The Practicalities of Literary Studies: Depictions of Ordinary Life in Ulysses

By Stephen Dechert

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Abstract

This project explores the artistic expression of life into literature. It ponders why the depiction of life matters and why literary studies, as a vehicle of that depiction, also matters. Ultimately, this project concludes that literary studies is a practical discipline that offers knowledge for everyday use. This project explores Ulysses by James Joyce and analyzes its portrayal of life, specifically ordinary life. It argues that Ulysses champions two approaches to life through centralizing characters Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, the idealistic and pragmatic respectively. The project argues that Ulysses slightly favors one over the other, but that there is still room for both approaches to life and that each has their beneficial effects. The second chapter of this project goes on to argue that the actual content of Ulysses is only half of its portrayal of ordinary life. The project then serves as an analysis of the stylistic techniques that frames the content of ordinary life, while also conveying and embodying the idea of ordinary life. My project culminates with this idea: Ulysses functions as a guide to living life fulfillingly, that reminds us that ordinary life can be more meaningful than usually depicted. Such findings are what make Literary Studies not only worthwhile, but practical, in its everyday application.

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Introduction

Literary Studies as a Practical Discipline

Literature and life have always had a symbiotic relationship— from antiquity to the modern era. Milton C. Albrecht outlines three hypotheses to define this relationship, which introduces this chicken or the egg scenario: is it literature that comes first and then society that has been heavily influenced by it or is it the society that comes first and literature is then just a reflective production of said society? His first hypothesis is that "literature reflects society," a theory that dates back to "Plato's concept of imitation" (425). Madame de Staël popularized the theory in academia with her essay *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, which consists of "a historical and sociological interpretation of the literature of several nations," (425). Albrecht posits a second hypothesis, where conversely "literature influences and 'shapes' society" (425) but he focuses less attention on this one. This is something especially resonate with Modernist literature, which is notorious for both its reflection of the upheavals endured in the global transition into modernity (urbanization, class conflict, industrialization, etc.) and at the same time, its attempts to revise society, as Ezra Pound champions, "Make it new" and rebel against traditional bourgeois sensibilities. This makes Modernism an interesting literary movement for my project and I will return to it later on. Albrecht's final hypothesis is that literature can "maintain and stabilize, if not justify and sanctify, the social order, which may be called, the 'social control theory'"(425). In this way, literature functions as a sort of subject formation, similar to the concept of "ideology" in Marxism, As Terry Eagleton writes in *Literature and History*, "Art, [Literature] then, is for Marxism part of the superstructure of society… it ensures that the situation in which one class has power over the others is either seen by most members of the society as 'natural' or not seen

at all" (5). Note that the use of the word "class" and "social order" refers to a particularly broad spectrum of social science categories, consisting mainly of socioeconomics and politics. According to Albrecht, literature can do these three things, and sometimes even overlap— it can reflect life, revise life, or reinforce life.

I offer my own contributions that literature can also function as an aberration of life, as it depicts the rarities of life. By that, I mean literature's content typically consists of events that take place outside of the realm of normalcy— the ones that disrupt daily routine and the first answers to the question "What did you do today?" Most people respond with the rarities of life, not the routined and already assumed, such as eating breakfast, showering, etc. Because of this, literature shows and suggests which aspects of life are important and meaningful enough to be written about. This gets a bit into literary theory and the question of "what stories ought to be told?" Pragmatically, is there a desire to read about something as familiar and perhaps even mundane to us all as life? Or is it the point of literature to offer us something that life cannot, a fictional world or realm of fantasy? Moreover, hitherto, what is really meant by life? The hypotheses offered connect literature to society, a sort of macroscale view of life, but what about the personal and intimate? Even more so, these discussions center around temporally sensitive relationships— what is considered to be a rarity of life in one time period might be normal for another, literature might reflect society only within the context of a very specific time period, in order for literature to revise society it must be in a very specific relationship with society as an opposition, and the reinforcement of society must be in conversation with the specific social order of the time period which has changed drastically over history— economically, socially, and politically. Despite or perhaps in spite of these rabbit holes, this discussion of the artistic expression of life in literature should be of utmost importance to literary studies— as it justifies

to a universal audience the necessity and existence of literary studies and literature in general, as a mode, a conduit, a proxy, for discussing, understanding, and in some ways, living life.

This is not exactly unique to literary studies— philosophy functions as a meta-disciplinary discourse where topics relating to life are covered at length. However, literature gives us a unique opportunity to put the abstract and foundational knowledge of philosophy, knowledge deriving from both formal means (academia, texts, school, etc.) and informal means, (experiences, friends, family, etc.) at play within the context of a literary world— which is most of the time much like our very own world. In a similar vein to pediatrician and psychoanalysis expert D.W. Winnicots' theories of human action, this experimentation of philosophical knowledge through the proxy of a literary world is a form of play— which Winnicot deems essential to human development as it functions as an epistemological mode. It allows readers to explore "what if" scenarios, gauge cause and effects, experiment, and play around with a realistic world. Even the most fantastical realms are created by humans and as such, to some extent, will always have a sense of familiarity. This is because the inspiration behind such works of fiction will always derive from and be confined to the epistemological limitations of the subjective realities of human nature, perception, and society. That is to say that everything we write has some semblance of humanity or familiarity to it, and as such, literature, including the fantasy genre or as the defamiliarizing literature of the modernist movement, can never be all-together removed from discussions of life. Even far-off places like elfland, outerspace, or dystopian futures still resonate with humanlike qualities, only repackaged, such as racism against elves or aliens instead of against African Americans or Native Americans.

In that way, because literature offers readers this "play time," sometimes as interactive participants or more voyeuristic roles, one can glean and engage with a variety of different topics relating to life, such as how to most effectively live fulfilling lives, is life meaningless, what even is life, etc. Contrary to popular belief, this makes literary studies one of the more practical disciplines, as it contributes knowledge that is universally applicable and accessible for everyday life— it has a pervasive utility to it. This is how I will use the idea of practicality in this project— something that is accessible and useful in everyday life. "Play time" itself should be noted for its practicalness as well, at least in accordance with the questions that literature both poses and answers. It is impractical to discuss life and its big questions within the confines of theoreticals and vacuums. There is no science or mathematical formula to yield precise answers to all of life's questions.

For the aims of this project, the exploration of the artistic expression of life into literature, I will focus on the capstone modernist work, *Ulysses*, by James Joyce, because it offers a uniquely strange contribution to this discourse, one that transcends temporal contingencies and sociological, historical, and political contexts. It functions not with the singularity of mere reflection, revision, or reinforcement, but as a prominent overlap of the three hypotheses. Moreover, *Ulysses* focuses on a life that is seldomly appropriated for artistic expression— it is not interested in the rarities of life, it works with the less marketable and less interesting, ordinary life, which occupies space in both the the society, the domain of macroscale life, and the personal, the domain of the intimate life. Furthermore, by focusing on ordinary life instead of the rarities of life, *Ulysses* offers a different perspective on "what stories are worth telling." This is all to say that Ulysses is an embodiment of ordinary life, one that performs and celebrates it, and as such, in some ways, functions as a guide to life.

Modernism and Modern Life

Modernism is a notoriously slippery term to pin down when it comes to literary studies. It is more widely considered to be movement not just literature, but art, philosophy, and culture as well, that has, as Michael Levenson states, origins dating as far back as “Edgar Allan Poe and further back to Lord Byron and then back again to Laurence Sterne... François Vil-lon can be a precursor, as can Catullus or Petronius" (Modernism, 4). Its distinguishing marks, “such as discontinuity, collage, literary self-consciousness, irony, the use of myth…” (Modernism, 4), have traces in literature dating back to ancient Athens, making not just the concept of Modernism difficult to pin down, but its origins as well. Perry Anderson would go as far to say that “Modernism as a notion is the emptiest of all cultural categories. Unlike the terms Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Mannerist, Romantic, or Neoclassical, it designates no describable object in its own right” (qtd. In Modernism, 4). Michael Whitworth describes Modernism as “as inescapable but undecidable... Perhaps we are not modern, or not yet modern, even as we feel that we have crossed a threshold in history” (Modernism, 2), which suggests that Modernism is fluid— and in some ways, maybe perpetually existing, as something that can never end.

Richard Shepperd concludes that scholars generally take three approaches to defining Modernism as a genre, “The first consists of trying to define key features of modernism, and it may be subdivided into attempts to define a modernist worldview, such as nihilism or authoritarianism” (qtd. In Modernism, 5). According to Shepperd, the most controversial of the three is conceptualizing Modernism as a reactionary movement contingent on a “‘a one-dimensional historical, literary-historical, or sociological context,’” (qtd. In Modernism, 5) that centalizes around the emerging “megaloptian” and its “disconcontinuties” with previous movements, such as the idealism and nature-worshipping of Romanticism. The issue with this

definition is that it pins Modernism down to one time period, but as expressed before, traces of Modernism exist in ancient Athens. Furthermore, it is arguable whether or not Modernism has officially ended, or, as aforementioned, it is a perpetually occurring movement, as society perpetually modernizes. Notably, the earlier iterations of Modernism are linked to the ongoing industrialization of the late 19th and early 20th century. A bit later on, Modernism would be reconceptualized within the context of World War 1, and even later on, into late Modernism, the creation of the atomic bomb would serve as the new basis for Modernism. I would argue that even today we find ourselves in a similar experience, an increasingly modernizing world, through innovations in technology and global development, with a similar existential crisis in climate change that recreates the effects of prior existential threats, such as the WW1 and the atomic bomb—therein, Modernism can still be modernized. The final approach to defining Modernism is "also contextual, and could validly employ the language of cause and effect (e.g. of the 'products' and 'results' of historical moments), but in doing so attributes a more active role to modernist writing" (Modernism, 2). This suggests that Modernism is deeply intertwined with the chronology of its specific time period, sometimes with reverence and excitement of the incoming modernity, and, as aforementioned, sometimes with pessimism and ruefulness. What caused this desire to modernize society with technological advance? And furthermore, what are the effects of said technological advance; How is life different? What is lost? Can modernization go too far? In this way, Modernism functions as a heuristic process, it is a "response to its historical context is to try to understand it" (Modernism, 2). This is all to say that Modernism is a mode that is deeply concerned with society and life, as it remains in constant conversation with the effects of modernity and the discontinuities with tradition. This makes Modernism a rich

artifact of history for my project, that as explained, perhaps even has some relevance today, in our perpetual state of neverending modernization.

Levenson argues that Modernism really only comes into its own by virtue of its use of a novelty— the new. Modernism as a literary genre sought to mimic and "pictoralize" the upheavals caused by modern industry, modern life, modern technology, modern thinking, etc. It emphasized "the new," (Modernism, 4) and tried to abide by that as a guiding philosophy. Russian formalism, a literary movement, flourishes as a result of this. Russian Formalism focused on the style and arrangement of literature, often at the expense of the actual content. In *Art As Technique*, Viktor Shlovsky would introduce the concept of defamiliarization, which was a technique that gave language an estranging effect. It entails taking ordinary things and making them unfamiliar by use of language, which offers readers new ways of thinking about the familiar, oftentimes, more critically. As such, it came to symbolize this notion of "the new" for Modernist literature and led to radically provocative uses of language and structure, such as in *Ulysses*. I will analyze *Ulysses*' style in chapter two, but I ultimately take an overall approach more aligned with New Criticism, a competing form of Formalism that focuses on the synthesis of both style and content. The use of defamiliarization in *Ulysses* achieves an estrangement effect, wherein the audience is distanced from the text, which, according to Bertolt Brecht, offers readers a vantage point to consume the literature more critically. Moreover, he contends that because of the ability to consume critically, it then is more successful at inciting audiences and influencing them— this will be important for understanding how *Ulysses*, a new type of novel with radically provocative and defamiliarizing style and content, is able to function as both a guide to life and as a world of play that encourages critical engagement from its readers— most effectively brought out from its distancing effect. For all of these reasons, Modernism and

Ulysses are invaluable to the discussion of life and literature, as not only are they in constant conversation with the life around them, but they offer readers a world to play in that provokes critical thinking.

Ordinary life

Ordinary life, despite its shared experience between all of man, is also slippery to define in terms of a concrete definition. Even more challenging is representing ordinary life in accordance with such concrete definitions, as scholars of everyday discourse note, it typically introduces a paradox. This is because ordinary life is most ubiquitously defined by virtue of its lack of interesting value— its normalcy and the lack of meticulous attention paid to it. It is the realm of life we most oftenly autonimized through without much critical thought, such as driving to familiar places, showering, eating, etc. Therefore, by representing ordinary life through different mediums, specifically literature, the artist introduces a paradox, namely by giving attention to something that is defined by the lack of attention paid to it.

First, we need to establish a concrete definition of ordinary life and the everyday, both terms are synonymous and interchangeable. There is an instinct to define them as emergent constructions highly influenced by temporal moments and cultural contexts. For instance, what is ordinary for those of us alive in the 21st century is vastly different from what is ordinary for James Joyce, born in the late 19th century. Moreover, there is also a tendency to define the ordinary through subjective and sociological forces. An ordinary day for the bourgeoisie is different from the ordinary day of the proletariat. Even Henri Lefebvre, considered to be the originator of everyday discourse in the modern age, posits a corpus that, as Liesl Olson notes in *Ordinary life In Modernism*, “registers very specific economic and cultural shifts in France after the Second World War” (13).

For the purpose of a solid concrete definition of the ordinary that is not contingent on very specific cultural and temporal landscapes, I will turn to Liesl Olson herself, as she introduces three definitions. The first two definitions coincide with each other, as Olson claims the ordinary "is an affective experience of the world characterized by inattention or absentmindedness" and "the ordinary also consists of activities and things that are most frequently characterized by our inattention to them*"* (6). Her third and final definition is: "the ordinary can be a mode of organizing life and representing it; it is a style, best represented by the routine, and aesthetic forms such as the list, or linguistic repetition, both of which attempt to embody the ordinary, to perform it" (6). This last definition is the most interesting, particularly the idea of the ordinary as an "aesthetic form," a mimesis of ordinary life, or, as Olson claims herself, an embodiment.

Ulysses' depiction of ordinary life is most transparently represented through its content. The very first image readers see is "plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed" (Joyce, 3). This is an activity characterized by its lack of interesting value and normalcy. This opening passage is simply Buck Mulligan's morning routine as the words "bowl of lather," "mirror," and "razor" signify the act of shaving— familiar to nearly everybody and practiced by most men and some women, yet seldomly ever granted significance or attention. The novel unravels in the same way, where the narrative follows two characters, Stephen Dedalus and Mr. Bloom, throughout their unremarkable and routined day in Dublin. Few significant things happen, the novel mostly consists of just everyday occurrences such as eating, using the bathroom, grocery shopping, more eating, farts, etc. However, it is reductive to say that *Ulysses* only represents and reflects ordinary life, as it does have a proper underlying philosophy about life and furthermore, questions and

advice on life— all of which is conveyed initially and moist obviously through the content, i.e. Bloom and Stephnen's unremarkable day in Dublin.

Chapter 1: An Unremarkable Day in Dublin

At the heart of *Ulysses*' plot is Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, typically referred to as Mr. Bloom. From these characters, two dominant interpretations are posited by scholars within Joyce studies. The first being incredibly simple and often reductive, it is the fixation of, as Jay Montresor states in *Joyce 's Jewish Stew: The Alimentary Lists in Ulysses*, Mr. Blooms' "earthy materiality in contrast to Stephen's spirituality" (Montresor, 201). As we will see, the comparison between the two goes a lot further than this. Mr. Bloom appropriates traits that are distinct from this idea of just "earthy materiality" but admittedly are still similar in nature— the same goes for Stephen in respect to his "spirituality." It is impossible to simplify and reduce the comparison of these two complex characters down to single traits. Stephen himself represents this idea of the abstract intellectual, that prioritizes and concerns themself not just with general spirituality, but with all things art, mind, soul, and the immaterial world. Whereas Mr. Bloom is positioned as his opposite, encompassing not just "earthy materiality" but all things physical, favoring the likes of science, the body, the material world.

The other dominant interpretation involves Joyce himself as an essential component in the relationship between Stephen and Mr. Bloom. Stephen is often regarded as Joyce's literary alter ego, as he closely resembles the traits and events of a youthful Joyce. This is more discernible from Joyce's other work, like *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man*, which focuses more around Stephen. In *Ulysses,* the similarities are still present, such as Stephen's refusal to, like Joyce, pray for his mother on her deathbed. In this understanding, scholars contend, Mr. Bloom would represent both aspects of present Joyce, the one at the time of writing *Ulysses*, and of an ideal future Joyce. The two characters' unremarkable day in Dublin would then come to represent the evolution of who Joyce was to who he is now and who he wants to be. Most

notably, this idea is present in the Scylla and Charybdis episode, as Stephen in the library offers a theory claiming that much of Shakspeare's literary canon resembles close events and characteristics of his own life. In this theory, Stephen relates Shakspeare's Hamlet character to Shakespeare's real life deceased son, Hamnet. Furthermore, Hamlet's mother Gertrude to Shakespeare's own wife, Anne Hathaway. What we see here is the transcribing of life into literature and art, and the proposition that it is very difficult, even impossible at times, to separate the two.

For this chapter, I want to occupy the overlap between these two interpretations. I suggest that the essences of Stephen and Mr. Bloom, their core personality traits and characters, are differing representations of approaches to life— the Artist vs. the Scientist. Furthermore, I contend that *Ulysses*, since it posits one character as an ideal, is not neutral in this conversation. It positions the Scientist, which incidentally is related to Mr. Bloom, as a more favorable approach to life. This is how *Ulysses* assumes its role as a guide to life— offering both life advice and perspective.

The Artist, Stephen Dedalus

The main character for this first portion of the novel, Stephen Dedalus, offers an interesting line in Telemachus: "I am the servant of two masters... The Imperial British state, Stephen answered" (Joyce, 17). Here, we see clearly the link between time periods and depictions of life— for the Irish in 1904, the year that *Ulysses* takes place in, the Irish were still under British rule. Accordingly, the British seem to dominate a large portion of the intimate ordinary life of the Irish. Furthermore, in this opening episode, Stephen and Haines, an Englishman, both of whom are staying with a mutual friend named Mulligan, get into a tense exchange, wherein Haines plays the role of the disingenuous British imperialist, replying to

Stephen's aforementioned comment, "I can quite understand that… An Irishman must think like that, I daresay. We feel in English that we have treated you rather unfairly" (Joyce, 17). This first episode is more aligned with Albrecht's first hypothesis— literature as a reflection of life. At surface level, this scene is just an ordinary morning routine, with conversations of Irishness and British imperialism serving as morning chatter. It is reflecting life of an ordinary morning in 1904 Dublin, a state still under an infiltrating British influence that remains prevalent even in the intimate everyday lives of Dubliners.

One of the more interesting scenes to come out of the first chapter involves Stephen's interaction with the milk lady. Assuming the role of an artful voyeur, Stephen watches her, thinking: "Old and secret she had entered from a morning world, maybe a messenger. She praised the goodness of the milk, pouring it out...A wandering crone, serving her conqueror..." (Joyce, 12). Stephen is giving the milk woman an entire backstory and fictitious scenario, in which she is transformed into an older more traditional woman that tends to the cows— a stereotype that harkens back to the past idealization of the proper Irish woman. Moreover, the phrase "serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer," refers back to Haines, the Englishman, who she is serving by virtue of delivering the milk. Later on, it is revealed that she actually does not know any Irish at all, as she asks: "Is it french you are talking, sir?" (Joyce, 12) to which Mulligan replies, "Irish"— completely invalidating Stephen's imagining of her as a traditional Irish woman. This transformation, of one thing into another, lies at the heart of this episode.

Let us return to Mulligan's opening scene to test this chapter's insistence on transformation. The first scene of Mulligan's morning shave is not necessarily just a morning shave— there is a transformative element to it that resembles Stephen's transformation of the milk lady. After Mulligan walks down the staircase with the bowl, "he held the bowl aloft and

intoned: Introibo ad altare Dei" (James Joyce, 3). Mulligan is performing a mock religious ritual signified by the word "intoned" and the phrase "Introibo ad altare Dei," meaning "I will go to the altar of the Gods" in Latin, the language of the church. This ordinary activity is transformed into a highly artistic religious act, further reinforced by Mulligan's religious utterances sporadically dispersed throughout the episode, such as "[Mulligan] crossed himself piously with his thumbnail at brow and lips and breastbone" (Joyce, 18) a mock religious gesture, and more explicitly, "Ah, go to God!" (Joyce, 18). This idea of transforming ordinary life into these artful imaginings becomes an essential theme of Stephen and his respective episodes, mainly Telemachus, Nestor, and Proteus.

Proteus offers the most prominent distillation of this theme. In this episode, Stephen is walking around the beach and begins to ponder the fabric of reality and the role his mind and perception can play in his personal conceptualization of reality. The episode opens with "Ineluctable modality of the visible" (Joyce, 31), a reference to Aristotle's theory of reality, wherein Stephen admits its "Ineluctability" or inescapable nature. He then goes on to say this: "Signatures of all things I am here to read" (Joyce, 31). The use of the word "read" here suggests interpretation, and in some ways, transformation. He continues: "...seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Sontgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs," (Joyce, 31). Stephen here is on one hand, admitting that the material world is an all-encompassing, inescapable realm. On the other hand, he concedes that there still are avenues for subjectivity, by that I mean, interpretation, imagination, transformation. In a metaphysical realm, such as in our minds, these avenues of subjective thought have the power to alter and change the world around us— as a mode of manipulating perception, sometimes consciously, sometimes not. The power of subjectivity is what ultimately gives us things like culturally rich understandings of the

universe— is it the Earth's rotation on an axis that gives us seasons, or is it Persophone returning to and from the underworld? As an artist, Stephen, much like an embodiment of literature, is able to create art with the world around him. His method of creation relies heavily on his ability to transform though.

Proteus, alongside with the Telemachus, establishes Stephen as a spiritual and artful figure. Within the novel, he represents the side of man that is obsessively concerned with finding meaning and transforming ordinary moments into moments of high drama and high art. Throughout *Ulysses*, he is constantly connected to literature, philosophy, the abstract, the metaphysical, the mind, art, etc. At times, he is even compared to Hamlet from *Hamlet*, which is another way of transforming ordinary life, and in this case, an ordinary person, into something of high art. I will touch on this later in the Scylla and Charybdis episode. Fittingly, when it comes to *Ulysses'* depiction of ordinary life, Stephen represents all these things— the artful, superfluous and pompous transmutation of ordinary life.

The Scientist, Leopold Bloom

Stephen only represents one approach to ordinary life— there is another characterized by his foil Mr. Bloom. Calypso beings with the introduction of Mr. Bloom:

> "Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcumbs...Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine" (Joyce, 45).

The extensive list of different meat dishes likens Mr. Bloom to that of a carnivorous animal. It is a fleshy bodily introduction, which stands in opposition to Stephen's more spiritual nature. Later on in the same episode, Mr. Bloom "kicked open the crazy door of the jakes...Leaving the door

ajar, amid the stench of mouldy limewash and stale cobwebs he undid his braces" (Joyce, 56). The phrase "door of the jakes" refers to an outhouse and "he undid his braces" indicates that Mr. Bloom is about to relieve himself. Here, he is established as a contrast to Stephen's identity as the man of the mind— Mr. Bloom is, instead, the man of the body.

Mr. Bloom further contrasts Stephen in Hades, as he has an interesting thought about death. At Patrick Dignam's funeral, Mr. Bloom thinks while surveying the tombstones, "More room if they buried them standing. Sitting or kneeling you couldn't. Standing?" (Joyce, 105). Instead of lamenting the moment, mourning, or taking the Stephen approach of transforming, Mr. Bloom is quite simply just concerned with the pragmatism of death. When he thinks "More room if he buried them standing," he is thinking of the logistical process in burying all of the deceased— eventually, if we continue at this rate, there will come a day when there is no room left to bury the dead. So, to save space, Mr. Bloom considers and somewhat even argues that bodies ought to be buried standing up. While Stephen is concerned with spirituality and the question of what happens with the soul when we die, Mr. Bloom is more concerned with what we do with the body.

In Nausicaa, Mr. Bloom's representation as the man of the body gets expanded to just the entire landscape of the physical world. After some distant flirtatious banter with the silhouette of a distant woman, Gerty, whom he sees on the beach, the bazaar fireworks starts: "And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind blank and O! And then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! And everyone cried O! O… Then all melted away dewily in the grey air…" (Joyce, 300). This moment opposes Stephen's earlier moment with the milk woman. In this case, Gerty is the one creating this imagined romance of Mr. Bloom, whom she only catches glimpses of in the dark, as a distant silhouette in the night. She creates, in the same vein as Stephen, this entire

fictitious moment of everlasting romance between herself and this complete stranger. That stranger, Mr. Bloom, conversely, is masturbating to her, signified by the phallicism of the "rocket" and "sprang," and the excessive use of "O"— simulating an orgasm. Thereby, the dynamic, of not only these two different men but two different approaches to life, is directly juxtaposed here but with Gerty taking the place of Stephen. Furthermore, Mr. Bloom in this moment is stimulating himself physically; appealing to his physical, animalistic, and natural sensibilities. In that way, this orgasm scene rivals that of Stephen's Proteus episode, where he, instead, stimulates his mind by virtue of his intellectual musings about reality. The dynamic is thus expanded to not only be man and mind, body and soul, material and metaphysical, but now, the physical and the mental as well.

Mr. Bloom proves himself to be, instead of the man of art or spirituality, the man of science. In Cyclops, in the conversation between Mr. Bloom and a few of the tavern regulars, notably Alf, Bergen, the Citizen, and Joe, the topic of hanging comes up and the men start discussing the idea of "hanging" as a method of public execution. They start talking about how one criminal executed had an erection when he died, to which, Mr. Bloom interjects: "That can be explained by science... It's only a natural phenomenon…" (Joyce, 292). The narrator then interrupts Mr. Bloom: "The distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft tendered medical evidence to the effect that the instantaneous fracture of the cervical vertebrae and consequent scission of the spinal cord would, according to the best approved traditions of medical science" (Joyce, 292). Mr. Bloom is established as the man of science by virtue of his insistence on interjecting with scientific knowledge, to the behest of the narrator, who mocks him for it by satrically appropriating the style of a scientific journal, not as a means of transformation but as faithful yet pretentious science jargon filled obfuscation. The man of science is closely

linked to Mr. Bloom's fascination with technology as well. As in Hades, Mr. Bloom, upon seeing the tombstones, ponders over the latest invention: "Besides, how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house" (93). Mr. Bloom embraces technology as well, which falls under the umbrella concept of science.

The Collision of Art and Science

Ulysses does not necessarily always pit these two approaches against each other. There is more nuance and synthesis to the conversation, as seen by the characters themselves. There is a plot among the seemingly pointless movements of the novel wherein the meeting of these contrasting forces is teased consistently. Stephen's mother, as revealed in Telemachus, passed away recently: "O, it's only Dedalus whose mother is beastly dead" (Joyce, 7). In Hades, it is revealed that Mr. Bloom lost his son Rudy shortly after birth: "If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son" (Joyce, 86). The final piece of the puzzle lies in this exchange between Molly and Mr. Bloom in Calypso:

> "— Met him what? he asked.
>
> — Here, she said.
>
> What does that mean?
>
> He leaned downward and read near her polished thumbnail.
>
> — Metempsychosis?
>
> — Yes. Who's he when he's at home?
>
> — Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. It's Greek : from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls" (Joyce, 62).

The attention paid to this word, metempsychosis, as the characters literally point to it, suggests its overall importance for the entirety of the novel. In relation to the aforementioned deceased family members, this plotline becomes teased: the soul of Rudy is going to transmigrate into Stephen and the soul of Stephen's mother is going to transmigrate into Mr. Bloom, and by virtue of this transmigration, the two characters will be able to replace their lost loved ones with each other.

One immediate issue with this metempsychosis is Mr. Bloom's sex. How can he ever replace Stephen's mother while not even being the same sex? We actually see Mr. Bloom bend the idea of sex and gender a few times. Most notably, his more feminine interest in flowers, his name reinforcing that interest, his constant emasculation by virtue of being a cuckold, and most graphically, the bath scene. He imagines himself in a bath:

> "He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunks and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (Joyce, 71).

The use of the word "womb" immediately gives the scene a feminine and sensual connotation, as does the "melting soap, softly laved." His complete emasculation comes when his male genital is compared to a "languid floating flower." The flower during the time of Modernism was constantly compared to the female genitalia, as seen by the public controversy regarding Georgia O'keefes flower paintings. This scene encapsulates female eroticism, which not only bends Mr. Bloom's gender, but suggests this idea that Mr. Bloom, despite his sex being male, can still replace Stephen's deceased mother.

Ulysses, after setting the foundation of this symbiotic relationship between the two characters, slowly starts to build to their encounter. The first tease comes with Mr. Bloom's interactions with Simon Dedalus, Stephen's father, at Dignam's funeral. At the funeral, Simon visits the grave of his deceased partner, May Dedalus: " Her grave is over there, Jack, Mr Dedalus said" (Joyce, 101). May Dedalus is the mother of Stephen Dedalus, the same mother he refused to pray for. In response to Simon, "Mr. Bloom closed his eyes and sadly twice bowed his head" (Joyce, 101), in reverence of Simon's deceased partner. Mr. Bloom in this scene is positioned in direct correlation, perhaps in some ways as a replacement, to May Dedalus, and to some extent, Simon himself, who concedes "I'll soon be stretched beside her,"— leaving Stephen an orphan. This is the initial setup for the Stephen and Mr. Bloom transmigration plotline.

Between the Hades episode and the final moments of Stephen and Mr. Bloom's day, they cross paths a few times, mostly coincidentally and insignificantly. At the end of the Scylla and Charybdis episode, Mr. Bloom walks between Stephen and Mulligan outside the library, to which Mulligan says: "The wandering jew... did you see his eye? He looked upon you to lust after you…" (Joyce, 209). The "wandering jew" refers to Mr. Bloom and the "lust" is most explicitly connected to Mulligan's homophobia, which he has displayed throughout the episode, usually as a commentary of Mr. Bloom. Perhaps Mullgian, as a visibly homophobic character, is not a reliable narrator, and "lust" is an innacruate descriptor of the glance— or we could interpret the "love" connotation of the word lust to be associated with familial love or platonic. Regardless, the moment registers as a very significant development of the plot, once again, teasing the inevitable encounter between these two characters.

There are more micro-interactions between the two until they finally officially share the scene together in Oxen and the Sun and have more meaningful interaction. Stephen and Mr. Bloom finally meet officially in a hospital, Stephen accompanied with some of his medical school friends:

> "...sir Leopold that had of his body no manchild for an heir looked upon him his friend's son and was shut up in sorrow for his forepassed happiness and as sad as he was that him failed a son of such gentle courage (for all accounted him of real parts) so grieved he also in no less measure for young Stephen for that he lived riotously with those wastrels and murdered his goods with whores" (Joyce, 373).

At this point, the plot reveals itself more explicitly, with the line "of his body nomanchild for an heir looked upon him his friend's son," and the transmigration process is beginning, signified by the use of "nomanchild" in reference to Rudy's death and "heir" in reference to the transmigration and replacement process. The process begins with more teasing, as Mr. Bloom just thinks affectionately about Stephen at first. Mr. Bloom both compliments him, saying that he "murdered his goods," with bad company and insults him for his "riotously lived" life, in a nurturing parental way. Another huge development occurs during the thunderstorm:

> "Master Bloom, at the braggart's side, spoke to him calming words to slumber his great fear, advertising how it was no other thing but a hubbub noise that he heard, the discharge of fluid from from the thunderhead… all of the order of a natural phenomenon" (Joyce, 323).

Mr. Bloom uses a scientific explanation to explain away the fears of a thunderstorm— which hitherto was considered, by the braggart, Stephen, to be an act of God's anger. Mr. Bloom attempts to nurture and comfort Stephen, further teasing the metempsychosis process. At the

same time, since the two characters embody two different approaches to life, this scene to some extent embraces the side of a pragmatic approach to life, wherein a science overrides religious transformation. The scene also functions as an embrace of the modernization of life as well— it is not necessarily a denouncement of the god fearing past, but rather appreciative and respectful, but still cognizant of the impending progressive future, wherein science can, in some instances, explain away God.

In Eumaeus, the novel reaches its highest point of action and the metempsychosis plotline finally culminates— somewhat. After a lucid journey through Dublin's red light district in Circe, the two characters sit down at a restaurant for a late dinner. They talk about a wide array of things, for instance, Bloom asks Stephen, after admiring the italian language, "Why do you not write your poetry in that language? Bella Poetria!" (Joyce, 578). Stephen replies after yawning: "To fill the ear of a cow elephant" (Joyce, 578). The two do not seem to agree with each other on the beauty of the Italian language and Stephen's yawn suggests how bored he is with the conversation. They then move on to conversations about the soul, as Mr. Bloom says:

> "You, as a good catholic, he observed, talking of body and soul, believe in the soul. Or do you mean the intelligence, the brainpower as such, as distinct from any outside object, the table, let us say, that cup? I believe in that myself because it has been explained by competent men as the convolutions of the grey matter. Otherwise we would never have such inventions as X rays, for instance. Do you?" (Joyce, 588).

Mr. Bloom is asking Stephen if he believes in the concept of an abstract and immaterial soul, or if he believes in intelligence, which takes the concrete form of the brain, "an outside object." He is directly addressing the competing forces between the two approaches, the pragmatic exterior world or the abstract interior world— ultimately, he favors the pragmatic.

Stephen replies, favoring the abstract: “They tell me on the best authority it is a simple substance and therefore incorruptible. It would be immortal, I understand…” (Joyce, 588). In this instance, “they” refers to religious dogma and of which Stephen appropriates— wherein the soul is this immaterial and immortal abstract essence, entirely different from what Mr. Bloom calls intelligence. The two men argue about it for a good bit until the narrator finally interjects:

> “On this knotty point, however, the views o f the pair, poles apart as they were, both in schooling and everything else, with the marked difference in their respective ages, clashed” (Joyce, 589).

This idea summarizes the rest of the interactions between Stephen and Mr. Bloom— the two clash and differ on nearly everything. It is in this dinner scene where the readers might expect a dramatized reincarnation or cinematic metempsychosis of deceased loved ones into living subjects— but *Ulysses* instead offers an awkward conversation. This is one of Joyce’s most effective way of portraying ordinary life, instead of offering that ultimate payoff, that moment of magic and cinema, befit and expected for the medium of the novel, the one he poked, prodded, and teased in every single episode— instead of all that, he offers something more realistic, something more akin to ordinary life; unmagical, normal, and insignificant.

The only payoff, the cinematic moment of *Ulysses* and of these two competing forces, comes at the end of the episode. As they get ready to leave the restaurant, Stephen questions:

> “One thing I never understood, he said, to be original on the spur of the moment, why they put tables upside down at night, I mean chairs upside down on the tables in cafés” (Joyce, 613).

It is a bit ironic that Stephen, with all his intellectual musings, his obsession with these big ideas of aesthetics, ontology, metaphysics, asks a question like this— a question not above the clouds but of practicality, logistics, and everydayness. To which, Mr. Bloom offers:

"To sweep the floor in the morning" (Joyce, 614).

This is *Ulysses'* shift away from those bigger questions and towards the embrace of the practical approach to life— wherein one is not constantly tortured by intellectual musings and bigger questions, but rather, just recognizes humanity and life as first and foremost, the realm of the corporeal. In some ways, *Ulysses* suggests that the pragmatic approach to life is perhaps ideal and even more fulfilling.

Matthew Jibu George is right to say that *Ulysses* is the celebration of the body. He also writes that: "nothing else is more everyday than the physical life of men and women.... The primary functions of daily life are of the body" (George, 194). By this he means *Ulysses'* content, the fixation on primary functions of everyday life, by virtue farting, peeing, release of bowels, masturbation, sleeping, sex, and, returing to the first scene, the shaving, function not just as "celebration of the body," but a "celebration of the everyday" (George, 194). Furthermore, since the body is linked to the practical and science, the celebration of the body functions as a celebration of the practical approach to life, what I call, the Bloomsian approach to life, the one that resists transformation and pretentiousness— and celebrates modernity, science, materiality, and pragmatism.

Chapter 2

Ordinary Techniques

We could expand on this first chapter further and analyze just how ordinary the day in *Ulysses* actually is within the context of a middle class Irish man in 1904 Dublin. We could trace Mr. Bloom more closely throughout his day— starting with breakfast, grocery shopping, drinks at the bar, work, him using the toilet, conversations with friends, etc. Still, it would only reinforce what we have already discussed, that nothing really remarkable happens on this day in1904 Dublin. *Ulysses*' excessive lack of remarkable moments makes the novel feel more like an anti-novel at times, one that resists depictions of the rarities of life in favor of something more routine— something more ordinary. However, this close reading would only cover one half of *Ulysses*' embodiment of the ordinary, most closely resonating with the first two definitions of Olson's ordinary: "affective experience" and "activities." *Ulysses* as an embodiment of the ordinary still, I argue, has a timelessness attributed to it, one that experiments with the very essence of the ordinary and transcends temporal, cultural, subjective, and sociological contexts. It captures the ordinary in a way so that the subject matter, the unremarkable day in Dublin, has a limited impact in *Ulysses*' embodiment of the ordinary. By that, I mean that if Joyce were to replace the content of *Ulysses* with something more remarkable such as the rarities of life, but maintained the same exact style, arrangement, and aesthetic, the resulting product would still retain some semblance of ordinariness. This is because the style, arrangement, and aesthetic, serve the aims of embodying the ordinary just as much as the content does.

In the conversation about the ordinary as an aesthetic form, Olson mentions lists, which proliferate throughout the second half of *Ulysses,* claiming that they are a stylistic choice that achieves this "embodiment of the everyday." These lists widely contribute, stylistically and

aesthetically, to *Ulysses*' embodiment of the ordinary. Ultimately, Olson and other scholars have developed a discourse surrounding the lists in *Ulysses* on the premise that they are an "attempt to record the exact history of one day in Dublin" (Olson, 46), almost like an eternally stoic photograph. Jaye Berman Montresor makes a similar observation, as he claims that "List-making is one of the ways that Joyce parodies the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* where the catalogue of ships and games serve as reminders that Homer's epics were originally recited" (Montresor, 198). In this sense, the "catalogue of ships and games" too tries to recreate and record the exact history of one moment in time in ancient Greece. At the same time, there's an arbitrariness to the lists, which gives the appearance that the items on the list are being "remembered at that moment" (Montresor, 196). This is how Olson fleshes out her main argument that "*Ulysses* comprehends the ordinary by keeping it open, and letting it go" (55). What Olson means by this is that *Ulysses* "lets the ordinary go" by recreating it exactly as one sees it by means of lists and infusing it into that recreation into the text. At the same time, *Ulysses* "keeps it open," due to the arbitrariness of the content of the lists and the impossibility of completion of said lists.

These two ideas adequately unravel the aforementioned paradox, but there is a piece of the puzzle to *Ulysses*' stylistic embodiment of the ordinary that Olson fails to mention—stream-of-consciousness. I argue that *Ulysses*' stream-of-consciousness operates in nearly the exact same way— it captures the ordinary stylistically as a mode that, like the lists, functions as a sort of record-keeping. This is because stream-of-consciousness is constantly reacting to and influenced by its surroundings, and therefore, stream-of-consciousness is record of not just the reactions, but the surroundings themselves. More importantly, stream-of-consciousness too "comprehends the ordinary by keeping it open, and letting it go" (55). I argue that *Ulysses* operates holistically— that the stylistic shift from stream-of-consciousness to list-making and

then back to stream-of-consciousness registers as a rhetorical edge. *Ulysses* displays its philosophy of the ordinary through this rhetorical edge; as something that can be, untransformed and in all its rawness, still quite meaningful.

Before we begin, a note: Stream-of-consciousness has a convoluted history outlined in Robert Humprey's *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. Originating as a term in the field of psychology by William James before it was ever appropriated for literary studies, it originally was used to describe the movement of consciousness, which James discovered to be more of a stream or flow, as opposed to what was hitherto thought to be a chain. In the realm of literary studies, the term is used more broadly, as an "approach to the presentation of psychological aspects of character in fiction" (Humphrey, 1). This is how I will use the term for this chapter. *Ulysses* stream-of-consciousness resembles something of an impressionistic painting, a bunch of vomited and fragmented words that together create a full picture.

As Olson argues, because *Ulysses* is "letting [the ordinary] go," (55) it is also resisting "transformative moments," (Olson, 55), which coincides with the Bloomsian approach discussed in the first chapter. I instead contend that *Ulysses* is not so binary.

"Keeping it open"

To start, we must first understand how the lists embody the ordinary by "keep it open." To clarify this and elaborate on Olson's point about arbitrariness, I will turn to a specific example: the list of Irish heroes that appears in Cyclops. This list includes several entries that could be considered befitting for a list of Irish heroes, including Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, etc. These entries all have historical or mythological credentials to justify their inclusion on the list. Further down the list, these entries appear "Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar," which conversely, have very little, if any historical or

mythological credentials to justify their inclusion. Olson understands these entries to be mistakes, which highlights the "arbitrariness of list-making," (52) as they include "disparate items that in no way fit" (52). In that sense, the lists remain open to some extent, suggesting "that many other items might be added to each list without changing the overall effect" (52), because the arbitrariness of the lists suggests that the entries are being "remembered at that moment" (Montresor, 196). This openness is also suggested by the list's introduction: "From his girdle hung a row of seasons… and on these were graven… striking art the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity…" (Joyce, 244). The word "many" is equivalent to "not all," meaning that there are certainly other Irish heroes that could, and should be on this list, but for one reason or another or not. Due to the arbitrariness of the list, it is likely that the Irish heroes not included were simply just forgotten at the moment of the list's creation. If we return to our definitions of the ordinary, specifically the "inattention" aspects, we understand then that the lists are a stylistic embodiment of the ordinary because they "point to a world beyond the text" (Olson, 49) by means of the entries excluded from the lists— a world that is composed of entries that did not make it onto the actual list, the forgotten Irish heroes, such as Oscar Wilde, St. Patrick, Robert Boyle, etc., all now marked by the inattention paid to them. This style represents things precisely by not representing them, which unravels the paradoxical sequence typically created by representing the ordinary, wherein giving things attention, removes some of its ordinariness. It surpasses mere representation of the ordinary at this point, as this style directly infuses the ordinary into the rhetoric and narrative of the text itself— not just what story is told, but how it is being told. Ultimately, this is how *Ulysses* not only represents and embodies the ordinary, but how it completely takes on the aesthetic form of the ordinary.

The stream-of-consciousness mode too maintains this openness by virtue of nearly identical techniques. In Eumaeus Mr. Bloom recounts the long day he has had,and his interior dialogue spills out onto the page: “Long day I’ve had. Martha, the bath, funeral, house of Keyes, museum with those goddesses, Dedalus’ song. Then that Brawler in Barney Kiernan’s. Got my own back there” (Joyce, 311). Mr. Bloom fails to mention all the other things that he has done with his day, such as the pork, the newspaper office, the restaurant, etc. The aspects of Mr. Bloom’s day that escaped his consciousness resonates with Olson’s arbitrariness, as many other things should be thought of and considered but are not— it is, in a similar vein to the missing entries from the “Irirsh heroes list,” a “world beyond the text” composed of things that we pay inattention to. Furthermore, the stream-of-consciousness is in constant motion here, rapidly turning and twisting from one thought to the next, evidenced by Mr. Bloom’s quick discursive dive into the “Brawler in Barney Kiernan’s,” in which he now fixates his attention onto entirely, further elaborating “Got my own back there.” The rapid movement from one thought to the next without much linearity also attributes arbitrariness to the stream-of-consciousness style— its direction is unpredictable and seemingly random. For the first half and final episodes of *Ulysses*, stream-of-consciousness is transcribing consciousness into the text and due to its pervasiveness and arbitrariness, it attributes an infinite “openness” of “worlds beyond the text” itself.

The aforementioned stream-of-consciousness example is convenient; it is, after all, a pseudo-list of Mr. Bloom’s day, so it makes sense that it shares the same openness that the “Irish heroes” list has. Notably, it shows how similar the two styles are and how a stream-of-consciousness can quickly turn into a more organized list. This will be important for understanding the shift from stream-of-consciousness to the lists. For now, it is important to note that stream-of-consciousness is still, regardless of this specific example, inherently linked to

openness— it is essential to the mode's style. William James notes about human psychology: "memories, thoughts, and feelings exist outside the primary consciousness," (qtd. in Humphrey, 1) which begs the question, how fully can the stream-of-consciousness mode capture all of one's consciousness, in its complete entirety? Similar to the lists, stream-of-consciousness can never be finalized to completely encapsulate all of human consciousness. There will always exist memories, thoughts, and feelings that, as James notes, "exist outside primary consciousness,"— stream-of-consciousness, due to its inherent openness, must always be arbitrary.

Molly's monologue in Penelope is a noteworthy example of the stream-of-consciousness mode that explores stream-of-consciousness' inherent openness unrelated to lists. Her entire monologue is eight sentences spanning many pages, which highlights the infinite nature in its refusal to abide by linearity and work towards a teleological end. One of Joyce's great jokes is that the number eight, the number of sentences in Penelope, can be turned on its side to form the infinity symbol, further representing the episode's infinite nature. Fittingly, in the gilbert schema, Joyce even drew an infinity symbol in the time column for this chapter. To look more closely at the content, the first sentence moves in quick succession, from thought to thought, unrestricted by means of time or topic. The first two lines read: "Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting for that old faggot Mrs. Riordan…" (Joyce, 608). The sequence goes as follows: it begins with Molly, then shifts to a past morning breakfast, to further in the past at City Arms Hotel, where he pretended to use a sick voice to make himself interesting for Mrs. Riodan. This rapid movement between thoughts, time periods, and people attributes a discursiveness to the stream-of-consciousness mode, wherein it can branch off into many different directions—

seemingly infinite directions. From pretending to be sick for Mrs. Riordan, Molly's thoughts then move towards: "...when theyre sick they want a woman to get well if his nose bleeds youd think it was O tragic and that dyinglooking one off the south circular when he sprained his foot at the choir party at the sugarloaf Mountain the day I wore that dress Miss Stack bringing him flowers the worst ones she could fine…" (Joyce, 608). Here, the discursiveness only intensifies, as Molly moves through a commentary on men and women relations, to a memory of Mr. Bloom spraining his foot at a choir party, to a day where Miss stack brought him flowers. The lack of punctuation, commas, apostrophes, and anything else that would slow down the relay of information, suggests that there is way too much information to traverse and way too little time. Also, Molly is starting to combine words, such as "dyinglooking," for similar reasons— there is not enough time to get through everything, so she must rush to get through everything. Much like the lists, the stream-of-consciousness can never be a complete closed encapsulation of one's consciousness— there will always be an openness to it, a different branch of consciousness to explore.

"Keeping the ordinary open" by means of these methods does more than just unravel the paradox of representing the ordinary— it attributes to the ordinary a sort of infinity, a world of endlessness. This shows the potential of ordinary life, even without transforming it— in its vastness, it can fill space. Stream-of-consciousness and lists become a poignant metaphor for ordinary life: ordinary life, much like stream-of-consciousness and lists, is constantly in motion because of its openness, and therefore, constantly filling space in life that would otherwise be empty. The rarities of life are aberrations, they do not happen everyday— and when they are not in effect, ordinary life is. Without ordinary life, our lives would consist of waiting for the next

rarity to happen, the next aberration, the next story that we deem worthy of telling. It would be significantly more empty. ORDINARY LIFE IS WORTH TELLING

“Letting it go”

To understand what Olson means by the phrase “letting it go,” I will now turn to another list from *Ulysses*: Mr. Bloom’s “budget” list (Joyce, 584) of his expenses for June 16, 1904 that appears in Ithaca. The “budget” list is formatted on the page to look as if it were an actual list directly scanned into the book. It includes every transaction that Mr. Bloom makes on June 16, 1904, including the Pork Kidney, Bambury Cakes, Tramfare, and even the loan to Stephen. For that reason, this list most closely resembles the lists that Montresor and Olson reference, the “record-keeping” and “cataloging of ships" seen in the *Odyssey* and *Illiad.* Instead of ships, this list instead opts to keep a record and catalogue Mr. Bloom’s transactions and by extension, his movements throughout the day. In this regard, the “budget” list still serves the same function as the lists in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, as it captures with near exact precision a moment in time; Mr. Bloom’s day. In Eumaeus, the “mourners" list (Joyce, 529) does the same thing, except it keeps a record of the funeral attendees and by extension a record of some of the people in Dublin, at least where they were at the time of the funeral. The “mourners" list is read directly from a pink magazine named the *Telegraph*, formatted as if it were a newspaper article, which functions similarly to the scanning in of the “budget” list— wherein both lists seem to take on a form of how they actually would appear, rather than modified versions of themselves to better suit a narrative. This is where the “letting it go” aspect materializes, as most of the longer and more substantial lists do not conform to flow nicely into the overarching narrative. Instead, they appear more raw, assuming the appearance of actual lists. In this way, the lists serve as an interruption, functioning as a deviation and distraction from the main narrative. Lists in literature, as Stephen

A. Barney notes, “intrude into the story” (qtd. in Richardson), and typically add very little to the overarching storyline. The lists act as a disruption to the narrative flow, or, as Brian Richardson argues, they “ nearly always force a break in the transmission of the narrative proper.” Therefore, *Ulysses* embodies the ordinary again, by “letting it go” directly in the text, without any conscientious effort to fit more properly into a linear and straightforward narrative.

There is another component to this idea of “letting it go,” as the construction of the lists themselves lacks order and structure. Olson notes that the lists “attempts to equalize all of the items listed,” (35) meaning that the first item on the list has no more significance than the second, third, fourth, etc. The lists in *Ulysses* are not ranked lists, nor sequential with the exception of the “budget” list, or proofs, but just raw compositions of entries. They are, in that way, a disorganized, jumbled mess of items, which coincides with the idea of “letting the ordinary” go. The idea of “letting it go” also attributes a multifacetedness to the mistakes and errors of the lists, outside of Olson’s claims of arbitrariness and arbitrariness. Not only do the errors give the effect of arbitrariness and openness then, but they also give the effect of an ordinary that is not proofread or corrected, but is instead, just “let go.” On the “list of Irish heroes,” the inappropriate entries, such as Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, Benjamin Franklin, etc. are then understood as entries that have slipped through the cracks because *Ulysses* is not interested in necessarily micromanaging the ordinary, but instead, prefers to “let it go.”

Ulysses also “lets it go” by means of its style of stream-of-consciousness mode. The definition of stream-of-consciousness is so broad, Humprhey contends that the most essential aspect to the style is simply an “inner awareness.” (4) *Ulysses* has a unique way of transmitting that inner awareness though— it employs fragmented little blips, instead of complete inner dialogues, reminiscent of impressionism. Returning to the same passage as before, Mr. Bloom’s

long day: “Long day I’ve had. Martha, the bath, funeral, house of Keyes, museum with those goddesses, Dedalus’ song. Then that Brawler in Barney Kiernan’s. Got my own back there” (Joyce, 311), we see a lack of complete sentences and thoughts. These are small impression marks, devoid of context, elaboration, and detail. This is an accurate representation of conscious thought as people do not typically have a stream-of-consciousness that is conscientious of context, details, specifics, and completeness— all the things we expect in a proper narrative. “Letting it go” in this instance, means transmitting the stream-of-consciousness, like the lists, exactly as one experiences it, without positioning it as a fuller dialogue and modifying it to better fit a reading experience.

This impressionistic stream-of-consciousness works most impressively in Penelope. The eight long sentences could thus be broken down into tiny little impression marks, and much like painting, only when squished together does it create the full picture. The first few lines ought to read like this: “‘Yes because he never did a thing like that before…’” (Joyce, 608). From there, we move to the next impression mark: “...as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs…” (Joyce, 608). And so on: “...since the City Arms hotel...” (Joyce, 608). The lack of punctuation, which initially I argue signified its length and Molly’s need to rush and therefore, openness, also resonates with the notion of “letting it go.” When a mind is racing it does not think in accordance with periods or commas, it just has a constant flow of continuous perpetual impression marks. The squished together words that appear later in her monologue, such as “dyinglook” (Joyce, 608), too give the effect of both openness and “letting go,” in the sense that once again, it is not manufactured to better fit into a narrative. There are other micro instances of “let go” stream-of-consciousness. For example, the repeated “jingling” that infiltrates Mr. Bloom’s stream-of-consciousness throughout Nausica. It becomes redundant after appearing

multiple times in the same episode, but it is inline with what an unfiltered, "let go" consciousness likes— with no regards for establishing a proper narrative. The lack of punctuation and periods too has no regard for proper narrative flow, and is instead, a sign of just "letting it go."

Undoubtedly, "letting go" is how *Ulysses* achieves its hyper literary realism. It "disavows [transformative] epiphanies— and its accompanying idea that life can be made into art," (Olson, 41-42) in favor of just recreating ordinary life as accurately as possible, which means neglecting narrative, flow, linearity, and reading experience. Once again, this is not about the content, the story being told, but the style, how it is being told. *Ulysses*' ordinariness penetrates deeper than just content, it is in the mechanisms of the novel, the vehicle in which the novel pushes the narrative forward. "Letting it go" highlights that ordinary life "is not easily made into neat fictions," (Olson, 55) which is working in tandem with *Ulysses*' notion of "keeping it open"— ordinary is infinite and as such, can never be captured properly by means of the novel. The only way to capture the ordinary is to show how impossible it is to capture the ordinary.

The Arranger

The concrete relationship between stream-of-consciousness and the lists warrants further discussion. We have discussed that both modes function in similar ways and have similar effects. Now I argue that the lists themselves in *Ulysses* are a form of stream-of-consciousness. To do this, we will look at the moments where stream-of-consciousness and the lists explicitly overlap. I return to the "Irish heroes list," to revisit the inappropriate entries, which we have established represent openness and "letting it go"— but how is this list constructed with errors in the first place? For this list to contain human errors, there must be a human element at work. I argue that this list originates from some entity's consciousness and in that way, this list functions as a slightly more organized form of stream-of-consciousness. Jules David Law claims that "Joyce's

everyday includes the unintentional in the sense laid out by Freud in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,*" (qtd. In Olson, 48) which explains how these errors got on the list— they are the freudian slips of someone's consciousness. When compiling a list, a bunch of entries flow into consciousness, functioning as potential candidates for the more finalized construction of the list. Those that appropriately meet the aims of the list are added, in the case of the "Irish heroes" list, Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, etc. Those that do not meet the aims of the list typically are not added to the finalized list and instead, are expelled out of consciousness. The "Irish heroes" list must stem from stream-of-consciousness then, as there exists entries from the development phase, where potential candidates flowed into consciousness, that have made the finalized list, but did anyway— "Benjamin Franklin" must have flowed into consciousness at the time of construction. Whereas a more official list of Irish heroes might not include Benjamin Franklin, this list retains an essence of stream-of-consciousness still, and so Benjamin Franklin still makes the more finalized version.

This entity, to whom the stream-of-consciousness belongs to, is, I agurge, David Hayman's Arranger. The Arranger is "an unidentifiable narrator… or the "novel-writing machine," or the novel's "consciousness"— ahead of a character's own observations, providing commentary on the events unfolding and the ways in which these events are represented" (Olson, 52). Typically, Joyce critics attribute the Arranger to the macro "features such as the headlines of 'Aeolus' or the interpolations of 'Wandering Rocks' and 'Cyclops.'" (Thwaites, 495). The Arranger, I argue, is also the one who constructs the lists— organized forms of his stream-of-consciousness. This is perhaps why the lists and stream-of-consciousness are inseparable from each other. The lists even directly borrow techniques from stream-of-consciousness, such as the squished together words:

"Nationalgymnasiummuseumsanatoriumandsuspensoriumsordinaryprivatdocentgeneralhistoryspecialproffsordoctor Kriegfried Ueberallgemeein" (Joyce, 252) and a "Herr Hurhausdirektorpresident Hans Chüechli-Steurli. " (Joyce, 252) Both function similarity to Molly's squished together "dyinglook" (Joyce, 608). The different presentation of stream-of-consciousness, from something more raw to these organized lists, is essential for understanding not just how *Ulysses* embodies the ordinary, but the rhetorical stake involved with this embodiment. *Ulysses* suggests that we, its readers, can comprehend the vastness of the ordinary, by showing that a human figure, David Hayman's arranger, can create a full list, at least fuller than Mr. Bloom's long day list. In this next section, I will argue that *Ulysses* not only shows its possible to comprehend the ordinary more fully like the arranger, but urges us to.

Tracing the Ordinary

I will now turn to the trajectory of the embodiment of the ordinary throughout the novel. Stream-of-consciousness intertwined with more traditional narrative elements occupies the first half of *Ulysses*. In *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses*, Karen Lawrence argues that stream-of-consciousness is abandoned the half way through, in favor of what she calls, the "parade of styles" (15). However, I argue that stream-of-consciousness does not completely disappear, it just takes a different form, namely, the lists are organized stream-of-consciousnesses. Finally, there's a return to the stream-of-consciousness mode, in the final episode, Penelope, by means of Molly's monologue. This stream-of-consciousness is markedly different from the first half though— it is even more of a raw stream-of-consciousness, meaning that there is absolutely no narrative intertwined with it. We must discuss what each mode does individually to the ordinary and then, by extension, what is

the rhetorical stake or what the novel is ultimately saying by means of these stylistic shifts in presentation.

The intermingling of narrative and stream-of-consciousness establishes the ordinary as an interruptive mode, but only to a certain extent. It is not always negatively intrusive, but rather more supplementary. The "jingling" in Nausica connect to the the keys of Boylan's car, as he is on his way to have sex with Molly— therefore, it serves as a constant reminder throughout the episode that Mr. Bloom is thinking about Molly and the affair. It is a distraction, but one that can be underscored by the fact it is just one symbol, one noise, that appears irregularly in Mr. Bloom's consciousness during the chapter. The jingling registers and then the narrative immediately continues:

> "Well now, he mused, whatever you say yourself. I think I'll trouble you for some fresh water and a half glass of whisky.
>
> Jingle.
>
> With the greatest alacrity, Miss Douce agreed" (Joyce, 214-215).

"Jingle" occupies its own line, but it does not distract from the narrative, as much as something the lists would. This example is particularly thematic for the episode as well, as Nausica is most notable for its noise. The effect of this is that the ordinary does appear as if it can fit within a main narrative, but as a supplement to the more main narrative-esque moments of life— the rarities.

However, *Ulysses* then shifts away from this mode, as if it is unsatisfactory for embodying the ordinary, in favor of the lists. Since the lists are an even bigger intrusion, there is this effect that ordinary life can sometimes consume the main narrative of life and be too disruptive. It contributes to *Ulysses*', as Susan Bazarghen claims, "massive unwillingness to get

one with it and tell a simple linear tale" (753). At the same time, it can still be supplementary— as the lists still serve as a prominent supplement to the narrative as stream-of-consciousness did. For instance, it is fitting that the "Irish heroes" list exists in the Cyclops episode, where questions of Irish nationalism and Mr. Bloom's own Irishness are explored. The Gilbert Schema categorizes Cyclops as "gigantism," which scholars have correctly pointed out is an obvious reference to the extensive amount of listing; the "Irish heroes" list itself being one of the longest lists in the novel— making it a noteworthy deviation and intrusion. The Gilbert Schema has a second categorization for this episode though: "political," something that the lists comments on as well.

As mentioned previously, Olson considered the errors on this list as simple highlights of "the arbitrariness of lists" (52). Brian Richardson takes a more author centric approach, stating that: "Joyce is primarily having fun with the form of the list as well as mocking people who pad their own lists and, perhaps, the cultural authority that presumes that a longer list is ipso facto a better list." Richardson's interpretation tends to be more receptive than Olson's, but ultimately, Thomas M. Conley slightly disavows it: "Joyce is not just getting a laugh here by introducing incongruities; he is condemning the absurdities of 'Irish tradition'" (102) and commenting on "what's wrong with Ireland." Conley's claim only pertains to the incongruities though. It is difficult to inherit such an interpretation when many legitimate entries still exist, such as, as Conley points out himself, "St. Fursa and St. Brendan" (102). Furthermore, there are items on this list, such as "Captain Nemo," and "balor of the evil eye," which could be interpreted as "what's wrong with Ireland" and "what's right with Ireland," at the same time. Captain Nemo is a fictitious character that fought against British imperialism— this entry could imply that British imperialism is "what's wrong with Ireland," but that Captain Nemo's fight against it is "what's

right with Ireland." In the same sense, the "balor of the evil eye," a solaresque figure of Irish mythology, could be linked to dry seasons and famine, which is "what's wrong with Ireland," while at the same time, fertility, which is "what's right with Ireland." The lists then appear to have many argumentative edges, instead of just one, and are constantly working in tandem with the narrative as supplementary text— in a more subtle way than the previous iteration of stream-of-consciousness. What the lists are really doing then, is amplifying— the intrusion, the supplementary, the density of the ordinary and by extension, the importance of the ordinary. The form of a list registers a certain element of importance and priority mainly because within the context of narrative flow, it stands out and, phislopically, simplifies and reduces things down to the most important points. The lists are forcing us to pay attention to the ordinary.

Finally, stream-of-consciousness returns, but without the intermingling of a proper narrative seen in its earlier iterations. In the final episode, Penelope, stream-of-consciousness becomes the main narrative, instead of supplementing it— therefore, the ordinary too is no longer a supplement. To end with this style is quite a provocative choice, one which Olson and other scholars explain as the futility of trying to find one mode to perfectly depict ordinary life. It registers a sort of "restlessessness," wherein there is a desperation to find an adequate mode and the shifts between these modes represent that desperation. However, I argue that there is a rhetorical effect to this progression path, where the raw stream-of-consciousness in Penelope, as the ending style, is the conqueror of the other styles and is deemed the best way of communicating the ordinary. There's something existential about this message, that ordinary life is not just supplementary or an intrusion, but the main narrative— it is a story worthy of being told itself.

The effects of the multiple stylistic changes suggests that there are many approaches to ordinary life, but that ultimately, it ought to be considered meaningful. *Ulysses* is not necessarily radical enough to encourage the idea that each day is a seven hundred page novel waiting to be written, but it does suggest there is space outside of the main narrative of life— it is ordinary life and it ought not be a throw away experience or something to completely ignore, despite how intrusive it might seem.

Conclusion

_____The effects of *Ulysses*' embodiment of ordinary life is dramatic— the novel feels like a living entity. Moreover, it has something to say about all the details of ordinary life that we miss out on— that is that perhaps those details, the ones we treat as interruptions or distractions, are not as meaningless and expendable as we consider them to be. They too, as *Ulysses* proves, are part of the narrative. Through these characters, Stephen and Mr. Bloom, Joyce speaks to readers directly, offering his own life advice, as a man that has already lived the life of Stephen, in all of its ruefulness and looks fondly in admiration at the perspectives of Mr. Bloom and the Bloomsian approach. Declan Kiebard categorizes *Ulysses* as a self-help novel, that helps readers navigate through a life by virtue of coming to terms with the loss of loved ones, in Dignam, Stephen's Mother, and Rudy, exploring gender and sexuality in the bathtub and in Molly Bloom, an untraditional but complex woman, with sexual needs, etc. Kiebard focuses mainly on generally specific microscopic and practical everyday occurrences, but I contend that *Ulysses*' greatest lesson is simply showing readers that these everyday occurrences matter in the first place. What *Ulysses* really offers and by extension, what literary studies can offer is different perspectives on life that when appropriated, have potential to be more fulfilling and satisfying than our previously held perspectives.

Kiebard also claims that *Ulysses* is plagued by the hands of academia and as such it has obtained a mystical academic aura and therein has been stolen away from the hands of whom it truly belongs to— ordinary people. Though *Ulysses* still has its critics from presumably ordinary people— a plethora of amazon reviews ranging from "too boring" to "too difficult." Perhaps this speaks more to the trajectory of literary studies and academia in general, especially the institutions that prioritize the "rigorous" over the "discovery." For literature though, deeply

intertwined with life, the “rigorous” and always being right is not practical. Life’s questions can not be answered through “rigorous” study with absolute certainty— they require discovery and play.

I agree with Kiebard and contend that only two words of Ulysses two-hundred sixty thousand words are needed to understand the novel: metempsychosis and parallax. Ultimately, the plot, lists, and stream-of-consciousness are a form of “Metempsychosis...That means the transmigration of souls” (Joyce, 52) the word that Molly points to in Calypso— wherein the soul of ordinary life takes on a new literary corpus, *Ulysses* itself. What *Ulysses* offers readers then is a “parallax. I never exactly understood” (Joyce, 126), just like how “the tip of his [Mr. Bloom’s] finger blotted out the sun’s disk,” (Joyce, 126) in Lestrygonians to create a different view. *Ulysses* parallax aims to show a different perspective of how to live life most fulfillingly, and therein, offers its practical lesson, both accessible and everyday applicable: to be cognizant of all the ordinary life that we live, as something that is worthy of being experienced and worthy of being told.

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