

Joyce At Dusk: The *Ulysses-Finnegans Wake* Interface Revisited

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Not another close look?

The first post-*Ulysses* notebook, named as VI.B.10 but also known as *Polyphemous*¹ and N1, has been extensively researched, it has been published and edited, the edition has been expanded online and the additions have been augmented in their turn.

As more and more gaps are being filled in by intrepid geneticists, more sources identified and manuscript locations found, more puzzling entries disentangled, the *Finnegans Wake* notebooks are beginning to fulfill more and more their role of ‘textual diaries’ – as Danis Rose called them in his seminal 1995 study.

From 1922 to 1940 we get an intimate view of Joyce’s concerns, his ideas, his hopes, and his close surroundings. There is the context of the often mysterious notes – all the things he *didn’t* note from the sources that we know he read – and especially of the notes not verbatim from books or periodicals but already subtly appropriated and changed in the smithy of his mind. This invisible subtext contributes to the picture of the man behind the work, and of the work we read *through* the man. The more we know about the notes, the less disjointed and more purposeful they become.

Finnegans Wake will always elicit, first, the question: What was he up to? This is the question we will try tentatively to answer by having another close look (Yet another?² Yes, another.) at the very early stages or to be more precise the pre-stages of his post-*Ulysses*

¹ Formerly also known as *Buttle*, a name that came into existence when it was still thought that it was the first word of the first page. Later research concluded that the first notebook page had become detached and that the facsimiles of the first leaf were printed in the reverse order in the *JJA*. The first word, hence, the first post-corrections word is ‘Polyphemous’.

² More about the *Polyphemous* notebook and the interface, see for instance Robbert-Jan Henkes, *Before King Roderick Became Publican in Chapelizod, The origins of the origins of Finnegans Wake*, *Genetic Joyce Studies* 12, Spring 2012, <https://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/articles/GJS12/GJS12_Henkes> (and an earlier version, ‘On the Verge of the *Wake*, Joyce’s Reading in Notebook VI.B.10’, in the *Joyce Studies Annual 2011*, ed. Moshe Gold and Philip Sicker, p. 122-164), but of course also the published and edited paper version, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo VI.B.10*, edited by Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer and Geert Lernout, Turnhout, Brepols, 2001; the emendations on the *Genetic Joyce Studies* site in 2011, <https://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/articles/GJS11/GJS11_Emendations>, and the seminal essay ‘A Nice Beginning: On the *Ulysses* / *Finnegans Wake* Interface’ by Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon, in *Finnegans Wake: Fifty Years*, *European Joyce Studies* 2, Rodopi, 1990, p.165-173.

book. A book which yet had no name, no subject, no characters, no nothing, but there must have been *something* in his mind for him to start writing, no?

Joyce always boasted that the least things could set him off writing,³ so what were these least things here? According to himself (*L* III, 193), he ‘conceived’ the work in October 1922, in Nice, eight months after the publication of *Ulysses*. So if we want to look for signs of the immaculate conception, notebook *Polyphemous* (N1/VI.B.10) is the place to start: at what point did the book spring from his cranium? What Hephaistian hammer are we able to discover at the scene of the crime?

Up until the beginning of March 1923, the conception remained firmly behind the bars of his brain, shrouded in notes in the consecutive notebooks *Polyphemous* (N1/VI.B.10) and the lost notebook N2 (VI.X.1). The beginning of his third notebook, *Trist* (N3/VI.B.3) coincides with the first actual materialisation of his book plan. ‘Yesterday’, he wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver on 11 March 1923, ‘I wrote two pages – the first I have written since the final *Yes of Ulysses*.’ (*L* I, 202) The two pages were the first draft of a skit about an innkeeper-king, starting with the wonderfully apposite, all-encompassing word ‘Anyhow’ and running on in decidedly colloquial, shaky, quaintly meandering prose culminating in an inglorious fall into unconsciousness of the protagonist after having drunk the dregs from his customers’ glasses.

Looking closely at the first notes Joyce made in *Polyphemous* (and on the way finding new sources), connecting his reading with his biography, and taking into account the physical characteristics of the notes, we think we can see his mind being directed to the ‘history of the world’ as a punnified amalgamation of all history and myth embedded in the protoarchetypal family story that we now know as *Finnegans Wake*.

We see Joyce again relying heavily on Nora – being read to by her and taking clues from her for his next work, just as he took clues from her for the Penelope chapter of *Ulysses*. But not only Nora: hovering over the inception of the *Wake* is also Lucia, being the prototype of the first clear character emerging, the double Isolde. We see Joyce haphazardly reading and stumbling on subjects that proved to be dear to his heart, pieces of the puzzle that he picks up and starts building on. We see him slowly, through listening to Nora’s mistakes in English, getting ready to create the worldwordmess that is already shining through in his very first skit about Roderick O’Connor, the king-cum-innkeeper.

Through the notebooks, we can tie the bibliobiographical knot around the impenetrable book tighter.

³ ‘A word is enough to set me off.’ Quoted in Frank Budgen, ‘Further Recollections of James Joyce’, in *James Joyce and the Making of ‘Ulysses’* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989 [1934]), p.365.

But first:

Nice! or: A well-earned holiday on the Riviera

In August 1929, Caresse Crosby forwarded a list of questions from *Vanity Fair*'s Frank Crowninshield. These included 'how long has Joyce been at this new book, and how soon after *Ulysses* (1922) did he conceive it.' Joyce answered on a copy of the letter: '7 years. October 1922. Begun at Nice.' and 'Eight months after publication of *Ulysses*.' (L III, 193).

A freeze frame of this moment in time might give the impression of the writer at rest by the Mediterranean, leisurely making corrections to his *Ulysses*, and then in a moment of inspiration conceiving the beginnings of his new book of the night. But rewinding these eight months and replaying this period a few times, will more likely conjure up a portrait of the artist falling apart. This can alter our view of the beginnings in Nice.

So let's go back in time – time – time...

Joyce might have passed the creative finish-line with the publication of *Ulysses* on February 2nd, but he was anything but home free. He was keenly aware of a large number of errors in the printed text. What was supposed to be a moment of triumph was marred by a steep uphill prospect of the Blue Book's destiny past Sylvia Beach's limited private run. Even with Harriet Shaw Weaver's financial contributions, there was not enough money around to finance the kind of living the Joyces both desired and would actively pursue whenever they had money at hand. They lived beyond their means.

There were housing problems, too. From the late stages of *Ulysses* until November of 1922 their home base was the cramped hotel room quarters at 9 rue de l'Université with no room to unpack their belongings, including most of Joyce's books and papers. They were desperately searching for a real flat, while at the same time being particularly unwilling to compromise on location and number of rooms.

There were drinking problems, too. In modern terms, Joyce fits the label of a functional alcoholic. He had a complicated history of public drunkenness, which Nora dreaded and actively tried to steer him away from, but as with any addict, with active creativity he would try to go around her measures.

And *Ulysses*? Within a month of the publication of *Ulysses*, an exasperated Joyce reported to Robert McAlmon that he was being asked what he would be writing next. At the moment he was very much looking forward to a holiday of sorts as soon as he could free himself from the logistics with *Ulysses*. Joyce was anxiously awaiting the reception in the press. He was pulling strings through Sylvia Beach and Harriet Shaw Weaver to solicit

reviews and articles. When these didn't appear, he grew paranoid and worried that a boycott of the book was happening.

There were physical problems, too, and they would go from bad to worse. Joyce complained that his teeth bothered him. He reported that he was plagued with nerves. And there were marital problems.

A tipping point came when Nora decided she needed relief from it all. She was sick of living out of suitcases at the hotel. She didn't want to deal with Joyce's publishing struggles or his drinking. She wanted a break and decided to take the children with her to visit family in Ireland, much to Joyce's dismay and disapproval.

On Nora's departure in April there was a flurry of telegrams and letters. Joyce wrote that he had a fainting fit at Shakespeare & Co early in the month, which he probably recovered from by having cocaine administered. This had happened several times before. The previous year, in 1921, the combination of stress, alcohol, and a trigger event, the appearance of a bad omen rat, pushed a frail Joyce over the edge and he lost consciousness.

Nora's trip to Ireland was cut short by an intensification of the ongoing civil war in the spring of 1922, and they rushed to return to the Continent by the end of April. Nora would soon have an invalid on her hands in addition to the dissatisfaction with their general living situation. In early May Joyce complained about nerves and toothache, but he was still well enough to show up drunk by himself to an event held by Sidney Schiff and his wife who were hosting Stravinsky and Proust. The Schiffs let Joyce know that he would be welcome to join them, but later when Joyce tried to come along to the afterparty, they swiftly had their driver bring the intoxicated Joyce home in their carriage.

This episode was followed by an iritis attack on 23 May, and then another one by the end of the month. He was initially attended to by a Dr. Victor Morax, and his student, Dr. Pierre Mériqot du Treigny, who would administer pain relief daily. Ellmann reports: "When the door of the room at 9 rue de l'Université was opened to the young doctor, he was astonished by the disorder: trunks half empty, clothes hanging everywhere, toilet accessories spread on chairs, tables, and mantelpiece. Wrapped in a blanket and squatting on the floor was a man with dark glasses who proved to be Joyce, and facing him in the posture was Nora. Between them stood a stewpan with a chicken carcass and beside it a half empty bottle of wine." (535) A picture primitive!

The Joyces had tentative plans to go to England in May, but they had to put these plans on hold as Joyce consulted several doctors about his condition. Some doctors suggested immediate operation, some for him to remove his decayed teeth, all of them, and have them

replaced by dentures. Joyce might have been almost as averse to having anyone touch his teeth as he was to have any further surgery on his eyes. He successfully managed to delay both by medication and prolonged periods of convalescence. On the recommendation of Sylvia Beach, Joyce put himself in the care of the ophthalmologist Dr. Borsch.

For five weeks, from the end of May to mid-July, Joyce spent his time in darkened rooms. Sylvia Beach and other friends assisted with doctor visits and his communication with the outside world, reading notices and reviews of *Ulysses*. “I always have the impression it is evening,” he told Philippe Soupault. The closest circle around Joyce was concerned about his wellbeing and would discuss alternative living-arrangements away from the strain and temptations that came with living in Paris.

In August, Joyce recovered sufficiently to go on his planned holiday. The schedule was to stop briefly in London and then continue to the English seaside. He spent a few lavish days around London, meeting friends and family, splurging on spontaneous shopping. Joyce finally met his patron, Harriet Shaw Weaver. It was a collision of frugality and excess that would remain unresolved throughout the years. The heightened excitement didn’t last long. Joyce collapsed after a few days, withdrew to his darkened room at the Euston Hotel, and spent the following weeks seeking treatment for his eyes. They had to cancel their holiday in Bognor. By mid-September they decided to return to Paris. On the way back they stopped a few days in Folkestone to salvage the slightest notion of a vacation by the sea. The disaster was ongoing.

Returning to Paris, the Joyces were back at 9 rue de l’Université, failing to find other accommodations. Conditions were even worse with the hotel undergoing renovations. Joyce was incapacitated while waiting for Dr. Borsch to return from holiday. Nora and Giorgio went flat hunting and secured a lease for a flat at 26 Avenue Charles Floquet for 6 months, but it would only be available from November.

Still chasing their elusive holiday, Joyce’s eyes feeling slightly better, and with Dr. Borsch’ blessing, although with instructions of getting his teeth taken care of, the Joyces left for Nice. They traveled by way of Dijon, where Joyce visited *Ulysses*’ printer, Maurice Darantière. They discussed the third printing. Arriving in Nice, Joyce set to work on a set of corrections. He estimated he could process 30 pages a day. Half-blind, he worked through his own text, making mostly cosmetic corrections. This post-publication round of corrections was not going to yield extensive additions, as the countless pre-publication rounds of proofs invariably had been doing. Would he have liked to? Perhaps not: he didn’t even try. The writing of *Ulysses* was a closed chapter.

Weighing on Joyce was a response to a letter he had received in Paris from Josephine Murray a few days before they departed for Nice. She might have expressed grievances that Nora and the children didn't visit her when they were in Dublin in May. She might have commented on *Ulysses*. In responding, Joyce found an outlet for resentments of his own, wounded as he was by Kathleen Murray's reports of her mom's reception of *Ulysses* and the comment that she had disposed of, or at least in Joyce's eyes, carelessly treated his book by lending it out. In hindsight, one might wonder if this also contributed to Joyce's collapse in London. About the time he sends off his vitriolic response in Nice, he breaks down again with another iritis attack.

For a brief moment, they had considered staying for the winter in Nice. They put down a deposit on a flat, but that was on the day of Joyce's recurring eye-strain. The winter weather had been unseasonably harsh, and with Joyce's ailments, they soon adjusted their plans again to return to Paris as soon as they could move into the flat at the Avenue Charles Floquet.

Joyce's corrections to *Ulysses* come to an end at the same time. They seem more haphazard and on the last page (BL 57356-8v/JJA 12 p180), several of them are erroneous, correcting faults that don't exist in the text. The corrections in BL 57356 go up to and including *Sirens*. At this point, there is a brief continuation of the corrections on the first page in what is known as the *Polyphemous* notebook. We might speculate that Joyce's worsened condition made him physically prefer the format of the stenographer notepad, which was better suited for note taking. There might also have been a break at the peak of his iritis attack as he had leeches applied to his eyes. We know from the letters that Joyce by 3 November sent a 'list of corrections pages 1 to 290' to Harriet Shaw Weaver,⁴ which is some pages past the *Polyphemous* entries.

The first page of the first '*Finnegans Wake*'-notebook: back to Cyclops

When did the idea of writing a history of the world originate? With hindsight, you can see clues already on the first page of the first *Finnegans Wake*-notebook. The first page starts with the last, and as it would turn out, final corrections Joyce would make for his typo-riddled *Ulysses*. Here we have a clue: apparently *something* made him lose interest in pursuing the corrections. Would this 'something' be an idea for a new work? And if so, what triggered him?

⁴ Letter dictated to Lucia, *L I*, p. 191.

Perhaps the first clue can be seen in the exact spot *where* Joyce lost interest. It may be no coincidence that the abrupt halt occurs in the middle of the Cyclops chapter, which in its cyclopedian asides embraces a good part of world history. In the growth of the lists in this chapter we can see how Joyce not only expands the list but also – in the end – to the historical figures starts to add mythical figures and hybrids. This overflowing into the realm of unreality would be one of the features of *Finnegans Wake*. And maybe the first germs were starting to spread here.

Let's take a closer look.

In his writing and notetaking, Joyce developed lexical and thematic elements seemingly independent and often over a considerable period before they evolved or settled. Revisiting previous drafts or versions appears to have spurred Joyce to morph his texts and very often expand them much beyond their initial shape.

In the early parts of Cyclops where Joyce was now making corrections, there is a list of miniatures inscribed on stones hanging from the Citizen's garments. The initial list from the V.A.8/NLI.10 fragments written in June-July of 1919, consists of mainly Irish chieftains, soldiers, and heroes.

From his girdle rung a row of seastones which jangled at every movement and on which were graven with rude yet striking art the heads of various famous heroes, Cuchulin, Rory O'More, Conn of Hundred Battles, Niall of Nine Hostages, Brian of Thomond, the ardri Malachy, Art Mac Murragh, Shane O'Neill, Owen Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.

(JJDA u12M.1/NLI.10 30)

Here, Joyce crosses out Rory O'More. This passage stays largely unchanged in the Rosenbach fair copy and the *Little Review*, with the small addition of a priest to the heroes (Father John Murphy).

From his girdle hung a row of seastones which jangled at every movement of his portentous frame and on these were graven with rude yet striking art the tribal images of many heroes of antiquity, Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, Brian of Kincora, the ardri Malachi, Art Mac Murragh, Shane O'Neill, Father John Murphy, Owen Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.

(Rosenbach fair copy).

This is how the list remains until October of 1921 when Joyce will revise it twice on the page proofs. It's a drastic expansion both in size and in thematic range, beyond the Irish, past the Irish in the world, to both good and bad Irish, the sphere expands to the historical, as well to the mythical and purely fictional. It is the kind of cavalcade of excess that we have come to expect from Joyce. The first round of additions goes like this:

From his girdle hung a row of seastones which jangled at every movement of his portentous frame and on these were graven with rude yet striking art the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity, Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, Brian of Kincora, the ardrí Malachi, Art Mac Murragh, Shane O'Neill, Father John Murphy, Owen Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O'Donnell, ^+Red Jim MacDermott, Soggarth Eoghan O'Growney, Michael Dwyer, Francy Higgins, Henry Joy M'Cracken, Goliath, Horace Wheatley, Thomas Conneff, Peg Woffington, the Village Blacksmith, Captain Moonlight, Captain Boycott, Dante Alighieri, Christopher Columbus, S. Fursa, S. Brendan, Marshal MacMahon, Charlemagne, Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Mother of the Maccabees, the Last of the Mohicans, the Rose of Castile, the Man for Galway, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, John L. Sullivan, Cleopatra, Savourneen Deelish, Julius Caesar, Paracelsus, sir Thomas Lipton, William Tell, Michelangelo, Hayes, Muhammad, the Bride of Lammermoor, Peter the Hermit, Peter the Packer, Dark Rosaleen, Patrick W. Shakespeare, Thomas Cook and Son, the Bold Soldier Boy, Arrah na Pogue, Dick Turpin, Ludwig Beethoven, the Colleen Bawn, Waddler Healy, Angus the Culdee, Dolly Mount, Sidney Parade, Ben Howth, Valentine Greatrakes, Adam and Eve, Arthur Wellesley, Boss Croker, Herodotus, Jack the Giantkiller, Gautama Buddha, Acky Nagle, Joe Nagle, Alessandro Volta, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa,+^ Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.

(Gathering 18, Second version, Buffalo V.C.1-18b, *JJA* 25: 16)

In a final set of additions, he adds more fantastic elements such as Brian Confucius and Murtagh Gutenberg, but also more recognizable entries like Lady Godiva, Queen of Sheba, together with the opera *The Lily of Killarney*. And even later we see *Finnegans Wake* highlights such as The Man That Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo and – finally – Tristan and

Isolde. Yes, the same Tristan and Isolde that would serve as a starting point for the world history he was about to start.

From his girdle hung a row of seastones which jangled at every movement of his portentous frame and on these were graven with rude yet striking art the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity, Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, Brian of Kincora, the ardri Malachi, Art Mac Murragh, Shane O'Neill, Father John Murphy, Owen Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Red Jim MacDermott, Soggarth Eoghan O'Growney, Michael Dwyer, Francy Higgins, Henry Joy M'Cracken, Goliath, Horace Wheatley, Thomas Conneff, Peg Woffington, the Village Blacksmith, Captain Moonlight, Captain Boycott, Dante Alighieri, Christopher Columbus, S. Fursa, S. Brendan, Marshal MacMahon, Charlemagne, Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Mother of the Maccabees, the Last of the Mohicans, the Rose of Castile, the Man for Galway, [^][The Man that Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo](#), [^][The Man in the Gap](#), [^][The Woman Who Didn't](#),[^] Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, John L. Sullivan, Cleopatra, Savourneen Deelish, Julius Caesar, Paracelsus, sir Thomas Lipton, William Tell, Michelangelo, Hayes, Muhammad, the Bride of Lammermoor, Peter the Hermit, Peter the Packer, Dark Rosaleen, Patrick W. Shakespeare, [^][Brian Confucius](#), [^][Murtagh Gutenberg](#), [^][Patricio Velasquez](#), [^][Captain Nemo](#), [^][Tristan and Isolde](#), [^][the first Prince of Wales](#),[^] Thomas Cook and Son, the Bold Soldier Boy, Arrah na Pogue, Dick Turpin, Ludwig Beethoven, the Colleen Bawn, Waddler Healy, Angus the Culdee, Dolly Mount, Sidney Parade, Ben Howth, Valentine Greatrakes, Adam and Eve, Arthur Wellesley, Boss Croker, Herodotus, Jack the Giantkiller, Gautama Buddha, [^][Lady Godiva](#), [^][The Lily of Killarney](#), [^][Balor of the Evil Eye](#), [^][the Queen of Sheba](#),[^] Acky Nagle, Joe Nagle, Alessandro Volta, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.

(Gathering 18, Third version, Texas, *JJA* 25: 27 – 25-27 October 1921)

Revisiting this list in Nice a year later could have reminded him that he (as he wrote to Weaver on 30 October) 'once was a writer dans le temps', both of the magnitude of his own writing, but also this kind of expansive juxtaposition of material. The list reads like a topical map of many things that will become *Finnegans Wake*. The unifying principle of the list in *Ulysses* is just their effigies hanging from the belt of the Citizen. In *Finnegans Wake*, the entire historical and fantastical cast of characters will be subsumed under one of the few

archetypal main characters, either one of the Earwicker household, or the other main characters in the saga, the Two Temptresses, the Three Soldiers, the Four Old Men and the Twelve Customers. Maybe Joyce's original idea of a history of the world fused with this eruption from cohesion pointing onward to his considerable stash of notes and material in storage in Paris. This would allow Joyce to operate with the kind of multitude he had grown accustomed to with *Ulysses* – the main clues being here: the Irish history component of the original list of heroes and heroines dangling from the Citizen's girdle, and the later addition of Tristan and Isolde, staring Joyce in the face on the printed *Ulysses* page.

That was almost exactly a year ago, the final additions to the trophy belt of the Citizen. Time flies. But now he was weak, with failing eyesight, mostly locked up in his hotel room in Nice. Bad weather and his ailments were ruining his holiday.

The rest of the first two *Polyphemous* pages

Let's explore this already much explored *Polyphemous* notebook a bit further.

Following the sudden abandonment of the *Ulysses* corrections on the first page of the *Polyphemous* notebook (as we saw, in itself a possible hint of things to come), we find the impenetrable note "Polyphemous is Ul's shadow". This could be both a foreshadowing of "Trantris is shadow of Tristan [E.P]" or an echo if this originated from now lost *Ulysses* notebooks or notesheets. Polyphemous connects to Cyclops, but we can't know if this entry interrupted Joyce's process of corrections, or if this was Joyce picking up the notebook at some later point. Is it a random *Ulysses*-only note, post-factum, 'a spontaneous commentary by Joyce, suggested by the "Cyclops" chapter he was correcting', as the editors of the Brepols edition suggest? Or is it a premonition of *Finnegans Wake* as the shadow of *Ulysses* to come? It might be more, even, a true compositional visionary one. Remember that Joyce 'conceived' the new work in October, and here we are definitely in the last days of October. Was this the groundlaying idea after all?

It is difficult to say even from the color-reproduction in the Brepols edition, but there seems to be a slight difference in grade and darkness shade in the pencil stroke. Or was the note written in one go with the last *Ulysses* corrections? Either way, they came to a grinding halt with this note, so it may not be too farfetched after all to see a flash of inspiration here, perhaps *the* flash of inspiration, the founding idea, when Joyce envisioned the possibility to make his new work 'a shadow' of his old one, after the longest day in literature to conjure up the deepest night.

A large number of entries in *Polyphemous* originate from newspapers and other periodicals. On the first page of the notebooks, Joyce took notes from the *Daily Mail* and the *Irish Times*. These do not proceed in a strict chronological order even if a progression in time can be derived from the sources identified by Vincent Deane and others. What's not obvious from the notebooks is just how much 'joycean' material is passed by in this process.

It is a well-known fact that while in these days the Irish newspapers were full about the raging civil war, Joyce took notes about how to make an apple-pie ('Brown Betty', 11c-f). The lack of 'political' notes may point to a dislike, bordering on disgust about what was going on in his ex-home country, but why perfectly usable other newspaper items weren't ticked off is a bit of a mystery.

Take for instance the reports of a triple murder in Clondalkin, where the reported leadup took place in Clonliffe Road in Drumcondra – the same street Joyce wrote to Josephine Murray about on 21 October 1921: "... Also I forgot to ask what do you know about Hunter who lived in Clonliffe road and Alf Bergan etc etc." (*SL*, 286). The suspect perpetrators were three soldiers of which the leader was Charles Dalton. In the later trial, the barrister defending Dalton was Timothy Healy – yes, of "Et tu, Healy." The case was reported in several of the issues of the *Irish Times* from which Joyce took other notes, so why not these? The answer might be that at this point he had the newspapers read to him in an arduous partial reading process, navigating sections and headlines through another person, most likely Nora Joyce.

The newspaper entries on the first notebook page are from the *Daily Mail* of 23 October 1922 and the *Irish Times*, first the 7th and then the 20th of October 1922 – resp. 001(h-k), 001(l) and 001(n-r). On the second notebook page the newspaper entries are from the *Irish Times* of 9 October, 21 October and (possibly) of 27 October – resp. 002(a), 002(b) and 002(g-h), although the entire cluster (e-i) in all likelihood derives from one newspaper item, and (c) and (d) probably derive from the same or another newspaper item.

The nice thing about writing 'a history of the world' is, of course, that literally anything is grist to the mill.

The diversity could suggest that Joyce didn't take these notes as part of the daily reading of the most recent newspaper, but rather that he was reading (or being read to) from random newspapers that arrived in parcels at irregular intervals. Throughout *Polyphemous*, the sources come out of order, without any discernible pattern.

The third *Polyphemous* page

The third page, comprising five distinct entries, is highly personal: no newspaper notes.

The five entries are:

1. a slip of the tongue ('storm debated');
2. a curious way of saying ('introduce object (penis)');
3. a detail of some personal anecdote about or coming from Lilian Wallace ('bell on table (L.W.)');
4. a compositional note of some kind ('biography begin in middle "at 28..."); and
5. a recorded dream, an 'epiphanoid' in David Hayman's somewhat strenuous term ('W thinks she is frigged in sleep tells Priest. He at altar next morning thinks he has been polluted. Catechism class He explains boy's reverie. He meets girl. She dreams "the dance"').

Item #5 could be something Nora actually told her husband, but the hasty way in which it is written makes it more likely it was a dream. It is not the only dream Joyce will record in this fashion in his Notebook, which he must have had lying on his nightstand.

But what interests us are the two first items. They sound as if they derive from the same source as the dream, the 'W' – which sometimes stands for Woman but most of the time for Wife, meaning Nora. At any rate, they do sound like 'Norisms'. Joyce was always very fond of her straightforwardness, unabashedness and her ways of saying. In *Ulysses* he had made ample use of her to flesh out Molly Bloom. He will do so again in his next project. Joyce keeps his ears open. (His eyes are unwilling at the moment.)

But they could equally be things Lucia said. Her English was less perfect than her Triestine Italian and her German, and as we will cut our way deeper into the *Polyphemous* jungle, we will see that the first active player, the first character to take shape in the mist of his musings, is Isolde – an Isolde who shares remarkable characteristics with Lucia.

The *Quarterly Review*

Sylvia Beach forwarded papers, magazines, and books to Joyce in Nice. She sent the October 1922 issue of the *Quarterly Review*, which contained a review of *Ulysses*. On 24 October Joyce replied to Beach (*JJ Letters to SB*, pp. 14-15) with an enclosed letter he had written in her name to send to the reviewer, Shane Leslie. By detailing in clerical detail which libraries had been gifted copies of the book, a fatigued Joyce could appear to at least attempt to manipulate the critic's response to his work.

Joyce made 32 consecutive notes from the *Quarterly Review*, mainly from the Reynard the Fox article about fox-hunting – notes that for a large part found their way in the skit he

would write in August 1923 on holiday (finally) in Bognor. There are only two notes on these pages that haven't been traced to the *Quarterly Review*, and they don't tell us much. 'Guinness (oars)' at 005(a) is mysterious, but 'story all improbable lies' at 004(a) could have been something Nora said.

For the most part we can gather that Joyce didn't read the periodicals and books he takes notes from in this notebook, but was read to, in all probability by Nora – as he would be later, in the summer of 1923, as witnessed by his notebook *Nativities* (N5/VI.B.2).⁵ Also the *Quarterly Review* she apparently read to him, because Joyce on page 004(c) notes the name 'Lister' from the article about mental health as 'Lyster' – which he wouldn't do if he had seen the name himself.

Throughout the notebook, as well as the following ones, there will be many telltale signs of the double dual effort of him and his reading nurse, whether it be Nora or Lucia (most likely Nora though). Clue: the immediate presence of Nora, she being the portal, the go-between, the semi-permeable fleece, the lens even, through which Joyce receives/conceives his ideas for a new work.

It is no surprise that such a short time after publication of *Ulysses*, the book and its fate were still firmly on Joyce's mind. In fact, throughout his composition of the fresh *Work in Progress*, he would actively keep on pushing translations, reviews, new editions and try to have the book published in countries where censorship had barred the gates. On pages 007 to 010, he ruminates about the 'wealth of his dramatis personarum' and equates *Ulysses* with an 'imposture book through the ages, revered more & more'. He conjures up Leopold Bloom *Ulysses* 'p 414 – LB & taxi' for some reason and repeats a phrase from the *Dubliners* story 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room', the phrase 'loves on the smell'.

On *Polyphemous* 010(c) we find a new source. And a little down the road another one by the same author.

Michael Monahan, *Nova Hibernia and Adventures in Life and Letters*

Michael Monahan (1865-1933) was an American of Irish extraction, the editor and proprietor of the literary magazine *The Phoenix* in Norwalk, Connecticut – and a friend of John Quinn's, the later owner of the *Ulysses* so-called Rosenbach manuscript. In 1917 Quinn had tried to interest Ezra Pound in Monahan's writing, to little avail. Pound wrote to Quinn on 28

⁵ Robbert-Jan Henkes, "2 weeks in the life of James Joyce: as gleaned from his 1923 Notebook VI.B.2 *Nativities* (revised edition)" <https://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/articles/GJS14/GJS14_Henkes_2weeks>, p. 30.

November: ‘Somebody ought to tell him to TRY AT LEAST TO WRITE THE LANGUAGE HE TALKS...’ In 1922, Monahan was able to come to Europe for a couple of months, helped by Quinn, who supplied him with an extra \$150 to be able to visit Brittany. It was on his Paris leg that Monahan tried to meet Joyce, who, however, was in Nice. He managed, perhaps through Beach, to have his gifts forwarded.

The first Monahan book, *Nova Hibernia* (1914), was identified by Ronan Crowley. It is a collection of musings on matters and people Irish, in eleven chapters. There is a chapter on Yeats and Synge, on Thomas Moore, on James Clarence Mangan – but Joyce went for the penultimate chapter, on Father Prout. He takes a mere three notes, all from the first page. They are followed by a name and address in Folkestone, where the family had stayed not long ago.

The last note on the page is a blasphemous French contortion: Joyce notes that the famous ‘mot de Cambronne’, the merde (= shit) unallowable on stage but not in battle, is actually very holy French, for it is pronounced in ‘Mother of God’ – ‘mère-de Dieu’.

The *Nova Hibernia* reading was further interrupted by first a continuation of the *Irish Times* of 30 and 31 October, and then by the mailman who delivers the magazine *Criterion*. Joyce had asked Beach to send it to him because it contained Valery Larbaud’s article on *Ulysses*. As luck would have it, the issue also contained an article by Thomas Sturge Moore on literary renditions of the Tristan and Isolde legend.

But Joyce, unaware of the spark the article will give him, first reads an article on dullness and then one on Carlyle in the *Criterion*. And only then – no, then he’s back again reading *Nova Hibernia*, this time about Thomas Moore, again for a very short while, making only two notes, ‘pink an opponent’ and ‘condign satisfaction’, and only then – no, there’s the *Irish Times* again, the issue of 10 October, and then the issue of 1 November, before the *Nova Hibernia* reading is resumed about Tommy Moore, and three notes are made: ‘bathos (Eol)’ is Joyce remembering the stylistic parodies of the Aeolus chapter of *Ulysses*, ‘T Moores wishes [or ‘writes’] for 5 ears’ appropriates Monahan’s praise for Moore (‘Moore has out-Persianed the Persian’), whereas ‘bulbul’ is taken directly from Monahan (‘passages where the thrush and the bulbul sing one note’). *Nova Hibernia*, happily it seems, is then abandoned for good, and the *Criterion* is taken up, no, no, wait, first there is the *Irish Times* of 31 October, still unfinished apparently, and yielding another five notes.

One of these, ‘buggareaus / (seeds)’, comes from a response to a letter to the editor titled ‘Trees in Ireland’. The original author is one Oliver St. John Gogarty. We will revisit this

below. Then, at the bottom of page 14 of the *Polyphemous* notebook, Joyce opens the fateful Sturge Moore article, and notes the previous treatments of the legend.

The first spark?

And finally, we can pinpoint his piqued curiosity, on the very first page of the Thomas Sturge Moore article, ‘The Story of Tristram and Isolt in Modern Poetry’ in the very first issue of *Criterion*. Sturge Moore opens his article with a challenge: who will be bold enough to forge this eternal legend into literature? Who will be the Shakespeare of this saga? Who will ‘not shrink from treating the legend of Tristram and Isolt’?

Sturge Moore’s challenge did not fall on deaf ears or in infertile ground. As would be expected, Joyce does not make a note, saying ‘Eureka!’ or ‘Idea: make a new T&I myth’ – for these conceptions need not be taken down. What he does do, is note a list of previous adapters of the myth – perhaps or perhaps not with the intention of reading them, but certainly to size up the competition.

What is certain is that in future notes Joyce is often keeping in mind a possible Tristan and Isolde connection.

While the tragedy of Tristan and Isolde interested Joyce at a thematic level, it was also steeped in the drama of his own family, and in his marital situation with Nora. Lucia practiced the overture on the piano. According to August Suter, Nora would go to the Paris gramophone stores and listen to Wagner while Joyce was writing. Nora refused to read *Ulysses*, while professing a preference for the operas. When it comes to the first drafts in the following year, some of which are in Nora’s hand, we see an almost cruel interplay between Joyce and his wife.⁶ Was Joyce initially trying to prove something to Nora?

⁶ ‘On mesure la cruauté qu’il pouvait y avoir, en l’occurrence, à dicter ceci à Nora et donc à la forcer à recopier de nouveau ses inepties, vingt ans plus tard.’ Daniel Ferrer, in: James Joyce, *Brouillons d’un baiser, Premiers pas vers Finnegans Wake*, Gallimard, 2014, p. 48.

THE STORY OF TRISTRAM AND ISOLT IN MODERN POETRY

By T. STURGE MOORE

PART I. NARRATIVE VERSIONS

ALAS! young dramatists never tempt us with new versions of Hamlet's or Othello's story, yet Athenian audiences were asked to applaud ever afresh Medea's or Antigone's. Milton did not carry out his intention of writing a *Macbeth*. Even had he not surpassed Shakespeare's he must have thrown light on the essential characteristics of that masterpiece, and might have eased the tyranny which forces us to suppose that all Shakespeare's faults were such as it is easy to correct, while his excellences must for ever be gaped on. But should young dramatists venture so far as an *Othello* it is almost beyond a doubt that the public, even the cultured public, would be unable to respond.¹ Let us, then, praise Mr. Binyon and Michael Field that after Tennyson, after Matthew Arnold, after Swinburne, and the European outburst of Wagner's success, they did not shrink from treating the legend of Tristram and Isolt. However highly we laud the modesty of those who refuse to measure their work beside acknowledged masterpieces, behind such talk there glows some perception of the courage and logical soundness of those who dare.

¹ Mr. Gordon Bottomley has recently used the earlier lives of Shakespeare's characters and thus challenged comparison in some degree, though the events he has imagined are obviously less crucial than those on which the great tragedies turn.

The first page of the Thomas Sturge Moore article in *The Criterion* I, 1 (1922), p. 34

Wordplay

But how would he go about reshaping the legend? A tantalizing light goes up in his brainpan right in the middle of his reading of the Tristan and Isolde article. At the very same time as conceiving a plan for a new book, Joyce is also considering the style in which he wants to

write it. The *What* is born at the same time as the *How*. The tantalizing note is the one immediately following the one in which Joyce takes up Sturge Moore's challenge.

After the list of writers, we find the note 'O la musique / Avec les soldiques' (15d). 'Soldiques' is a portemanteau word, joining 'soldats' to go with the music, but more importantly – and the reason it sprang to Joyce's mind – is that it contains 'Isolde'.

The word 'soldiques' Joyce would later reuse in a poem he composed, in May 1932, 'pour la rhyme seulement' and dictated over the phone to Beach. Her transcription (*JJA* 1:350-352, published in *Poems and Shorter Writings*, 142) is not entirely reliable or understandable, but it is our only source. The poem, to the tune of 'Au clair de la lune' (as Aida Yared pointed out), punningly pitches two French acquaintances, Valery Larbaud and Pierre de Lanux, in a fight over tin soldiers. But here, in this early notebook, it is just a loose phrase, inspired by the Tristan and Isolde article Joyce is reading or is being read to. Isolde gives him the rhyme, the portmanteau and a definite sense of music in words. The little rhyme functions as a portal to the vast and wellnigh undiscovered possibilities of distorting words.

The 'soldiques' note is followed by a note which puts the Tristan and Isolde story into a *Ulysses* perspective. This method, subsuming under *Ulysses* terms, also lies at the heart of his great big Scibbledehobble notebook. It helped Joyce to cope with the flood of ideas and notes for his next work, to bring some order into them, to be able to think about his new characters along known *Ulyssean* lines.

'Isolde of Britt – Pen / ” ” white hands Calypso' is also an important note. Joyce immediately picks up the dual Isoldes that will very soon after merge into a single Issy and split into her and her mirror image. In fact, Isolde is the first of the Earwicker household to emerge from the magic writer's cauldron.

Then follow two notes from the second Monahan book, *Adventures in Life and Letters* from 1912 (about which more in a minute), with the first misreading. The two notes, deriving from the chapter about Guy de Maupassant; the first is 'rebuttal', the second, more interesting 'preserving persevering'. The Monahan sentence goes: 'What remains then, he asks, for us who are simply conscientious and persevering workers?' Apparently, Nora mispronounced the word, and Joyce, liking the mistake, jotted it down.

The misreadings will multiply in the course of the coming days. The next one occurs immediately on the next page, when the perusal of the *Criterion* article about Tristan and Isolde is resumed. Joyce notes: 'Buffoon Buffon' – the article cites the French naturalist George-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, famous for his quote, loved by Flaubert, 'le style est

l'homme même'. But apparently Nora pronounces it 'Buffoon' – opening up the way to a creative way of using names (*Finnegans Wake* would end up containing more than five thousand proper names.)

Two notes down the line we meet a new saint, 'S. Giovanni Boccaccio' and another three notes down, the first portmanteau, amalgamated, telescoped personification appears in the person of 'Anne Doyle'. '(An Dail)' that Joyce adds for this first time, indicating the provenance of the name as Irish for 'the parliament', turned by him into a woman of that name. So, again, a kind of breakthrough distortion, this one.

Next, newspapers take precedence again. We have a run of notes from the 4 November issue of *The Leader*, one of Joyce's favourite ones for its 'Irish voice', especially in its recurring features 'As Others See Us' and 'Our Ladies' Letter', and again back a few days in time from at least three different issues of the *Irish Times*, of 27, 30 and 28 October. It could be that Joyce is looking for Oliver St. John Gogarty's "Trees In Ireland," which he eventually locates in the 30 October issue, which yields "Hills of Eire" in the notebook.

The sparseness of these notebook pages can be deceiving. If we blink we might miss that main Wakean arteries are pulsating even at this formative stage. Joyce would always tap into his personal and Irish heritage. Here we have in short order traversed his sometimes adversary Gogarty, Father Prout, expelled master of rhetoric at Clongowes, the *Book of Kells* as an Irish *Ulysses*, Moore's *Irish Melodies*, Tristan & Isolde, Boccaccio. It might be reasonable to assume that if Joyce saw this as fertile ground for where he was going next, he wouldn't have to spell it out beyond the mnemonics already in the notebook.

TREES IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES.

Sir,—Here is a unique letter. It deals with a subject of the greatest importance to the country; yet it neither addresses, advises nor admonishes the Government. It merely calls for co-operation about a matter which is well within our own reach—tree-planting. For those who do not realise the importance of this, and the benefit which both the people and the climate may derive from afforestation, an example will suffice and save space. In Germany the public highways and the railway embankments are lined by fruit trees (apples, pears, plums), planted about a dozen yards apart. The trees this year have to be propped up to bear their yield of fruit. The mountains are covered with forests of pine, plane, chestnut and oak. The fruit trees provide cider made of apples and pears. The plums are split, stoned and used on bread. In Germany they do not rear children on stewed tea and margarine. The vitamins, on which growth depends, are absent in these, but present in fruit.

What is the result of the afforestation? First, cheap raw material; therefore, large houses and beautiful furniture; for elaboration follows when the *materia prima* is abundant. Since the war there are few two-roomed thatched huts in Germany. Little mountain villages are composed of eight-roomed houses with high gables. The sexes are separated; there is room for the children to study, a drawingroom for the housewife, in which she may gather her hair-locks and ornamental things. The walls are panelled, the floors parqueted, and the furniture stained to show the grain by coloured varnishes. All this means comfort and beauty—a chance for progress, high-grade civilisation.

How is the fruit preserved from thieves? "We grow no thieves," the German replies. If people take communal property, they take from themselves. The apples are protected from school-boys and such in the same way as potatoes and grass are protected in Ireland—by being common.

The effect of forests on the climate of a country cannot be shortly explained. Dr. Henry, our eminent authority, can tell how cattle are sheltered and their milk yield increased by trees; waste land enhanced and bogs actually dried until the surface of a marsh shrinks to dry powdery peat by their action. He can show where useless land in Wicklow has been planted with Douglas fir, and in seventeen years has become worth £120 an acre, allowing two shillings for every fifty-foot tree. This means that land fit only for grazing geese or goats, is made to pay £7 a year per acre. Yet less than 3 per cent. of the surface of Ireland is afforested. Under British rule there was no law to prevent stripping the little that remains. Germany is a political mosaic, but an industrial unit; and revolutions there do not cost the country more in a week than the aims of their fomenters could repair in a generation.

But here what is to be done? Let us ask the railway companies to allow volunteers to plant with fruit trees their waste embankments as far as possible next month. If this were done, the railway companies would be producing something even during a strike. Two men can plant thirty trees in an hour. On the embankments these will be protected from cattle; and, surely, it can serve no political purpose to destroy young fruit trees; but, if they be cut down, they may still be useful if the effect is the same on the voracity of their destroyers as the cutting of the tree by George Washington was confessed to have had on him. So much for fruit trees.

Regarding afforestation, the following proposal is not for the moment addressed to the poor man, but to the man who, by the investments abroad, have kept him poor. If, instead of considering shares in orange groves or apple orchards in South Africa, every man with a motor car were to buy three or four acres of waste land in Wicklow, and drive his planters out and in for a few weeks, he would be sure of a yield in twenty years which would be safer and more beneficial to the country and himself than any insurance policy. A hundred such men co-operating would enrich a countryside.

Instead of being (in the Midlands) one of the ugliest and most ill-kept countries in Europe, Ireland would be transformed in a decade. The climate would change, and with it the character of the people. Road-sides that grow wasteful ash and useless elder would be trim and productive with the apple, pear and plum. Monotony could be varied by the poplar and sorb-apple tree. The hills of Eire would be fair once more. The plains of our country would have much-needed shelter; and they who would inhabit them would be purposeful and calm; for how can people be calm who live in a wind-swept region, or equable in a climate that is always changing? Harsh gales would be less frequent, the marshes would be drained and rivers kept at a level. They who live in Ireland then will be less subject to brain-storms and emotional extremes. They will live placider in milder air, and from their literature and oratory there will be a dying down of wind.—Yours, etc.,

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY.

Ely place, Dublin, October 28th, 1922.

Letter to *The Leader*, Monday 30 October 1922, 7/3

Michael Monahan, *Adventures in Life and Letters*

On *Polyphemous* page 18, the reading of the second gift-wrapped work by the American author Monahan resumed (after two notes on page 15 that may have been added later). *Adventures in Life and Letters* is also a hodgepodge of short pieces and musings in the same style commented on by Ezra Pound. Forty-nine sweeping essays, reminiscences and anecdotes mixed with an occasional poem, a 373 page Cyclopean cortège in which he discusses himself and/or Robert Louis Stevenson, Louis the Grand, the Man in the Iron Mask,

Mary Mother of Jesus, Claude Tillie, George ‘Lover’ Moore, Brother Elias, Guy de Maupassant, Cellini, Claude Duval, Dick Turpin and Sixteen-String Jack (highwaymen), another Mary, himself being without any sense of direction, Joe McDonough an old book seller, *Her*, the Koheleth, Madame, Dr. Cure-All, The Woman (‘with sex, sex, sex behind it all’, 149), Comte and Clotilde, boy Bill at sea (a tryptich), Balzac and ‘a woman as virtuous as *Nora Helmer*’ (177), Lilith, Monsieur Vicomte de Lovenjoul, Lafcadio Hearn and Ibsen and a potpourri of others, Dickens, Egeria ‘of the true divine stature’ (227), the Shade of Lamb, the bliss of sleep, him turning forty, Mammon, Oscar Wilde and ‘moral blemish’ (264), God, the Devil, again Voltaire (a natural follow-up), the mathematical mystic George Boole (of the Boolean search), the Rich and Poor, the People, Cellini, Horace, Poe in an Irish cottage (“Do ye know, sir, that the ould boss wrote ‘The Raven’ sitting at the little windy there furninst ye—one night afther a dhrunk! Would ye wondher at it?” 323), literary enmities (and one of his own), saintly Henriette Renan, Hell, his Evil Genius, Easter, his Talisman and finally himself as an Old Boy.

The Monahan notes spread out over seven notebook pages, 15-21, and are taken from eight different pieces: ‘Guy de Maupassant’, ‘A Note on Oscar Wilde’, ‘Cellini’, ‘Henriette Renan’, ‘At Poe’s Cottage’, ‘To the Shade of Lamb’, ‘George Moore, Lover’, and ‘Knights of the Road’.

Another misreading occurs when Nora (for it is her, it appears from the note) read him the piece, or maybe just a few pages of the piece on Oscar Wilde: *Polyphemous* 18(d) ‘taken to (t)ask (W)’ derives from Monahan writing ‘I have been taken to task by a certain critic for printing so much about Oscar Wilde.’ The parenthetical ‘W’ in Joyce’s note indicates that it was indeed his wife who was doing the misreading.

Another possible conceptual note is the next: ‘the lady (p 7) / the brazen whore (p 20)’, originating in Monahan’s short essay on Benvenuto Cellini: ‘As soon as the brazen-faced whore (just a page before she had been ‘the lady Pantasilea’!) set eyes on the fine youth, she had her designs on him.’ Perhaps Joyce pictured himself an inconsistent narrator along the lines of what the four old dodderers Mamalujo would become. At any rate it looks like an idea he could use.

From the Cellini piece, Joyce takes four more notes: ‘to avenge brother!’ (maybe conceptual too), ‘arquebusier’ (just a word), ‘forehandedness’ (which sounds like four-handedness) and the Othello quote ‘to yerck him under the ribs’ (which is not as such in Monahan, but his reference to Iago sets off Joyce).

The next three Monahan notes come from his piece about Henriette Renan, the self-effacing, self-sacrificing sister of Ernest Renan. ‘Saint Henriette!’ Monahan calls her, and Joyce notes, on 19c: ‘Allmers = Renan’. Allmers, the Brepols editors note, is the deluded protagonist of Ibsen’s *Little Eyolf*, who lives with his wife and half-sister, just like Renan lived with his sister, and ruined her life. But Joyce also notes – in Scribbledehobble – the parallel with Tristan, in the note ‘Henriette (cf Trist-Renan)’.⁷ So again, the Tristan & Isolde connection crops up.

Next follow six notes from the *Leader* of 28 October and three notes, probably from a newspaper as well. Resuming the reading of Monahan, the first thing Joyce jots down is another Norism, ‘particularly / practically (W)’, from Monahan’s essay ‘At Poe’s Cottage’: ‘It has one fairly large window looking on a small grass-plot in front, and two tiny windows which light the low sleeping-room upstairs for there is an “upstairs” although the cottage is practically of only one story.’

And another one, two notes down, ‘thicker (thither)’ from the same: ‘Thither it is proposed to move the historic cottage when a settlement shall have been made with the present owner.’

And three notes down, one more: ‘ruptures (raptures)’ from another essay, ‘To the Shade of Lamb’ which Joyce may have singled out for reading, thinking it might be about lampshades: ‘The factitious raptures of spiritists were not for thee, nor wert thou ever seduced from the steady contemplation of thy ideal of happiness here below, by a distorted vision of the New Jerusalem.’

Nora must have been very tired to make these reading mistakes. Joyce ponders the slips of the tongue and slips of the pen and makes a small list, occasioned by Nora’s mistakes: ‘philogy / hapiograph’, ‘Bodley Bodley / dittography’, and ‘candeler / calender’ (*Polyphemous* 20h-j) all of them slips like the ones Nora is making in her reading.

The Monahan reading continues with only two notes from the piece on George Moore, possibly because subjects are discussed not fit for women’s ears (Monahan quickly confides that Moore’s ‘two books about himself ... are full of fornication’). Next comes a cluster of notes about famous highwaymen that Monahan loved to read about when he was small. In the fifteen notes, mainly of robbers’ names, Nora again makes two slips that her cruel husband

⁷ The *Scribbledehobble* note is in the section called ‘Exiles (.II)’, VI.A.301, in the Connolly edition on page 80. Hayman discusses the entry in a footnote on page 181 of *The Wake in Transit* (Cornell University Press, 199) and writes: ‘This entry refers to the curious relationship established by Renan between his loving and protective sister and his new wife, a topic treated at length in [Renan’s] memorial to Henriette.’ See also David Hayman, ‘Epiphanoiding’, in: *Genitricksling Joyce*, edited by Sam Slote and Wim Van Mierlo, European Joyce Studies 9, Rodopi, 1999.

writes down: ‘furetive furtive’ (21d, written ‘furetive’ with the first ‘e’ slashed out) deriving from p. 88 of Monahan: ‘Of Life and Literature I knew nothing when I brought a boy’s mind to these books the dearer, too, that they were forbidden and had to be tasted with fear and precaution, sometimes by a furtive candle in my little room...’ And two notes down, ‘f(l)et as the wind’, deriving from Monahan’s p. 92: ‘Black every inch of her and fleet as the wind.’

This is the last of the Monahan pieces they will read. The notes continue with more newspaper ruminations, this time a whole bunch of thirteen from the *Sunday Express* of 29 October, running on to the bottom of *Polyphemous* page 22. No Norisms here. But in the next book he took up, they start again.

John Stuart Mill’s *England and Ireland*

Joyce is still deep down in the stages of reading everything that chance brings to his hands. Only halfway into 1923, when he is writing his ‘study of old age’ skit Mamalujo, will he start deliberately choosing books, asking Weaver and Beach to procure them for him. Only in notebook *Nativities* N5/VI.B.2, his reading will begin to be purposeful. In *Polyphemous* he is still letting good luck cross his path.

John Stuart Mill’s 1868 essay-pamphlet *England and Ireland* was, with its 45 pages, thin enough to be taken by Joyce on holiday in Nice, but it could have been sent to him by Beach or by Weaver or anyone who managed to find out his whereabouts in the Hôtel Suisse on the Quai des Etats-Unis. As yet it serves no writing purpose, but Mill’s sometimes arduous choice of words gives Nora problems again and supplies Joyce with more words that are not the right words but are because of that special words and telling words that say more than their origin lets out, in other words puns.

‘Gibraltar’ on 23f might be a misreading, or a mispronunciation of Nora’s, but as it does not derive from Mill, there is no way of being certain.

At 23h we find another proof that Joyce was closely observing Nora and gauging her every word and movement for clues as to what he would be about to write. ‘9 pages more = 18 (W)’ could be about the number of pages (or leaves, as Nora apparently counts) of the Mill pamphlet to go. A similar observing note we find (jumping slightly forward) on page 43e, where Joyce notes ‘W reads, skips 2 pages, on – –’ (that is, presumably, reads on, unperturbed). The ideal book: open it at random, read a page, not understanding a word, skip two pages, read on, etc. If that sounds like the *Finnegans Wake* experience to many, here’s the origin and here is the person to blame. Nora thought it all out and Joyce obliged her.

Nora stumbles seven times in Mill. Here are the slips:

24b ‘re(ci)procate’, from Mill 28: ‘The persevering reciprocation of insults between English and American newspapers and public speakers has, before now, brought those two countries to the verge of a war...’

24c ‘born(e)’, from Mill 28: ‘An Irishman must have a very lofty idea of the resources of his country who thinks that this load upon the Irish taxpayer would be easily borne.’ (A tricky one: how would you mispronounce ‘borne’?)

24d ‘succeed (secede)’, from Mill 30: ‘Ireland would succeed in establishing a regular and orderly government...’

24e ‘prejuice’, from Mill 34: ‘If the British Parliament could sufficiently shake off its prejudices to use the veto on Irish legislation rightly, it could shake them off sufficiently to legislate for Ireland rightly, or to allow the Irish, as it already allows the Scotch members, to transact the business of their own country mainly by themselves.’

24f ‘single will (W = aux)’, from Mill 34-5: ‘The difficulty of keeping two countries together without uniting them, begins with constitutional liberty. Countries very dissimilar in character, and even with some internal [34] freedom, may be governed as England and Scotland were by the Stuarts, so long as the people have only certain limited rights, and the government of the two countries practically resides in a single will above them both.’ (Apparently, Nora pronounced the word ‘will’ as if it was a verb).

24h ‘just (W = gerade) that’, from Mill 38: ‘Whether this was the case, or not, every farm not farmed by the proprietor would become the permanent holding of the existing tenant, who would pay either to the landlord or to the State the fixed rent which had been decided upon; or less, if the income which it was thought just that the landlord should receive were more than the tenant could reasonably be required to pay.’ (Apparently, Nora pronounced the word ‘just’ as if it was ‘merely’.)

24i ‘severing (W = severe)’, from Mill 38: ‘Those landlords who are the least useful in Ireland, and on the worst terms with their tenantry, would probably accept this opportunity of severing altogether their connexion with the Irish soil.’

Not a bad score for Nora. Joyce’s faultfinding mission in Nora’s reading stops here. He will not use Nora’s off the cuff puns for his skits that become *Work in Progress* that becomes *Finn’s Hotel* that becomes *Finnegans Wake*. For this, he didn’t need the actual Norisms: they had served their purpose and guided him into the realm of multiple meaning.

The Woman Behind the Man

It's a miracle Joyce could do something, anything at all in Nice, with his wellnigh absent eyesight and terrible pains. He had leeches applied to his eyes to lessen the blood pressure in the eyes and disperse, partly, the nebula. His teeth were hurting as well and he would have them all extracted within months.

Letters he sometimes dictated, and Nora read him books and periodicals. The slips of the tongue, totaling 15 from *Polyphemous* page 15 to 24, prove it. This turned out to be not only a welcome and enjoyable distraction but also fruitful in itself, for Nora inadvertently pointed him to something that can be described as an entirely new way of writing, a new style, completely different from the most beautiful and the best English on, above and beneath the surface of the earth, for which he was being hailed on account of *Ulysses*. This new method was non-beautiful, erroneous, faulty, slipperysloppy, and focused on wrong words, misreadings and mispronunciations, of which he noted quite a few coming from Nora in the weeks in Nice.

In these weeks, we see some main interests emerging and ripening, that first had to lay fallow for some time but were eventually picked up, when they had gathered pace and Joyce actually started writing his skits. That is to say (unmixing the tangled metaphors), he stumbled across the interests, as he stumbled across the Tristan and Isolde article in the *Criterion* and the fox-hunting one in the *Quarterly Review* that he read for completely different reasons, but he knew somewhere in the back of his vast mind that the stuff would come in handy; he made notes and allowed them to be ruminated on in his brain. It was probably not for nothing that he later said that he 'began' his new work in Nice.

Nora's slips of the tongue pointed the way to the new language he was to devise for his world myth, where one word carries a wealth of different meanings.

The strands that would become his new novel are developing from the very start of the notebook: Ulyssean concerns, Cyclopean language, the family unit with Isolde emerging first, the unwitting puns of Nora – all are working together to form some kind of basis, some kind of conception that Joyce could build further on.

Why do we only now find out Nora's unwitting but guiding role in directing Joyce's thoughts towards his new work? Why do we only now get a glimpse of Nora reading newspapers and books to her husband who is literally and figuratively groping in the dark?

The answer is: because we only now discover the written source of Joyce's mysterious entries, and knowing the sources we see where the slips he notes come from, and how they must have been occasioned by Nora (and occasionally perhaps Lucia, who was with them in

Nice) reading to him. Sometimes Joyce makes a mistake in a name he writes down, as we have seen with 'Lyster' on *Polyphemous* page 4.

Joyce cherished Nora's slips and whereas he didn't put them to use directly, he was inspired to twist his future language in ways that resemble her slips, as can already be seen from the style of the first skits. The malformation of words is just like the extensions of the Cyclops cortège a strand of the work-in-beginning-of-progress to be woven together.