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Ulysses: Philosophy or Literature? Interrogating the text through the lens of philosophical nostalgia to identify the Derridian positionality of Joyce's oeuvre.

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DECLARATION

I declare that I have written this thesis myself and on my own. I have duly referenced and quoted all the sources and literature that I used in it. I have not yet submitted this work to obtain another degree. I will sign this declaration and consent by handwritten signature.

The James Joyce, Prague 1, Czech Republic, 26th March, 2024

Signature:

Jessica Louise McMurray

Dedication:

To Ed: You sparked this passion in me, but you're not here to see it through. I was a fool to ever question you: reading *Ulysses* may have been the making of me. We should be sitting in the confessional at Grace's arguing every paragraph. You'd be outraged at me having the gall and presumption to question your authority on Joyce, but you'd come back from the bar with a Midleton for me, because secretly, you'd have been so proud.

And to Dad: I wrote this with your copy of *Ulysses* in hand – inscribed in 1977 with your name and college. I traced your scrawled notes in the margins back to mine. I value every thread that ties me back to you. You'd have been proud too.

Finally, to Dr. Marek, whose insight I respect deeply, and whose guidance I valued throughout.

Abstract: *In Derrida's 1992 essay 'Ulysses Gramophone', Derrida declared that Joyce's Ulysses can be understood as a Babelian 'hypermnesic machine'; a text that constitutes not only itself but incorporates predictively all of the ensuing academic discourse that would flow therefrom. As Vichnar (2008) phrases it: "In approaching Joyce's text... the reader finds it always already supplemented by some "and"... every critical work that unproblematically operates within the syntactic construction of "Joyce and ..." re-enacts a gesture already performed by Joyce's text about which it purports to be" (emphasis added). In this way, Ulysses becomes a text that contains all of thought – past, present and future; each word layered with meaning, double meaning, contrary meaning, prediction, reflection and negation.*

If this proposition holds true, then in theory it is possible to interrogate the text using any lens of investigation, chosen at random (in other words, to fill in the blank after 'Joyce and ____' in a metaphorical search bar of Joycean scholarship) and successfully identify both Joycean source material and subsequent academic discourse thereon. This dissertation does exactly this, adopting an 'experimental methodology' by using a randomly selected (but subsequently justified) 'variable' – in this case, the notion of philosophical nostalgia – to 'fill in the blank' and thus to test the Derridean proposition of Ulysses' hypermnesic quality and Vichnar's assertion of Ulysses as an 'all-encompassing' text that anticipates its own interrogation – in all forms – and thus becomes "the sum of all sums" (Derrida, 1992).

The choice of philosophical nostalgia in part is selected as the variable of interrogation because it contains within it a multitude of expressions, conceptions and constructions, providing yet richer ground for experimental interrogation. As such, the dissertation explores a varied range of constructions of 'philosophical nostalgia' within Joyce's oeuvre (though primarily Ulysses); including those of Chrostowska, Schultz, Kierkegaard, Jung, Malpas, Heidegger, and Camus, as well as exploring notions of linguistic materiality in relation to nostalgia and experiential self.

In doing so, the work inevitably encounters questions pertaining to the nature of 'philosophy' and 'literature' and the legitimacy of distinctions between the two. The dissertation finds that Joyce's work cannot be considered a work of philosophy merely by virtue of its (exhaustive) detailing of philosophical concepts: to do so would render it merely encyclopaedic in nature. Instead, it is the experimentality of Joyce's work (particularly linguistic, but also the experiment itself of producing a hypermnesic encyclopaedia of all-encompassment) that allow it to transcend the stricter definitions of either field and become a work that should rightly be considered 'philo-literary'.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ulysses and Derrida's Gramophone

'Homer's *The Odyssey*', Bojana Aćamović (2020, p.42) writes, represents 'a foundational text of the Western literary canon', with a cultural presence so huge that it leads Hall (2008) to claim that there cannot be said to be any 'spin off' from the text, since all texts are necessarily informed by its profound effect on our 'imagination and cultural values'.

But if it is *The Odyssey* which shaped Western canon for three millennia, there is certainly one very direct 'spin-off' of *The Odyssey* which has shaped its progression through the 20th century: namely, *Ulysses*. As Hall notes "*The Odyssey* has generated other texts with foundational status. ... The best example [of which] is Joyce's *Ulysses*, a founding text of Modernist fiction. Any aspiring novelist since Joyce has had to deal with the *Odyssey* simply because of the magnitude of *Ulysses* in the emergence of contemporary fiction' (Hall, 2008, p.9).

But *Ulysses* constitutes far more than a mere reworking and/or extension of the original epic. Its impact is not only to 're' the work in an *additive* manner; to re-imagine, re-work and re-interpret in a simulacrum that sits *alongside* the original, it instead serves to actively impose upon the foundational text of *The Odyssey* itself and change its fundamental nature and reception as a Western cultural artefact; for as Hall identifies, there exists always a 'two-way nature to the relationship [between original and reworking]: every new response to a classic text alters the total picture of its influence' (Hall, 2008, p.6).

For Derrida, this goes even further. *Ulysses* does not merely play upon the universal themes of *The Odyssey*, generating a summation of the way they have permeated Western thinking and creativity to date, but instead does something far greater: it develops itself as an *active* text that both records the presence of these themes *and* spins them out into infinity. Derrida refers to *Ulysses* as a 'hypermnestic machine' – not just a memory *record* of unusual poignancy and accuracy, but a machine capable of *generating* memories; past, present and future. Essentially, as Derrida puts it, Joyce's work (and *Ulysses* most notably), constitutes writing that seeks 'to repeat and take responsibility for all equivocation itself, utilising a language that could equalize the greatest possible synchrony with the greatest potential for buried, accumulated and interwoven intentions within each linguistic atom, each vocable, each word, each simple

proposition, in all worldly cultures and their most ingenious forms (mythology, religion, sciences, arts, literature, politics, philosophy and so forth)’ (Derrida, 1989, p.102).

Derrida’s understanding of *Ulysses* as an almost living entity that generates thought as much as it records thought - a modern day, encyclopaedic Borgean Library of Babel that contains within it all *that is*, but also, most crucially *will be* – is not as innovative a claim as one might initially assume; indeed, Joyce himself stated that ‘I’ve put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy ... [it] is the only way of insuring one’s immortality’ (Ellman, 1982, p.512)¹.

Recognising the truth of Hall’s assertion that ‘every new response to a classic text alters the total picture of its influence’, Joyce ensured that his text would constitute far more than 265,222 words found within the 732² pages of the book, and instead has grown (and continues to grow) to not just accommodate but *actually consist of* the entire catalogue of extant academic scholarship that surrounds it. This causes Derrida to proclaim that ‘nothing can be invented on the subject of Joyce’ (Derrida, 1992, p.281), and Pugliatti (2016) further notes: ‘Given that James Joyce is second only to Shakespeare in terms of the number of published studies of his work, any new discovery relating to Joyce and his work is an important world literary event’ (p.15). But for Derrida, it is more than an important event, it is an inevitability: “Everything we can say about Ulysses, for example, has already been anticipated, including, as we have seen, the scene about academic competence and the ingenuity of metadiscourse’ (Derrida, 1992, p.281) (with Derrida referring here specifically to Stephen’s dissection of academia in both *Portrait*, and his lengthy contemplation with fellow academics on the nature of literary analysis in Scylla and Charybdis).

Adding to the meta-complexity of this notion though, Derrida’s recognition of the role of Joycean scholarship as being *as* important to the text as the words within the text itself has created yet a further ‘wheel within a wheel’; his own recognition of Ulysses as ‘Babelian’ has itself sparked discourse *about* Derrida-in-reference-to-Joyce, which thus further bolsters Derrida’s position and in effect ensures that he has created a self-fulfilling prophecy; i.e. that Joyce’s collected words on a page act as a catalyst from which unlimited further content spins

¹ Though note, some questions have been raised as to the validity of this phrase, with some authors – such as Sam Slote (2022) asserting that it was a spurious fabrication by the recipient of the statement: Jaques Benoist-Mechin.

²² Gabler edition

out. The hypermnestic record is thus created, with the original texts of Joyce as the fuel for production, and Joycean scholars as the engine.

Commentaries upon this process (indeed, this very work itself) then simply add a further ‘meta’ layer to Derrida’s proposition. As Vichnar notes “For Derrida, the signature of ‘Joyce,’ which every interpretation (*his own including*) seeks to countersign, is first and foremost the encyclopaedic, all-inclusive character of his texts, by which it becomes “the sum total of all sum totals”, the “hypermnesis machine”, or the “1000th generation computer” (emphasis added here) (Vichnar, 2008, p.6). By a simple matter of logic, any author seeking to pass comment on the legitimacy of Derrida’s claim that *Ulysses (and the commentaries it both prompts and predicts) contains everything* necessarily adds weight to that very proposition, heaping yet more content into the basket of ‘everything’.

David Vichnar explores this idea in his thesis ‘Joyce Against Theory: James Joyce after Deconstruction’ (2008), where he sets about what Mahon (2010) refers to as the ‘meta-critical task of scanning the last twenty-five years of theoretical innovations in Joyce scholarship’ (p659), covering deconstruction, psychoanalysis, feminism, sexuality and gender studies, cultural studies and postcolonialism with the aim of exploring how these commentaries - as much as the original text itself - inform understandings of the work in relation to its status as a modern or postmodern text, its historicism, politics, technicity, media and hypertext, textual criticism and textual genetics. His title - using the conjunction ‘against’ - plays on the negation of the far more typical ‘and’ found in Joycean scholarship titles; a ‘conjunctive alchemy [which] permits critics to distil new reading of books like *Ulysses*... from a rich array of cultural, aesthetic, theoretical and historical contexts... [exercising] the humble conjunctive’s unique ability to weave Joyce’s texts into the world in ways still creative, thoughtful and unexpected’ (Latham, 2007, p.7). Latham’s quote there is particularly notable for its deployment of the term ‘creative’; which should be read not only as the exercise of personal expressiveness, but as a *productive* endeavour: a constant forging of the Babelean library.

This study aims to engage in a similar undertaking, but of much smaller scope and scale. In essence, like Vichnar, it attempts to ‘prove’ the validity of Derrida’s position on *Ulysses* (and wider Joycean scholarship as a whole) by interrogating the text through a pre-established lens. Where Vichnar undertook this with a multitude of lenses, this study will interrogate the text through only one lens – that of philosophical nostalgia (the justification for which is established below in section 1.2). Moreover, where Vichnar aims to use these multiple lenses of interrogation to establish the positionality of the text in relation to a multitude of issues (see

above re: postmodernism, historicism, politics, etc), this study will do so with an aim of exploring just one question: *if* Joyce's oeuvre is indeed a hypermnestic machine that contains all things in the world (of which philosophy is included), then can it itself *constitute* a piece of philosophy?

As such, the research questions can be framed thus:

RQ1) Can one select a 'random' topic – in this case philosophical nostalgia – and use it to interrogate both Joyce's oeuvre and extant Joycean discourse and generate meaning and understanding therefrom – thus supporting Derrida's notion of Joyce's work as a 'hypermnestic machine' that both records and *generates* all thought, past, present and future?

RQ2) If so, what implications does this have for understanding and categorising Joyce's work as either literature, philosophy, or a hybrid concept in between?

The second question is - on a logical level - not dissimilar to Bertrand Russell's concerns regarding whether a set of all sets can contain itself within it. However, it is also pertinent on a philo-literary level: asking what marks the difference between philosophy that leverages literary devices for illustration, and literary works which explore philosophical concepts.

By outlining the multitude of ways in which one philosophical concept – that of philosophical nostalgia - is spun out throughout the work, the work can go some way to supporting (but not *proving*) the first proposition: that there is a beyond-encyclopaedic scope to the work that turns it from *containing* philosophy to *becoming* philosophy. But by using just one lens of interrogation, the study is in effect limited regarding 'study size' and 'generalisability' in its pursuit of RQ1, and thus can also only make so many claims regarding the positionality of the text as philosophic, literary or hybrid as questioned within RQ2. These essential 'methodological' issues are discussed further in section 1.2 below.

1.2 Methodological concepts

The goals of this study are, admittedly, lofty; they do after all seek at their heart to identify the *capacity* for the presence of ‘everything’ within a singular (albeit significant) text. But aside from issues of practicality, there are methodological concerns to such an undertaking, which are important to dissect further because this study is, in effect, attempting to apply an ‘experimental design’ to literature. In essence, it asks: Can proposition X (that Ulysses is a hypermnesic machine) be proved by the application of any given random experimental variable (in this case, philosophical nostalgia) and from this, can a generalisation (the nature of Ulysses as literature or philosophy) thus be made. Much like a ‘true’ scientific undertaking – which can only ever make a null hypothesis (the so called ‘black swan’ issue, in which one can never prove that all swans are white, but can quickly prove they are *not* with the presence of just one swan), the method deployed recognises that it can never fully prove Derrida’s assertion of ‘the presence of *everything*’ within the text (even Vichnar’s comprehensive, far-spanning ~400 page study only constitutes a drop in the ocean). However, through the process of randomisation, it can make assertions regarding the *likelihood* of the validity of Derrida’s claim. In this case, that ‘randomisation’ is the selection of a concept at whim (in this case, philosophical nostalgia) to interrogate the text. Thus, whilst there are justifications offered for the selection of philosophical nostalgia (explored in section 1.3), these do not derive *from* the text, but are applied *to* it experimentally – and are in effect an arbitrary selection by the researcher, influenced by non-Joyce-related courses and areas of study. The approach taken is thus by no means systematic nor comprehensive – indeed, as stressed above, if one is to understand Joyce’s work as the experimental, organic hypermnesic machine Derrida claims, such an undertaking would be impossible, for it would spin out to infinity. Instead, the dissertation seeks to give a broad but cherry-picked overview of the many manifestations of nostalgia contained within, because it is precisely the arbitrariness of this cherry-picking that provides the methodological, ‘quasi-randomised’ foundations of the study.

1.3 Notions of philosophical nostalgia and justification for its selection as interrogative device

‘Philosophy’, writes Novalis ‘is essentially homesickness - the urge to be everywhere at home’ (Novalis, 1789). Expanding on this, Chrostowska (2010) states that ‘if philosophy is the loss of the self (that very memento of loss), which it was for Novalis, then so is the way home. If our struggles abroad - our self-preservation and self-discovery - solidify our self, or multiply it as they did Odysseus’s, then our homecoming is a flight into fluidity or else a shedding of selves... The self is a journey homeward. The homely return over beyond the horizon’ (p.52).

This concept of philosophy as a personal journey (though not necessarily one of return) is embodied in much of the language employed by other philosophers; Kierkegaard’s Double movement of faith, Camus’ futile instinct towards ‘unity’, Heidegger’s concepts of Dasein as humans dynamically engaged in ‘being in the world’ where ‘action is more basic than theory’ or Hegel’s concepts of humans as practice: all of these theories suggest not a stagnant or static singular act of contemplation, but an active *movement*: an *-ing*, *doing*, *being*, *growing*, - a participatory process, progression or revolution through or within one’s understanding – and thus subsequent development of and realisation (or perhaps attainment) – of self.

But it is notable that Chrostowska’s instinct is not to draw upon any of these philosophers as illustrative of her point, but instead, Homer’s foundational epic: *The Odyssey*. Chrostowska’s developed argument is to assert that the journey one makes philosophically is not linearly forward, but an act of return, and that these foundational, ancient notions of philosophical return manifest in an instinct towards nostalgia. But what is perhaps even more interesting than Chrostowska’s central argument is the way in which she chooses to develop it; her invocation of the Odyssey as a crucial *literary* manifestation of the philosophical mood presents a number of points of interest, not least because she uses it as a vehicle to contrast historical and contemporary attitudes towards this philosophical journey. Thus, in questioning the concept of philosophical nostalgia and its modern/post-modern applications, she in effect asks: How then would a modern Odysseus face his journey today, and in what ways would nostalgia manifest within that journey, or even inform the way the journey was undertaken?

Helpfully, the issue has been explored – both by intention and incident, if Derrida is to be understood – with James Joyce’s own ‘reimagining’ of the text: *Ulysses*. Draping itself loosely

– and never explicitly³ – on the framework of Homer’s original epic, *Ulysses* divides into three books and 18 chapters, with each paralleling one of Odysseus’ adventures. Similarly, the three characters; Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus and Molly Bloom – represent parallels of Odysseus, Telemachus and Penelope respectively. In this sense then, if Chrostowska’s invocation of the *Odyssey* represents a drawing upon a historical literary record of a philosophical phenomenon of the time, *Ulysses* might be counted as its contemporary counterpoint, ripe for comparison.

In this way, philosophical nostalgia – which is not offered here under a single definition, but explored in its various nuanced conceptualisations throughout the dissertation - represents an almost perfect device through which to conduct an interrogation of *Ulysses*. On the one hand, *Ulysses* by its very nature replicates the general notions of nostalgia-as-return that Chrostowska finds within the original *Odyssey*, and thus the very concept is arguably ‘baked in’ to *Ulysses* by definition. At the same time, the ability to ‘crack the atom’ of philosophical nostalgia and identify the multitude of specific philosophical expressions and constructions offered by various theorists (Camus, Heidegger, Kierkegaard *et al*) represents the exact multiplicitous, multitudinal ‘playground’ that is needed to probe *Ulysses* in every possible direction (along one specific axis) and thus a) prove its Derridian/Babean nature and b) interrogate its experimentality, and thus its potential to constitute a work *of* philosophy, not just a record thereof.

1.4 Structure and Line of Argumentation

The thesis is divided into four sub-chapters, the first three of which examine various aspects of Joyce’s writing: character; language, time and space; and the deliberate inclusion of error and serendipity. Each of these is tied to differing conceptions of philosophical nostalgia. Following from this introduction, the second chapter engages in an examination of Joyce’s three central characters in *Ulysses*. Here, Bloom is linked to expressions of nostalgia as framed by Chrostowska relating to notions of home, as well as to Jungian concepts of myth and archetype.

³ Whilst referring to the chapters of *Ulysses* by their Odyssean titles has become common practice in Joyce scholarship, they are in fact not included in any published version of the book. It is only through publication of the Linnati/Gilbert schema as a separate accompany document that the parallels are laid explicit – a publication which, notably, Joyce claimed to subsequently regret. This study keeps with the tradition of Joycean scholarship by using their schema names, as well as the accepted Gabler referencing conventions for each of Joyce’s texts.

Stephen is tied to concepts of Kierkegaardian nostalgia particularly, and Molly is explored as an expression of nostalgia as a phenomenon of modernity.

The second chapter examines the various ways in which Joyce experiments with language, form, time, and space object inclusions, in ways that can readily be interpreted through a lens of Heideggerian phenomenology. It begins by outlining how Heideggerian phenomenology – and particularly elements pertaining to historicity and language – can be constructed as ‘nostalgic’, before then linking these to various elements of the book; particularly the chapters Oxen of the Sun and Ithica.

The third chapter then examines Joyce’s use of plot and world within *Ulysses* particularly, and draws parallels with Camus’ construction of absurdist nostalgia, highlighting how the world or effort built by Joyce serves to highlight the tension that man finds in his instinct to seek meaning in a world that is fundamentally devoid of one, and how this very notion is nostalgic at its heart.

It must be stressed that throughout the study there is not necessarily any assertion of Joyce consciously and deliberately engaged with the work of any one of these philosophers – indeed, in many cases it is logistically precluded; both Camus’ and Heidegger’s main works were published some years after *Ulysses*. As such, the analysis undertaken here echoes Scholar’s (2016) in relation to Heidegger, which is ‘heuristic rather than historicist in its terms of reference... [and] does not argue that Heidegger’s thoughts influenced Joyce as he wrote *Ulysses*... [but that there exist] striking similarities between the two’ (p.120).

The lack of historical connection or evidence for the *direct influence* of the philosophies upon Joyce does not pose an obstacle for the analysis; indeed, in many ways it can be said to be the *point* of the analysis: positioning the work atop a Derridian proposition of ‘all-encompassment’ means the purpose of the endeavour is to highlight the entirely comprehensive nature of Joyce’s oeuvre – *Ulysses* specifically – in both its deliberate authorial intentioned-ness, where Joyce seeks to lead the reader to a particular thought, but also in its ‘intentional interpretability’ - where Joyce leaves deliberate room for infinite interpretation. Certainly, no word of *Ulysses* is accidental, and even the most apparently offhand reference, comment or construction by Joyce will have been laboured upon, written and re-written, layered with meaning, double meaning and its own negation (note the seventeen years that Joyce spent writing *Finnegans Wake*). And yet still Joyce deliberately infused space within the text for the eternity of other interpretations that he could not predict, but could create space for the existence of.

Such an analysis is by no means controversial; ever since Barthes' 'Death of the Author' (1977), the legitimacy of interpreting a text without any reference to the author – either their intent or influence – is entirely acceptable. And yet, in the case of this study – which seeks to ask particularly whether Joyce's work can be interpreted as philosophy – it follows that intentionality will necessarily become a pertinent question (see particularly chapter four). Vichnar – who undertook a similar project in his work *Joyce Against Theory* – phrases it thus:

Authorial intention cannot be the last word on the text: it is something that we should not neglect, something that we should pursue through its fluctuations and nuances by a rigorous interpretation of the extant documents, but it cannot be a limitation of our powers of interpretation (Ferrer, p.278) [It can be thought of as an] "authorial intention" to be pursued, yet also abandoned: an imperative to remain faithful to Joyce, to the point of betraying him by way of interpretation which his writing solicits as well as forestalls, requiring one to write in its very own memory (Vichnar, 2008, p.428).

This note on methodological approach is addressed here because it directly informs the way in which the final substantial chapter – chapter five - is undertaken, along with the conclusion, in relation to the implications of a Derridian interpretation of Joyce's work and our potential understanding of Joyce's oeuvre as philosophy. Chapter five therefore seeks to lay a base for various ways in which philosophy and literature have been distinguished within the extant literature, which are then synthesised with the findings of the first three chapters and research question one in order to reach a determination regarding the positionality of Joyce's oeuvre in the conclusion.

In terms of the specific conclusions that will be reached, through outlining and exploring these multiplicitous and multitudinous references to and expressions of philosophical nostalgia – both direct and interpretable, it will be readily apparent that in relation to the first part of RQ1 – namely, whether themes of philosophical nostalgia can be used to interrogate the text – the study will reach the conclusion that the answer is very much: yes. Though empirically this cannot *prove* the presence of *everything* within the text, its status as an 'experimental randomised variable' combined with an inherent logical understanding of Derrida's proposition will lead to the conclusion for RQ1 as a whole that: Yes, Ulysses can rightly be understood as

a hypermnesic machine of unlimited capacity to incorporate all that was, is and will be. It is a creature that expands and lives beyond the confines of its pages.

In relation to RQ2, regarding the implications of this in relation to its status as literature, philosophy or something else, it will be identified that in meeting Derrida's proposition, the work necessarily shows itself to be more than a passive record of thought; instead, it constitutes the active *generation* of thought. It will be argued that *this* is the mark between the record of philosophy, and the practice of philosophy. Thus, it will be seen, it is not just the philosophical *content* of Joyce's work that marks it as philosophical (for then, an encyclopaedia might also constitute a work of philosophy). Instead, it is the experiments with form and format which render it closer to a philosophical thought experiment, and thus truly Derridian in its nature. It is this ability which – it will be established - renders *Ulysses* a 'practice' or 'experiment' of philosophy, and not merely an exploration thereof.

2.0 Character in Ulysses: Joyce's figures as embodiments of existential nostalgia

2.1 Bloom and Odyssean nostalgia

Chrostowska – in efforts to distinguish ‘modernist’ conceptions of nostalgia from the more traditional, states that historically ‘a nostalgic disposition was discernible in the configuration of philosophy as a mental journey ‘home’ - where home stands for truth about the world - the absolute, and our selves’ (Chrostowska, 2010, p.62). She asserts that ‘predicated on the principles of ontological change, [nostalgia represented] a lack that only the return to an elusive origin – not beyond existence but within it – could eliminate’ (ibid.). For Chrostowska, the original embodiment of this existential mission was first and most wholly embodied in the legend of Odysseus.

But crucially for Chrostowska, the ‘physical return can only mimic the impossible nostalgic return’ (ibid., p.62), and it is this that constitutes the key tension for Odysseus. Throughout his adventures, Odysseus clung always idea that there would be a perfection in the moment of return. He is thus surprised to arrive and find himself a stranger in his own land. But through a range of suitable trials - pertaining to recognition through his scar, by his dog and by the testing of his wife, Odysseus is able achieve ‘true return... to his preserved core’ (ibid., p.63). It was not his physical journey home, but the extent to which the *trials* of that physical journey – and its culminating tests on Ithica – allowed Odysseus to challenge and thus reassert his fundamental self and being. Odysseus’ return is not a ‘backward movement’ (a point to be further expanded upon later in this dissertation), but none-the-less, facilitates a fully complete ‘return to origin’ movement, in which he is granted an eventual sense of wholeness and completion.

But Chrostowska asserts that were the modern Odysseus to undertaken the same journey now, ‘he would have... so changed through his travels as to become almost unrecognisable, physically and morally a stranger in his own land – reminded of and never restored to himself in the ambiguity of his return’ (ibid. p.64). Where nostalgia once served as a draw towards self-restoration or self-reassertion, now it serves as a false flag that distracts and lures oneself away from a real return to self, and renders the eventual gap between presentness and full realisation of the self all the more damning.

This is clearly seen in Bloom's day-long journey around Dublin. Whilst each chapter of *Ulysses* parallels one of Odysseus' stop-offs – whether it be an encounter with the Cyclopean 'Citizen' or the Sirens of the Ormand Bar – it seems that Bloom's fundamental motivation is entirely different from Odysseus: he wanders Dublin to *escape* home and the self-confrontation that awaits him there, as he must contemplate what Molly's affair with Blazes Boyle – being undertaken in that very moment in his own house – will mean for his relationship and his sense of self upon his return. Throughout the day, as we are exposed to Bloom's internal monologue and inner thinkings – both directly and through Joyce's employment of Free Indirect Discourse – we are aware that self-confrontation and self-realisation and - most importantly - a yearning for physical return home, are that very *last* things that Bloom seeks. Every time there is a risk of his thoughts dancing up to the line of this contemplation – be that of Molly's affair, his father's suicide or his first child's death, it skips away on the back of flippant, detached contemplations of the largely insubstantial; frequently non-sensical trains of thought driven by free association, and crafted – either consciously or sub-consciously, it is never entirely clear – to *avoid* the process of eventual self-contemplation, self-testing and self-rectification which Chrostowska asserts to be the heart of the Odyssean epic.

And yet, such a process is, ultimately, unavoidable for Bloom. In joining with Stephen as they meet the prostitutes and experience the delirium of ultra-intoxication, Bloom first goes through a psychedelic confrontation of the self in Circe, and then a rational interrogation of the self as he returns to his house with Stephen in Ithaca. But, whilst nostalgia constituted the very driving force for Odysseus achieving this ultimate philosophical end, for Bloom this end is unavoidably encountered despite an almost active *rejection* of personal nostalgia (an idea expanded upon further in section 3.3 in relation to Ithica's focus on materiality and its resultant Heideggerian invocations).

A fundamental question that permeates much of Joycean scholarship is: whether motivated by the device of nostalgia or not, who is Bloom when he arrives home? Has his journey re-affirmed and re-asserted his fundamental self, or is he a changed man somehow – be that either grown or diminished? Arguments can be made in both directions.

On the one hand, Joyce is clear to construct Bloom as a character who, on a fundamental level, lacks a home. It is precisely *because* of this that he lacks the philosophical nostalgic instinct. As the son of a Hungarian Jew with no living parents, Joyce invokes (and indeed, in Cyclops, is directly referenced as) the concept of the peripatetic Wandering Jew. This invocation of the 'archetype' of the wandering Jew and the Ahasveric myth – not to mention the structural

parallels of the novel with the *Odyssey* as the foundational archetypal ‘heroic’ novel itself - speaks to an instinct to nostalgia, not on the part of Bloom as a character, but Joyce as author and us as reader. As readers we are lured by the familiarity of and comforted by the ‘nostalgic appeal’ of a world that can be reduced to the unnuanced simplicity and clarity of a lost cultural, linguistic, or racial singularity. And yet, having had this set-up for us with the apparent Odyssean parallel, Joyce denies us it, and leaves us determinedly nostalgic for it in the sense that we feel strongly the ‘gap’ between the reality that faces us and the expectation – derived from constructed memory – that we had anticipated. Analysing this through the lens of cultural memory studies, Zirra (2016) asserts that this is a deliberate modernist experiment in the paradox of parallelism and paradox, and it is through this understanding that Jung’s assertion of the text as ‘meaningless’ must be dismissed – this ‘meaninglessness’ is precisely what focuses the mind on the gap between expectation and experience (a theme that will be expanded upon in variety of different ways throughout this thesis). Schenker (1984) however contends that this need to ‘resort’ to the ironic deployment of subverted-archetype constitutes a failure of modernity. He states instead Joyce’s reframing of the heroic archetype is not an experiment in expectation and reality, but instead necessarily stems from the issues of modernity, stating:

The man of superior natural ability earlier ages presented experienced occasions for heroic action that seem no longer to exist... A twentieth-century *Iliad* would be impossible, if only because individual warriors today do not test one another in personal combat... pressing the firing button of a missile will never inspire a poet as the hurtling of bronze lanceheads once did, except ironically (Schenker, 1984, p.154).

Under Schenker’s construction, Joyce’s ‘ironic subversion’ of archetype is thus not an experiment, but an inevitability of the times (itself a proposition that has significant implications in relation to Heideggerian historicity, which are discussed further in chapter three).

Whether forced or chosen, in setting up the structural elements of these nostalgic archetypes, and then rejecting their accepted course, Joyce facilitates multiplicitous interpretations of Bloom in relation to the character’s own nostalgia. These interpretations, first and foremost, are necessarily rooted in notions of whether Bloom even has a concept of ‘home’ or not – and his sense of self in relation to concepts of journey to that possible home. This contrast – between the subversion of archetype as a formal device that impacts the reader (in relation to expectation

subversion and nostalgic literary familiarity), and as a content device that opens up interpretations of the character (in terms of the potential nostalgias inherent in Bloom's journey) sees Joyce performing a 'double movement' that operates both within and outside of the novel, on two plains of 'existence'. This is an idea that will be repeated throughout this study.

In terms of how Joyce both reinforces and challenges these notions and thus explores concepts of nostalgia and its relation to both home and journey, on the one hand, the core identity of Bloom as this wandering Jew is embodied in its displacement, not its rootedness. This is readily seen in Bloom's assertion of his defining identity as Irish, and his rejection of socio-cultural nostalgia for Irishness as being fundamental to holding that identity (in Cyclops). He believes firmly in his ability to *be* Irish without connection to or yearning for an Ireland of old, an attitude which his drinking companions (slash 'frenemies'⁴) reject strongly. Throughout, Bloom gives the impression of a man who feels a relatively stable sense of self without a particular need to confront, 'root' or return that self geographically or historically – even though, as identified above, that process of *philosophical* self-confrontation and return seems to be unavoidable (hitting Bloom as it does with full force in Circe's psychedelic confrontation). But even though the *event* of philosophical self-confrontation is unavoidable, Bloom is arguably little different as a man *before* Circe and Ithaca as he is afterwards. He was never particularly lost, and so even in these moments of challenge, there is no particular 'finding' to do.

Similarly, Bloom's lack of the nostalgic instinct is rendered all the more apparent when contrasted with Molly, whose appropriation of the final chapter demonstrates a deep nostalgic instinct (an issue discussed more in section 1.3). We learn almost nothing of Bloom's past throughout a book of 732 pages, only to be given an almost full historical contextualisation of his life and relationship with Molly in the last 30. Molly's instinct is very clearly to root her and his presentness in their past, and to bring that past forwards to the now in order to re-find her contentment, whereas Bloom does not: his sense of core self maintains stability throughout his journey, and he does not need to relate his presentness to a desired reattainment of the past in order to feel selfhood.

But it is also in Molly's chapter (Penelope) where evidence for the idea of Bloom's day-long journey as a catalyst for change, growth and eventual return can be found – a nostalgic return

⁴ A portmanteau it is submitted Joyce would readily have approved of

realised, not thwarted (thus far more echoing Odysseus's journey, and significantly different from the nostalgic constructions offered in sections 2.2 and 2.3, below, which are by definition grounded in the fact that a self-rectification between past and present will always and inevitably be thwarted). In the penultimate chapter, after Stephen has left, Bloom and Molly reconnect sexually and (guardedly, and with many omissions) talk of their respective days. Both are aware, to some degree, of the transgressions that have occurred (Molly's affair with Blazes Boyle, Bloom's masturbatory session at the beach with Gertie, and his visiting of the prostitutes). The next chapter, which opens the following morning, sees Molly exclaim that: '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' (*U18*, 1). Her monologue goes on to link this re-found confidence of expression with the Bloom of their early-years relationship. There are arguments under this reading to say that in this way Bloom exactly parallels Odysseus: he left the house in the morning as a man whose identity - over the years - had been eroded, and through the process of journey and the need to eventually 'test' himself with confrontation of his wife's infidelity, finds that identity restored.

Turner supports exactly this proposition. He says that 'Bloom is the repetition of Ulysses. Many of Bloom's doings are bathetic reductions of Ulysses' wanderings. But, by forgiving Molly, Bloom strings the great bow of Ulysses, and indeed does so in a way that outdoes and rebukes his forebear' (Turner, 2014, p.41). In making this statement, Turner constructs notions of philosophical return and nostalgia as fundamentally Nietzschean in nature, with the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* constituting embodiments of the eternal return, and particularly the subjective dimension of it embodied in Nietzsche's concept of *Amor Fati* (Nietzsche, 1908). Observing Bloom and his ultimate acceptance of his day - itself a microcosm of his life, which itself is a microcosm of his eternity - allows the reader to question the extent to which he achieves, or at least views life as an opportunity to seek the achievement of *amor fati*, a state in which 'one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely to bear what is necessary, still less conceal it ... but love it' (*ibid.* p.714). The extent to which Bloom achieves this level of radical acceptance and contentment hinges on the way in which many elements of the book are interpreted, with Mason (1977) arguing that the most significant is whether the reader interprets Bloom's cuckoldry as a humiliation to which he is subjected, or a kink which he has actively adopted. The former makes Bloom's journey and Molly's infidelities the 'obstacles' of the *Odyssey* that must be overcome to achieve philosophical return, the latter renders them the sought-out quirks of a man with a stable continuity of self

that needs no return: a full sense of *amor fati* and the ability to rectify past, present and future as singularly intertwined, rather than fundamentally disconnected and irreconcilable (which – as will be identified in further chapters – sits at the heart of many understanding of nostalgia).

But this concept of *amor fati* does not actually constitute the main focus of Turner's Nietzschean analysis, though it does hold implications for it, because his analysis retains reference to the individuals' state-of-self and fundamental contentment in relation to their understanding that repetition – in some form – may be inevitable. The Nietzschean question that Turner says is addressed most clearly by *Ulysses* pertains to the idea of repetition *with difference*. This augmentation of Nietzschean Eternal Return was expressed particularly by Ouspensky (1950), who – reporting on his conversation with mystic George Gurdjieff, stated:

This idea of repetition ... is not the full and absolute truth, but it is the nearest possible approximation of the truth ... And if you understand why I do not speak of this, you will be still nearer to it. What is the use of a man knowing about recurrence if he is not conscious of it and if he himself does not change? ... Knowledge about the repetition of lives will add nothing for a man ... if he does not strive to change himself in order to escape this repetition. But if he changes something essential in himself, that is, if he attains something, this cannot be lost' (Ouspensky, 1950, p.250).

Turner explores a similar idea in what he refers to as Deleuze's 'idiosyncratic' interpretation of the Nietzschean eternal return, in which Deleuze states that 'However far they go, however deep the becoming-reactive of forces, reactive forces will not return. The small, petty, reactive man will not return' (Deleuze, 1983, p.71). Turner terms this 'a return, but not verbatim...' (p.41) and says that it this idea is embodied strongly in *Ulysses*. Bloom appears to be anything but the petty or reactive man; he endures various humiliations throughout the day (the Citizen, Molly and Blazes, to name two) with grace and forbearance, but no apparent desire for them to constitute his eternal reality. Under this counter-interpretation of Eternal Return offered by Nietzschean critics, the mark of Bloom as a man is not his acceptance of his potential eternal cycles, but the growth he achieves from their existing an eternal return not entirely set in stone. Indeed Joyce directly references this within *Ulysses*, wherein at the beginning of Nostos (in Eumaeus) the narrator – in this chapter acting as apparently objective reporter – refers to 'history repeating itself with a difference' (U16.1525-1526) as he parallels Bloom's expression of gratitude with one made earlier in the day. The focus of the difference that occurs even in

the repetition of daily minutia – the simple words ‘thank you’ – suggests the small but significant differences that are the sum of a great man; not the *achievement* of ‘*amor fati*’ but the decision to engage in a process of constant growth *towards it* by recognition of the change possible within each cycle.

These ideas of how one deals with movement in time, linear or eternal, repeated, recycled and recollected, lived forward and backward, are also found in the other characters, but in ways which embody subtly different philosophic constructions. Thus, the analysis will now move on to examine Stephen addresses his own existential being in relation to his past, present and future.

2.2 Stephen’s nostalgic journey and the quest for himself

Whilst it is undoubtedly Bloom who is the ‘traveller’ of *Ulysses* and thus parallels – or as we have perhaps seen, inverts - the nostalgic expression of the original character of Odysseus, Stephen none-the-less also acts as a central vehicle for the expression of other forms of nostalgia, as well as its rejection. In many ways, these are more developed, precisely because, whilst *Ulysses* constitutes a snapshot of a single day in the lives of each character, *Portrait* constitutes a *Bildungsroman* of Stephen specifically, and therefore sheds vital insight into the development of particular forms of nostalgia as they relate to existence over time.

In his assessment of Stephen, Ryan (2020) positions nostalgia as, in essence, a paradox – a paradox in the sense that it is both a backwards/forwards-looking motion: a search for future contentment through (as will be seen, necessarily always imperfect) replication of the past, but also, paradoxical because the movement of nostalgia represents at once an expression of redemption *and* of deficiency. Ryan expresses it thus:

As a *redemptive potential*, which results in a hatred of maturity, or nostalgia, immaturity is depicted as an ideal form, maturity as a deficit, and inculpability provides immunity from humiliation coming from within. As a *human deficiency*, which results in an aversion towards children and childhood, or misopaedia, maturity is depicted as an ideal form, immaturity as a deficit, and intentionality provides immunity from humiliation coming from without (Ryan, 2010, p.5).

Stephen embodies this tension almost completely – a discomfort with Kierkegaardian notions of an individual’s journey as an attempt to re-enact the pure beginning, but also a discomfort with the idea of a Kantian philosophical journey founded around the idea of realising the maturity of man. He desires, but yet cannot rectify himself with, nostalgic comfort as a source of redemptive potential, nor as a compensation for human deficiency. His fundamental discontent comes from his inability to *be* in himself and in his moment at any given time: as a boy he is alienated (and, he frequently perceives, *elevated* from his childhood peers), and yet as an adult he is fundamentally uncomfortable with his maturity. Ryan indicates that this results in a ‘self-negating oscillation’ (ibid, p.1) between the two states, wherein his tendency towards an ‘elegiac mood of recollecting a catastrophic youth is merely a continuation of Stephen’s alienation’ (ibid. p.3). He is the embodiment of Kierkegaard’s statement that ‘life can only ever be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards’ (Kierkegaard, 1843, p.306)⁵, but even in that backwards understanding, Stephen remains fundamentally uncomfortable, stating that ‘History... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake’(U2.377), and further that ‘I am another now and yet the same’ (U1.311). He can understand the past, but he cannot invoke a nostalgic past to act as an existential crutch. Umberto Eco characterises Stephen’s rejection of both the past as a crutch *and* the present as a solid base by virtue of Stephen’s inherent discomfort with any ordering notion: ‘Stephen denies the classical world not in its accidental displays but in its very nature as an orderly cosmos univocally defined by the unalterable rules of Aristotelian-Thomistic logic’ (Eco, 1989, p.35).

Irvin (2018) is inclined to view this inability to engage in existential ordering of the self as Heideggerian in nature. He states that:

‘Stephen... in his struggle, in his attempt to understand himself and his own being as a self-creator, is a singularly ontological character in Heidegger's sense of a being whose own being is an issue for it (Heidegger 2010)... Joyce depicts Stephen's particularly historical struggle as fundamentally tied to his unique philosophy of history... This philosophical historicism, and the weight that it places on the creation of a new language

⁵ Note, although this is the commonly accepted shortened form of the quote, Kierkegaard himself questioned the translation. A more substantial translation is offered by Jørgensen: ‘It is really true what philosophy tells us, that life must be understood backwards. But with this, one forgets the second proposition, that it must be lived forwards. A proposition which, the more it is subjected to careful thought, the more it ends up concluding precisely that life at any given moment cannot really ever be fully understood; exactly because there is no single moment where time stops completely in order for me to take position [to do this]: going backwards’

as a sign of historical movement and self-overcoming, is another point of concurrence between the philosophical aspect of Stephen's character and the work of Heidegger, particularly his Dasein analysis. In many ways, the analysis of Stephen's struggle reveals a remarkable anticipation of Heidegger's Dasein analysis, and the philosophical value of literature in its own right, in its own language' (Irvin, 2018, p.488).

Whilst pertinent to this current analysis, exploration of the Heideggerian notions of nostalgia exhibited within Joyce's work must necessarily be delayed until chapter three. Instead, what is focused on here is that Stephen's 'unique philosophy of history' is tied inherently with his deep-seated feeling of alienation from that history, both personal and universal. Stephen's rejection of the order that brings everything into a coherent unity – of which history and philosophy are but two devices - *is* his alienation (or his alienation causes him to reject concepts of coherent unity – the order of operations remains ambiguous).

Stephen's alienation – its presence *in* his history and its manifestation in the way he subsequently *constructs* his history – is evidenced throughout the text. Symbolically, within the first three chapters of *Ulysses*, the most striking pieces of evidence might be said to be relinquishment of the household key to Buck Mulligan – an action he predicts with bitter resignation: 'He wants that key. It is mine. I paid the rent. Now I eat his salt bread. Give him the key too. All. He will ask for it. That was in his eyes' (*U1.1630*), and subsequently relinquishes upon the realisation that 'I will not sleep here tonight. Home also I cannot go' (*U 1.740*). The salt bread – an allusion to Dante - references Stephen's feelings of exile. But his reference to home here is ambiguous – in theory it is indeed the castle-like tower that he, Mulligan and Haines occupy, yet the addition of 'also' indicates that he refers to something other than their apartment (the aforementioned 'here'). Since Stephen has long since left the family home, moved to Paris and returned upon his mother's death, then 'home' is not with his family either. Instead, it is a conceptual place: Stephen is not logistically but mentally, emotionally and conceptually prohibited from ever achieving 'a return'. In this way, paralleling both Odysseus and Bloom in the central idea that in nostalgia, the place of return is always by necessity not the same place from which one left. Thus, when Stephen concludes the chapter with the highly debated single word utterance: 'Usurper', he not only refers to Haines - who seems to have displaced Stephen within the flat – but the idea that he, Stephen, constantly acts to usurp *himself*: in each new moment and movement he paradoxically distances himself from

the very sense of self he is trying to recollect through an attempt at a ‘movement forward towards the past’.

This ‘movement forwards towards the past’ is also readily displayed in chapter three, where we learn that Stephen has relinquished his ambitions of being an academic and formulating a grand theory of the aesthetic, and has instead taken a job teaching schoolchildren; schoolchildren of an age that parallel the formative years explored in *Portrait*. Joyce inserts many deliberate textual parallels between Stephen’s thoughts expressed then in *Portrait*, and now in *Ulysses* in order to render explicit a comparison between the two, including – but not limited to – Stephen’s developing relationship with riddles.

What is particularly important about this is the idea that there is ostensibly a consistency and congruence between the Stephen of *Portrait* and the Stephen of *Ulysses*, and yet also a pronounced difference. This concept of ‘movements’ of the self that at are at once seemingly progressive in their movement forward, and yet in reality contain within them their own missteps might be seen as congruent with a Kierkegaardian sense of nostalgia and self (again, the notion that ‘life can only ever be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards’). Parallels between Stephen’s frequent ‘findings’ of himself – only to be met with subsequent feelings of deficiency and falsity – are most strongly found in *Portrait*, where Stephen – for brief moments – feels he has ‘found himself’ at various points in the aesthetic (through his initial contact with prostitutes at the age of 16), the religious (in his pious rapture and self-flagellation) and the ethical (through his eventual recognition of the unifying ‘existential’ value of language) – only to realise that with each movement, he can never find full security; they are by their nature ‘false movements’.

Where Joyce obviously differs from Kierkegaard is that Stephen’s religious movement a) precedes his ethical, and – more significantly b) his religious movement fails to realise Stephen’s ultimate rectification with himself, but instead proves to be just as false as all the others. What is not clear though is whether Joyce indicates this is a failing of *Stephen’s* specific attempt at the religious – which adopts a tone of performative liturgical self-flagellation (for instance, in Stephen’s decision to deliberately seek out bad odours or not move in bed, despite significant discomfort) or whether it constitutes a wider illustration of Kierkegaardian/Abrahamic attempts at the relinquishment of doubt. Posed differently, is it ‘merely’ an examination of Stephen as one specific character, or does Joyce use Stephen’s failure as a wider representation of the *overall impossibility* of ever attaining such Abrahamic dimensions (which, controversial and cynical interpretations of Kierkegaard might say was the

philosopher's unspoken assertion also – seeking precisely to create an unachievable 'ultimate goal' for humanity as a concept in order to relinquish himself of his inability to reach such a level personally).

A suggestion to the latter idea – that Joyce is passing comment on the human condition more than Stephen specifically - is found in the idea that structurally, each chapter of *Portrait* begins with Stephen in a diminished, lowered position, which by the end of chapter sees him in a physically or emotionally elevated position; 'each new chapter begins in sharp contrast to the exultations with which the previous one concludes. [...] The aftermath of elation is invariably depression, and the triumph with which *Portrait* concludes is undercut with the deflated opening of Ulysses' (Benstock, 1985, p.51). This is at its heart a structural parallel to the story of Icarus (who, note, is Dedalus's son, the namesake of Stephen Dedalus), and a metaphor for the inherent unattainability - and folly of thus seeking - 'the sun' – which read in its widest sense is more generally self-fulfilment, and more specifically from a Kierkegaardian stance, the Religious. Thus, the nostalgic tension Stephen feels should not be viewed as a personal, psychological one (through Joyce's insertion of Freudian allusions may frequently serve to misdirect, and Joyce's own acknowledgement of Stephen as a quasi-biographic self-insertion easily leads one to read Stephen's struggles as personal), but instead offers up an idea of this nostalgic tension as *inherent* in the human condition: a generalisable existential claim. For Epstein (1982), Stephen's suffering 'is not a Freudian, or Jungian, or Reichian organism, describable and mappable by therapists [but instead] is the human being in substance [and] under the accidents, the substance remains' (Epstein, 1982, p.75).

Kierkegaardian analysis is also apt in diagnosing precisely *why* Stephen's nostalgic movements can never result in the attainment of satisfaction. Kierkegaard is clear on the debilitating instinct towards nostalgia, and the inherent impossibility of its two components; repetition and recollection. Kierkegaard expresses it thus:

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward. . . Hope is a new garment, stiff and starched and lustrous, but it has never been tried on, and therefore one does not know how becoming it will be or how it will fit. Recollection is a discarded garment that does not fit, however beautiful it is, for one has outgrown it. (Kierkegaard, 1843, p.131-132)

To give a practical example; one may take a (physical) step, and then another. The second step is a repetition. But it has not put one in the same place as the initial position; the subject is now *two* steps forward, in an unknown and potentially unexpected place. To truly obtain the initial position would require a step backwards – a *recollection* – but a step backwards is in reality an entirely different *movement* to a repetition – necessarily novel rather than repeated. One cannot use the same mechanism to return – it is a logical impossibility, and thus indicates that either mechanism or destination must differ, the two can never be repeated together. Thus, for Stephen, nostalgia is the constant conflation of recollection and repetition and the different mechanisms and outcomes of both. Stephen’s religious movement particularly is founded in (and confounded by) repetition and recollection, rather than the ‘shiny new garment’ (Kierkegaard, 1842) of hope that is necessary for its successful achievement.

This can be seen in numerous ways through Stephen’s early experiences; notably his obsession with the Virgin Mary, which constitutes a conflated repetition/recollection of his aesthetic sexual stage, rather than a true and hopeful move forward into the religious. Furthermore, his fascination with the ‘Fire and Brimstone’ catechism of Father Arnell offers more an opportunity for Stephen to recollect his own parallel experiences from childhood and ‘repeat’ his own self-obsessive narcissism under a new veil (see above the assertion of Stephen’s religious movement as ‘performative liturgical self-flagellation’) than any true engagement with the religious message. But even on a more ‘meta’ level, the pastiche with which Joyce writes the catechism Stephen hears – catechism itself being an expression of doctrine that is both recollected and repeated, vocally and through action, by religious practitioners, and delivered by Father Arnell particularly in a way that is turgid with bombastic repetition – serves to highlight *religion* itself as potentially victim of the crippling non-movement that comes through Kierkegaard’s construction of nostalgia as a paradoxical (non)movement of recollection and repetition, and an issue strongly bound up in concepts of faith.

The Abrahamic dimension of this Kierkegaardian exploration is in itself a key contrasting notion that demonstrates the ways in which Joyce has used the original Odyssean myth not as a framework to follow, but a structure to subvert; to work within and between the beats and conventions of the tale, challenging, validating and negating in parallel moves. In this case particularly, by introducing Kierkegaard’s Abrahamic notions into an Odyssean tale, he challenges the two differing concepts of nostalgia that are held within each, expressing a ‘nostalgia that is not in the order of the ego, or to be understood by the figure of Odysseus, and

return, but is much rather aligned with a metaphysical interruption of the self, and the wandering figure of Abraham, for whom home is always to come'. At its deepest level, this serves to highlight the competing claims – not only nostalgic - that the twin foundational myth sources of the West assert over the modern world; namely, the Classical and the Biblical, both of which themselves have been variously positioned as the original 'story of all stories', and thus, to some extent, hypermnesic machines in themselves (albeit in a different manner to the way in which - this study will determine - Joyce achieves that same feat in his oeuvre). In itself, this presentation of the competing mythical foundations of the Western world is an action that has significant implications for the potential to understand Joyce's work as philosophical in nature – a point that will be expanded upon in more detail in chapter five.

But whilst this religio-mythical contrast is an important dimension of Joyce's presentation of Stephen – both in *Portrait* and *Ulysses* – it is submitted here that the more fundamental area of exploration undertaken by Joyce is metaphysical and existential in nature; an exploration of the centrality of temporal progression – forward and backward, towards real and imagined selves, both achieved and unachievable, to notions of nostalgic conception, and the intertwined nature of those with various philosophical constructions of existential crisis. As will be seen, all of these dimensions play out in different ways throughout the book, and allow for different interpretations of nostalgia to be drawn.

2.3 Molly and modernist nostalgia – both personal and national

The final chapter of *Ulysses* – unofficially titled 'Penelope' – is the first time that the reader actively encounters Leopold Bloom's wife, Molly. Throughout the book we have learnt much of Molly – a singer of Gibraltar-Spanish descent, who – most pertinently – has been conducting an affair with Blazes Boylan for the entirety of the afternoon. But this is the first time we are given access to her directly, and the mode of this access is entirely different to the entire book that has preceded it. Whilst interior monologue has featured – particularly in the case of Bloom, this has been interwoven with FID and various stylistic voices of the 'arranger' (see for instance Oxen of the Sun and Ithica, discussed in section 3.2 and 3.4 respectively). But here in Penelope Joyce delivers a stream-of-consciousness approach that might be better termed a 'flood'; its entire lack of punctuation across 44 pages gives an unbroken, tumbling, breathless and jumbled account of Molly (and by extension, Bloom); their past, present and future, a monologue

delivered silently as she lies next to a sleeping Bloom the next morning – though some critics suppose that the chapter is best understood as a ‘dialogue’ with herself (Bazargan, 1994).

Up until this point, personal history has been decidedly scarce in the book. Only the attentive reader will have discerned that Bloom and Molly lost their son at an early age, or that Bloom’s father killed himself: whenever Bloom comes close to contemplating these troubling parts of his past (or indeed his present, with Molly’s affair) his mind always approaches the subjects askance – abstractly, aloofly and cryptically, and dances quickly away before any memory (or thought about that memory), can be concretely formed or expressed. Even Stephen’s relationship with his past is somewhat opaque to the virgin reader who does not have the benefit of having read *Portrait* to provide context. Thus, in forty-four pages we are provided with more personal history and context – for both Molly and Bloom – than we gain across the entire preceding ~900 pages.

This is, of course, no accident. Various commentators interpret this distinct stylistic and content difference as an exploration of various ideas and themes, with gender being perhaps the most commonly explored. But Schultz (2018) presents an argument that the chapter should be framed as a ‘wellspring of Modernist nostalgia’, and that through such a reading, the tone of the chapter – and thus the book as a whole perhaps – might be reconsidered, from one which reads Molly’s repeated and final exclamation of ‘Yes’ as affirming and optimistic, to one which is decidedly more resigned. That resignation is one born of the inadequacies of nostalgia.

Schultz’s focus is on the fictionalism of Molly’s memories. Certainly, throughout the entirety of *Ulysses*, falsehoods, errors, and (self)deceptions through the reframing and reorienting of thought and memory are undertaken by all of the characters - Bloom most particularly, but these are rarely as overt or conscious as Molly’s. Umberto Eco states that ‘by decomposing thought and thus the traditional entity ‘mind’ into the sum of individual ‘thoughts’, [Joyce presents] both a crisis in narrative time and – thus - a crisis of the personage’ (Eco, 1989, p.43). Schultz argues that Molly rectifies (or at least, salves) this crisis of narrative and personage by engaging in thinking that is ‘ephemeral, fugitive and contingent... She weaves and un-weaves truths whilst attempting to unsuccessfully arrive at the truth’ (Schultz, 2018, p.477). The wider purpose of this complex relationship with the truth, Schultz contends, is not just an exploration of Molly’s psychological arsenal, but allows Joyce to give full expression to a notion of modernist nostalgia, in which ‘fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on the realities of the future’ (ibid. p.476). Joyce engages in this commentary on both a micro- and meta- levels, and Schultz explores both in turn.

Exploring the gap between the promises of the past and the realities of the present on the micro-level, Schultz identifies these demands of the present as inherently full of frustration and dissatisfaction for Molly as individual; her lagging singing career, the limitations of her sexual life, her increased economic hardship, and the loss of her identity and freedom, which come about through the imposition of her new role of domestic drudgery and wifely servitude. These frustrations she places largely at Bloom's feet, and – by association - to the confines of marriage as an Irish cultural institution more generally. Thus, Schultz argues, for Molly to contemplate a future with any hope and positivity at all, she must reconstruct the past - 'long for, ruminate and falsify' (ibid. p.474) - in a manner that is 'less a desire for an idealised past and more a response to a present need' (ibid. p.477). Thus, nostalgia is derived not from the pull of the past, but the push of the present. As such, her repeated declarations of 'yes' and her 're-infatuation' with Bloom and her decision to 'give him one more chance' are arguably less positive and optimistic – they are not an *escape* from a nostalgic reverie – they are instead resigned necessities, deployed in order to cling on to some sense of agency and control as she faces an interminable future. Crucially, the very ability to pursue this resigned 'faux-positivity' necessarily requires a restructuring and resultant reinterpretation of the past through nostalgic reverie, in order to maintain a narrative that has at its heart at least an approximation of consistency.

Schultz submits that this characterisation of nostalgia is inherently modernist in its construction. He characterises the modernist figure (through the image of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*) as one who holds a 'phenomenological gaze' over a history that is 'less a sequence of events like beads on a roseary and more a pile of debris' (ibid. p.473), and characterises this figure as one who is 'at one captive and fugitive: a prisoner of the always already present moment who is nostalgic for the elusive past and uncertain future [with a] longing for the ephemeral (that which cannot be recouped nor achieved)' (ibid).

This modernist nostalgia, he asserts, does not just hold relevance for the existentialist narrative of Molly as a character and individualist figure, but – through the chapter of Penelope as a whole – explores wider Modernist concepts of Ireland as a country emerging into its post-colonialist future, one which by rights should be progressive now released from the grip of the English, but which – through the regressive and conservative nature of its Catholic ruling forces – now occupies a position in which 'the good old days' might yet hold some appeal. For Schultz, Penelope thus stresses the idea of nostalgia as 'the gap between the promises of

modernity and the realities of modernisation' (ibid. p.474), on both a personal and collective level.

Molly, Schultz further argues, is the perfect candidate through which this national exploration can be explored. The national identity of Ireland – politically, culturally, historically – is of course a theme that permeates throughout the novel, and indeed all of Joyce's work (Gillespie, 2011), with perhaps its most overt exploration occurring in *Cyclops*, in the conflict between the traditionalist views of Bloom's drinking 'frenemies' (see section 2.1), but also in Bloom's more general observations throughout the day, which provide a critical and yet not necessarily damning contemplation of the city and its relationship to class, religion and cultural identity. But, despite his role as an 'outsider', Bloom maintains a relative role of privilege in his assessment of the city, and of Ireland more widely. His upbringing was middle class, his birthplace was Ireland itself (even though his father was an immigrant Hungarian Jew), and his place in society now is as a white male with a respected career. Molly, on the other hand, was displaced from her original place of birth – Gibraltar – and occupies little more than the role of wife, which has sublimated even the small amount of status she held as a singer. If Ireland is a marginalised country, and Bloom – as a Jew – is marginalised within it, then the ultimate position of marginalisation falls to Molly – and it is this status that even better serves to examine the role of nostalgia as a device that approaches Schultz's asserted 'gap between the promises of modernity and the realities of modernisation' on the socio-cultural level, rather than only the personal. Molly thus represents to Schultz a 'representative of the collective unconscious of Ireland', which, far from delivering modernity's 'promise of equity in a heterogenous society' actually delivered the '(post)colonial reality of stifling cultural nationalism'. (Schultz, 2018, p.582).

2.4 Conclusion to Chapter Two

Through engagement with each of Joyce's characters, this chapter has outlined how each character operates as a vehicle for differing manifestations of existentiality, all of which can be tied to various conceptions of nostalgia. As stressed in section 1.4, it is not possible to make any assertions as to whether this was a deliberate intention of Joyce, or whether it is an inevitability of his construction of a novel that gives unlimited space to interpretation, reinterpretation and negation, exploring all dimensions in ways that are at once congruent and

conflicting. Regardless of which, the chapter supports Research Question One in finding ready examples of nostalgia within the text – as regards character – and begins to build a case to support a Derridian understanding of the text as capable of both bearing and rendering *any possible* form of interpretation.

But it is not only through character that these concepts of modernist and phenomenological nostalgia are explored; these elements can be found throughout the text in relation to the theme, structure, setting, language and tempo-spatial aspects of *Ulysses* – all of which will be explored further in the following chapter.

3.0 Language, time, space and object in Ulysses: the expression of phenomenological nostalgia

As was identified within the introduction, there is no single definition of ‘philosophical nostalgia’, and indeed the very point of this dissertation is to explore its multiplicitous constructions and conceptualisations as they are explored with Joyce’s oeuvre. But it is worth noting that from an etymological perspective, whilst the term derives from Greek (*nostos* = return home, *algos* = pain), it is actually a neologism of the 17th century, and at that time constituted a specifically technical, medical term that was applied to both the physical and psychological state of melancholia that soldiers experienced when forced to fight away from home. In that sense then, the focus was very much on the ‘*algos*’; of the actual physical pain and bodily illness felt by those that experienced it. Moreover, its dimension was distinctly geographical; ‘home’ was a physical place of dwelling from which the soldiers had been concretely displaced.

With time though, the word moved into more common parlance and morphed in terms of its emphasis – from the focus on *algos* to a focus on *nostos*, and from a focus on the physical place of home, to one more related to its constructed nature; a construct of material experiences in a time, and in a place, with Malpas (2011) identifying that home becomes something that ‘is not a space or a time but a place that holds a space and a time within it’ (p87). Nostalgia (as a common-meaning word, rather than a philosophical state) thus became not an abstract or situational ‘mood’ (again, taken in its common-meaning sense, with the philosophical notion of mood explored more technically below), but something invoked *by* something and *in relation to* something. It thus took on a strong dimension of materiality; prompted by smells, tastes, sights or sounds which invoke a simulacrum experience of something from one’s past, which brings about a feeling more of comfort than displacement. In-so-far as an *algos* dimension is experienced, it is in the inadequacy of that replication which prompts this pain, and it remains minor compared to the ‘escapist fantasy’ (Malpas, 2011, p.161) that modern concepts of nostalgia facilitate.

In this way then, and echoing some of the themes introduced in section 2.2 and 2.3, Malpas argues that nostalgia’s movement away from a medical neologism of displacement and pain to one of comforting (faux)recollection driven by the needs of the present represents its evolution into a distinctly ‘modernist’ phenomenon. It is not an attempt to escape the *present*, but the

modern, with the modern being characterised as ‘fundamentally an experience of temporal discontinuity... because modernity is where time loses its constancy and connectedness’ (Ibid, 2001, p.164). The nostalgic moment that one harks back to appears to be something more concrete to grasp hold of, though ironically is anything but, because it remains a fiction. But it *feels* like what was being offered in the past – and what is re-offered through nostalgia – is a sense of stability and security.

Under Malpas’s notion, the experience of nostalgia might be distilled into the following elements:

- 1) It relates to ‘time’ in a conceptual sense, rather than a chronological or narrative one; with Malpas stating that ‘if time has become nothing more than a succession of disjoint moments, and in which there is no longer any more encompassing sense of time as that within which one could orient and place oneself’ (p.164) then it is easy to see the inherent comfort of nostalgia, which re-exercises apparent control and order over time.
- 2) Whilst the time dimension of nostalgia is more conceptual than concrete (operating as ‘vague, collective longing for a bygone time’ (Fritzsche, 2001, p.1587)), the place and materiality of nostalgia are – at least in some ways - more concrete; triggered by reference to tangible, material experience in the world. We are never nostalgic for a specific experience of a *particular* meal enjoyed on a *precise* date, but we are nostalgic for a specific food as a material good at a *generalised* time in the past (nostalgia for Granny’s meatloaf, for example). The nostalgia relates, ultimately, to an experience and feeling *far wider* than the specific food and process of eating, and yet that material experience holds the core from which more generalised feelings of comfort, security and longing flow. And yet, even that materiality too is not ‘concrete’ because it is materiality in the past and thus subject to the fallibility of memory: what we hark back to is not a concrete experience, but a *story* of that once-concrete experience which we have told ourselves, told others, and had told to us. It is thus as much myth as memory; if it ever were concrete, now it is merely sand, buffeted by waves and formed and reformed into sandcastles of the mind – at once embellished and enhanced, and at the same time lacking the substance of the original.
- 3) By virtue of this myth-making, memory-based process inherent in nostalgic formation, and its process as one formed both within us and between us and others in the formation of collective memory and myth, and because it is constitutes a process of rectifying the

present with the past, even in states of apparent discontinuity, then nostalgia is both necessarily an important component of self-identity, and of collective being.

Read together, these elements of nostalgia – understood in this way – represent a strongly Heideggerian, phenomenological construction of the world, stressing not only the spatial but temporal dimension of meaning-making as something tied to an objective historicity. In this then, one can find a rooted physicality in the nostalgic trigger – it stems from a material experience of being-in-the-world. Heideggerian analysis is not only important for giving focus to the temporal and spatial dimensions of nostalgia (and as will be seen, the manifest ‘gap’ that constitutes the heart of nostalgia), but also the *effect* of the nostalgic experience, specifically, by understanding Heidegger’s construction of ‘mood’ (of which nostalgic mood is but one). In his construction of world, collective memory and individual imagination act together to bring about a ‘mood’, in which there occurs an appearing of both ‘self’ and ‘world’ at once. Thus, for instance, when one feels ‘bored’, the world appears boring also. The congruence between the self and world in these moods allows us to operate smoothly within our existence. Nostalgic mood is however particular and distinct from others, because whilst most moods represent a ‘coming together’ of ‘I’ and ‘world’, and thus dissolve the distinction between self and the external, nostalgia serves to bring that distinction to the fore; there is felt a disparity between what the world is to the individual in their constructed memory and past experience, and what it is in its present materiality. In this sense then, for Heidegger, far from a device used to placate the self (as argued by Schultz (2018) in relation to Molly’s ‘modernist’ nostalgic practice), it instead becomes a source of discomfort more akin to the Kierkegaardian analysis undertaken in relation to Stephen.

Also pertinent to this analysis is not only the content of Heidegger’s philosophy in relation to nostalgia, but examination of Heidegger’s philosophy *from the outside*, as nostalgic not in its content, but in its construction and aim. Critics such as Malpas have constructed Heidegger’s existential account as ‘pejoratively nostalgic’ – not in its operation but in its nature. Following from Fritzsche’s analysis as nostalgia as a phenomenon arising from and yet rallying against ‘modernism’ leads Malpas to further characterise nostalgia as ‘a denial or blindness to the present, and thus necessarily conservative and self-deluded in nature’ (p.164), an attribute he argues is also at the heart of Heidegger’s work also.

How then might all these various nostalgic phenomenological constructions – both those inherent in his work and those levelled *at* his work - be said to find expression in Joyce’s

oeuvre? The following sub-sections will seek to examine them in relation to concepts of place, space, and history, language, form, time and space, and materiality.

3.1 Place and space in history

Turning first then to the centrality of both space and place in Heidegger's construction of existence as Dasein – a 'being-in-the-world', the most apparent exploration of this within *Ulysses* is the singular place and time that the novel occupies. Its setting is Dublin; and an accurate-at-the-time rendering at that – not merely a fictitious place with underlying similarities and the same label applied on top, but a physical geography replicated in text. Not only is Bloom's path around Dublin retraced by avid fans in a yearly Bloomsday celebration, but Bulson (2001) identifies that – although living in Trieste and subsequently Paris at the time - Joyce actually had friends and family pace out routes, and used a map to figure things out directly. The 'facticity' of Dublin as a city is fundamental to *Ulysses*, both in-and-of-itself, and in the way it shapes the adventures of its characters. Time too is regulated just as rigidly. Herr (2004) refers to Joyce's undertaking of fixing place-in-time as a complex process of 'temporal layering' that aims to 'concentrat[e] several eras into the story of a single day [to create] a text that we can keep pace with and that keeps pace with our own sense of regulated, clockwise existence, despite – or possibly because of – its temporal depth' (Herr, 2005, p.154).

But an interesting irony comes in the process of committing the Dublin of June 16th 1904 to paper – especially given that the time of writing stretched between 1914, in Trieste, finishing in 1921, in Paris; an irony that becomes even more pronounced given the cultural phenomenon of Bloomsday. That irony comes in the inherent intersection and interrelation of time and place in the construction of nostalgia: even in attempts to replicate textually a real and accurate portrayal of a place, free from embellishment or romanticisation, the very act of doing so means that the account necessarily becomes nostalgic as soon as it is committed to paper, and grows more apparently so with every moment thereafter as the gap between the moment of commitment and consumption widens. The act of thousands of Joyceans trudging around Dublin every June 16th and lamenting the many now-redeveloped drinking houses only serves to evidence this.

But it is not that the textual-Dublin freezes an account of place whilst the real-world version of it moves on, for the Derridian analysis being attempted here categorises *Ulysses* not as a fixed

and immutable object containing only that within its pages, but a living, breathing and evolving phenomenon. In that sense, the textual-Dublin also has capacity for a certain mutability. Instead, the nostalgic distance between the place of the book and the place of contemporary Dublin exist not because of a tension between the textually-frozen and the currently-living, but instead because the two evolving paths of ‘place’ – fictional and actual – have diverged as they have *both* evolved, creating the necessary ‘gap’ in which nostalgia – and the aforementioned ‘highlighting’ of Heideggerian mood and the tensions between I and the World – can occur.

It is important to recognise here that this nostalgic gap is not one being expressed in the *content* of the novel, but in its very form (as before in section 2.1) – it is not knowledge we gain through the content we read, but knowledge we gain by the very *process* of reading, as we experience the nostalgic gap between book and reality. The novel itself embodies – rather than merely expresses – the notion of temporal distance and its centrality to the construction of philosophical nostalgia.

3.2 Language and form, in and of time and place

This idea of ‘novel as existence’, not merely ‘novel as the rendering of existence and existential concepts’, now raised twice as an idea within this study so far, is what Umberto Eco refers to as the ‘radical conversion from ‘meaning’ as content of an expression, to the form of the expression as meaning’ (Eco, 1989), and is explored in other ways too. Most significantly for this study, concepts of nostalgia are frequently bound within it. In particular, Joyce’s experiments with language – hallmarks of his work long before they had ever become established tropes of modernism – engage in this investigation of existence (both its nature and its representation, and the extent there exists any distinction between the two) using concepts of historicity central to Dasein’s construction.

This is most evident in the chapter ‘Oxen of the Sun’. Events-wise, this is the first time that Stephen encounters Bloom; Stephen travels to the hospital with his three medical-student friends to continue their bender, whilst Bloom travels there to visit Mrs. Purefoy, who has been in labour for three days. Paralleling this concept of fertility and ‘embryonic development’ is the style that Joyce adopts; he loses the casually interwoven voices of both Free Indirect Discourse and Stream-of-Consciousness deployed up until that point, and clearly introduces a voice which stands outside of the novel and imposes upon it external historicity. This external

voice – typically referred to as ‘the arranger’ in Joycean scholarship – spends the chapter tracing the evolution of language through 32 parodies which ‘chart the growth of literary style from preliterate pagan incantations into Middle English, followed by the Latinate styles of Milton, imitations of satirists such as Swift, and eventually 19th century novelists such as Dickens’ (UlyssesGuide, 2024).

This is far more than a mere historical account, and a defiance of the nostalgic linguistic turn which seeks to stabilise the self with reference to the fixed meaning of words. Instead then, it illustrates that language is and has always been a dynamic, active process of spontaneous sensemaking, not something we return to, but something we use. In this sense then, Joyce’s expression of history can be said – at least in *Oxen* specifically – to articulate a Heideggerian conception of history as a process of ‘being and doing’ through a ‘hermeneutical or communicative event of disclosure—via understanding, interpretation, and appropriation—and concealment in relation to the facticity and possibilities of historical existence’ (Nelson 2007, p.97). In other words, history is not a thing that is in the past, it is a thing we ‘do’ in the present. Thus, through *Oxen*, Joyce expresses (or at the very least contrasts) traditional expressions of linguistic nostalgia as tied to temporal progression (and distance from the past) with Heidegger’s notions of nostalgia as relating to distance from one’s own process of being.

In particular, the various levels of accessibility that each paragraph demonstrates – some entirely readable, some far harder to discern the meaning of – demonstrates not the evolving nature of a *Hegelian* historicism where there has been a move from the primitive to the sophisticated, but a specifically Heideggerian understanding, in which the knowledge of all these periods stand before us *at this* point in time, in the immediate moment. We as readers are product of them collectively, not chronologically. Thus, though they are presented to us chronologically, our understanding of them does not progress stage by stage: for instance, our ability to understand the second paragraph - a direct translation of Latin without Anglicized diction or syntax – is not informed by our understanding of the first – a number of pagan incantations. Indeed, latter paragraphs are far more accessible to us as readers and not predicated on an evolutionary understanding from those that have gone before. We consume the language from our singular point of history; our knowledge of each paragraph is relative to this point only, and not predicated on the relationship of each paragraph’s linguistic relation to each other.

With this, Joyce necessarily demonstrates the Heideggerian idea that ‘what once was central to the understanding of being in a culture is now - through the working of a poet or a great work of art - moved to the margins’ (Kelly, 2010). Kelly continues:

A whole different organizing principle takes effect. This movement from one epoch to the next, on Heidegger’s view, is nothing like a rational process, and there is therefore nothing like the same kind of clear sense in which the later epoch is ranked as better than, or a development over, the previous. No doubt some things will seem to be, and maybe even are, better. But in general the epochs are irreconcilable with one another: practices that earlier played a central organizing role in the culture are covered over and hidden now; a new range of practices organizes the culture (Kelly, 2010, online).

Moreover, Joyce’s linguistic exercise here does not just seek to illustrate this process – and thus the artificiality of the idea of nostalgia in a historicity that is central to our existence, and yet not progressional in nature – but also seeks to position himself *within* it. By highlighting the literary manifestation of epoch change thus far, and then continuing it onwards with his own text, Joyce is asserting his role in ‘sidelining one organisational cultural form’ and replacing it with a new one. His text is not nostalgic for literature’s history (an idea explored in section 2.1 relating to his subversion of myth and archetype), and yet is full of understanding that its existence is predicated *on* that full literary history.

It is not only historicity which is expressed using the mechanism of language in *Oxen of the Sun*; language also forces the reader to reconfront language as existence more generally. By drastically changing the style of each paragraph, authorial presence and intent are at the forefront, in a way that has not been true before (indeed, much of Joyce’s stylistic choices have aimed to put the narrative voice *closer* to the character, not to distance it). This constant ‘wrestling’ of the narrative wheel is a crucial device for interrogating the very nature of existence; the role of character as a *representation of* reality or *as* a reality, the role of author as bound within their creation or as set apart from their creation. At the heart of this lies one key device: language. In expressing the potential for latter ‘cool’ distance from the subject but never allowing for full engagement of the supposed objectivity that previously characterised literature, Joyce again engages in his dualist experiment: positing the centrality of language as our existence – a strongly Heideggerian phenomenological standpoint (or at least, one he would adopt in later work (Abscher, 2018), and yet highlighting that in literary attempts to communicate one’s existence, within the use of language there always necessarily remains an

innate subject/object 'presence-at-hand' distinction that cannot apparently be eliminated, frustrating the idea that language might be a 'ready-at-hand' tool. Joyce's manipulation of language again works to highlight the 'gaps' that cause us *as readers* jarring recognition of our place in the world. These gaps operate in just the same way as they do with temporal nostalgia; forcing the individual to confront a jarring present reality with the comfort of an old and readily accepted one; in this case the difference between language as *expression* of existence, versus the possible dawning reality that our language *is* our existence.

Umberto Eco refers to this chaotic interchangeable, scrambled understanding of the 'world within the book' versus the 'book within the world' (or what Vichnar calls 'writing of the consciousness versus consciousness of the written'). as a case in which order is overturned. He states: 'Since a tradition of an omniscient narrator represents the order of the universe in most cases, Ulysses overturns it. This radical conversion from 'meaning' as content of an expression, to the form of the expression as meaning, is the direct consequence of the refusal and destruction of the traditional world in Ulysses' (Eco, 1989, p.37).

In this way, it stresses the gaps between both the *characters* and their setting, and the *reader* and their setting, manifesting the book as an act of existence in-and-of-itself. Through, this, the complexity of *whose* histories are being played upon in the formation of nostalgia comes to the fore, not least of which, Joyce's history(s) within the wider tradition of writing. Bazargan (1985) states that 'the hermeneutics of Joyce's relation to past authors' is best framed through the author's own understanding of Hermes as 'the god of signposts... the point at which roads parallel merge and roads contrary also' (p.272). Bazargan (1985) thus states that this lends the text not 'distant parallelisms' but an 'iterability... implying the rebirth of something new at the moment of repetition' (ibid.). Thus 'in refunctioning the past, Joyce recreates it without denying his references, by implanting them in the present, by making their metempsychosis possible'. Metempsychosis is indeed a key issue for Joyce – Bloom constantly, and somewhat mistakenly, ponders the term throughout, and as Kager (2016) identifies, any point of repetition within Joyce's work is almost always a signpost to 'pay attention' to an idea. Bazargan continues that: 'The outcome of this endeavour [i.e this metempsychosis] is an image that repeats and regenerates the original by containing and transforming it simultaneously'. This is, at its heart, the notion of nostalgia; taking the artefacts of the past, drawing their parallels with the moments of the future, and engaging with both simultaneously in a way which both alters (or more accurately, reconstructs imprecisely) the past, whilst colouring the present. Nostalgia is thus a particular form of metempsychosis, and the literary text its various bodies. For Joyce,

no word exists without a referentiality that underpins it – a layering of secondary and tertiary levels that all impact that way in which language is employed and operates. As such, Joyce's language – through Heideggerian 'historicity' – is experienced both with nostalgia and with an experience of its new, present, being-in-the-moment-ness.

Of a crucial interrelationship in this whole dynamic is the reader themselves. Joyce's experiments do not just 'conjure' existence through language layered with reference to some notion of its 'objective' historicity. The 'existence' formed by this language necessarily also needs to intersect with the subjectivity of the reader also: for the reader may either have knowledge of this historical referentiality in Joyce's work, or they may not, and the interpretation they take – of the characters, of the purpose of the words, of the story and of its meaning – will be coloured by this. Joyce yet again performs a double motion here – examining historicity and language as mechanisms for the *expression* of existence (of Bloom and Stephen), but also questioning more directly the role of language *as* being (in the relationship of book, reader, author, understanding, language and history). The experience of the individual – as a person and a reader of *Ulysses* – is entirely coloured by their access to a context and historically grounded understanding of the world.

This is, at its heart, is an issue of form, rather than content. Form, throughout, becomes a key mechanism for manipulating the phenomenological *experience* of the reader, rather than simply expressing any phenomenological concept which the characters or content might be illustrative of. Another key formal device that is used to produce a similar effect is that of chronology. The novel is *entirely* present. If one is with Stephen – either observing him or 'in' him through stream-of-consciousness, they cannot simultaneously be with Bloom. We are blind to the actions of one character when we are with the other. This is a sharp departure from narrative convention, which, through *narrator* omnipotence, also grants *reader* omnipotence; the ability to engage with multiple viewpoints at the same time. Such a luxury is not afforded by *Ulysses*. And the denial of this luxury necessarily calls upon the reader to readdress their *own* relation to the chronological structuring of time and the logic of space. Conventional books provide escapism not just in their content, but in their form; they provide for a world in which time and space are warped and allow the reader access to it all simultaneously, jumping backwards and forwards in time, revisiting the same moments in different space with the words 'whilst', 'during' and 'simultaneously'. Tensions between what is and what might be are therefore never felt – the reader is given access to all. But in *Ulysses* – as in life – Joyce articulates how one's subjective experience can only ever be grounded in its time and place, it has no access to

anything else but that. Anything else – the imagination of what others are doing, the ‘remembrance’ of what one once did – are all necessarily constructions, fabrications and fictions. It is this fictional construction of an imagined other (place, time) that is none-the-less given the weight of the ‘real’ which lies at the heart of the Heideggerian phenomenological experience and its resultant implications for philosophical nostalgia.

There are yet other ways in which breaks from Joyce’s break from formal narrative convention also serve to focus the mind of the reader to distances of time and space, and their resultant nostalgic implications thereof. Punctuation is one device particularly that Joyce plays with. As ‘present’ as the text is in its tight chronological progression, it can be argued that there is no more immediacy of expression of past, present and future than there is in Penelope, which – lacking any punctuation - achieves a breathless immersion that is undeniably *now* in its thinking, even if the content of this thought is perpetually pulled forward and backwards to the past and the present. This is achieved because punctuation, the ultimate device for the ordering of ‘time’ in the written word, is eliminated. Punctuation necessarily always brings chronological, narrative coherence to a text, even when the content is jumbled – it is an inherent act of retrospective structuring. The resultant text, lacking punctuation, is absolutely immediate and present, with its jumbled semi-incoherence approximate the ‘now-ness’ of thought, which lacks chronology and structure in its genesis, and only gains this as the mind seeks retrospective order for the purpose of sense-making. At the same time though, the *content* of the thought is frequently retrospective, and bounces between Molly’s sensible experience in the room, and her interior construction of her past in her head. Thus, devoid of punctuation, the Penelope chapter grounds the immediacy of the thought in form, but the historicity Molly’s existence in its content, and thus exposes the nostalgic gap between the two in clear light. In this way it highlights Derrida’s dismissal of time as maintaining a ‘linear trajectory’, instead occupying a state where ‘past, present and future have become unreliable temporal and spatial markers, especially with regard to individual and collective memory’, with nostalgia constitutes less a return to the past, and more a return to a specific site in a falsified past.

Experiments with form do not just serve to explore issues of time and space, but also to highlight how and where *different forms* of exploration are being undertaken within the text. For instance, the formal differences of Ithica from Penelope serve to highlight the differences of experiential beingness that Bloom and Molly embody. Joyce himself commented that Ithica might be best thought of as the concluding chapter to *Ulysses*, stating that ‘Ithica is in reality the end, since Penelope has no beginning, middle or end’ (Letters I, p.172), with Schultz (2018)

referring to its position as one of ‘displacement’ within the book. But it is not just its position at the end which ‘others’ the Penelope chapter. With its lack of punctuation, Penelope seems to stand in a moment out of time. Bloom’s journey had chronological and spatial progression, with a beginning and an end. Molly’s journey is timeless and eternal – in this way it more closely echoes the ‘no beginning, no end’ nature of *Wake*, which begins and ends mid-sentence. For Molly these are the thoughts of always, not of the moment.

Similarly, the contrast in *place* is apparent. Bloom has been wandering, constantly engaged in progression and movement in his world. It is this movement as much as the passage of time that gives order and chronology – it gives *sense* to Bloom’s present, and to us as an audience encountering him. Conversely, our encounter with Molly is in one place (her bedroom), and gives only prompts, not sense or structure, to her inner world, which is the place that is *really* being occupied by both character and reader during the chapter. This contrast between place – if not evident enough from setting, stativity and staticity – is evidenced all the more by the final statement of the (pen)ultimate chapter of the book, Ithica. The arranger’s catechistic interrogation- ending in an unanswered ‘Where’ - serves to highlight that wherever Bloom and Molly are, whilst it may be geographically the same space, it is anything but the same experiential place. Bloom and Molly’s nostalgias are rendered different through the differences in their time and space, even when they objectively appear to be occupying the same location and moment.

This temporal and geographical ‘outsideness’ of Molly versus Bloom’s apparent immersion in the world serves to highlight the Heideggerian tension in constructions of nostalgia; it is an experience fixed in both time and space – present and past. And yet those time and spaces are often nebulous, if not entirely fictional constructs. All that remains is the gap between the fiction and the reality, the concrete and the ephemeral. And it is here, in this nostalgic gap, that one is most exposed to their existence.

But along with time and place, there is a third phenomenological construct that has the ability to render explicit the nostalgic gap: materiality. This is discussed in the following section.

3.3 Materiality

For all of its highbrow referentiality, *Ulysses* is a book that is fundamentally grounded; its physicality and bodily, lived experiences of its individuals are pronounced throughout. From visits to the outhouse, to focus on the physical sensation of food, and from the scenes of masturbation and sex to the endless jokes, puns and onomatopoeic expressions of flatulence, the book relates to the physical as much as the psychological and existential beingness of an individual. Joyce himself said that the book is an ‘epic of the human body’ (Preston, 2009, p.232) and organs were an important part of the guiding schema, with Kiberd stating that Joyce ‘described his character pissing and shitting in order to show that here was a man thoroughly free of abstract pretension or bodily self-hatred. . . Joyce wanted to afford the body a recognition equal to that given to mind’ (Kiberd, 1992, xvi)

Scholar (2016) states that this bodily groundedness has Heideggerian overtones in relation to the lived experience; the fundamental difference between our interactions in the world that are either ‘present-at-hand’ or ‘ready-to-hand’, and the sudden and disconcerting awareness of one’s place, both within and outside of existence, that can occur as our relation to other bodies transfers from one mode of interaction to the other. Bloom’s first encounter at the house strongly echoes Heidegger’s concept of violent awareness when the intelligibility of things becomes, for some reason, lost to us. Thus, when Bloom arrives at the house, the narrator observes that ‘[t]he right temporal lobe of the hollow sphere of [Bloom’s] cranium came into contact with the solid timber angle where, an infinitesimal but sensible fraction of second later, a painful sensation was located in consequence of antecedent sensations transmitted and registered’ (U18.1284-1289). Bloom, having ‘coped with’ his house for many decades, is today thrown into a state where the world has revealed itself to him. This example of something as small as the inability to use a door has become perhaps the most used metaphor for the flip from readiness-at-hand and presence-to-hand, outside of Heidegger’s own example of a hammer and nails. For instance, Safranski explains that ‘[under a Heideggerian construction,] when I am attuned to [the door], I do not perceive it at all... It has its location in my living space, and also in my lifetime... If unexpected it were to be locked one day, and I knocked my head against it, then I would painfully perceive the door as the hard wooden pal that in reality it is’ (Safranski, 1998, p.95) With the materiality of the door then, Joyce expresses through a metaphor to express the sudden status of awareness – a *painful* state of awareness -that can befall us when we are unexpectedly confronted with the world if and when our ‘coping’ fails.

But Scholar suggests that in reality, Bloom had already had this awareness. He refers to the way in which Bloom particularly ‘conceives of the world not as something adapted for him to use, but as something with its own vast history’ (Scholar, 2010, p.120). In this sense, he has a keen Heideggerian awareness of his own being – he is the philosopher that stands outside of Dasein – and yet he rarely seems to display the apparent alienation and anxiety that Heidegger suggests stems from this.

Scholar submits that whilst Bloom’s distance from his environment is evident throughout the book, it is the penultimate chapter – Ithica – in which it is explored to its fullest extent. Just as irony was the Joycean tool for the deconstruction of modernist nostalgia cited by Zirra (2016) in chapter 2.1, here for Scholar it is parody that Joyce employs as a tool for the dissection of materiality-as-nostalgia. The chapter, in which Bloom has invited Stephen home, is written in the style of a highly objectivised catechism; a question-and-answer investigation in which a remote but not entirely disinterested third-party queries the minutiae of Stephen and Bloom’s actions. The computer-like interrogation, bogged down in detail without understanding the wider context, represents for Scholar a ‘parodic attack on impersonal objectivity’ (Scholar, 2010, p.121) which gains its sense of parody from the hyper-objective stances it takes, and in doing mocks the very conception of an object-subject distinction through the artificial binary of its question-answer format. But existing in both parallel and contrast with this hyper-objectivity is the occasional interjection of surprise subjectivity – the ‘computer interrogator’ (and responder) is at turns whimsical, tangential and speculative, delivering answers marked by inaccuracy, omission and irrelevance. In this combination of both hyper-objectivity and fallibility, Joyce both supports a Heideggerian understanding of existence that must necessarily dissolve its harsh differentiation of subject and object, but at the same time challenges Heidegger’s casting of science as ‘against’ Dasein, by showing how it is actually through the relentless ‘scientific’ interrogation of Bloom’s environment in Ithica that he (and we as an audience) end up gaining a sense of his ‘referential totality’. It contests the idea that the reduction of the ready-to-hand to an objectively-observed present-at-hand somehow ‘reduces’ the quality of the self’s relation to the world. This leads Plock (2012) to state that far from constituting a series of ‘reductions and abstractions as well as “coldness” or “emotionlessness” reminiscent of detachment’ the chapter is in fact one of the most ‘emotionally charged’ that ‘generates intimacy and immediacy in Bloom’s world’ (Plock, 2012, p.560).

Take for instance the multi-page inventory of Bloom’s drawers (‘What did the first drawer unlocked contain?’ U17:1780) and the somehow instinctual understanding of the narrator –

even in its computer-like objectivity – that the follow-up question should pertain to Bloom’s mental state in relation to these (‘What reminisces of a human subject suffering from progressive melancholia did these objects evoke in Bloom?’ *U17:1880*). Most importantly, Scholar stresses that it is in this rectification of Bloom with his objects that he finally seems to be a settled individual, free from the anxiety that he has danced around in the preceding 16 chapters (namely, his outsider status, Molly’s affair, the death of his son and suicide of his father). Plock (2012) states that where in ‘previous episodes of Ulysses, objects functioned predominantly to position Bloom in a complex network of commercial, capitalist, and social exchanges’ – actions and immersion *in the world* - in Ithica the ‘accumulation of things conversely [serve to] accentuate his emotional attachment *to the world*’ (emphasis added) (p.599). Thus, even though Bloom is achieving a Heideggerian ‘readiness-at-hand’ in his dealing and coping with the world, his sense of comfort and place is only achieved when he returns home and ‘deals’ with his material relations in a more conscious manner. Similarly, Plock (2012) states that when the subject-object distinction of objects and character is dissolved to its greatest degree – when the objects become animate in Circe – this is when Bloom is at his most existentially challenged. This is an almost complete inversion of Heidegger’s sense of Dasein.

Scholar too suggests that this subversion of the relationship between presence-at-hand, readiness-at-hand and capability to achieve a seamless sense of being-in-the world is already being undertaken in chapters before Ithica. Focusing on the objects to be found in Bloom’s pockets, Scholar submits that it is these which we might most expect to be ‘ready-to-hand’, things we ‘cope with’ and use without impediment of thought, just as Heidegger suggests we are able to do with hammers, and Safranski with doorknobs. But in fact, it is these objects – particularly the soap - which constantly trouble Bloom as they irritate and impede him. They remain conspicuous and thus an impediment on Bloom’s ‘Dasein’ *until* he is able to get them home to be grouped, categorised and placed correctly within his wider inventory.

Taken together, this seems to constitute an endorsement of the premise of Dasein, but a rejection of its conclusion: materiality is key to our ability to cope with our existence, but distanced understanding of that materiality – far from being an impediment – can in fact be a mechanism *for* coping.

Whether adhering to a strictly Heideggerian construction or not, Plock stresses that as a modernist, Joyce’s exhaustive engagement with the material world is far from mere clutter and interior decoration in the pursuit of ‘realism’; ‘objects [in fact] take on a surprising range of

significance in every single episode of Joyce's novel' (Plock, 2012, p.559). Freedman (2006) refers particularly to the role of the material as the 'environmental logic' of the book, in which the contents of the book are both individualised inventory, but at the same time operate as a 'system of relations' - both within the diegetic world of *Ulysses*, but also *outside* of it, for the reader engaging with the text. She states:

Ulysses dramatizes the encounter between the real world and the world of the novel, even as it challenges the rigidity of that distinction... Joyce rejects the imaginary spectacle... as a creation ex nihilo and the autonomy of the literary work, and insists on tracing the object back to its origins—an origin that, like a drop of water in the ocean, ultimately dissolves into itself and is untraceable. [The result is an] elusive interplay between world and word, between historical Dublin and the imagined one of Joyce's text. [Material objects] are not simply tropes for aesthetic production in Joyce's work, although this is one of their functions [but also] historic referent[s] [with which Joyce] is speculating on the relationship between aesthetics and history, between artistic and social production. Joyce limns the outlines of a world where something always comes from something else, a world that leads us back, like water through pipes, to an origin both beckoning and necessarily elusive. (Freedman, 2006, p.852).

This causes Freeman to assert that '*Ulysses* tends to reject the idea of an original product, or a product without history, and instead embeds both the subjects and objects of the world in the history of their origin, their making, and their repeated iterations'. Her point might be understood both ontologically and phenomenologically. Relational points – references, familiar objects and places, orientating features - are used at once to grant the reader a 'ready-to-handness' with the text – seamless coping, and then in the next moment (or indeed, at the same time) to 'throw' the reader from the text and force them to engage with it as its own object, unfamiliar, confusing and alien – one 'present-at-hand'. In this way, the constant tension between 'presence-at-hand' and 'readiness-to-hand' that Joyce retains with his relentless referentiality – which itself is dependent on a focus on the material - echoes an Heideggerian duality of ourselves as beings in the world and yet ones who can step outside it to observe that state, yet never at any time be removed from the state either. As readers we are both observers *of* the book, but necessary participants *in* its existence also.

This in turn brings all of this consideration of Heideggerian materiality back to the concept of nostalgia. First and foremost, in the introduction to chapter three, the Malpas-generated construction of nostalgia stressed the role of a material, tangible element – either object or place – as a trigger for the ‘constructed’ temporal re-imaginings central to nostalgia and its creation of an existential ‘gap’. But it was identified that the material object itself – located temporally in the past, may be a construct of the stories we tell ourselves and are told: the role of memory in relation to the material object is fundamental. Bhabha refers to this process as the “mimesis of memorialization - the restitution of record, date, time, name’ and states that this process of mimesis ‘anxiously gives way to the deferred event of memory, its repetition as revenant, its ghostly appearance in the present [. . .]”. which is “caught in the affective anxiety of what it means to remember, recall, recount’ (Bhabha, 1997). What Bhabha terms here ‘affective anxiety’ is in essence the Malpasian nostalgic gap forwarded in this essay. Expanding on this, Jones (2010) states that ‘lodged in that passage from the mimesis of memorialization to the deferred event of memory is the manufacture of relics of memory, including the symbolic reworking of history through public memory... In the relic - a surviving memorial of and to the past - that past is both naturalized and sacralized in the present’. Thus, material triggers, capable of mental manipulation and memorilisation through the mental and memory-based categorisation processes exhibited in Ithica, become the parallax through which the past and the present interact. They are the objects around which the mental processes of nostalgia are repeatedly focused.

Joyce provides for these material triggers throughout. But more than this, he shows that – under a Heideggerian construction – the very presence of a material object and one’s interaction with it – as presence-at-handness rather than ready-to-handness – can itself manifest this ‘existential gap’ in-and-of-itself, without any subjective memorialisation or ‘nostalgification’. Materiality-in-the-moment is capable of creating exactly the same uncomfortable ‘gap’ which prompts one to forcibly confront their own sense of being, without necessarily hinging upon a temporal dimension per se (though material objects *may also* be heavily interrelated with temporality and historicity also).

3.4 Conclusion to Chapter Three

This chapter has explored the range of techniques that Joyce uses to leverage or express phenomenological concepts in ways that give rise to an understanding of nostalgia, with each concept complex in itself and made all the more complex by its interrelatedness with others.

The chapter started with a construction of nostalgia – based on Malpas’ work – which posited three key elements to nostalgia; a sense of place, a sense of time, and a material grounding. However, it stressed that these elements are often fictions or constructions that are given the false weight of reality. The significance of each of these elements – place, time, material – to a Heideggerian phenomenological analysis, was identified. The first sub-chapter addressed how Joyce rigidly controls both time and space within *Ulysses*, and in doing so, prompts a disconnect between the place and space of the book, and the reader; a disconnect which is, in essence, a nostalgia. This ‘real world’ disconnect is also addressed in the third subsection with reference to materiality, with Freedman asserting that again, the reader’s world and the world inside *Ulysses* blur and blend but also conflict in a way that forces contemplation of gap between – again, the essence of nostalgia. This third subsection also addresses Scholar and Plock’s analysis of how this occurs *within* the Ulyssean universe, as Bloom engages with his material world and explores notions of presence-at-hand and readiness-at-hand, and the role of seamless coping versus distanced analytical engagement in navigating those spaces, as well as the potential for manifesting a nostalgic mood of ‘awareness within the world’.

The mid-section of the chapter dealt particularly with the role of history and language together, and the multitudinous ways that Joyce uses language as a formal device, rather than a mere conveyer of content. With this formal device he is able to control and explore all of the elements above; time, space and materiality particularly – and thus also, nostalgia.

A key theme which was introduced in chapter two and now fleshed out more concretely within this chapter is the constant duality that is being undertaken by Joyce. On the one hand, the *content* of the work serves to explore ideas – here particularly, of nostalgia - much as this essay seeks to explore ideas. The reader reads ideas, and thinks. On the other, the *form* of Joyce’s work forces the reader not just to consider these ideas at a distance, but to work with them directly – to be intertwined with their operation. The book *manifests* experience as much as it records ideas about it; what Freeman called the ‘dramatiz[ation of] the encounter between the real world and the world of the novel, even as it challenges the rigidity of that distinction’, and

Eco referred to as 'radical conversion from 'meaning' as content of an expression, to the form of the expression as meaning'. This development must be born in mind, because it will have important implications for the conclusion reached in this thesis.

4.0 Worlds of error, mistake and recurrence : Joyce's works as expressions of absurdist nostalgia

4.1 'Absurd' mistake and error

Ulysses is an 'absurd' book in the sense that is frequently ridiculous – silly even – and contrary to common sense. Much of this is used as a device for humour and characterisation; Bloom particularly is at once affronted by the mistakes in the world – the misspelling of his name, typos in the newspaper adverts – and yet frequently prone to misconceptions, misunderstandings and error himself. The end result is a slightly pompous but ultimately endearing character. But these errors serve to operate as more than just devices of characterisation. Whether it be the chronology and date of things, names, facts or more general conceptual understanding, Creasy (2011) suggests that 'Bloom's mistakes suggest that he is more than the sum of his schooling' (p.72) – that the formal conceptualisations we are granted through education necessarily find themselves challenged when confronted with the real world. But it should be noted too that these mistakes flow freely even when the narrator is not Bloom through internal monologue, but a nebulous source of free indirect discourse, or even the entirely removed computer-like interrogator (and responder) of Ithica, where McCarthy (1984) notes that the 'mistakes' made in mathematics call into questions potential mistakes more fundamental to the rest of the book, not least of all, Molly's list of lovers. Crispi (2016) asserts that these exist to 'challenge readers' preconceptions about the fixity of the character's life-stories'. (p.104). Already then, it can be seen that these errors have something to say about existence, subjectivity, objectivity and reality.

On a more meta level also, numerous authors – amongst them McCarthy (2013) and Creasy (2007) have identified that through genetic analysis of the evolution of the text, various editions have received various typographical misprints, which themselves both echo and subvert Joyce's own deliberate exercises in mistake-making. In perhaps the most ironic of these genuine, real-world errors, at the point where Bloom is 'nettled not a little' to discover his name had been misspelled as "Boom", the printers actually re-corrected the deliberate typo to Bloom, thus adding layers of error – and therefore ridiculousness – to the originally intended 'mistake'. Additionally, the frequently investigated extra-large full stop is also omitted from some editions, thereby fundamentally altering the path of a whole sub-section of Joycean scholarship focused only on that punctuational choice (Briggs, 1996).

This idea of error as something ‘contrary to reason’ and thus absurd in its ridiculousness (within the text’s deliberate mistakes) and something that robs intentionality of its link with outcome (in terms of printing error) is of course heavily tied to the notion of existential absurdity, a state of existence which Camus sees as inherently nostalgic in nature, pertaining as it does to the concept of the gap between what is, and some other state that is longed for (though lacking the temporal dimension of the some of the nostalgic constructions offered throughout this study). Referring specifically to this gap, Camus states that ‘between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give that assurance, the gap will never be filled’ (Camus, 1942, p.7). Thus, Camus poses absurdist notions of existence as essentially constituting a ‘nostalgia for unity; [an] appetite for the absolute [which] illustrates the essential impulse of the human drama’ (ibid. p.7) – a drama that never be satisfied, because in ‘bridging the gap that separates desire from conquest... we fall into the ridiculous contradiction of a mind that asserts total unity and proves by its very assertion its own difference and the diversity it claimed to resolve. This other vicious circle is enough to stifle our hopes’ (ibid. p6). But ‘so long as the mind keeps silent in the motionless world of its hopes, everything is reflected and arranged in the unity of its nostalgia’(ibid).

Error then, becomes evidence throughout Ulysses of the *apparent* futility of meaning making in a world indifferent to man’s need for a sense of reason and unity. And yet Bloom does not embody an individual troubled by his apparent absurdism, but rectified with it, as Camus indicates one should be (just as he did not seem unduly troubled by Heideggerian anxiety, even as the world seems to present itself in every moment to him). In strong contrast to Stephen’s ongoing existential doubt, Bloom is highly curious, inquisitive and analytical in his nature – a person whose ‘existential contingency is clear as he speculates on the vast and uncharted nature of the universe (Church, 1979)’, but never fundamentally troubled by the fact that his ruminations frequently seem to lead nowhere, recognising – as Camus indicates, that ‘there ends my knowledge, and the rest is construction’ (Camus, 1942, p.7). Investigation of the world around him is a pleasurable habit, rather than activity upon which something greater rests. This calls Church (1979) to assert that ‘it should be clear that as Joyce abandons Stephen at the end of "Telemachia," he also abandons the Christian-humanistic position of his own early education, turning to the existential universe of his new hero, Leopold Bloom’ (p.356) and stating that by the end of the book ‘Bloom's acceptance of such a universe is clear on the last pages of "Ithaca" as he consoles himself about Molly's infidelity with being "neither first nor

last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (*U*17.731), like Sisyphus, and as he lies down beside Molly' (*ibid*).

For Rahim (no date), *Ulysses* – and Bloom in particular - is not necessarily to be seen as an absurdist construction, but certainly a counterpoint to the various grand narrative attempts offered within philosophy. He states that *Ulysses* is a book that explores 'depth through the mundane' and continues:

The paradox encompasses the complexities of the living experience through the manifestation of prosaic day-to-day concerns when being metaphysically investigated. It is in this aspect that *Ulysses* attempts at proposing not so much as a definite conclusion to ontological and epistemological enquiries, but more of a closure, or perhaps drawing the perimeters of the living experience that have been the focus of many philosophical dialectics'(Rahim, p.1).

In this, she echoes Camus' own statements:

From Jaspers to Heidegger, from Kierkegaard⁶ to Chestov, from the phenomenologists to Scheler to the logical plane and on the moral plane, a whole family of minds related by their nostalgia but opposed by their methods or by their aims, have persisted in blocking the royal road of reason and in recovering the direct paths of truth. (Camus, 1942, p.8)

4.2 Recurrence as the rock of Sisyphus.

As understanding of *Ulysses* as absurdly nostalgic can also be found be revisiting the notions of repetition and circularity that were examined in chapter two. Where these were interpreted variously through (augmented) Nietzschean and Kierkegaardian lenses, they have been used by some authors to support an essentially absurdist reading of the book. Church (1976) particularly states that whatever interpretations may have been garnered from various readings of the book throughout, it is only upon reaching the final three chapters of *Nostos* that Joyce's 'message' might be understood; thus demanding a reading of the text that has regard for the interior structuralism of the text as a whole. She states:

⁶ It is outside of the scope of this essay to explore what Absurdism actually owes to Kierkegaard specially, and the wider tradition on philosophy more generally.

The spoof, of course, was always a powerful weapon in the hands of Joyce, but through the imagery of the Nostos, he seems to turn his irony sharply upon himself and his own creation, thereby inserting a note of doubt as to the very method and message of the entire book. For if Bloom's return is a mockery founded in Epps's soluble cocoa; if, in essence Bloom turns out to be, as at Albert Hengler's circus, only the papa of a clown; if women circulate and recirculate by happenstance like coins; if fatherhood, then, is a matter of the chance of one's situation in a mathematical sequence repeated to infinity; if there are no answers to the absurd problem of squaring the circle; if Bloom's final position in bed is foetus-like as well as "N.W. by W." (p. 721); and if the last episode is couched in the world of Molly's fantasies rather than of Bloom's actions, then we must see *Ulysses* as a book proposing an existentially absurd universe in which the tension lies between being and nothingness (Church, 1976, p.124).

But it is not just the notion of absurdism that *Ulysses* lays down, but Camus' two different states within that: resistance and radical acceptance. If the characters themselves – finding the absurd world through conflict with their narrative, plot, setting and textual reality – can be said to be vehicles for the notion of absurdism, then it seems certain that Bloom represents the Sisyphean hero – rectified with his need to accept cosmic meaningless and engage in his own meaning-making, whilst Stephen is the existentially anxious, doomed to seek to attach himself 'to any point and to fasten to it', only to find 'it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes forever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination'. Stephen 'burn[s] with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite', but finds that his 'whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses'. (Pascal, 1910, p.27).

4.3 Conclusion to Chapter Four

This chapter has outlined two central ways in which *Ulysses* might be read as absurdist, and outlined how philosophical absurdism itself has an inherently nostalgic bent, founded as it is upon the gap between what is real, and the cocoon that men occupy to avoid true confrontation of that reality. Unlike in chapter three though, the phenomenological points of fixation – time, space and the material – are not needed to construct or experience this gap. It is none-the-less nostalgic.

Comparing this chapter with chapters two and three, it is possible to assert that there are irregularities and inconsistencies presented, especially in relation to Bloom. In some parts, he is explored as a character comfortable and rectified with his existence, at others, one who shies away from facing its realities. These differing interpretations should not be seen as inconsistencies, but instead evidence to support the text as a Derridian hypermnesic machine capable of multiplicitous, eternal interpretation, both congruent and conflating, assertion and negation.

5.0 On the relationship between philosophy and literature: where lies Joyce?

Whilst the chapters above have sought to ‘test’ the first research question – pertaining to the Derridian proposition of the Babelean-scope in Joyce’s work, and using the lens of philosophical nostalgia to interrogate this, that research question itself exists to probe a second question: what does this tell us about the distinction between literature and philosophy? This chapter will aim to explore the relationship between the two, and efforts that have been made within the literature to better conceptualise their categorisations.

5.1 Conceptions of the philosophy/literature divide

‘The discipline of philosophy,’ Van Boheemen-Saaf (2006) writes, ‘has a long history of commentary on its sister discourse, literature. Since Plato, philosophy has been seen as the serious and prestigious discipline concerned with the articulation of truth. Literature, on the other hand, is stereotyped as the merely ornamental, all too inventive and therefore *deceptive* use of language’ (p.31). But what Van-Boheemen-Saaf finds so particular about this ‘division of labour’ is the fact that philosophy ‘not only... speaks about literature, but also... repeatedly takes examples... to corroborate its concepts... the research from which philosophy can draw to make its abstractions concrete’ (ibid). For a discipline that seeks to distinguish and distance itself from ‘mere’ literature, philosophy often leans heavily on both the content of literature, and the mechanism of its form for the delivery of ideas. In his forward to *Joyce’s Ulysses: Philosophical Perspectives*, Kitcher (2020) expresses a similar viewpoint on the complex, sometimes contradictory relationship of the two disciplines, stating that ‘philosophy and literature have developed as partly competing, partly complementary enterprises. Both literary writers and philosophers have frequently studied and commented on each other’s texts and ideas, sometimes with approval, sometimes with disapproval, in their efforts to become clearer about human life and about valuable commitments—moral, artistic, political, epistemic, metaphysical, and religious (ix)’. But Kitcher further notes that ‘while these relations have been widely recognized, they have also frequently been ignored or misunderstood, as academic disciplines have gone their separate ways within their modern institutional settings’ (ibid.). And yet, some authors are granted implicit permission to traverse – perhaps even transcend – the conventional boundaries of the two disciplines, not merely blurring the lines between the two but eliminating the distinction and sublimating it under arenas of academic

study which bear the title of their own name; Camus, Beckett, Kafka, Hesse, Dostoevsky. And, it is argued here, Joyce.

Various attempts have been made to more formally define the boundaries between the two disciplines, and identify what exceptional cases tell us about those boundaries. Concepts such as the need to use method (Tesar, 2021), the need to have an intentional aim (Hannon and Nguyen, 2022) and/or the need to present a coherent thesis or argument (Dutilh Novaes, 2021) are all floated in the literature in attempts to ‘ringfence’ what constitutes the practice of philosophy. Berry (2020), however, states that in acknowledging ‘an unusual characteristic of both literature and philosophy... [namely] that no one seems to know what either is’, one must question the validity of definitional criteria. He draws upon Wittgenstein’s investigation of how ‘conceptualisation’ is achieved by humans to explain that philosophic and literary entities are not best understood by attempting to ‘pin down’ definitional particulars, but instead by understanding their commonalities. He outlines Wittgenstein’s characterisation of how people develop ‘concepts’ – particularly in the aesthetic realm; a two-stage process in which first, definite boundaries are established, and secondly, an ‘unselfconscious, open-ended and improvisatory’ practice of investigation and expression.

Under this understanding, all literature might be granted the title of ‘experimental philosophy’ - an open-ended improvisatory experiment. Thus, literature simply becomes philosophy of varying qualitative merit, rather than a binary delineation of ‘is/isn’t.’ (an approach Berry mockingly credits to Carnap and Searle, who variously ‘discarded’ Heidegger and Derrida as ‘being no philosopher at all’, rather than making qualitative judgements on the quality *of* that philosophy). Citing Cavell, who claims that ‘in a modern era, intellectual works with designs upon the most serious attention of their culture must give themselves out as, or allow themselves to be appropriated as, philosophies’ (1979, pxxi), Berry’s argument that is that literature and philosophy must be seen as two sides of the same coin.

However, Berry’s point must be understood as more nuanced than simply expressing that the distinction between literature and philosophy is an artificial practice, and arbitrary definitional exercises carry no value. Instead, his point is to stress – with Wittgenstein’s construction of conceptualisation particularly – that in establishing ‘which side of the coin you are looking at’, sometimes the harder we seek and cling to boundary definitions, the more we muddle our understanding of a thing, rather than clarifying it. Definition, distinction and categorisation

become essentially an activity of ‘I know it when I see it’ – a phrase famously employed by United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart in relation to what constitutes hard-core pornography.

5.2 Implications for an understanding of Joyce

In light of this understanding developed by Berry and based on Wittgenstein, it becomes clear that this dissertation cannot answer its second question simply by drawing an arbitrary checklist of ‘philosophy criteria’, and then working through *Ulysses* to tick them off. Instead, efforts to recognise and articulate philosophy and literature – both their overlaps and their distinctions – becomes an issue of ‘knowing it when you see it’.

So then, do we ‘know what we see’ when we engage with Joyce’s literature? It is asserted here that we do, but not in the way we might first think. Chapters two, three and four have shown in significant depth the varying ways in which philosophical ideas are set out upon the page and explored within the content and diegetic world of *Ulysses*. It is asserted that in line with the Derridian proposition, these philosophical ideas – and indeed all ideas, thoughts and explorations – could be played out to infinity, with *Ulysses* as their touchstone. The book does indeed hold the capacity to be a Babelean library.

But a Babelean library is still just a library, regardless of its scale. Using the ‘know it when you see it’ test, an encyclopaedia is not a work of philosophy. The ability for something to contain *within it* philosophy does not make it a practice of philosophy itself. What then is important about the Derridian analysis is the finding – developed throughout this thesis – that *Ulysses*’ scope for infinite progression derives from its *form*, more than its content. By engaging with previously unexplored notions of form, Joyce created a text that was an *active* entity *for* thought, rather than a passive container *of* thought. As summarised in chapter two, it becomes the ‘dramatiz[ation of] the encounter between the real world and the world of the novel, even as it challenges the rigidity of that distinction’ (Freeman) and a ‘radical conversion from ‘meaning’ as content of an expression, to the form of the expression as meaning’ (Eco). In this new approach to form, and to the writing of a ‘a work of literature’, its creation becomes an experimental *practice* by Joyce, and its output becomes book-as-verb – a *thinking* thing, rather than book-as-noun – a thing of thoughts. It is through this process that it rightly appropriates the label of ‘philosophy’.

The perspective is, unfortunately, not entirely original or unique. Bonnici (2008) describes Joyce as either a ‘philo-literary’ or ‘literosophical’ author, whilst Byrd (1967) reaches almost exactly the same conclusion as this paper, stating:

To say that the novels of James Joyce are philosophic is certainly not to make a critical revelation. The surface of the novels demonstrates that fact; time and again, the characters think and talk about philosophy and philosophers, Aquinas and Aristotle, even Nietzsche, Berkeley, and Plato. Practically all of Joyce's critics have felt impelled to extract a statement of philosophic doctrine from the novels. Generally, these statements appear confused and have little correlation one with the other. I think that the confusion results primarily from trying to find Joyce's philosophic ideas embodied only in the surface of the works.... No-one, as far as I know, has given much consideration to Joyce's method as a philosophic novelist. Without doubt, the surface philosophy plays a role in the method, particularly in the earlier works, but it is only supplementary to the philosophic conception of *Ulysses* as a whole. (Byrd, 1967, p.9)

His parallel conclusion to the one reached within this work – that *Ulysses* is not philosophy because it *contains* it, but because it *does* it: it is philosophy as a verb rather than a noun – is constructed largely around a Wittgensteinian analysis of language. This notion of language as *existence* rather than an *expression of existence* is touched upon within this study (section 3.2) but it is outside of the scope of this thesis to explore it in more detail. None-the-less it forms part of the wider assertion made here: that in ‘containing all the content of the world – past, present and future’, Joyce doesn’t simply create a Babelean library, but in the *process of that creation* engages in a deliberate and considered *act* of philosophy. That Babelean aim – along with form, narrative, character, structure, setting, theme, and language - all operate together to *become* an active practice of meaning, rather than a mere expression of it. As such, the novel can be said to probe what existence means on a multitude of levels, of which ‘nostalgia’ is just one. Thus, nostalgia can be said to be far more than the philosophical *content* of the novel, and instead becomes just one small part of Joyce’s exploratory and experimental philosophical *process*, which aims – like many philosophers before him – to challenge tradition and the accepted understanding of things.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 On the nature of conclusions

In drawing a supposed ‘conclusion’ to the ‘question’ of Joyce’s oeuvre as something which is infinitely interpretable and hypermnesic in nature, it is necessary to engage in a little self-reflexive consideration of interpretability and the idea of ‘concluding’ anything at all, and how that might apply to this thesis itself. Whilst Joyce’s work is undoubtedly ‘special’ – if not on an individual experiential level then certainly in terms of its impact on Western literary canon – it *may* be a mistake to view it as particularly unique to Derrida’s understanding of textual interpretability. It would be *possible* instead simply to read Joyce as emblematic or paradigmatic of Derrida’s wider positionality on literature in general – a position one can loosely classify as ‘structuralist’⁷, wherein all texts are necessarily ‘freely interpreted but also cooperatively generated by the addressee (the original text constituting a flexible type of which many tokens can be legitimately realised)’. (Eco, 1979, p.3).

Whilst section 6.2 will contest this assertion of *Ulysses* as merely a ‘bannerman’ of the structuralists, it is worth considering the implications of a structuralist account – as a way in which *all* texts might be read - for this study. In particular, it can be argued that to state a concrete ‘conclusion’ from the investigations undertaken herein arguably contradicts the very principle of interpretability that this same-self paper claims to explore. Eco (1979) submits that it does disservice to the reader to lay out in explicit terms, ‘the conclusion’, ‘obsessively aim[ing to] arouse a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers’ and ‘pulling the reader along a predetermined path, carefully displaying their effects so as to arouse [the intended response] at the due place and at the right moment’ (p. 8).

Yet, Eco also identifies that a text cannot be described as meaningfully communicative if ‘the role of its addressee (the reader, in the case of verbal texts) has not been envisaged at the moment of its generation *qua* text. An open text is a paramount instance of a syntactic-semnitco-pragmatic device whose foreseen interpretation is a part of its generative process’ (p.3), with

⁷ It is beyond the scope of this essay to examine the various ways in which both Derrida and Eco are heralded as defying classification, called variously ‘the last of the structuralists’ and ‘the first of the post-structuralists’. But, ultimately, as Nöth (2017) observes, these individualistic classifications do ‘not rule out the conclusion that the structuralist heritage is deeply rooted in [their] thought’, and so structuralist will be the convenient, if somewhat reductionist, term used here.

that foresight of interpretation (often mistakenly) based on the assumption of shared code between reader and writer.

Here, certainly, in a work developed specifically for assessment, with clear guidelines for the production of that work, it can be stated confidently that the addressee – namely, ‘the examiner’, and their ‘interpretation’ of the work - has absolutely been envisaged throughout the process of generation – appeasement of their expectations is indeed as fundamental to the genesis of the work as the ideas themselves. Furthermore, the shared interpretative code of student and examiner -codified as it is - is far more likely to reach a level of accordance than other more ambiguously coded ‘open’ texts to which Eco refers. This means that in the context of this study, ‘pulling the reader along a predetermined path’ may in fact be not just necessary, but expected.

All this is to say that a conclusion is an unfortunate evil, required as it is by academic convention, even though it is somewhat contradictory to the very spirit of a Derridian investigation that leans heavily also on the work of Umberto Eco, and - not least - contrary to dissection of an author who, in *Wake*, made an entire point of pursuing Viconian circularity and deliberately shunning concepts of definitiveness or conclusivity. None-the-less, a conclusion here must be rendered, and so, is presented.

6.2 On Joyce’s work as capable of ‘infinite interpretation’

The investigation herein has been framed by two key research questions, which are presented here again for convenience.

RQ1) Can one select a ‘random’ topic – in this case philosophical nostalgia – and use it to interrogate both Joyce’s oeuvre and extant Joycean discourse and generate meaning and understanding therefrom – thus supporting Derrida’s notion of Joyce’s work as a ‘hypermnestic machine’ that both records and generates all thought, past, present and future?

RQ2) If so, what implications does this have for understanding and categorising Joyce’s work as either literature, philosophy, or a hybrid concept in between?

As was identified within the introduction, this somewhat unusual imposition of a traditional social sciences research approach upon a philo-literary study is justified because the proposition is not to analyse a particular *meaning* of the text, but to understanding how meaning operates *in relation* to the text - with the meaning chosen for examination (philosophical nostalgia) merely an illustrative example or 'random variable' (random in the sense that it was picked on the whim of the researcher based on external influences upon them, not discerned or derived from the text). This variable is imposed upon the text and used as an interrogatory lens to support (though arguably not prove) the assertion that any lens can be used to analyse the text, because of its intrinsic hypermnesic nature. The lens chosen might as well have been – as Lernout (2002) submits – deconstructivist, feminist, post-colonial or queer, it may have been as tightly focused as a single element or concept – the key (White, 1971), cannibalism (Power, 2023), the word 'yes' (Derrida, 1992) or it might have been as broad as to accommodate an entire anthropoligical/historical/social/cultural/philosophical/mathematic investigation. The point, as Lernout (2002) stresses, is that 'whatever methodology critics can dream up [to analyse Joyce]... is already there' p.339). Indeed, Eagleton (2011) submitted that whenever a new literary theory was introduced into the wider field of literary theory, 'it is always worth testing [it out] by asking: How would it work with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* first?'

With this arbitrary but illustrative interrogative device, the dissertation has amply demonstrated that through the deployment of a lens of 'philosophical nostalgia', Joyce's texts – and most specifically *Ulysses* – can be seen as expressing a number of diverse philosophical viewpoints which pertain to nostalgia in various ways. The precise content or nature of these philosophical manifestations of the idea are not the *point* of this dissertation – the lens of analysis is, as stressed before, a *device* to probe a further question (that of Derridian positionality) rather than an end in itself. None-the-less, it is still be worth summarising the ways in which these concepts of philosophical nostalgia are expressed in *Ulysses*. Through a combination of character (chapter two), experimental literary devices such as time, place, space, language and object (chapter three) and through plot (chapter four) Joyce has in effect taken the 'traditional' nostalgic account of the Odyssey adventure – nostalgia as a return home, and subverted it to operate within, between and against the conventional beats of the Odyssean journey. Through this, he presents a world of nostalgias, so different for each character that it seems impossible that they might be sharing Dublin as their singular home: they live in the same space, but not in the same world.

In terms of the devices used by Joyce for this expression of diverse philosophical viewpoints, explorations of nostalgia are found variously through the direct references made by Joyce, through the openly interpretative nature of Joyce's writing - which leaves endless scope for meaning to be found in the gaps between and in the negative spaces of everything committed to the page, and through reference to the extant literature which has developed around Joyce's oeuvre, the production of which was foreseen by Joyce himself, and therefore considered to be a constitutive part of the works that generated it.

The extent to which this 'evidences' the 'infinite interpretability' of *Ulysses* posited by Derrida – the main thrust of research question one - turns somewhat on the way in which 'infinite' is understood. In German, there are two distinct forms of infinity. The first - *Unendlichkeit* - is quantitative in nature, and refers to an unending number of discrete iterations. It is clear that despite the sprawling nature of the text, such an understanding of 'infinite' does not apply to *Ulysses*, it does not contain every imaginable substance, idea and concept within it. But in German, infinite also receives the translation *Unbegrenztheit*, which instead may be seen as more of a qualitative concept; communicating a form of boundlessness. It is *this* idea of infinite interpretability that is demonstrated by the ability to pick a 'random' topic – such as that of philosophical nostalgia – and read the text in that light. More particularly, it is not so much the book that is boundless in nature, but the reader's potential in relation to the book – affirming the oft quoted idea that *Ulysses* is not a book you read, but one that reads you. However, this 'boundlessness' in scope should not be confused with 'boundlessness' in structure. As Eco submits (in relation to *Finnegans Wake*, but the analysis is as pertinent to *Ulysses* also), 'You cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it can be, cannot afford whatever interpretation' (p.9).

It is here then that the statement made at the outset of these conclusion – that Joyce's works are merely emblematic of a structuralist interpretation, but not necessarily unique to them in any way – is proved to be, if not untrue, then inaccurate. Under Eco's statement that a text cannot have boundless interpretation, but instead must operate within the bounds of what the text (and by extension author) leaves space for to be interpreted, what you run into in the work of Joyce is a text where its very *intention* is that level of fully boundless interpretation- a work of puzzles, references, layers, codes, truths, negations and everything between (recall Joyce's stated intention of his works as devices to secure his 'immortality').

For Eco, this process of setting the bounds of interpretation (or, in the case of *Ulysses*, creating something boundless), requires a 'Model Reader as a component of its structural strategy', and

in the case of *Ulysses*, ‘one can extrapolate the profile of a ‘good Ulysses reader’ from the text itself, because the pragmatic process of interpretation is not an empirical accident independent of the text *qua* text, but is a structural element of its generative process’ (p.9). In other words, the text achieves hypermnesic status and boundless interpretability in large part because this is what Joyce intended, but also because by this intention and the product that naturally flows from it, it invites the type of reader who is most likely to participate in and contribute to this interpretability.

6.3 On the nature of Joyce’s work as philosophical

This leads neatly to the conclusions this dissertation reaches in relation to research question two – namely, the implications of the findings of ‘infinite’ interpretability in terms of the positionality of the work as one of literature or philosophy (or both). Chapter Five considered the nature of the relationship between the two, and in particular found the understanding of Byrd to be the most compelling in understanding how Joyce might be defined as much a work of philosophy as literature; not by what Byrd calls the philosophical ‘surface content’ of the works, but by his ‘method as a philosophic novelist’. This means that Joyce does not pursue a specific philosophic doctrine, but instead engages in the provision of a space and a structure within which the practice of ‘philosophy’ can occur – both for Joyce and for the reader. For Joyce, the ‘doing’ of philosophy through the book occurs within the experimentality of the exercise in itself. For the reader, the ‘doing’ of philosophy through the book comes from the space, prompt and framework it offers them to engage in the act of thinking. In this sense then, its philosophical nature can be seen in the same sense as Cartesian doubt or Aristotelian *phainomena/endoxa* or dialectic approaches; it is a generative vehicle for thinking about the world, rather than a treatise on the specific nature of the world (though assumptions on *what* can be perceived and *how* it can be perceived may often be ‘baked in’ to philosophical methods).

But how is this different from any book? As Chapter five explored, there is arguably an instinct to treat literature as a philosophical proving ground. In that sense then, *any* book is a prompt and framework for philosophical contemplation. But what makes *Ulysses* specifically so – and differentiates it from other literature which itself might validly be seen generally as a ‘framework for thinking’ - is Eco’s statement regarding the role of the text in setting up for itself its own desired ‘model reader’; setting the expectations and behaviours of the reader, and

then delivering the mechanisms by which they can fulfil that ideality. In this way, the work is philosophical because Joyce has signified to his readers that it will be, and they have acquiesced in their participation. The hypermnestic dimension of the text – demonstrated throughout this study - is integral to this and is what constitutes Joyce’s main act of signification. Thus it can be concluded that an understanding of Joyce’s work – and *Ulysses* specifically – as philo-literary stems directly from the formation of the text as ‘infinite’, setting as it does not the substance of a philosophical doctrine, but the mechanism by which philosophy is practiced, as both author and reader.

6.4 Implications for further study

As evidenced by Habgood-Coote *et al* (2022) in their submission ‘Can a Good Philosophical Contribution Be Made Just by Asking a Question?’ – in which the authors submitted for publication in *Metaphysics* journal a paper which consisted of nothing but its self-same title, as a means to illustrate their point⁸ - there is much validity to a paper that raises more questions than it solves. And certainly a number of areas of enquiry are opened from the findings of this paper, discussion of which is precluded in any depth within this current study, but which may be mentioned briefly.

Perhaps the most central area for exploration are the *implications* of Joyce’s work as both hypermnestic in nature and – as has been asserted here – necessarily philosophical as a result. A first apparent question is, what does this mean for Joyce’s work as either a modernist or postmodernist classification (an issue explored in relation to other facets of Joyce’s work by authors such as McHale, 1990, Lutzkanova-Vassileva, 1998, and Dettmar, 1996). Moreover, what does this scholarisation of Joyce do to Joyce’s works? To what extent does it begin to replicate Kundera’s (1993) assertion that the aesthetic quality of their writing becomes sublimated by its intellectualisation, what Kundera referred to as the ‘Kafkologizing’ of Kafka, wherein the work of academics has become to ‘replace Kafka with the Kafkologized Kafka’. May the same be said of Joyce? Has the act of ‘finding everything’ in *Ulysses* now corrupted the text of its ‘meaningful’, joyful or aesthetic qualities? Or instead, does the fault (if indeed such fault is identified) lie not with academics, but with the necessary inevitabilities of historical progression? Can it be argued that such a process is an inevitability of the progression

⁸ The paper was published only on the understanding that the authors would follow it with a supplementary commentary paper, which was included within the same edition of *Metaphysics*.

of art specifically; Joyce academized and philosophised his *own* work precisely because – as Danto (1984) argues – philosophy is the only logical progression of art, arising as it does from art's death, which occurs as the art extends beyond the bounds of its measurability in verisimilitude, into the realm of the expressionist and absurd, where no definitional scale of quality can exist, and finally to the only position it can thus occupy – one of self-conceptualisation, self-reflexivity and self-consciousness: an inherently philosophical movement. Was Joyce – simply by virtue of his time, place and status in literary cannon – forced to write a work which 'by displaying what is subjective... reveals its purpose as existing for the subject, for the spectator and not on its own account. The spectator is, as it were, in it from the beginning, is counted in with it, and the work exists only for this point, i.e, for the individual apprehending it' (Hegel, 1975). And, as a final question - in light of Hegel's invocation of the reader as a necessary actor in the process, complicit or otherwise - are audiences as a result now somehow both the motivators and victims of this Hegelian artistic progression - Eco's 'Model Readers' who are at once the stimulus of a work, and yet also its hostage, denied aesthetic joy and instead forced into navel-gazing self-awareness and self-contemplation through art that has died and rebirthed in the field of philosophy?

Or perhaps, *Ulysses* is simply a story about three particular people, going about their particular lives on a particular day in Dublin. Nothing more.

These questions – arising naturally as they do from the findings of this paper – could constitute the basis of their own full thesis, and as such can only be touched upon here. But they do highlight the fact that far from constituting only an intellectual exercise in itself and for itself, this study sets the basis for a wider understanding of literature and philosophy as a whole, using Joyce as a crucial gateway to the issue.

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