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PART I

*Making* Ulysses

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## CHAPTER I

*Writing Ulysses**Michael Groden*

As both product and process, writing pervades *Ulysses*. Characters read and respond to written texts ranging from the moral “Matcham’s Masterstroke” to the erotic *Sweets of Sin*, from Milly Bloom’s handwritten letter to Martha Clifford’s typed one, from newspaper articles about horse races and funerals to a cryptic “U. P.” (or maybe “U. p: up”) postcard (*U* 4.502, 8.257–58). They think about possible sources of creative writing: “Invent a story for some proverb,” Bloom ponders, and he recalls the “Time I used to try jotting down on my cuff what [Molly] said dressing” (*U* 4.518–20), while Molly wishes that she could remember Bloom’s ideas “and write a book out of it the works of Master Poldy” (*U* 18.580). The characters pay attention to the paper on which a text is written (Bloom buys appropriate stationery for his response to Martha), the particulars of handwriting (he forms his letter e’s in Greek style; Milly apologizes for her bad handwriting), and a newspaper’s layout (the Plumtree’s Potted Meat ad under the obituary notices). They also become textual critics as they note errors: Martha’s typed “I do not like that other world” and “if you do not wrote” (*U* 5.245, 5.253), a newspaper article’s “*L. Boom*” (*U* 16.1260), a telegram’s “Nother” (*U* 3.199), Molly’s handwritten “sympathy I always make that mistake and newpew with 2 double yous” (*U* 18.730–31).

Writing points to the future – someone sometime will presumably read the written words – but reading points to the past, as we take in what someone wrote and perhaps also make an imaginative leap into a novel’s fictional past or consider the historical conditions under which the work was written. The writing also has a past. How did the work attain the form in which we encounter it? This question might imply the additional one: What went right and wrong as the work moved from the author’s mind to a pen, typewriter, or word processor and then to print or screen? Scholars intrigued by this question are editors and textual critics. But the question can also involve the author’s writing processes in themselves. Scholars who become fascinated by and study these processes are genetic critics.

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More and more often in recent years, genetic criticism has moved from a fringe pursuit into the mainstream of Joyce criticism and scholarship. Every recent Bloomsday conference has prominently featured genetic issues, and essay collections providing overviews of approaches to Joyce's texts have included chapters on genetic criticism, Joyce's manuscripts, and Joyce at work. A recent book of essays is even devoted entirely to genetic analyses of the individual chapters of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>1</sup> (Jean-Michel Rabaté has suggested that the *Wake's* ideal reader is a genetic one who approaches the text "through the material evidence of the notebooks, drafts, and corrected proofs reproduced by the *James Joyce Archive*."<sup>2</sup>) Many books not primarily about manuscripts or genetic issues have turned to them to support diverse arguments. And newspaper and magazine articles and television's *The Colbert Report* have discussed manuscripts and sometimes even referred to genetic criticism by name.<sup>3</sup>

What can the *Ulysses* manuscripts say to us? Why should we listen?

Susan Sontag speculates about the attraction of writers' journals: even if they often provide little insight into published books, she suggests, they offer access to writers' daily lives, often in far less polished or self-conscious form than any finished works. The "rawness of the journal form" lets us encounter "the ego behind the masks of ego in an author's works."<sup>4</sup> A writer's manuscripts also take us behind the curtains but in a significantly different way. Rather than the human being in the process of living, they expose the writer in the process of writing. This is fine since, as Louis Menand has remarked about Joyce's life, "the writing is where the action is."<sup>5</sup>

As Joyce worked, he took notes ranging from focused thoughts and stray ideas to jottings from his readings. He listed events and characters, drafted passages, and made notations that made sense to himself (his manuscripts' only assumed reader) to indicate that he had used a note, inserted an addition, or copied a draft. He disposed of the pages as he saw fit. Whether by design or accident, not much has survived from his early efforts on *Ulysses*, but a great deal of evidence exists from the novel's later years in progress. We can look over Joyce's shoulder and follow him at work.

The surviving material covers an extraordinarily wide range. Major collections exist at the British Library, the University at Buffalo, the National Library of Ireland, and Cornell and Yale universities, with smaller collections at Harvard, Princeton, and Southern Illinois universities; the universities of Texas, Tulsa, and Wisconsin-Milwaukee; the Rosenbach Museum and Library; the Huntington Library; the New York

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Public Library; and University College Dublin. Notes are extant in the British Library “notesheets” and eight notebooks. Early drafts survive for ten episodes: “Proteus,” “Scylla and Charybdis,” and everything from “Sirens” to “Penelope.” The Rosenbach Library in Philadelphia owns a beginning-to-end manuscript (almost: it lacks the last “sentence” of “Penelope,” and Joyce revised and augmented the episodes heavily before *Ulysses* was published as a book). Typescripts, fragmentary for the early episodes but complete for the last ones, are mostly at Buffalo, but scattered pages are elsewhere. The first set of proofs is at Harvard (for some pages there are up to nine sets), the middle sets are at Buffalo, and the final set is at Texas.

The Rosenbach Library published a facsimile of its manuscript in 1975, and volumes 12–27 of *The James Joyce Archive* contain photo-reproductions of all the other documents that were known to exist in the late 1970s. Phillip Herring has edited the British Library notesheets and, in a separate volume, two of Buffalo’s notebooks and its drafts for “Cyclops” and “Circe.” In 2012, the National Library of Ireland (NLI) put digital images of all its *Ulysses* manuscripts online, and Danis Rose has produced transcriptions of them. Book-length catalogs exist for the Buffalo and Cornell collections, with the Buffalo volume supplanted by a revised online catalog. I included a chart in “*Ulysses*” in *Focus* that lists and locates the extant documents for each episode up to the Rosenbach Manuscript.<sup>6</sup>

The manuscripts do not offer keys to unlock the kingdom that is *Ulysses*, nor do they open up avenues of reading and criticism that supersede or preclude others. However, knowledge about *Ulysses* coming into being can enrich the novel in the way that awareness of a friend’s background and childhood lets us not only see the person in front of us but also perceive the shadow – the earlier layers – of the past. Joyce did not write his notes and drafts for genetic critics, but the documents survive to speak about *Ulysses*’ earlier states, the childhood it both enjoyed and suffered through before Joyce gave it a public face and released it into the world. In Jed Deppman’s clever phrase, genetic critics can use them to create a “Portrait of the Artwork as a Young Man.”<sup>7</sup>

The object of study for genetic critics is called the *avant-texte*, a concept that involves the documents that precede a published text and implies that those documents can themselves be treated as a text.<sup>8</sup> The *avant-texte* of *Ulysses* does not necessarily include all the surviving documents. Does it include a note in a draft’s margin that seems unrelated to *Ulysses*? A passage

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that Joyce never worked into any version of the text? The publication of *Ulysses* on February 2, 1922 provides a convenient end-date for the avant-texte, but when does it begin? In one sense, Joyce started working on *Ulysses* around 1914, after he finished *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. He first explicitly mentions the novel on June 16, 1915 (whether the month and day were by then the setting for the novel is uncertain), when he tells his brother that he is writing something called *Ulysses* and that he has completed the first episode (*SL* 209). In another sense, however, the beginnings can be traced to late 1906, when Joyce thought of an addition to *Dubliners* called “Ulysses” and quickly expanded the idea from a story into a short book before abandoning the project without writing any of it (*Letters II* 168, 190, 209; *JJ* 264–65). Or they can even go back to 1903 and Joyce’s drafting of the first chapters of *Stephen Hero*. This starting point is consistent with Joyce’s July 1915 description of *Ulysses* as a “continuation” of both *Portrait* and *Dubliners*.<sup>9</sup> Various scholars have shown how Joyce mined his earlier writings as he began to work on *Ulysses*, including a scene in the Martello tower, with *Ulysses*’ Buck Mulligan called “Doherty,” the *Giacomo Joyce* sketch, and various notebooks that he originally compiled for earlier works.<sup>10</sup>

Each genetic critic explicitly or implicitly constructs an avant-texte. Like other literary studies, genetic criticism involves individual judgment, choices, and preconceptions. Thus, even though “it deals with what Joyce thought *in so far as it can be shown in documents*,” as Geert Lernout puts it,<sup>11</sup> those documents need to be interpreted, and different accounts of the genesis of *Ulysses* are not only possible but also inevitable and even desirable.

In a brief passage in an early copybook Joyce used to draft “Sirens,” Father Cowley gossips about the Blooms. “There was an arrangement [revised to “a put up job”] between them,” he says. “About ten she’d telephone down to the husband about the child and if Bloom had won anything, he was off,” using a false excuse that something was wrong with his child. (Joyce revised this on the page to faintly suggest the voice of the presumably still unconceived “Cyclops” narrator: “About ten she’d ring up the hubby about the poor child and if Bloom had raked in the pool, begod, off with him.”) Mat Dillon eventually figured out Bloom’s con game, Cowley reports in conclusion.<sup>12</sup> A substantially altered version of this uncontextualized passage appears in *Ulysses*, not in “Sirens” but rather in “Cyclops.” After Bloom leaves Barney Kiernan’s to look for Martin Cunningham and

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after Lenehan tells the men in the pub that Bloom has won money on the horse Throwaway, the narrator leaves the room to pee:

gob says I to myself I knew he was uneasy in his (two pints off of Joe and one in Slattery's off) in his mind to get off the mark to (hundred shillings is five quid) and when they were in the (dark horse) pisser Burke was telling me card party and letting on the child was sick (gob, must have done about a gallon) flabbyarse of a wife speaking down the tube *she's better or she's* (ow!) all a plan so he could vamoose with the pool if he won ... (U 12.1563–69)

This passage about Bloom's card-game trick is hardly the only one that Joyce shortened or eliminated as he wrote. In other instances, an early "Cyclops" draft includes gossip involving Bloom and Molly's mother, anti-Semitic slurs about "buggy jews," and Stephen Dedalus as the man who quips that a Jew can love his country "when he's quite sure which country it is."<sup>13</sup> Why did Joyce – often depicted as a writer who expanded as he revised – rework or eliminate draft scenes like these? He never offered a reason, but in doing so he made the published *Ulysses* less specific in its derogatory gossip than the drafts, letting fewer examples of hostility towards Bloom or overt anti-Semitism make their point, and confining the bigoted remarks to the expected barflies. I am not suggesting that he weakened *Ulysses* – quite the opposite, in fact, as the language becomes more impressive and the gossip less credible in its reduced specificity – or that he should have retained the early versions. (Hugh Kenner cites Ernest Hemingway's remark that "a writer's omissions will show only when he omits things because he doesn't know them,"<sup>14</sup> and Joyce's deletions might be seen as evidence of his knowledge of the full details behind the scenes of *Ulysses*.) Once we know about the early versions, however, they are, in Stephen's words, "not to be thought away" (U 2.49). They constitute what Louis Hay calls "a kind of third dimension of the written work." The younger, alternate scenes lie behind the published ones as if in the text's memory, as its shadow, or in a palimpsest.<sup>15</sup>

Can events "have been possible seeing that they never were?" Stephen asks. "Or was that only possible which came to pass?" (U 2.51–52). His speculations about possibilities and actualities reverberate for genetic criticism, which has been described as "an esthetic of the possible" because "the work now stands out against a background, and a series, of potentialities."<sup>16</sup> This involves looking from two temporal vantage points, from the published work back to the drafts – "a retrospective vision" – and also from a particular draft to various future possibilities – "an anticipatory

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perspective.”<sup>17</sup> The published text can’t show the full range of possibilities that were in play at particular times in its past, or the ways in which Joyce responded to what was already written by retaining many of his words in an act of repetition but also by dropping, altering, and adding words in acts of invention. The published text comes to look like the last in a series of possible texts, even if a privileged one, “a necessary possibility.”<sup>18</sup>

When I studied *Ulysses* in progress in the 1970s, I posited three stages in Joyce’s work – an early one from “Telemachus” to “Scylla and Charybdis,” a middle one from “Wandering Rocks” to “Oxen of the Sun,” and a late one from “Circe” to the end – on the assumption that he wrote the episodes one at a time in sequence (*Progress* 4). The documents that the National Library of Ireland acquired in 2002, however, indicate something different. A very early “Sirens” draft – lacking any fugue-like elements, at first even lacking Bloom – suggests that Joyce worked on this middle-stage episode at least a year earlier than we had previously assumed; and passages in the manuscript’s second part include early vestiges of “Cyclops.”<sup>19</sup> For Luca Crispi, Joyce’s experimentation with techniques that we now associate with *Ulysses*’ middle stage while he was writing the early-stage episodes suggests that the concept of compositional “stages” should be replaced by one of “complex and nuanced incremental *phases*” and “a series of gradated innovations rather than distinct breaks with what Joyce had already accomplished” (“First Foray”). Readers of *Ulysses* might recognize stylistic and technical differences between, say, the first nine episodes and “Cyclops” or between “Cyclops” and “Circe,” but these differences are not reflected in Joyce’s writing processes in the way they once seemed to be. The new picture of Joyce at work is only beginning to be painted and, of course, if new documents come to light, the picture will again change.

One aspect of the new picture involves what I noted as Joyce’s “habit of composing his material in blocks with only arbitrary attempts at transition or connection.” I added that he “gives no indication of how he planned to connect” the scenes, “if he even knew at the time” (*Progress* 131). The only other drafts that Joyce apparently wrote out in this way were part of one for “Circe” and one for “Scylla and Charybdis,” lost but described in a catalog. I concluded that the draft’s unstructured fragmentary scenes indicated Joyce’s uncertainty as he moved away from what he called the novel’s “initial style” (*Letters I* 129) into what I termed its middle stage (*Progress* 124–39).

The new manuscripts have altered the outline of *Ulysses*’ shadow and restored some of its memory. They include drafts of “Proteus” and



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(unexpectedly) “Sirens” from Joyce’s early years of work on the novel, the second half of the University at Buffalo’s “Cyclops” draft that I studied, and an early version of “Ithaca,” all composed in unconnected textual units similar to those in the Buffalo “Cyclops” draft. Instead of seeming like an anomaly or an indication of his uncertainty, Joyce’s method there has come to appear as his usual way of writing. Scholars now commonly refer to Joyce’s piecemeal, mosaic, or epiphanic method of composition of *Ulysses* and talk about him writing in vignettes or fragments.<sup>20</sup>

Readers have often noted places in *Ulysses* where the transition from one paragraph to the next seems rather abrupt. For example, the “Cyclops” narrator’s occasional use of “So anyhow” – as in “So anyhow in came John Wyse Nolan and Lenehan with him with a face on him as long as a late breakfast” (*U* 12.1178–79) – functions not only as a loquacious talker’s verbal tic but also as Joyce’s way of smoothing over a rough break. Several questions in “Ithaca” also seem unconnected to the previous answer, as in the series of questions and answers regarding Bloom’s solution to a “domestic problem” sandwiched between Stephen’s narration of “The Parable of the Plums” and Bloom’s “examples of postexilic eminence” (*U* 17.657, 640–41, 709–10). In these instances, the discrete units of Joyce’s early drafts are faintly showing through in the palimpsest that is *Ulysses*. They are also apparent in Declan Kiberd’s description of Joyce’s novel as “a collection of stories bolted with some strain together, rather than a smoothly linear narrative.”<sup>21</sup> If Joyce worked “like an assemblagist before he wrote continuous narrative drafts of episodes,” as Crispi argues, a genetic study can call attention to the bolts, or the stitching, that readers sense as they experience *Ulysses* (“First Foray”).<sup>22</sup>

Readers also often marvel at Joyce’s use of paragraphs. He enlarged them incessantly as he revised. For example, the earliest surviving version of “Aeolus” includes Bloom’s thoughts about J. J. O’Molloy:

Practice dwindling. Losing heart. Used to get good retainers from D. and T. Fitzgerald. Believe he does some literary work for the *Express* with Gabriel Conroy. Wellread fellow. Crawford began on the *Independent*. Funny the way they veer about. Go for one another baldheaded in the papers and then hail fellow well met the next moment. (*Rosenbach* I “Aeolus” 9–10)

By the time Joyce published *Ulysses*, he had more than doubled Bloom’s observations from these 56 manuscript words to 116, adding details about O’Molloy’s gambling debts, the professional fickleness of newspaper men, and references to wind (*U* 7.303–12). He added to the lists in “Cyclops”: the “Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity” grew from twelve to eighty-six

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names and the “saints and martyrs, virgins and confessors” from twenty-one (not counting the “eleven thousand virgins” at the end) to eighty-one (*Rosenbach* I “Cyclops” 7, 52–53; *U* 12.176–99, 1689–1712). Many of Joyce’s paragraphs are like balloons filled almost to the bursting point. Did he ever finish *Ulysses*? Molly Bloom’s final “yes” ends it conclusively, but the lists in the middles of paragraphs could easily have grown even larger. Eighty-six Irish heroes? Why not 88? 188?<sup>23</sup>

Hans Walter Gabler has discussed Joyce’s additions to a paragraph in “Lestrygonians” in which Bloom looks at the shelves in Davy Byrne’s pub before he orders a cheese sandwich (*U* 8.741–56). The short passage in its first surviving version reads:

Sardines on the shelves. Potted meats. What is home without Plumtree’s potted meat? Incomplete. What a stupid ad! [An interlinear addition: “Right under the obituary notices too. Dignam’s potted meat.”] With it an abode of bliss. Lord knows what concoction.  
–Have you a cheese sandwich? (*Rosenbach* I “Lestrygonians” 17–18)

Joyce enlarged the paragraph with Bloom’s mental joke (“Ham and his descendants mustered and bred there” *U* 8.742), the beginning of his limerick about a cannibal, his thoughts about Yom Kippur, and his pun on “[m]ity cheese” (*U* 7.55). Gabler shows Joyce returning to the paragraph over and over again, each time seeing *Ulysses* as a slightly different novel in progress: “Bloom’s original slight hesitation over his order for lunch has become transformed into a multidimensional acid sketch of a hungry man’s world view.”<sup>24</sup> As Finn Fordham has suggested, genetic criticism should “correlate the thematics of the text with the processes of the text’s production,”<sup>25</sup> and Gabler demonstrates that Bloom’s hesitation and a hungry man’s mind are both visible in the published “Lestrygonians” paragraph and also in Joyce’s work producing the paragraph over several years.

Genetic studies tend to show Joyce preserving the various states *Ulysses* went through – its several presents – as he moved the text toward its various futures. For example, “Aeolus” existed in a “finished” beginning-to-end form, published in *The Little Review*, before Joyce added the headlines to it on the proofs; and (we now know from the National Library of Ireland’s documents) he drafted “Sirens” and then imposed on it what he called “the eight regular parts of a *fuga per canonem*” – or, more accurately, just a fugue (*Letters* I 129).<sup>26</sup> Daniel Ferrer writes about Joyce’s “layering” of his different kinds of writing during the several time periods in *Ulysses*’ development. Almost