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(Originally written in 1997)

Fat *Ulysses*

The language of fat: it is everywhere in *Ulysses*, from ‘Stately, plump’ Buck Mulligan at the very beginning of the book, to Molly Bloom’s ‘open-ended’ monologue, at the end. While there is no indication that Leopold Bloom is especially corpulent, he does eat a great deal of fatty food (beginning with a kidney fried in butter, proceeding to a cheese sandwich, and followed again by liver and bacon) over the course of the day, The story of Bloom's fat day parallels the psychological and emotional tensions at the heart of Joyce's novel. First and foremost, fat provides a schema (albeit one that did not appear on the chart Joyce gave to Stuart Gilbert, to keep the professors busy) for contrasting Stephen Dedalus, who is repelled by fat, to Bloom, who is drawn to it. For both Stephen and Bloom, fat represents excess and pleasure, but it also has a dark side, an underbelly, as it were, that ties it both to unhealthy sexuality and death. Fat's dark side embodies a dimension of *Ulysses* that I believe hasn't been discussed before, and I describe it, following Richard Klein, as the “fat sublime.”

I am interested not just in the thematic of fat, but in the richly textured language in which Joyce cases fat. Getting at this language requires the use of tools that might ordinarily be more relevant to the reading of poetry, including close attention to sound effects and linguistic word play. For instance, on the level of sound, clusters of words

appear throughout the text, and begin to connote ‘fat’ onomotopaeically in a number of registers: fat/vat/rat, plump/lump/hump/plum, bub/blub/bulk/tub/butt, pig/big, butter/bloater, feed/reek/cheese/breathe, mouth/pout/out/soft, etc. ‘Fat descriptions’ containing these words are alliteratively integrated into rich, rhythmic, poetic prose. For instance: “The sluggish cream wound curdling spirals through her tea” (IV. 367); and “A warm human plumpness settled down on his brain” (VIII.637).

Like most objects in the material world of *Ulysses,* ‘fat’ rarely appears as an independent entity. Cartesian objectivity is generally unstable in *Ulysses,* and objects (especially human bodies) are constantly commingling and transforming. Joyce often fuses related objects into single words, or fuses an object with an adjective describing it, or with the sensory experience by which the object might be perceived. Joyce's famous deployment of portmanteau words might also be thought of as a kind of ‘fattening’ of language: “flowerwater,” “snotgreen,” “smokeblue,” “coolwrappered,” “warmbubbled,” “bedwarmed,” “curdsoap,” to pick a few among hundreds of possible examples. Joyce's semantic agglutination works in different ways depending on how it is used. In some cases, it is simply a matter of blending two objects, as in “flowerwater,” but at other times, the very nature of the object described is in doubt. For instance, ‘fat’ (which, I should point out, does not exist in a pure form in nature at all) tends to function as an integrated aspect of a given object, central to its definition, but also excessive to the form of that object, that is, deformative. Fat human bodies tend to have ‘fat’ adjectives congealed to them, to be in some way ontologically determined by the appendage of fat. Thus, Buck Mulligan in the ‘Telemachus’ episode is *thickly* “plump,” with a “plump face,” and “plump body.” “Plump” attaches itself to his name, and in one case, even

substitutes for his name, as when his "plump body plunged" (I.729). This sort of metonymic substitution, which is nearly universal as a way of naming the many characters in *Ulysses* (such as "jingle" for Blazes Boylan, or "onehandled adulterer" for Nelson), dismembers the bodies of the characters even as it enriches them with affective specificity, imbuing their individual appearances with a kind of *gestalt* effect that would not derive from straightforward reference to fixed markers such as name, gender, or class.

From fat in language to fat in food, where fat is found generally as an implied content or nourishing element. This being the 1910s, fat in food tends to have no pejorative meaning (i.e., the contemporary sense of food as 'fattening'). However, symbolically, the 'fat' in certain foods that appear in the novel do carry a kind of morbid weight alongside the more felicitous fatness. The "kidney" at the opening of Calypso, for instance, might connote fat in both the nourishing and the morbid senses[1]. But frying and grease, butter, cheese, and cream are fat as well, generally with only minor 'symbolic' baggage[2]. "Tubs," "vats," and "barrels," which generally appear in *Ulysses* as containers for beer and wine, also figure for fat when applied to human bodies, which can be "tubby," "butty," and even "base barreltone."

[1] "'In ancient Jewish rites (as in 'the sacrifice and ceremonies of consecrating the priests,' Exodus 29:1-28), kidneys were regarded as the special parts to be burned upon the alter as a gift to Yahweh' (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*)" quoted in Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, p. 70, #1.

[2] Although fat is certainly fertile, I don't think fat as specifically limited to reproduction or pregnancy, which might seem to be indicated by the close link of dairy-fat to sexual reproduction. Such readings might be productive in some instances, but they risk reducing the complexity of this theme to a single narrative schema. The goal here is to expand out the framework of meanings rather than narrow it.

In his *Eat Fat*, Richard Klein theorizes the relationship of fat to figuration in much the same way I have begun to do here, though he does not specifically mention *Ulysses*. Klein traces the changing representation of fat in European literature, most strongly in Shakespeare, beginning with the Old English root of 'fat', which meant "to hold or contain," as referring to the vessel used for containing baptismal water, and sometimes the vessel used for the 'stamping' of wine (Klein, 29). In Shakespeare, Klein points to dozens of uses of 'fat', many of which conform to its old meaning, but some of which, as in the descriptions of Falstaff, conform to 'fat's' new, more anthropomorphic and socialized meaning[3]. Klein takes pains to point out (*Eat Fat* is also very much a polemic decrying contemporary attitudes and misconceptions about 'fat') that until very recently, 'fat' when describing the human body was not very heavily weighted towards its pejorative sense. In Shakespeare, for instance, fat is used as much to denote richness, warmth, and health, as it is to describe gluttony or sexual lasciviousness (prostitutes are represented as fat). As we will see, this cultural attitude to fat remains firmly in place in *Ulysses*: 'fat' is generally linked to life, vitality, and pleasure, especially by Bloom. But for Stephen Dedalus, fat is quite the opposite, a threat to the individual control of flesh.

Stephen Dedalus is in every way a hater of fat. He in particular is threatened by Buck Mulligan's garrulousness, and he neither eats nor exposes his body to the elements by bathing in 'Telemachus.' From Stephen's perspective, there's something treacherous in Mulligan's 'plumpness'; against Mulligan, Stephen has "moodybrooding" thoughts

[3] Incidentally, Falstaff is evoked by John Eglinton in the discussion of Shakespeare in 'Scylla and Charybdis', as a way of defending the 'Bard' from Stephen's 'ad hominem' interpretation of his work: "But we have it on high authority that a man's worst enemies shall be those of his own house and family. I feel that Russell is right. What do we care for his wife or father? I should say that only family poets have family lives. Falstaff was not a family man. I feel that the fat knight is his supreme creation" (IX.814-16).

that are frequently self-deprecating and saturated by images of decay and corrosion. For Stephen, 'fat' is the state of corpses: "A sail veering about the blank bay waiting for a swollen bundle to bob up, roll over to the sun a puffy face, saltwhite" (I.676). The "puffy face," and elsewhere, the "bag of corpsegas" (III.475), suggest a grotesque vision of flesh, of dysfunctional bodies whose inanimacy is closely linked to their 'puffiness'. The bodies of priests and (not coincidentally) castrati are also fat:

> Houses of decay, mine, his and all. . . . Houyhnhnm, hosenostrilled. The oval equine faces, Temple, Buck Mulligan, Foxy Campbell, Lanternjaws. . . . A choir gives back menace and echo, assisted about the altar's horns, the snorted Latin of jackpriests moving burly in their albs, tonsured and oiled and gelded, fat with the fat of kidneys of wheat. (III.116-119)

The reference to Deuteronomy[4] in the final phrase, "the fat of kidneys of wheat," cannot be taken to be particularly true to the meaning of the original use of the phrase (which indicates a 'cornucopia' bestowed by God upon Jacob). The phrase might be better read as a quotation: the "jackpriests" are *fat with* "the fat of kidneys of wheat." Notice that the language which figures the priests as livestock, "tonsured and oiled and gelded," works its way back through the sentence, to their "snorted Latin." We begin to see that Stephen's meditation is really on the sterility, which is also a *corrupt* sterility, of the monastic profession (in which he includes Buck Mulligan). Stephen's priests are degenerately fat because they exploit their authority, because they *double* what should suffice to stand on its own -- materially, the text of the Bible. The doubling of the "fat" here echoes a point Richard Klein makes about the word 'fat', that "there is something

[4] A particularly fat passage. Deuteronomy 32, 11-14: "Butter of kine, and milk of sheep/ and fat of lambs and rambs of the breed of Bashan,/ and goats wit the fat of kidneys of wheat;/ and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." "Kidneys of wheat" indicates the 'finest part' of wheat.

about the word that has always made people want to say it twice" (Klein, 3). Fat, for Klein, is a word (and an entity) which only wants to "wax," that is, to grow. *Ulysses* bears out the 'doubling', or what we might call the 'Fat fat' thesis, severally.[5]

Part of Stephen's disdain for the monastic life, and what makes him align monks with castrated opera singers, may stem from what he reads as a perversity inherent in the homosociality of monasticism. But Stephen is in general in an acute paralysis when it comes to sex and gender: the language "tonsured and oiled and gelded" priests in the passage above is nothing compared to the violence of the language he conceives when thinking of female flesh, embodied variously in the figure of his mother, in a Biblical Eve, and in prostitutes. However, alongside all of this negativity and revulsion, Stephen is actively imagining a way out of his physical isolation, through warm, possibly "fat," "touching": "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O touch me soon, now. What is the word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me" (III.434-7). But Stephen quickly turns away from this softening, and for much of *Ulysses* (especially in his sections in 'Aeolus' and 'Scylla and Charybdis') he insists on defining himself in sharp and rigorous terms – against 'soft' thinking of all stripes, whether of sexual longing (as above) or the Platonic abstractions that are thrown around, willy-nilly in 'Scylla and Charybdis**.**'

In his respective corner, at the start of the novel, Leopold Bloom is also thinking about fat. However, quite unaware of Stephen's meditations, Bloom is thinking of a

[5] See 'Aeolus', 48: "Fat folds of neck, fat, neck, fat, neck." Also, 'Aeolus', 479-81. Also See 'Wandering Rocks' 1229-31: "John Henry Menton, filling the doorway of Commerical Buildings, stared from winebig oyster eyes, holding a fat gold hunter watch not looked at in hiis fat left hand not feeling it." Also 'Sirens', 419-20: "Tossed to fat lips his chalice, drankoff his tiny chalice, sucking the last fat violet syrupy drops."

much juicier kidney than the Biblical "kidneys of wheat" in which Stephen wallows. Bloom is thinking of a *pork* kidney, and with only the profoundest appreciation:

> Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes. Most of all he like grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine. (IV.1-4)

Unlike Stephen, who is not seen to eat anything substantial in *Ulysses*, and who does not eat thereafter in either of the next two episodes, the first thing we learn about Bloom in 'Calypso' is the juicy detail of the entrails he eats, which are fat. He eats with "relish"; the soup is "thick," the gizzards "nutty," the heart "stuffed," and everything else "fried." Everything is filling and cooked. (I will return to the problem of the taste of "faintly scented urine" below; it is a slightly different thematic from "fat.")

For Bloom 'fat' functions as a living organism. It can be perceived through many different sense organs, as with the beer he smells walking past a bar: "From the cellar grating floated up the flabby gush of porter" (IV.106). Fat is also mobile: the kidney he buys "oozes with bloodgouts." That meat-fat tends to be bloody, or that his grilled kidneys smell faintly of "urine," doesn't bother Bloom here, as the blood and the suggestion of excrement might indicate simply the 'lubrication' of a well-integrated system. Through its ability to drift, to suggest via smell or sight what it will taste like and what it will feel like fully consumed, Bloom can perceive meat-fat as part of a warm, full, chain of embodied Being: "The shiny links, packed with forcemeat, fed his gaze and he breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pig's blood" (IV.142). The meat does not smell so much as it "breathes," and Bloom inhales that breath as if directly 'linked up' to the meat.

Fat also *transforms* with frying:

> Having set [the tea] to draw he took off the kettle, crushed the pan flat on the live coals and watched the lump of butter slide and melt. While he unwrapped the kidney the cat mewed hungrily against him. . . .Here. He let the bloodsmeared paper fall to her and dropped the kidney amid the sizzling butter sauce. (IV. 274-78)

In a matter of moments, the solid, inert "lump of butter" becomes "sizzling butter sauce," which can then incorporate and 'cook' the still inert, fat, kidney. The melting butter here resembles the "pure curd soap" Bloom buys in the next episode. Prior to use the soap is "coolwrappered," and it smells like "sweet lemony wax." But in the bath it will melt, smell, and clean:

> He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth,, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower. (V.567-572)

Covered in soap and immersed in water, Bloom bathing is like the kidney cooking of the previous episode. Only here, instead of cooking, Bloom is "oiled" by "scented" soap. His body is inert (in multiple respects) and floating, a limp lump. With the soap his limbs will become "lemonyellow," mildly, pleasantly transformed. After bathing, Bloom will carry around his damp bar of soap in his pocket, all day long. Along with his potato and the memory of Molly's body, it will serve as a protective fetish, a warm charm against the many threatening elements he will encounter in his wandering around Dublin.

Although I have focused in 'Calypso' and 'Lotus-Eaters', on fat as nourishment, as beneficially transformative, and as offering the possibility of fulfillment, it also has a negative side in Bloom's perception, which is fully developed at Patty Dignam's funeral,

in the 'Hades' episode. As in Stephen's imagination of bloated corpses, the context of this episode is the terrain of morbid fat, of the "fat corpse." But, though Bloom does pause briefly in his wild chain of thoughts and associations, he isn't truly threatened by the threatened by the collation of "corpus" and "corpse" (which he connects for the first time when sitting in the church in 'Lotus-Eaters'), of the possibility that the form of the human body (corpus) is only definite in death (corpse). In Bloom's inward discussion of the problem, the institutional language of scientistic exuberance continues to prevail**:**

> I daresay the soil would be quite fat with corpsemanure, bones, flesh, nails. Charnelhouses. Dreadful. Turning green and pink decomposing. Rot quick in damp earth. The lean old ones tougher. Then a kind of tallowy kind of a cheesy. Then begin to get black, black treacle oozing out of them. Then dried up. Deathmoths. Of course the cells whatever they are go on living. Changing about. Live for ever practically. Nothing to feed on feed on themselves. (V.776-782)

Rather than be troubled by the disintegration and decomposition of the human form, Bloom focuses on the healthy soil, the individual cells (which he suspects will "live for ever practically"), and even the maggots. He's not particularly averse to thinking explicitly of the stages of the body's decomposition, but he imagines it in living, edible images: "tallowy," "cheesy," and finally "treacle." In a relatively good mood, Bloom can transform even morbid fat, what Ben Dollard will later (in referring to himself) call the "fat of death," into edible fat. He has a strong tendency to refigure even human flesh into something possibly useful to himself, that is, food: "A corpse is meat gone bad. Well and what's cheese? Corpse of milk" (VI.981-2). Bloom is not thinking so much of 'corpse' in terms of a dead, or deanimated body, as he is imagining it as the solidified and fermented, *but still living*, embodiment of 'living' objects, such as meat and milk.

Part of what "fat" originally specifies in its earlier usage, Klein points out, is "ready to be killed,"[6] and this negative, morbid sense of the word cannot help but overwhelm Bloom's unhampered stream of reflections on this kind of fat. Klein (himself rather Bloom-like with his allusive, short attention-span style of writing) will later, in referring to the fattiest meats -- liver and goose -- speak of "dark fat," fat which is "unbelievably" rich, and threateningly so. Perhaps not wanting to repeat his spectacular performance in *Cigarettes are Sublime*, Klein shies away from calling this dark fat "sublime," but in that it offers the possibility both of unspeakable pleasure as well as annihilation, in its uncontrollability, in its corrosiveness and perversity, "sublime" might be the best word for it. We see the fat sublime in the "urine" smell attached to Bloom's "inner organs of beasts and fowls." Bloom's appetite is overdeveloped; he considers edible what is properly the 'corpse' of food (digested and stripped of nourishment), that is, excrement. Bloom is uninhibited in his enthusiasm for it: rather than being 'turned off' by the impropriety of 'urine', or of the fat of corpses, he is excited by the thought of *re*consumption.

Bloom is not in any sense consciously desirous of experiencing the fat sublime, nor is he gluttonously or unethically fixated on fat pleasure, which Klein calls "greedily sucking on life." Bloom is in fact utterly repulsed by the spectacle of men in the Burton unashamedly gorging themselves:

[6] "In its earliest use as an adjective, in its current sense, *fat* means ready to be killed, well fed, well supplied with fat. In the fourteenth centuryy, Wycliff's translation of the Bible spoke of 'a feste of fatte bestes' - that is, a feast of fat beasts. Something fat means it's good enough to eat." (Klein, 77)

> His heart astir he pushed in the door of the Burton restaurant. Stink gripped his trembling breath: pungent meatjuice, slush of greens. See the animals feed.
>
> Men, men, men.
>
> Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging, wiping wetted moustaches. A pallid suetfaced young man polished his tumbler knife fork and spoon with his napkin. New set of microbes. A man with an infant's saucestained napkin tucked around him shovelled gurgling soup down his gullet. A man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it. Chump chop from the grill. Bolting to get it over. Sad booser's eyes. Bitten off more than he can chew. Am I like that? (VIII.650-662)

The violence of the scene makes Bloom's "gorge rise"; he loses his appetite and has to go somewhere else. Also (thankfully), it forces him to consider some of the merits of vegetarianism (VIII.720-730), which he had earlier dismissed as being pretentious, and more importantly unpleasant, because it "keeps you on the run all day" (VIII.537). Ultimately, Bloom has a cheese sandwich at Davy Byrne's (not too good by the sound of it: "pungent mustard, the feety savour of green cheese" VIII.819), which he washes down with wine. The wine acts much like the transformative, melting fat of the earlier episodes: "Wine soaked and softened rolled pith of bread mustard a moment mawkish cheese" (VIII.850), starting Bloom on a long, paratactical series of reflections on food-production, parties, "combustible ducks," and Huguenots. But it also brings him to a subject he has been uneasy about all day— sex.

A major question in the first episodes is the relationship of 'fat' to sex. Certainly, though one might not call the experience erotic, Bloom gets a great deal of pleasure out of his fatty kidney, and there is no question that Molly's physical presence is part of the overall reassurance and pleasure he expects to find upon returning home from his trip to the butchershop: "To smell the gentle smoke of tea, fume of the pan, sizzling butter. Be

near her ample bedwarmed flesh. Yes, yes" (IV.236-7). The thought of Molly saves Bloom here from a distressing train of thought, and does so again when he's troubled by the appearance of Blazes Boylan in 'Hades' (VI.204-8). And after having some wine after his cheese sandwich in the passage I alluded to above, it becomes abundantly clear that Bloom was at least once intensely attracted to her, but the pleasure he remembers does not express an exactly conventional 'masculine' heterosexual desire:

> Ravished over her I lay, full lips full open, kissed her mouth. Yum. Softly she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed. Mawkish pulp her mouth had mumbled sweetsour of her spittle. Joy: I ate it: joy. Young life, her lips that gave me pouting. Soft warm sticky gumjelly lips. . . . Hot I tongued her. She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. (VIII.906-9)

Bloom's memory of sex with Molly is fully saturated with and dependent upon the pleasure of the eating, chewing, and tasting that were essential elements of their first sexual encounter. The 'fat' of their bodies doesn't directly or obviously contribute to the erotic charge of the moment, but Molly's "full lips full open" most definitely do. The passage is dominated by oral bodies: *lips*, "full lips" and "fat lips."; and *mouths*, preferably open ones, kissing, or eating. In light of the centrality of the oral in Bloom's experiences of pleasure in the stream-of-consciousness sections of *Ulysses*, it might be better to discard the distinction between oral pleasures like eating and kissing, and more conventional genital eroticism, which plays a rather small part in this part of *Ulysses* (it will become more important, in many cases as a source of anxiety, later). All of the manifestations of 'pleasure' on Bloom's menu are linked by the sensory experiences of richness of texture, taste, and smell; the presence of warmth; and especially, the possibility of release through passive reception. This last is evident in his various eating

and drinking experiences, in the bath, and especially in 'Sirens', when, in addition to eating, he 'receives' and is nourished by the sound of Ben Dollard and Simon Dedalus's voices. Even though he can't quite compete with Blazes Boylan, and even though he doesn't have the means to regain Molly's attention (and this is, undoubtedly, troubling to him), Bloom is perfectly capable of choosing his pleasures, and of actively seeking their fulfillment.

Stephen's experience of this first half of the day (ending around four o'clock) is quite different from Bloom's. Rather than eating, bathing, listening to songs, he argues, first with Mulligan, then with Deasy. He struggles in silence with the newspapermen spouting their "divine afflatus" in 'Aeolus', before finally telling his bizarre "Parable of the Plums." He has a long, tedious argument about Shakespeare in 'Scylla and Charybdis.' Though argument and reasoning in the literary, philosophical, or theological registers are the only activities he does not find entirely repulsive, Stephen does not exactly get pleasure from all of this 'oral activity'. However, he does embed in his arguments, reflections, and writing-experiments a pattern of desire centered around the mouth. This is most strongly present in the poem he writes (revising a poem by Douglas Hyde) after the moment in 'Proteus' cited above: "Touch me. Soft hand..." (III.436). The original verse, and Stephen's revision of it, are as follows:

And my love came behind me-	On swift sail flaming
He came from the south;	From storm and south
His breast to my bosom,	He comes, pale vampire,
His mouth to my mouth.	Mouth to my mouth.
-Hyde, "My Grief on the Sea"[7]	(VII.522-25/132)

[7] See Gifford, p.62.

Stephen drains the 'fat' out of Hyde's poem (breast/bosom) and infects it with his corrupt erotic vision of the "pale vampire." Stephen is writing in the shoes of a 'ravished' maiden; whatever 'direct' pleasure he gets from the fantasy his poem expresses is through projection, that is, through his fantasy of being the object of desire by the speaker of the poem. This is a complicated circuit, quite different from the one which obtains for Bloom, but the fundamental orality of it remains: "mouth to my mouth" is not so different from "She kissed me. I was kissed." Stephen is not entirely sure of his logic, and will eventually come to doubt it: "Would anyone wish that mouth for her kiss? How do you know? Why did you write it then?" (VII.711-12). But his reflection here leads to a meditation on the sound of "mouth" ("South, pout, out, shout, drouth"), which may in turn be the seed for the rather naughty "Parable of the Plums" he tells at the end of the episode. In Stephen's story, two "Dublin vestals" climb up Nelson's pillar[8] with a sack of plums. Having reached the top they find that looking out over Dublin makes them "giddy" and looking up at the statue of the Lord Admiral Horatio Nelson gives them "a crick in their necks." So they eat the plums:

> They put the bag of plums between them and eat the plums out of it, one after another, wiping off with their handkerchiefs the plumjuice that dribbles out of their mouths and spitting the plumstones slowly out between the railings. (VII.1026-8)

If Stephen's poem reflects a decidedly skinny aesthetic sensibility, his "Parable" undoubtedly understands the pleasure of fat. The poem and the "Parable" do have some things in common, including the fact that women are Stephen's protagonists in each case.

[8] The Dublin vestals are fat, echoing in their chastity the monks who are "fat with the fat of kidneys of wheat." Climbing the pillar, they "waddle slowly up the winding staircase, grunting, encouraging each other, afraid of the dark, panting..." (VII.943-5).

Both of his creations also make use of the mouth (not absolutely a 'woman's mouth': the subject of his question "Why would *anyone* wish that mouth...?" is gender-neutral) in critical ways. In this "Parable," mouths are in action through steady, ritualistic, sloppy eating ("wiping off with their handkerchiefs the plumjuice that dribbles out of their mouths")[9].

Even though there's a great deal of 'fat' in the last seven episodes of *Ulysses*, its language and its thematics generally can't be isolated in the way I have been doing with the first eleven, which generally function in the stream-of-consciousness mode. What Franco Moretti calls the "institutional languages" of the latter sections make individual 'bites' of language I have been seeking out difficult to isolate from the motivations of the form of each particular episode. Nevertheless, I suspect this project could be extended, particularly with the purpose of exploring the relationship of fat to sex in 'Circe'. Some of the latter episodes (especially 'Circe', 'Eumaeus' and 'Ithaca') also rehash events that happen in the earlier episodes; it would be interesting to see the ways in which direct experiences become memories, or in the case of 'Ithaca', statistics and tabulations. It would also be worthwhile to consider what Patricia Parker, in her *Literary Fat Ladies* calls "Joyce's open-ended ending," the 'Penelope' episode, as a response to Bloom's perception of Molly's body.

Works Cited

[9] And there are all sorts of innuendos here as well, in the homosociality of the vestals' situating (at the top of a tower; rejecting the proud "onehandled" male statue), as well as a slightly more scatological orality suggested by "plumstones."

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