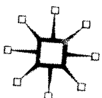
To Laura,
Teacher of a whole new generation of Ulysses students
Fondly Margot

Virgin and Veteran Readings of Ulysses

Margot Norris



VIRGIN AND VETERAN READINGS OF *ULYSSES*
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First published in 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN: 978–0–230–33871–5 (hardcover)
978–0–230–33872–2 (paperback)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Norris, Margot.
Virgin and veteran readings of Ulysses / Margot Norris.
p. cm. —(New directions in Irish and Irish American literature)
ISBN 978–0–230–33871–5 (hardcover)—ISBN 978–0–230–33872–2 (pbk.)
1. Joyce, James, 1882–1941. Ulysses. 2. Narration (Rhetoric)—History—20th century. I. Title.
PR6019.O9U6846 2011
823'.912—dc22 2011021972

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: December 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

Introduction: Virgin Reading, Possible Worlds Theory, and the Odyssean Intertext of Ulysses

The Virgin Reader

A number of the classic works of Joyce criticism allude to the experience of a "first reading" of *Ulysses*. After carefully outlining the events of June 16, 1904, Stuart Gilbert writes, "At a first reading of *Ulysses* the average reader is impressed most of all by the striking psychological realism of the narrative" (8). Years later, Hugh Kenner tells us about "[w]hat the first readers of *Ulysses* were meant to know of its author" (6).[1] Michael Groden, however, puts the concept of a "first reading" of the work in question by reminding us that parts of *Ulysses* were published in serial form in *The Little Review* between 1918 and 1920. Consequently, its "literal" first readers encountered *Ulysses* before Joyce had even finished it and perhaps had not yet figured out the ending of the work. He notes, "Joyce had apparently planned neither 'Ithaca' nor 'Penelope' very fully in late 1920 and early 1921" (186). This means that when the Linati schema was formulated, the work was not yet finished.[2] There are therefore a variety of ways of conceptualizing "first readers" of *Ulysses*: the people who dipped into parts of the work in *The Little Review*, those who read the whole thing hot off the press in 1922, and readers who encountered the work for the first time in the decades that followed, and still do, like many of our undergraduates. But do any of these first-time readers qualify as what we might call "virgin readers" of *Ulysses*? How many readers pick up *Ulysses* knowing nothing about it, with no idea of what to expect, unfamiliar with the characters, ignorant of the events that will unfold, and oblivious to its parallel to Homer's *Odyssey*?[3] Very few, probably, suggesting that a virgin reader should be considered an imaginary construct, a hypothetical figure unlikely to exist in reality but nonetheless capable of being posited. Why posit such a figure? Reader-response theory since the 1980s has complicated the figure of the reader, offering such categories as the "real" reader, the "virtual" reader, the "ideal" reader, the "mock reader," among others.[4] Given its hypothetical character, the virgin reader resembles an implied reader in the sense of functioning as "the intended recipient of the narrative," to use H. Porter Abbott's definition (191).[5] But although my construct of the virgin reader

as a hypothetical first-time consecutive reader of the narrative is complicated, it allows us to approach *Ulysses* in new ways that bring significant aspects of its narrative construction into fresh focus.

Let me offer an example of how the fictional perspective of the hypothetical virgin reader can serve as a heuristic device. The preface of Jefferson Hunter's 2004 *How to Read "Ulysses" and Why* announces: "This book is intended for first-time readers of *Ulysses*" (ix). The guidebook then offers a helpful and informative general introduction, followed by an accessible narrative summary of the events in the novel. When he comes to "Calypso," Hunter tells the first-time reader, "There is a check to joy as Bloom gathers the mail, because Molly has received a letter from Blazes Boylan, her musical impresario and lover" (39).[6] This sounds like a perfectly accurate statement, since by the end of the novel Boylan will indeed have become Molly's lover. But this is not yet true in the morning, and there is nothing to prevent "Penelope" from revealing at the end of the work that adultery never took place and that Molly, like her mythical prototype, remained faithful to her husband. Hunter infuses his guide with a veteran reader's perspective, and in this case produces what we might call a "spoiler." This deprives a genuine first-time reader of a feature of *Ulysses* that has received relatively little critical attention, namely, its potential *suspense.* I will return to the suspense the narrative creates about Molly's possible affair in my later discussions. But the point I wish to emphasize here is that exploring the text from the vantage of a hypothetical virgin reader brings important elements of the text's plot construction to our attention. Here is another example. When describing Bloom in the butcher shop, Porter makes it clear that Bloom is Jewish. But the text gives only oblique, rather than explicit, suggestions about Bloom's ethnicity in "Calypso." Indeed, the information about Bloom's Jewishness is offered through a gradual accretion of suggestive details over several episodes. This narrative strategy has a fascinating implication, namely that writing at a time when open and public anti-Semitism was not uncommon, Joyce may have deliberately delayed confirming Bloom's Jewish identity until the reader had gotten to know him well—thereby troubling and possibly muting any prejudgment or bias. At the same time, a guide for first-time readers, like Hunter's, cannot explain the implications of Bloom's exchange with Dlugacz without introducing their common Jewish identity, even if it does produce another spoiler.

This dilemma suggests that *Ulysses* can arguably be "read" by a first-time or virgin reader, but can be fully "understood" only by a veteran reader who brings knowledge of the whole work, including the ending, to any part of it. Karen Lawrence posits this feature early in her discussion of *Ulysses*, arguing that the text's narrative discontinuities make the work unintelligible unless the reader has "the entire book in his mind; he must see the beginning in terms of the end" (5). She grounds this approach in Joseph Frank's analogy of modernist fiction with imagist poems, producing a "spatial" approach that dominated *Ulysses* criticism in mid-century. "Consequently, modern fiction, like modern poetry, cannot be 'read' but

only 'reread,'" she writes (5). This suggests that a virgin reading—a consecutive or sequential reading in which the text is confronted with attention to the narrative development of events produced by the temporal disbursement of information—is untenable. It is not, of course, since many first-time readers are obliged to follow precisely this procedure even if their knowledge of the implications of what they read remains flawed and incomplete. From a critical and heuristic perspective, however, a simultaneous procedure for reading the work from a virgin and a veteran perspective concurrently is not precluded. In that case, the virgin reading simulates a first-time encounter with the narrative *innocent* of later information that will eventually modify or clarify earlier events and character appraisals. At the same time, a veteran reading shadowing it makes the significance of what is withheld from the virgin available to us. This is effectively the process I will employ in this study. The benefits of such an approach are multiple and best conceptualized for their bearing on our understanding of how the *fictional world* of *Ulysses* is constructed, even as conventional problems of narration, plot, character, and interpretation are revisited from a new perspective.

The virgin reading I propose will direct attention not just to questions of narrative and narration but to broader issues of fictional construction. I will therefore call upon the field of narratology with special focus on the specific perspectives of Possible Worlds theory to ground my approach. These broad theoretical resources make it possible to attend to such textual features as genre, plot, character, narratorial voice, authority, style, and the like, on the one hand, while on the other hand tracking the effects of these aspects of fictional construction on the reader. Take, for example, the issue of fictional *incompleteness*—a characteristic to which Wolfgang Iser drew early attention. A virgin reading of *Ulysses* alerts us to the fact that the work fails to show or tell us many things. Hugh Kenner noticed that there were missing scenes in the work: the conversation where Molly tells Bloom the time of her appointment with Boylan, for example, or the reason the furniture in the Bloom parlor has been moved. But there are even more serious moments, such as Stephen's surprising and troublesome singing of an anti-Semitic ballad to Bloom. Because the text does not offer the reader an explanation for this event, the reader is put on the spot, obliged to make judgments of an ethical character without hope of a clear and just resolution. At such moments, narrative construction, style, and reader response become intimately entangled. Incompleteness also marks the famous stream-of-consciousness technique that promises intimate access to the thoughts and feelings of Stephen and Bloom. A virgin reading allows us to track the extent to which their thoughts do not bring the conflicts and anxieties with which they struggle into the open. What prompts Stephen to launch that elaborate Shakespeare lecture in the library? He may have formulated a plan while he was "off-stage," maybe drinking with the pressmen at Mooney's, but this is not disclosed to us. How aware is the emotionally secure and self-confident Bloom about the disparagement to which we see him subjected by an increasingly large cast of

characters as the novel progresses? We see him act in ways that suggest that he knows, but his overt thoughts rarely preoccupy themselves with issues of prejudice and anti-Semitism that have potentially serious effects on his life. An attentive virgin reading generates many productive questions of this kind, and once its attitude is adopted, it need not be rigorously applied to every episode in order to produce new perspectives with some surprising results. But its application as a strategy is nonetheless important for encouraging us to be open to new possibilities of reading and interpretation.

Possible Worlds Theory

The focus on alternative possibilities of plot and character construction allows a virgin reading to be illuminated by the theories of fictional world-making offered in Possible Worlds theory. The following introduction lays out some of the main tenets of this approach, to be repeated and revisited in the discussions of specific *Ulysses* episodes that follow. Besides addressing such problems as textual incompleteness and implicature, this preliminary discussion will also briefly address the complex problem of *transworld identity* posed by Joyce's inclusion of historical figures in the novel. And Possible Worlds theory also elucidates a feature of *Ulysses* that considerably complicates a virgin reading of the work—*intertextuality*—with a sharpened focus on the status of the work's Odyssean parallels. My interest in Possible Worlds theory began with an invitation to contribute an essay to Michael Gillespie and Nicholas Fargnoli's 2006 volume, *"Ulysses" in Critical Perspective*. The project had a particularly intriguing challenge built into it, for it required not only a retrospective assessment of various theoretical approaches to the novel, but also speculation of their future course. I selected the field of narratology as my focus, knowing that *Ulysses* has enjoyed a long and distinguished history of narrative criticism. The surprise came when I turned my attention to possibilities for the future, and discovered that narratology had moved into an exciting new phase of exploration and formulation. Possible Worlds theory blossomed during the 1990s. Thomas Pavel's 1986 *Fictional Worlds* was one of the earlier texts in a series that was followed by Marie-Laure Ryan's *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* in 1991, Ruth Ronen's *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* in 1994, and Lubomír Doležel's *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* in 1998. By highlighting "fictionality"—the state or condition that makes a text fictional and the processes by which fiction is constructed—their approach departs from such earlier explorations of narrative experiments in *Ulysses* as Franz Stanzel's discussion of "mediacy of presentation," David Hayman's attention to the function of the "arranger," or Erwin Steinberg's look at Joyce's innovations in stream of consciousness. These works, as well as Karen Lawrence's groundbreaking study of the style of *Ulysses*, attend chiefly to modulations of voice and strategies of storytelling in the work—as opposed to the ontology of its fictional worlds.[7]

My narratological approach will augment theirs with a focus on how multiple, intersecting and interlocking worlds—of actuality, discourse, thought, fantasy, and intertextuality—are constructed and operate in *Ulysses*.

Lubomír Doležel opens his book *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* by pointing to a shift of focus "from narrative as story to narrative as fiction. To be sure, the domain of fiction is broader than that of the story. Yet in this wider perspective a new vista on narrative opens: we come to understand the conditions and principles of *story inventing* as a special case of *fiction making*" (ix). As its name suggests, Possible Worlds theory emerges from a philosophical tradition grounded in the work of the seventeenth-century rationalist Gottfried Leibniz, whose theological optimism reflected a belief that divine creation assured that our world must be the best of all possible worlds. Twentieth-century thinkers have stripped the notion of possible worlds of this metaphysical origin in theodicy by taking up Leibniz's implication: that to imagine this as the best of all possible worlds, we must be able to imagine or mentally construct worlds other than our own. This concept has gradually become an interdisciplinary tool in a wide range of fields including the natural sciences (where it addresses mutually exclusive paradigms), historiography (where it takes form as counterfactual scenarios), and analytic philosophy and the philosophy of logic (Doležel 14). Early appearances in literary criticism of this ontological turn away from idealism appeared in the work of the phenomenologist Roman Ingarden and the philosophical writings of Umberto Eco. Ingarden's thoughts about literary works of art were informed by his philosophical address to the question of what could possibly exist and what it takes, or entails, for objects to exist. Umberto Eco proposed a solution to the problem of impossibilities in possible worlds by noting that properties that violate logic can nonetheless be "mentioned" or named even if their properties cannot be described (Doležel 165; Ronen 55). But contemporary Possible Worlds theory draws even more heavily on the fields of analytic philosophy and philosophy of logic,[8] notwithstanding what Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan described in 1988 as a "crisis in narratology" produced by increasing dissatisfaction with its formalism (Ryan 3). Marie-Laure Ryan concedes that "[t]raditional topics, such as point of view and narrative technique, have been largely exhausted" (3), and she pledges to address the need for new ideas, although without abandoning her largely formalistic approach. She defines Possible Worlds theory as a formal model based on two concepts. They are "the metaphor of 'world' to describe the semantic domain projected by the text; and the concept of modality to describe and classify the various ways of existing of the objects, states, and events that make up the semantic domain" (3).

So what can Possible Worlds theory contribute to literary criticism in general, and to the critical interpretation of a work like *Ulysses* in particular? Gerald Prince's definition of Possible Worlds theory offers a bridge between its new focus and more traditional approaches to literary texts. He writes, "Narratives comprise temporally ordered sequences of states of affairs that

are taken to be actual/factual ('what happens') and that are linked to other states of affairs considered non-actual or counterfactual and constituted by the mental activity of various characters (their beliefs, wishes, plans, hallucinations, fantasies, etc.)" (77). This description gestures toward traditional notions of plot on the one hand ("temporally ordered sequences of states of affairs") and traditional notions of narrative discourse, on the other ("the mental activities of various characters"). But several issues not conventional in literary criticism are raised in Prince's definition—notably the problem of reference and referentiality, and the problem of truth value, or what is true and not true in fiction. This formulation offers an alternative to the more traditional concept of mimesis that presupposes that fictional worlds mirror actual worlds. Instead, Possible Worlds theory exposes the *pretense* or *illusion* by which fictional worlds "dissimulate their fictionality," as Ronen puts it, in order to present themselves as actual or factual (31).[9] The relevance of this analytical insight into the construction of fictional worlds is immediately apparent for a text like *Ulysses* with its high degree of "documentary reality" (186), as Clive Hart calls it in reference to the "Wandering Rocks" episode.[10] Hart characterizes the episode as "Joyce's most direct, most complete celebration of Dublin, demonstrating succinctly his conception of the importance of physical reality, meticulously documented, as the soil from which fictions may best grow" (181). The narration represents to him a verifiable reporting of facts capable of "error" (as it were) when it fails to reflect the real world accurately (197). Possible Worlds theory offers a different conceptual system for determining what is true or false in fiction precisely by redefining its reference to the actual world. Ronen writes, "Within the fictional universe of discourse, truth is not determined relative to an extratextual universe, but relative to a fictional world in which only some of the textual assertions can establish facts" (41). In other words, "facts" in the fictional world of "Wandering Rocks" are not determined by "facts" in the historical space of 1904 Dublin but only by the semantic or meaning-producing operation of the text. Rather than "truth" or "error," fictional texts produce what Ronen calls "warranted assertibility" (41).

What then is the status of the many historical entities—verifiable persons, places, and events—that populate the pages of *Ulysses*? Although he describes fictional worlds as "ensembles of nonactualized possible states of affairs," Doležel acknowledges that fictional entities may have actual prototypes in the real world and that this gives them what he calls a "transworld identity" (16–17). The Reverend John Conmee, S. J., is a figure in *Ulysses* whose prototype was indeed the historical rector of Clongowes Wood and Belvedere College when James Joyce was a student at these institutions. But within the fictional world of *Ulysses*, Father Conmee is a "factual" entity *not* because he actually lived in Dublin in 1904 but because the narrator claims or warrants that he is an actual person in the fictional Dublin of the novel. This explains how the novelistic Conmee can have the same ontological status in the text as Leopold Bloom, even though Bloom, unlike Conmee, lacks a definitive historical prototype.

Possible Worlds theory therefore clarifies and analytically sorts out what Hart called the "deliberate blurring of the distinction between fiction and reality" in the novel (186). But not every discourse in a fictional world is capable of making the warranted assertions that produce facts and factual entities in the text. "The text's power to grant fictional existence is explained by the procedure of authentication," Doležel writes (145), and it is speech act theory that offers the best conceptual framework for analyzing the function of authentication. "Fictional texts can carry out the function of authentication precisely because they are exempt from truth-valuation; they are performative speech acts" (146). In other words, fictional texts cannot tell us what is true or not true in the nontextual world, but convention grants them the authority to claim what is true or not true in the fictional world. Doležel then goes on to specify the conditions under which discourses enjoy authentication functions in fiction. "The basic and most common narrative texture combines two kinds of discourse: the narrative of an anonymous, impersonal narrator and the direct speech of the fictional person(s)" (148), he writes, and then goes on to describe the consequences for authentication in this dyadic discursive structure. "[E]ntities introduced in the discourse of the anonymous third-person narrator are eo ipso authenticated as fictional facts, while those introduced in the discourse of the fictional persons are not" (149). Ruth Ronen states a similar principle: "In literary contexts, then, authority is conceived as a convention attributing more power of construction to an external speaker, and less power to an internal or restricted speaker. Once a speaker has been situated outside the fictional world with omniscience and omnipotence on his side, the events and situations narrated are likely to be viewed by the reader as facts of the fictional world" (176).

For a text with such highly variable narrating structures and voices as *Ulysses*, this clarification of narrative authenticating authority is extremely valuable. Joyce demonstrates in the course of the novel how even such ostensibly authoritative nonfictional writing as newspaper reportage can be riddled with factual errors, as we see in Joe Hynes's obituary report of Paddy Dignam's funeral. "Nettled not a little by L. Boom (as it incorrectly stated) and the line of bitched type but tickled to death simultaneously by C. P. M'Coy and Stephen Dedalus B.A. who were conspicuous, needless to say, by their total absence," Bloom points out to Stephen "the usual crop of nonsensical howlers of misprints" in the newspaper he reads in the cabman's shelter (16.1267). Doležel's general principle of privileging the authenticating ability of anonymous impersonal narration undergoes further curious challenges in *Ulysses* in such compromised voices as those of the narrators of "Nausicaa," "Eumaeus," and "Ithaca." In anticipation of such potential complications, Doležel introduces rules for what he calls "graded authentication" for subjectivized third-person narrators who construct "fictional facts relativized to a certain person (or group of persons), facts commingled with subjective attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and so on" (153). This qualification allows us to clarify how the "Eumaeus"

narrator, sufficiently omniscient to enter the thoughts of Bloom, Stephen, and even Corley, simultaneously mixes his reportage of facts with opinions and judgments. Conversely, Doležel's explanation helps us track the extent to which the prejudiced first-person narration of the dun in "Cyclops" can be reliable with respect to the facts he reports, while nonetheless producing an account of the events in Barney Kiernan's pub that is erroneous and misleading. The distinction between the factual world of fictional events and the virtual worlds of character's thoughts, beliefs, desires, prejudices, as well as their reported or transmitted stories lies at the heart of Possible Worlds theory. Here is Prince's description again: "Narratives comprise temporally ordered sequences of states of affairs that are taken to be actual/factual ('what happens') and that are linked to other states of affairs considered non-actual or counterfactual and constituted by the mental activities of various characters (their beliefs, wishes, plans, hallucinations, fantasies, etc.)" (77). Marie-Laure Ryan somewhat reductively tropes this distinction by positing fiction as comprising what she calls a "textual actual world" constructed of fictional facts, around which orbit the virtual or possible worlds of the characters' systems of knowledge, obligations, and desires. In every episode of *Ulysses* these worlds coexist—sometimes in harmony and sometimes not. For example, the ostensibly authoritative catechism of the "Ithaca" narration offers both an account of what happens, the "facts" of what transpires at 7 Eccles Street between Bloom and Stephen, but also forays into Bloom's thoughts, memories, knowledge, and utopian fantasies. The narrator in addition offers us what Prince calls the "disnarrated" by pointing to things that Bloom *doesn't* say to Stephen on this portentous occasion.

How then do we think about those aspects of fictional worlds that are not concerned with actual or factual states of affairs? These virtual or possible worlds in fiction are generally conceptualized in terms of modality—a notion most accessible to literary critics with reference to its role in grammar and linguistics. Auxiliary verbs—for example, *can, may, must, will, ought,* or *should*—allow sentences to express possibility, impossibility, necessity, and contingency, on the one hand, and permissibility, obligation, proscription, on the other. Possible worlds in fiction are modal constructs referring to states or ideas or plans that are not actualized in the text but that refer to a variety of possible conditions. Consider the difference between the propositions "Molly Bloom is having an affair" (fact); "Molly Bloom is going to have an affair" (probability); "Molly Bloom might have an affair" (possibility); "Molly Bloom shouldn't have an affair" (proscription); "It's understandable if Molly Bloom has an affair" (permissibility); "Molly Bloom will have an affair if Bloom doesn't return home in the afternoon" (contingency). Modalities like these gesture to the notions that inhabit the thoughts of characters or, in some cases, narrators, and refer to their knowledge, beliefs, desires, ethics, fantasies, as well as to the stories they know or tell. Doležel conceptualizes fictional modalities as systems of constraints that are subject to contention in fictional worlds.

These include such fundamental categories as conformity to physical laws or laws of nature, and logical constraints imposed by the laws of noncontradiction and the excluded middle. When physical laws are violated in a fictional world, a supernatural realm is created that is physically impossible though not logically impossible—like the world of myths and fairy tales. With respect to logical constraints Ronen points out, "It is not only that fictional worlds can include impossibilities, but violating the law of the excluded middle appears to have motivated a whole school of literary writing, namely that of postmodernism" (55).[11] Doležel also points to dreams, hallucinations, and madness as constituting intermediary worlds between the natural and the supernatural. Leopold Bloom's ability as a male to bear eight sons in the hallucinatory state of "Circe" would signify such an intermediary state. Marie-Laure Ryan further simplifies the fictional modalities of Doležel by restricting them to the private worlds in the minds of characters rather than by treating them as operatives of world-construction. This allows her to keep fictional characters centered in a textual actual world that is linked to an orbital system of possible worlds. Ryan then transforms Doležel's deontic system into an obligation-world, his axiological system into a wish-world, and his epistemic system into a knowledge-world (111). His intermediary realm of dream, fantasy, and madness, however, is treated by Ryan as a special possible world case in which the character is completely recentered in a domain that she likens to a different fantasy universe rather than to a satellite of an actual world. Her concept of a Fantasy Universe is particularly helpful for analyzing the complicated fictional realms of the "Circe" episode.

In spite of what Ronen calls her "relatively unproblematic view of the actual world as a stable reference world" (70) in fiction, Marie-Laure Ryan offers a number of interesting elaborations on the consequences of fiction's linking of factual events to the virtual worlds of characters' thoughts and stories. The first of these addresses the reader's ability to suspend disbelief, as it were, and to enter fictional worlds as though they were games of make-believe or pretense in which the reader is a willing player.[12] "As inhabitants of the one and only actual world, we realize that the textual universe is created by the text, but as players of the fictionalized game, we agree to regard it as preexisting to it, as being merely reflected in the narrator's declarations" (23). In other words, readers extend a feigned credibility to the narrator's positing of an ostensibly actual or factually constructed world in his telling. Ryan continues: "Contemplated from without, the textual universe is populated by characters whose properties are those and only those specified by the text; contemplated from within, it is populated by ontologically complete human beings who would have existed and experienced certain events even if nobody had undertaken the task of telling their story" (23). This formulation introduces the important role that *incompleteness* plays in the creation of fictional worlds. Doležel writes, "It would take a text of infinite length to construct a complete fictional world. Finite texts, the only texts humans are capable of producing, are bound

to create incomplete worlds" (169). But if fictional texts are necessarily incomplete and characterized by gaps and absences of information, how do they manage to appear complete and filled-out to readers? Doležel credits Wolfgang Iser with addressing this problem in the 1970s by arguing that textual gaps stimulate interactive participation in fictional world construction on the part of the reader. "The blanks make the reader bring the story itself to life—he lives with the characters and experiences their activities," Iser wrote in *The Act of Reading* (192). But Doležel challenges the mimetic structure of Iser's model, noting that "the Iserian reader reconstructs the fictional world guided by his or her life experience, that is, by his or her communion with complete objects and worlds" (171). Instead of such a mimetic model, where textual gaps are supplied by knowledge of the non-textual or actual world, Doležel regards textual gaps as sites of *implicitness* that require from the reader a logical response in the form of inference. "Indeed, implicitness based on presupposition is a major source of fictional world-construction and reconstruction" (175).

Possible Worlds theory therefore posits a phenomenology of reading and protocols for interpretation based on fictional world reconstruction. Textual incompleteness and implicitness produce negative markers in the form of lacunae, and positive markers in the form of allusions, innuendoes, and insinuations that require reader attention and supplementation. The degree of reader participation is inevitably much greater for a virgin than a veteran reader, thereby producing not only more extensive speculation, greater risk, but also a wider and more interesting range of interpretation. But the question of reader response can be formulated in even broader theoretical terms. "Actual persons, authors and readers, can access fictional worlds but only by crossing somehow the world boundary between the realms of the actual and the possible" (20), Doležel writes. This formulation raises the question of access between or across worlds, a problem specifically addressed by Ryan, who categorizes a set of "accessibility relations" that give readers access to the textual actual world of fiction, and also give fictional characters access to their private or virtual worlds. Without reinstating a theory of mimesis that has the fiction reflect the extratextual world, both Doležel and Ryan conclude that readers are obliged to use their actual world knowledge in order to process the information produced in fictional texts. Ryan's accessibility relations, for example, assume that readers understand the properties, inventories, species, temporal status, physics, and logic of entities in fictional worlds by comparing them with their understanding of these same entities in the actual world (32–33). As Doležel puts it, "Fictional worlds are accessed through semiotic channels and by means of information processing" (20). Fictional texts produce knowledge that constitutes what he calls the "fictional encyclopedia," and this fictional compendium takes precedence over the reader's actual world encyclopedia when filling gaps or supplying allusions to effect interpretive reconstructions. But he adds that while "explicit markers of implicitness, such as lacunae, hints, innuendoes, and so on, are *local* triggers [. . .] the fictional encyclopedia is a *global* condition of the recovery of implicit meaning" (181). In the case of *Ulysses* criticism, the protocol suggested for fictional text reconstruction by Doležel would preclude the practice of symbol-imposition that characterized much early Joyce criticism. Although colloquially characterized as "symbol-hunting," symbols were less discovered than ascribed to allusions or words in the text—a practice that failed to subordinate the encyclopedic knowledge of the actual world to the fictional encyclopedia generated by the novel itself.[13]

Marie-Laure Ryan posits an additional "law" operative in the phenomenology of reading as generated by Possible Worlds theory. "This law—to which I shall refer as the principle of minimal departure—states that we reconstrue the central world of a textual universe in the same way we reconstrue the alternate worlds of nonfactual statements: as conforming as far as possible to our representations of AW [the actual world]" (51). This principle is already implicit in the notion of accessibility relations functioning as the bridge between the reader's sense of an actual world and the understanding this enables of the worlds of the fictional text. But Ryan gives minimal departure an additional feature with great importance for the critical processing of *Ulysses*, and that is its accommodation of the role of intertextuality. "Texts exist in the world as a potential source of knowledge, from which we draw information in building our representation of reality. The frame of reference invoked by the principle of minimal departure is not the sole product of unmediated personal experience, but bears the trace of all the texts that support or transmit a culture" (54). This sense of the function of intertextuality corresponds to its conventional significance as the condition that determines that fictional texts are not created ex nihilo, as Ryan puts it, but incorporate other text as referents in their construction. For Ryan, the implicit contribution of textual referents to fiction-making is their consolidation of fictional world characteristics into identifiable "generic landscapes." She explains, "Generic landscapes solidify through a process of filtration: we gather their elements from the themes and objects characteristic of a certain corpus. Since they are extracted from fully reconstituted textual universes, these objects have already been preprocessed according to the principle of minimal departure" (55). In other words, the reader brings a cultural reconstruction of fictional worlds to the experience of reading a new fictional text, and this general literary knowledge inflects the general knowledge of the actual world in the role it plays in minimal departure. Ryan does not specifically distinguish between explicit and implicit intertexts—a distinction not trivial for *Ulysses* in which Shakespeare, for one, plays a highly visible explicit role in the epistemic or knowledge world of the characters while Homer's *Odyssey* plays a far more implicit role. When professor MacHugh in "Aeolus" refers to the sophist who "took away the palm of beauty from Argive Helen and handed it to poor Penelope" (7.1038), he confirms that Homer's *Odyssey* belongs to the fictional encyclopedia of the novel's Dubliners. But clearly Bloom and Stephen do not think of themselves as acting out the roles of Homer's Odysseus

and Telemachus. Doležel comments on an aspect of implicit intertextuality important for *Ulysses* when he points out that it creates the possibility that "the text's meaning can be grasped without identifying the intertext, but is enriched, often quite substantially, by its discovery" (201).

The *Odyssey* as Intertext of *Ulysses*

"'I am now writing a book,' said Joyce, 'based on the wanderings of *Ulysses.* The *Odyssey*, that is to say, serves me as a ground plan" (15). Frank Budgen reports this early conversation in *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses."* In 1920 Joyce formalized his "ground plan" (perhaps unintentionally, since he specified that it was "for home use only") in the schema for *Ulysses* that he sent to Carlo Linati (*Selected Letters* 270–271). "The character of *Ulysses* has fascinated me ever since boyhood," he wrote to Linati, and with such disclosures Joyce established the dominance of Homer's *Odyssey* as a primary intertext for his 1922 novel.[14] This function of the *Odyssey* in relation to *Ulysses* is so well established that Gerald Prince cites it as an exemplar for the term *intertext* in his revised 2003 *Dictionary of Narratology*:

> [I]ntertext. 1. A text (or set of texts) that is cited, rewritten, prolonged, or generally transformed by another text and that makes the latter meaningful. Homer's *Odyssey* is one of the intertexts of Joyce's *Ulysses.* (46)

However, Hugh Kenner offers a useful reminder that the *Odyssey* as classical intertext was intended to function implicitly rather than explicitly. "In the *Ulysses* manuscripts Homeric indications were confined to the title. The eighteen chapter-headings—catch-words to identify the dominant correspondence of the moment—turn up only in letters, *schemata* and reports of Joyce's conversation," he points out. "The book readers were to see would hint at a hidden plan only on its title-page: a neat instance of Joyce's trust in synecdoche. Restored to currency by Gilbert in 1930, the episode-titles have since become so familiar we sometimes forget that they are not part of the text" (23). Even so, Kenner is obliged to acknowledge that the *Odyssey* makes a nondeterministic reading of *Ulysses* difficult because it threatens to predict not only the plot but also the outcome of its events. "[F]or nearly fifty years The Search for a Father has been a recurrent phrase in *Ulysses* criticism" (19), he writes—one that conditions the reader to expect not only the eventual meeting of Stephen and Bloom but also an eventual reconciliation and communion.[15] But, of course, critics have advanced the conclusion that Stephen and Bloom fail to achieve paternal or familial communion all along. Richard M. Kain, who recapitulated this critical interpretation in a 1972 essay, even gave it a name, calling it "the Isolation Theory" (148), since it posits the continued isolation of both Bloom and Stephen. The Homeric intertext places constraints on interpretation that are difficult to resist at the same time that

such resistance is absolutely crucial for producing uncontaminated and uncompromised readings of Joyce's text.

The application of a virgin reading counters the intertextual determinism of the classic on the plot of Joyce's novel. So does consideration of a *counterfactual* relationship between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, one that revisits the Homeric epic in the conditional spirit of "what if" its events had turned out differently in the classical work. Molly's infidelity offers key evidence to support both forms of resistance. A virgin reader has no way of knowing whether Bloom's suspicion of an amorous relationship between his wife and her impresario is a paranoid fantasy or a justified fear until Molly's revelation in the concluding episode of the novel. If awareness of the Homeric parallel were to condition expectations of the wife's fidelity, Molly's adultery would come as a surprise and a shock to a hypothetical virgin reader. By the same token, a counterfactual reading allows one to consider the ironies produced by a version of the *Odyssey* in which Penelope is found unfaithful upon the husband's return home. And if Penelope is unfaithful, could the meeting between father and son also eventuate in an unsatisfying failure—one with potentially dire consequences for Bloom's daughter Milly, for example? Has Bloom's paternal attention to Stephen diverted him from catching the potentially dire implications of Bannon's revelation at the maternity hospital that Milly may have been deflowered with unprotected sex at the risk of an unmarried pregnancy? I will revisit all these questions in subsequent discussions, but I wish here to draw attention to the importance of attention to *plot*, and to a *plot-focused* analysis as a way of assessing the effects of the intertext on *Ulysses.*

Marie-Laure Ryan devotes the entire second section of her book to "The Plotting of the Plot." Her model for plot structure and function begins by privileging the factual domain of the narrative universe and linking it to the virtual worlds (knowledge, obligation, and wish worlds) in the minds of the characters. She then goes on to say, "The relations among the worlds of the narrative system are not static, but change from state to state. The plot is the trace left by the movement of these worlds within the textual universe" (119). For Ryan, plot movement follows conflict, often between events in the factual universe and the private worlds of characters. The *agenbite of inwit* produced by Stephen's failure to pray at his mother's deathbed reflects the conflict between his action and his sense of filial obligation. Conflicts can also pertain among the various domains of the mental world (Stephen's intellectual freedom in conflict with his desire to honor maternal affection and devotion) and across the private worlds of characters (Molly's sexual desires in conflict with Bloom's sexual inhibitions in the wake of Rudy's death). The instigator of plot in Ryan's model is produced by what she calls "productive conflict," which she defines as follows: "A conflict is productive when its experiencer is in a position, and is willing, to take action toward its resolution" (120). However, Ryan's notion of productive conflict, which is central to her plot structure model, creates specific difficulties for analyzing the plot of *Ulysses.* The character in the novel

who takes the most resolute positive action to resolve a conflict is Molly Bloom, whose sexual frustrations are resolved, at least provisionally, by her agreement to an assignation and sexual encounter with Hugh Boylan. In contrast to Molly's productive "conflict-solving move," Bloom's actions in *Ulysses* may be characterized as "habitual doings," in Ryan's terms—that is, "repetitive gestures pursuing maintenance goals such as surviving in the world of everyday life" (130). Indeed, Bloom practices what might be called "active" passivity in relation to the marital conflict—a variant of the response that we see too in Stephen's determination to avoid confrontations that might resolve conflicts while courting those that produce them. By replacing a theme-based approach with a structural approach to fictional plot, the idiosyncratic management of action that gives *Ulysses* its seemingly *plotless* effect can be better understood. So too can the novel's counterfactual relationship to its intertext. Molly's adultery has much deeper implications for Joyce's departure from the *Odyssey* plot when we recognize that she assumes the active role of the men in the Homeric epic while they are assigned the passive roles of Penelope. If we take each of the Joycean figures in turn and examine their role through the lens of a Possible Worlds plot-structure model, our resistance to the determinism of the Homeric intertext becomes rewarded with additional meaning and insight. Although my later chapters will elaborate the plot-consequences of the actions and inactions of the figures in *Ulysses* in considerable detail, it may be helpful to give them an intertextually inflected preview before launching into the various sections of the book. Here is my look at Stephen, Bloom, and Molly as *anti-Telemachus*, *anti-Odysseus*, and *anti-Penelope*.

Stephen as Anti-Telemachus

Stephen Dedalus certainly faces a "productive conflict" in Ryan's terms, at least in his relations with exploitive friends and with an Irish literary community that fails to welcome and esteem him as an artist or intellectual. His active move of flight to the Continent to resolve his situation at the end of *Portrait* has failed, and he appears to formulate no plan in *Ulysses*. Although Joyce makes it quite clear that Stephen, like Telemachus, is threatened by unworthy usurpers, young Dedalus does not tackle this threat to his intellectual Irish kingdom by seeking a father or a mentor to handle it for him. His actions consist of three kinds: the first is the production or delivery of words—a history lesson, a poem, a delivered letter, a sent telegram, a parable, a lecture, a song, and a ballad, among others; the second, the consumption of alcohol, is an action difficult to classify with respect to activity or passivity, or with respect to its conflict-solving function; and the third, surprisingly, involves the delivery and provocation of blows—to Mulligan at Westland Row station, to Bella Cohen's chandelier (as possible stand-in for his mother's ghost), and from Private Carr in Nighttown. These actions require somewhat ingenious realignments and

interpretation if they are to be related to the Homeric figure of Telemachus. However, Stephen's most energetic early action of his day is the delivery of the Shakespeare lecture in the National Library—an event whose outcome is difficult to judge because its intended aim is not made clear. Book II of the *Odyssey* does show Telemachus bravely delivering a speech to his assembled community to apprise them of his woe and his predicament. "I lost my noble father" (14.46), he tells them and complains of suitors who "tear my whole house apart and destroy all my living" while guilty of "assailing my mother against her will" (14.49–50). He further requests a ship to sail in search of his father. This address, which is mocked and rebuffed by the suitors, is no more effective in winning sympathy or support than is Stephen's Shakespeare lecture. If its intent was to impress the senior Irish intellectuals in the library with an original analysis that displays Stephen's critical prowess, their rebuff recalls the painful and humiliating response received by Telemachus.

Stephen appears to *need* a father to fight his battles for him much as Telemachus does, and Simon Dedalus claims to feel himself up to the task of intervening in Stephen's usurpation. "That Mulligan is a contaminated bloody doubledyed ruffian by all accounts. [...] But with the help of God and His blessed mother I'll make it my business to write a letter one of those days to his mother or his aunt or whatever she is that will open her eye as wide as a gate" (6.63). Yet Stephen fights his own battle against his usurpers. The Shakespeare lecture in the library is undertaken on Stephen's initiative alone and it has far-reaching potential not only for his own reclamation but also for that of the Irish revival. He here addresses the Bard's unsavory material, ideological, and political collusion with England's exploitation of the poor ("he was himself a cornjobber and moneylender, with ten tods of corn hoarded in the famine riots"), the country's anti-Semitism ("Shylock chimes with the jewbaiting that followed the hanging and quartering of the queen's leech Lopez"), and its imperialistic adventurism (" [t]he *Sea Venture* comes home from Bermudas and the play Renan admired is written with Patsy Caliban, our American cousin" [9.742–757]). Stephen teaches the leaders of the Irish revival how to critique the English literary tradition's most sacred icon with respect to a history that reflects on the Irish famine, xenophobia, and colonialism. If the Shakespeare lecture offers an indictment of British colonial, racist, and imperialist historical practice, Stephen elsewhere confronts such actual Englishmen as Haines and the soldiers in Nighttown with their own implication in Ireland's occupation and exploitation. For all his seeming passivity, Stephen compares reasonably well with Telemachus with respect to courage and effort in at least attempting to confront and rectify his difficult situation.

Stephen has required no paternal help in attacking the suitors, even if his moves fail to restore him to his rightful social and symbolic place in Irish culture with its attendant prerogatives. His other "aggressive" actions, if we wish to characterize them as such, appear aimed—in Freudian terms—at both mother and "father." This marks a pronounced departure from

Telemachus's filial devotion to his parents. Stephen's confrontation with his mother occurs in imagination only, in the alcoholic hallucination in "Circe" in which she threatens him: "(*with smouldering eyes*) Repent! O, the fire of hell!" (15.4211). His moves toward his biological and potentially symbolic fathers also do not appear to follow the path of Telemachus. In Nighttown Stephen taps his brow to acknowledge "But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king"(15.4436). The gesture implies a confrontation with the father that is internal, a psychic parricide. Yet Stephen's literal father has no material or social kingdom left to reclaim, either for himself or for his son, making a strategy of avoidance sensible even as it is anti-Telemachian. But Stephen also does not seek out the paternal Bloom, and in *Ulysses* it is the "father" who attaches himself to the son to help him fight his battles against the suitors who drink up his earnings and waste his resources. Avoidance is difficult in these circumstances, and Stephen's consistent rudeness to Bloom, culminating in the singing of an offensive anti-Semitic ballad in Bloom's kitchen, is therefore construed by critics as a gesture of filial rejection and repulsion.[16] If so, Stephen's anti-Telemachian action suggests he has more to fear from the father than from usurping suitors, and that the reclamation of his kingdom requires a psychic parricide.

Bloom as Anti-Odysseus

If Bloom, unlike his wife, eschews "conflict-solving moves," then how does he align with the heroic figure of Odysseus? Joyce himself addressed this issue in his conversations with Frank Budgen by offering interpretations that reconfigure the Homeric protagonist's heroism in interesting ways. Joyce clearly favored Odysseus in his less aggressive stances, as a man "subjected to many trials, but with wisdom and courage [he] came through them all. Don't forget that he was a war dodger who tried to evade military service by simulating madness" (Budgen 16). Joyce also disliked the bloody slaughter of the suitors at the end of the epic: "The slaughter of the suitors [. . .] always seemed to me unUlyssean," he told Budgen (256). Budgen agreed, finding Telemachus's cruel killing of the female servant collaborators the act of a "sickeningly sadistic young prig" (256). But Keri Ames finds the Homeric epic offering interpretations of heroism that conform to Joyce's own. "Exposing such complexities in the notion of heroism, while insinuating that heroism may actually be much more ordinary, and even more pitiful or contemptible than one normally presumes it to be, was likely one of Joyce's aims in selecting his novel's title" ("Rebirth of Heroism" 172). And Ames construes Odysseus himself as a figure who abandons conventional *heroics* "for the sake of simply surviving and returning home" (173). This mode of fictional behavior reflects Ryan's "habitual doings"—the "repetitive gestures pursuing maintenance goals such as surviving in the world of everyday life" (130). Habitual doings tend to be oriented toward low-priority goals and entail a low risk of failure. Bloom's rare conflict-solving

move of a secret correspondence with Martha Clifford to solve his sexual impasse reduces the risk of exposure as much as possible with a pseudonym and an out-of-the-way post office box. Even Bloom's most significant plot action in *Ulysses*—his refusal to intervene in what he suspects is his wife's tryst—constitutes a "passive move." Ryan writes, "In what may be called deliberate nonaction, or passive moves, the (non)doer's goal is to let events follow their course even though he or she is in a position to prevent this development" (132). Bloom could use his knowledge of the hour of Boylan's expected arrival to intervene in the planned adultery before it is too late. "I could go home still: tram: something I forgot. Just to see: before: dressing. No. Here. No" (7.230). But he does nothing to disrupt the impending action.

The conflict within and between Bloom and Molly is centered in their mutual nonsatisfaction of sexual needs.[17] Bloom's sexual dysfunction troubles his own wish world as well as Molly's wish world, and this state of affairs requires that action be taken to resolve the double conflict. Molly's action is productive and high risk, aimed at resolving her own dissatisfaction even if her action will exacerbate and intensify Bloom's. "I suppose it was meeting Josie Powell and the funeral and thinking about me and Boylan set him off well he can think what he likes now if thatll do him any good" (18.168), she muses. Molly's action—both in its prospective and in its actualized state—confronts Bloom with two choices, or rather, the same choice at two different moments of the day. He can confront Molly with his suspicions prior to the assignation and possibly avert it, or he can confront Molly after the event and oblige her to decide between confessing or denying her affair. But clearly either confrontation is psychologically riskier for Bloom than the passive move of choosing to avoid intervention and confrontation altogether. Instead, Bloom's low-risk maneuvers of using female strangers as masturbatory props achieve only provisional and incomplete satisfaction and do little to move the plot forward. They do, however, illuminate aspects, not entirely laudatory, of his character—a function of the preponderance of what Ryan would call nonnarrative or descriptive elements in the novel's events. "Intuitively, narrative elements are those that contribute to the advancement of the plot, while nonnarrative elements flesh out the narrative universe and make it more vivid without moving the plot forward" (125).

Bloom's many other actions throughout the day, most of them of a charitable nature, represent low-intensity choices with little element of conflict or risk. He does have his heroic moments, however, and his passivity as a fictional agent is additionally clarified in Ryan's distinctions between actions and "happenings" in relation to fictional plots: "Actions are deliberately aimed toward a goal, happenings occur accidentally" (129). But the unpredictable and accidental events that constitute happenings can nonetheless change the course of the plot, as Ryan points out, and as *Ulysses* demonstrates. Besides Molly's adultery, the other single most serious event in Bloom's life on this particular day is one of which he never becomes aware,

and one to whose consequences he is obliged to react without ever understanding its significance. This is the chain of misunderstandings created by the unpredictable and accidental miscue produced when Bloom's locution, "I was just going to throw it away" (5.534) coincides with Bantam Lyon's reading the name of the dark horse *Throwaway* in the newspaper Bloom intends to discard. The event is a *happening* that changes the course of the plot by creating a counterfactual or conditional proposition in the belief world of Bloom's acquaintances in the novel. This is the belief that *if* Bloom possessed a tip on *Throwaway*, he would have placed a bet and won big in the Gold Cup race. This nonactualized event in the novel becomes plot-functional because it creates a conflict between Bloom and some of the men in Barney Kiernan's pub, including the Citizen—a conflict whose cause will remain obscure to Bloom even as he is subjected to its effects. Bloom's readiness to retort to the Citizen's anti-Semitic slurs shows him not at all cowardly when confronted with an affront to his character or to his race. Bloom's confrontation with the Citizen in "Cyclops" thereby constitutes a positive move that most closely corresponds to an Odyssean action in the Homeric epic. But unfortunately Bloom's quite brave and witty response to the Citizen's attack will be incidental rather than working as a conflict-solving maneuver because it cannot address the erroneous premises behind the attack. Even more seriously, the virtual scenario of Bloom's winning, putatively kept secret by him to avoid standing drinks, will be circulated by the narrator of "Cyclops" along with his anti-Semitic interpretation as a factual account throughout Dublin. This foreshadowed circulation could alter the belief system of the people in Bloom's actual world in such a way as to put him in permanent conflict with his community. In this respect, the plot construction of *Ulysses* works in a dysphoric plot direction in which fortunes change for the worse rather than the better—an outcome radically different from the outcome of the *Odyssey*. This result may come about because a lingering, prejudicial animus against Bloom results from a plot-function centered not in individual agents but in what Doležel calls "social process." Because group processes often lack intentionality, they may produce uncontrollable events. "In all these processes, the individual is manipulated by suprapersonal forces that he or she is unable to stand up to, because they cannot be identified" (112). This power of "social process"—which Joyce confronted most dramatically in the fall of Parnell in his fiction—would reflect the supremacy of the gods' interventions in the world of the Homeric epic.

Molly as Anti-Penelope

Molly Bloom's conflict is produced by sexual frustration resulting from her husband's sexual inhibitions—with respect to both pleasure and procreation—since the death of the couple's infant son. "When we left Lombard street west something changed. Could never like it again after

Rudy" (8.609), we hear Bloom think. However, the reader encounters this marital problem only from Bloom's perspective during the first seventeen chapters of *Ulysses*. His thoughts and feelings on the subject do make references to Molly, including his suspicions and fears aroused by small signals. Bloom seems convinced that adultery is afoot, but Molly's own actions are neither verified nor explained until "Penelope," the last chapter of the novel. This delay in learning whether or not Bloom's suspicions were justified makes the confirmation of the adultery a potential shock for the virgin reader—a shock intensified by familiarity with the Homeric intertext's prediction that the wife will remain faithful after all. In contrast to the classical Penelope's "passive move" or "deliberate nonaction"—her stalling and refusal to choose a suitor to succeed her husband—Molly has acted to resolve her sexual impasse and end her frustration. She makes it clear that the tryst was a purposeful arrangement ("after my hours dressing and perfuming and combing" [18.146]) and not an unpremeditated byproduct of a rehearsal. And she makes it clear that sex occurred and gave her pleasure. Her maneuver is both high priority and high risk, in several respects. She risks double rejection if Boylan does not follow through—a fear heightened by his tardy arrival. "I was just beginning to yawn with nerves thinking he was trying to make a fool of me" (18.341). And her infidelity ought clearly to pose a threat to her marriage, or at least to her marital harmony with Bloom. But another surprise has already confronted the reader in this respect in "Ithaca." There was no confrontation between husband and wife, even though Bloom appeared to confirm the excessive presence of his wife's impresario in his home that day. The husband's response to this imagined or perceived evidence is his characteristic nonaction, arguably reassuring Molly and the reader that her actions have not precipitated a crisis.

The handling of the adultery has significance both with respect to Joyce's curious disposition of narrative and nonnarrative elements in *Ulysses* and in relation to the Homeric intertext. For Hugh Kenner, Joyce's decision to put the most dramatic moment of the novel's plot offstage is intended to defuse its melodramatic intensity in the interest of keeping the text's focus on the nondramatic elements of the story. "Trysts, assignations, adulteries, these are banal. It seems part of Joyce's art to relegate that order of melodrama to the wings, and focus our attention instead on the perdurable texture of the ordinary" ("Molly's Masterstroke" 19). In effect, Kenner argues that Joyce displaces the significance of narrative elements with the paradoxical vividness imparted by nonnarrative elements, "the perdurable texture of the ordinary." However, this formulation deflects our attention from the role of the characters' actions, motivations, decisions, and choices in the management of their conflicts. Keri Ames puts the counterfactual reversal of the Homeric plot in *Ulysses* in the strongest terms, crediting the dramatic shifts in cultural and historical context between ancient and modern for its possibility. "By taking full advantage of this historical shift, Joyce has manufactured a full inversion of sex roles: the wife now cheats while the husband wanders nearby, instead of the wandering husband cheating afar

while the faithful wife waits at home. In some sense, Odysseus has become Molly, and Penelope has become Leopold. The circumstances of cultural and historical context have made this reversal possible" ("Oxymoron of Fidelity" 163). But what specific features do these changed cultural and historical conditions take in the thoughts and actions of the characters? For Molly, it is the case that Boylan is no more a grand passion for her—a specific individual who conforms perfectly to her needs and desires—than Calypso or Circe are grand passions for Odysseus. And however affectionately she thinks of Bloom's many virtues and failings, Bloom too was not a singular ideal lover for Molly, who has her men exhibit a peculiar substitutability. Not only does she produce the famous pronoun slippage that makes it hard to keep track of the referents of her recurrent "he," but at the moment Bloom proposes marriage, she confesses, "I thought well as well him as another" (18.1604). As a result, Molly's conflict-solving move produces additional questions that require surprisingly intensive reader scrutiny and evaluation. "Penelope" becomes less a destination in the reader's journey than the site of a renewed quest.

Keri Ames's brilliant exploration of infidelity in the Homeric myth shows that adultery was already a problematic issue in the classic itself. Its complexity in *Ulysses* is therefore consonant with its intertext. "In *Ulysses*, Joyce, like Penelope and Homer, refuses to join in the censure of adultery and/or the adulterer. Homer and Joyce seek to exhibit the effects of adultery and to provoke the consideration of the ethical problems surrounding it without attempting to provide any definitive resolution" ("Oxymoron of Fidelity" 168). Ames even characterizes the marital wanderings of both Bloom and Molly as "consensual infidelity" operating on "spousal consent." "The careful lies that she and Leopold construct to hide their encounters with Boylan and Gerty indicate a conspiracy between them to create the illusion of normality" ("Oxymoron of Fidelity" 147). Molly and Bloom "lie" chiefly by silence or sins of omission in this respect, I would argue, although one could impute a form of "consent" to their avoidance of confrontation on the subject. Hugh Boylan does not yet threaten Bloom's domestic kingdom on this day, and this may be why husband and wife can skirt a confrontation over him and avoid a marital crisis. But this leaves open a curious question about their mutual nonaction with respect to infidelity. One of the crucial events in the marital reconciliation of Odysseus and Penelope involves the function of the "secret of the marriage bed" as authenticator of Odysseus's identity and his right to resume his rightful place in Penelope's home. Does Joyce provide an analogue to this curious detail in *Ulysses*? Without explicitly recognizing its significance, Hugh Kenner provides a possible answer to this question in "Molly's Masterstroke." Kenner notices that after bumping his head on the sideboard of his parlor, Bloom realizes that the furniture has been changed. After sifting through the possibilities of who moved sideboard, piano, chairs, and table, Kenner comes to the conclusion that Boylan must have moved them. Why did Boylan move the furniture? Presumably because Molly asked him to, in order to tire him out sufficiently to forestall the initiation of sex, according to Kenner. But what if Joyce had the larger analogue of the "secret of the marriage bed" in mind with this furniture rearrangement? Odysseus reveals his knowledge that the marriage bed cannot be moved—because it is constructed out of a living olive tree—when Penelope orders it transported outside the bedroom. "Eurycleia, spread for him the thick bed/ Outside the well-based bedroom which the man made himself. /Put the thick bed out for him there and throw bedding on" (252.177). Moving a piece of furniture both precipitates and resolves the crisis of Odysseus because his knowledge of the bed's construction reassures Penelope that the returned stranger is indeed her husband. But what if Molly's motive was not to tire Boylan out but to test Bloom's reaction to another man's intrusion into the body of both wife and home? Molly's thoughts about Boylan and his substitutability suggest that her affair with him offers a provisional—not a permanent solution—to her conflict and her frustrations. The change in the front-room furniture by Boylan could serve as Molly's veiled warning to Bloom that Boylan's penetration into the couple's life could be extended from the sexual realm into the domestic domain. The possibility that Boylan could take over his home would presumably offer a far greater threat to Bloom than a mere sexual affair between his wife and her impresario. The secret of the Blooms' marriage bed may be that it is only their sexual lives that are unsatisfactory and in disarray—not their domestic lives, which are happy and fulfilled. And in that may lie their marital salvation.

Stephen Dedalus on the Concept of Possible Worlds

Before proceeding to a systematic and linear exploration of the plot and its development in *Ulysses* through the lens of Possible Worlds theory, we might pause to acknowledge that Joyce appears to inscribe this theory's foundational logic in the text of the novel itself. At various moments of his day Stephen Dedalus meditates on counterfactual alternatives of history as well as on the variety of possibilities available to the creator of fictional worlds. Stephen's morning occupation as a teacher of history and literature in "Nestor" inaugurates a string of speculations with a quite distinctive philosophical resonance. "Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted" (2.48). Stephen himself a moment later identifies Aristotle as the theoretical source for these thoughts, and Gifford and Seidman gloss his rumination as referring to the antithetical relationship between the "potential" and "actuality" discussed in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (31). The crux of Aristotle's argument, that in history possibilities vanish with the occurrence of actual events, further troubles Stephen's thought. "But can those have been possible seeing

that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass?" (2.51). Gifford and Seidman attribute this thought to Aristotle's distinction between history and poetry in the *Poetics*: "The distinction between historian and poet...consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be" (31). This train of thought is not a new preoccupation for Stephen, we learn a moment later, but one that has haunted him since his nights studying in the library of Saint Genevieve during sojourn in Paris. "It must be a movement then, an actuality of the possible as possible, Aristotle's phrase" (2.67).

During his lecture to the literary men in the National Library later in the morning, Stephen's thoughts return to these theories of possibility, now specifically with artistic creativity in mind. Placing himself in Shakespeare's mind, Stephen imagines the Bard creating fiction with counterfactuals in mind. "Here he ponders things that were not: what Caesar would have lived to do had he believed the soothsayer: what might have been: possibilities of the possible as possible: things not known: what name Achilles bore when he lived among women" (9.348). Joyce has Stephen here adumbrate his own fiction-making processes, including the speculation of possibilities that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* leaves open and that *Ulysses* takes up. What would Stephen do if he did not complete his medical studies in Paris and returned to Ireland instead? "In the intense instance of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be" (9.381). This is a poignant observation, of course, since Stephen at that very moment is in the process of trying to create and control possibilities for himself, with the very formulations he is offering his listeners in the library. Possible Worlds theory could therefore be construed as a theoretical coda to Stephen Dedalus's own preoccupations and speculations in *Ulysses*, one that will help us to sort out the complicated fictionality of a work with a variety of transworld and metafictional layers produced by its experimentalism and departures from realism. Fittingly, this study will then begin with Stephen Dedalus, not only because he dominates the first three episodes of the work, but because he also frames its fiction-making and world-making processes.

Notes

Introduction

1. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Hugh Kenner will refer parenthetically to his 1987 *Ulysses. Revised Edition*.
2. Indeed, Groden argues: "In fact, Joyce never really 'finished' *Ulysses*. Rather, since he was determined that it should be published on his fortieth birthday, February 2, 1922, he had to stop writing it" (13).
3. See my 'Ulysses' *for Beginners* published by the National Library of Ireland Joyce Studies series in 2004 for a fuller discussion of the considerations that go into the concepts of first-time readers and virgin readers (1–6).
4. See *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism*, edited by Jane P. Tompkins, for a variety of discussions on these topics.
5. Gerald Prince also offers the following useful distinction: "The implied reader of a narrative text must also be distinguished from the narratee: the former is the audience of the implied author and is inferrable from the entire text, whereas the latter is the audience of the narrator and is inscribed as such in the text" (43).
6. Harry Blamires, who also addresses chiefly the student and the general reader, makes the same predictive statement: "Sadly he notes the handwriting on the letter to Molly: it is Boylan's (Molly's lover)" (23).
7. Another study of the novel's narration that predates Possible Worlds theory is Dermot Kelly's 1988 *Narrative Strategies in Joyce's* 'Ulysses'.
8. Philosophers who contributed to Possible Worlds theory include analytic philosopher David Lewis (in his 1973 work on *Counterfactuals*) and theorist of modal logic Saul Kripke. Doležel describes the contribution of analytic philosophy to contemporary thought with this encomium: "Analytic philosophy has preserved the sober spirit of critical thinking at a time of bloated verbosity. This spirit, which requires controlled theory formation and testing, precise conceptual analysis, and fair assessment of the ideas of the past, has not died but has carried us into the computer age" (x).
9. Kendall Walton's *Mimesis as Make-Believe* also addresses similar issues of fiction making.
10. Hart's essay on "Wandering Rocks" appears in *James Joyce's 'Ulysses': Critical Essays*, edited by Hart and David Hayman in 1973.
11. Marie-Laure Ryan cites the Borges story "The Garden of Forking Paths" as alluding to a piece of fiction that would presumably violate logical constraints by presenting a figure who, when confronted with alternatives, chooses all of them (41).
12. Both Ryan and Doležel refer this notion of fiction as a game of pretense to the pragmatic theories of Kendall Walton. But Doležel aims to integrate pragmatic

theories of fiction-making into "a unified theory of fictionality whose core is fictional semantics" (12).

13. Robert Martin Adams is actually very rigorous and logical in imputing symbolic meanings to features of the text, but he nonetheless offers examples of symbol ascription. Tom Rochford's characteristics, which include wearing a claret waistcoat, offer Adams the following "symbolic clues": "He is robin-breasted as a harbinger of spring and rebirth; his two-columned machine represents a form of spiritual accounting [. . .]; and his saving a man from a sewer establishes him as a prototype of the resurrection, a Christ-figure" (92).
14. Much scholarship has been devoted to this intertextual relationship, which is far from simple. Since the polyglot Joyce lacked Greek, the precise version or versions of Homer's *Odyssey* he consulted required elucidation. Michael Seidel's 1976 *Epic Geography: James Joyce's 'Ulysses'* explored Stuart Gilbert's numerous allusions to Victor Bérard's *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée* as a work Joyce admired. And Hugh Kenner in a 1969 *James Joyce Quarterly* article pointed out the range of "Homers" produced by translations with which Joyce would have been familiar. These include Charles Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, which Joyce read as a boy, as well as Butcher and Lang's 1879 translation, and Samuel Butler's "plain prose version" offered in his 1900 edition of *The Authoress of the Odyssey* ("Homer's Sticks and Stones" 295).
15. Karen Lawrence too maps the *Odyssey* onto *Ulysses* while conceding its limitations. "'Eumaeus' represents the recognition scene between Stephen (Telemachus) and Bloom (Odysseus), and this has a special place in the story," she writes, even as she shows how the predicted climax is sabotaged in the episode itself (176).
16. Vicki Mahaffey suggests that Stephen "fears fragmentation, directing his fear at women and Jews as those he believes most likely to disintegrate or symbolically castrate him" ("Sidereal Writing" 260).
17. See Morris Beja's discussion of the sexual issues that confront all three protagonists in the novel in "The Joyce of Sex: Sexual Relationships in *Ulysses*" in *The Seventh of Joyce* (255–266).

One The Conflicts of Stephen Dedalus: From the "Telemachiad" to "Aeolus"

1. Although Margaret McBride treats *Ulysses* as a metafictional text authored by Stephen Dedalus, she is careful not to conflate Stephen and Joyce. "A metafictional reading of *Ulysses* requires an excision of the biographical and autobiographical. Stephen must be viewed not as "Stephen-Joyce" but as a purely literary construct," she writes(*Ulysses and The Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus*) (35).
2. L. H. Platt gives the power relationship between Mulligan and Stephen a much larger political framework, arguing that it represents the historical social and class conflict between Irish Catholics and Ascendancy Protestants. He writes, "Joyce's fiction is usually presented as developing under the stimulus of European models, rather than in response to Irish cultural contexts; this is one reason why it may be uncomfortable to think of Joyce engaging in old hostilities which, in the post-Parnell political hiatus, were fought out by the Protestant and Catholic intellegentsias in essentially literary terms" ("The Buckeen and the Dogsbody," *James Joyce Quarterly*, 84). Of course, if Mulligan is consi ered to be Catholic, rather than merely mocking Catholicism, this argume becomes much more ambiguous.
3. See C. E. F. Trench's article, "Dermot Chenevix Trench and Haines of *Ulysse* in the Fall 1975 issue of *James Joyce Quarterly* (39–48). His account clarifi the extent to which the national and political descriptions of the historic Trench and the fictional Haines are in stark conflict.
4. Vincent J. Cheng has offered a provocative formulation of this relationship *Joyce, Race, and Empire*. "I would like to suggest that one way to think abo the dynamics of 'Telemachus' is as an ethnographic encounter with a 'nativ population, in which the British anthropologist ventures out in the wilderne to study the primitive 'wild Irish' and their folkways, in the presence of a wil ing native informant (Mulligan) and the latter's semi-willing specimen of stuc (Stephen)" (152).
5. Margaret McBride says of Stephen, "Nor will he return to the job at Deasy school" (*Ulysses and the Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus* 53). But I rea Stephen's thought as entertaining a possibility rather than announcing decision.
6. The *Canting Academy*, also called *The Devil's Cabinet Opened*, was a 167 dictionary of slang written by Richard Head to demystify the "cant" of thieve Gifford and Seidman's allusion makes better sense in relation to Stephen's thef of Hyde's words than to the poem's vernacular. Here is how they cite Hyde stanza:

   And my love came behind me--
   He came from the South:
   His breast to my bosom,
   His mouth to my mouth. (62; my indentation and italics)
7. Marilyn French writes, "Stephen is a victim of the usurpers Mulligan anc Haines, but is a pretender-usurper himself, as in his thefts from Wilde, th telegram cribbed from Meredith, the Shakespeare lecture, which was take from numerous sources but credits none and which purposely falsified som facts, as well as the poem plagiarized from Hyde" (67).
8. In his Winter 1987 *James Joyce Quarterly* article, Vincent Cheng offers a detailed analysis of the vampire poem's relevance to Stephen's anxiety tha violence lies at the heart of both sexual and artistic creation. "To Stephen a kiss, mouth-to-mouth, had been a troubling symbol for the sexual act since the opening pages of *A Portrait*," Cheng writes (163). "In short, Stephen's vampire imagery in 'Proteus' introduces sex as violent and destructive coupling, creation and art as violent destruction, and the ambiguity among God, vampire, father, creator, artist, and Stephen" (167).
9. Although he offers an intriguing investigation of the poem's possible sources, Robert Adams Day appears to concur that the process of Stephen's composition is unconscious and ultimately unknowable. "What Stephen is doing is recapitulating the moment, memorably described by T. S. Eliot, when a multitude of images from life and reading ('from picture papers and cheap novels, indeed, as well as serious books') begin to arise from the unconscious and coalesce in the mind "(184).
10. Gifford and Seidman offer an answer to Stephen's question (62) by pointing to 13.1246–13.1247: "Mr Bloom stooped and turned over a piece of paper on the strand. He brought it near his eyes and peered. Letter? No. Can't read."