

THE JOYCEAN EMPTY FORM OF DIFFERENCE¹

ABSTRACT: As noted by Sam Slote, from the earliest, Joyce criticism has tended to associate structure and play with meaning. In terms of cognitive laws with which Joyce's early works negotiate, Leonard Talmy's four imaging systems provide appropriate methods of approach. Ascribed to *structural schematization* are notions of interrelation, categories and the effect of constellation which draw symmetry between opening and closing of "Araby." Related are *deployment of perspective* (syntactical accent), *distribution of attention* (localisation of a figure within the background) and *force dynamics* between the elements on the scene, due to which, through *Dubliners*, the *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, the meaning of a word is described in many different ways. This paper argues for the structure of a word and syntax being described in a number of ways through *Finnegans Wake* and, accordingly, influencing the perspectives of trajectory and landmark. In Shakespeare, this role is held by Queen Hecuba's absently-present image in *Hamlet* and of her letter in *Troilus and Cressida*, while as the most appropriate analogy to the neologisms of the *Wake* appear overlapping and enframing of images in *Prospero's Books* by Peter Greenaway.

Key words: Joyce, cognitive linguistics, Greenaway, film.

*Since things in motion sooner catch the eye
Than what not stirs.*
William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*
(III. iii. 183-184), spoken by Ulysses

By the end of 1990 and by the beginning of the following year, an exhibition, being organised by Jacques Derrida as the first in series "Taking Sides", took place at the Louvre museum. Two years later, the series ended with the exhibition *Le bruit des nuages: Flying out of this World*, whose curator was British film director Peter Greenaway. Framed within the two were allegories of optics and blinds, images representing items out of our sites and out of movement simulated by film techniques. However, earlier than writing *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, which was published on this occasion, Derrida revealed in *The Truth in Painting* the influence James Joyce's rhetoric has had over his

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thought, or, rather, the film-like rhetoric of *Finnegans Wake* has had over his writing. At one point (1987: 75), Derrida states: "Position: opposition: frame."

Regarding the problems of semantics, of words' position in a sentence and of the specific phrases, Derrida turns to the term "the truth in painting", emphasizing how "locution seems to be able to refer [to truth in painting] which can already be understood in a multitude of ways" (1987: 4).² In that way, Derrida ascribes to the term the specific abstract conception to which it refers, only to write a systematic thesis which analyses and describes it. Later in history of philosophy, Gilles Deleuze introduced film, encountering us with the repetition of space given by photography and difference that is enabled by that repetition, providing at the same time an illustration for the conceptuality of language and thought as places where a meaning always occurs *in between the two*. This is also visible through Joyce's work in which "sense comes from structure, form informs content" (Slote 2009: 66). For content to take place, there must have been given a structure of grammatical norms, either in verbal or filmic texts, criteria which are creating, according to Deleuze, "the empty form." It is through that structural scheme of mental maps or of grammar that all the aspects of language are written. However, since the arrangement of content results in varieties in meanings, Deleuze expands the term to "the empty form of difference."

My intention in this paper is to demonstrate how process of cognition develops through prosaic texts of James Joyce, since he "wanted to make history, the resuming and the totalization of history, possible through the accumulation of metaphoricities, equivocalities, and tropes [. . . saying how] there is no historicity without this accumulation of equivocality in language" (Derrida 1997: 26). At this point his work becomes similar to Peter Greenaway's, especially when it comes to comparison of *Prospero's Books* to Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Even Joyce's earlier texts can be seen as discourses that provide readers with multiple meanings of one word. This is visible in the story "Araby" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, particularly later in *Ulysses* where readers encounter employment of those imaging systems that are crucial for processing of the *Wake*. As a result of them, *Finnegans Wake* is acknowledged as a work that authorises far more forms than it takes, where meanings occur in between the two, as in film, or disappear "between these two moments of speech" (Jean-Luc Godard, *JLG*).

Imaging systems: blindness and insight in "Araby" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

² As Derrida notes, it is not that the idiom "of the truth in painting" is simply untranslatable, I mean the idiom of the locution, for the quotation marks are not enough to assure us of it: it could be a matter of the idiom of truth in painting, of that to which this strange locution seems to be able to refer and which can already be understood in a multitude of ways (Derrida 1987: 4).

Regarding the systematization of imaging act, Leonard Talmy analyses four processes in his 1988 essay “The Relation of Grammar to Cognition.” These are: structural schematization, deployment of perspective, distribution of attention and force dynamics. The latter involves those forces that the elements of the given scene exert on each other, like in cases of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The same concepts of correlation between the elements are also present in *Prospero’s Books* due to Greenaway’s montage. Structural schematization, the first imaging system, represents a process of “partitioning” of space or time that is specified by such deictics like *this* and *that*, which, if used in a text, can denote it as poetic or documentary. Thus, different conceptualisation strategies have been proposed by Cognitive Linguistic Schematization theory. One kind is based on extension processes and comparison that require activation of high level schemata for perceiving beings, while other are based on elaboration processes for non-living things.

Strongly related to them is a process of framing, regarding which Deleuze notes how “all framing determines an out-of-field” (1986: 16). According to Charles Fillmore, frame, either cognitive or interactional, is “any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits” (Geeraerts et al, 2006: 373), while “a *semantic frame* is a schematization of experience (a knowledge structure), which is represented at the conceptual level, and held in longterm memory” (Evans 2007: 12). In *Finnegans Wake* we encounter surprisingly clear and simple demonstration of this concept through sentence “(A spilt, see, for a split, see see!)” (*FW* 461.35–36). Given inside brackets, as something less important and framed within the main text, imperative “see” for the first time indicates to material visualization of ink spilt over the paper. Twice repeated later, it demonstrates to readers two ink stains. However, when it comes to Joyce’s earlier texts, a fragment makes understandable the structure within which it fits, but, due to Joyce’s practice to put the same word within different contexts, the conceptualisation becomes something that needs to be re-constructed in the readers’ minds and does not come immediately with reading.

In “Araby,” Joyce draws symmetry between perception of a street with dead ending and a voice from the end of a gallery that announces that the light is turned off. The first figurative use of adjective *blind* opens the story and develops until its closing, with open eyes of narrator blinded by anger:

North Richmond street being *blind* [...] An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the *blind end*, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, *gazed* at one another with brown imperturbable faces. [...] I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger. (emphasis added)

Joyce's concern with metaphors of light and image is emphasised through framing of the adverb "lightly" in the *Portrait*:

- He had been thrown by the fellow's machine lightly on the cinderpath and his spectacles had been broken in three pieces [...]. (P 38)
- [...] it thrilled him to think of it in the silence when the pens scraped lightly. (P 44)
- Then in the dark and unseen by the other two he rested the tips of the fingers of one hand upon the palm of the other hand, scarcely touching it lightly. (P 81)

The contexts within which Joyce places the word in these sentences is important from cognitive point of view as much for the aesthetic value of the text. In the first example the writer deliberately chooses Stephen's spectacles to be broken (after being thrown lightly) - not Stephen's fingernail, nose, elbow, or some personal object other than spectacles. Spectacles are related to clearness of seeing and, as such, to light and visual sensation. In the second example, although "lightly" refers to auditory appearance, the pens and visual lines they leave are, again, indicating something that is related to the sight, to the visual and to light. In the third example, the adverb is used in, probably, the best situation to describe its meaning – being tactile-oriented, but this action is contextualized by darkness and distracted attention of "the other two" who are unable to see what is happening. This darkness and movement "unseen by the other two" that results in tactile sensation are also aspects that are primarily related to the visualization.

Interestingly, in Jean-Luc Godard's theoretically-autobiographical film (1995), we see a blind woman, whom Godard engaged to be a film editor, contemplating over her hand that touches the other hand which is touching a film projector. She concludes with equation:

If the visible has a relationship to itself that goes through me and becomes me as I watch this circle which I do not create, but which creates me, this winding of the visible within the visible can go through and animate other bodies, as well as mine. And I could understand how this wave is born in me, how the visible over there is simultaneously my landscape.

In this respect, the adverb "lightly" in the sentences from the *Portrait*, can be read as derivate of noun *light*, due to a special deployment of perspective used to accentuate light, rather than Stephen himself. Therefore, "being touched lightly" would mean to be touched so slightly as if by light, so that a feeling it more recognised as a change in temperature conditioned by a sun-ray falling upon the skin than as a tactile pressure or pain.

Related to this aspect of Joyce's writing, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that "Joyce's words, accurately described as having "multiple roots," shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language, only to posit a cyclic unity of the sentence, text, or knowledge" (2005: 6). Further reflections on process of writing, Joyce's as well, include Derrida's notion of (*pure*) *trace* that *is difference*, because "[t]he unheard difference between the appearing and the appearance [*l'apparaisant*

et l'apparaître] (between the “world” and “lived experience”) is the condition of all other differences, of all other traces, and *it is already a trace*” (1997: 65). Derrida finds in linguistics and grammatology the same aspects Deleuze focuses on in film, arguing for importance of repeated difference to process of writing and concludes how “instituted trace cannot be thought without thinking the retention of difference within a structure of reference where difference appears as *such* and thus permits a certain liberty of variations among the full terms” (Derrida 1997: 47–48).

Ulyssean and Finnegans’ *cyclopticals*

As an example of cognitive relation of grammar to image in mind, Talmy gives following sentences that also illustrate the concept of difference through repetition:

- a. There *are* houses *at various points* in the valley.
- b. There *is a* house *every now and then through* the valley. (Geeraerts ed. 2006: 91)

In terms of film, the situation would turn into this one:

- a. There *are* photographs *at each point* in the film.
- b. There *is a* photograph *every now and then through* the film.

Based on differences between these two statements, Deleuze defined concepts of movement-image and time-image. Due to forms of each, which require particular modes of perception, aesthetic feeling evoked cannot be the same.

When it comes to Joyce, conceptual cycling and interface between syntax and semantics is particularly visible in the use of progressive aspect of verbs. They appear as reflections of multiplied shot in minds of those who are looking at it. In “Cyclops” chapter of *Ulysses* we are encountering similar frameworks of domain and viewing arrangement through “a watchtower beheld of men afar” (12: 65–66) where the profiling depends on unknown, empty forms of different perspectives. This is also presupposed along with perception of time in the first line of this chapter: “I was just passing the time of day [...]” (*U* 2008: 12.280). Although it is a phrase in language, it loses nothing of importance, on the contrary, only confirms how specific concepts of schematization are rooted in our minds at the time when we are using the same linguistic construction to describe relations in time or space. In the example of watchtower, the object is described as a residency of beholder (watcher), but the syntactic structure implies its similarity to a lighthouse. For, if the beholder is perceived as someone spatially distant from us, there is a turn created in the purpose of the watchtower – namely, it should serve to see us and not to be seen by us. Watchtower should enable seeing, not becoming object of it, but using the structure “a watchtower beheld of men afar,” which is very similar to “a watchtower beheld by man afar,” Joyce gives us notion on dual use of the word, both in its primary meaning and as a lighthouse. In that way, something which implies one man watching at many (as in panopticon) is equalled with something which is blind, but emits light and is seen by many, innumerable and only

presupposed men in future. Surely, no one could calculate for how many time has been any lighthouse looked upon, but while placing it at some location “[t]he mind must put itself into its own product, produce a discourse on what it produces, introduce itself of itself into itself” (Derrida, 1987: 26). It is exactly that change of perspective in which beholder, or any agent, places himself and which is further deconstructed in *Finnegans Wake*. By the auto-law of deconstruction, “which happens inside” (Derrida 1997: 9), beholder is replaced by light and “[d]isappeared [disparu] is the subject. What has disappeared appears, absent in the very place of the commemorative monument, returning to the empty place marked by his name. Art of the cenotaph” (Derrida 1987: 179).

Finnegans Wake is a literal example of Joyce’s awareness “that language is radically different from an information carrying and information preserving system, such as a code or telecommunications. Language forms carry very little information per se, but can latch on to rich pre-existent networks in the subjects’ brains and trigger massive sequential and parallel activations” (Fauconnier 1999: 107). In order to demonstrate this, I will firstly turn to influences that visual-related issues are having on the grammar of Joyce.

– [. . .] but are you solarly salemly sure, beyond the shatter of the canicular year? *Nascitur ordo seculi numfit*.

– Siriusly and selenely sure behind the shutter. *Securius indicat umbris tellurem*. (512.35–513.2).

Both selenium and tellurium appearing in these sentences are important chemical agencies for development of photography, but selenium appears here within an adverb, indicating a mode of language’s transmission or appearance. The interface of “solarly” and “selenely” creates juxtaposed sides within a process of communication, namely of emitter and receiver. Even earlier, in the second part of the book, the notion of time flowing in reverse, *a ricorso*, from receiver to sender is brought out with possible allusion to camera and cinematographer that frame world “[c]ycloptically through the windowdisks and with eddying awes the round eyes of the rundreisers” (*FW* 055.23).

Since “[t]he whole Joycean oeuvre cultivates seeing eye canes” (Derrida 1993: 33), we find references to the visual in the *Wake* as numerous as presupposed watchers of the lighthouse in *Ulysses*. For that reason, Clive Hart claimed that most of Joyce’s neologisms are more easily understood by eye than by ear (1962: 36), which this also relates to Joyce’s employment of intertextuality.

Intertextualities of *Prospero’s Books* and *Finnegans Wake*

At the beginning of *Prospero’s Books*, we see enlarged drop of water over entire screen as it falls against black background. While it keeps dripping in equal rhythm, new, smaller frame is introduced, one that gives us an image of John Gielgud’s (Prospero’s) hand. The background image is still visible around it. At one point, water starts dripping on Gielgud’s hand and soon after both water from the

background image and one that is within the same frame with the hand start dripping instantaneously. Additionally, Greenaway uses third, transparent image of manuscript in the inner frame, creating “the *mise-en-scène* of fabulous and artificial worlds is reflected in the magic wand – in fact, a quill – of Prospero” (Pascoe 1997: 15).

The same conceptual organization – consisted of metonymy, frame semantics and iconicity – needed for reading the *Wake* is need for watching *Prospero's Books*. More precisely, both works mirror all segments of conceptualization. Furthermore, Joyce and Greenaway, apart from using these methods for image building, play upon them, creating directly mental images different from those represented on screen or paper. For example, in *An Andalusian Dog* Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel provoked a feeling by sequence of images in a film: woman's eye with razor in manly hand above it; the razor cutting an eye of a cow. In the *Wake* and *Prospero's Books*, the sequence happens within the same image, instantaneously, so that it is almost impossible to speak of sequentiality. In a moment, it is uncertain what comes first, what second, where is attention distributed, unless we acknowledge that medium, technique or ambivalence are in focus. Yet, concentrating “solely on the literal sense or even the psychological content of any document to the sore neglect of the enveloping facts themselves” (*FW* 109.12–13), we encounter “the very special extension of the op-sign: to make time and thought perceptible, to make them visible and of sound” (Deleuze 1989: 18).

Terms *trajectory* (TR) and *landmark* (LM), which derive from Langacker's Cognitive Grammar framework, are used for an entity located by another one as if by a backdrop. In given Greenaway's still, the *trajectory* is, firstly, the inner image which represents Prospero's hand, and the *landmark* is background image of a drop of water. However, soon enough it becomes impossible to define which image is trajectory and which one is landmark. This happens because the eye does not see the separation of the outer and the inner frame due to overlapping paths of the outer drop of water and the one within the inner frame, so that the eye tends to see them joined into one body of water in its fall. At that moment, the images seem as if they are transparent, even though in this particular case Greenaway was using enframing rather than overlapping. If the same technique was used in a photography, the effect would not be the same – movement is what confuses the eye. “It is montage itself which constitutes the whole, and thus gives us the image of time. It is therefore the principal act of cinema” (Deleuze 1989: 34).

The same processing of perception is employed while reading *Finnegans Wake* and, maybe, even represented by it. Eyes (the focus), in movement over words intentionally join them, although they already represent framed or overlapped *images* of thoughts, for “moving is the working of the unconscious” (*JLG*). Not surprisingly, Jacques Lacan, partly referring to *Finnegans Wake*, claims that “[t]he most complicated machines are made only with words” (Lacan 1988: 47). Deleuze and Guattari also represent language as mechanism, noting that language “is made

not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience” (1987: 76). Thus, compression of words may be influenced by life’s task to “make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed” (Deleuze 1994: ix). Deleuze explains this process as rooted in the fact that “[d]ifference is represented *in* the identical concept, and thereby reduced to a merely conceptual difference. Repetition, by contrast, is represented *outside* the concept, as though it were a difference without concept, *but always with the presupposition of an identical concept*” (Deleuze 1994: 270). Joyce used this method for graphemic levels, as in sentence:

Come not nere! Black! Switch out! (*FW* 403.17)

Differentiation from *here* into *nere* involves word *nero*, which means, as indicated by following exclamation, *black*. Later, Joyce introduces additional letter to comment on distribution of light, knowledge “The eversower of the seeds of light to the cowl d owld sowls [...]” (*FW* 593.20). The change of *old* into *owld* may indicate that those who perceive are so hungry of knowledge, that they are as sensitive in perceiving it as owls’ eyes are to light, or that “eversower of the seeds of light” is ironically named, sowing as little light as only owl-like sensitive eyes can be satisfied by it.

Given the previous examples of relation between cognition and Joyce’s use of grammar, it is not excluded that Joyce, who was concerned with spatial organisation of words within text, at one moment alludes to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, simply placing the (same) word at the same place in a passage. In that way, the ninth question and answer from Chapter VI in the first part of *Finnegans Wake* may resemble Joyce’s reading of Hugo’s Paris:

9. Now, to be on anew and basking again in the panaroma of all flores of speech, [...] the sap rising, the foles falling, the nimb now nihilant round the girlyhead so becoming, the wrestless in the womb, all the rivals to allsea, shakeagain, O disaster! shakealose, Ah how starring! but Heng's got a bit of Horsa's nose and Jeff's got the signs of Ham round his mouth and the beau that spun beautiful pales as it palls, what roserude and oragious grows gelb and greem, blue out the ind of it! Violet's dyed! then \what\ would that fargazer seem to seemself to seem seeming of, dimm it all?

Answer: *A collideorscape!*

(*FW* 143.03–28, emphasis added)

While in Hugo’s novel, one reads:

A second and a third grimace succeeded – then another and another, followed by redoubled shouts of laughter and the stamping and clatterings of merriment. The crowd was seized with a sort of frantic intoxication, a supernatural kind of fascination, of which it will be difficult to convey any idea to the reader of our own days. Imagine a series of visages successively presenting every geometric figure, from the triangle to the trapezium – from the cone to the polyhedron; – every

human expression from rage to lechery; all ages from wrinkles of the new-born infant to those of the hag at the point of death; all the religious phantasmagorias from Faunus to Beelzebub; all the brute profiles, from the distended jaw to the beak, from the snout of the hog to the muzzle of the bull. Imagine all the grotesque heads of the Pont Neuf, those nightmares petrified under the hand of Germain Pilon, suddenly staring into life, and coming one after another to stare you in the face with flaming eyes; all the masks of the carnival of Venice passing in succession before your eye-glass – in a word, a human *kaleidoscope*.

(Hugo, 1834: 38–39,
emphasis added)

Since we saw that Joyce was well aware of imaging systems decades before they were classified in cognitive linguistics, it is not surprising that he used the same method of intertextualizing as Greenaway in *Prospero's Books*, decades prior to the director. Purloined kaleidoscope that appears as “collideorscape” may be read as an answer to all those questions Derrida asks and Greenaway plays upon in the film:

What is the topos of the title? Does it take place (and where?) in relation to the work? On the edge? Over the edge? On the internal border? In an overboard that is re-marked and reapplied, by invagination, within, between the presumed center and the circumference? Or between that which is framed and that which is framing in the frame?” (1987: 24).

However, whether each reader will appreciate the Wakean ninth question more or less while reading it through the passage from Hugo’s novel, remains something that not even cognitive linguistics can ever tell. The aesthetic value of Joyce’s works, and particularly of *Finnegans Wake*, remains a field in which the readers have been discovering anticipation of new communication technologies, such as hypermedia and interface software. All of them, on the other hand, are illustration of cognitive process, as well as language is.

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DŽOJSOVSKA PRAZNA FORMA RAZLIKE

Sažetak

Rad se fokusira na Džojsov opus, uzimajući u obzir činjenicu da je kritika nastojala da dovede u vezu strukturu i igru sa značenjem u Džojsovom pisanju. Predlaže se da Džojsovi rani prozni radovi imaju dodirnih tačaka sa kognitivnim zakonima koji su kasnije definisani od strane Leonarda Talmija kao sistemi mišljenja. Talmi je registrovao četiri takva sistema i svi oni predstavljaju adekvatne načine da se pristupi izučavanju Džojsovih dela. Sistem mišljenja koji je definisan kao proces *strukturalne šematizacije* tiče se dovođenja u vezu, kategorisanja i konsteliranja. Ostali sistemi su *iznalaženje perspektive* (akcenat u rečenici), *distribucija pažnje* (postavljanje figure u odnosu na pozadinu, to jest kontekstualizovanje) i *dinamika sila* između elemenata na sceni, uz pomoć koje je, kroz *Dablince*, *Portret umetnika u mladosti* i *Uliks*, značenje jedne reči opisano na mnogo načina. Ovaj rad ukazuje na strukturu reči i sintakse kao na sredstva uz pomoć kojih se kondenzuju različita značenja u *Fineganovom bdenju* i time vrši uticaj na položaj putanje i znaka koji čine misli distinktivnim. Kao najprikladnija analogija neologizmima u *Bdenju* pojavljuju se uokvireni i polutransparentni kadrovi iz filma *Prosperove knjige* savremenog britanskog reditelja Pitera Grineveja, iako ima dodirnih tačaka između Džojsove poetike i one reditelja Žana-Lika Godara. Uzimajući u obzir prostorni raspored reči na stranicama romana, rad predlaže nov hermeneutički aspekt određenih delova teksta koji se mogu videti kao reference prema *Zvonaru Bogorodične crkve* Viktora Igoa.

Ključne reči: Džojso, kognitivna lingvistika, Grinevej, film.