

# ***Ulysses and Finnegans Wake: A Q-Methodological Look at Profundity (Part I: Ulysses)***

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**ABSTRACT:** *James Joyce's Ulysses and Finnegans Wake are mainly substantive and transitory, respectively, a distinction introduced by William James and fundamental to the principle of complementarity in quantum theory. In this first of two parts, 5 of the 18 episodes of Ulysses are examined in detail to demonstrate the mix of substantive and transitory thought, which are as fundamental to Q methodology as to quantum theory.*

## ***Introduction***

*Ulysses* is a novel about the lives of a few lower middle-class individuals living in Dublin on June 16th, 1904, during the course of that day, from 8 a.m. to after midnight. The hero is Leopold Bloom, an Irish Jew, employed as an advertising salesman, and is described by Stuart Gilbert (1959) as "undis-

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tinguished by any particular virtue or vice, kindhearted, moderately educated, mildly sensual, not even really vulgar." The heroine is Marion (Molly) his wife. During the day Leopold seems to meet mainly foul-mouthed drunks, but also Stephen Dedalus, who is adopted that day by Leopold as a surrogate son, and who is Leopold's scholarly "other half." The story is told in a sequence of "episodes," 18 in all, beginning at 8 a.m. on the morning of June 16th, 1904, and ending next morning, on June 17th.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* was published (in part) in 1912, but was banned from entry into the United States as obscene until 1933. It began a revolution in the literary field, not due to its obscenity. I propose to show that Joyce's mode of thought was Q-methodological. *Ulysses* is an epic of *substantive* knowledge. *Finnegans Wake* is all *transitory* thought. But this is only the beginnings of fundamental parallels between Joyce's thought and that of Q methodology. The subject of *substantial* and *transitive* thought was introduced by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1891, and is the basis of the principle of complementarity in quantum theory (Stephenson, 1986a, 1986b).

### **James Joyce and Substantive Thought**

Joyce discovered for himself the power of substantive thought, and represented it "done-on-purpose" in *Ulysses*. It ruled the world of *use*, of commerce, the humanities, and science, and of all extant knowledge.

We should have examples: consider, then, the opening four sentences of *Ulysses*. They are as follows:

Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing gown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him by the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned:

– *Introibo ad altere Dei.*

Halted, he peered down the dark winding stairs and called up coarsely:

– Come up, Kinch, Come up, you fearful jesuit.

The first two sentences are substantive: they are written as if to describe things "outside," objectively. The second two are transitory: the narration describes things "inside" Mulligan. Holding the bowl aloft and intoning like a priest about to celebrate Mass is meant to represent the clowning, or satire, or blasphemy of the speaker. The yell for his roommate, Stephen Dedalus (nicknamed Kinch), is of the same intemperate Mulligan's "inner" being.

You will agree that all literary narration mixes these two indiscriminately.

### ***The Challenge of Ulysses***

What Joyce "did-on-purpose" was very different. For 650 pages of my 767-page volume of *Ulysses*, Joyce expresses in 16 episodes what happened to his few characters, and what they thought on June 16th, 1904, from 8 a.m. to midnight. In these 650 pages there is the usual mixture of substantive and transitive thought.

In the final 115 pages this is dramatically changed. Episode 17 is completely *substantive*. Episode 18 is as radically *transitive*.

Because these two concepts are fundamental in quantum theory, as in Q, it suggests that we should examine what else in Joyce's two masterpieces are indicative of quantum theory, as at their foundations. And it is in that respect that we are now able to understand the two epics.

### ***The Structure of Ulysses***

The 18 episodes of *Ulysses* are given names from Greek mythology; they embrace much, if not nearly all, of the substantive knowledge of Western culture in the 19th century -- for theology, history, philology, economics, botany, religion, rhetoric, architecture, literature, mechanics, music, politics, art, medicine, magic, science. The knowledge is put into the mind of Mr. Bloom (in spite of his modest background).

There is, for example, *Calypso*, episode 4, representing *economics*. (Calypso was the entrancing nymph in Homer's *Odyssey* who held Odysseus captive for seven years during his wanderings in the Mediterranean.) Bloom sets out at 8:00 a.m. on that day of June 16, 1904, to buy a *kidney* for breakfast, and speculates about money. In the butcher's shop he sees an advertisement for the sale of farms in Turkey by the Turkish government, of "vast sandy tracts" to plant with eucalyptus trees, orange groves and immense melon fields. Bloom is partial to melons, and daydreams about the East, his homeland. He admits to a vague malaise, that he is never quite "at home" amongst the "noble Danes of Dublin" (Dublin was founded by Norsemen, including Danes). He has a secret wish to return to the "warm bright and blue shadows of the East."

We are introduced to the *reality* of Bloom's *fantasy*, instigated by the all-too-attractive advertisement. The fantasy is not mere "will-o-the-wisp," but rooted in Bloom's life, as his birthright. It is essentially transitory thought, and matters more to him than he dare make substantive. Instead, he hinges it upon his wife Molly, who becomes richly fantasized in a later episode where she is in Turkish attirement, attended by a camel:

On her feet are jewelled toe-rings. Her ankles are linked by a slender fetterchain. Beside her a camel, hooded with a terreting turban, waits ... lifting a foreleg, (the camel) plucks from a tree a large mango fruit, offers it to his mistress....

In short, Joyce plays the transitory tune, as Bloom's fantasy. But he is also being satirical about everything in the domain of economics and advertising, as well as melancholic about his residence in an alien land. Each episode is dealt with in this way: and it is worth looking more closely at the plan, in terms of three of the episodes: *Aeolus*, *Scylla and Charybdis*, and *Circe*, however briefly.

### **Aeolus**

*Aeolus* is episode 7, devoted to *rhetoric* and *journalism*.

*Aeolus* in Greek mythology was *God-of-the-Winds*, and 32 pages of my copy of *Ulysses* are devoted to this God. Bloom, at 12 noon on June 16, 1904, visits the press room of a Dublin newspaper about an advertising assignment, and the episode describes the event as well as what Bloom thought at the same time.

"Funny," we hear Mr. Bloom saying, "the way those newspaper men veer about when they get wind of a new opening. Weathercocks!"

It is summarized by Stuart Gilbert, an early authority on Joyce (who knew Joyce, and who helped Joyce translate *Ulysses* into French), in *James Joyce's Ulysses* (1959), as follows:

#### *Aeolus*

Scene	<i>The Newspaper</i>
Hour	<i>12 noon</i>
Organ	<i>Lungs</i>
Art	<i>Rhetoric</i>
Colour	<i>Red</i>
Symbol	<i>Editor</i>
Technic	<i>Enthymemic</i>

Needless to say, Joyce makes much of *Aeolus* as the *God-of-the-Wind*. He describes the typical journalist in the following breathless language:

Practice dwindling. Losing heart. Gambling. Debts of honor. Reaping the whirlwind. Well read fellow.... Weathercocks. Hot and Cold in the same breath. Wouldn't know which to believe. One story good till you hear the next. Go for one or another baldheaded in the papers and then all blows over. Hailfellows well met the next moment.

Of course Joyce represents journalism as at the mercy of rhetoric -- it is the primary source of its credibility gap, and has followed journalism down the centuries, beginning in Greek mythology. It really doesn't matter whether Homer, and the early poets, existed or not -- they spoke their poems as *news*, and this existed in the body public already, as we shall see when we examine *Finnegans Wake*. Quintillion (A.D. 35-95?) taught as Professor of Rhetoric at the University in Naples, and Western communicators have been taught in Quintillion terms for centuries -- he called for "moderation and good taste" in its use.

Its use by journalists and the politicians they pursue nowadays, one must surely admit, leaves much to be desired in Quintillion terms!

In Aeolus, Joyce provides examples of 95 different rhetorical devices, all in the compass of 32 pages. If you read all of Shakespeare's plays you would no doubt find examples of all of them: no wonder our expert Stuart Gilbert could recommend the episode as obligatory reading for students of rhetoric -- as I do, also, for students of journalism.

One example is of direct interest: it is "Gone With the Wind," spoken by Stephen Dedalus. We may doubt whether Margaret Mitchell knew that Joyce had used this enthymeme in *Ulysses*. Her novel was published in 1935 and the title is remarkable as a summary of a slice of American history, in which Scarlett O'Hara marries the wrong man, and leaves what matters most, "gone with the wind," for the sake of money and family security. Rhetoric can perform literary wonders, as Quintillion taught it, with good taste and moderation.

For his part, Joyce (as Stephen Dedalus) could have been thinking of a political meeting at Tara (August, 1843), at which a million people assembled to hear Mr. O'Connell's oratory. There was a brass band from every State in Ireland. The oratory, the rhetoric, the dissembling, the half-truths, the big lies, focused TV-spots on today's politics ... all such remain with us, and Joyce shows it "up front," in devastating irony. *Rhetoric*, he concludes, is basically chimerical. And today,

what appears in print, or on television, is a pretense at being substantive, except when natural calamities break the news.

### ***Scylla and Charybdis***

It was a common practice in the 19th and early 20th century for a few persons to meet on a regular basis to advance their knowledge. Such was a meeting in the Dublin National library of Stephen Dedalus and four friends, Mr. Best, John Eglinton, George Russell, and the librarian. Their concern was with *literature*. Episode 9 (*Scylla and Charybdis*) is an account of what transpired.

It was a common practice in the 19th century and early 20th for a few persons to meet on a regular basis for discussion. I make reference elsewhere (Stephenson, 1987) to such a group when, as a youth of 17, I was friends with a family in which the father (a coal miner) had around him, in his detached house with an acre of garden and a family of five handsome daughters and three sons -- the eldest daughter a school-teacher, the eldest son killed in Spain, fighting Franco's dictatorship -- who had a library of several hundred books, at whose house a group of men met regularly to discuss politics and economics: three of the men later became Labour Members of the British Parliament.

But now for Episode 9. The discussion is intense, as if some eminent governmental authorities were discussing "the career and statesmanship of Lenin." There is nothing amateurish about it: Gilbert describes it as abounding...

in abrupt contrasts, formal speeches alternating with clowning, argot with metaphysics.

The excitement rises when Stephen declares, like a modern Socrates, that the real hero in *Hamlet* is not Hamlet the son, but Hamlet's *father*.

Consternation follows!

But the argument turns upon a very interesting observation, that the early plays of Shakespeare expressed tragedy (*King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*), whereas the

later plays, such as *The Tempest*, concerned reconciliation and not bitterness. Stephen wonders why the change? What had happened to the young genius as he became an older and wiser one? What had assuaged the hell of *King Lear*?

Stephen answered that it was a *child*, a Miranda, given up for lost but restored miraculously to Prospero her grandfather.

The father was just a necessary evil compared with this restoration of the child. In short, Stephen uses this observation to deny validity to traditional substantiveness -- the belief in Hamlet as somehow hero belies the reality of the situation more broadly examined. Stephen concludes:

When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at him to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of rationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.

Again, in short, the clever Stephen Dedalus is rejecting all talk of nationality, literature, religion, as if these matters are only *substantive*.

Stephen is aware that he is treading on thin ice. He was facing the dogmatism of the Irish nationalists and Jesuits, the "Celtic Twilight," as contrasted with the freedom in Elizabethan London, where Shakespeare had lived royally, in wealth and fame, until he felt the banishment from his homeland and writes *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the Prospero of *The Tempest*.

There is the paradox: all religion, Stephen tells his friends, and every explanation of the universe -- all existing knowledge -- if you look broadly enough at it, is founded (as he put it) ...

*upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood.*

This statement is the Einsteinian equivalent of  $e = mc^2$ . It indicated that all substantive knowledge is suspect.

A German expert on Joyce's *Ulysses*, Professor Curtius (1929, cited in Gilbert, 1959), had drawn the same conclusion about Joyce, that all the wealth of philosophy, theology, aes-



thetics, psychology, upon which Joyce himself had been schooled, was now declared to be ...

gifts but to spend themselves, to refute themselves in a world-conflagration, a flaming welter of metallic iridescence. What is left? An odor of ashes, the horror of death, sorrow of apostasy, pangs of remorse.

It is very strong language. Joyce had indeed been schooled in the wealth of the literature of the Western world: he was conversant with 40 different languages, and had a vocabulary, apparently, of some 64,000 words -- in comparison with the mere 800 required in Ogden's basic English!

### *Circe (Episode 15)*

Circe, in Greek mythology, is a celebrated enchantress who changed the companions of Odysseus into swine, and the scene in this episode (15) is a brothel, at midnight, into which Bloom stumbles with Stephen Dedalus on his way home on June 16, 1904. The brothel scene is really more funny than obscene, and from the Q-methodology viewpoint is important, in that Joyce acknowledges that hallucinations are *real*, subjective, transitory phenomena. What characterizes the episode is that every "temptation" offered to Bloom or Stephen Dedalus is countered by transitory thought, in the form of hallucinations.

Thus, one of the "ladies," Zoe, asks Bloom for a "swagger-root." Bloom replies that he rarely smokes, and that smoking is childish anyhow. Zoe responds:

*Go on, Make a stump speech out of it.*

Bloom then hallucinates: he imagines himself "in workman's corduroy overalls, and proceeds, indeed, to make a speech of it: he speaks (though no one hears) ...

Mankind is incorrigible. Sir Walter Raleigh brought from the new world that potato and that weed, the one a killer of

pestilence by absorption, the other a poisoner of the ear, eye, heart, memory, will, understanding all. That is to say, he brought the poison a hundred years before another person whose name I forget brought the food. Suicide. Lies. All our habits. Why, look at our public life!

This is typical of 170 pages of this episode, in which hallucination runs riot, but based on facts.

When church bells chime, Bloom echoes with ...

*Turn again Leopold! Lord Mayor of Dublin!*

Then, for incident after incident, he imagines himself as Lord Mayor of Dublin (and makes a speech out of it); there is a page full of congratulations from former Mayors; another speech by Bloom, followed by enormous crowds in the streets, may-poles and festooned arches everywhere. Regiments of the Dublin Fusiliers the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Cameroon Highlanders and the Welsh Fusiliers stand at attention along the street to keep back the crowds ... and on, and on, with phantasmagoria unbounded ... : "the ladies from balconies throw down rose petals. The air is perfumed with essences. The men cheer." Michael, Archbishop of Armagh, anoints him. The Chapel of Freeman Typesetters yells Hear! Hear! (not Here! Here!) Another speech by Bloom:

My beloved subjects, a new era is about to dawn. I, Bloom, tell you verily it is even now at hand. Yea, on the word of a Bloom, ye shall long enter into the golden city which is to be, the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future.

And of course the New Bloomusalem appears, in a vast hallucination -- a colossal edifice, with crystal roof, in the shape of a huge pork kidney, containing 40 thousand rooms! ... so it continues for page after page of every possible impossibility, in which he conjures up his dead father, Stephen Dedalus's dead mother, his former lovers. It is also a confession of everything sinful he had already *thought*, or perhaps performed.

In short Bloom's transitory mind is laid bare before us. He escapes from the brothel, with Stephen Dedalus, with a

clear mind, now softened as if by abreaction when he sees in hallucination ...

a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand.

It is Rudy! Bloom's only son had died in childbirth, and this is his reincarnation, in fantasy, in hallucination, a Miranda returning home.

Again it is a grandiloquent debunking of the brothel, and testimony to the vagaries and impossibilities of life. It is Joyce's concept of *unlikelihood*, epitomized. The October 1988 issue of *The Illustrated London News* has an article on "The Hying of Ecstasy" (pp. 29-32), about the use of an illegal drug, Ecstasy, which is currently a craze in London. My wife and I used to shop for fruit and vegetables on Tottenham Court nearly 60 years ago: now it is apparently closed to traffic some nights while young people dance frenetically after taking a pill, the size of a peppercorn, at £20 a pill! It is the same dance *Macabre* of Bloom and his friends with the women, and hallucinations, of *Circe* in *Ulysses*. But there is no Leopold Bloom, no Joyce, to bring the young people into daylight.

### *Episode 17: Ithaca*

We now come to the final two episodes, 17 and 18. Each of the others has expressed the same theme, that extant knowledge is flawed, even chimerical. Now, at episode 17, Joyce provides 70 pages of uncontaminated fact, to satirize the fundamental conclusion, the Einsteinian  $e = mc^2$ , so that nobody can possibly miss what he is representing as substantive knowledge: it begins where Bloom and Stephen Dedalus have left the cabmen's shelter and the hallucinations of *Circe*, and are on their way to Bloom's home, Stephen pretty drunk, Bloom still sober. The narration is entirely in catechistic form.

WHAT PARALLEL COURSE DID BLOOM AND STEPHEN FOLLOW RETURNING?

Starting united both at normal walking pace from Beresford place they followed in the order named Lower and Middle Gardiner streets and Mountjoy square, west; then, at reduced pace, each bearing left, Gardiner's place by an inadvertence as far as the farther corner of Temple street, north; then at reduced pace with interruptions of halt, bearing right, Temple street, north, as far as Harwicke place ...

... and so on.

**OF WHAT DID THE DRUUMVIRATE DELIBERATE DURING THEIR ITINERARY?**

Music, literature, Ireland, Dublin, Paris, friendship, woman, prostitution, diet, the influence of gaslight or the light or arc and glowlamps as the growth of adjoining paraheliotropic trees, exposed corporation emergency dustbuckets, the Roman catholic church, ecclesiastical celibacy, the Irish nation, jesuit education, careers, the study of medicine, the past day, the maleficent influence of the presabbath, Stephen's collapse.

**DID BLOOM DISCOVER COMMON FACTORS OF SIMILARITY BETWEEN THEIR RESPECTIVE LIKE AND UNLIKE REACTIONS TO EXPERIENCE?**

... and on and on.... There follows, for 20 pages, the same questioning of Bloom -- of how he has *missed* seeing Stephen Dedalus in 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1892, 1893, and 1904. There are detailed summaries, en route, as Bloom disgorges his knowledge about everything already mentioned in the earlier episodes, for example about *water* (Bloom goes to fill a kettle with water from his kitchen faucet to make hot cocoa for Stephen and himself at 1:00 a.m., after midnight, and we are regaled with every bit and nuance of scientific knowledge about *water* -- how it flowed from the reservoir in County Wicklow, what the system cost, and about every quality and characteristic of *water*, every fact you could wish for if you were trying to tell the world about the significance of water, ending with the fact that 90% of our body is water, and that water is particularly noxious in fens and marshes, not to mention ...

its effluvia is faded flowerwater.

**Not a detail is missed!**

Halfway through the 72 pages there is mention of an experiment by Bloom, when he marked a silver coin and put it into circulation in Dublin. He wondered whether he would ever see it again. Of course he never did see it again, and he is asked, Why does that depress you? He answers ...

... Because at a critical turning point of human existence he desired to amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity.

**The catechist asks:**

**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HUMAN LIFE IS INFINITELY PERFECTIBLE, AND THAT THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE ELIMINATED?**

**Bloom answers:**

Yes, human life was infinitely perfectible, keeping in mind the generic conditions imposed by the agonies of birth and death, painful maladies, innate lunacy, congenital criminality, decimating epidemics, etc.

**WHY, THEN, HAVE YOU DESISTED FROM SPECULATION ON THESE MATTERS?**

**He answers:**

Because it is a task for a superior intelligence to substitute other more acceptable phenomena.

**Again the question is put:**

**DID STEPHEN DEDALUS PARTICIPATE IN THESE THOUGHTS?**

**Bloom answers:**

Not verbally. Substantially.

So it continues, fact upon fact. Gilbert (1959) describes it as itemizing items, as for a catalogue sale: he writes ...

From this episode the flesh of sentiment and trappings of style have been stripped until it is little more than a skeleton ... the incidents ... are described meticulously in terms of natural phenomena; or, rather, they are not merely "described," they are analyzed and listed. One is, at times, reminded of the catalogue of some provincial auction sale.... (p. 369)

But what remains? Mr. Bloom is a man who has seen and suffered much, at what he called "the university of life." He rests, at the end of the episode, in a softened mood, thinking of his lost son. The final question is put:

**WITH WHAT ANTAGONISTIC SENTIMENTS WERE YOUR  
SUBSEQUENT REFLECTIONS AFFECTED?**

Bloom answers:

*Envy, jealousy, abrogation, equanimity.*

There follows a vivid definition of equanimity -- as something totally natural, the result of a "reciprocal equilibrium between the body organism and its attendant circumstances, foods, beverages, acquired habits, indulged inclinations, significant disease. As more than inevitable, irreparable."

Concepts paralleling those, of envy, jealousy, abrogation and equanimity, are end-points of Melanie Klein's contribution to psychoanalysis, as in her *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (1937), and her *Envy and Gratitude* (1957), which I have attributed to quantum theory (Stephenson, 1987).

### ***Episode 18 (Penelope)***

Molly has been awake, and has heard her husband and Stephen as they talked downstairs in the kitchen. She hears a version of it from her drowsy husband, and then, next morn-

ing, Friday, June 17, 1904, she gives her thoughts to us in the concluding 45 pages of *Ulysses*, for 25,000 words of unpunctuated and unparagraphed monologue. It begins ...

Yes, because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the *City Arms* hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting to that old faggot Mrs. Riorden that he thought he had a great big leg of

...

... and on, for 45 pages without a comma, full stop, exclamation mark, or paragraph. She ends with the famous, ineffable

...

*I said yes I will yes*

The soliloquy is full of revealing self-referent statements, such as the following:

God help the world if all the women were all her sort down on bathing suits and lownecks

I suppose she was pious because no man would look at her twice I hope I'll never be like her

I hate having a long wrangle in bed

I would lower myself to spy on them

The tone of Molly's meditation is undoubtedly *earthy*. Throughout the monologue she is absolutely *natural*; she is not a degenerate, like modern young people who "return to nature" or to "simple communistic life." Gilbert (1959) describes her, instead, as ...

the voice of Nature herself, and judges as the Great Mother whose function is fertility. (p. 400)

The Great Mother is *Gaea*, who, according to Greek mythology, was the first being on earth and who sprang from *Chaos*.

Her son was *Uranus* (the sky); she became, by her son, the mother of a brood of giants.

There are idyllic moments in Molly's rumination, "full of the spirit of nature," when she speaks like Mother Earth: for example ...

I feel all fire inside me  
 I love flowers I'd love to have the whole place swimming in  
 roses  
 like nothing on earth  
 see it all around you like a new world

The episode is limited to no *time* as such. Through the course of the monologue we see her expanding -- she is first an ordinary housewife, but she ends as a "personification of the infinite variety of Nature," a Great Mother of the Gods, starting from a chaotic plasma as her beginning.

This is the language of Stuart Gilbert.

And certainly, as you read the 45 pages, there is something close to ecstasy at its conclusion, as genuine sublimation.

### ***Prolegomena to a Conclusion***

We shall see much more of Molly's influence in *Finnegans Wake*. Meanwhile her episode is transitory thought *in the raw*.

On the American Public Broadcast System during September 1988, I saw a B.B.C. production of *Oedipus at Colonus and Antigone*, by Sophocles. Tragic Antigone was pleading for moral values as natural to human beings; she stands alone in her belief, against the traditional knowledge, the substantive thought, of the Senators and the Theban Regent, Creon. 2,500 years later, Molly Bloom, errant wife of Leopold Bloom, was making the same plea, in the same tragic context. Nothing had changed. Joyce, with *Ulysses*, was intent upon change, and believed that scholars would be searching into *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* for the next 1000 years to find it.

In Part II we can look closely at *Finnegans Wake* and at our theoretical approach to these works of genius, that can end the search long before the thousand years have ended.



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**"Ulysses and Finnegans Wake: A Q-Methodological Look at Profundity (Part II: Finnegans Wake) will appear in the July issue.**

***If entropy is increasing, where is it coming from? (Anon.)***