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James Joyce Estate finally gives Kate Bush Permission to use Molly Bloom soliloquy

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The Irish Times has recently reported that the Joyce estate has, after many years of refusal, finally granted the English singer Kate Bush permission to use the famous Molly Bloom soliloquy from James Joyce's seminal novel Ulysses as the lyrical basis for a song. The soliloquy, spoken at the end of the novel by Molly Bloom, the wife of the main character Leopold Bloom, is famous for including one of the longest sentences in the English literature (over 4000 words). Kate Bush was refused permission to use the extract in the original version of her album The Sensual World in 1989.

The decision is notable due to the previous unwillingness of the Joyce estate to allow such adaptations of Joycean text. For instance, in 2006, a Stanford Professor, Carol Schloss, was forced to sue the Joyce estate in order to use parts of Joyce's writings in an academic biography of Joyce's daughter Lucia. The case was eventually settled with the Joyce estate agreeing to pay Schloss' costs.

It is notable that James Joyce, who died in 1941, used many "appropriations" in the creation of Ulysses; in fact the entire plot of the novel is based on Homer's Odyssey. It is perhaps also notable that Joyce's copyright, which in the UK and Ireland is due to last 70 years after his death, expires next year. After 2012, every artist will be able to appropriate from Joyce's work? Ulysses will be public domain.

The relevant details of the Joyce copyright dealings are found here:

<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/node/6265>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2011/0405/1224293869934.html>

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