyrical masterpiece" (Lewis 1967, p. 142), is a sequence of six poems which brings together some of Crane's main artistic concerns. In the early months of 1923, after finishing "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," Crane composed a poem titled "Belle Isle"; later in the year, he wrote another poem, with which he was not very satisfied, for which he had two titles in mind: "The Bottom of the Sea Is Cruel" and "Poster." A year later, in November 1924, he got the idea to write a series of "sea poems"; it was then that he decided to incorporate the two poems into the series: the former became "Voyages VI" and the latter "Voyages I." This caused some critics to question if "Voyages" is to be considered one poem or merely a collection of loosely connected poems. However, the poem seems to have a coherence and unity that make its six parts fit cohesively into an integral work of art.

The six poems, which Crane called "sea poems" and "love poems" (Letters 1965, p. 192), were inspired by a love affair Crane had with a young European sailor in the spring and summer of 1924 and with whom he shared an apartment at 100 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn.

About that affair Crane writes to Waldo Frank:

I have seen the Word made Flesh. I mean nothing less, and I know now that there is such a thing as indestructibility. In the deepest sense, where flesh became transformed through intensity of response to counter response, where sex was beaten out, where a purity of joy was reached that included tears. (Letters 1965, p. 181)

But regardless of the possible origination of "Voyages" in Crane's affair with the sailor he identified as E. O., there is much more to the sequence than love, heterosexual or homosexual--it is a statement about Nature (Gea Tellus). Commenting on Joyce's influence in the sequence, Leibowitz remarks that "the influence of Ulysses is evident explicitly in the poetry [of Crane], especially in 'Voyages.' More indirectly but pervasively, it captivated Crane's imagination and influenced his language" (Leibowitz, p. 100).

\* \* \* \* \*

"Voyages I" opens with a descriptive passage which, despite the presence of Crane's touch in it, is rather straightforward and free of Crane's usual ambiguity and ellipsis:

Above the fresh ruffles of the surf  
Bright striped urchins flay each other with sand.  
They have contrived a conquest for shell shucks,  
And their fingers crumble fragments of baked weed  
Gaily digging and scattering.

And in answer to their treble interjections  
The sun beats lightning on the waves,  
The waves fold thunder on the sand; (p. 35)

The words "shell shucks," with their punning on "shell shocks," have

a Joycean resonance. Leibowitz notices a more important Joycean borrowing in the first stanza:

The "two little curlyheaded boys, dressed in sailor suits with caps to match and the name H.M.S. Belleisle printed on both," whom Bloom sees "dabbling in the sand with their spades and buckets, building castles as children do . . . happy as the day was long" [Ulysses, p. 346] remind us of the "Bright striped urchins" of "Voyages I" (Leibowitz 1968, p. 100).

In the third and last stanza in the poem, the poet, assuming a fatherly attitude, gives a piece of advice to the care-free children:

And could they hear me I would tell them:

O brilliant kids, frisk with your dog,  
Fondle your shells and sticks, bleached  
By time and the elements; but there is a line  
You must not cross or ever trust beyond it  
Spry cordage of your bodies to caresses  
Too lichen-faithful from too wide a breast.  
The bottom of the sea is cruel. (p. 35)

According to Crane, "Voyages I" serves as "a 'stop, look and listen' sign" to the reader of the poem, "a skull & cross-bones insignia" (Letters 1965, p. 99). The poet's bidding to the "brilliant kids" to "Fondle" their "shells and sticks," with its explicit sexual connotations, and to be wary of "a line" beyond which they "must not cross nor ever trust," sounds like an invitation by the poet to the children to enjoy the erotic pleasures of sexual love (when the time comes), and an admonition to stay away from the deep recesses of life, the "daring voyage of love, the effort of flesh, feeling, and imagination to travel to the last reality and meaning of the erotic life" (Lewis 1967, p. 155). To put it in a larger context, he is bidding the children to enjoy life's physical pleasures and to



abstain from embarking on philosophical quests to the ultimate realities beyond them--to wallow in what Molly has to offer them and shun Stephen's musings and arguments.

But as the "bright, striped urchins" are, according to Lewis, "swiftly transformed by metaphors into ships alerted for departure: their bodies are 'spry cordages' or lively ship's rigging" (Lewis 1967, p. 152), the poet realizes the futility of his advice as well as the inevitability of the children's seafaring in due time; the children are bound to undergo the same experience he has undergone.

M. L. Rosenthal remarks:

This first poem is, thus, an overture in which the speaker advises his more childlike self (symbolized by the "bright striped urchins" near the water) not to take the risks he knows he will take. The intriguing thing the speaker has to tell us here is that adult love and life's terror are for him synonymous. It is pity, for himself, of what will become of him in the ensuing "voyages" that makes the three stanzas of the overture so poignant. (M. L. Rosenthal, p. 179)

\* \* \* \* \*

"Voyages II" syntactically sounds complementary to "Voyages I," though it presents a different view of the sea:

---And yet this great wink of eternity,  
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,  
Samite sheeted and processioned where  
Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,  
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love; (p. 36)

Unlike the sea in "Voyages I," the sea here is neither ominous nor threatening; it is described as "this wink of eternity." (The association of the sea with eternity is another Joycean borrowing; "Am I

walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?" Stephen wonders during his seaside stroll in "Proteus"). The word "wink" may be interpreted in different ways: it may be taken for a signal or a hint affirming the presence of eternity in general; it may also be taken for a subtle metaphor directly linking the sea to eternity, or to a tiny moment in eternity ("wink" in the sense of an "instant" or a "twinkling"), and as such, the immortality and vastness of the sea become a fleeting instant compared to the infiniteness and limitlessness of eternity.

Lewis finds a pattern in the imagery of the first stanza; he writes: "In one of Crane's most alive and ingenious patterns, the word 'wink' leads into another optical image, 'rimless,' and a portion of the latter word's meaning thence into 'unfettered' and 'vast'" (Lewis 1967, p. 156). Robert A. Day finds another optical association in the first stanza; he says: "Gazing across the sea and the earth, one is, so to speak, looking across the surface of a titanic eye, on whose dark iris the moon flashes, producing the shimmer of light that is the 'wink'" (Day, p. 226). Day suggests that the "'unfettered leewardings' are voyages without end for lovers who will be bequeathed to no earthly shore, but they are tranquil voyages, to leeward, away from the wind'" (Day, p. 226).

In the third line of the first stanza, Crane introduces another sea metaphor; the sea is likened to a woman lying in her bed, a metaphor with a parallel in Joyce in whose "iconography," Maurice Beebe contends, "Woman, Moon, Water, and Life are closely associated" (Beebe, p. 303). Maurice Beebe goes on to suggest that the images of

Woman, Moon, Water, and Life "are sanctioned by literary and mythic tradition, and the abundance of allusions, especially in Ulysses, proves that Joyce was aware of the frequency with which they appear in earlier literature" (Beebe, p. 303). "Samite" is a medieval fabric interwoven with gold and silver threads. Lewis agrees with Sidney Richman that "Undinal" is "an adjective struck from the name of the water nymph or spirit of nature who married a mortal" (Richman, p. 71). Robert Day, on the other hand, disagrees with this reading as "off the mark" and suggests that "it is more consistent with the poetic statement to see the word ["Undinal"] as deriving directly from the Latin 'unda,' a wave, and thus merely signifying 'of waves, wavy'" (Day, p. 227).

Commenting on the line: "Her undinal belly moonward bends," Richman observes that it provides "a visual image, an image of pregnancy which enforces the concept of the sea as life-giving and not life-destroying" (Richman, p. 71). Stuart Gilbert suggests that the sea in Ulysses is the "primordial element, giver and taker of life" (Gilbert 1969, p. 128). And Lewis aptly ties in all the threads of the first stanza and blends them smoothly into the second stanza:

"Processioned" . . . is also one of the important words whose impinging connotation interacts with others to beget the new image of the sea. Along with "Samite sheeted," . . . "undinal" (Undine was a water-goddess), "scrolls of silver," and "sceptered terror," it helps make of the sea a godlike ruler of ancient times. (Lewis 1967, p. 156)

The sea's "Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love" is a

reference to the insignificance (in terms of both time duration and importance) of human cares and concerns in comparison with the infinite eternity represented by the sea. "Wrapt" is a homonym for "rapt."

Take this Sea, whose diapson knells  
 On scrolls of silver snowy sentences,  
 The sceptered terror of whose sessions rends  
 As her demeanors motion well or ill,  
 All but the pieties of lovers' hands. (p. 36)

In this stanza the power of the Sea as a goddess and a queen is stressed: her waves (the majestic "scrolls of silver") portend doom ("knells . . . snowy sentences"); she "passes judgments of guilty or not guilty by the expression of her face ('As her demeanors motion well or ill'), and fixes 'sentences' that settle the fate of every human enterprise except love" (Lewis 1967, p. 157). With all her might and majesty, the Sea has no power over "the pieties of lovers' hands." According to Lewis, the lovers escape the devastation of the Sea "not only because, like the sea, they are participants in the experience of love, but also because, in that experience they also touch something of the divine, the trans-human" (Lewis 1967, p. 157).

In the first and second stanzas, Crane associates the sea with the archetypal woman. Commenting on the first two stanzas, Paul remarks that in the first stanza Crane depicts "the loving-laughing aspect of the sea, its open sensuous favoring nature, and in the second stanza "its imperiousness" and the death it portends (Paul, p. 146). "Nowhere in Crane's mature work," Paul comments on "Voyages

II," "is the erotic attraction of woman so fully and genuinely evoked, though the seductive female presence, the imperious goddess who permits the voyage of love, has been little appreciated in this much-noticed (Paul, p. 143).

Still intoxicated with Helen's Dionysian wine and emulating Joyce---Maurice Beebe believes that "Joyce often personified the life principle in feminine guise" (Beebe, p. 303)---Crane affirms his belief in the essential femininity of the body of the world in recreating a Helen-Molly-Mother Nature out of the Sea:

And onward, as bells off San Salvador  
Salute the crocus lustres of the stars,  
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,---  
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,  
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell. (p. 36)

As the two lovers journey "onward," the bells of San Salvador chime and "Salute the crocus lustres of the stars." The reference to the sunken city of San Salvador recalls Troy in "Faustus and Helen" and reinforces the image of the sea as "this great wink of eternity"; cities, like civilizations, rise and fall while the sea remains unchanged, a constant reminder of the immortality of Nature. The reference to "crocus" and "poinsettia meadows"---what Paul regards as elements of "the pastoral" (Paul, p. 146)---suggests a link between the Sea and the Eternal Female (Molly Bloom). Toward the end of Ulysses, Molly associates herself with both the sea and "the pastoral":

O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and  
the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda  
Gardens yes . . . and the rosegardens and the jessamine  
and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where

I was a Flower of the mountain yes where I put the rose  
in my hair. . . . (Joyce 1961, p. 783)

Joyce identifies Molly with the sea, and in so doing he sounds a familiar note, a common theme in the collective subconscious of mankind. In Thalassa: A Theory of Geniality, Sandor Ferenczi writes: "Individual observations of the symbolism of dreams and neuroses reveal a fundamental symbolic identification of the mother's body with the water of the sea and the sea itself on the one hand, and on the other with 'Mother Earth,' provider of nourishment" (Beebe, p. 304).

In "General Aims and Theories," Crane explains what he means by "Adagios of islands"; he writes:

. . . when, in "Voyages II" I speak of "adagios of islands," the reference is to the motion of a boat through islands clustered thickly, the rhythm of the motion, etc. And it becomes a much more direct and creative statement than any more logical employment of words such as "coasting slowly through the islands," besides ushering in a whole world of music. (Crane 1966, p. 221)

The influence of Joyce's elliptical style is evident in Crane. Commenting on "Adagios of islands," Sidney Richman argues that the phrase "extends the already implied metaphorical statement that the sea is somehow equivalent to aesthetic force---or is perhaps the supreme aesthetic force" (Richman, p. 74). Turning Nature into the supreme aesthetic force is one of Joyce's main intentions in Ulysses; by presenting Stephen and Bloom (the artist and the average man) from all angles, throughout the book, and reserving the last chapter (the last word, as it were) for Molly who (being symbolic of Mother

Nature and the Virgin Mary) towers above both of them, minimizing their statures and trivializing their cares and concerns, Joyce asserts the role of Nature as the source of all aesthetics. In this tendency of art to defeat itself, Crane is, again, suggestive of Joyce.

Robert Day remarks that "If the sea continues to be the physical body of a woman, its veins would be the currents," and, using "At Melville's Tomb" for a guide, he suggests that "the 'dark confessions' are the evidences of ship-wrecked mariners, carried along undersea by the currents ('veins') in testimony of the sea's power of death and as her trophies" (Day, pp. 229-30). Along with Lewis and Paul, Day holds that the address in "O my Prodigal" is meant for the poet's lover; however, the capitalization of "Prodigal"---along with the fact that "Voyages II" is "a nearly classic example of ritual death and rebirth with obvious symbolic parallels to baptism" (Richman, p. 74)---leads us to suspect that the poet's "Prodigal" is actually the Sea: prodigal in the variety of life forms she creates and the lives she destroys; "The dice of drowned men's bones" ("At Melville's Tomb"), or what Joyce calls "seaspawn and seawrack" (Joyce 1961, p. 37).

Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours,  
And hasten while her penniless rich palms  
Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,---  
Hasten, while they are true,---sleep, death, desire,  
Close round one instant in one floating flower. (p. 36)

In this stanza, which Richman calls "the penultimate stanza both literally and figuratively" (Richman, p. 75), Crane points out the

paradoxicality of the Sea and her differences from mankind. Being the "great wink of eternity," the Sea controls time ("her turning shoulders wind the hours"). The poet invites his love to "Mark" the passage of time and seize the day Carpe Diem by enjoying their love "while the sea's bounty is still available" (Lewis 1967, p. 166). The subject for the phrase "are true" (implicit in the pronoun "they") is either the "palms" or the "bent foam and wave"--both of them may be considered the subject simultaneously--and not "sleep, death, desire," as some critics tend to believe. The "palms" may be a reference either to the palm trees of the tropical islands or, more appropriately, the palms of the Sea's hands. And because most critics seem to be alert to the pun in "palms," they tend to think of the antithesis in "penniless rich palms" literally, forgetting Crane's liking for complex and indirect statement. The antithesis of "penniless rich" is probably Crane's concrete and indirect way of stating the more abstract antithetical nature of the sea as a life-giving and a life-destroying force--the "seaspawn and seawrack," again. It is also possible that a line from the "Proteus" episode may have suggested that line; on his walk along Sandymount strand, Stephen steps on seashells and we read in his interior monologue: "crush, crack, crick, crick. Wild sea money" (Joyce 1961, p. 37; emphasis added).

The three words, "sleep, death, desire," which perplexed many critics, impelling some outlandish interpretations, seem to be a succinct summation of human life, though not in the right order; "desire" comprises all of life's survival instincts; death is the



end of life (or the beginning of a new metamorphosis), and "sleep" is halfway in between, a compromise wherein the stasis and unconsciousness of death coexist with the kinesis and vitality of life. The summation of human life into three words, which seems to underscore its evanescence, in comparison with the infiniteness and immortality of the sea, is the main reason behind the poet's plea to his lover to "hasten" (twice) and seize the day before it is too late.

Without explaining how, Lewis tells us that "The entire experience and all its many elements are quietly concentrated in a single entity or image: 'one floating flower'" (Lewis 1967, p. 159). This is one of the conspicuous examples where Joyce seems to exclusively provide the clue to a Cranesque ambiguity. At the end of the "Lotus-Eaters" episode, Bloom's mind, driven to a delightful lethargy under the warm June sun, starts to dwell on the bath he intends to take shortly:

Enjoy a bath now: clean trough of water, cool enamel,  
the gentle trepid stream. This is my body.

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full,  
naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting  
soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs rip-  
rippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemon-  
yellow: his navel bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled  
curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream  
around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating  
flower. (Joyce 1961, p. 86; emphasis added)

The "floating flower" is Bloom's genitalia: the penis is the center, and the pubic hair and the testicles are the petals. The "floating flower," in this Joycean sense, is definitely more than a lucky coincidence and it explains the deeper significance of the

trio "sleep, death, desire"--"sleep" and "desire" are easily identifiable with sex and genitalia; death is also identifiable with sex, either through Freudian psychology, or through religion: death and sex replaced Adam and Eve's prelapsarian immortality. Also, "foam and wave" may very well be Crane's paraphrase of Joyce's "They are coming, waves. The whitemaned seahorses. . ." (Joyce 1961, p. 38)--white being the color of foam. Leibowitz remarks that "Bloom's vision of a lazy, hot, flowery Far East, with its lethargy and sleeping sickness in the air [Ulysses 69-70] is like Crane's tropics" (Leibowitz, p. 100).

The awareness of the fleeting nature of human life and history does not lead to a rejection of either in the last, prayer-like stanza:

Bind us in time, O Seasons clear, and awe.  
 O minstrel galleons of Carib fire,  
 Bequeath us to no earthly shore until  
 Is answered in the vortex of our grave  
 The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise. (p. 36)

The fixity-flux paradox of the Sea stir in the poet two ambivalent urges: one toward mortal life ("Bind us in time, O Seasons clear, and awe"), and another toward immortal life ("O minstrel galleons of Carib fire, / Bequeath us to no earthly shore"). Notice that he implores the element of change in Nature (the "Seasons") for the mortal life, and the element of permanence ("Carib fire": the sea) for the immortal life.

There is, however, another way of looking at the stanza which replaces ambivalence with congruity. The stanza is a celebration of

life; the poet asks Nature ("Seasons clear") to "bind" him and his lover in the world of "time" and never rob them of the artistic ability to look upon everything in life with marvel and wonder ("awe"). He then implores the sea ("Carib fire") not to take them to shore until the lovers are given the assurance that their death--the "vortex of our grave" which, in Ulysses is a dialectical process that leads to new life, new resurrection--corresponds to the destruction-regeneration pattern in Nature down the years, from the beginning of history until its end--the time span covered by "The seal's spindrift gaze toward paradise." Being an amphibious animal, the seal (just like the dolphins in "Emblems of Conduct") symbolizes the early, pre-historic stages of life and its development from water to land; paradise is, of course, the end of history, the ultimate "manifestation of God."

The phrase "minstrel galleons of Carib fire" is an example of Crane's condensed style we encountered before in "Adagios of islands." "Minstrel galleons" are probably ships carrying singers and musicians whose melodies fill the atmosphere, or it may be a reference to the music the wind produces as it fills the sails of "galleons." "Carib fire" is the Caribbean Sea at sunset when the sun disappears behind the horizon, spreading blood-red color across the sky. Again, Ulysses provides a useful clue. In the previously quoted excerpt from Molly's monologue, recalling her life in Gibraltar, we read: "O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets. . ." (Joyce 1961, p. 783; emphasis added). This again proves the Joycean influence, and gives an added significance to "galleons" which both the Oxford and Webster dictionaries define

as "a Spanish sailing ship" (emphasis added).

\* \* \* \* \*

In "Voyages III," which Leibowitz calls "the most richly ceremonial poem of the sequence" and "a hymn" (Leibowitz, p. 98), Crane humanizes Nature, identifying the human with the natural:

Infinite consanguinity it bears--  
 This tendered theme of you that light  
 Retrieves from sea plains where the sky  
 Resigns a breast that every wave enthrones;  
 While ribboned water lanes I wind  
 Are laved and scattered with no stroke  
 Wide from your side, whereto this hour  
 The sea lifts, also, reliquary hands. (p. 37)

Commenting on this stanza, Lewis observes:

The poet's love for his friend is blood-brother to the love discernible between the elements of nature throughout infinity; at once a model for and portion of that love. The sea mounts the sky's proffered breast in a sexual union incidental with that of the lovers; or, in keeping with the sea's royal character as established in "II," the sea "enthrones" itself upon the submissive sky. The image is huge and startling. (Lewis 1967, p. 162)

Lewis complains about Crane's excessive use of "the pathetic fallacy" (the attempt to anthropomorphize the sea); however, Crane has his compelling reasons for that. What he is trying to do is create a "Materna" figure out of the sea but, realizing the limitations dictated by the conciseness of his medium, as compared to the latitudinal expansiveness of the novel, he exploits whatever limited means at his disposal to turn the sea into a woman, with all that is implicit in the concept of femininity.

By stressing the submissiveness of the sky to the sea--in the sexual act between the two of them wherein the sea plays the aggressive male to the female of the sky--Crane is again utilizing Joyce who uses Shakespeare's life as a parallel for the Trinitarian mystery. In other words, he is creating his own Solomon Seal--one of the four major leitmotifs in Ulysses (better known as the Star of David); a geometrical figure with two interlocking, acute triangles, one pointing upward, the other pointing downward, indicating that what happens on earth is equivalent to what happens in Heaven. Following Freud's lead and Joyce's example, Crane seems to believe in religion as a human invention with deep roots in the libido; and by suggesting the male aggressiveness of the sea (Nature) and the female passiveness of the sky (Heaven), Crane seems to be emulating Joyce who explains the very core of Christianity in terms of Shakespeare's (and his own) sexual frustrations. Being inaccessible to humans, the realm of Heaven can be explained only in terms of its analogy to the realm of history.

The love between the sea and the sky seems to be identical with the love between Crane and his lover; that is why the two couples fade into each other meaningfully in the first stanza. The "tendered theme" is love--or, better still, love in the Christian sense of "God is Love"--and it is described as belonging to the poet and his beloved ("of you"), but it is also described as belonging to the sea and the sky ("light / Retrieves" that "theme" "from sea plains where the sky / Resigns a breast"). And without qualifying the relationship between the two human lovers as sexual, Crane treats the sea-sky relationship as a definite and a continual sexual

intercourse---"the sky / Resigns a breast that every wave enthrones." Commenting on this sexual aspect, Lewis remarks: "Never have the elements engaged in so fierce a mimicry of human sexual combat as in 'Voyages III'" (Lewis 1967, p. 163).

It is for that reason that the poet's sexual rapport with his beloved is described as taking place in terms of the sea itself (through "water lanes" which he "wind[s]"). The "water lanes" are described as "laved and scattered," and without resorting to a dictionary, the antithetical nature of the two past-participles suggests the antitheses of death and resurrection, destruction and regeneration. Both the scattering and laving occur without human intervention ("with no stroke / Wide from your side"); they are inherent in the very nature of the "water lanes" of the sea and the lovers' approaches to one another. Lewis observes that besides being sexual, the relationship between the sea and the sky, the poet and his lover, is "also a religious experience" (Lewis 1967, p. 163). The sea "also" presents to the object of her courtship (the sky) "hands" full of sacred relics as she indulges in her sexual union with the sea. And by the same token the love between the poet and his beloved is an ambivalent combination of sex and worship (Dionysus and Christ).

In the following lines, heaven and earth---much like the poet and his beloved---blend and fade into one another in a mystical union which is at once transcendental and earthly:

And so, admitted through black swollen gates  
That must arrest all distance otherwise,---  
Past whirling pillars and lithe pediments,  
Light wrestling there incessantly with light,

Star kissing star through wave on wave unto  
Your body rocking!

and where death, if shed,  
Presumes no carnage, but this single change,--  
Upon the steep floor flung from dawn to dawn  
The silken skilled transmemberment of song;

Permit me voyage, love, into your hands . . . (p. 37)

The "black swollen gates," through which the lovers are "admitted," are those of the sea (and the womb); it is "The bottom of the sea," which is anything but "cruel," the heart of darkness from which light stems and life emanates, and in the infinity of which opposites are harmoniously reconciled--the "distance" which is characteristic of the relationship of opposites is "arrested."

The "whirling pillars and lithe pediments" are the masculine and feminine genitals--"whirling" describes the aggressiveness of the male, "lithe" the passiveness of the female. Lewis argues that pillars and pediments are "items one associates with Greek temples and Christian churches" (Lewis 1967, p. 163); and if we associate Greek temples with Dionysus (eroticism and intoxication), and Christian churches with Christ (worship and mysticism), we get a spectrum of interpretations which reinforces rather than contradicts my reading.

The poet and his lover journey past the coition of Nature, the "orgiastic scene in which like mates with like" (Uroff, p. 69), where "Light [is] wrestling . . . with light," where "Star [is] kissing star," and "where death, if shed, / Presumes no carnage." "In this experience," Paul remarks, "death is not dying but transformation" (Paul, p. 151)--Death is merely an antithesis to the

thesis of Life whose dialectics (the "whirling" and "wrestling" and "kissing" and "rocking") constitute the synthesis that is Nature. At this point, the poet experiences a Joycean epiphany, a perceptive insight into the nature of life (a "single change"). "The bottom of the sea that had seemed cruel to the speaker on shore now becomes on closer contact a cradle, 'flung from dawn to dawn'" (Uroff, p. 70). Death becomes the "single change" which all living things undergo in death.

Apart from Joyce's thematic influence, Leibowitz notices a technical influence that corroborates the former:

When Crane writes, in "Voyages III," of the "silken skilled transmemberment of song," he creates a brilliant new word that expresses the tension in the poem between creative and destructive process, between love and death. The word, like the love, is made up of transubstantiation and dismemberment, the one impossible without the other. The poem requires a similar reconciliation of opposites: the "imaged Word" fulfills a memorial function by preserving the love even after it has ended. In the same poem the phrase "This tendered theme" suggests both the act of giving and the tenderness with which the love is offered. Ulysses is filled with such coinages: "blandiloquent," for instance. (Leibowitz, p. 101)

"The silken skilled transmemberment of song" is probably the most condensed and connotative line in the whole poem. The word "transmemberment," with its fusion of "transubstantiation" and "dismemberment," recalls the union of Christ and Dionysus at the end of "Lachrymae Christi," thus suggesting the common grounds between the two sacrificial myths in spite of the differences in details between them and the disparities between the two cultures which secreted them--both myths are objective correlatives for the death-resur-



rection cycle in Nature. Also, "song" here recalls "Lachrymae Christi"'s "Not penitence / But song"--Crane's endorsement and celebration of Joyce's "sane and joyful spirit" which categorically shuns the "Agenbite of Inwit."

The two adjectives "silken skilled" is Crane's alliterative and condensed way of expressing the "transmemberment of song" both in Nature and in art. The adjective "skilled" may be taken for artificial, artistic, contrived, deliberate, and self-conscious. On the other hand, silk, being a natural material, may be taken for natural and spontaneous as opposed to "skilled." There is, however, another way of looking at the word "silken." Wrapping itself studiously and laboriously in the silk threads it secretes, creating its cocoon, the silk-worm is like the artist who, patiently and skillfully, creates his art out of his own experiences--"the creation" Shakespeare (and every artist) "pile[s] up to hide him from himself" (Joyce 1961, p. 197). Stephen Dedalus in Ulysses uses the silk-worm metaphor explicitly earlier in the chapter:

- As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies, Stephen said, from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image. (Joyce 1961, p. 194)

"Mother Dana" who, according to Thornton, "is called Mother of the Irish Gods, was the greatest of the Danaan deities" (Thornton, p. 177)---another Materna like Joyce's Molly Bloom and Anna Livia Plurabelle and Crane's Helen and Sea.

What the poet sees in the bottom of the sea, the inmost depths of the womb of Mother Nature, is a congruous vision wherein death

and resurrection, destruction and regeneration are two faces of the same coin; a positive and a negative generating in consort the energy of progress in Nature. The ancient wisdom of man (embodied in mythology and religion) and art reflect this process in Nature; a fact attested by the astonishing similarities (despite differences of culture, temperament, and detail) between the Dionysian myth and the Biblical account of Christ's life. This uniformity of Mother Nature leads to the ecstatic joy manifest in the last line:

Permit me voyage, love, into your hands . . . (p. 37)

The poet's awareness of the consistency of Nature (in spite of ambivalent signs to the opposite) causes an effusive "overflow of powerful feelings."

\* \* \* \* \*

Critics disagree as to the worth of "Voyages IV." Paul finds it "a poem of ardor and skill," and holds that the "occasion and argument" of "Voyages III" and "Voyages IV" are "similar" (Paul, p. 152). Lewis, on the other hand, reads the poem in terms of the fluctuations in Crane's affair with E. O., and argues that in "Voyages IV" there is "a notable slackening of poetic muscle" (Lewis 1967, p. 166). As we shall see later, Paul is closer to the mark than Lewis:

Whose counted smile of hours and days, suppose  
I know as spectrum of the sea and pledge  
Vastly now parting gulf on gulf of wings  
Whose circles bridge, I know, (from palms to the severe

Chilled albatross's white immutability)  
 No stream of greater love advancing now  
 Than, singing, this mortality alone  
 Through clay aflow immortally to you. (p. 38)

The first line of the first stanza is syntactically continuous with the last line of "Voyages III": "Permit me voyage, love, into your hands / Whose counted smile of hours and days. . . ." This syntactic continuity not only does it link "Voyages III" to "IV" but also identifies the sea with Helen; compare the above lines with the following line from "Faustus and Helen" in which the poet addresses Helen: "Those hands of yours that count the nights."

The first line succinctly suggests that the "sane and joyful spirit" ("smile") of Nature (the sea) dominates history ("hours and days"). The smile also recalls the smile ascribed to Christ and Dionysus at the end of "Lachrymae Christi." Crane then proceeds to suggest that if he were hypothetically ("suppose") omniscient and in possession of godly knowledge of all of Nature ("the spectrum of the sea"), its destruction-regeneration dialectics--the divisiveness that ends in unity, the death that culminates in rebirth (the "pledge / Vastly now parting gulf on gulf of wings / Whose circles bridge")--which enact themselves in the sea (both surface and bottom) from the tropics (the land of "palms") to the arctic ("the severe / Chilled albatross's white immutability"), he would not find "No stream of greater love" than that demonstrated by the "singing" march of mortal humanity ("advancing") to immortality through the metamorphosis of death ("this mortality alone / Through clay aflow immortally to you")--the metamorphosis described by Joyce as "god becomes

man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain"  
(Joyce 1961, p. 50).

In the following stanza, Crane continues his celebration of the metamorphic dialectics of Nature, revealing more Joycean elements:

All fragrance irrefragibly, and claim  
Madly meeting logically in this hour  
And region that is ours to wreath again,  
Portending eyes and lips and making told  
The chancel port and portion of our June-- (p. 38)

The noun "fragrance" is meant as a verb. The adverb "irrefragibly" is a coinage which, despite its ostensible derivation from "fragrance," recalls two similar-sounding words: "irrefragable" (meaning "indisputable" or "unanswerable"), and "irrefragible" (meaning "invulnerable"). In the first line, Crane holds that everything in Nature emits one and the same "fragrance" and makes the same "claim" to the same law of mutability; all produce the same music of the spheres, so to speak.

"Madly" and "logically" are two antitheses which open a large spectrum of associated antitheses: Nature versus art, Nature versus man, Dionysus versus Christ--"Madly" as a reference to the irrationality associated with Dionysus; "logically" as a reference to Christ as Logos (the Word); Joyce writes: "the Logos who suffers in us at every moment" (Joyce 1961, p. 185). "Madly" and "logically" may also be taken for an indirect reference to the two poles of destruction and regeneration through which Nature progresses dialectically, metamorphosing one form of life into another. "In this hour / And region that is ours" is Crane's paraphrase of Joyce's command to

himself to "Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (Joyce 1961, p. 186). "Wreathe again" is a reference to the cyclic pattern of history, the Myth of Eternal Return, which, along with the dialectical pattern implicit in the antithetical "Madly" and "logically," constitutes the world-picture of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake.

The outcome of the dialectics of history in their Eternal Return is new lives and new creations ("eyes and lips and making") which are inherent potentially in "The chancel port"---"chancel" recalls the church altar which, in turn, suggests Christ, and "port" (as wine) suggests Dionysus and Christ (the Eucharistic blood). Also, "port and portion" is a multiple reference; it may be taken to denote the blood and body of Christ in the Communion, or to the wine orgies and dismemberment associated with Dionysus. And aside from its association with spring (Easter) and summer (the ripening of the vine), June is the month in which Ulysses takes place; this may be a reference to the Homeric parallel in Ulysses as a metamorphosis of sorts, and as such, it identifies the Ulysses world-picture with the dialectics of Nature and mythology which are identical.

Shall they not stem and clove in our own steps  
Bright staves of flowers and quills to-day as I  
Must first be lost in fatal tides to tell? (p. 38)

The pronoun "they" refers to "The chancel port and portion of our June"---the Dionysus-Christ myth; the metaphysical equivalent of the death-resurrection cycle in Nature. Crane invokes Dionysus-Christ to invest ("stem and clove") his life and love ("our own steps")

"today" with "Bright staves of flowers and quills"--the roses and thorns associated with Dionysus and Christ: Hegel's Dialectics of History--the true essence of life which, otherwise, the poet must die by water ("Must first be lost in fatal tides") in order fully to comprehend and possess.

The poet, however, does not intend to die by water (at least for the time being) in order to get to the light at the heart of darkness; there is plenty to explore in life:

In signature of the incarnate word  
 The harbor shoulders to resign in mingling  
 Mutual blood, transpiring as foreknown  
 And widening noon within your breast for gathering  
 All bright insinuations that my years have caught  
 For islands where must lead inviolably  
 Blue latitudes and levels of your eyes,-- (p. 38)

The "signature of the incarnate word" recalls Stephen's "Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack" (Joyce 1961, p. 37); the death-resurrection concept of which "the incarnate word" (Jesus Christ) is an adequate metaphysical symbol.

Being in a way the place where the sea (Nature) ends, the harbor seems to be a symbol for the end (the purpose) of Nature. "The harbor shoulders" (carries) "the incarnate word" and disseminates it--"re-sign" it as Paul insightfully observes (Paul, p. 155)--among all living things (the "mingling / Mutual blood"). "Transpiring" describes "the incarnate word" and may be taken for "exhale" or "perspire," or "become known." "Foreknown" may be a reference either to predestination or cyclism, the Myth of Eternal Return. "The incarnate word" not only provides a clue to the cyclic pattern

of life in general, it also (and as effectively) offers an explanation for the poet's little story, his life and its epiphanies ("All bright insinuations that my years have caught"), and his transcendental inclinations--his yearning "For islands where must lead inviolably / Blue latitudes and levels of your eyes"--at the core of which lurks his suicidal tendency, his unconscious desire to join Mother Nature in an insoluble wedlock.

The last two lines of the poem accentuate the transcendental-suicidal nature of Crane's dream of Union with Gea Tellus:

In this expectant, still exclaim receive  
The secret oar and petals of all love (p. 38)

After expressing his bewilderment at the ambiguity of these two lines, Lewis suggests that "The secret oar and petals" are "the male genitals, the symbolism being adjusted to the seafaring profession of the departing lover. In context, they are homosexual symbols, which is why they are 'secret'" (Lewis 1967, p. 168). The "oar and petals" are homosexual symbols insofar as the oar stands for the male organ and the petals for hands or the male organ (Bloom's "floating flower"). But if we take the flower for a reference to the female organ, then the image becomes heterosexual rather than homosexual.

The image is more homosexual than heterosexual since Crane mentions only "petals" not a whole flower. I do not, however, agree with Lewis that "the oar and petals" are described as "secret" because they are homosexual symbols. The word "secret," it seems to me, is a reference to the poet's inmost desire to commit suicide, to

get to "the bottom of the sea," to move centripetally from the "petals" of the flower (history) to its center (the metaphysic beyond and behind history which he "Must first be lost in fatal tides to tell").

\* \* \* \* \*

The suicidal afterthought that occurs marginally at the end of "Voyages IV," becomes the dominant theme in "Voyages V." The poet in this poem

emerges from the sea to the shore and to a puzzling feeling of alienation, betrayal, and treachery. Nature takes on a hardened quality, and all the fluid, soothing qualities, of the sea are marmorealized into a world that threatens the poet. (Uroff, p. 72)

The first words in the first stanza give voice to the agony and isolation that bedevils the poet's soul:

Meticulous, past midnight in clear rimes,  
Infrangible and lonely, smooth as though cast  
Together in one merciless white blade---  
The bay estuaries fleck the hard sky limits. (p. 39)

The lovers are together, standing in the window of the poet's apartment and staring at "The bay estuaries" in silence. It is "past midnight" and the lovers' mood is obviously gloomy ("Meticulous," "infrangible and lonely"); a mood that is diametrically opposite to the blissful ecstasy they experienced in the previous poems, to say the least. It was the sea (the presence of Molly-Helen) that created



the former blissful mood. When at sea, the lovers notice that "the sky / Resigns a breast that every wave enthrones"---an image of love that reflects the joyful and amorous mood of the lovers. In their present situation on land, on the other hand, "The bay estuaries fleck the hard sky limits"---an image of desolation and animosity that reflects the lovers' current mood.

It is ironical that when the lovers are actually "together," undiverted by the mighty presence of the sea, they feel "lonely." The only image that reveals a glimpse of amorous unity is an image of pain: "Together ~~in~~ one merciless white blade"; a phallic-homosexual image tinged with physical agony: both lovers are tellingly pierced (penetrated) by the same "merciless white blade."

The agony and isolation the two lovers experience are the outcome of their sexual self-awareness which contrasts sharply with the transcendental elation they experienced at sea. Describing his love for E. O., Crane writes:

I have seen the Word made Flesh. I mean nothing less, and I know now that there is such a thing as indestructibility. In the deepest sense, where flesh became transformed through intensity of response to counter-response, where sex was beaten out, where a purity of Joy was reached that included tears. (Letters 1965, p. 181; emphasis added)

And describing the effect of the sea on him, Crane writes in the same letter: "I think the sea has thrown itself upon me and been answered, at least in part, and I believe I am a little changed---not essentially, but changed and transubstantiated as anyone is who has asked a question and been answered" (Letters 1965, p. 182). But

ashore now, the transubstantiating effect of the sea upon the lovers is worn off, and what they are left with is an everyday erotic feeling out of which "sex" is not "beaten."

The poet's sense of betrayal and estrangement from his lover intensifies in the second stanza:

—As if too brittle or too clear to touch!  
 The cables of our sleep so swiftly filed,  
 Already hang, shred end from remembered stars.  
 One frozen trackless smile. . . What words  
 Can strangle this deaf moonlight? . . . (p. 39)

"The lovers," Paul explains, "are bound by the icy sword of their suffering, . . . relationship 'too brittle' and 'too clear' and, as with an icicle, beyond the reach of touch, which would shatter before it could melt it" (Paul, p. 156). All the hope-inspiring elements, all the signs and manifestations of "the sane and joyful spirit" are transformed into dismal and vacant symbols. Even the Brooklyn Bridge—which is a symbol of hope and transcendence in The Bridge, and which Crane invokes "to lend a myth to God"—is here an empty and a desolate symbol: "The cables [of the bridge] of our dreams" (the poet's passage into the realm of dreams and fantasy) are "so swiftly filed" and "Already hang, shred ends from remembered stars." Paul seems to regard "hang" as a sexual metaphor (Paul, p. 157).

The "counted smile of hours and days" ("Voyages IV") (the dominance of "the sane and joyful spirit" in Nature) is replaced here with a "frozen trackless smile" which Paul suggests its contrast with the image of "the laughing sea" in "Voyages II" (Paul, p. 157). Also, the moon, which is a symbol of divine grace in "Lachrymae

Christi," and which is a symbol for art and human values in "Chaplinesque," and toward which the "undinal vast belly" of the sea "bends," is here a "deaf moonlight" which the poet wishes his "words / Can strangle."

For we

Are overtaken. Now no cry, no sword  
Can fasten or deflect this tidal wedge,  
Slow tyranny of moonlight, moonlight loved  
And changed . . . "There's

Nothing like this in the world," you say,  
Knowing I cannot touch your hand and look  
Too, into that godless cleft of sky  
Where nothing turns but dead sands flashing. (p. 39)

The poet and his lover "Are overtaken" by a superior and unsympathetic fate. "A terrible power wills their separation, a 'tidal wave' as overwhelming and irresistible as a glacier. 'Tidal' identifies this power with the sea and the moon, with the tyrannical goddess of 'Voyages II'" (Paul 1972, p. 157). Paul also notices the abundance of negatives in the poem, "the thrice-reiterated 'nothing' and cluster of negatives ('no,' 'not,' 'never')" (Paul 1972, p. 157). The excessive use of negatives also suggests the opposite of Molly's affirmative "Yes" and Crane's determination, as he says in a letter to Charlotte Rychtarik, to "keep saying 'YES' to everything" (Letters 1965, p. 148). "No cry, no sword" carries sexual and phallic implications.

The moonlight here is a "moonlight loved / And changed"; it is not the benevolent moon that "in lonely alleys make / A grail of laughter of an empty ash can" ("Chaplinesque"), or the moonlight the

"benzine / Rinsings" of which "Dissolve all" in heavenly grace, it is instead a moonlight that exercises "slow tyranny."

The poet is amazed at his lover's comment on the landscape that "There's / Nothing like this in the world." The poet hints that his gloomy picture of the landscape ("that godless cleft of sky / Where nothing turns but dead sands flashing") is induced by the alienation between him and his lover ("I cannot touch your hand"). The pessimism of "that godless cleft of sky" recalls, and sharply contrasts with, the optimism associated with Helen's cleavage in "Faustus and Helen" ("the hiatus / That winks above it, bluet in your breasts"). Paul argues that here "The imagery recalls that of 'Passage' but expresses more explicitly the relation of lovelessness and godlessness, nothing and nothingness. Here the vortex is not 'the vortex of our grave' ('Voyages II'); it is sterile, empty, lonely, meaningless death" (Paul, p. 158).

"--And never to quite understand!" No,  
In all the argosy of your bright hair I dreamed  
Nothing so flagless as this piracy. (p. 39)

When the poet's lover objects to the poet's pessimistic outlook, complaining about his ability "to quite understand," the poet "replies vigorously, expressing his sense of betrayal in terms of the high expectations and fulfillments he had had" (Paul 1972, p. 158). "Argosy" is a fleet of ships; and by expressing his disappointment and disillusionment on land in terms of sea imagery ("argosy," "flagless," and "piracy"), the poet provides us, indirectly but subtly, with a flagrant contrast to the ecstatic fulfillment he

experienced at sea. "The argosy of your bright hair," for instance, contrasts with the "minstrel galleons" of "Voyages II." Lewis holds that "argosy" "may have been connected in Crane's mind as in that of many others, though that is not in fact its etymology, with the mythical ship Argo and hence with the quest-journey of Jason (who figures in the Atlantis section of The Bridge)" (Lewis 1967, p. 171).

The last stanza, which is an address to the lover, unfolds Crane's resolution toward his lover:

But now  
 Draw in your head, alone and too tall here.  
 Your eye already in the slant of drifting foam;  
 Your breath sealed by the ghosts I do not know:  
 Draw in your head and sleep the long way home. (p. 39)

Lewis suggests that in this stanza, the poet "begs the lover to turn back from the window and to come to him one last time, that they may dream together of some far-off reunion" (Lewis 1967, p. 171). Paul, on the other hand, argues that in the stanza, the poet "gives his lover to the sea, enjoins his departure in the elemental way of 'Song of Myself'" (Paul, p. 158). Paul also holds that the last line in the last stanza

may be read as generous permission to sleep through this winter season, the poet in his steadfastness counting on time to bring in again the summer of love ("our June") and bring the lover back to him ("home"). Yet it may be read at the same time as a vindictive taunt to sleep the long joyless sleep, which, unlike the short or timeless way of ecstasy in "Voyages II," is the lonely way of unrewarding death. (Paul, p. 159)

Whatever the interpretation, it is clear that being on land unfavorably contrasts with being at sea, that the feelings of seren-

ity, ecstasy, and being at one with Nature, when the poet was voyaging with his lover at sea, are totally and deplorably lacking as the poet and his lover stand in the window of their New-York apartment (away from the sea) staring at the landscape. It is this awareness of his bereavement on land that induces the poet to entrust his love to the sea and wish himself, and his lover, back "home" at sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

In "Voyages Vi," the final poem of the sequence, Crane, after experiencing the death of love in "Voyages V," evinces a great hope in the healing power of the sea and its efficacy as a redeemer:

Where icy and bright dungeons lift  
Of swimmers their lost morning eyes,  
And ocean rivers, churning, shift  
Green borders under stranger skies, (p. 40)

Despite the period at the end of the last line of "Voyages V," the first line in "Voyages VI" seems to be syntactically continuous with the last line of "Voyages V": "Draw in your head and sleep the long way home. / Where icy and bright dungeons lift / Of swimmers their lost morning eyes."

Lewis remarks that in this last poem, "We have moved, geographically and spiritually, from the warm Caribbean to icy northern waters; as it turns out, from the heat of emotional and physical experience to the cool zone where emotion may be recollected in tranquility" (Lewis 1967, p. 172). In spite of being "icy," the

sea's "bright dungeons lift / Of swimmers their lost morning eyes"--- their everyday, worldly, and businesslike eyes, which are already lost, and replace them with new eyes more attuned to the sea. The same thing happens to rivers as they merge into the ocean; "churning" like milk turning (being metamorphosed) into butter, rivers change their life-giving habits: instead of irrigating agricultural land ("Green borders"), they turn into brine as they join the ocean, giving life to myriad sea creatures, and, evaporating in the water cycle) the equivalent of the death-resurrection cycle in Nature) to form rain and then rivers. "Stranger skies" is not a reference to the Existentialist silence of the universe; it refers to the sky as a catalyst in the water cycle: river water flows to the sea where it evaporates to form clouds which travel in the sky to fall again in the form of rain that joins rivers starting the cycle all over again.

In the following stanza, the poet contemplates the death-resurrection, destruction-regeneration, and agony-ecstasy cycles in life:

Steadily as a shell secretes  
 Its beating leagues of monotone,  
 Or as many waters trough the sun's  
 Red kelson past the cape's wet stone; (p. 40)

The adverb "Steadily" is the key word in this stanza, it suggests the constancy and steadfastness of Nature; qualities lacking in the poet. The poet's main purpose in this stanza is to point out the fortitude of Nature in the face of pain and metamorphosis. When a grain of sand finds its way to the inside of a mollusk shell, intrudingly lodging itself between the wall of the shell and the frail body of the mollusk, the tormented creature copes with the

pain efficiently by secreting, slowly and diligently like an artist, a fluid ("Its beating leagues of monotone") that surrounds and contains the bothersome grain of sand, turning it into a beautiful gem. Likewise, under the brunt of the "sun's / Red kelson," the ocean water turns into vapor--coping with heat by changing its form from liquid to gas--which forms clouds that turn into life-giving rain. By citing the examples of the mollusk and water, Crane is indirectly hinting at his failure to cope with emotional pain which led to despondency. This metamorphic cycle in Nature leads to a rise in poetic pitch in the following two stanzas:

O rivers mingling toward the sky  
 And harbor of the phoenix' breast---  
 My eyes pressed black against the prow,  
 --Thy derelict and blinded guest

Waiting, afire, what name, unspoke,  
 I cannot claim: let thy waves rear  
 More savage than the death of kings  
 Some splintered garland for the seer. (p. 40)

Realizing the absurdity of the despair caused by his loss in love, and feeling a bit ashamed of himself for that despair, the poet conceives of life as a cycle of flux, metamorphosis, destruction followed by regeneration--"rivers mingling toward the sky." The reference to "rivers" as a symbol of flux is an apt image, the Latin root for "flux" (fluxus) means "flow" or "river." "Toward the sky" may be taken physically as a reference to the water cycle in Nature, or metaphorically as a reference to teleology and divine guidance in the flux of history. All the rivers of Nature move toward the "harbor of the phoenix' breast"---a Dionysus-Christ figure and a



mythical bird that burns itself to ashes every five-hundred years to rise again from its own ashes. (Notice also that the phoenix is a major symbol in Finnegans Wake.)

Again, the poet is using nautical imagery: the "rivers" of life mingle pyramidally in their progress "toward the sky" where the "harbor of the phoenix' breast" is. The poet's ship is headed in the same direction but his despair at the loss of his lover (in "Voyages V") blinds him to that fact ("My eyes," he says, are "pressed black against the prow")--despite the fact that his head is at the prow of the ship, facing directly the forward and upward movement of his ship (his life), he is blinded by his despair to the progress and purpose that exists even in adversity.

Like Oedipus before the tragedy, the persona of the poem has eyes but cannot see. It is noteworthy that the word "eyes" is repeated three times in the poem thus establishing an association between the poem and Oedipus Rex and the "Proteus" episode in Ulysses where references to eyes abound. Budgen describes "Proteus" as "full of light and colour" (Budgen, p. 48), and about it Joyce writes: "Change is the theme. Everything changes--sea, sky, man, animals. The words change, too" (Budgen, p. 48). Crane describes himself in Oedipal terms as "derelict and blinded guest." The mystical connotations of "guest" (on the ship of life) are obvious. "Derelict" is an interesting adjective which, meaning "a vessel abandoned in open water," seems to associate the poet with the sea ("vessel"), and his despondency with a break with Nature ("abandoned in open water").

Like the Phoenix, the poet is "Waiting, afire" for the answer of his prayer to the "rivers" of life to resurrect him. He is waiting for the sea to quench his fire and resurrect him, for up to this point he is in an amorphous purgatory, midway between his old self and the new one he is awaiting; that is why he "cannot claim" any name because his new name is still "unspoke[n]" by the sea--his death by water is to be followed by a baptismal resurrection.

Crane invokes the "waves" to "rear" "some splintered garland for the seer," which, "by transposition," as Lewis suggests, "is a garland for the splintered seer" (Lewis 1967, p. 174); a "garland" ("an immense poetic theme") (Lewis 1967, p. 174) that is "More savage than the death of kings" (more awesome than tragedy). Implicit in this prayer to Nature is the desire to be sanctioned and given artistic inspiration.

In the following stanzas, which Lewis calls "the sea's answer to the ardently waiting poet," we experience a shift of scene from the "icy" waters of "ocean rivers" to the scorching heat of "siroccos" and tropical islands:

Beyond siroccos harvesting  
The solstice thunders, crept away,  
Like a cliff swinging or a sail  
Flung into April's inmost day--

Creation's blithe and petalled word  
To the lounged goddess when she rose  
Conceding dialogue with eyes  
That smile unsearchable repose-- (p. 40)

These highly condensed lines allow for numerous interpretations.

"Siroccos" are hot winds that blow from the Sahara on Southern

Europe; there are two kinds of siroccos, one damp bringing rain, the other dry bringing sands from the Sahara. One can read the first line as "Beyond [the] siroccos['s] harvesting / The solstice thunders," and as such it imputes a natural phenomenon (the siroccos) to a far-away source, thus suggesting the unity of all of life. It can also be read as "Beyond [the] siroccos [which are] harvesting / The solstice['s] thunders," and as such it attributes destruction and regeneration in Nature--the life-giving damp siroccos and the destructive dry siroccos--to the inevitable change of seasons ("The solstice"), thus suggesting the ineluctability of the death-resurrection cycle in Nature.

Covering large areas of the globe in its way, the siroccos may stand for space; and indicating the beginning of summer and winter, the solstice, on the other hand, may stand for time, and as such the first line may be read as: "Beyond space and time. . . ." Commenting on the two stanzas, Lewis remarks:

I take "creation's word" to be the subject of "crept away" and the two similes as visual images, first from the vantage point of the water (whence a cliff, as it is passed, can seem itself to be in motion), and second from the vantage point of land (whence the ship disappears over the horizon). In combination, the two images expand the notion of significant movement--of the passage of consciousness from one place and condition to another. (Lewis 1967, pp. 175-6)

"Creation's blithe and petalled word" is another example of Crane's condensed line. The word "blithe" recalls Joyce's "sane and joyful spirit" along with the smiles and laughs of the sea in "Voyages II" and "IV" and of Helen in "Faustus and Helen." The

"petalled word" recalls a segment of Stephen's monologue as he strolls down Sandymount strand in "Proteus":

Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseciss, oos. Vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded in barrels. And, spent, its speech ceases. It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling. (Joyce 1961, p. 49; emphasis added)

It also recalls the "calyx" in "At Melville's Tomb" and "bluet" in "Faustus and Helen I." The "petalled flower" is also a reference to the "floating flower" of "Voyages II," Bloom's "languid floating flower" (Joyce 1961, p. 86), or to "the Word made Flesh" (Letters 1965, p. 181)--both as a reference to the consubstantiation of God the Father into God the Son, and the progress of history from potentiality to actuality (Joyce 1961, p. 25).

"The lounged goddess" is the Sea, Helen, Mother Nature, and Molly Bloom. The phrase "when she rose" identifies this goddess with Virgin Mary whose Son died and rose from the dead in an affirmation of the death-resurrection cycle in life. Being an incarnation of Mother Nature, this goddess communicates not with words but "with eyes / That smile"--the "sane and joyful spirit again"--"unsearchable repose"; an easily accessible reconciliation to all of life. The goddess's speechless, eye "dialogue" indirectly suggests Molly's silent monologue at the end of Ulysses.

The last two stanzas of the poem provide a vision of harmony which is both transcendental and down-to-earth:

Still fervid covenant, Belle Isle,  
 ---Unfolded floating dais before  
 Which rainbows twine continual hair---  
 Belle Isle, white echo of the oar! (p. 41)

The imaged Word, it is, that holds  
 Hushed willows anchored in its glow.  
 It is the unbetrayable reply  
 Whose accent no farewell can know. (p. 41)

Like the wafer and wine which in the Holy Communion become the body and blood of Jesus Christ (who, in turn, is an incarnation of the Word), "Belle Isle" is a consubstantiation of the goddess of Nature and the Sea. "Belle Isle" may be a Joycean borrowing (Joyce 1961, p. 346). Lewis aptly associates the "Still fervid covenant" with the rainbow in the Old Testament: "a still living covenant, a divine guarantee" (Lewis 1967, p. 178). In the third line, the rainbow physically appears in the poem ("rainbows twine continual hair")-- "eternal rainbows braid eternal hair". (Lewis 1967, p. 178).

The "Unfolded floating dais" is the raised platform upon which the throne of the goddess-queen is raised. But "dais" may be taken for "daisy" (much like "Carib" for "Caribbean" in "Voyages II"), and as such, it recalls the "floating flower" and Bloom's genitals, thus suggesting a link between Bloom's pubic hair and the "continual hair" "Which rainbows twine." Combined with the "white echo of the oar (with its conspicuous phallic connotations), the "floating dais[y] recalls "The secret oar and petals of all love" ("Voyages IV"), an image that is both heterosexual and homosexual, as I have attempted to point out.

"Belle Isle" is "The imaged Word," the Incarnate Word, "the Word made Flesh" which "holds . . . in its glow"--like the flower whose petals (the "calyx") emanate and "glow" from the center disc (the "vortex")--all of the silent elements of Nature (the "hushed

willows"). Paul agrees with Lewis that "The imaged Word"

is the "Word" of poetry--as always, of Crane's kind of poetry; transcendent reality imaged in language, and in a poetic language whose power ("glow") fixes, gives permanence and beauty and settled meaning to, the things of this world. Those things, human and natural, find their true anchorage--according to Crane's quietly surprising figure--not in the sea of the actual but in the steady glow of the ideal. (Lewis 1967, p. 178)

"The imaged Word," however, is Gea Tellus, Mother Nature who is the mother of all; Crane's last word in "Voyages" (much like Joyce's in "Penelope") is dedicated, not to his medium, but to the omnipresence that inspires all art, Mother Nature. After all, what saves the poet from his despair that looms over "Voyages V" is Nature (exemplified by the mollusk and water), and not his art which remains paralyzed under the intensity of his sense of emotional loss. In the Gospel according to John we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is to the Word in that comprehensive and universal sense that Crane dedicates the last stanza of his last poem in "Voyages."

Also, according to Joyce's Shakespearean theory, God the Father created the world (the Word) and entered it in two capacities, as the Holy Ghost and as God the Son ("the Word made Flesh"). Likewise, Shakespeare created his world in Hamlet (by means of the word) and entered it as a ghost (King Hamlet) and as a son (Prince Hamlet); and Joyce created his word-made world in Ulysses and entered it as a ghost (Bloom) and as a son (Stephen Dedalus), giving the last word to Molly Bloom ("The imaged Word"). It is to the Word as world, not the Word as art, that Crane devotes the last stanza of his poem.

The last two lines in the stanza are a dedication to Mother Nature as personified by Molly Bloom. Mother Nature ("The imaged Word") is "the unbetrayable reply"; she is the ultimate answer to the quest of Stephen, Bloom, and Everyman, and she is unbetrayable (she betrays but cannot be betrayed) because she is the eternal, invincible, and the all-powerful mother of all---she gives birth to all and, in due time, brings death to every living thing, transforming one form of life into another. Therefore, the "accent" of that "unbetrayable reply" is endless and absolute ("no farewell can know"). Being cyclic and circular (beginning and ending with a "Yes," like a snake with its tail in its mouth), the "unbetrayable reply" of Mother Nature (Molly bloom's dialogue) is like God and Time: without end.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot maintains that we "often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts" of a poet's work "may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (Eliot 1975, p. 38). Hart Crane is a case in point; his White Buildings contains his best work and evinces James Joyce's influence on him. The present study has been an attempt to establish a link between the two phenomena.

James Joyce influenced Hart Crane. And while some scholars and critics pointed out the presence of a Joycean influence in some of Crane's poems, no one ventured fully into that risky and unexplored area of Crane's career. It was in view of the lack of full-length considerations of that overlooked but important aspect in Crane's poetry that the present study was undertaken. It is on account of the same lack that this essay assumes its importance.

Joyce and Crane were very different in temperament: Joyce was even-tempered, self-restrained, a family man, and a survivor; Crane, on the other hand, was intemperate, impulsive, homosexual, and suicidal. Yet, in spite of their different temperaments, both men had very similar artistic temperaments, and that fact made influence



possible. What intensified Joyce's influence was the publication of The Waste Land and Ulysses in 1922, a fact which marked Crane's final break with Eliot's influence and his turning to Joyce for influence and guidance. In The Waste Land he found a condemnation of the modern scene, while in Ulysses he found an acceptance of life, including the modern scene.

Unlike other writers Crane read, Joyce integrated his aesthetics unobtrusively in the texture of his work (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses); that not only made Joyce's aesthetics more readily available (than if they were written and published separately), but also allowed for the reader's critical "suspension of disbelief." Starting his readings in Joyce at the impressionable age of sixteen, Crane came to see in Joyce's work enticing optimism and an artistic temperament similar to but more sophisticated than his, a temperament that spawned subtle artistic theories, a coherent ontology, and a large repository of artistic techniques and styles, the potentialities of which are limitless. Thus Crane fell under the influence of Joyce.

As indicated in its title, this study has been an "influence," not a "source," study. Richard Altick differentiates between the two kinds of literary study; an "influence" study, according to him, "refers to the wider, more profound, more subtle and intangible effects that a knowledge of one writer's works has upon another, whereas 'source' designates specific borrowings that may or may not be related to that larger debt" (Altick, p. 109). And the difficulties encountered in the course of the present treatise are the

ones typical of "influence" studies. One of these difficulties is adequately described by Andre Morize in his book Problems and Methods of Literary History:

Influence by its very nature does not always declare itself by precise and well-defined signs; its study does not admit of the same exactness as, for instance, the investigation of sources. Frequently, it consists in following the capricious, unexpected meanderings of a stream whose waters are led hither and thither by the accidental contour of the ground and take their color from the various tributaries and the soil through which they flow—at times even disappearing from view for a space, to reappear farther on. (Altick, p. 109)

In the course of the study there have been such meanderings in the Joycean influence. In the early poems in White Buildings ("Black Tambourine," "Chaplinesque," and "Sunday Morning Apples") Joyce's influence is more thematic than technical, while in the later ones ("Lachrymae Christi," "The Wine Menagerie," "At Melville's Tomb," "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," and "Voyages") it is both thematic and technical. In some poems ("Legend" and "Emblems of Conduct") the Joycean influence can be more readily seen than in others ("My Grandmother's Love Letters" and "Stark Major"). But despite the variance, Joyce's influence is discernible in both groups with varying degrees.

The present study has progressed according to the criteria laid down by Altick for "influence" studies. The first four chapters (including the introduction) have been an examination of the external evidence, what Altick calls "The dates and other bibliographical and biographical facts" which "certify that the supposed influence could have occurred" (Altick, p. 111). In these early chapters, Crane's

first-hand knowledge of Joyce (his reading of Portrait and Ulysses), the vital importance of literary influences in his career, the uniqueness of Joyce's influence on him, the various aspects of the Joycean influence, and the parallels between the careers of Joyce and Crane have been closely scrutinized.

The last four chapters of the study have been a detailed exposition of the "internal evidence" (Altick 1975, p. 111), a close reading of the poems of White Buildings in the light of Crane's thorough reading of the Portrait and Ulysses. The evidence in these four chapters is not as conclusive as in the first four chapters, and it depends in large part on the reader's knowledge of Joyce and Crane as well as on his awareness of the nature of "influence" studies; commenting on the nature of "internal evidence" in "influence" studies, Altick observes that in "influence" studies "Seldom is a clear-cut answer possible" (Altick, p. 112).

As I have shown, Joyce influenced Crane in more ways than one; but paradoxically enough, the closer I examined Crane's work for Joycean influences, the more original Crane's work appeared to be. Commenting on The Bridge, John Unterecker points out Crane's originality despite his borrowings:

As every writer borrows, he [Crane] borrowed; but his borrowings are inevitably woven into a poem [The Bridge] uniquely his own. Secondhand themes and images are nothing new in literature. What Crane found in these writers [William Carlos Williams and James Joyce] and in a good many others was material that could be adapted to the mythic structure that he was creating. (Unterecker 1962, p. 10)

And although Unterecker is speaking of the influence of Joyce and

Williams on The Bridge, what he says is just as applicable to White Buildings and to all the literary influences on Crane, Joycean and otherwise.

The introduction to this study has established three major points: first, the paramount importance of influences in Crane's career and his self-conscious effort to develop them; second, the preeminence of the Joycean influence compared to the other literary influences, and third, White Buildings as the best illustration of the Joycean influence.

I have tried in the first chapter to trace the impact of most of the authors who helped shape Crane's literary personality, and to point out in the meantime the limitations of their influences. My main point has been to show that while Plato, Nietzsche, Ouspensky, Mary Baker Eddy, Arthur Rimbaud, Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot have contributed something to Crane's make-up as an artist, their influence upon Crane was limited and brief. Joyce's influence on Crane, on the other hand, was much more pervasive than any other and never seemed to end even after he catered to Otto Kahn's wishes by injecting a patriotic strain in The Bridge.

In the second chapter, "Parallels and Influence," I have attempted to display a large variety of parallels and similarities between the careers of Joyce and Crane, parallels and similarities that may very well be hard-to-prove Joycean influences upon Crane. Taken as parallels, these traits that Joyce and Crane have in common may be considered affinities of temperament; and, taken as influences, these common traits suggest a cause-and-effect relation between

Crane's output and his readings in Joyce.

The influence of Joyce's aesthetic theories in the Portrait and in Ulysses on Crane's aesthetics (as revealed in his letters and critical writings) has been explored in the third chapter. The emphasis in that chapter has been on the areas wherein Joyce's theoretical aesthetics have had a direct impact on Crane's aesthetic concepts. Although mainly theoretical, the third chapter helps shed light on the chapters that follow it.

In the fourth chapter I have tried to demonstrate the effect of the Portrait and Ulysses on the poems in White Buildings which deal with aesthetic questions and problems. Poems such as "Legend," "Black Tambourine," "My Grandmother's Love Letters," "Sunday Morning Apples," "Praise for an Urn," "Chaplinsque," "Possessions," "The Wine Menagerie," and "At Melville's Tomb" have been scrutinized for Joycean aesthetic influences: everyday life as an embodiment of eternal and immutable laws, the poet's oracular function in society, the relation of art to life, the roots of poetic expression in the subconscious, the irrational as an expression of the transcendental, and mythology as a viable tool in understanding history.

I have attempted in the fifth chapter to trace the influence of Ulysses on the poems which deal with ontological, philosophical, and religious themes in White Buildings. I have demonstrated that poems such as "Emblems of Conduct," "Garden Abstract," "Stark Major," "Lachrymae Christi," and "Recitative" portray a world-picture inspired by Joyce's in Ulysses.

In the sixth and seventh chapters, my emphasis has been on the

influence of Joyce's portrayal of Molly Bloom as a Mother-Nature symbol, on Crane's two long poems: "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" and "Voyages." In both chapters, I have illustrated Crane's heavy reliance on Joyce, both thematically and technically, in turning the sea and Helen into symbols for Gea Tellus, the Materna.

All through the study, the different aspects of Joyce's influence on Crane (subconscious influences, affinities of temperament, and direct borrowings, both thematic and technical) have been explored, and in exploring them my purposes have been: first, to bring to the limelight a significant and overlooked aspect in the career of one of America's finest poets; second, to point out Crane's originality by showing his assimilation and adaptation of Joycean material in his poems; third, to undermine the label of Romanticism which has been associated with Crane's name; and, fourth, to present a close reading of White Buildings in a new light.

NOTES

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Hart Crane, The Complete Poems and Selected Letters and Prose of Hart Crane (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1966), p. 3. Unless otherwise noted, the poetry will be from this work.



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