

Dalma VÉRY

Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Arts  
Modern English and American Literature and Culture Doctoral Program  
Budapest  
dalmavery@gmail.com

## READING THE FABRIC

*The Hermeneutics of the Text as Fabric and James Joyce's Ulyssese*

### Olvasni a szöveget

*A szöveg mint szöveg hermeneutikája és James Joyce Ulyssese*

### Čitanje tkanja

*Hermeneutika teksta kao tkanja i Uliks Džejsa Džojsa*

Although it seems to be apparent today that language is not a “transparent medium”, interpretations focussing on the narratives of texts still seem to outweigh the efforts oriented upon how the text actually addresses the reader. The plain investigations of narratives do not concern themselves with what the text says in the way it speaks, but concentrate on assumed threads of sense and on hidden symbolism. The hermeneutic task is to engage in a dialogue with the text by way of concentrating on the surface of its fabric as texture, i.e. to ask what way the text addresses the reader inasmuch as it speaks and how one hears it. In the attempt to unfurl the text as fabric, one has to lay bare the phenomenal sense of the sign, of speech as language, of hearing, but also of the text as space. In this way, one may actually follow the intertwining threads of perception, sense and affectedness throughout the process of reading, and may thus gain genuine insight into what the text as fabric reveals. Excerpts from James Joyce's *Ulysses* demonstrate how the eminent unfolding of the fabric requires attention to its diverse facets.

*Keywords:* hermeneutics, texture, eminence, hearing, textual space

### *Texture*

James Joyce's *Ulysses* has been considered a work difficult, almost impossible to read. Although Joyce himself claimed that numerous puzzles and riddles are

embedded into his work, the difficulties the reader is confronted with while reading the text do not solely arise from these. Joyce's work, his oeuvre, makes one aware of language *as* thought, thus providing the possibility to realize that language is not a self-effacing medium for *conveying* one's thoughts, but that language as *speech* makes thoughts *happen*. That is to say, in the *how* of language as speech the *what* of thought reveals itself. This also means that there is no one-to-one relationship between *what* is said and *how* it is said: on the contrary, the complexity of the *how* is the point of departure for interpretation, so that an understanding of the *what* may be reached. Such interpretations may take various directions, given that there are always different points of view with regard to which an understanding develops. Joyce's works do not ignore this insight: they enable language to exhibit its own character, to reveal itself in the lingual relations of speech, so that by interpreting the manifested modes of speech, one is offered the option to understand the therein articulated relations of sense differently from the way one used to do. As Margaret C. Solomon formulates it,

In *Ulysses*, meaning is not discovered; it is produced by resonances which become producers of other resonances, so that the work of art, operating on its own effects, ends with a new dimension, a point of view from which it can be re-read. The distance of such a point of view from the elements which produced it enables the reader to measure the deviations between the elements and so to 'see' the laws underlying [...] the transversals which create the resonances without closing the distances (Schlauch 1974, 128).

In other words, Joyce's works compel the reader to come to terms with the diverse points of view offered by the *how* of language, so that (s)he may gain insight into *what* it hence may reveal. This makes *Ulysses* a difficult reading, since it is resistant to the orientation which considers language, thus speech, a transparent medium. If one fails to attempt to come to terms with the diverse manners of speech in which and the various points of view from which the text addresses us, it cannot but remain entirely opaque. The present paper aims to provide a hermeneutical approach of how the text compels one to adapt to its modes of articulation. It explores the multifaceted order of organization the speech of the text, as a fabric of textual relations, exhibits. In doing so, the paper seeks to expose that before speaking of *what happens* in *Ulysses*, one should first consider the ways in which *language happens*.

*Ulysses*, as a carefully modulated verbal work of art brings to light that language is not a tool that bestows "obvious meanings," but is always an event of speech which requires interpretation and thus implies the unfolding of sense.

As pointed out above, one is forced to adapt to the distinctive modes of logic surfacing in a text in order to be able to engage in a dialogue with it. With regard to the language of literary works, it is invariably the speech of the *text*, its diverse modes of articulation, which makes itself explicit, not the speech of an imagined authorial presence. The interpretive task one has to face up to in *Ulysses* is, hence, to understand the *way* it calls upon us: the way the text addresses us in its build-up of speech, the mode in which its interwoven facets of style throw light upon the potential relations of sense.

In order to realize the interpretive task, one should always consider the texture of the specific work of art one attempts to interpret, as it is the work of art which determines the paths of interpretation one has to take. The primary and fundamental role of the text throughout the process of interpretation is not emphasized only by philosophical hermeneutics, but also by representatives of semiology. According to Riffaterre, the unusual sense of the poetic sign is invariably rooted in its phenomenality. “[I]t can be lexical, grammatical, syntactical, figural, or intratextual, but whatever the linguistic mode may be, its actuality is always determined by its phenomenality” (de Man 2002, 34). As Paul de Man further elaborates,

Riffaterre has consistently held to the position that it is not sufficient for a poetic significance to be latent or erased, but that it must be manifest, actualized in a way that allows the analyst to point to a specific, determined textual feature which he can localize and which, in its turn, determines or overdetermines the response of the reader (de Man 2002, 33).

The phenomenality of language as speech constitutes and lays ground to the textual relations the fabric of the work exhibits.

### *Eminence*

In order to lay bare the hermeneutic framework of textual relations, it is necessary to consider the issue of *writing*, since, as Gadamer underlines, “‘being written’ [*Geschriebensein*] constitutes the background of the word ‘literature’” (Gadamer 1993f, 244).<sup>26</sup> While writing in its everyday appearance usually serves as a reference to something to be discussed, reproduced or recalled, i.e. it indicates something or, in fact, is a reminder, writing as “literature” has a fundamentally different status. It is autonomous inasmuch as it is not dependent upon a given language situation for its sense and meaning, on the contrary. “The reader is

<sup>26</sup> All citations from German-language texts are presented in my translation – D. V.

not concerned with the speaker, but with the written [*Geschriebene*]” (Gadamer 1993a, 288). That is, as emphasized by Gadamer, the text as literature *is* literature “exactly because it does not refer back to the original communicative situation between the writer and the addressee” (Gadamer 1993h, 261). In other words, “now it is the written which speaks, and it does not obtain its force of expression only by referring back to the original discursive situation” (Gadamer 1993h, 262). Paul Ricoeur reached the same conclusions as Gadamer in his essay entitled “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” in which he claims that

[w]ith writing, everything changes. For there is no longer a situation common to the writer and the reader, and the concrete conditions of the act of pointing no longer exist. This abolition of the ostensive character of reference is no doubt what makes possible the phenomenon we call ‘literature,’ which may even abolish all reference to a given reality (Ricoeur 1981, 141).<sup>27</sup>

This insight was developed elaborately by Jacques Derrida in his work entitled *Of Grammatology*. In the mentioned work the claim is made that writing erases a pre-established transcendental referent, so that it does not refer but to the multitudes of diverse possibilities of sense (traces) which may reveal themselves throughout the process of (re)interpretation.<sup>28</sup> Although Derrida and poststructuralist criticism emphasized the rhetorically indeterminate facet of speech made up of chains of traces, leaving the phenomenal nature of the text out of interpretive consideration, the closely affiliated field of semiology asserted the crucial significance of the text’s phenomenality. In Riffaterre’s view, “if the phenomenality of the text is allowed to disappear, there remains literally nothing to be read” (de Man 2002, 35). In other words, the interpretive effort should not leave the phenomenal facet of the text as fabric out of consideration, for the rhetorical relations of speech as language are actually anchored in the interpretation of signs as signs that appear to the reader in a particular way and correlation, not as mere locations of an uncontrollable proliferation of interpretations. Following from these insights, one may state that works of art as works of literature are texts which manifest themselves as self-sufficient pieces of writing: hence, instead of being reminders of something, or referring to a

---

<sup>27</sup> I slightly modified the translation – D. V.

<sup>28</sup> See Derrida, Jacques. 1994. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. I also have to note here, however, that the interpretation of the relation between language, speech and writing developed by hermeneutics and by deconstruction differ in crucial respects, the elaboration of which differences the present paper cannot undertake.

particular intention, they refer back to themselves in their particular modes of self-manifestation by way of which they address the reader.

In the “Lestrygonians” episode of *Ulysses*, the following excerpt surfaces: “Grafton street gay with housed awnings lured his senses. Muslin prints, silkdames and dowagers, jingle of harnesses, hoofthuds lowringigng in the baking causeway” (Joyce 1986, 137–138; 614–616).<sup>29</sup> The first sentence gives no direct hint regarding the speaking voice: the appearance of the words “Grafton street” would suggest an impartial narrator; however, these words are followed immediately by the expression “gay with housed awnings,” which bespeaks a particular mode of emotional involvement. It is the mere succession of the first six words therefore, which calls attention to the implied indeterminacy of the textual voice. Such implied indeterminacy of voice, allowed for by the mere arrangement of words, suspends the hitherto acknowledged fictional discursive order, directing back the reader’s attention to the text itself which presents the sole dimension of reference (s)he can rely on for interpretation. Although the end of the first sentence, “lured his senses,” gives a cue of narratorial speech by way of the third person singular possessive pronoun (“his”), the verb “lured,” again, dismisses the potential unanimity of speech, for the impartial narrator seems to adopt a word that is not customarily to be found among the options of narratorial turns of speech. From this point onwards, and at the beginning of the next sentence, the indeterminacy of the speaking voice is maintained. A string of noun phrases ensues in the company of a coined verb (“lowringing”), offering idiosyncratic impressions without any further discursive framework, whatsoever. Although the reader has been aware of Leopold Bloom’s silent thoughts throughout the preceding episodes and paragraphs, the indeterminacy of voice brought about by way of the demonstrated verbal arrangement suspends the significance of the actual speaker, concentrating attention on the expressions themselves which follow immediately thereafter:

Muslin prints,  
silkdames and dowagers,  
jingle of harnesses,  
hoofthuds  
lowringigng in the  
baking causeway.

<sup>29</sup>The edition of Joyce’s *Ulysses* reprints the text of the 1984 critical edition. References after the page number indicate the number of lines.

Yet again, no hint is made to the who the speaker is, or what situation we find him in. Even the narratorial framework is thwarted. The reader must hinge upon the bare expressions and bare thoughts, forced to ponder the surface of the verbal texture itself, and hence its relations of sense. Literature, as a *written artefact*, then, is singled out by its *eminence*. As Gadamer puts it, it is the particular mode of manifestation, or rather, self-manifestation which makes one consider texts of literature as distinct from other, non-artistic texts.

[Literature] is text in an essential and demanding sense, namely, a text which does not refer back to a speech, be it thought or voiced, as its fixation, but is untied from its origin, claiming its own validity, as the ultimate authority on its own account for the reader and interpreter (Gadamer 1993a, 286).

In this sense, it comes to light in its significance that “the artistic or literary work seals its own unity, that is to say, it establishes its own autonomy” (Gadamer 1993f, 254). Texts, as works of literature, creating a different status of writing than it is customary in everyday use, articulate themselves as pieces of *opaque* writing, i.e. ones that necessitate the *conscious effort* of interpretation. As Gadamer makes it explicit from this perspective,

[t]he concept of the text is hermeneutic in itself. [...] It is in this respect that the most extensive concept of the ‘text’ is related to ‘understanding’ and is disposed to ‘interpretation’. But a text which is a literary artefact, seems to me a text in an *eminent* sense. It is not only disposed to, but necessitates interpretation (Gadamer 1993f, 248).<sup>30</sup>

As such does the text become a fundamental hermeneutical concept. “It articulates the authoritative potentiality [*Gegebenheit*], to which understanding and interpretation have to measure themselves – it is the hermeneutical point of identity, which keeps every variable within bounds” (Gadamer 1993a, 289). As the example cited above also makes it clear, the work of literature resists any attempt which seeks to go beyond language, for the speech of the work refers back to itself in calling upon the reader to make sense of it in its indeterminacy. The eminence of such a mode of written articulation comes to light in its manner of exposing the potential of sense: the opening up of horizons and aspects of interpretation in an order of speech unexpected and hitherto unthought of. As Gadamer pinpoints it, poetry, as literature, is singled out for distinction insofar as

---

<sup>30</sup> The italics are mine – D. V.

in it the distance of designation falls away, and [...] due to this, the represented language says more than what the familiarity of saying would imply. It is a mysterious form of undifferentiation between what is said and the how of saying, endowing art with its specific unity and lightness, and with it, a particular mode of truth (Gadamer 1993a, 294).

The eminent text of literature, being overt self-articulation, is essentially speech. As written speech, the literary work can never be understood without hearing it as speech, without interpreting it as speech, calling upon us to engage in a dialogue with it. “The way therefore in which a word as ‘text’ is present unveils what the word is in its speech [*sagendes*], and hence, what its being as speech constitutes” (Gadamer 1997a, 124). Differently put, “[the] poetic word can never cease to become speech (or stammering) so that it can always play itself over to new possibilities of being” (Gadamer 1997a, 140). This is not mere *phonocentrism*, as Derrida’s criticism labelled the articulatory necessity inherent in speech, but the formulation of the insight that the text may speak to us only inasmuch as we *listen* to how it has to say what it says. According to Anthony Burgess, “Joyce counterpointed the narrative with a detached verbal melody” (Burgess 1973, 81). If the text does not speak, but merely recedes throughout the multitudes of infinite abysses that traces constitute, how would one hear the “detached verbal melody” of the text’s speech?

It is the *art of language* as the *art of writing* that endows the written with the capacity of self-articulation, manifesting itself as the self-sufficiency of speech (Gadamer 1993h, 263). As Ricoeur duly emphasizes, “[i]t is not by chance that, in German, *Wort* – ‘word’ – is also *Wort*, ‘speech’ (even if *Wort* and *Wort* do not have the same plural)” (Ricoeur 1974, 92). The self-sufficient, eminent speech of a literary text speaks (for) itself: it demands that the reader orient himself/herself upon it in hearing its address, and in such hearing-orientation speak together with it, i.e. to say what it says and also respond to it. The text, as Manfred Frank claims, is written speech (Frank 1990b, 127). “Reading is related to writing, to handwriting or to print, and writing has its origins in speech. Reading is allowing to speak [*Sprechenlassen*]” (Gadamer 1993d, 271).

### *Hearing*

Being written, then, calls for being spoken, and being spoken also always means being *heard*: hearing the spoken, the speech of the text, to which one responds. Hearing, thus, is hearing-response. Speech, as articulation and as hearing, implies the necessity of response, which response commences and/or

continues a dialogue: the unfurling of speech throughout interpretive inter-action. Another excerpt from the “Lestrygonians” episode reveals what the significance of hearing the text is: “Wine *soaked* and *softened* rolled pith of bread *mustard* a *moment* *mawkish* cheese” (Joyce 1986, 143; 850–851).<sup>31</sup> The endings of the words soaked–softened–rolled–bread–mustard create a verbal chain of rhyming and consonance which not only sets the dominant sound pattern of the sentence, but also serves as the background against which the alliterative correspondences between soaked and softened, and between mustard–moment–mawkish are highlighted. The muster of such simple sound patterning determines the manner the sentence is to be heard by the reader, for the articulatory significance of the words is given emphasis thereby. The sense of association between the words is anchored in the correspondences between their sounds. This also demonstrates that only through the response of hearing, by paying attention to that which addresses the reader as the speech of the text, may the work of literature open itself up to dialogue: only hence may the correlations and possibilities of sense an articulation implies be interpreted. As Manfred Riedel formulates it, “[t]o [the] form of unfolding [*Vollzugsform*] that is *légein* does *akúein* indissociably belong [*gehört*], listening in the sense of lending an ear to what is said [*Heraushören*] [...]. The word *légein* always already aims here at hearing and having-heard the *Dia-logos* [...].” (Riedel 1990, 114). One may also say that in order to allow the written to speak for itself, we have to orient ourselves on its event of saying, *we have to hear how* the text as speech addresses us in its articulation. As Gadamer formulates it, “I read a text with apt understanding only, if the characters are not only deciphered and transposed into sounds, but if the text is made to speak, which means that it is read in a modulated and articulated, formulated way, with an awareness of its sense” (Gadamer 1995a, 141). The text, we have seen, is eminent inasmuch as it is an autonomous, written artefact, addressing the reader in its explicit self-articulation. “It is really unique that a literary text speaks in its own voice, so to speak, on its own account and does not speak in anybody’s name [...].” (Gadamer 1997a, 130). Therefore, the text demands that we direct our attention onto its texture, onto the texture of writing woven of written words, so that its speech, the way it addresses the reader, may be listened to, deciphered, and may thus become intelligible, providing the possibility of insight. This is the way the eminent text, the hermeneutic point of identity as written speech, becomes a “communicative event” (Frank 1990b, 137).

However, the speech of the text is essentially *silent speech*. It speaks inaudibly throughout the complex process of visual perception, interpretation and silent

---

<sup>31</sup> Highlights and italics are mine – D. V.

articulation. Thus, “[i]n the case of literature, the tension between the dumb signs of writing and the auditory nature of language is completely released. One does not only read the sense, one hears it” (Gadamer 1993d, 274). Gadamer makes this more explicit in the following way:

[w]riting is not the visual reproduction of voice. On the contrary, it is writing which demands that one lend voice to what is read. Language’s capability of writing is not merely a secondary phenomenon, and inasmuch as it is of significance and natural also that phonetic writing does not actually exist (Gadamer 1995b, 159).

Rather, the speech of the text is heard by the “inner ear” (*das innere Ohr*) as Gadamer terms it (Gadamer 1993a, 290).

This [...] does not mean that a real voice should be lent, that it should actually be heard. Or, better formulated, this voice is only like a voice-to-be-heard and it should be like one, as it cannot be any that is actually heard. This voice, only to-be-heard, never actually heard, is basically a pattern, a norm (Gadamer 1993h, 267).

This is the silent speech of the eminent text: the perceptual pattern and measure to which the reader’s textual hearing has to adjust itself. The following sentence is from the “Sirens” episode: “**Mr Dedalus, famous father, laid by his dry filled pipe**” (Joyce 1986, 216; 259).<sup>32</sup> Seemingly, this sentence does not offer anything poetic. A simple, descriptive sentence with the interjection of a noun phrase incorporated into it. To those approaches of interpretation which consider the concept of the “inner ear” and the voice of the text mere metaphors of phonocentrism, it surely does not offer a discernible pattern. However, to those who are open to hear the speech of the text, the muster of strong stresses established by the order of words proves to be inescapable. Apparently, a stress pattern evolves, which amounts to an even rhythm of pulses, awarding the simple sentence a melodic base. A trochaic-dactylic strain of rhythm is set up, making the *music of diction* an unavoidable experience to the reader. This is one of the ways in which a work of literature compels its reader to pay attention, to hear what it has to say in its various modes of lingual manifestation. “It is not the understanding of an intended meaning which is at stake here, but just exactly the unfolding [of the literary word] as a lingual phenomenon. The word set down as literature is in this case determined by its being heard [*Gehörtwerden*]” (Gadamer 1993f, 246). We have to hear something in order to understand it

<sup>32</sup>The highlights are mine – D. V.

and, conversely, we have to pay attention, to orient our understanding upon that which addresses us, in order to hear it. As Jonathan Culler asserts in *Theory of the Lyric*, for many lyrics “it seems important that the reader be not just a listener or an audience but also a performer of the lines – that he or she come to occupy, at least temporarily, the position of the speaker and audibly or inaudibly voice the language of the poem [...]” (Culler 2015, 37). With the help of the “inner ear,” the reader himself/herself voices the speech of the poem, as it addresses him/her: “A reader of verse, attentive to the rhythms and verbal patterning, produces or articulates the text as he or she hears it, occupying, however temporarily, the position of speaker” (Culler 2015, 138). Therefore, by lending an ear to the literary work, the eminence of its words acquires voice, unfolding the correlations and the possibilities of sense in their silent sounds and its rhythm. In this way may one engage in a dialogue with the work of art itself. Gadamer emphasizes that the work of poetry is “text” inasmuch as it is “woven” of the diverse threads of sense and sound, hence revealing that it is actually “gathered into a combined sequence of word and sound. Not only the integrity of the sense of speech (*Redesinn*) builds this unity, but also, in the same breath, that of a sound structure” (Gadamer 1993a, 290).

This fundamental insight was aptly revealed by Robert Frost in his letter to John T. Bartlett: “*The ear does it*. The ear is the only true writer and the only true reader” (Frost 1995, 677).<sup>33</sup> It is only the “inner ear,” or after the Frostian conception, the “reading ear” which unites the unfolding relations of sense with the phonetic makeup (Gadamer 1993a, 290). The word addresses our hearing in its complex mode of articulation, which articulation necessitates the silent unfurling of sound and rhythm, giving rise to the various relations and possibilities of sense unbound in the sound patterns of the words heard by the “reading ear.” “What singles out literature then, is the self-manifestation of the word, so that in it the sense of the whole gains utterance by way of the irreplaceable uniqueness of sound coupled with an indeterminable, multi-voiced nature of sense” (Gadamer 1993f, 253). Differently put, words are manifold “gestures of sense” (*Sinngebärde*) which determine the contours of the ways they may possibly sound (*Lautgestalt*) (Gadamer 1993b, 21). Conversely, by virtue of the sound shape of words, diverse perceptual associations and hence, relations of sense may also evolve within the fabric.

---

<sup>33</sup> For this reference I am indebted to professor Aladár Sarbu which I would like to thank once again. The italics are mine – D. V.

As the word ‘text’ actually means the interwovenness of threads into a fabric that keeps itself together and does not allow any longer for the emergence of the separate threads, so is a text ‘text’ in the sense that its elements gather into a unity of word and sound sequence (Gadamer 1993a, 289–290).

The text, therefore, is an indissolubly binding fabric, a *texture*, in which the facets of sense and sound are tightly interwoven (Gadamer 1993f, 253), compelling us throughout our attentive reading-hearing of it to understand what it may possibly say.

The work of art, thus, as an eminent text, *speaks* – it speaks through its *hearer* (Gadamer 1997a, 129). Therefore, it is justifiable to claim that “[b]eing able to hear means being able to understand” (Gadamer 1993d, 272). Herein does the hermeneutic task emerge in its ultimate significance. As Manfred Riedel exposes Gadamer’s interpretation,

[t]he *summa res* of hermeneutics [...] culminates exactly in exposing the fundamental relation [*Grundverhältnis*]: the hermeneutically possible and necessary multifaceted unfolding [*Vervielfältigung*] of the sense of every single text through allowing it to speak by way of interpretation” (Riedel 1990, 166).

To be able to engage in a dialogue with the text, to be able to read and interpret it, we have to allow it to articulate itself and thus, to become its hearers: and in hearing the text, we hear its speech, we hear the sound patterns and rhythms of its words and phrases as the unfolding of the possibilities of sense. “The mere reading of original or translated texts is in truth already interpretation through tone and speed, modulation and articulation – and all that lies in the ‘inner voice’ and is there for the ‘inner ear’ of reading” (Gadamer 1993e, 284). We hear the text as it emerges in its correlations of sense (*Sinnzusammenhänge*) which is woven into a texture of words. Hence is it hearing – as hearing-response dedicated to the text throughout reading – that allows for the self-presentation of the text’s speech (Gadamer 1993d, 274). Accordingly, as Manfred Riedel points out, “‘translating back’ the self-assigning utterance of speech [*Sichzusagende*] to the immediacy of hearing through the mediation of written records [is] the task of the acroamatical dimension of hermeneutics” (Riedel 1990, 176). It is in and through this self-assigning utterance of the speech of the text that the word exhibits itself as the ultimate, but ever-differently-unfolding *location of sense*, since the potential sense-creating jointures of its sound patterns and its rhythmic manifestations reveal to us the ever-changing possibilities of meaningful relati-

ons. In this regard also, eminent texts retrieve themselves into the possibilities of continually altering interpretations. One must engage in a dialogue with them over and over again, for neither their rhythmic and sound patterns, nor the sense relations involved in these are exhaustible: they compel us to reconsider how the potential relations of the texture may be understood, and which possible meanings one may arrive at with the help of interpretation. The “movement of sense” (*die Sinnbewegung der Rede*) (Gadamer 1972, 255) is anchored in the multifaceted nature of the texture.

### *Fabric*

The work of literature, as texture, unfurls itself as a “formation of sense” (*Sinngebilde*). That is, throughout the process of reading – following the paths of articulation the text dictates –, an “entirety of sense” (*Sinn ganze*) builds itself up as a formation of sense (Gadamer 1997b, 192). In speaking together with the text, articulation allows for signs to gain sense, so that the potential sense of the expressions the chains of signs give rise to in its contextual particularity may come to light. In Manfred Frank’s brief formulation, “all interpretation is that of sign correlations” (Frank 1990a, 250). Signs build the expressions of the text, which expressions are to be made sense of in their textually developed arrangement, hence, in their textu(r)al relations. In other words, it is always in terms of given expressions that a sign is interpreted, with regard to the mode, role and hence, the sense of its particular manifestation. As Manfred Frank formulates it,

[t]he significance of (the sign) is [...] the work of structuring and segmenting (the expression) itself. It does not have precedence over the sign in the sense that the expression would specify it only subsequently. The significance of the sign creates itself at the point of intersection between the gliding layers of expression [...] and sense [...], which are synthesized with each other in one and the same movement so that they are ascertained, comprehended, and differentiated in themselves (Frank 1990b, 162).

Sign, sense and expression are in constant interplay throughout the process of reading-hearing-response, thus, they create the primary order of the literary texture. Interpretive articulation, then, opens up the difference of manifestation between the expression and its possibilities of sense, and it is in this difference where signs exhibit their own contextual significance. The

difference of manifestation between the expression and its potential of sense is thus anchored in the jointures of signs, since by way of such jointures are those (expression and sense) joined that belong together in their disunion. Let us consider the following sentence from “Sirens”: “At each slow satiny *heaving* bosom’s wave (her *heaving* embon) *red rose* slowly sank *red rose*” (Joyce 1986, 235; 1106–1107).<sup>34</sup> The most striking features of speech in the sentence are the alliterative, repetitional and visual cues that establish the main relations of sense between the expressions. The mentioned cues are all presented by the (re) appearance of specific signs and the jointures of speech they create. Alliteration appears in “slow satiny,” “slowly sank” and “red rose,” the latter of which is also involved in a pattern of repetition. The verb “heaving” is also repeated, its repetition involved in the visual frame of brackets, creating repetition with a difference by virtue of such visual segmentation. This range of alliterative and repetitional patterns allows for letters (signs) and words (expressions) to create an order of associations that shape the sense relations implied.

At each slow satiny  
*heaving* bosom’s wave (her  
*heaving* embon)  
*red rose*  
 slowly sank  
*red rose*.

In the above segmentation of the sentence on the basis of alliterations and repetitions, one may notice how the segmenting function of bracketing is overturned, and how the text is thus deprived of the significance that an important facet of its framework implied. However, it is primarily the associative threads of speech winding through the alliterative and repetitional patterns that yield the dynamic of the sentence, halting the process of reading at each jointure of signs or expressions, and engendering further verbal movement by setting up the expectation of a sequence involving such patterns of jointures. The process of alternation between the *stasis* of jointures and the *kinesis* of expectation is the actual movement that making sense of the sentence itself constitutes. In this way, the sentence gradually evolves into an entirety of sense. This example also brings to light that “the expression [is] not simply an instrument for the reappropriation of the (articulated) sense through interpretation, [...] rather, it is the prerequisite of the possibility of such a sense” (Frank 1990b, 147), a prerequisite allowed for by the existence and nature of signs.

<sup>34</sup> Highlights and italics are mine – D. V.

All of us know how the evidence of well-understood sense builds itself up. It proceeds through many stations, through the spelling out of single letters, through the appropriate articulation of the formation of words [*Wortbildung*], and is eventually comprehended as a gathering of the whole, in which the manifoldness of signs is brought together. [...] It is justifiably called ‘concentration.’ One is oriented upon a centre [*Mitte*], out of which the entirety is organized into jointures of sense [*sinnhaften Gefüge*] (Gadamer 1995b, 161).

One may also say, that the self-manifestation of the literary text is such “concentration,” mustering jointures of sense on multiple planes of association and interpretation. These jointures of sense, as we have just seen, are anchored in jointures of written, i.e. visually perceptible signs and hence also in jointures of sounds. The interrelation between sign, sense and sound create the order of the text as texture. Therefore, the norm which the text establishes with the eminence of its written speech manifests itself as a texture, as a fabric of lingual relations which one must decipher in order to be able to follow the paths opened up in its composite mode of speech. “A text is the unity of a fabric [*Gewebe*] and it presents itself in its texture as an entirety” (Gadamer 1995b, 163). Manfred Frank duly emphasizes that the German etymology of the words *Werk* (‘work’) and *Text* (‘text’) refer back to *Flechtwerk* (‘wickerwork’) (Frank 1990b, 160). The threads of written speech, intertwined into a fabric, cannot be deciphered in a way that they, in their separateness, eventually yield a univocally determined meaning “behind” the text. As the work of literature unfolds its fabric of textual relations, it also becomes a “gathering of sense” (*Versammlung von Sinn*) (Gadamer 1993c, 339) or “concentration,” orienting the reader upon the binding threads between the diverse planes of the texture. The reader’s “reading ear” has to be attentive, since in such gathering of sense it is “the field intensity of words, the tension between the strength of their sound and their sense-energies which confront each other and interchange, and which, therefore, shape the work in its entirety” (Gadamer 1993g, 236).

Moreover, the visual arrangement of signs, yielding their own textual space, also builds a facet of the fabric. Thus, it becomes apparent once again that it is the interplay between the various perceptual planes, sense-relations and verbal patterns of the textu(r)al fabric that determines the modes in which the text articulates its speech, giving rise to the diverse possibilities of making sense of it. In Roland Barthes’s formulation:

*Text* means *Tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; [...] (Barthes 1998, 64).<sup>35</sup>

It is the multiple facets of the textual fabric (of the texture) – presented by the various textu(r)al relations – which allow for the correlations of sense to unfold. There is no text without texture, there is no ‘meaning’ without the consideration of the interrelation between the diverse facets of speech and the various horizons of sense these facets unfurl. “Text means ‘texture,’ text means a fabric which is made up of separate threads interwoven with each other in such a way that the whole fabric amounts to a unique texture” (Gadamer 1993f, 254).

The speech of the text, thus, on the basis of its “order of organization” (*das Ordnungsgefüge der Rede*) (Gadamer 1997a, 132), may never be considered as the mere application of a set of linguistic rules. The literary text creates and constitutes its own requirements of interpretation, its own rules of speech, to which reading has to conform in an inventive way. Hence, the fabric of the literary text, as speech, distances itself from familiar verbal patterns, thereby opening new horizons of new sense relations for the reader to experience and to contemplate. Futurist aesthetics emphasized that art aims at “a shift in perception,” namely, “making the language and the form in which it is presented strange and uncomfortable so that the process of perception slows down and alters” (Lotman 2012, 343). This conception of *defamiliarization*, later developed by Russian formalism, was also elaborated upon by Roman Jakobson. For Jakobson, formal defamiliarization constitutes the development of a differential relation between the eminence of poetic speech and the function of conventional, denotational speech (Lotman 2012, 343). Poetic speech, thus, unfurls the presence of difference, the divergence between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the actual and the potential, the interplay of which creates an interpretive tension bestowing the unforeseeable presence of what one encounters as “unknown sense” (Frank 1977, 357).

In this way does the fabric address us in its multifaceted relations, compelling one to follow the distinctive logic involved in the textual patterns, i.e. the textual order of speech, which “guides us [...] like a self-developing dialogue in the direction of a never entirely coverable sense” (Gadamer 1993c, 344). In Manfred Frank’s words, “though sense takes its *place* [...] in the chain of signs, nevertheless,

<sup>35</sup> Italics in the original – D. V.

no single element of the chain may have a fixed *position* of meaning [...]” (Frank 1977, 308).<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, this “continual gliding of sense through writing” proves to be the unfolding of the literary text itself (Frank 1990b, 185). The “continual gliding of sense” does not mean gliding *out* of sense though. “A poem is and always remains,” as Gadamer writes, “a gathering of sense, even when it is only a collection of sense-fragments” (Gadamer 1993c, 339). The “continual gliding of sense through writing” is a “gathering of sense” that withdraws itself repeatedly into its own possibilities of development. As Frank explicates Sartre’s argument,

sense [...] is [...] an unspecified layer of sediment, the bottom of the text, which spouts up as a search for sense in consciousnesses [...] other than the consciousness of the ‘originary reader’ or ‘author’ and offers to disclose something in the words that were not embedded into them either by the dictionary, or by grammar, or by the author, or by the previous readers (alone) [...] (Frank 1990b, 140).

The gliding-gathering of sense through writing manifests that the process of reading as hearing-response cannot be other than a *detour*: a detour of reconsideration that the interrelations of the multifaceted literary fabric do not only allow for, but require. As Manfred Frank, following Lacan’s insight, puts it, “sense shifts under the expressions [...] and plainly finds, as Humboldt says, ‘no fixed location in writing [...]’ at all” (Frank 1990b, 177).

### *Texture and space*

As language chisels thoughts into speech, a work of textu(r)al *relief* is developed. The following excerpt from the “Proteus” episode demonstrates how the structuring of the narrative alters the manners of verbal arrangement which evolves into a fabric of verbal-spatial significance in the course of interpretation:

He *coasted* them, *walking* warily. A porterbottle *stood up*, *stogged* to its waist, in the cakey sand dough. A sentinel: *isle of dreadful thirst*. Broken hoops on the shore; at the land *a maze of dark cunning nets*; farther away chalkscrawled backdoors and on the higher beach a dryingline with two *crucified shirts*. Ringsend: *wigwams* of brown steersmen and master mariners. *Human shells*.

He *halted* (Joyce 1986, 34; 152–158).<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Italics in the original – D. V.

<sup>37</sup> Italics mine – D. V.

The first two narratorial sentences and the last sentence describe Stephen and his immediate surroundings in well-rounded constructions, applying verb phrases predominantly. From the third sentence, a different mode of *diction* commences. Although the narratorial stance is also descriptive here, the sentences are built of fragmentary phrases. Noun phrases and prepositional phrases predominate, while verb phrases are avoided entirely. Metaphorical speech in phrases such as “isle of dreadful thirst” or “crucified shirts” surpasses the significance of action suggested by verbs in the preceding sentences. Narratorial speech following Stephen’s actions and Stephen’s own silent narration present diverging verbal textures and thus, different points of view from which sense relations are contextually considered. Thus, these two modes of diction are dissimilar not only from a syntactic point of view (the predominance of verb phrases as compared to the predominance of noun phrases and prepositional phrases), but also from the order of thoughts they constitute. The perspectives implied in the two modes of diction are oriented upon different horizons: the narrator is concerned with the description of Stephen’s mental and physical states, while Stephen is focussed on his perceptions and on their metaphorical elaboration. The well-rounded presentation of Stephen’s circumstances is in striking contrast with the fragmentary range of his “own” phrases. The diverging structures of syntax and the perspectives from which sense relations are presented create two different orders of thought that correspond to alternatives of diction. Moreover, these verbal alternatives are arranged in a way that the former serves as a background to the latter, inasmuch as the circumstances of thought and action illuminate the poetic significance of Stephen’s metaphors. In this way do the excerpt’s structures and textures interact.

However, style being in all the details does not only pertain to text understood as language, but also to the text understood as a *visual corpus* of written signs. Differently put, the space of writing which we orient ourselves in throughout the process of reading is the visual surface created by the verbal ordering of *textual space*. As the reader follows the strains of speech and the threads of sense through the paths of written signs on the page, (s)he also orients herself/himself in the textual space of verbal significance. Dieter Breuer elaborates the spatial or visual facet of the literary text as encompassing all the following relations:

Font type, font size, letter spacing, segmentation, punctuation in a narrow sense, spacing of lines, arrangement of lines (block of lines, strophe schemes), page size, colouring devices, margins, book covers, paper type, manner of folding, binding, etc. Visual devices in the narrow sense comprise the so-called ‘image’ [...] (Breuer 1990, 124).

Although the work of literature may appear in various editions with different typography, type-setting, page size and binding, it invariably creates a textual space of letters, lines and punctuation marks (or the lack of the latter), the visual paths of which the reader explores so as to uncover the diverse strains of speech, to collect the links of contextual correlations, and to discover the various potential threads of sense. The diction of textual space is not restricted to the phenomena of concrete poetry. The space of the texture is marked by its conspicuous, written locations of sense, by textual relations and terrains in which the interpretive process orients the reader visually. It is not by chance that one cannot point out a particular location of the text easily if one is not familiar with its layout, i.e. with the type-setting of the text presented in a specific edition, for the layout exposes the textual space of the work itself with which we have to familiarize ourselves in order to find its specific locations. This knowledge of textual space develops throughout the process of (re)reading and yields a map of textual paths and locations which (re)orient us visually within the fabric of sign and sense. Günter Figal elaborates on this aspect of the literary work of art in a most illuminating way:

Not least does it become clear that books are locations when one, referring to a textual location in a literary work, points at the book: Here it is. [...] With the edition one opts for [...], [one] has already decided in favour of it and its layout of the work, since it allows for the self-manifestation of the work in a specific manner [...].

The phenomenal spaces exposed by works of art are generally determined in multiple ways: they are both visual, acoustic, and hermeneutic spaces [...]. [...] [A]fter all, every work of art has its own space. [...] That this space belongs to the work of art itself instigates the supposition that a work of art does not only organize space, but is in itself spatial (Figal 2010, 249–250).

The diction of textual space, then, is always part of the work itself, it creates the visually perceptible space of writing, which has fundamental significance with regard to the work's sense-making potentiality.

The *textual space* of James Joyce's *Ulysses* exhibits itself conspicuously, inasmuch as its modes of segmentation modulate the sense relations of the textual layout. It is unavoidable for the reader to come to terms with the space of the text, since the work's visual body of signs is the primary order of speech that allows for the relations of sound and sense to manifest themselves. What *Ulysses*, as an eminent text, demonstrates, therefore, is the essentially phenomenal nature of the work of literature. Intertwining relations of sign, sound, verbal space

and sense, the necessity of engaging the reader in hearing-reading-response, the jointures created by the various correlations, horizons and dimensions all make it apparent that the text is not a “container” of words that express a “content.” The text is a self-sufficient fabric of textual relations which offer insight into our own existence if we are willing to follow their path.

### References

- Barthes, Roland. 1998. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller, with a note on the text by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Breuer, Dieter. 1990. Vorüberlegungen zu einer pragmatischen Textanalyse. In: Rhetorik. Erster Band: Rhetorik als Texttheorie. 91–128. Herausgegeben von Josef Kopperschmidt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Burgess, Anthony. 1973. *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Culler, Jonathan. 2015. *Theory of the Lyric*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Figal, Günter. 2010. *Erscheinungsdinge: Ästhetik als Phänomenologie*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Frank, Manfred. 1977. *Das Individuelle Allgemeine: Textstrukturierung und -interpretation nach Schleiermacher*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Frank, Manfred. 1990a. Das ‘einzelne Allgemeine’ des Stils: Anmerkungen zur Hermeneutik Jean Starobinskis. In: *Das Sagbare und das Unsagbare: Studien zur deutsch-französischen Hermeneutik und Texttheorie*. 239–255. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Frank, Manfred. 1990b. Was ist ein literarischer Text, und was heißt es, ihn zu verstehen? In *Das Sagbare und das Unsagbare: Studien zur deutsch-französischen Hermeneutik und Texttheorie*. 121–195. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Frost, Robert. 1995. *Collected Poems, Prose and Plays*. New York: The Library of America.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1972. Semantik und Hermeneutik. In *Kleine Schriften III: Idee und Sprache*. 251–260. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993a. Der ‘eminente’ Text und seine Wahrheit. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 286–295. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993b. Dichten und Deuten. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 18–24. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993c. Gedicht und Gespräch. In *Ästhetik und Poetik II: Hermeneutik im Vollzug*. Gesammelte Werke Band 9. 335–346. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993d. Hören-Sehen-Lesen. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 271–278. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993e. Lesen ist wie Übersetzen. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 279–285. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993f. Philosophie und Literatur. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 240–257. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993g. Philosophie und Poesie. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 232–239. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1993h. Stimme und Sprache. In *Ästhetik und Poetik I: Kunst als Aussage*. Gesammelte Werke Band 8. 258–270. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1995a. Dekonstruktion und Hermeneutik. In *Hermeneutik im Rückblick*. Gesammelte Werke Band 10. 138–147. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1995b. Hermeneutik auf der Spur. In *Hermeneutik im Rückblick*. Gesammelte Werke Band 10. 148–174. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1997a. Von der Wahrheit des Wortes. In *Gadamer Lesebuch*. 120–140. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1997b. Wort und Bild – ‘so wahr, so seiend.’ In *Gadamer Lesebuch*. 172–198. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Joyce, James. 1986. *Ulysses*. Edited by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior. New York: Vintage Books.
- Lotman, Yuri. 2012. Defamiliarization. In *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Edited by Roland Greene, et. al. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- de Man, Paul. 2002. Hypogram and Inscription. In *The Resistance to Theory*. 27–53. London, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1981. The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation. In *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. 131–144. Edited and translated by John B. Thompson. Paris–New York: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme and Cambridge University Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1974. Structure, Word, Event. In *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. 79–98. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Riedel, Manfred. 1990. *Hören auf die Sprache: Die akroamatische Dimension der Hermeneutik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Schlauch, Margaret. 1974. Character as Linguistic Mode: A New Look at Streams-of-Consciousness in ‘Ulysses’. In: *Ulysses: Cinquante Ans Après: Témoignages Franco-Anglais sur le Chef-d’œuvre de James Joyce, rassemblés par Louis Bonnerot avec la collaboration de J. Aubert et Cl. Jacquet*. 111–130. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier.

VÉRY Dalma

## OLVASNI A SZÖVETET

*A szöveg mint szövet hermeneutikája és James Joyce Ulyssese*

Jóllehet mára nyilvánvalónak tűnik, hogy a nyelv nem „transzparens médium”, a szövegek narratíváira koncentráló értelmezések száma még mindig meghaladja azon erőfeszítéseket, melyek a szöveg beszédmódjainak feltárására helyezik a hangsúlyt. A csupán a szövegek

narratíváját vizsgáló interpretációk nem veszik figyelembe a kérdést, hogy a szöveg mit mond azáltal, ahogy beszél. Az értelmezés feltételezett fonalt és a szövegben rejlő szimbolikát kutatják. A hermeneutikai feladat abban áll, hogy dialógusba kerüljünk a szöveggel. A dialógus akképp jön létre, hogy a szöveg fenomenális felületét kérdezzük, azaz a szövegszövet összefüggéseinek feltárására teszünk kísérletet. Vagyis fel kell tennünk a kérdést, hogyan szólít meg bennünket a szöveg, mikor az olvasás során hozzánk beszél, s ezt hogyan halljuk meg. Hogy magát a szöveget mint szöveget tegyük láthatóvá a hermeneutikai interpretáció során, a jel fenomenális értelmét, a nyelv mint beszéd értelmét, a meghallás jelentőségét, valamint a szöveg terének mibenlétét egyaránt fel kell tárnunk. Ilyenformán az olvasás során követhetővé válnak az észlelés, az értelem-összefüggések, valamint az érintettség összefonódó fonalai, s a szöveg mértéke szerint szabott betekintést nyerhetünk abba, ami benne rejlik. A James Joyce *Ulysses*-éből származó idézetek tanúsítják, hogy az irodalmi szöveg eminens kibontakozása során nem tekinthetünk el a szöveg fenomenális értelmezhetőségének eltérő vetületeitől.

*Kulcsszavak:* hermeneutika, szövegszövet, eminens, meghallás, szövegtér

Dalma VERI

## ČITANJE TKANJA

*Hermeneutika teksta kao tkanja i Uliks Džejmsa Džojisa*

Iako je danas prilično jasno da jezik nije „transparentni medijum“, interpretacije koje se fokusiraju na narativima tekstova i dalje prevazilaze nastojanja onih koji se bave time koliko se tekst zaista obraća čitaocu. Interpretacije koje su usmerene samo na naraciju ne bave se onim šta tekst kaže na način na koji govori već se koncentrišu na pretpostavljene niti značenja i na skrivenu simboliku. Hermeneutički zadatak je da stupimo u dijalog sa tekstom koncentrišući se na površinu njegovog tkanja kao tekture, tj. da se upitamo kako se tekst obraća čitaocu kada mu tokom čitanja govori, i kako ga čitalac čuje. U pokušaju da tekst rasplete čitalac mora da raščlani fenomenalno značenje znaka, značenje jezika kao govora, značenje sluha ali i teksta kao prostora. Na taj način se zaista mogu pratiti isprepletene niti percepcije, i tako možemo steći pravi uvid u ono što se u tkanju teksta krije. Odlomci iz Džojsovog *Uliksa* pokazuju kako eminentno raščlanjivanje teksta odnosno tkanja zahteva pažnju u njegovim najrazličitijim aspektima.

*Ključne reči:* hermeneutika, tkanje teksta, eminentno, čuti, tekstualni prostor