

ELLIOTT B. GOSE, JR.
The Transformation Process in Joyce's Ulysses

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980. Pp. 228.

This study was not written for "the common reader," nor for casual students of Joyce: they will find it tedious, perplexing, over-learned. Rather, it is written for Joyceans—that special breed for whom Joyce "put in so many enigmas and puzzles" they will be "'busy for centuries arguing over what I mean.'" Joyceans argue, probe, search, and research not only because they are addicted to enigmas and puzzles: they reverence Joyce's achievement; they are drawn and compelled by the power and complexity of Joyce's vision.

They will find *The Transformation Process in Joyce's Ulysses* a challenging and rewarding work. Elliott B. Gose, Jr. maintains that "the thoroughly worked-through premise of Joyce's later fiction" can be identified with Henri Bergson's insistence "that reality is a perpetual growth, a creation pursued without end" (xix). This premise, Gose argues, is the key to Joyce's fictional strategies and techniques: ". . . mummification became Joyce's artistic mode, as witness the colloquial accuracy of his literary dialogue and the constant mimicry of his different styles in *Ulysses*" (p. 31). It is also basic to his theme: "Joyce believed we must see man as an animal able to enjoy himself (a 'funanimal'), able to engage in life, finally able to see the divine in the low, an absurd prospect that can make us laugh and give us heart" (p. 58).

Gose traces this premise to "an early and acknowledged influence," Giordano Bruno, and to "a later half-repudiated influence," Sigmund Freud (xix). Bruno's arguments for "the coincidence of contraries and . . . the ultimate unity of material and spiritual, phenomena and divinity" and Freud's theory that "contraries coincide, that dream work will often turn a feeling into its opposite" were, for Joyce, "compatible and necessary": they helped him to reject "the tendency of the intellect to set up logical categories which are called real" but oversimplify life and limit our understanding, and to see "the transformation process which is the actual reality of life and the universe" (pp. 13, 95, 96).

Clear, detailed, scholarly, the analysis consistently manifests its author's control of the text and his sensitivity to *Ulysses* as a work of art. Gose resorts to psychological criticism; but his interpretations, though not always persuasive, are never crude or reductive. He recognizes the limitations of his approach; he sees in *Ulysses* "the fullness of a vision of life that goes beyond the clinical to an affirmation of the resilience of the human spirit"; he knows that such an affirmation "is what in the last analysis places a great work of art beyond the range of ego psychology" (pp. 110, 100).

To some readers, Gose's explications of the text may seem belabored, tendentious, arcane, even pedantic. But any serious scholar—from Stuart Gilbert and Harry Levin to Richard Ellmann and Stanley Sultan—who challenges and enriches our understanding of *Ulysses* must risk such charges. Joyce was a pedant: only a pedant could have thought of the novel, let alone written it; it invites, encourages, demands ingenuity. Gose has put his on the line and produced a humane, intelligent, excellent account.

James L. McDonald

HELEN S. GARSON

Truman Capote

New York: Frederick Ungar, 1980. Pp. 210.

As Helen Garson points out in her introduction, "Truman Capote has been in the public eye for more than thirty years. Everyone knows his name, if not his work, for he has been interviewed, quoted and photographed regularly." Her book on Capote is designed for the general reader who wants an overview of Capote's life and writing with some indication of the foundation on which his fame or notoriety rests. The format of the book is that of a "reader's guide," with a brief biography followed by a chronological survey of the works.