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Cinematographic Joyce: The Appropriation of Gaze in "Two Gallants"

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I

Joyce's association with cinema is now an established truth, thanks to recent researches done on this issue. Much of the research point out Joyce's interest in transforming *Ulysses* into a film. Despite his ostensible disapproval of the transformation, it seems he was not entirely indifferent to the idea.[1] A more direct link between Joyce and cinema, however, is his involvement in the Volta project: a setup and arrangement for the first movie theater in Dublin. Having successfully persuaded his Italian investors, he prepared for the opening of the theater in 1909. Though the project ended up in failure, the incident shows that his interest in the theater was early enough to influence his early works. The composition of

1) According to Richard Ellmann, "Officially he discountenanced the idea (though he had once endorsed it), on the ground that the book could not be made into a film with artistic propriety" (654). However, when others, including Eisenstein, talk about the possibility of its cinematic adaptation, he did not actively discourage it (Ellmann 654).

Dubliners stories spans the period between 1904 and 1907, only a few years before his Volta adventure. Indeed, the development of visual effects by optical devices around the turn of the century was so revolutionary that it would have been difficult to ignore the new media for the artist who continually sought and experimented new forms of writing. Joyce rather seems to have actively embraced the media as a major form of his artistry. Indeed, unrefined as it is, the cinematic form is quite apparent in his short stories of *Dubliners*. Particularly in "Two Gallants" (1914), the new form is closely interlinked with its theme. My essay, claiming that developing cinematic techniques are already inscribed in this story, explores the ways in which cinematography carries and amplifies the story's theme of human commodification.

II

There has been a constant stream of criticism on the topic of Joyce and cinema. The early criticisms up to late 1980s are well-introduced in the first chapter of Thomas L. Burkdall's *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* (2001). Burkdall's monograph, together with the collection of essays in *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema* (2010), is the most well-known book-length research into Joyce and cinema. Edited by John McCourt, this collection includes a variety of approaches from Joyce and the Volta theater through the influence of early cinema on Joyce's works to the analysis of their film adaptations. The horizon is also broadened with new research on modernism and cinema. David Trotter's *Cinema and Modernism* (2007) and Andrew Shail's *The Cinema and the Origins of Literary Modernism* (2012), for example, examine the relationship between modernist writers and cinema at large. Even with such research, Joyce was an indispensable staple to developing their ideas.

Most of the research focuses on *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, yet few critics pay attention to *Dubliners*. One such critic is Keith Williams. In "Short Cuts of the Hibernian Metropolis: Cinematic Strategies in *Dubliners*," he explores how Joyce

employs "a variety of visual tropes" to reinforce the style of "scrupulous meanness" (Williams 154; *Letters* II 134). Williams argues that Joyce's use of alternating viewpoints in particular, resembles camera walk: "Joyce's effortless transitions between extra and intra-diegetic viewpoints exhibit striking similarities to the ways in which camera foregrounds either subjectivity or objectivity, presenting how a character 'sees' within the scene, or how an omniscient, albeit impersonal, narrator visualizes that scene from without" (154). Williams further sees an incipient form of "montage" in *Dubliners*, a cinematic technique that blooms later in *Ulysses*. His attempt to read cinematic form in *Dubliners* is valuable, but his analysis of each story is too brief and sketchy. There are, for example, only three paragraphs allotted to discussing the cinematography of "Two Gallants." Paying attention to the opening passage of the story, he claims that the passage is "typical of film and would become self-consciously foregrounded in the 'Big City' avant-garde documentaries of the 1920s, comparable to Joyce's representations of the urban in *Ulysses*" (Williams 162). His observation ends in merely pointing out the similarities between the story and film. The opening lines of "Two Gallants," however, prepare the reader to easily follow the camera walk and distance control appropriated by Joyce throughout the story. When "[t]he grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city," our eyes move along with the camera whose imaginary long shot is taken from the sky, descending to the street (*D* 38). The camera features a mass of anonymous people when the narrative voice begins to describe "[t]he street . . . swarm[ing] with a gaily coloured crowd" under the stage illumination of "the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles" (*D* 38). From the indistinct form of the crowd emerge two young men, walking down the street as if they are zoomed in. Their information is given only through the camera eye in the following paragraph. Joyce announces that the unfolding "Two Gallants" is heavily relying on cinematic techniques from the onset.

III

"Two Gallants" depicts the two gentlemen's cheating a slavey out of her money. By creating an illusion of marriage with a middle-class gentleman, Corley has often sexually and economically exploited women of the lower class. He boasts to "his disciple" Lenehan that what he attempts to do now with the girl is a "mug's game"[2] (*D* 49, 42). Introducing himself as a promising man temporarily out of job, Corley courts and coaxes her into a false fantasy. "I used to take them out, man, on the tram somewhere and pay the tram or take them to a band or a play at the theater or buy them chocolate and sweets or something that way," he explains to Lenehan (*D* 41). In return, the slavey used to bring cigarettes and even "two bloody fine cigars" to her lover (*D* 40). Such transactions, under the guise of courtship, reveal how human relationships are tainted with, and filtered through, commercial values; the romantic relationship degenerates into a commercial "adventure" in "Two Gallants" (*D* 46).

Joyce, however, delivers such a theme in a suggestive, if not concealed, manner from what may be called a camera eye. The narrative often sounds like the stage direction used in cinema. Sentences like "Corley closed one eye expressively as an answer," or "This time Lenehan was inclined to disbelieve. He shook his head to and fro and smiled" depend on our imaginative reading of the characters' facial expressions and bodily gestures (*D* 41, 42). Indeed, non-verbal communication is far more favored than omniscient narration or direct dialogue for the delivery of vital information in "Two Gallants." Its non-verbal communication is largely dependent on cinematic techniques. One prominent example is how the relationship between Corley and Lenehan is informed through their gaits. Immediately after the first presentation of the two men, whose identities are not yet even revealed to the reader, the camera focuses on their ways of walking.

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2) A fool's game.

> Two young men came down the hill of Rutland Square. One of them was just bringing a long monologue to a close. The other, who walked on the verge of the path and was at times obliged to step on to the road owing to his companion's rudeness, wore an amused listening face. (*D* 39)

We learn that one man is dominating both the talk and the sidewalk. The other, accordingly, is routinely nudged into the road but soon comes back, in order to keep pace with and make himself agreeable. Along with his servility and his companion's self-centeredness, the scene exposes their hierarchical relationship through their facial expressions and bodily movements. Meanwhile, the contents of Corley's "long monologue"—for it turns out to be Corley—are not given in the scene, as if it was not worth narration. We may conjecture the contents from their ensuing dialogue, but more critical information about his character has been given through cinematic rendering. The cinematographic form shows how and which information Joyce decides to include or insinuate in his work.

Joyce's intention to present his story in a cinematographic form becomes more evident when the camera eye follows Lenehan instead of Corley as they part for a while. Consequently, we as readers have to watch Lenehan's eventless idling instead of Corley's deceptive courtship. Such a choice is deliberate on the part of the author, Margot Norris argues. Regarding the story being "designed to enact, and thereby unmask, some fundamental premises of *pornography* taken in its Greek etymological sense, as a writing about harlots or prostitutes (*porne*)," Norris observes that the story "quite deliberately eschews a pornographic turn, and chastely forgoes an opportunity to narrate the operation and activity of seduction (what does Corley tell or promise the slavey to get her to produce the money?)" (81, 85). "Instead," she continues, "we merely receive Lenehan's fantasy of it—reported, as is so much in this story, in the form of pantomime" (85). What she calls a pantomime is, in fact, Lenehan's cinematic imagination in which "he beheld the pair of lovers walking along some dark road, he heard Corley's voice in deep energetic gallantries and saw again the leer of the young woman's mouth" (*D* 46). Joyce's technique here is similar to a flashback, as the scene changes from

Lenehan's satisfactory eating to Corley's dating, an event occurring in Lenehan's thoughts. Such a cinematic technique intensifies the irony of Corley's "gallantry," of which he is performing a most ungallant job behind his assumed manner of a gentleman (*D* 46). Indeed, the social criticism Joyce inscribed in the story would be notoriously dull if he had delivered it in a plain narrative. The deployment of cinematic techniques in "Two Gallants" is indispensable in conveying its message.

How does cinematography highlight and amplify, then, Joyce's ironic use of gallantry? R. B. Kershner defines gallantry in "Two Gallants" as "a variety of objectification and depersonalization that is especially pernicious because it mimics and parodies romantic devotion while replacing the interpersonal element with an impersonal economic exchange" (86). Such objectification and depersonalization are literally realized in their gazes and implanted in the story. To show how the men objectify the slavey, for instance, Joyce borrows Lenehan's gaze to substitute the camera eye of the scene. Desiring to "have a look at her," he scrutinizes her to see if she is an apt target (*D* 43).

> As he approached Hume street corner he found the air heavily scented and his eyes made a swift anxious scrutiny of the young woman's appearance. She had her Sunday finery on. Her blue serge skirt was held at the waist by a belt of black leather. The great silver buckle of her belt seemed to depress the centre of her body, catching the light stuff of her white blouse like a clip. She wore a short black jacket with mother-of-pearl buttons and a ragged black boa. The ends of her tulle collarette had been carefully disordered and a big bunch of red flowers was pinned in her bosom stems upward. Lenehan's eyes noted approvingly her stout short muscular body. (*D* 44)

The description is rendered to the reader through Lenehan's eye, making the reader see only what he sees. It resembles a subjective shot or a point of view shot in this sense. These shots enable the viewer to read simultaneously the object in view and the observing character's mind. According to Lenehan, despite her "muscular body" that informs her involvement in manual labor, the woman's clothes point to her sharp awareness of social decorum amounting to social oppression (*D* 44). Such

oppression generates the tension between her body and costume, materialized in the "great silver buckle" that "seemed to depress the centre of her body" (*D* 44). The way she dresses herself up, however, betrays that she is not simply an oppressed figure. The cheap and showy materials for decoration, such as "mother-of-pearl buttons and a ragged black boa," also indicate her vanity of and desire for material comfort (*D* 44). Contrasted to the clumsiness, observed in "a big bunch of red flowers . . . pinned in her bosom, stems upward," her attempt to keep up with the bourgeois decorum only turns out to be a ridiculous mimicry that rather highlights her present social status. On the whole, her outfit enlightens the viewer to the fact that she is a working-class woman with a strong desire for material success, a fact that is exactly what Lenehan wishes to know.

The predatory relationship between Corley and the slavey is already hinted by Lenehan's gaze. His close examination of her bodily shape and costume positions him far above her, empowering him as one who can appreciate and evaluate her as an object. In other words, his gaze evinces the unequal power relationship between man and woman. As Laura Mulvey argues in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,"

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. (837)

Mulvey's insight is particularly useful in understanding female objectification under the male gaze in "Two Gallants." The slavey is introduced to the reader only through Corley's fragmented narration and Lenehan's gaze. Her facial expressions such as "a contented leer" at her partner, as well as dressing up in "her Sunday

finery" only confirm her role to be "looked at and displayed" and her awareness of it as an aesthetic object (*D* 44; Mulvey 62). Meanwhile, the misplacement of flowers on her blouse signals a failure in fulfilling her desire to marry Corley. The visual information Lenehan's gaze provides enables the reader to predict the end of the rendezvous that she is likely to be exploited and abandoned, and that she, following in the steps of her predecessors, may turn out to be a prostitute and, thereby, completes her objectification.

Joyce, however, refuses such a foregone conclusion. The men, by turning the woman into a commodified object, are also transformed themselves into male prostitutes. When Corley presents himself as a marriageable young man to the women he has dated, he symbolically sells himself as a commodity. This acquired identity is ironically articulated in the Florentine pronunciation of his name (As the letter "c" is pronounced as "h" in the Florentine style, his name sounds like "Whore-ley") (*D* 41). Unintentional as it may be, "Corley has effected a *reverse* courtship, a *reverse* gallantry, and a *reverse* prostitution" (Norris 84). Joyce makes the point clear from the beginning when the narrative gaze objectifies Corley in ways similar to how Lenehan's gaze projects the slavey.

> Corley's stride acknowledged the compliment. The swing of his burly body made his friend execute a few light skips from the path to the roadway and back again. Corley was the son of an inspector of police and he had inherited his father's frame and gait. He walked with his hands by his sides, holding himself erect and swaying his head from side to side. His head was large, globular and oily, it sweated in all weathers and his large round hat, set upon it sideways, looked like a bulb which had grown out of another. He always stared straight before him as if he were on parade and when he wished to gaze after someone in the street it was necessary for him to move his body from the hips. (*D* 40)

Corley wears the mask of a gentleman, but the narrative gaze leads us to see that there is more we need to see about him. With its distance and inherent mockery, the narrative gives us the necessary information about Corley's character through

his physical description, the fact that he is as ostentatious and imbalanced as is his dating mate. The disproportionate hat upon his head, for instance, makes him look more ludicrous in spite of its stylish arrangement (*D* 40). His lack of manners, exemplified by his insensibility to his friend, gives emphasis to his unintelligent bulkiness (*D* 40). His inability to see the person at his side, unless he turns his whole body, is indicative of his narrow-sightedness (*D* 40). Such short-sightedness bars him from seeing himself as a commodity. The narrative gaze, however, tells us, in the language of cinema, that Corley's body is already objectified and depersonalized in the commercial network of "Two Gallants."

The point is obliquely made through Joyce's careful arrangement of different gazes. In fact, Joyce often switches the narrator's gaze from one of the characters to another. Though Joyce employs Lenehan's gaze when describing the slavey's appearance in one scene, in another, he has already been the object of the narrative gaze. The gaze exposes what other characters cannot see. Wearing "an amused listening face," Lenehan responds to his friend's story with "constant waves of expression break[ing] forth over his face from the corners of his nose and eyes and mouth," and with "[l]ittle jets of wheezing laughter followed one another out of his convulsed body" (*D* 39). The gaze, however, notices that "when the waves of expression had passed over it, [he] had a ravaged look" (*D* 39). It is clear that Lenehan performs the role of Corley's "disciple" to gain his favor and to share in the profit Corley would make (*D* 49). The narrative gaze sheds light on the blind spots the male protagonists are not aware of about themselves—that they are, despite their male prerogatives, still reduced to objects. This Joyce achieves by the skillful transition between the character's gaze and the narrative one. Such transition surely resembles camera movements that attempt to show both the view of the omniscient director and those of the limited characters. It may not be enough, though, to point out the similarities between Joyce's narrative and camera movement. The similarities raise questions of why, and to what effect, Joyce adopts such cinematic techniques.

The interplay between the male gaze (Lenehan's gaze, in this case) and the

reverse gaze (the narrative gaze) is effected to highlight the ironic situation in which the men do not see themselves as being enslaved by money, a situation epitomized in Corley's revelation of the gold coin. This finale also features Corley's sense of pride and Lenehan's delight at the sight of the coin. Their emotions, however, have been gradually built up to by Joyce, long before their exposure, through the changing focal points. The characters' movements are described in alternating views—from Lenehan's eye and from the camera eye in turn.

> Suddenly he saw them coming towards him he started with delight, and keeping close to his lamppost, tried to read the result in their walk. They were walking quickly, the young woman taking quick short steps while Corley kept beside her with his long stride. They did not seem to be speaking. An intimation of the result pricked him like the point of a sharp instrument. He knew Corley would fail: he knew it was no go.
>
> They turned down Baggot Street and he followed them at once, taking the other footpath. When they stopped he stopped too. They talked for a few moments and then the young woman went down the steps into the area of a house. Corley remained standing at the edge of the path, a little distance from the front steps. Some minutes passed. Then the halldoor was opened slowly and cautiously. A woman came running down the front steps and coughed. Corley turned and went towards her. His broad figure hid hers from view for a few seconds and then she reappeared running up the steps. The door closed on her and Corley began to walk swiftly towards Stephen's Green. (*D* 48)

As the first sentence informs Lenehan's perception of the couple's approach and resulting happiness and expectation, in the following sentence, we get to see their movement from the eye of Lenehan who "[tries] to read the result in their walk" (*D* 48). If their walk is depicted from the viewpoint of an omniscient narrator, a more direct statement would be given such as "They did not speak" instead of "They did not seem to be speaking" from the hypersensitive and limited observer (*D* 48). The narrator pays attention not only to the pair themselves but also to Lenehan's psychological state, fluctuating as he nervously observes the pair. Thus he describes Lenehan's disappointment yet mingled with hope: "An intimation of

result pricked him like the point of a sharp instrument. He knew Corley would fail: he knew it was no go" (*D* 48).

The use of double gaze gets more complicated in the second paragraph. The phrase "They turned down Baggot Street" sounds like Lenehan's perception, yet the camera soon changes its position into the one that includes Lenehan in the frame when it shows him "[following] them at once, taking the other footpath" (*D* 48). When the narrative says, "[w]hen they stopped he stopped too," the camera features Lenehan without letting go of the effect of employing his vision—the anxiety and nervousness he feels. Such an effect continues, and when "[Corley's] broad figure [hides] hers from view for a few seconds," we are as impatient as Lenehan to see what is happening between the pair (*D* 48). The double vision—one of Lenehan's and the other of the narrator—is effectively deployed to heighten the tension of the story.

Joyce again draws on a cinematic technique for the climax in the final scene. The close-up of the gold coin, along with the triumphant gesture of Corley, shows that he succeeded in getting the money from the slavey.

> Can't you tell us? He said. Did you try her?
> Corley halted at the first lamp and stared grimly before him. Then with a grave gesture he extended a hand towards the light and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold coin shone in the palm. (*D* 48-49)

Instead of answering to Lenehan's question, Corley silently presents the coin. Using "the first lamp" as lighting, he consciously displays his trophy by "extending a hand towards the light" and "[opening] it slowly to the gaze of his disciple" (*D* 48-49). When the narrative turns to the coin itself, the reader can easily visualize the closed-up hand of Corley and the gold upon it. This moment affirms all the suggestions made through the passing dialogues, and more frequently, non-verbal signs of the story. That is, this symbolic commodity has dominated the men's consciousness, and perhaps more poignantly, that the humans in the world Joyce depicts are all subjected to money and further commodify themselves. If the camera

has panned along them as objects, it now exposes the real cause of such objectification in the form of the gold coin. The coin takes the star turn, replacing human protagonists in Joyce's drama. Such a sarcastic display of his message is fundamentally dependent upon the camera techniques.

IV

Corley proudly presents the coin to his co-conspirator as a proof of his conquest and betrays how humans are inversely conquered by the rule of commerce in "Two Gallants." Such a revelation is largely dependent on the cinematic means of the close-up. Indeed, Joyce employs cinematic means as a form of narrative. His turn to visual narrative helps his readers see, in particular, "a variety of objectification and depersonalization" behind a thin veil of romance (Kershner 86). We see, for example, Lenehan's objectification of the woman when he scrutinizes her. What he is not aware of, though, is that he himself has been the object of the narrative gaze from the beginning. The gallants are as much objectified and depersonalized as the slavey in the world Joyce depicts. In spite of their affected airs, the camera eye sharply catches and minutely illuminates their reality. Even capturing the character's gaze in the frame, this cinematic tool achieves dramatic effects that would be hardly possible with a conventional form of narrative. The construction of "Two Gallants" as a multidimensional drama owes much to its cinematography.

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Abstract

Cinematographic Joyce: The Appropriation of Gaze in "Two Gallants"

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This essay explores how cinematography in "Two Gallants" helps Joyce better communicate with his readers its theme of human commodification. In this story, male exploitation of woman as a commodity, culminating in her transformation into a prostitute, not only subjects the men to the ruthless world of commerce but also commodifies them as well. Such commodification is conveyed and highlighted by the cinematic form of narrative. While the female body is objectified by Lenehan's gaze, his and Corley's bodies are not free from the gaze that controls the whole narrative. In fact, their physical description exposes the fact that they are equally the objects of the camera eye, which Joyce has inserted into the story. By the use of alternating gazes, furthermore, the narrative adds dramatic effects to the climactic ending: when Corley opens his palm in a proud manner, his and his disciple's subjugation to money have been completed.

■ Key words : Cinematography, Male gaze, Camera eye, Gold Coin, Commodification

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