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DAVID P. RANDO

THE FUTURE OF JOYCE'S *A PORTRAIT*: THE *KÜNSTLERROMAN* AND HOPE

Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* generates a number of questions about the future, as any good *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman* should do. These genres, which depict, respectively, the way in which a young hero is educated, matures, and assimilates into his or her society, and the way in which a nascent artist is formed, cause readers to wonder about the fate of the budding aspirant in whom they have become invested. Among the many other coordinates that the novel interests readers in tracking is whether Stephen will fail or succeed as an artist. Can or will he mature into the kind of artist capable of writing a book like *A Portrait*? Can or will he forge an art capable of affecting the Irish 'racial' conscience or the nationalist politics of Ireland? This essay aims to capture some of the future effects that are the consequence of the way in which *A Portrait* manipulates the artist novel genre.

To access some of these future effects I draw on the twentieth century's most exhaustive theorist of hope and future, Ernst Bloch. Bloch, a contemporary of Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, with philosophical affinities with the Frankfurt School, is usually overlooked in Joyce criticism and in Anglophone modernist studies more broadly.¹ However, as interest in poststructuralist conceptualizations of identity, power, and subversion continue to wane in literary studies, there is a renewed interest in alternate ways of reading modernists such as Joyce politically. Enda Duffy has recently argued that we should conceive of Joyce as political not because his texts are subversive, but rather because the intensity of Joyce's language — his 'will to visualize' — creates a 'politically active aesthetic'.² I argue that part of this politically active aesthetic and will to visualize consists of Joyce's wishful images, his ability to conjure better worlds and to conceive of the future as fundamentally open to possibility.

Bloch offers a refined mode of detecting political hopes in daily life and practices and of incorporating such hopes, as well as the possibilities they give rise to, into our picture of past and present reality. Under Bloch's gaze the

world comes to seem drenched in wishful images and hopes that, however misdirected or misrecognized at present, are nonetheless politically vital to the calculation of possible futures. At the end of his encyclopaedic *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch concludes, 'man everywhere is still living in prehistory, indeed all and everything still stands before the creation of the world, of a right world.'³ One justification for this extraordinary view is Bloch's conviction that descriptions of reality that omit real possibility (things that *could* happen, however remote or unlikely they seem) are incomplete. Accordingly he writes, '*Concrete utopia stands on the horizon of every reality; real possibility surrounds the open dialectical tendencies and latencies to the very last.*'⁴ Fredric Jameson captures Bloch's vision in this way: 'little by little wherever we look everything in the world becomes [...] a manifestation of that primordial movement toward the future and toward [...] Utopia, and whose vital presence, behind whatever distortions, beneath whatever layers of repression, may always be detected, no matter how faintly, by the instruments and apparatus of hope itself.'⁵ It is to just such a hopeful gaze I wager that *A Portrait* will respond.

In a set of paired essays written in the early 1960s — 'A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel [*Detektivromans*]' and 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist [*Künstlerromans*]' — Bloch views the genres of the detective novel and the artist novel as essentially opposed. The detective novel, according to Bloch, has an Oedipal form, modelled on Oedipus's encounter with the Sphinx in Sophocles; detective fiction begins with an enigma rooted in the past — what Bloch calls 'the darkness at the beginning'⁶ — and the role of the detective (and thus the desire of the reader) is to shine a light on the past, bringing it into ever more perfect recollection until the true nature of the crime is revealed. Detective fiction is a fundamentally anamnestic genre, concerned above all with the recollection of the past and modelled upon the way in which the tragic past of Oedipus is eventually remembered and its consequences made manifest.⁷

The novel of the artist, by contrast, interests readers in a creative person who longs to bring something new into the world, which Bloch calls a '*portrayal of the desire to articulate that which has never yet been heard in Apollo*'.⁸ For Bloch, the *Künstlerroman* fundamentally 'requires recognition of and interest in the creative person who brings out something new instead of something past'.⁹ In this way the novel of the artist invests readers in the production of the yet-unseen masterwork that the aspiring artist seeks to create. Bloch writes, 'The detective story depends on penetrating and digging up material, while the inventive story depends on revealing and shaping it in

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the not-yet and out of the not-yet that arises before us as that of the work'.¹⁰ Because it leads readers to anticipate and even to welcome the new and the not-yet, the artist novel is organized prospectively where detective fiction is oriented retrospectively.

But while the *Künstlerroman* may give readers a *desire* for the new masterpiece, it cannot quite satisfy them with the new masterpiece *itself*, because the longed-for artwork cannot or at least does not typically appear within the *Künstlerroman* narrative. It is usually posited as the great but undefined artwork that the aspiring artist will go on to create in the future. Sometimes, as is potentially the case with *A Portrait*, the novel itself could stand as the culmination of the artist-hero's ambition and skill — if, that is, *A Portrait* could be interpreted as the fine artwork that Stephen Dedalus will go on to write — but even in such cases the fictional artwork itself cannot be said to reside *within* the *Künstlerroman* narrative, and the longed-for work may still inhabit that wishful space between the character-artist's will and desire and the author's product. It is almost inevitable that precisely on the ground where readers are conditioned by the generic conventions of the artist novel to train their hopes for the new that an open space will persist. As Jameson puts it, 'this emptiness of the work within the work, this blank canvas at the center, is [for Bloch] the very locus of the not-yet-existent itself'.¹¹ As readers await the artist's masterpiece, the *Künstlerroman* transmits to them the impulse to 'make it new', to break from the past. But because this desired artwork cannot appear within the novel *about* the artist and also is not exactly identical to the novel itself, readers return from the world of fiction with a distinct sense of what Bloch calls the 'not-yet',¹² with what we might call an undischarged longing for the new. For Bloch, there are utopian implications that issue from this feature of the *Künstlerroman*. Having brought readers to anticipate and to value the 'not-yet', the *Künstlerroman* is fundamentally a genre of hope. It is especially important to Bloch because it is a genre preoccupied with the ontological openness of the future, the future that tends to arrive in forms we cannot exactly anticipate.

In an early section of *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch tries to catalogue the character of wishes that typify various stages of human development. The 'little daydreams' that Bloch attributes to children, adolescents, and young adults often mirror the wishes and daydreams of Stephen Dedalus and the resemblance suggests the extent to which hope motivates Stephen and propels the narrative. Bloch especially attributes many creative and artistic wishful impulses to youth. These youthful hopes and wishes would doubtless sound

some familiar chords in readers of *A Portrait*.¹³ One of them seems particularly resonant for Stephen, who as a nascent artist can theorize at length about art, but as yet can produce only a modest villanelle. Bloch argues that at this age art is always easier to talk about than to achieve: 'Adolescents of this kind know the feeling of a fire burning inside them, of art being close, but when they try to grasp its being, it becomes dry, it shrinks so much that they cannot even fill a page. Talking at this time is common and easy, writing hard.'¹⁴

For Bloch, however, none of Stephen's daydreams and wish images of childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood would be particularly exceptional. On the contrary, he sees such wishes as typical of immature bourgeois youth.¹⁵ But if these wishes are typical of bourgeois youth, then the wishes that are characteristic of bourgeois adulthood and middle age, according to Bloch, are especially impoverished, revolving almost exclusively around sex and money. He writes, 'wishing does not decrease later on, only what is wished for diminishes'.¹⁶ Along with these wishes for sex and money come regrets about the past, missed financial or sexual opportunities, and sometimes a desire for revenge, more Simon Dedalus than Stephen. Bloch's point is to show how each stage of life is saturated with hope, but that in their bourgeois forms, hope is directed into selfish and sometimes destructive pursuits. The idea, however, is to recognize the constant current of hope that charges virtually every moment of human life and to direct it towards creating a better world rather than reproducing the bourgeois world and its desiccated or catastrophic pursuits. Reading his encyclopaedic *The Principle of Hope*, in which (to modify the narrator of 'Araby') wishful images accompany one into even those places most hostile to hope, one is impressed with two thoughts: first, that hope is the most abundant and most decisively future-oriented, or 'expectant' emotion; and, second, that it is tragically, even catastrophically narrowed and misdirected under capitalism. It is therefore precisely within the impoverished hope-worlds of middle class readers that the *Künstlerroman* form has an important role to play. Bloch writes, 'Instead of the so-called higher echelons of society, the life of the artist seems to be more attractive—the successful artist and accordingly his novel of the artist'.¹⁷ In spite of Stephen's callowness, his anxiety, and his mistakes, the important fact is that — unlike his friends, who mostly choose among the (admittedly meagre) options available to them for aspiring to bourgeois success — civil and colonial service, medical school, and so on — Stephen is represented on the cusp of maturity with wishes for a better world still intact, and this hope that diverges from the bourgeois wishes of middle age helps to characterize the

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cultural and political work that the artist novel can do, as well, perhaps, as the genre's enduring appeal to bourgeois readers.

But *A Portrait* is not an entirely conventional *Künstlerroman*, for at least two reasons. First, the question of the future in Joyce's artist novel is complicated by Joyce's reprisal of Stephen in *Ulysses*. Robert Scholes represents the approach of many subsequent critics when he argues, 'If the Stephen in *Ulysses* is the same person as the Stephen in *A Portrait*—and there seems to be no question about this—then we must consider *Ulysses* in interpreting *Portrait*.'¹⁸ More recently, Gregory Castle refers to *Ulysses* as *A Portrait*'s 'dangerous supplement',¹⁹ a poststructuralist term that evokes the curious situation in which something that is ostensibly whole and self-sufficient nonetheless seems to require completion by something external to it. However different *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* are as novels, and however greatly their narrative ambitions and intentions may vary, the two have become almost inexorably hermeneutically linked. This makes *A Portrait*'s relation to the future quite different from artist novels whose heroes walk off into eternity at the end, long before they ever have a chance to do so on Sandymount strand.²⁰

On the one hand, the routine frequency with which critics turn to *Ulysses* in order to answer specific questions raised by *A Portrait* only substantiates the extent to which the idea of the future is somehow central to *A Portrait*. Yet, on the other hand, as sensible as Scholes's claim that critics must consider *Ulysses* when interpreting *A Portrait* is, unreflective or automatic recourse to *Ulysses* can distort interpretations of *A Portrait*. The simplest reason for this, it seems to me, has to do with genre: *A Portrait* is primarily a *Künstlerroman* and *Ulysses*, whatever it may be, is primarily not one. I think we can see some of this generic distortion in Hugh Kenner's criticism when he makes what he calls 'the crushing ironies of *Ulysses*'²¹ central to his influential reading of Stephen in *A Portrait* as an unwitting 'victim being prepared for a sacrifice'.²² Even were we to agree with Kenner that *Ulysses* is a book of *crushing* ironies, and on most days I do not think I do, it still seems unfitting to apply those ironies to *A Portrait*, which remains to the last open towards the future: 'Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race' (*P* V.2788–90). While there is certainly a repeating structural pattern in the novel of highs followed by lows, and while we can recognize many features of Stephen's national, cultural, and personal worlds that seem likely to inhibit his artistic ambition, it does not seem to me as though anything in *A Portrait* proper necessarily crushes the ontological openness of the future, its real possibility.

Now, it is true that Joyce seems first to have conceived of *Ulysses* as an extension of the loosely autobiographical story that he was telling in *Stephen Hero* and in what later became *A Portrait*. As he wrote to Ezra Pound in 1915, '[*Ulysses*] is a continuation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* after three years' interval.'²³ A late fragment from the manuscript of *A Portrait*, referred to as the 'Doherty fragment', after the name given there to Buck Mulligan's precursor, seems to show that Joyce once considered ending *A Portrait* with Stephen leaving Ireland as a result of the Martello tower quarrel, which, of course, he later used as the starting point for *Ulysses*.²⁴ The genesis of *Ulysses* is thus fully imbricated with Joyce's composition of *A Portrait*, which is consistent with Joyce's habit, as A. Walton Litz describes it, in which 'Phrases, characters, and long passages are deleted from one manuscript only to appear later in a different context.'²⁵ This general compositional practice, the narrative and temporal continuity between *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, and Joyce's specific reworking of the Doherty fragment make it reasonable to say that *Ulysses* is a kind of 'sequel' to *A Portrait*, at least according to the conventional definition of the term: 'a literary work that, although complete in itself, forms a continuation of a preceding one' (*OED*). But the inadequacy of the word 'sequel' only helps to show that the distortion cuts both ways: to define *Ulysses* as a 'continuation' of *A Portrait* is to make one of the most comical understatements available to literary history; it is to underestimate radically the ambitions and means of a novel that might have begun as a continuation of *A Portrait*, but which then grew to epic proportions. We could even say that *Ulysses* challenges the limits of the concept of a sequel because, although it in part continues a preceding story, its method and purpose of telling differ so dramatically from the preceding story as to render the two more than a little alien from each other.

Even if *Ulysses* were a sequel, I would say that it is far from *the* sequel to *A Portrait*. In other words, the present represented in *Ulysses* is not and could not be exactly identical to the future as it is *posited* by *A Portrait*. It is not that I would argue that the two take place in slightly different fictional worlds, although that may be true, but rather because as a *Künstlerroman* *A Portrait* necessarily has a generic commitment to the future of a kind that the epic *Ulysses* need not have. Specifically, to too quickly swallow the supplement of *Ulysses* is to deny the hopeful and even, as I will later suggest, hopefully utopian work that *A Portrait* does through its negotiation of the generic form of the artist novel. In other words, as a *Künstlerroman* *A Portrait* naturally has a number of future effects, some of which may have been obscured because of

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the 'accident' of Stephen's later appearance in *Ulysses*, but which the later novel, however it represents Stephen, cannot retrospectively negate.

But if the first reason that *A Portrait* departs from the conventional *Künstlerroman* has to do with the future represented by *Ulysses*, then the second reason involves *A Portrait's* relationship to the past, in the form of its obsession with origins. Joyce's pattern of charting present progress and forward growth as they are enmeshed with origins dates back at least as far as the work to which *A Portrait* is itself a kind of 'sequel': Joyce's 1904 essay, 'A Portrait of the Artist'. There Joyce wrote, 'the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actual present is a phase only' (PSW 211). The past mediates the succession of presents and also determines the trajectory or curve of the subject's future course. However, in that essay Joyce also acknowledges that the earliest past has a mysterious or perhaps inaccessible quality, because the portrait itself can only start after the subject has achieved 'use of reason' (PSW 211). Similarly, we might say that one of the defining aspects of *A Portrait* is that there is a curious 'darkness at the beginning' of this novel of the 'not-yet'. Bloch argues that the detective and artist genres are essentially opposed, yet one of the most distinctive features of *A Portrait* is the strange way that it smuggles the detective form and its orientation towards obscure origins into the artist novel. At the risk of oversimplifying, for schematic purposes I am going to associate *A Portrait's* 'not-yet' with the green rose that Stephen imagines during his sums lesson — 'But you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the world you could' (P I.197–8) — and associate the 'darkness at the beginning' with the word, *Fætus*, which Stephen finds carved into a desk of the anatomy theatre in Cork when he searches for his father's initials — 'A vision of their life, which his father's words had been powerless to evoke, sprang up before him out of the word cut in the desk' (P II.1053–5). Each image marks a horizon or a vanishing point, but one looks forward to the not-yet and the other looks backward to the darkness at the beginning.

Maud Ellmann notes that when Stephen searches the desks in the Queen's College anatomy theatre for his father's initials — the father's phallic signature — he discovers instead the carved *Fætus*—the mother's umbilical scar. She writes, 'Both the timing and the meaning of the word suggest the *Fætus* represents the navel of the novel: the founding scar that marks the primordial attachment of the fetus to the mother.'²⁶ The *Fætus* scene is one that looks back to Stephen's origins, both paternal and maternal. Yet it remains a puzzle; the word itself is a Sphinx whose riddle could only be unravelled by a return to the

source, to the darkness at the beginning. But to unravel the navel would be to reopen the maternal scar that marks the end of umbilical attachment between the mother and child and the beginning of individual identity itself. Because, as Ellmann argues, the navel, 'is the central plughole through which language and identity go down the drain',²⁷ we cannot unravel the *Fætus* back to a point of origin. *Fætus* is therefore the best image in the novel for a kind of endless anxiety about identity and origins, an anxiety that makes it on some level impossible *not* to read Joyce's artist novel as detective fiction.

So *A Portrait* defies Bloch's definition of the detective novel as fundamentally anamnestic and the *Künstlerroman* as primarily oriented towards the future to the extent that it can be read as though it were a detective novel, under the mark of the *Fætus*, as readily as it can be read as an artist novel, under the name of the green rose.²⁸ Many of the most enduring debates about *A Portrait* have tended to locate critical interest in the past of the narration rather than in the novel's orientation towards the future. For instance, the intractably enduring problem of assessing the relationship between author and character, narrator and protagonist — what Mark Wollaeger calls the 'irony crux'²⁹ — turns the critic into a detective for a crime in the past that can only be described as the author's ambivalence towards the hero. The clues by which the critic-detective attempts to determine the precise quality of the Sphinx-like author's ambivalence are read in the act of writing, the growing or narrowing gulf of ironic distance, and in the narrative texture itself. In this case, what Bloch calls 'that "X" that precedes the beginning'³⁰ in detective fiction is Joyce's attitude towards Stephen prior to or during his act or acts of writing. This becomes *A Portrait's* primordial and immemorial element, its original sin and fall from grace. No reading emblemizes this orientation towards the clues of the past more than Kenner's bravura act of literary detection that shines a critical light on the darkness of the novel's beginning, arguing that *A Portrait's* 'first two pages [...] enact the entire action in microcosm'.³¹ If, as Bloch writes, 'every last investigation of origins is related to the Oedipal form, which treats the incognito basically not just as an unknown of the logical variety, but also as something uncanny, unknown even to itself',³² then Kenner's reading is an investigative reaction *par excellence* to the novel's darkness before the event and to its uncanny origins.

Not surprisingly, the novel has also invited psychoanalytical readings that tend to be persistently anamnestic, viewing Stephen's early Oedipal coordinates as determinant of his subsequent course. Typically, the movement of the novel is described as a series of compulsive and neurotic repetitions

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and returns to Oedipal origins, a preoccupation that tends to obscure or even to discount *A Portrait's* movement towards the new and the unknown.³³ Indeed, psychoanalytical critics often, though not always, regard the new with knowing pessimism or even cynicism.³⁴

The novel has also invited critical detection of Stephen's development, which diagnoses the roots of his inadequacies, failures, or his lack of understanding. These critics are often pessimistic about Stephen's potential, although some find cause for cautious optimism.³⁵ Diagnostic interpretations are, of course, central to the *Bildungsroman* genre because they involve questions of education and learning. Moreover, the novel's ambiguity about Stephen as artist allows for and even demands that the novel be read as detective fiction, to trace the roots of potential failure. The artist novel genre has a tradition of depicting those who fail to become artists, though this is generally unambiguous. As Bloch comments: many are called, but few are chosen.³⁶ The difficulty is that we cannot quite tell if this is the case for Stephen, so we scrutinize his roots all the more carefully. At the same time, interpretations that see Stephen's many shortcomings as definitive evidence of his permanent failure to become an artist deplete the *Künstlerroman's* native stock of hope that Joyce's narrative relies on. If anxiety may be seen as the dominant anticipatory emotion of the detective form — the crime committed in the past becomes the anxious exigency of the present, from the ground of which the detective seeks its future revelation and resolution — then we can characterize readings of *A Portrait* in the mould of detective fiction as practicing a hermeneutic of anxiety. We might also conclude that one of the distinctive features of Joyce's *Künstlerroman* is that it invites and to some extent relies upon this kind of anxiety.

But as much as *A Portrait* has elicited interest in the 'darkness at the beginning', it has also produced readings that evoke and evaluate specific hopes for the future that are aligned with the *Künstlerroman's* 'not-yet', and Stephen's green rose. At the beginning of the novel, Stephen sings, 'O, the geen wothe botheth' (*P* I.12), which is his childish conflation of, 'O, the wild rose blossoms / On the little green place' (*P* I.9–10). In this, Stephen's first artistic transfiguration, accidental as it might be, he begins to bring a new thing — a green rose — into existence just as the novel begins. The green rose has a range of determinant meanings, all of which attach to hopes about the future. Most obviously, the green rose signifies Stephen's desire to be an artist and to create something that the world has not seen before: 'I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world' (*P* V.2726–7), he says. The green rose is the not-yet of artistic genesis.³⁷

Many critics find something genuine in Stephen's intention to forge the conscience of the Irish race in not just hopeful but even potentially utopian ways. For Marian Eide, sexual and moral freedom are inseparable from Joyce's nationalism, and she argues that Joyce intends 'to reconcile physical and intellectual creation', an arch-utopian goal if there ever was one.³⁸ Emer Nolan argues that *A Portrait* is invested in 'the creation of the ideal national community, in a projected future and a collective freedom'.³⁹ Pericles Lewis sees Stephen as striving for 'moral unity' with the conscience of his race, arguing that 'Joyce's narrative technique seems to offer some hope that Stephen will succeed in achieving this mystical union'.⁴⁰ Vincent Cheng goes even further by viewing the potentiality contained in Stephen's image of the 'green rose' not just as representing Irish independence, but specifically 'Irish nationhood within the world community', aligning Joyce's values not entirely with those of Stephen but also with the internationalist and utopian values of MacCann.⁴¹

But what Bloch can really teach us in this case is that all of these readings of the green rose are finally *too* determinant, that they limit our comprehension of the political potential of the novel through their determinacy. Just as critics cannot be satisfied with *A Portrait* as a detective novel that leads backwards into the darkness of the *Fætus*, so is it inadequate to follow the sign of the green rose to interpretations that find a point of *fixed* hope the desire for which the novel organizes. And just as the *Fætus* attaches to specific parental and Oedipal anxieties but also signifies, in an inexhaustible manner, a generalized and perhaps insoluble anxiety rooted in and pertaining to the past (which I will say more about later), so does the green rose exceed the specific hopes to which it can attach by signifying a generalized hopefulness and a genuine openness to the future. It is in this free-floating openness and hopefulness that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* assumes its most political and utopian dimension. Because it would be too simple to say that it merely *symbolizes* Stephen's personal freedom or Ireland's political freedom, let us posit that this green rose represents an elusive kind of freedom yet unknown in the world. Even more, let us say that Joyce's green rose *allegorizes* freedom (in Benjamin's transitory sense of allegory in contrast to what Bloch calls the symbol's '*Unitas of one sense*')⁴² across a shifting array of senses, from artistic to national to international, but especially in this final sense: absolute and unalienated freedom. One way of articulating this imaginary and utopian state would be as the young Karl Marx did, locating such freedom in nothing short of 'the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man

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and man'.⁴³ Like the green rose, this freedom has never existed in the world, but through the new artwork that the novel posits but cannot produce, Joyce's *Künstlerroman* makes its audience desire precisely that which has never yet been known: the highest good.

Notoriously, the future does not always arrive in the forms that we can anticipate. The future is more radically open to possibility than any of the specific questions that emerge from *A Portrait* can account for. Yet this openness to possibilities that cannot be named in advance is a crucial component of the *Künstlerroman*, whose central generic investment in the Not-Yet-Conscious — which Bloch defines as 'the psychological birthplace of the New'⁴⁴ — has not yet sufficiently found articulation within political criticism of Joyce's novel. Bloch helps to reconceive the revolutionary quality of *A Portrait* as fundamentally open to the future, but not always to a specific future and not always in forms that we can easily hope for or even ask about. For example, Stephen's decision to reject the priesthood is followed by his epiphanic vision of the bird-girl, which confirms for Stephen his vocation as artist. Both of these scenes have generated enormous critical attention, and for good reason: they are major turning points in the way in which Stephen imagines potential concrete futures for himself. His visions of a religious and an artistic future guide the decisions he makes in the present and these decisions will have much to do with the succession of events in the future. There are, however, less concrete but no less important ways in which *A Portrait* is oriented towards the future.

A good example of undefined openness and hope occurs precisely in the connective tissue between Stephen's rejection of the priesthood and his artistic epiphany in the next section. The end of the priesthood section comes at a special point in the novel because Stephen has rejected a religious career but has not yet embraced an artistic one. Stephen is open to the future, but does not yet have a specific future in mind. The section culminates with a scene in which Stephen and his siblings, on the verge of yet another change of address because of the family's descent into poverty, sing Thomas Moore's 'Oft in the Stilly Night' together. Stephen recognizes the weariness in the voices of his young brothers and sisters, having already begun to be ground down by poverty, yet their voices also remind him of Newman, who found in the weariness of children an accompanying hope. This little scene tells us something, but it is not something that we have necessarily been trained to want to know: the family singing scene has generated little critical attention, probably because it falls right between two of Stephen's most weighty

concrete decisions about his future. It does not seem to say anything at all about the specific questions about the future that the novel poses, or at least it seems to speak to these specific questions with so much less muscle than other celebrated passages that it is usually confidently overlooked. However, the scene could be an emblem of the tough and sinewy sort of hope-stuff that comprises and holds the scenes of *A Portrait* together as it ambles towards specific futures with a generally wishful sense of futurity. I would therefore like to look closely at this tissue to see what it can yield for a generic reading of Joyce's novel.

Coming after Stephen rejects the priesthood but before he embraces a vocation as an artist, the family singing passage evokes hope before it becomes channelled into a specific hope, whether about the artist, the nation, the Irish people, or even about the family's most pressing financial troubles. Just after one of Stephen's sisters reveals that the landlord is on the verge of putting the family out, the song begins:

The voice of his youngest brother from the farther side of the fireplace began to sing the air *Oft in the Stilly Night*. One by one the others took up the air until a full choir of voices was singing. They would sing so for hours, melody after melody, glee after glee, till the last pale light died down on the horizon, till the first dark nightclouds came forth and night fell (*P* IV.586–91).

Thomas Moore's 'Oft in the Stilly Night' is an appropriately crepuscular choice of song for the hour of the day. Moore's sleepless, solitary speaker reflects sadly on better days and departed friends, and likens himself to the only person remaining in a deserted banquet hall. The air's yearning for better days chimes with the happier and more affluent past of the declining Dedalus family. But the song also presents several ironic or even comic contrasts to the setting. The siblings are too young for all their friends to have died, and far from being sole survivors, they are instead represented as part of a family choir, one tightly knit enough to sing for hours together and to speak in a distinctively jokey family vernacular ('Goneboro toboro lookboro atboro aboro houseboro' [*P* IV.576]) that further suggests their close community. Even if the siblings are unfortunately experienced enough to be able to look back on more secure and prosperous times, the fact that it is the youngest brother who takes up the song only heightens the contrast between the song's strong nostalgia and the scanty store of years available to the children as fodder for wistful recollection.

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Stephen notices the painful contrast between youth and fatigue in 'the overtone of weariness behind their frail fresh innocent voices' (P IV.593–4), but he dwells less on the past and more on what his siblings' singing voices signal about their attitude towards the future: 'Even before they set out on life's journey they seemed weary already of the way' (P IV.595–6). This idea leads Stephen to further meditation:

He heard the choir of voices in the kitchen echoed and multiplied through an endless reverberation of the choirs of endless generations of children: and heard in all the echoes an echo also of the recurring note of weariness and pain. All seemed weary of life even before entering upon it. And he remembered that Newman had heard this note also in the broken lines of Virgil *giving utterance, like the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness yet hope of better things which has been the experience of her children in every time.* (P IV.597–605, emphasis in the original)

Stephen's instinct to abstract and universalize his siblings' voices ('the choirs of endless generations of children') may deny to them some of the particularities of their situation, but the abstracting move also enables him, through John Henry Newman, to identify and articulate the hope of better things to come that Stephen also recognizes in their song alongside their anxiety about the future. The passage from Newman's *An Essay in the Aid of a Grammar of Assent* that Stephen remembers (more or less accurately) comes as part of a series of examples that Newman gives of what he calls 'real assent' to, or belief in, given propositions. In this example, Newman imagines a young boy who, learning Horace or Homer, may initially be unable to distinguish their verses from those of any number of merely clever writers. Real assent to or faith in the propositions contained in the passages of classic authors eludes the inexperienced boy, but it comes later to the more experienced adult: 'at length [these passages] come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness.'⁴⁵

The Newman comparison suggests that Stephen believes that his siblings will come to understand the sad and nostalgic verses of Moore only after gathering more experience of life, yet their past and present experiences of poverty already help them to intuit the weariness of life's journey to come,

even if they cannot yet experience real assent to Moore's propositions about the passage of time, vanished youth, lost love, and dead friends. Yet Stephen, too, is still a young man, as the title of the novel emphasizes, and as Joyce emphasized to Frank Budgen.⁴⁶ Much of what his comparison to Newman implies about the limited experience and intuition of his siblings applies equally well to Stephen. Moreover, the prospective weariness that Stephen attributes to his siblings and that readers may attribute to Stephen is inseparable from hope: children may regard the journey of life to come with reluctance and weariness when they encounter verses like those of Moore that spell out the perhaps inevitable losses to come, yet because by definition these children lack the experience that could confirm Moore's melancholy in the form of real assent, there is an inescapable anticipatory character in their singing that also leaves a space for hope. The weariness about what is to come combines with inexperience to create a strange formula for hope.

Just prior to the family singing scene is another emblematic wishful image, also a musical one. As Stephen's conversation with the priest about a potential vocation ends, 'a quartet of young men' passes, singing: 'The music passed in an instant, as the first bars of sudden music always did, over the fantastic fabrics of his mind, dissolving them painlessly and noiselessly as a sudden wave dissolves the sandbuilt turrets of children' (*P* IV.469–72). The image of music dissolving the fabrics of his mind just as a wave dissolves children's sandcastles looks back to the novel's nadir of hopelessness, Father Arnall's description of the eternal spiritual pains of Hell. In Father Arnall's punishing and hopeless vision of Hell a little bird carries away one grain of sand every million years, and even after it shuttles away the entire mountain, and then mountain after mountain, 'eternity would have scarcely begun' (*P* III.1087). Yet here the quartet's song seems to wash away in a single wave the hopelessness that in Father Arnall's Hell would have had to be removed grain by grain for eternity. The sudden wave that music creates in Stephen's mind is an image of artistic abundance or surplus. Perhaps to say that Joyce's writing strives towards the condition of music is not so much to claim that it aspires towards a musical rhythm or tone, but rather that it seeks to share in what Bloch hears in music: the surplus of hope-material that points towards the future without naming a specific future.⁴⁷ *A Portrait's* moments of definitive futurity are actually the exception; wishful tissue of this kind is the rule.

In sum, I have argued that Joyce's images of real possibility, of the openness of the future, and of movement towards a utopian resolution of conflict and genuine freedom, especially in the wishful tissue of the novel, constitute an

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overlooked political function of *A Portrait* not only through its representations of hope, but also through the impulse towards the 'not-yet' that it can transmit to readers. At the same time, *A Portrait's* distinctive alignment of the detective and artist novel genres works in such a way that the future horizon of the novel melts into the vanishing point of its obscure beginnings. Its openness to the future meets the novel's darkness at the beginning. Hope and anxiety are entwined, and it may be that part of what is enduring about the novel is the way in which the *Fætus* gestates into the green rose and the green rose blooms into the *Fætus* in a distinctively Joycean transformation of the kind that Fritz Senn and others have helped us to see organizing Joyce's metamorphic texts.⁴⁸

Finally, I must try to define the way in which the detective story elements that *A Portrait* exhibits distinguish Joyce's novel from other novels of the artist and affect its political meaning. In order to do so, however, we need to redefine the type of anxiety that circulates through *A Portrait's* detective form. As we have seen, critics tend to define this anxiety in sexual and especially Oedipal terms. But here again Bloch can offer a useful modification. Unlike Freud, who sees the sexual drive as the root of anxiety, Bloch, following Marx, sees hunger in the context of the social environment as the foundation of anxiety, including 'subsistence worries, economic despair, and existential anxiety'.⁴⁹ Therefore things such as socioeconomic concerns, world wars, and fascism lie at the root of anxiety. Psychoanalytical readings that overlook the socioeconomic roots of anxiety, I would argue, misidentify the novel's Sphinx, whose riddle poses the problem not of sex but of hunger. Irish hunger has been well historicized, of course. For a person of Joyce's generation, the Famine would have represented an irreducible anxiety that precedes even the individual's ancient Oedipal dramas. The *Fætus* may be a consequence of sex, but its only exigency is hunger. As Bloch writes, 'The stomach is the first lamp into which oil must be poured'.⁵⁰ In *A Portrait*, the detective impulse leads finally to the digging out of the material conditions of hunger, which is as ever-present in the novel's connective tissue as its wishful content. Hunger is there at the beginning of the family singing scene, in the 'latchless door' (P IV.558) and 'naked hallway' (P IV.559) of the Dedalus house, and in the 'second watered tea' (P IV.561) and 'the small glassjars and jampots which did service for teacups' (IV.562-3). Hunger is especially present in the 'turnover' that his siblings have just eaten, which is described as 'ravaged' (P IV.567).

As a detective novel *A Portrait* uncovers a persistent socioeconomic anxiety that manifests itself in hunger and in other forms throughout the text, while as an artist novel it points towards a better future by investing readers in the

creation of the new and by supporting this impulse by wishful images of real possibility woven into otherwise harsh material reality. *A Portrait* therefore combines hope and anxiety, possibility and hunger, horizon and vanishing point, green rose and *Fœtus*, even dissolved sandcastle and ravaged turnover, in order to orient readers towards detecting and uncovering the material conditions of anxiety, but also, within those material conditions, to recognize real possibility and the ontological openness of the future. Joyce's artist novel is, to borrow two last phrases from Bloch, an 'art for hope's sake',⁵¹ but it is always an 'educated hope',⁵² a hope whose *Bildung* has been in hunger. As we have seen, sometimes Joyce's images evoke concrete possibilities, but more often they take the form of a wishful impulse toward a better future that can hardly be named in advance. Unlike what readers of *Ulysses* might suppose, the future of *A Portrait* cannot be known in advance. To read *A Portrait*, rather, is to keep awaiting the masterpiece it posits (not just the masterpieces Joyce wrote), to remain attuned to its hopeful and anxious impulses, to feel its real possibilities and its irreducible socioeconomic anxieties, and to nurture its wishful images of determinate, indeterminate, and, at its most distant horizon, utopian futures.

NOTES:

1. It is characteristic of Bloch's forward-looking work that his time in Anglophone criticism seems always just about to arrive. For evidence of recent interest in Bloch, see the essays in *The Privatization of Hope: Ernst Bloch and the Future of Utopia*, edited by Peter Thompson and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013) and, earlier, *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, edited by Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (London: Verso, 1997).
2. Enda Duffy, 'The Happy Ring House', *European Joyce Studies 21: Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism*, edited by Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), p. 176, p. 177.
3. Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 Volumes, translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 1375.
4. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 223. Emphasis in original.
5. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 120.
6. Ernst Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel', *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, translated by Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), p. 256.

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7. For more on the way in which Bloch links Freudian psychoanalysis with anamnesis, see Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp. 51–113.
8. Ernst Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist', *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, p. 274. Emphasis in the original.
9. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist', p. 267.
10. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist', p. 276.
11. Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, p. 132.
12. Perhaps even, 'not yet, though venisoon after' (FW 3.10).
13. VFor instance, about children Bloch writes, 'The hidden boy is also breaking out, in a shy way. He is searching for what is far away, even though he shuts himself in, it is just that in breaking free he has girded himself round and round with walls' (Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 23). About adolescents Bloch writes, 'Even later on this combination of narrowness and beautiful foreign lands does not disappear. In other words: from this time the wishful land is an island', and 'Around the thirteenth year, the fellow-travelling ego is discovered. That is the reason why dreams of a better life grow so luxuriantly around this time' (Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 24). At the time of young adulthood, the nature of wishes begins to change: 'Loneliness is no longer sought after and spun out in fantasies, but is intolerable, it is the most intolerable aspect of the life that begins at seventeen', and 'The young person torments himself with the enjoyable prospect of this future, he wants to induce it all at once, even with storms, suffering, thunder and lightning, as long as it is just life, real life that has so far not yet become' (Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 26, p. 27).
14. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 27.
15. Bloch even associates such dreams and dreamers with potentially catastrophic outcomes, such as a susceptibility to fascism: 'The often invoked streak of blue in the bourgeois sky became of course a streak of blood: the stupid or stupefied had their own strong man called Hitler. But the greyness of a young mediocrity has never shone without capricious figures; the wish itself puts them on his arm. At this time, between the March and June of life, there is not a break, either love fills it up, or the prospect of a kind of stormy dignity.' Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 29.
16. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 29.
17. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist', p. 265.
18. Robert Scholes, 'Stephen Dedalus: Poet or Esthete?', in James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Text, Criticism, and Notes*, edited by Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 468–9. Making a similar point, Wayne Booth claims that ironic readings of Stephen occurred to nobody at least until *Ulysses* was published. Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 333.

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19. Gregory Castle, 'Coming of Age in the Age of Empire: Joyce's Modernist *Bildungsroman*', *James Joyce Quarterly* 50.1–2 (Fall 2012–Winter 2013), 359–84 (p. 379).
20. In *Ulysses*, Stephen wonders, 'Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?' (*U* 3.18–19).
21. Hugh Kenner, 'The *Portrait* in Perspective', in *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*, edited by Mark A. Wollaeger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 39. Kenner also points out Joyce's comment to Frank Budgen that in *Ulysses* Stephen 'has a shape that can't be changed'. See Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 105.
22. Kenner, 'The *Portrait* in Perspective', p. 55. Kenner also understands *A Portrait* in relation to *Dubliners* in a manner that potentially distorts *A Portrait*, as when he argues that *A Portrait* is an extended *Dubliners* story of 'paralysis, frustration, or a sorry, endlessly painful, coming to terms'. See Kenner, 'Joyce's *Portrait*—A Reconsideration', in *James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, edited by John Paul Riquelme (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), p. 361.
23. Quoted in *JIII* 383.
24. This is BL Add MS 49975. The fragment appears with commentary in A. Walton Litz, *Method and Design in 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegans Wake'* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 132–41, and in *The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'*, edited by Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), pp. 106–8. Litz points to internal evidence to call the fragment a 'late draft' (p. 136), and argues, 'in the original plan of his autobiographical novel [...] the Martello tower episode was intended to be the cause for Stephen's leaving Ireland' (p. 137). Similarly, Scholes and Kain comment, 'Fragment 2 indicates that Joyce's intention in *A Portrait* was to have Stephen's departure into exile be the result of his expulsion from the Martello Tower by the Gogarty-figure called Doherty in this fragment and in the Pola notebook but Mulligan in *Ulysses*' (p. 106).
25. Litz, *Method and Design*, p. 132.
26. Maud Ellmann, 'The Name and the Scar: Identity in *The Odyssey* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', in *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*, pp. 143–81 (p. 169).
27. Ellmann, 'The Name and the Scar', p. 172.
28. In a recent article, Lise Jaillant notes that in 1928 *A Portrait* was published in the Modern Library series contemporaneously with *Fourteen Great Detective Stories*. She writes, 'Not only did the two books share a similar physical format, but they were displayed in the same way. Indeed, *Fourteen Great*

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- Detective Stories* was number 144 in the series, and *A Portrait*, number 145. As booksellers generally arranged Modern Library books by numbers on a special display rack', she continues, 'most consumers would have encountered the two texts simultaneously', Lise Jaillant, 'Blurring the Boundaries: *Fourteen Great Detective Stories* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the Modern Library Series', *James Joyce Quarterly* 50.3 (Spring 2013), 767–96 (p. 769).
29. Mark A. Wollaeger, 'Introduction', in *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*, p. 21.
 30. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel', p. 256.
 31. Kenner, 'The *Portrait* in Perspective', p. 33.
 32. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel', p. 260.
 33. Chester G. Anderson exemplifies this approach in rhetorically dramatic fashion when he argues of the novel's hopeful ending, 'Even if we had forgotten Stephen's castration fears, his phobias and fetishes, his paranoia, his morbid guilt feelings and obsessions, his homosexual wishes and strong desire to be female, his coprophilia and mild masochism, the rhetoric itself might help us guess that this manic crest will have its trough'. While it is reasonable to guess that Stephen's hopeful road will be a long one because the chapters of the novel spell out an alternating pattern of elevation and deflation, and *Ulysses* could even be seen as the trough to come, Anderson's psychoanalytical coordinates deplete the obvious interest that the novel determinedly builds in what is to come in favour of the darkness of the unconscious past. Chester G. Anderson, 'Baby Tuckoo: Joyce's 'Features of Infancy'', in *Approaches to Joyce's Portrait: Ten Essays*, edited by Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), p. 135.
 34. Sheldon Brivic, for example, reads Stephen from a psychoanalytical perspective in which, even though the structure of the novel, like Stephen himself, is seen as compulsively repetitive, Stephen is yet able to recognize his repeating pattern as a preparation for changing it. Interestingly, Brivic argues that Stephen's intention 'to re-form human consciousness by bringing a new awareness of the mind through self-exploration' is an idea that has not only spread since the novel was published but, by inspiring other writers, has even advanced human freedom 'in a way that may be critical and lasting.' Out of this largely anamnestic vision of the novel, then, emerges a distinct orientation towards the new and the future in the form of the novel's subsequent effects in the world. Sheldon Brivic, 'The Disjunctive Structure of Joyce's *Portrait*', in *James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism, Second Edition*, edited by R. Brandon Kershner (Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2006), pp. 279–98 (p. 297).

35. For instance, Vicki Mahaffey argues, 'although [Stephen] grandly says no to God in the tradition of Lucifer, he has not learned to say no to the phallic function, to experience and accept his own insufficiency and self-division'. Vicki Mahaffey, 'Père-version and Im-mère-sion: Idealized Corruption in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *James Joyce Quarterly* 50.1–2 (Fall 2012–Winter 2013), 245–61 (p. 245). Other critics argue that Joyce intended for readers to diagnose the precise developmental hurdles that an ironically or satirically drawn Stephen must overcome before he can self-actualize as an artist or as a mature adult. For instance, Suzette Henke writes, 'In a tone of gentle mockery, Joyce makes clear to his audience that Stephen's fear of women and his contempt for sensuous life are among the many inhibitions that stifle this young man's creativity'. Suzette Henke, *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 84. Michael Levenson balances anamnesis with what Bloch would call the Not-Yet-Become when he argues that the burden of Joycean character is to 'be all that it has been and all that it might become.' Michael Levenson, 'Stephen's Diary in Joyce's *Portrait*—The Shape of Life', *ELH* 52.4 (Winter 1985), 1017–35 (p. 1034).
36. Bloch, 'A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist', p. 270.
37. Stephen contrasts this prospective desire with Yeats's retrospective Michael Robartes, who 'remembers forgotten beauty' and 'presses in his arms the loveliness which has long faded from the world.' Stephen's response to Yeats's anamnestic beauty is 'Not this. Not at all' (*P* V.2725–6). Critics have also noted that the green rose links Stephen to other creators. For instance, Kenner ominously associates the green rose with Daedalus who did violence to nature by trying to improve upon it, while Joseph Valente, through the 'wild' rose blossoms and the characteristic green carnation, links the green rose to Oscar Wilde. See Kenner, 'The Portrait in Perspective', 41 and Valente, 'Thrilled by His Touch: The Aestheticizing of Homosexual Panic in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', in *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*, pp. 251–2. Valente reads *A Portrait* according to the anxiety approach: 'Instead of unfolding on the latency model, which neatly conforms with the linear, quasi-organic development typical of the *Künstlerroman*, Stephen's homoerotic affects emerge in a knot or fold known, in Freudian parlance, as a 'deferred action', in this case the retroactive generation of a subsequently phobic desire' (p. 252). Here I link the green rose to Wilde not to stress Stephen's anxiety but rather to emphasize the 'not-yet' of artistic creation.
38. Marian Eide, 'The Woman of the Ballyhoura Hills: James Joyce and the Politics of Creativity', *Twentieth-Century Literature* 44.4 (Winter 1998), 377–93 (p. 388, p. 390).

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39. Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 47.
40. Pericles Lewis, 'The Conscience of the Race: The Nation as Church of the Modern Age', in *Joyce through the Ages: A Nonlinear View*, edited by Michael Patrick Gillespie (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), pp. 81–106 (p. 102).
41. Vincent Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 72.
42. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 176.
43. Karl Marx, 'Private Property and Communism' section of 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844', in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 84.
44. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 116.
45. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in the Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, edited by I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 56–7.
46. 'Some people who read my book, *A Portrait of the Artist* forget that it is called *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', Budgen, p. 60.
47. Although music, like all art, is deeply conditioned by the dominant ideology, for Bloch there also inheres within artworks, but especially music, a certain amount of 'surplus over and above their mere ideology there and then' that points over the horizon towards the utopian (Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, pp. 156–7; emphasis in the original).
48. See, for instance, Fritz Senn, 'Book of Many Turns', in *Ulysses: Fifty Years*, edited by Thomas F. Staley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), pp. 29–46.
49. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 84.
50. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 65.
51. 'l'art pour l'espoir', Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 173.
52. 'docta spes', Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 7.