

**Fashion and Roland Barthes: A Study of the Hat motif in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.**

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**Abstract**

*The image of the hat dominates James Joyce's 20<sup>th</sup> century epic, Ulysses and even manages to find its way to his prior work, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. The image of the hat is not merely a publishing strategy of the publishers, nor is it just a fashion statement of the times. Joyce exploits the sign of the hat to enrich his narrative. His literary experiment is in tune with Roland Barthes's ideas on Fashion and Language. This research paper is an attempt to trace the intersection of Joyce's modernist epic as guided by the sign of the 'hat' and Barthes's notions on Fashion as a system.*

The 'Signet Classic' edition of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* features the photograph of James Joyce or Stephen wearing a hat. The 'Penguin Modern Classics' edition of *Ulysses* has the cubistic image of Joyce wearing a hat. The hat comes back again in the 'Vintage International' cover of *Ulysses*. The cover flaunts the vertical alignment of the name 'Ulysses' and a hat on top of it. The repeated foregrounding of the hat calls for the readers' attention.

Roland Barthes claims in his book, *The Fashion System* "the connotation of Fashion cannot be submitted to an independent analysis" (40). He distinguishes the written code of a fashion accessory from its pictured code and stresses the importance of the written code. The fashionable accessory or garment itself has no relation with fashion. Instead, it is language which defines fashion and hence the description of the fashionable garment adds something to the idea of that image which is otherwise not present in the garment. "Language is not tracing the real" (Barthes 41) but it adds meaning to the real, if not constituting reality itself.

If seen through this perspective, the hat for Joyce is not merely an accessory but a sign. Here one may wonder, why did the hat intrigue Joyce? Joyce was well versed in Latin and he chose the Latin name "Ulysses" over the Greek name "Odysseus". A Greek epic hero is unimaginable without his armours and war helmet. It is interesting to note that etymologically

the word “hat” originates from the Latin word “cassis” which means ‘helmet’. Therefore the hat becomes the modern day war gear of a modern working class hero. Joyce therefore sets the tone for his contemporary epic to unfold through a very simple symbol of the ‘hat.’ In an age when established notions about humanity was undergoing a massive reconstruction, the helmet turned too heavy for the head. The head is already weary of the complexities and uncertainties inside it. During these times, the spear or the sword does not sever the head of the gorgon medusa<sup>1</sup>; rather it is the sceptical gesture from women which drives a Prufrock mad in order to hide traces of baldness underneath a hat as T. S. Eliot suggests in his poem *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

The modern day hero, a Prufrock or a Stephen Dedalus is well aware that although how much one dreads to meet the opposite sex, the desire for companionship remains, no matter how much one formulate theories about Shakespeare, yet the grandeur of a tragedy is missing from life. The grand design of a tragedy has given way to the tragicomedy where laughter and pain are intermingled into a strange paste where “nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes”<sup>2</sup> (*Waiting for Godot* 30).

The angst of loneliness is common to everyone belonging to the modern world. Yet people go to their daily activities and live a routine existence as they “prepare a face to meet the faces that [they] meet”<sup>3</sup> (*T. S. Eliot Collected Poems* 4) every day. The hat becomes a little shade for the modern individual if not a refuge. It helps him to lose himself among other creatures strolling down the street aimlessly. Barthes speaks of this symbolic significance of the word over the image of the fashion accessory. He says, “We could say that, in language, the system [of fashion] has a value of being, while in clothing its value is merely attributive” (*The Fashion System* 68). Joyce’s use of language to explore the image of the hat in *Ulysses* is in accord with Barthes’s statement.

If we look at the photograph of another great Irish author, our idea about the hat will be little clearer. The photograph of Oscar Wilde in the collection of Albert Kaplan, presents Wilde wearing a medium sized hat in black and white. The owner says about it –

When I first saw the Wilde ambrotype, my attention was drawn to the hat. I did not think the sitter was Wilde, but rather a young man making a conscience attempt to copy the appearance of Oscar Wilde.

It was only after examining the enlargement print that I realized the young man was none other than Oscar Wilde himself!

The hat is chic. In a later version the brim is larger, and the crown elevated and reduced in size. However, the hat’s essential style remained.

The hat then is serving as a disguise perhaps to hide Wilde from the society he was not comfortable living in; a society too constrained to accept Wilde’s sexual preferences. The

similar situation is faced by Joyce, Stephen and Bloom. The Dubliners have their own hats in order to hide from their own nightmares. Dublin has its own ‘mad hatter’<sup>4</sup> and a hat shop protecting itself from its own people. The hat becomes a symbol of quest towards completion. It acts as a platform for the past and the future to reside in harmony. It serves as a compromise between the artistic and the scientific. It serves as a legacy.

Homer’s epic begins with the absence of the father. The father is not present in the household in the *Odyssey*, things are not in order. The son takes the armour and begins the search for the father. Such is the theme in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Stephen Dedalus is a subject of mockery in the Mortello tower due to his name which is of Greek origin. However it becomes easier for the reader to identify Stephen with Telemachas<sup>5</sup> due to this mockery itself. Stephen disregards his biological father, Simon Dedalus and is subconsciously searching for a father figure. It appears as if the artist in him is incomplete and he is searching for his muse. Stephen is being told what to do; he does not have a choice. In the first episode we come to know he does not have his own complete set of garments. He borrows clothes from Buck Mulligan. Mulligan does not fulfil the criteria of a friend according to Stephen. Although Mulligan gives him a “Latin quarter hat” (19) before Stephen starts his journey on the day of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904 at 8 O’ clock. Stephen knows the world around him but he is not fully aware of its hostility yet. He does not understand the necessity of the hat. He says, “My Latin quarter hat. God, we simply must dress the character” (51). As the story progresses we get to know that Stephen considers himself guilty for the death of his mother. He had refused to pray by his mother’s death bed. And resultantly he is constantly in his mourning attire. Perhaps this explains his lethargy during changing clothes or dressing up. In this aspect he is similar to Hamlet and he himself looks away from the “Latin quarter hat” and gives “a side-eye [view] to [his] Hamlet hat” (59). Like the prince he is also searching for a ghost whom he can call father. Stephen’s search takes him to the sea shore in the third episode. He chooses to perceive the world through his senses rather than his eyes. The artist in Stephen fails to find anything fertile in Dublin. Therefore Stephen closes his eyes, as if meditating and tries to gather his thoughts. He is trying to see the beauty of the sea shore without his eyes. Perhaps Joyce in this scene is foretelling that Stephen will one day grow into a Homer, who although was blind but envisioned two epics through his other senses. In this prophecy Joyce affirms the birth of his modern day epic, *Ulysses*. Stephen therefore lays “back at full stretch over the sharp rocks, cramming the scribbled note and pencil into a pocket, his hat tilted down on his eyes” (61). The hat here serves as a guardian which helps the artist during his meditation. As Stephen begins his meditation, Leopold Bloom prepares himself to escape the island of Calypso. Leopold Bloom is about to encounter the world around him. Unlike Stephen he is aware of the threats that the world around him poses. Therefore he is conscious about his

safety and looks for his armour. He asks, “Where is my hat, by the way?” (83). The hat shields the person wearing it from the adversities around him. It protects him from himself as well. Therefore as he finds his hat before leaving “his hand took his hat from the peg over his initialled heavy overcoat” (67). As Bloom is about to start his journey back home, he remembers the tender moments he had shared with his family in the past. “The little mirror in his silk hat” (76) starts a series of flashback where Bloom thinks of his wife, daughter and then his son. He is also aware that his son, Rudy is dead. The shock of this remembrance is absorbed by the armour, the hat. Therefore in order to reach equilibrium the narrator says, “the sweetest legend in the crown of his hat . . . Plasto’s high grade ha . . .” (67). He does not complete the word ‘hat’ and this ensures the equilibrium in the mental wave of Bloom’s psyche. Bloom being scientific in nature, thinks in a half scientific manner. Therefore when ripples are produced in a wave, some crests are compressed and some are relaxed. The complete and incomplete pronunciation of the word ‘hat’ in a single sentence reflects this compression and relaxation phenomenon. This pursuit of equilibrium is what Bloom desires and this is what is destined for him by the author. His wounded fatherhood will be healed as he meets Stephen. Therefore he begins his journey and steps out of the house at 7 Eccles Street, Dublin.

Bloom has travelled almost one and a quarter miles from Eccles Street and presently he is in Sir John Rogerson’s quay. “While his eyes still read blandly he took off his hat quietly inhaling his hair oil . . . very warm morning . . .” (86). Bloom has reached the den of the Lotus Eaters, which is the city of Dublin. Whether it is morning or night, the city and its people are constantly occupied by one addiction or another. It is mainly alcohol which leads to indolence and joblessness. Bloom is aware of the state of the city and its inhabitants; he therefore carefully refrains from alcohol throughout his journey although he drinks wine during lunch. However he is the victim of other agencies promoting addiction. His hat however serves its purpose and guards Bloom. For instance, the odour of the hair oil is capturing his mind when suddenly Bloom breaks free of the illusion as his eyes notice the “leather headband inside his high grade ha . . . . His right hand came down into the bowl of his hat” (86). The gesture of the hands in the manner of a magician, but there is no magic to behold. Instead of the rabbit, there comes a card with the identity of Henry Flower. The card is the key that allows Bloom to achieve companionship in the form of Henry Flower and the hat maintains the balance between Bloom and Henry Flower. Therefore in order to act like Henry Flower, Bloom must remove the hat. Henry Flower, who is a voyeur, is also under the influence of an addiction stimulated by his sexual desires. Bloom goes to the All Hallows church and “stepping into the porch he doffed his hat” (97). While the women pray there, Bloom preys over them and lusts for them. In this manner he satisfies his carnal desires. He

perversely remarks, “Who is my neighbour?” (98). It must be mentioned here that Bloom is also a victim of consumerism and therefore when he is thinking about his ‘high grade’ hat, the word ‘hat’ remains incomplete as all cares about is the quality of the product. Barthes describes this power of fashion as he explains how it enslaves men and imposes upon them artificial needs of so called fashionable accessories and garments.

Bloom fails to find the flare of love in his own wife and that is why he flirts with Martha as Henry Flower. He even notices random girls and fantasize about them. He especially highlights those aspects in his fantasy which he fails to find in Molly in the present time. He thinks of the times when the “laceflare of her hat in the sun; flicker, flick . . .” (91). In this current memory of Bloom, the hat preserves the mystery of amorous love and youth which was once shared by the couple. This is further affirmed when we meet Molly in the last episode, Penelope. From her chain of thoughts we come to know that she used to wear a hat in the romantic moments shared with Bloom in Howth and she also plans to wear a hat when she will go to Belfast with Boylan. However throughout the scene she does not wear the hat. Therefore it seems at this point that “Loves / Old / Sweet / Song / Comes lo-ve’s old” (91). Love in the Bloom household is incomplete and a bridge lies in between Leopold and Molly Bloom. The bridge that will always be there and Bloom had been unwilling to traverse it for Rudy is dead. The narrator at this point shows the promise of the journey of Bloom being a fruitful one, for Stephen awaits him. Perhaps the bridge will be bridged on the fateful day of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904.

The reader anticipates the meeting of Bloom with Stephen in several ways. If Stephen produces his literary theories about Shakespeare, Bloom on the other hand reiterates the theory of Shakespeare and masks. For Joyce, the hat replaces the mask. Bloom says about the hats, “These pots we have to wear. We ought to have hats modelled on our heads” (99). A very similar idea is told by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, when Hamlet tells Ophelia, “God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another”<sup>6</sup> (*William Shakespeare* 539) Bloom here expresses the problems caused by the dual nature of mankind due to which man loses his identity. The same idea is expressed by George Orwell when he says, “he wears a mask and his face grows to fit it”<sup>7</sup> (*Modern Prose* 194). This is what happens with Bloom; in the letter to Martha even if he wishes to be honest he fails to be so. Similarly in the end, even though he wishes to tell Molly how his day transpired, he fails to say so. He is fettered to his dual identity respectively. The Dubliners too are no exception. Even they are tied to their respective hats. The Dubliners although living in a decadent society, yet they do not forget their humanity. Although they are hiding themselves from the others, they do not restrict themselves from helping others. Sympathy is still alive in some of the city dwellers. For instance, Martin Cunningham wears a ‘silk hat’ while going to the abode of the dead. Perhaps

it is his effort to champion the cause of life, in a dying city. Therefore it is very common to see in *Ulysses*, Martin Cunningham always trying to help the fellow citizens.

Young Dignam must bear the responsibility of his family at a very early age. He must not show his weakness. He wears a 'wide hat' in order to hide his tears or may be it is the hat of his father being placed upon his little head. However he is not alone, people like Father Conmee, Martin Cunningham and Leopold Bloom are standing by his side. Perhaps he is wearing the 'wide hat' in order to accommodate everyone helping him into a family.

Bloom is standing in the graveyard, when "a raindrop spat on his hat. He drew back and saw an instant of shower spray dots over grey flags . . . . The weather is changing he said quietly" (112). The hat cushions its master from the ravages of changing weather and times. During the funeral, "All watched . . . hats lifted by passers. Respect" (109). It appears as if the Dubliners are ready to reveal themselves only to the dead. The dead sees everyman out of their shells for death is waiting for everyman and no matter how much they are disguised by the hat, death cannot be cheated. This anticipation of death and the grey weather have a gloomy effect on the people present there. The hat absorbs this pain and gets crushed a little. Cunningham helps John Henry Menton to smooth the hat again. Bloom salutes the dead like a soldier as he "fitted his black hat gently on his knee and, holding its brim, bent over piously" (130). The scene ends with their exit from the graveyard as they "[put] on their hats . . . . The cemetery is a treacherous place. They covered their heads" (132).

The change in the weather forecasts, the series of hostility Bloom is about to face in the upcoming episodes before his meeting with Stephen. Myles Crawford the editor of the *Freeman*, firstly encourages Bloom regarding the Keyes's advertisement but later disrespects Bloom and nullifies his efforts. He is said to wear a 'straw hat' in the novel. If we look closely we will notice that people whom Bloom mainly tries to avoid are said to wear a 'straw hat.' The 'straw hat' therefore becomes the symbolic headgear of the enemy troops in *Ulysses*. Bloom feels hungry after his work in the *Freeman* office and goes to have his lunch. Bloom goes to the Burton restaurant initially, but he does not like the ill-mannered eating style of people present here and hence he leaves. He goes to Davy Byrne's to have some light snack instead. While eating he shares a small talk with Nosey Flynn and the topic of Molly and Boylan's singing trip comes up. Bloom gets troubled by this talk and therefore even during having food, the hat is shoved back on his head. He does not remove it. As he finishes his food his thoughts are occupied by Molly. While he is occupied with Molly's thoughts in several occasions he refers to "Old Goodwin's tall hat" (196) the tall hat therefore preserves the emotions and bond once shared by the Blooms. However there he sees Boylan in his "straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers . . ." (234). We are again reminded of



Bloom's discomfort with people wearing the straw hat. Bloom decides to avoid him and therefore steps inside the National Library which nearby.

While Bloom looks into the old copies of *Kilkenny People* (256), our focus shifts towards Stephen preparing for an intellectual battle. Stephen looks at "a wide headless caubeen<sup>8</sup> hung on his ashplant handle over his knee. My casque<sup>9</sup> and sword . . . Argal<sup>10</sup>, one hat is one hat" (246). Stephen therefore becomes the warrior digging the grave of history and literature to announce his theories about Shakespeare. He is determined to leave a mark on the pages of history in the knowledge about Shakespeare yet we come to know he is unwanted. He is not invited to a social gathering about to take place. As the episode ends Stephen and Buck go for a drink while Bloom leaves the library. As he leaves the library he goes to buy a notepaper to write to Martha. During this journey he "eyed and saw [Boylan] afar on Essex bridge a gay hat riding on a jauntingcar" (339). This time Bloom decides to follow Boylan rather than avoiding him to the Ormond Hotel. Bloom loses track of Boylan as he meets Richie Goulding in the Ormond Hotel. In the meantime, Simon Dedalus and Ben Dollard start singing and the barmaids captivate everyone's attention. Bloom prepares to leave when Tom Kernan requests 'the croppy boy.' It reminds him of his own hairlessness; he thinks of Rudy and thereafter seeks refuge in the company of his hat as before leaving the hotel he looks for his 'hat.' As he is about to leave he notices a whore coming towards him wearing a "black straw sailor hat" (374). Bloom knows her and they had shared a previous encounter. During that time, at a crucial moment she had revealed her knowledge about Molly and this time Bloom carefully avoids her. It is around 5pm and Bloom goes to the Barney Kiernan's pub to meet with Martin Cunningham.

In the pub, Bloom meets other people but he does not fit into their group. They order drinks and Bloom politely refuses. It aggravates the group against Bloom further. The people criticize the present state of the city and country from a stationary point of view. The group makes fun of the mentally challenged Denis Breen and says that he needs a "shoehorn" (416) to wear a hat. Bloom fails to get the stupid joke and protests. Joyce protests as well for he exposes the stupidity of the group and shows the readers that it is them who are mentally ill processed. The topic of their discussion then shifts to Jews and they begin a series of anti-Semitic attacks on Bloom. The charge is mainly led by a citizen, unidentified by the narrator. The situation of Bloom among the group is quite similar to that of a black man "strung up on a tree with his tongue out and a bonfire under him being fired upon by gunmen in "slouch hats" (426). Bloom before leaving with Martin Cunningham retorts by naming some of the greatest Jews who lived on Earth, namely Mendelssohn, the great Romantic composer, Karl Marx, Mercandante, the Italian composer and Spinoza. Lastly Bloom says, "And the Saviour

was a jew and his father was a jew” (445). This reply infuriates the citizen and he hurls a biscuit tin can towards Cunningham’s coach.

The scene shifts towards the Sandymount Strand, Star of the sea church. It is 9pm and Bloom’s wrist watch has stopped at 4.30pm. Bloom’s thoughts hover around Molly and Boylan. He watches three girls near the sea shore. His attention is captivated by one of them by the name of Gerty MacDowell. “She wore a coquettish little love of a hat of wideleaved nigger straw contrast trimmed with an underbrim of eggblue chenille and at the side a butterfly bow to tone” (455). We get to know that she had searched a lot to match find the exact chenille needed to match the hat. Joyce later says that she indulges in the use of cosmetics or artificial beauty to enhance her beauty. The custom made hat therefore signifies an anomaly. She sees Bloom “under the brim of her new hat” (463) and she reads the sadness of Bloom visible in his countenance. She wonders if Bloom is a foreigner. In the previous scene, Bloom was being ridiculed for being a foreigner, here he gets something different – the girl is fascinated by Bloom and she tries to seduce him. Bloom reaches an orgasm and wonders if Gerty MacDowell is Martha. As Gerty leaves, Bloom sees that she is lame and the anomaly promised by the ‘custom made hat’ reveals itself. However the scent of Gerty’s perfume is in the air and Bloom immediately thinks of Molly’s perfume. Therefore we can see that the ‘straw hat’ has again served its purpose. Bloom is anxious and uncomfortable thinking about the liaison of Molly and Boylan. Bloom feels tired and as he passes to sleep he thinks of “some good matronly woman in a porkpie hat to mother him” (497). Gerty therefore like the Virgin Mary, mothers the homeless Bloom. She nurtures the neo-Christ and Bloom falls asleep and the cuckoo sound of the clock reiterates like a lullaby.

Bloom visits the Maternity Hospital to see Mina Purefoy, who was supposed to have a baby. The narrator informs us that previously she has had several miscarriages. Bloom understands the pain of childlessness and therefore is sympathetic towards her. Simultaneously, Stephen and his friends argue about, whether to save the mother or the child during time of crisis, when only one can be saved. His friends, who are medical students, joke about the contraception procedures and pregnancy and Stephen considers the religious aspect of the crisis. Bloom feels that Stephen is wasting his time in such a trivial group. The father in Bloom rises to the occasion as he is not controlled by the hat anymore. He is in the Horne’s hall, holding the hat. A thunder storm is occurring outside and as the thunder roars, Stephen feels genuinely afraid. Bloom realizes this and tries to explain to Stephen the scientific phenomenon behind thundering. Stephen also shows him respect and returns the intimacy when Bloom is anxious about whether the cattle heading towards the dock, he had seen in the morning will be slaughtered, by reassuring him that the cattle are being taken for vaccination against the foot-and-mouth disease. This episode brings Stephen and Bloom closer on the



same plane. Both of them undergo a reverie of the yester years and the dull monotony of the present is contrasted against it. Bloom keeps the hat at a distance in this episode and comes out of his shell to share his thoughts with Stephen and the latter does the same. A verbal calmness is achieved and the birth of the son of Mina Purefoy is announced by the nurse. The son and the Jewish father have met. The scene is calm and silent when a thunder reverberates again and Stephen heads towards Burke's along with his friends.

It is almost 11pm, the closing time of the pub is near and Stephen gets out of the pub along with Lynch and they journey towards the brothel. In this episode is the subconscious desire fuses with reality and results into hallucinations. Bloom imagines himself wearing the "purple Napoleon hat" (575). The hat of the famous general perhaps prophecy that Bloom will show the misdirected artist his direction in life and he will take charge of his household. As the events progresses although nothing happens, we get to know that Stephen's hat is not with him, it is lying on the pianola along with his ashplant. He is out of his shell now. In another reverie we notice Bloom acting as the butler of the Bloom household. Boylan comes to meet with Molly and "hangs his hat smartly on a peg of Bloom's antlered head" (669). The hat this time reflects the burden of the affair between Molly and Boylan is carried by Bloom. He holds himself responsible for Molly leaving him for Boylan. The chaos and hallucinations of this episode dissolves in the thin air as Bloom manages to find Stephen and he "stretches out his arms, sighs again and curls his body. Bloom holding his hat and ashplant stands erect . . . He looks down on Stephen's face and form" (702). Bloom has taken Stephen's hat in his own hands and therefore had concerned himself with the fate of Stephen. He is no longer burdened by his own 'hat' which holds the memory of Rudy. Therefore in the end the ghost of Rudy disappears and does not listen to Bloom's call. Perhaps the spirit of Rudy is now finally free as Bloom has found his lost son in Stephen. The 'hat trick' has been done in the returning of the hat. The father, the son and the Holy Ghost are present at one place to bless life.

"Preparatory to anything else Mr Bloom brushed off the greater bulk of the shavings and handed Stephen the hat and ashplant and bucked him up generally in orthodox Samaritan fashion, which he needed very badly" (704). Bloom finds himself in Stephen and tries to comfort him. The gesture of returning of the hat reflects a bond developing between Bloom and Stephen. As they start to walk together towards Bloom's house they decide to have some cocoa at Bloom's house since no other shop was open at that time. While walking Bloom notices Stephen's "dilapidated hat" (712). The present state of Stephen's hat reflects the state of the artist within him. He is not successful and not ready to be successful either. His talents are in a raw state and they are waiting to be given a proper shape. It is the conversation with Bloom which will produce a positive impulse within Stephen. The fate of Ireland rests in this

moment when Bloom relates to Stephen the story of returning Parnell's hat. Bloom says that "his (Parnell's) hat was inadvertently knocked off and . . . Bloom was the man who picked it up in the crush after witnessing the occurrence . . . who (Parnell) panting and hatless and whose thoughts were miles away from his hat . . . thanked him" (761). The fall of the hat here perhaps anticipate the fall of Parnell. However Irish glory will be restored through Stephen and his works.

Bloom and Stephen reached Bloom's house while talking and to Bloom's dismay he realizes that he has forgot to take the keys before leaving in the morning. He "compressed his hat on his head" (779) and jumped over the fence and opened the front door to let Stephen in. Before making the jump over the fence, the compressing of the hat symbolizes Bloom tightening his armour in order to take the final leap. However when he comes back to let Stephen in he "reappeared without his hat, with his candle" (781). He is without his hat for he is home after a long journey and he has nothing to hide in Stephen's company. Bloom and Stephen discuss several topics while having cocoa in the kitchen. It is revealed that they represent two different temperaments. Bloom represents the scientific and Stephen represents the artistic. The topic of Bloom's father's suicide comes up and it is revealed that he committed suicide on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1886 in Queens hotel wearing a "new boater straw hat" (801). The straw hat which has been a source of discomfort for Bloom is brought to focus again, but this time his pain gets somewhat liberated while sharing this incident with Stephen. Bloom represents the past and Stephen represents the future. In the house of Bloom, 7 Eccles Street, the past and future intermingles into a strange present. This wisdom is gained by Stephen, the light bearer of the future and he departs in the darkness, under the night sky with the "hat on his head" (818). And the modern day 'Elijah', Bloom stands still with the lighted candle in his hand gazing towards heaven hearing Stephen's "retreating feet on the heavenborn earth . . ." (827). Bloom's wanderings have come to an end and Stephen's has begun. He resigns to his fate, accepts everything which has happened with him till 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904 and lies down beside Molly.

It is almost 4am and although Bloom is sleeping, Molly is awake beside him. For the first time, Joyce lets us take a glimpse of Molly's mind. We understand that Molly is painfully aware of Bloom's dual identity. Perhaps she knows about Henry Flower as well. But there is also a pride in her, for Bloom cannot hide anything from her as "Poldy anyway whatever he does . . . always takes off his hat when he comes up in the street like that . . ." (880). Bloom's gesture of removing the hat, while returning home perhaps indicates that Henry Flower has taken possession over Bloom. His activities and detachment from Molly leaves the latter alone. She feels neglected and in order to overcome this, she tries to "cutting up [her] old hat and patching up the other" (889). She puts on her own "gloves and hat" (898)

to do the same what Bloom had been doing to her. But only after committing adultery, she realizes that no matter what Bloom thinks about her, “every blessed hat” (891) will not look good on her. Severing an ‘old hat’ and making a ‘new hat’ will not fulfil her. She sees herself through Bloom’s eyes and when Bloom neglects her, she feels like an “old shrivelled hag” (925). She is angry with Bloom for she thinks it is stupid enough for Bloom to kiss her bottom. She says in anger, “Any man thatd kiss a womans bottom Id throw my hat at him . . .” (925). The hat here becomes a punishment for Bloom for he has neglected her. Therefore Molly perhaps feels that the burden of Molly and Boylan’s sexual act is necessary for Bloom to realize his fault. Molly’s thoughts predominantly gather around Bloom and her lovemaking while she was wearing her “white ricestraw hat” (902). The discomfort associated with the straw hat is not found in this memory of the Blooms as neither Rudolph Virag nor Rudy was dead during the time of Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom’s courtship. The ‘straw hat’ therefore becomes a symbol of the lover and it epitomizes romantic love. Molly’s thoughts then shift to the day when Bloom proposed her. She remembers that they were lying in the rhododendrons in Howth and Bloom was dressed in a “tweed suit and his straw hat” (931). Therefore as Bloom completes his wanderings and returns to the Bloom household in 7 Eccles Street, he is no longer the lonely mariner, he becomes the lover in the ‘straw hat’ once again. He displaces Boylan from Molly’s mind and the lasting picture of Bloom in Joyce’s *Ulysses* does not remain in the funeral attire which he was wearing the whole day, but rather the young lover proposing his beloved in his ‘tweed suit and straw hat’ among the rhododendrons. To this proposal Mrs.Molly Bloom once again replies “yes I will Yes” (933).

As long as *Ulysses* is read and Dublin remains, Dublin will celebrate Bloomsday on 16<sup>th</sup> June every year. Bloom has highlighted Dublin in the map of the world and even the smallest of Dubliners like a ‘paviour’ or a ‘flagger’ recognizes the effort of Bloom and tells him, “That’s the famous Bloom now, the world’s greatest reformer. Hats off!” (604). This keeps alive the spirit of humanity and the Dubliners alike. The Dubliners are incomplete without their hat because the hat is a symbol for every possible moment a Dubliner can share. The hat is his companion since puberty till the day he takes his last breath, during his greatest success and his most painful heartbreak. In 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904 stood proudly in Dublin the shop of “John Plasto of number one Great Brunswick Street hatter” and in today at the same place stands the brand of Philp Treacy<sup>11</sup>, the award winning Irish milliner.

Thus language uplifts the hat to a far greater height than the image of the same as Barthes repeatedly stresses. Joyce though the sign of the hat highlights the control of Fashion over the civilisation though Leopold Bloom’s obsession with his ‘high grade’ hat. Barthes several years late explains how language adds meaning to Fashion and Fashion in return becomes the law from a simple spectacle. Gradually it transforms into fact and commonplace

reason thus leading to a consumerist culture. Barthes claims, “[Fashion’s] playful metaphors sometimes connect it to political power . . . sometimes to religious Law” (*The Fashion System* 270). Joyce uses the hat to explore the topics of the saviour and his father being Jews, anti-Semitism and the fall of Irish political leader Charles Stewart Parnell<sup>12</sup>.

The hat for Joyce serves multiple and often contradictory purposes. On one hand it conceals the hypocrisy and shortcomings of the Dubliners, on the other hand it acts as their armour, protecting them from the decadent social weather of Dublin. There are still people in the idle city like Martin Cunningham and Leopold Bloom who do not shy away from helping those in need. The hat is equated with memories and emotions. It reminds its wearer of lost youth, love and life, but it also witnesses the forging of new relationships. Thus the ‘straw hat’ which signifies Bloom’s difficulty around the person wearing it transforms into the final symbol of romantic love and promise of a new beginning.

### Endnotes

1. Gorgon medusa -In Greek mythology Medusa ("guardian, protectress") was a monster, a Gorgon, generally described as having the face of a hideous human female with living venomous snakes in place of hair. Gazing directly upon her would turn onlookers to stone
2. “nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes” – these lines are taken from Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*.
3. “prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet” – these lines are taken from T.S.Eliot’s poem *The Lovesong of J.Alfred.Prufrock*.
4. “mad hatter” – The Queen of Hearts accused him of murdering time in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. The hat for Joyce in this context acts as a literary trope which influences time in the form of flashbacks.
5. “Telemachus” – the son of Odysseus in Homer’s epic, the *Odyssey*.
6. “God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another.” – *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene I. Hamlet tells these words to Ophelia to express his views on how women use cosmetics to enhance their appearance.
7. “he wears a mask and his face grows to fit it.” – George Orwell says this in his essay “Shooting an Elephant”.
8. “caubeen” – Irish for hat.
9. “casque” – helmet
10. “Argal” – derived from Latin ‘ergo’; gravedigger in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

11. Philip Treacy - Born in Ahascragh, on the 26th of May 1967 in the West of Ireland, he lived with his parents, seven brothers and one sister across the road from the village church. He moved to Dublin in 1985 to study fashion at the National College of Art & Design, where he made hats "as a hobby" to go with outfits he designed.
12. Charles Stewart Parnell – he was an Irish nationalist politician and one of the most powerful figures in the British House of Commons in the 1880s.

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