

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: ". . . mumming 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.

The biographical section seems to me to be the weak link in an otherwise interesting and useful study. Garson provides the important names, dates, titles, and anecdotes but too often tries to sound like Fitzgerald writing about the Beautiful and the Damned ("Capote gave his party in an attempt to ward off the great sadness that had come over him after the completion of *In Cold Blood*").

In Chapter 2, she discusses Capote's first novel, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. Pointing out the generally rough treatment given it by the critics because of its strangeness, she demonstrates carefully how Capote drew on the conventions and resources of folklore, fairy tale, and Southern gothic fiction to probe the psychological and moral decomposition of his adolescent protagonist.

In the next chapter she looks at Capote's first collection of short fiction, *A Tree of Night and Other Stories*. She discusses the stories under two headings that are quite familiar to Capote readers—"sunny or daylight stories . . . and dark or nocturnal ones." Again, she carefully and convincingly shows how romantic elements of gothic horror, magic, and fairy tales are blended in a new way by Capote to produce fiction with psychological and moral resonance. Capote, in other words, is not a decorative but shallow writer as some critics have charged. He explores issues such as homosexuality, urban alienation, the loss of self, and the nature of love in a fresh and illuminating way.

The next two chapters deal with *The Grass Harp* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Here Garson illustrates Capote's flair for comedy and his mastery of the tones of nostalgia and pleasurable melancholy that have made him beloved of magazine editors and movie producers. I must confess that Garson finds more to like and admire in these stories than I do, but she makes her case that they have substance as well as style.

In Chapter 6, Garson discusses the fiction of the 50's and 60's, pointing out Capote's widening thematic preoccupations (with prison life for example), and in Chapter 7 she reviews the nonfiction, illustrating Capote's versatility as a writer of travel pieces, journalistic reports, portraits, essays, and anecdotes.

Chapter 8 examines *In Cold Blood* where Capote finally weds his novelistic and

journalistic talents to produce a genuine American tragedy on which his claim to be a serious writer can rest securely. The last chapter is devoted to Capote's work since *In Cold Blood* where he tries, rather unsuccessfully, to turn scandal and gossip into art.

If, as some assert, literary criticism is simply sensitive paraphrase then Garson has done her work as a critic quite well. She stays close to the text, points out artistic strategies and thematic preoccupations, and illuminates the work's particular appeal and value. Her study is sensible, restrained, and informed and provides an excellent introduction to an important contemporary writer.

Michael J. Larsen

PAUL ILIE

Literature and Inner Exile. Authoritarian Spain, 1939-1975

Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1980. Pp. ix, 197.

In his introduction, "The Semantics of Exile" (pp. 1-10), Professor Paul Ilie examines the meanings of the term "exile" and traces the following progression. Exile is a territorial break from the homeland which may be either voluntary or forced. It is accompanied by a set of feelings and beliefs that isolate the separated group from the majority. As a result, exile is more of a mental condition than a material one, for more important than geographical isolation is the internal structure of exile. Exile, then, is "a state of mind whose emotions and values respond to separation and severance as conditions in themselves. To live apart is to adhere to values that do not partake in the prevailing values; he who perceives this moral difference and who responds to it emotionally lives in exile" (p. 2).

Ilie's ideas lead us to differentiate further between territorial exile (where one voluntarily abandons one's homeland); catastrophic exile (where one is forced from one's homeland as a result of some catastrophic event—exemplified by Ilie in the