

A Deconstructive Reading of "A Painful Case": A Possible Starting Point for Non-Joyceans

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In this deconstructive reading of "A Painful Case" one cannot avoid feeling qualms of conscience at the prospect of offering an inevitably limited vision of Joyce's art by reducing it to an exploration of how his aesthetics, given the modernist moment during which it is found to be emerging, may be understood as the result of how it is nourished in interdiscoursal terms by a synthesis between Pope-like and Pound-like aesthetics or, in wider metaliterary terms, by the interaction of the Enlightenment, on the one hand, as represented by the Novel form, and Modernism, on the other, as represented by the proto-modernist novel.

Upon considering the paradigmatically originatory nature of "A Painful Case" as a measure of Joyce's "work[s] in progress," it would seem possible to argue that the Pound-like tendency toward modernist experimentalism, which a deconstructive reading of the story brings to light, itself constitutes a re-enactment of the process of emergence up into which the Novel as a 'novel' narrative form is taken during the Enlightenment, a process which has been chronicled in a masterly way by J. Paul Hunter.¹ What also needs to be taken into account with regard to that same process is the struggle to reach a point of professionalism on the part of the novelist, paradigmatically played out through the figure of the implied author in each Enlightenment text, by which to ensure the Novel's becoming a worthy art form within the Tradition of Literature, i.e. that it might be considered Augustan as well as Modern.

From the perspective of the kind of metaliterary reading a deconstructive approach to Joyce's text makes possible, "A Painful Case," understood as a modernist version, or enactment, of the dimensionalizing potential of the Enlightenment Novel, reaches the same kind of technical saturation point as is reached in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, for example. As a result, Belinda, the metaliterary equivalent of the Novel form, is released into literary history. On the other hand, the well-tried poetic techniques of the neoclassical mode of the heroic couplet have their modernist equivalent in anti-saturation, i.e. in a release into an anti-dimensionalizing black-hole aesthetics involving what we recognize as the process of modernist interiorization or, in other words, the modernist-poetic-experimental novel. "A Painful Case" may be said to constitute, in a paradigmatic way, Joyce's release into literary tradition, seen as a mirror version, a black-hole version, of the Enlightenment Novel's emergence into the process of its own on-going dimensionalization throughout history. As stated in the essay "Epic and Novel" by Bakhtin: "The novel comes into contact with

spontaneity of the inconclusive present; this is what keeps the genre from congealing. The novelist is drawn toward everything that is not yet completed."² In this sense, it is hoped to be able to show how "A Painful Case" brings to the fore Joyce's historical self-consciousness with regard to his own incorporation into narrative art understood as an ever-dimensionalized Tradition. Such a pan/trans-historical vision also has its origins in the period of the Enlightenment as may be exemplified by Kant's thoughts expressed in *On History*: "In man (as the only rational creature on earth) those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual."³ And furthermore:

Th[e] capacity for facing up in the present to the often very distant future, instead of being wholly absorbed by the enjoyment of the present, is the most decisive mark of the human's advantage. It enables man to prepare himself of distant aims according to his role as a human being.⁴

Meanwhile, modernist aesthetics implies dimensionalization as, paradoxically, microscopic intensity and textual dismantling within a process of interiorization, a kind of anti-dimensionalization, as already stated. The Kant-like struggle toward the novelist's professionalization marking such an emergent process also has its metaliterary counterpoint in the text's implied author's quandaries regarding technical (and thus professional) concerns with regard to a representative story such as "A Painful Case." With regard to Pope as a paradigmatic Enlightenment writer involved in the struggle toward professionalization, lines 229-231 from Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* may be cited: "[W]e tremble to survey / The growing Labours of the lengthen'd Way, / Th' increasing Prospect tires our wandring Eyes."⁵ J. Paul Hunter indicates that Pope's couplets "engage . . . explicitly to demonstrate difficulty and complication, not to provide quick access. . . . [R]evelation is a slow and laborious process, not produced from above, but achieved from below by means of human learning and skills development."⁶ As part of Joyce's professional struggle for emergence, what is being constantly dimensionalized in an on-going, transhistorical manner is the point of interaction between the centrifugally emergent process affecting the Enlightenment Novel, and thereby traditional narrative art, on the one hand, and, on the other, the centripetally anti-emergent process, a black-hole version of its traditional counterpart, in which modernist experimentation acquires relevance at every moment.

An analytic entry point into what has been suggested thus far would be the interdiscoursal echo found in the expression "Just God . . ."⁷ which appears in "A Painful Case," of Pope's claim, expressed in *An Essay on Criticism*, for professionally artistic "just[ness], the balance struck among all aspects of a work by which its capacity to strike a "common" note in its readers may be measured. It is in this sense that Pope reveals how the "test of art" is the result of a naturally "just" and balanced "Supply" of "Life, Force, and Beauty" (74, 68-69, 72).

Regarding "A Painful Case," the intensely constant simultaneity of narrative and its metaliterary counterpart, the metanarrative of an author's emergence, allows the reference to "Just God, what an end" (111), alluding to Mary Sinico's death as a release from further degradation due to her alcoholism, to be seen not only as the expression of James Duffy's cynical self-righteousness, but as the implied author's relief at being able to emerge beyond the kind of narrative art associated with explorations of the "wrecks on which civilization has been reared" (111-12).

"[W]ithout seeing or hearing" the "six-working-men . . . spitting often on the floor and sometimes dragging the sawdust over their spits with their heavy boots" (112), the implied author, the metaliterary, paradigmatic modernist novelist, emerges, "rear[s]" himself like a Nietzschean superman strengthened by, and yet freed from, the shackles of, contact with the documentary-based social novel. At the same time, paradoxically, upon understanding "Just God, what an end" as the equivalent of "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23.34), what comes to be dramatized is how the price to be paid for becoming a professional artist is the inevitable need to sacrifice what would be generally accepted as being in possession of a social conscience. This common sense of a shared tolerance, based on social solidarity, identifiable with Enlightenment values, and which operates as a fundamental undercurrent in Swift, Defoe, and Pope's art, coincides with the black-hole version of itself, i.e. with the modernist artist's apparently ruthless indifference, as represented by the socially maladjusted Duffy's heartlessness, to mainstream socially based fiction. Wheatley-Lovoy expresses the same tension between the social and the creative in terms of a Nietzschean tension between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, also expressible in terms of "a Dionysian model of history" which implies the constant interaction of the constructive and the destructive, what we wish to define as the originatory essentialism of "A Painful Case" and of Joyce's art in general as it struggles between narrative and poetics.⁸

Yet, as will be shown later, by also taking into account the asymmetrically cubist nature of Joyce's art, the black-hole simultaneous experience of the liberated, modernist artist consists of the equally asymmetrically simultaneous interaction of creatively imaginative 'jouissance' (Pound-like poetics), on the one hand, and the suffering inherent in the prototypical artist's guilt-complex (inferiority complex), the result of an inevitable distancing from society and its petty everyday concerns. The guilt complex emerges in Duffy's rhetorical questions: "He began to feel ill at ease. He asked himself what else could he have done. He could not have carried on a comedy of deception with her; he could not have lived with her openly. He had done what seemed to him best. How was he to blame?" (112). As will also be the subject of comment later, this analysis of the non-material interaction of narrative and metanarrative as a voice-based dimension of implicature, which this deconstructive reading of "A Painful Case" is allowing us to carry through, may be found to have a black-hole version of itself, expressible in terms of textuality's material-textual

deconstruction as writing itself, linked with the phenomena of "immediacy" and "the intermediary," according to Derrida:

Through the sequence of supplements a necessity is announced. That of an infinite chain ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer; the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of originary perception. Immediacy is derived. That all begins through the intermediary is what is indeed inconceivable to reason.⁹

There is a sense in which "A Painful Case" may be read from the perspective of the transition in narrative art within the Enlightenment from the proto-novel to the Novel, basically from Defoe's thesis novel to Austen's novels of manners. Pope's *Rape of the Lock* may also be included as a point of reference within such a perspective since a metaliterary reading of this same text allows Belinda to be seen as the equivalent of a new literary form (the proto-novel, destined to become the Novel) which is released from the saturation point reached in the creative manipulation of hyperbaton within the formal context of the neoclassical heroic couplet. In this sense, Pope's poetics were understandable as the very experience of immersion within the kind of initiatory shipwreck experience of a Gulliver, an experience which contributes to the enriching dimensionalization of the latter's existence and, from a metaliterary perspective, to the Novel's ever-dimensionalized evolution as a creative form.

An equivalent of Belinda's release is the proto-modernist novelist's emancipation within the metaliterary dimension of "A Painful Case," an experience tinged with melancholy since it constitutes a mirror-version of the optimistic joy which infuses its Enlightenment counterpart. For this reason, with regard to the story's penultimate paragraph, discursal intertextuality allows for a vision of a Paul Morel or a Stephen Dedalus-like figure emerging from within Lawrence-like modernist poetic prose characteristic of a novel such as *Sons and Lovers*:

When he gained the crest of the Magazine Hill he halted and looked along the river He gnawed the rectitude of his life; he felt that he had been outcast from life's feast No one wanted him; he was outcast from life's feast Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out of Kingsbridge Station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through the darkness, obstinately and laboriously. It passed slowly out of sight; but still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name. (113)

As a result of such calculatedly shadowy dimensionalization, with its basis in cubist displacement, affecting the textemes that go into the making of "A Painful Case," the employment of the term 'interdiscursual' rather than its stricter equivalent, 'intertextual,' would seem preferable at the moment of calibrating the emergence of the proto-modernist narrative artist within this same story's metaliterary dimension.

Moreover, a reading of this same process of emergence in cubist-like parallel with the emergence of the (proto-)Novel from within the multiple discourses that

went into its making during the Enlightenment, allows for Pope's perspective, in *An Essay on Criticism*, on the concept of what is "common," which implies a synthesis between "Good-Nature and Good-Sense," (225) to gain relevance in our deconstructive reading of the metaliterary dimension of "A Painful Case." The prototypical Enlightenment voice within Pope's poem, or in a proto-novel such as Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, precisely consists in that of a narrator who shares the 'common' humanistic, rational, universal values of Enlightenment tolerance. Bakhtin's reference to the operation in the Novel form of a "backdrop of the 'common language' of the impersonal going opinion," based on his concept of "heteroglossia," may also be seen as relevant in this respect.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the discourses of reportage and anthropological observation operating within Defoe's proto-novel, or thesis novel, implies avoidance of sentimental involvement in the plight of individual families, a phenomenon in the London of the 1665 Plague which implies a stage in the Novel's development prior to a Dickensian immersion in the exploration of the lives of the down-to-earth families typical of *David Copperfield* and *Hard Times*, forming part of the Novel form's treatment of the 'Great Human Comedy.' If such a technique of identification (accompanied by counter identifications of different degrees and kinds) contributes to the emergence of the technique of point-of-view in relation to the interaction of character and heterodiegetic voice within the evolution of the Novel form during the Enlightenment, the mirror-version or black-hole version of this process is emergence 'into' (rather than 'out of') modernist interiorization, or into what we have called the Pound-like dimension of "A Painful Case" as a paradigmatic text at the moment of coming to terms with the in-built, on-going, self-enhancing dimensionalized nature of Joyce's 'work[s]-in-progress.' Meanwhile, his language has the modernist potential of becoming "[un]common" when measured against that of the traditional novel inherited from the Enlightenment. As far as the analytic entry point into the Pound-like dimension of "A Painful Case" is concerned, reference may be made to the possible pun on Ezra Pound's name in the expression "pounding in his ears" which occurs in the sentences which reads as follows: "[James Duffy] turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears" (113).

However, as already stated, the process involved in the transition from an aesthetics of emergence 'out of' to one of emergence 'into,' while, on the other hand, being characterized by a kind of Pope-like equilibrium between 'just[ness]' and 'common[ality],' as far as the interaction of discourse types is concerned, may also be considered a process simultaneously characterized by the shadowy displaced manner in which Joyce's cubist-modernist aesthetics allows those same discourse types to merge with the narrative as they emerge out of it and beyond it. Such discourse types merge, re-merge and re-emerge at different moments, like the sylphs of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, within "A Painful Case" experienced not only as narrative text, but also as modernist ethos. Moreover, those features and elements which go into the creative

process are "[j]ust" off-centre, "[j]ust" out of focus, "[j]ust" suggestively present enough to exert their fascination. In this sense, the earlier reference to "[j]ust God" becomes the equivalent of a prayer of thanksgiving made by the emerging prototypical modernist artist who senses the fruits of his powers.

That such exquisiteness might lead to accusations of Pope-like "foppishness" against him, the deconstructed version of that same artist's guilt complex regarding his heartless distancing from the social world, as already indicated, also needs to be taken into account. This is because it highlights the potential for satire that the Pound-like black-hole of textual experimentation manifests fully by transforming the encyclopaedic quality of the interdiscoursal mode of narrative into a black-hole version of itself, i.e. into intense deconstruction, or even textual dismantling. In this sense, it is relevant to recall how Hugh Witemeyer reminds us of Pound's belief in the conception of poetry being more intense than the reception of an impression.¹¹ Thus, encyclopaedic scope emerges into hitherto unimagined intensity as the tradition of satire with its undermining function, which reaches its zenith in the poetics of the Enlightenment, becomes the equivalent of the questioning of limits with regard to modernist 'jouissance'-as-experimentation on the part of the emerging proto-modernist implied author within "A Painful Case." It is in this context of the aesthetics of interactive emergence, implying reverent respect for the tradition of the Novel as a model of emancipatory aesthetics, that we should understand the pixelized intensity of the deconstructive analysis of this story's textuality as a dimensionalized (black-hole) version of that same emancipatory tendency within the Enlightenment.

The textemes with a satirical base which are off-stagedly ever-present, in the manner of a cubist equivalent of Pope's sylphs, allowing for the merging of traditional narrative and modernist experimentation, include the fluid interaction of Chaucer-like techniques of satirical portraiture, fused with Dickensian-like references to character foibles and obsessions, in the description of James Duffy in the story's second paragraph:

He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances. He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense. He never gave alms to beggars and walked firmly, carrying a stout hazel. (104)

Not only is the story's protagonist represented through an amalgam of features paradigmatically linked with comically sinister types such as a Pecksniff, a Bumble, a Jagger, or a Bounderby who "would rob his [own] bank" (105), but also through displaced synecdochical textemes that, as in the case of the reference to "the disused distillery" (103) allow for the emergence of the identification of his loneliness with that of a Miss Havisham-like figure. Meanwhile, this incipient insistence on the unsavouriness inherent in the mixture of the masculine and the feminine within Duffy's personality, becomes even more acute in the texteme that highlights the

kind of potential for alternative ways of existence associated, intertextually in this case, with the bottles of perfume on a Belinda's dressing table in a poem like *Rape of the Lock*: "On lifting lid of the desk a faint fragrance escaped" (104). The function of such textemes is to set up an ironic contrast with others such as the Gaskell-like description of Duffy's bare "uncarpeted room" (103) or the reference to how "his life rolled out evenly – an adventureless tale" (105), thereby emphasizing the potential for the exploration of the 'darker side' of the protagonist's schizophrenic nature.

Thus, in an invertedly metonymic way, a cubist way we might say, the implied author's identification with Enlightenment aesthetics occurs as a result of the merging of that same cultural period's exploration of satire, in the treatment of the personality of James Duffy, with the displacement of the element of adventure inherent in the picaresque and travel-writing genres of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the cubist nature of that same displacement suggests that such genres acquired thereby a renewed modernist function as indicators of the exploration of the zone of the human unconscious. Moreover, the potential for the coming together of the Enlightenment scope for satire, on the one hand, modernist interiorization, on the other, is also the result of how the undermining function inherent in satire itself is de-intensified in the case of the implied author's exploration of his prose's potential for experiment within the tradition of narrative art. This process of de-intensification gives way to professionally-based calibrations, necessary at the early stage in a novelist's development, which allow the implied author to test out his own capacity to adapt the tradition of discourse types to his own needs, a further example of Bakhtin's concept of "heteroglossia."

To avoid excessive exemplification, reference can be made to the suggestive, off-centred fusing of the styles of George Eliot and Jane Austen, with a hint of Dickens (see the reference to "swoon . . . pupil . . . iris"), in the description of James Duffy's first encounter with Mary Sinico and her daughter:

He took the remark as an invitation to talk. He was surprised that she seemed so little awkward. While they talked he tried to fix her permanently in his memory. When he learned that the young girl beside her was her daughter he judged her to be a year or so younger than himself. Her face, which must have been handsome, had remained intelligent. It was an oval face with strongly marked features. The eyes were very dark blue and steady. Their gaze began with a defiant note but was confused by what seemed a deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris, revealing for an instant a temperament of great sensibility. The pupil reasserted itself quickly, this half-disclosed nature fell again under the reign of prudence. (105)

Similarly, the process of probing and testing out also takes place within the liminal interaction of the kind of prose typified in D.H. Lawrence's novels and that found in 'Mills-and-Boon'-like magazine short stories:

He went often to her little cottage . . . Little by little, as their thoughts entangled, they spoke of subjects less remote . . . The dark discreet room, their isolation, the music that still vibrated

in their ears united them. This union exalted him, wore away the rough edges of his character, emotionalised his mental life . . . [H]e heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognised as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness. (107)

Finally, reference may be made to the off-centred, cubist-like fusion of the kind of prose style identifiable with Henry James and D.H. Lawrence in the following example: "He felt that they were hard-featured realists and that they resented an exactitude which was the product of a leisure not within their reach. No social revolution, he told her, would be likely to strike Dublin for some centuries" (107).

Theoretically speaking, this final phrase functions as an instance of metaliterary irony, given the simultaneity of the Novel form inherited from the Enlightenment and the proto-modernist novel operating within "A Painful Case." It is the intensification of the kind of narrative-based experimentalism which has already been mentioned and exemplified that allows for the phenomenon of emergence 'out of' multiple discourse types associated with the Enlightenment and with the Novel tradition in general to become simultaneous with an emerging 'into' the intense aesthetics of modernist experimentalism which becomes a black-hole inversion of the 'fin de siècle' aestheticism that still operates within the shadowy, intriguing nature of the presence of discourse types in Joyce's narrative art, as practised in this story, even though such impressionist(ic) shadowiness may also be viewed from the perspective of overlapping cubist planes and laminas.

What we would wish to argue here is that a deconstructive reading of the textuality of "A Painful Case," as opposed to a reading of its narrative style, constitutes an analytic transition which implies reading the story as a paradigmatic exploration on the part of an implied author of 'his' / 'a potential novelist's' capacity to operate within the experimental medium of the modernist novel. Thus, as far as the proto-modernist novel is concerned, the subtly suggestive shadowiness that characterizes the interaction within the story of Impressionism and Cubism as a key feature in the professionally orientated exercise of calibration of discourse types within narrative styles, the equivalent of Pope's concept of "just[ness]," emerges 'into' the intensively deconstructive tendency operating within textuality, understood as the anti-dimension wherein poetic creativity holds sway. As will be shown later, such experimentalism, potentially typographical in nature, is also identifiable with, as John Rocco reminds us, "the verbal games of the Dadaists as the direct precursor to Picasso's newspaper puns."¹²

Keeping in mind the pictorial parallel already established, such intense creativity, which would be exemplified below from a deconstructive perspective, allows us to realize that the Jackson Pollock-type aesthetics also at work in the story's textuality, signals the inherent presence of post-modernity within the very interaction of proto-modernist novels and modernist novels as represented by the mutual emergence of narrative style and poetic virtuosity 'out of' and 'into' one another that pervades "A Painful Case." It is for this reason that the choice of the story as a starting point for an analysis of Joyce's art is justified. This is because, in terms of the Kant-like

dimensionalizing nature of these authors' 'work[s]-in-progress,' it constitutes an 'omphalos' wherein a professional concern for both the narrative tradition and for experimental creativity coincides with a Pope-like attempt at balancing the multidirectional tendencies at work within this text as a generic crux involving the emergence 'into' and 'out of' one another of the Enlightenment novel, the proto-modernist novel, the modernist novel, and the post-modernist novel.

Thus, the story in question constitutes a paradigmatic example of the initiatory crux at the centre of Joyce's individual art while it is the ever-enhanced dimensionalization of that same crux that also constitutes the trans-historical uniqueness of that same art. By Georges Poulet's definition of the "moment" in the period of the Enlightenment, more light may be shed here upon the use made of the term 'crux': "It is the greatness of the eighteenth century to have conceived the prime moment of consciousness as a generating moment and generative not only of other moments but also of a self which takes shape by and through the means of these very moments."¹³ In terms of the metaliterary basis of our analysis, Poulet's description of the generation of the individual has its parallel in that of the paradigmatic individual artist, a figure which traverses and is taken up 'into' the "moment" as an on-going stage (a dimensionalized 'crux') within his / her, as well as culture's dimensionalization. It is precisely this phenomenon of dimensionalization which allows for the transformation of Joyce's modernist individualism into trans-historical uniqueness. "A Painful Case" is also unique in giving the reader access to the centrifugal-centripetal crux somewhere at the centre of Joyce's art, a phenomenon which is continuously dimensionalized throughout his work.

It is the centripetal poetic-modernist way of dimensionalization that may be analyzed by exploring the texture of the very writing which goes into the making of "A Painful Case." In the case of the story's opening sentence, its graphic dimension as writing interacts with the etymology and the semantics of its language while, in turn, these interact with the chemistry of its phonetics and phonology giving rise to a virtuoso literary performance. What also emerges from a deconstructive reading of "A Painful Case" is an awareness of this same performance's tragicomic nature, both with regard to the devastating satirical treatment of the story's protagonist, Mr. James Duffy, and to the metaliterary implication of the story as a function of the evolution or the dimensionalization of Joyce's self-conscious art. The term 'performance' employed a moment ago would seem apt since what is heard deconstructively within the story's opening sentence is the discourse of a circus ringmaster's declaimed introduction of, in this case, a cross between a strongman, "Mr. Ja[]," and a clown, "[M]ess[y] Duff[]," as the next act. The foppish nature of the clown as muddler ("mes[s]er") maybe associated with the French phonological-phonetic patterning of "Mess[ieur] Duff[e]" caught as it emerges out of "[]mess Duffy." This oxymoronic hybrid of the strongman and the foppish, clownish meddler not only allows for the emergence of acute satirical vein running through the

characterization of the morally rigid, intolerantly misanthropic James Duffy, whose hypocritical moral strength is undermined by suggestions of his possible impotency and possible homosexual leanings, but also allows for the emergence of the multiple cultural sememes that act as keys to the ventilating of the text. This process acts as a creative counterpoint to the solipsistic introversion characteristic of the story's protagonist in psychological terms.

The opening sentence reads thus: "Mr. James Duffy lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious" (103). While inversely proportional emergence of languages other than English, as already exemplified above, contributes to the sexualization of the text's lexical component, "lived in Chapelizod" becoming "liv[i]d [i,a]z(s)od[, in c]hapel (French: chappel)," the dynamics of the deconstructed aesthetics of the intermediary are also found to be multidirectional, as indeed they are in an even more intense (dimensionalized) way in Joyce's 'works' as a whole understood as the equivalent of the Jackson Pollock paintings to which reference has already been made. In this same multidirectional sense, as far as the text's graphemic dimension is concerned, letters are potentially changing position, number or case size, or are being both phonetically and physically transformed. Thus, the implicit reduction of "[I]" to "i" is a further sign of how the text is constantly being sexualized or may even be felt to be an actual living ("liv[i]d") being in its own right. As such, it becomes the equivalent of the experience involved in a masturbatory fantasy, a more dimensionalized (even more intriguingly creative) version of which will appear in *Ulysses*. In fact, as we hope will be revealed as this reading of "A Painful Case" by a non-Joycean develops, this textual equivalent of masturbatory activity as a constant, which reaches saturation point, constitutes the metaliterary record, a paradigmatic 'case' in point (at every point or punctum on the textual surface, in fact) of the emergence of a masterly modernist (dimensionalized into 'universal') genius of letters.

This creative expansiveness has its psychological equivalent, in terms of the cruelly satirical characterization of the story's protagonist as living in an incessant state of misanthropic paranoia and obsessive solipsism in which sexual and social ("as far as possible away from . . .") impotency become even more obsessively undermining, compensated for by existence itself becoming a lewd masturbatory fantasy.

Basing ourselves on the kind of deconstructive reading suggested by Derrida's "The Double Bottom of the Plupresent,"¹⁴ the operation of the aesthetics of the intermediary in the opening sentence reveals how graphemically the autonomy of the letter "y," potentially characteristic of all the letters, especially when imagined in terms of the text's already mentioned semantic and lexical sexualization, endows it with the status of graffiti, while allowing it to emerge as an obscene scrawl depicting sexual penetration. At the same time, the graphemic configuration corresponding to the capital "M" of "Mr." suggests the legs-akimbo, crouched position which, given

the potential intermediary equivalence between "Chapelizod" and ["temple of sodomy"], is suggestive of anal penetration. Keeping in mind the graphemic emphasis on the diminished capital "I," reinforced by aberrant forms of it in the "r" in "Mr." or the "z," the "h" and the "t" that appear within other lexical items, together with the "y" already indicated, the texture of writing itself participates in the portrayal of James Duffy's psyche in terms of phallically based sexual diminishment. It begins to become clear that this aberrant phallic "I," associated with the practice of anal penetration, involved besides in what would be the impossible practice of anal self-penetration, as suggested by the intermediary transformation of "city" into "[sit I (upon my own phallus)]" and "citizen" into "[sit I (upon myself meditating like a Zen Buddha)]," is, in the end (innuendos abound even in the analytic language used to describe this text) involved in an incessant masturbatory act. Moreover, as already indicated, it is the incessant liberation of the linguistic sign that takes place in this text, as a metonymically representative cipher of Joyce's work as a whole, that acts as an index of the obsessively intolerant rigidity of James Duffy's (and Dublin's) outlook on life.

In the case of the transformational liberation of the linguistic and graphemic signs "city" and "citizen," that same liberation involves ellipsis. Paraphrasing Lacan's liberating dictum "that signifiers are signifiers for other signifiers" acts as a reminder with regard to this text that the aesthetics of the intermediary is also constituted by the potentialization of the elliptical since—again following Lacan—all signifiers are richly empty in terms of "error." Indeed, keeping this in mind allows for a deconstructive completion of elliptical content.¹⁵ This same process of discourse projection evolves in an inevitably simultaneous way with presence of semantic, connotative alternatives, such as the appearance of bawdy puns in one of the possible transformed intermediary versions of "as far as," in the story's opening sentence. Within the discourse of cruel taunting typical of children the phrase becomes: "[Look at Duffy, the Duffer, a[r]se(hole/filler) far[ter,] a[r]s(filler)]." At the same time, the depth of James Duffy's tragic misery may be calibrated inversely by the degree of potentialization inherent in the functioning of the aesthetics of the intermediary, as exemplified by "possible" being transformed into the discourse of indignation constituted by the reply to the aforementioned taunting: "[How can it be] possible [that such scum/uneducated young people can exist?]."

Simultaneously, as far as the psychology of James Duffy is concerned, the potential of interlingual phonetics, as allowing for the transformation of "possible" into its French equivalent, highlights how 'Frenchness,' in the same way as 'the Germanic' from the standpoint of cultural cliché and prejudice, acts as an index of the unsavoury and the lascivious regarding sexual activity. In turn, what is constituted is a metonymic representation of the obsessively misanthropic rejection of any alternative to Dublin's smallmindedness. For this reason, masturbatory immolation becomes the equivalent of the protagonist's defence mechanism or survival mechanism, while this is a given

ironic confirmation of how the prototypical discourse of the epitaph, interfused with that of the obituary, also emerges out of the story's opening sentence in as shadowy, intriguing a way, as already indicated. Moreover, as already stated, this living death being experienced by the narrative's protagonist, coexists with the vibrant, carefree 'joie du vie' that characterizes the creativity of the prose, the dimensionalized extent of which emerges as a result of a deconstructive reading of it. At the same time, it is necessary to keep in mind how the stroboscopic interaction between the psychology of character and the metaliterary value system of the text's aesthetics comes to be projected upon the 'figure' of the implied narrator, equally interactive with that of the implied author, given the automatically (and stroboscopically) intermediary nature of the text as medium. This same interaction may be confirmed by the discourse chain, beginning at "to live," and concluding at the point where the first sentence ends, which may be considered an instance of free indirect speech.

Meanwhile, it is precisely the performative, illocutionary force of different kinds of enunciated language, which freely interact within the chain in question as a whole, that contributes to the synthesis of the satirizable (the comic) and the pitiable (the tragic) that goes into the making of Mr. James Duffy as a literary character. His haughtiness is the result of the coincidence in this chain of the half-heard confusion of discourses typical of a political speeches, declarations of rights, statements of the kind made by political exiles entering countries as immigrants (a prototypical Joycean theme), and press interviews, while his self-pity may be gleaned from the interweaving within the chain of the already mentioned discourses of epitaph and obituary with that of the language of last wills and testaments.

A deconstructive reading of Joyce's creativity in this story, revealing how intensely profound and intriguingly fascinating it really is, not only tunes into the intertextual emergence of types of discourse, but also to the variety of voice representation and dramatization of attitude that sustains it. In this sense, together with basic transformations, quasi translations and paraphrases are sensed as emerging simultaneously within that very process of emergence, graphemic dynamics also constituting a further and simultaneous process of emergence-as-dimensionalization (interiorization).

While recognizing the danger involved in a theoretically based line of criticism, let it suffice to say that the analytic equivalent of the pixelization of a text which a deconstructive approach allows for contributes to our awareness of the creative scope, depth and intensity of a text and, in this case, of the extent of the intriguing fascination exerted by Joyce's texts.

It is precisely in terms of the phenomena of extent, depth and intensity that textual pixelization may be understood since, theoretically at least, it makes for the deconstruction of Derrida's concepts of "mimemes, icons, simulacra" or, in other words, the potential for the deconstruction of Deconstructionism itself.¹⁶ This brings us to one of the central concerns of our reading of "A Painful Case," which is that

now more than ever, now being the Digital Age, its extent, scope, depth and intensity may be explored. Keeping in mind Jean François Lyotard's (1979) cultural theory concerning the local having replaced the macro, local narratives having replaced metanarratives ('grand récits'), as a characteristic of the 'postmodern condition,' what we would call the 'pixelization' of the local may be a sign of how the Digital Age is to take us beyond the 'postmodern condition,' paradoxically in terms of a process of black-hole anti-dimensionalization, a kind of modernist process of interiorization as the equivalent of cultural rewind,¹⁷ giving rise to a more local and cognitive version of Derrida's "repetition" as "the possibility of becoming-perceptible-to the senses."¹⁸

Based on Lyotard, Fitzhugh and Leckie link "local environment" with cognitive processes, indicating that "cognition is de-centred and that distinctions between mind, body, and world need to be abandoned." By "reject[ing] the idea that we cognize only in language, [and by] accept[ing that] language itself develop[s] at least partly from the biological, trans-temporal . . . body," these anthropological historians "accept at least some species-level cognitive traits[, a point which recalls a Kant-like view of history, as indicated above] that make actions and attitudes amenable to analysis."¹⁹

In the end, and without in the least smacking of conservatism, de-dimensionalization, involving, in the case of critical analysis, a re-reading of texts which may be considered the equivalent of their pixelization, offers the possibility of exploring the extent, depth, scope, intensity of these same texts so as to re-confirm what has come to be taken for granted regarding the creative virtuosity of their writers, Joyce being a case in point.

The sylph-like mobility of the ciphers of Joyce's writing, (the equivalent of modernist dance, a discourse that plays such a fundamental role in Joyce's textual aesthetics) as a reaction against realist-naturalist monumentalism, already smacks of emergence as an apparent / imaginative new beginning, the equivalent of the emergence of the Enlightenment Novel, a beginning-as-anti-emergence (i.e. as a cognitive rewind of modernist interiorization) which allows the ciphers of Joyce's writing 'per se' to take on a runic (i.e. historical) quality.

As far as a reading of Joyce's "A Painful Case" is concerned, if the degree of self-conscious deconstruction of a Pope or a Swift as prototypical Enlightenment writers, even of Joyce himself, is calibrated, the deconstruction of that very process of deconstruction is required in order to gauge the extent, depth, scope and intensity of Joyce's artistic achievement, the Kantian degree of effort involved in it which, as we are trying to argue here, may be understood from the perspective of its capacity to contribute to the slowing down of postmodernity's hyper self-perpetuation, while also making possible the re-experiencing (and possible re-alignment?) of both modernist and Enlightenment aesthetics in an ever-increasingly fruitful way.

The interaction of the metaliterary and mythic codes operating within "A Painful Case" allows it to be understood as a kind of rite of initiation, a baptism (of fire),

or an engendering which, given the parallelism between the text's representability in terms of a ceaseless masturbatory act, implies the constant presence of initiation-as-emergence, as the ever-dimensionalized awareness of the difficult, frustrating nature of literary creativity, and of the degree of social, personal and human sacrifice it involves. Thus, as an idealistic baptismal rite, keeping in mind the in-built principle of hard-won maturity inherent to it, the process of the professionalization of the figure of the novelist which the text projects paradigmatically also involves that same figure's undermining of itself from a human perspective, a factor that also contributes to the projection of the prototypical identity of the artist as a creative phenomenon in his own right. In that sense, the way in which the professionalization of the artist-novelist involves the complete recognition of art on its own terms, which includes the artistically-creative right to be wrong as a human being, to fail as a human being (or seemingly, creatively so at least), reminds us of how "A Painful Case" may also be considered as a manifestation of the type of the discourse associated with Declarations of Rights and Constitutions so characteristic of the Enlightenment. However, here, what emerges is their text-specific satirical counterpart in the misanthropic, intolerant, haughty, absolutist self-centredness of Mr. James Duffy who, as the potential translatability of "from the city" suggests with regard to the story's opening sentence, also issues his ex-cathedra pronouncements "urbi et orbe" (103).

Similarly the encyclopaedic facet of such discourses brings to the fore the "complete words['] worth" (103), the absolutely, all-encompassing, all-demanding / self-demanding immersion of the aspiring, emergent prototypical modernist artist-novelist in writing as creative act and as physical texture (experience) or medium. Part of such texture manifests itself in what Derek Attridge has denominated the "portmanteaux aesthetics" not only of *Finnegans Wake*, as he suggests, but also of Joyce's works-as-work, as this reading is re-emphasizing.²⁰ Thus etymologically speaking, "worth" within "Wordsworth" ("Words[']worth" is cognate with the Latin verb, "vereri" which gives rise to "revere" in English), their etymological interaction also contributing to highlighting the narcissistic paranoia of James Duffy, given its echo in the lexical item "river" in the story's second sentence within the noun phrase "the shallow river."

Yet, ironically, in metaliterary terms, the psychological dejection of the story's protagonist comes to be constantly coincidental and simultaneous with the sheer creative freedom that goes into his caustically satirical portrayal as the haughty, hypocritical, misanthropic, tragic James Duff. Creativity, the medium of the implied narrator-protagonist, is interactively bridged through the satirical function of the discourse of sadomasochism. It is deconstructive reading of the text that allows the full impact of the function of that same discourse's presence to emerge.

The constant presence of sadomasochistic discourse as sheer enactment acts as a metonymically representative index of the existential claustrophobia of hypocrisy and provincial smallmindedness of the Dublin of the first years of the twentieth

century, as commonly observed by experts on Joyce's pronouncements in this regard, but also as an index of the creative effort the author himself was prepared to undertake in order to transcend such a claustrophobic milieu. In that sense "A Painful Case" represents, we would argue, the first truly mature awareness on the part of its author, of the personal human cost involved in such a professional undertaking. In this sense, it is worth underlining Wheatley-Lovoy's comment on how James Duffy and Gabriel Conroy "most closely resemble the adult Joyce."²¹

Deconstruction through pixelization, therefore, allows us to realize the extent, intensity and scope of the suffering implied in that immersion in professionalization, which, in the end, is constituted by a dimensionalized furtherance / enhancement / intensification of the same process as experienced by the emergent professional novelists of the Enlightenment.

It is precisely the cultural code operating within the text that sheds light on the modernist moment as the enhanced intensification of the milieu of the Enlightenment, while that same intensification is indexed through the simultaneity of sadomasochistic discourse and the potential for radical textual experimentation, such coincidental aesthetics also acting as an index of the metaliterary angst that characterizes the risk-taking involved in the implied (modernist) author's (artist's) predicament, on the one hand, and of postmodernity on the other hand, that the implied reader's consciousness of how dimensionalization, as a measure of cultural progress inherited from the Enlightenment, is also, therefore, inherent to Modernism's anti-potential to become an enhanced version of itself (i.e. postmodernity).

Meanwhile the possibility of beginning to gauge and calibrate the agonizingly complex multiplicity that characterizes the minutiae of the dimensionalization of progressive interiorization itself emerges in the text's radically formal enactment of the encyclopaedic exploration and representation of sadomasochistic masturbatory fantasies, the satirical function of which is to deconstruct, in an exemplary fashion, the intolerance (portrayed in James Duffy) as an extremist Progress-inhibiting 'modus operandi.' In this way, as a metacultural sememe weaving itself through "A Painful Case," the metadiscourse of the Enlightenment constitutes the essence of the text's emergent aesthetics.

As already stated with regard to "A Painful Case," the act of reading as sadomasochistic experience implies manipulating and torturing the text itself as a source (victim) for aesthetic pleasure, as an inexhaustible range of sadomasochistic tableaux emerge from it, many of them based on clichéd genres and irrational prejudices. The following example may be cited: "In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for *Bile Beans* had been posted on to the first sheet" (103-104). As already indicated above, the text's graphemic components allow for the synthesis of the acrobatics of ciphers, the aesthetic function of which contributes to its immersion in the circus-carnavalesque motif, typical of the French Symbolists and, at the same time, of the

slapstick of the silent movies, while, in psychological terms also allowing for the awareness of the sordidness associated with the graffiti on the walls of public conveniences. Graphemically the preposition "In," besides representing a failed erection, enacts the acrobatic tumbling into "sheets," the latter word, as a pun, also manifesting itself phonetically as "[shits]" thereby linking with the pun emerging out of interaction of "sent[]" within "sentence" and "s[c]ent."

As a counterpoint to coprophilic abjection, marked by derisive homoerotic overtones, what also emerges is the fantasizing of a tableau of bondage, characterized by clichéd features of exotic Orientalism which interact with the literary discourse of the nineteenth-century aesthetes and the 'Persian-Letter' travel-writing tradition of the Enlightenment, besides hazily and suggestively alluding to Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

Such tantalizing suggestiveness also characterizes the function of ellipsis within deconstructed versions of stretches of text, as already indicated above, since such a rhetorical device constitutes a further enactment of the degree of guilt and risk associated with such an analytic-interpretative modus operandi. Thus, given the fundamental "portmanteau(x) aesthetics" at work in the text, as a result of splitting the noun "sentence" syllabically, a bondage dialogue emerges between the "I" of the text and clichéd figures within masturbatory fantasy, understood as sadomasochistic aesthetics, such as a Moroccan slave / toy-boy called "[W]as[i]" ("[was i]nscribed") or a Mark-Anthony type, synechdochically identified as "[R]om[e]" ("from[e]"). Simultaneously the "/n/" and the "/d/" ("/-ed/") of "inscribed," together with the "/f/" of "from," emerge as sounds associated with masturbatory / defecatory effort, as well as graphemically emerging as the hieroglyphically graffiti-like manifestation of the pierced penis, "/f-/" in "from," the failing flop of the phallus, "/-n-/" in "inscribed," and gender-based sexual failure in the incomplete cock-and-balls ideogram represented by the letter / phoneme "/-d/" in "inscribed" (db).

The latter case of the "d," within the text's graphemic component, is insistently present, as in "old" in the phrase "in an old sombre house" in the second sentence of the story where, as a sign of weakness, it breaks up the logical sexual sequencing of "o," as copulatory point of entry, and "l" as phallus. The sentence in the text reads thus: "He lived in an old sombre house and from his windows he could look into the disused distillery or upwoods along the shallow river on which Dublin is built" (103).

Similarly, the isolation of the small-case "i" at moments when deconstruction takes place, may be interpreted as instances of anticipation, catalytic stimuli within the masturbatory process, suggesting thereby precocious ejaculation. The incomplete cock-and-balls ideogram is linked with the elliptical lexical manifestation of "an[us]" in "and" with regard to the sentence ("In these sheets . . .") being analyzed here. Moreover, this same runic essentialism, is the equivalent of the sheer intensity of psychological fantasy, on the one hand, and the unrelenting sacrificial effort inherent in the creature process as transmitted through this "[p]ainful [c]ase" understood

as metaliterary exemplary discourse characteristic of the proto-modernist Novel. Deconstructively this same sentence ("In these sheets . . .") yields "ti[e] me to [whatever you deem fit,] ti[e] me [before whipping me]." Also, besides being linked to ellipsis, the preposition "to" may be etymologically linked to the essence of disruption and disjointedness, linked therefore with the idea of violence, in its all-enduring lexical manifestation as a verb prefix, carrying those very meanings, operating within early Germanic languages.

Portmanteau-like, graphemically based aesthetics also allow for paraphrasing, which also includes hyperbaton, "Ti[e]me[!] [A]n[us]" (= What an asshole I am! Doesn't that encourage you in your ill-treatment of me?) "-d" (I'm sexually pathetic! = Incomplete cock-and-balls graffiti). In terms of bondage, the filling out of the ellipsis associated with "iron-" in "ironical" is enhanced through the dramatics of paraphrasing and graphemic hieroglyphics: "[I]n [my / your] an[us] is like being clapped in] iron[s!]" ("i" = ejaculatory spasm; "c" = another cipher of incompleteness, in this case with regard to points of sexual entry in the female-male / male-female). The formative morphology of the suffix "-ical," linkable to both adjective and adverbs, confirms this trans-sexual mix. In a simultaneously and intensively implicit way, given that graphemic mobility constitutes a further manifestation of the multidirectional character of textual dimensionalization, "i" within "ironical" may emerge insidiously in the name of "[A]l[i]" as another vocative, recalling "[W]as[i]" within the tradition of Persian-Oriental exoticism. At the same time, such eroticism, based on prejudices, imperialistic stereotyping, the equivalent of Dublin's provincial smallmindedness, as well as being based on the sexual association of furriness, fleshy ooziness and imprisonment, all of which are connotatively present in "-cal" (within "ironical"), also a lexical entity in its own right, as a result of its interlinguistic bridging with Romance languages, confirms this same exposure of cliché, having virtuoso creativity as its counterpoint and counterpoise at each instance (pixel) of textuality.

The identification of the exotic and the erotic with non-English languages emerges in the enticing transposition of "[-]cal" in "C/Ka[r]l," especially if the Irish brogue of the speaker within the bondage dialogue is taken into consideration at this point (as at many other points): "[Chain I (= me) in] iron[s, C]a[r]l [!] Mo[re] me[a]n[i]t!." in this same sense, the Frenchness, and therefore eroticism, inherent in "moment," is metonymically transposable into any expression of masochistic urge while the hypothetical tense change from "me[a]nt" to "me[a]n []" underlines the deconstructed reading of the narrative as free discourse, a further indication of intensity. At the same time, intensity manifests itself as blurring so that "nt" at the closure of "moment" may not only be sensed as a grunt or gulp of sadomasochistic pleasure but also as a burp-hiccough within the monologue of a drunken man. James Duffy as the unloved solitary who, like many a Dubliner, is prone to drowning his sorrows, not only through the consumption of alcohol but also through insistent masturbation or, at least, impure thoughts. It is in this latter sense, one of many

as already indicated, that the fricatives of the story's opening sentence (in words such as "wished," "possible," "city," "citizen," "pretentious") may be interpreted. The blurring of the effects of alcohol and those of masturbation, the latter activity itself being associated with blindness in popular lore, is exemplified in the deconstructive transposition of the title of one of the books of James Duffy's shelf. Thus "Maynooth Catechism" becomes "[Thou m]ay[] no[o]t ("h" = drunkard's hiccough) / [should not] drink / masturbate!" "[K]ate, (bisexual identity also being a factor here), gi'us / a man a kiss[, goon wi'y]."

Blurring of vision, linked with seeing double in the punning references to "Dublin" in this story and in others, the equivalent of slurring in speech as indicated by the transformation "[-]chism" undergoes, allows for the emergence of a doubly aberrant version of the mythic code operating in the story, manifested in the initiatory ritual of baptism by fire or through survival in water, operating in the form of the shipwreck in Enlightenment works such as *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Roderick Random*.

A deconstructive reading of "A Painful Case" allows an awareness to emerge of how James Duffy's besottedly (baptismal, masturbatory) paranoid state of mind interacts with Swift-like explorations of the essentially scatological depths of the human psyche. As a dimensionalized re-enactment of the process involved in the consolidation of Enlightenment aesthetics, the immersion of Joyce's short story in the modernist mode of writing is due to the Sterne-like 'jouissance' which is found "[do]ublin[g]," 'dubbing' and 'lining,' i.e. ennobling, Joyce's discourse as the links in creative terms with knighthood and ermine present in these former verbs suggest. Thus, his prose is made Augustan and, at the same time, worthy of literary tradition, that of the novel by, ironically, distancing it from Romance or, in the case of the modernist novel, from Victorian realism.

In the matter of the hybrid interaction of Augustan literary monumentalism, on the one hand, and Enlightenment 'jouissance' and tolerant open-mindedness, often disguised as rabid, scandalous satire, Pope is enigmatically present in the story's title and in the surname "Duffy" which may be linked, with *The Dunciad* given the status of "Duffer" and "dunce" as cognates of one another.

At the same time, "Painful" is a punningly portmanteau-like echo of Pope's reference to critics as "plain fools" in his *Essay on Criticism*, his way of underlining the pitfalls involved in acts of interpretation, the kind of pitfalls encountered by the prying deconstructive critic in the "Case" of Joyce's short story, that critic as one who 'pixelizes' texts and who is, therefore, a "pretentious" 'Duns'-Scotus kind of hair splitter. While all such rhetorical devices are asymmetrically interactive, as if to confirm the overall workings of a cubist-modernist aesthetics as the medium within which the text evolves, etymological overlapping, interlinguistic punning, semantic multiplicity, together with sexual innuendo, merge in the story's title. Thus, the title represents the kind of discourse which manifests itself as an enhanced, cruder,

more explicit version of the kind of headline / heading found in an eighteenth-century scandal sheet or record of Law-Court Proceedings within the 'yellow-press' tradition. An early meaning of "duffer" as a hawker of women's clothes also acts as a reminder of how the story's narrative, as coincidental with the incessant enactment of sadomasochistic masturbatory fantasies, has its basis in gender transgression. Thus, keeping in mind the anatomical meaning of "[c]ase," together with polyglot puns on the word "penis," the title, "A Painful Case" becomes "A Foreskin Overflowing with Sperm." It is in this more aberrant sense, that of being besotted with masturbatory sperm, that allows for the emergence of a rabidly scathing satirical version of the Enlightenment ritual of baptism and renovation / purification. Trial by water, or by shipwreck in its Enlightenment version, becomes immersion in masturbatory sperm (dregs of the human psyche).

Keeping in mind that "[p]ain[]" may also be considered a portmanteau pun on "P/pan," the paranoid intensity of James Duffy's existence as the equivalent of sadomasochistic fantasy, comically transforms masturbation into a travesty of the Greek mythological flute player's musical activity, while also making it the equivalent of the story's essentially intense creativity 'per se.'

Moreover as a simultaneous creativity the agonies, qualms and pleasures that characterize the 'activity' of the deconstructive, hair-splitting 'pixelizer' of texts may also be considered the result of his / her involvement in the materiality of writing itself wherein everything is encyclopaedically spermed.

In "A Painful Case" we read: "Writing materials were always on the desk." As is suggested by the portmanteau-like pun on "writ[h]ing" detectable in "writing," and by the euphemistic value which may be assigned to "materials," writing-as-textuality acts as the equivalent of the activity of spermatozoons, an echo, in terms of Enlightenment encyclopaedism, of the capacity for multiplicity inherent in Sterne's 'homunculus.' The milieu of advances in microscopic science within the modernist period, emerges in an awareness of the presence of activities of division and splitting as affecting the spermatozoids indicated by the interaction of "des-," within "desk," and its alternative is "dis-" when recognized as a common prefix. As indicated above, a deconstructive reading of the text allows for the potential isolation or, as indicated earlier, delay of the final consonant in words as the enactment of the drunkard's hiccough-burp following his efforts at pronouncing them clearly. It is precisely through the drunkard's slurring that the word "death" emerges out of "desk" as an index of James Duffy's tragedy. Thus the "writ[h]ing material [vials]" become the glasses of alcoholic beverage that swoon before his eyes and, again spoken with an Irish brogue, "Il be the [death] o'me (him)." Simultaneously, consideration may also be given to the projection of the protagonist's Oedipus complex, as suggested by the emergence of the term "mater" within "materials." Deconstructed options for "-ials" come to be marked by ellipsis in terms of the appearance of the cipher "v" so as to give rise to the word "vials" which, given the intriguing presence of a

Jekyll-and-Hyde type of discourse that operates intertextually within the story, confirms the psychological complexes, of sundry origin, that are making the protagonist's life a misery. This same psychic exhaustion is suggested by the transformation of "were" into "weary," due once more to the potential operativity of the Irish brogue within the text's textuality. As far as the way in which transformative aesthetics affect the adverb "always," that which is given rise to acts as an indication of the state of degradation being experienced at every moment by James Duffy, a phenomenon which, as indicated above, has its metaliterary equivalent in the risk-taking that accompanies creative insinuation, on the one hand, and its critical deconstruction, on the other.

Ellipsis combined with graphemic and phonetic instability manifest themselves in the dance of letters before the eyes of the protagonist for whom the drowning of one's sorrows is equated with wallowing in self-concern, while simultaneously constituting the equivalence of obsessive sadomasochistic activity. As the equivalent of imaginative fantasy, such activity foregrounds the risks involved in the bringing forth of text(s) in the modernist era, which implies a process of black-hole interiorization becoming anti-emergent dimensionalization, texts which are absorbed into the black hole of textuality. In this sense, keeping in mind the sentence being analyzed at this point, as well as the orientally exotic scenario of Duffy's sadomasochistic fantasy, "always," a result of the interaction of both ellipsis and transformational processes, becomes "[A][i's]way [is my way]," i.e. "[I am Ali's slave]." The sexually based psychic mixture of agony and self-indulgence, which interacts somehow with the protagonist's Oedipus complex, not only receives further graphemic intensification in the anatomical symbolism associated with the letters "o" (sexual entry point) and "n" (failed erection) in the preposition "on," reinforced by another crude reference to sexual potency in masturbatory terms in the transformation of "were always on" into "[W]e[']re always on," but also reaches an extreme point of abject sordidness in the pixelized transformation of "always" into "al[l's]w[hey]." This phrase acts as a metaphoric reference to yet another pool of ejaculated sperm, comparing it to milk-whey, the result of an incessant masturbatory act and recurrent moment of satiety ("were" = 'we[a]r[ly],' as already indicated).

The presence of "way" as 'whey' becomes a more open instance of punning at the moment of the recounting James Duffy's feeling of guilt while on Magazine Hill, as he hears the goods train in the distance. At the same time, it is the metaliterary implication of the Donne-like pun on "pound[]," potentially transforming it into [Ezra] Pound, that becomes relevant to our argument concerning the inversely proportional simultaneity between the degree of abject loneliness experienced by the protagonist in psychological terms and the transformational intensity of the creative powers employed in satirically undermining that same protagonist's misanthropic social stance: "He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears."

This again is in keeping with an understanding of Joyce's text as what may be termed as modernist 'black-hole' process of anti-dimensionalization and therefore as a centripetal or anti-version of Enlightenment emergence.

Within this metaliterary model, thought may be given to the metaliterary equivalent of the climactic point reached within the portrayal of the character, i.e. his tragic awareness of the first time of the absolutely irreversible nature of his loneliness which, given the enigmatic open-endedness of the story's conclusion may or may not lead to the stoic acceptance of himself for what he is. Liminality, as a manifestation of the narrative reverse side of the text's satirical mode of discourse, involving at least punning and innuendo, such acceptance would possibly or, at worst, given Dublin's provincial small-mindedness, imply the recognition of his homosexuality on the part of the protagonist. Given the cubist-modernist slippage that characterizes the text's aesthetics, from the perspective of the text's metaliterary component, its climactic point is reached, a little earlier, at the beginning of the final paragraph. Besides, it is a highly comic one since sadomasochistic fantasy is sensed as reaching a surrealistic high-point at the phrase "[W]e turned back." Thus, in terms of the creative resources that constitute the satirical mode's basis in incessantly scathing taunts which fuse the masturbatory, the sadomasochistic and the homoerotic, what is suggested by "back" is that the protagonist is literally (surrealistically) transformed into an anus colloquially, 'asshole / arsehole'.

Reminding us of the subliminal deconstructive presence of the discourse of the circus ringmaster mentioned earlier, this climax may be paraphrased thus: "He is actually turning into a 'back[side]' before your very eyes!" Meanwhile sexual puns and innuendo, besides the possible pun on Pound's name, together with features of the text's etymological, phonetic and graphemic components, intertextually linkable with Pound's ideogrammatic and fragmentary mode of aesthetics, as well as his representative function as an entry point into Dadaist-like typographical 'jouissance,' give rise to the interaction, for satirical purposes, of the masturbatory, the sadomasochistic, and of incapacity with regard to heterosexual physical activity, together with intensity in relation to its homosexual counterpart. In this sense the bawdy, quasi pornographic sexualization of both textuality and discourse emerges through the subliminal presence within them of the Greek verb 'rheein,' to flow, in "rhythm," thereby reminding us once more of the ejaculatory materialness of the text-as-medium / experience, of the semantic presence of "to torture" in the verb form, "to engine," of the noun which appears in the text, and of the Latin verb "pendere" meaning to hang which, thereby, brings to the fore aforementioned simultaneity of heterosexual incapacity and "pretensions" (N.B. the story's opening sentence), homosexual libidinousness, as indicated by the bawdy implications of "pounding" and of the interlinguistic presence of "arse" (Irish brogue) in the noun "ears."

Given the incessant nature of the satirical mode, of sadomasochistic masturbatory fantasy and of psychically-related misanthropic paranoia, intense transformation, the equivalent of sadomasochistic energy and aggressiveness, has an equally effective

presence in the rest of the story's concluding paragraph, as in the text as a whole. To avoid excessive exemplification, its third but last sentence's transformation potentially emerges as manifested below, keeping in mind that the content of sadomasochistic homoerotic masturbatory fantasy of which it is made up has a Nordic rather than an Arabic flavour.²² The original sentence reads thus: "He could not feel her near him in this darkness nor her voice touch his ear." Based on how "feel" has developed etymologically from 'palamē' and 'palma' (palm of the hand) in Greek and Latin, evolving through 'folm' in Old English and 'fühlen,' the latter acting as a further echo of "Painful" in the story's title, the masturbatory process is confirmed once more. At the same time, the homosexual nature of the fantasy emerges out of the etymological links of "ear," also present in "[n]ear," with the Dutch word 'aar,' a pun, partially in this case, on the word 'arse.' Also, given that 'aar' is also a cognate of 'acus, aceris' in Latin, meaning a husk of a corn, in bawdily symbolic terms anus and phallus become interchangeable within the masturbatory fantasy, index of the intense physical involvement demanded by sadomasochistic practice and which has its parallel in the mixture of mental struggle and pleasure inherent to the process of analysis of this story's textuality. It is in terms of the deconstructive pixelization of the story's textuality in the form of experiencing its text[ure]-as-(fertile, creative) sperm that an awareness emerges of the degree of professional intensity being experienced by the implied author.

Dublin's early twentieth century claustrophobic provincialism, a constant within the collection's metaliterary and metacultural codes, is being satirically undermined at every textual point or pixel, as the internationalist aspiration of its modernist implied narrator emerges, at this moment point, in the Nordic variant of sadomasochistic fantasy, a potentially ironic allusion to historical identity of the city as a Viking capital.

In the end, without going into further deconstructively analytic analysis, what this non-Joycean has tried to illustrate is how "A Painful Case" may be understood as a paradigmatically relevant entry point into the on-going process of the dimensionalization of the unique way in which the interaction of Enlightenment emergence and modernist interiorization is always operating somewhere, and at every moment, at the heart of Joyce's narrative creativity. The need to discard the other stories within *Dubliners* as insufficiently paradigmatic in this respect would be a matter for another discussion elsewhere.

Notes

¹ J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York / London: W.W. Norton, 1990).

² Mikhail Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 15.

³ Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Upper Saddle River, NJ: The Library of Liberal Arts, 2001) 13.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, "Conjectural Beginning of Human History," *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Upper Saddle River, NJ: The Library of Liberal Arts, 2001) 57-58.

⁵ All Pope quotations are from the one-volume Twickenham edition, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

⁶ J. Paul Hunter, "Sleeping Beauties: Are Historical Aesthetics Worth Recovering?," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34.1 (2000): 6.

⁷ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, ed. Terence Brown (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992) 111. Hereafter all page references will be expressed parenthetically with regard to this edition.

⁸ Cynthia D. Wheatley-Lovoy, "The Rebirth of Tragedy: Nietzsche and Narcissus in 'A Painful Case' and 'The Dead,'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 33.3 (Spring 1996): 190.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 22.

¹⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 302.

¹¹ Hugo Witemeyer, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 177.

¹² John Rocco, "Drinking Ulysses: Joyce, Bass Ale, and the Typography of Cubism," *James Joyce Quarterly* 33.2 (Winter 1996): 400.

¹³ Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956) 23.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, "The Double Bottom of the Plupresent," *Dissemination*, ed. Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, [1972] 1983) 306-13.

¹⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller (London: Hogarth Press, 1977) 198. With regard to error, Lacan states the following: "[T]here is no error which does not promulgate itself as truth. In short, error is the habitual incarnation of the truth." See the *Seminar on Jacques Lacan. Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-54*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 263.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Play: From the Pharmakon to the Letter," *Dissemination*, ed. Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, [1972] 1983) 168.

¹⁷ Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 22.

¹⁸ Derrida [1972] 1983, 168.

¹⁹ Michael L. Fitzhugh and William H. Leckie, Jr. "Agency, Postmodernism, and the Causes of Change," *History and Theory* 40 (December 2001): 78, 79.

²⁰ Derek Attridge, "Unpacking the Portmanteau; or Who's Afraid of *Finnegans Wake*?" *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to Joyce* (London: Methuen, 1988) 188-209.

²¹ Wheatley-Lovoy 191.

²² We have avoided in our analysis any reference to a post-colonial need to explore critically the cultural code that operates within the strand of the Orient that threads its way through Joyce's work, especially since scholarship has explored such subject matter, as in R. Brandon Kershner, "Ulysses and the Orient," *James Joyce Quarterly* 35.2/3 (Winter / Spring 1998): 273-96; and in Carol Loeb Shloss, "ReOrienting Joyce," *James Joyce Quarterly* 35.2/3 (Winter / Spring 1998): 259-71.