

THE HAECCEITANCY OF READING JAMES JOYCE'S *FINNEGANS WAKE*:
WAYS OF SENSEMAKING

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Hiermit versichere ich, die vorliegende Dissertation selbstständig angefertigt zu haben.

Bei der Anfertigung der Dissertation wurden keine anderen als die in dieser Dissertation aufgeführten Hilfsmittel verwendet.

Berlin, den 15.7.2013

Written for A. P.

May your regrets have always been too few to mention

*questa dannata lingua che non so come chiamare
è bellissima, bellissima... e io l'amo molto*

This whole day have I followed in the rocks,
And you have changed and flowed from shape to shape

.....
I see my life go drifting like a river
From change to change; I have been many things....
— WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS, “FERGUS AND THE DRUID” —

[O]mnia mutantur ...

.....
Et quoniam magno feror aequore plenaque ventis vela dedi:
nihil est toto, quod perstet, in orbe. cuncta fluunt, omnisque
vagans formatur imago.
— OVID, *METAMORPHOSEON LIBRI*—

‘Ich sehe nichts als Werden. Laßt euch nicht täuschen! In eurem kurzen Blick
liegt es, nicht im Wesen der Dinge, wenn ihr irgendwo festes Land im Meere
des Werdens und Vergehens zu sehen glaubt. Ihr gebraucht Namen der Dinge
als ob sie eine starre Dauer hätten: aber selbst der Strom, in den ihr zum zweiten
Male steigt, ist nicht derselbe als bei dem ersten Male.’
— FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, “DIE PHILOSOPHIE IM TRAGISCHEN ZEITALTER DER GRIECHEN” —

riverine, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay
.....
A way a loose a last a loved a long the
.....
riverine
.....
in the languor of flows
— JAMES JOYCE, *FINNEGANS WAKE* —

Отделяясь от бытового языка,
самовитое слово так же отличается
от живого, как вращение земли кругом
солнца отличается от бытового вращения солнца кругом земли. [...]
Словотворчество – [...] в деревне, около рек и лесов, до сих
пор язык творится, каждое мгновение создавая слова,
которые то умирают, то получают право бессмертия.
— Велимир Хлебников, “Наша основа” —

.....
Anonymi elegia Ad Lectorem.

.....
Abnuis? Ac saltem stylus et nova lingua novusque
... se rogat aspicias.
— FRANCESCO COLONNA, *HYPNEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI* —

Sed multis et multiplicibus obscuritatibus et ambiguitatibus decipiuntur, qui temere
legunt, aliud pro alio sentientes; quibusdam autem locis quid vel falso suspicentur
non inveniunt. Ita obscure quaedam dicta densissimam caliginem obducunt. Quod
totum provisum divinitus esse non dubito ad edomandam labore superbiam et
intellectum a fastidio revocandum, cui facile investigata plerumque vilescunt.
— AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA* —

O bouches l’homme est à la recherche d’un nouveau langage
Auquel le grammairien d’aucune langue n’aura rien à dire.
— GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE, “LA VICTOIRE” —

[L]es Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la montrent;
par là ils manquent de mystère; ils retirent aux esprits cette joie délicieuse
de croire qu’ils créent. *Nommer* un objet, c’est supprimer les trois quarts de
la jouissance du poème qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu;
le *suggérer*, voilà le rêve.
— STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ, RÉPONSES À JULES HURET —

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PREFACE

It seems to be hard for scholars not to be lured into showing the pose of retrospective conceit when writing about the studies preceding their own. The tendency to emphasise how limited the perspective of earlier critics was and how advanced one's own perspective is, often comes to the fore. This study does not purport to present a 'better' understanding of *Finnegans Wake* but rather a different understanding of it. The perspective developed here is the result of the process of grappling with the text and with preceding positions. Without the critical work that preceded it, this study would have been inconceivable. At the same time, the present exploration is marked by the conviction that the *quidditas* of literature, of art, will always exceed our conceptualisations of it.

For some, the number of quotations in this study may appear to be large in comparison with a great part of the literary criticism produced today. My reply to a possible objection of this type is that I find it difficult to accept that the work of the literary critic has come to mean erasing the voice of other critics in one's own writing as effectively as possible, or quoting only the 'famous' critics and theorists. Literary criticism means essentially engaging with, coming to terms with and responding to other texts, many of them being texts *about* literature. Why should paraphrasing be considered the adequate form of this intellectual exploration of others' thoughts while the privilege of quotation is reserved for the 'voice' of the writer? Paraphrasing is advocated on the premise that in contrast to 'the mere copying of words' it is the result of an understanding of the given material. The universal validity of its usefulness is hardly ever challenged. One can argue just as well that a paraphrase can never convey the full range of nuances of the original. The rationale of paraphrasing is 'translating' a meaning into different words. As students of literature we are aware that the meaning of a given set of words (signs) consists as much in 'how' something is written or said (the choice of words, the specific references, connotation, the pattern of the argument, the tone, the attitude, etc.) as in 'what' is written/said. In fact, the concept of paraphrase is an illusion: A thought expressed cannot be paraphrased without a critical loss, the 'form' in which it is expressed is essential to it. Notwithstanding the above, it is a fact that quoting is entirely a question of prestige – to whom do we grant the privilege of quotation and to whom not. A study such as the present one may demonstrate the ability of abstraction and comprehension in various ways. I want to let other critics have their say in my text because it is not a subtractable 'content' of their thought and ideas which should provoke reflection but rather the fact that their meanings involve 'content' and 'form' coinciding.

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This dissertation has profited from research stays in Zurich, California, and Dublin. I have had the opportunity to carry out research at the Zurich James Joyce Foundation and at the libraries of Freie Universität Berlin; Humboldt Universität Berlin; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin; Universität Leipzig; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Berkeley; Trinity College Dublin; University College Dublin. This has been made possible through the resources and funds provided by the German *Exzellenzinitiative* (Excellence Initiative).

INTRODUCTION

[T]he new art obviously addresses itself not to everybody [...] but to a specially gifted minority.
(José Ortega Y Gasset, 1925)

*[O]ne of the fascinations of reading *Work in Progress* is that as a mine of suggestion and allusion it is practically inexhaustible.*
(Stuart Gilbert, 1929)

Joyce makes no concessions to communication other than a tantalizing invitation to the reader to seek and continue to seek.
(Eugene Jolas, 1929)

The question 'but what does it all mean' need not be asked; it means variously, to Joyce himself and to each reader.
(Robert McAlmon, 1929)

... its [WiP's] mystery and its inexhaustible promise of new revelations.
(Robert Sage, 1929)

[A] work of art is given us not in the first place to be understood but to be enjoyed.
(Frank Budgen, 1934)

[N]o work of art can exist without an audience.
(David Daiches, 1939)

The riddle alone is real, the riddle and man's passionate itch to solve it.
(Adaline Glasheen, 1956)

*Who then is the hero who achieves the permanent quest in *Finnegans Wake*? [...] Eventually it dawns on us that it is the **reader** who achieves the quest.*
(Northrop Frye, 1957)

*And what book, or rather what language, calls attention to itself as language, as ineluctably verbal and quite finally so, more than *Finnegans Wake*?*
(Ihab Hassan, 1975)¹

The account of the origin of the cosmos in Hesiod's *Theogony* begins with the phrase “ἦτοι μὲν πρότιστα Χάος γένετ’.” (Hes., *Theog.* 116) (ētoi men prōtista Chaos genet)² which Glenn Most, taking into account the conceptual history of the term χάος (see Theisen, 753f), translates as “In truth, first of all Chasm came to be” (Hesiod, 13). Most explains his choice of the word *chasm* as follows: “Usually translated as ‘Chaos’; but that suggests to us,

¹ The sources of the quotations are: Ortega Y Gasset, 325; Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 67; Jolas, “Revolution²,” 89 (in references to sources the superscript numbers, as in “Revolution²,” are used to indicate the chronology of essays and books that have been revised or reissued under the same title and to indicate the numbering of volumes); McAlmon, 107f; Sage, “Before,” 169; Budgen, *Making*, 291; Daiches, 153; Glasheen, *A Cenus*, vii; Frye, *Anatomy*, 323f, Frye's emphasis; Hassan, 90.

² In this dissertation, transliteration of ancient Greek follows the 2010 ALA-LC Romanization Table for Greek.

misleadingly, a jumble of disordered matter, whereas Hesiod's term indicates instead a gap or opening" (ibid., 13 n. 7). In his discussion of "τὸ κενὸν" (Arist., *Ph.* 208b25-35) (to kenon, "the void") in Book IV of *Physics*, Aristotle quotes Hesiod and thus also links Hesiod's term *Χάος* with the void (cf. Ross, 371). Roughly 800 years after the composition of the *Theogony*, the author(s) of the Gospel of John let(s) his Prologue begin with the phrase "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος" (Nestle-Aland, 292) (En archē ēn ho logos) which most English translations of the Bible have (canonically) rendered as "In the beginning was the Word" (see e.g. *The Interlinear Bible*, 818).³ In 1938, James Joyce inserted the phrase "In the buginning is the woid" (*FW* 378.29) into his "Work in Progress" (see Van Hulle, 117).⁴ In Joyce's textual "collideorscape" (*FW* 143.28) both ideas appear to coincide as the lexical collision of *word* and *void* in the word formation "woid" suggests. Does Joyce's phrase imply the notion of 'the word made void'? Or does it indicate 'the word filling the void' – perhaps the void of an (otherwise) empty *world*?⁵ After all, the description of the earth as empty or void in English translations of Genesis 1:2 may also reverberate in Joyce's phrase.⁶ *Word*, *world*, *void* and "woid" – these keywords, and the concepts which they represent here: language, representation, meaning, textual and/or epistemic 'absence' (e.g. gaps, minus functions, authorial intention) and provoked readerly 'presence' (e.g. processes of meaning construction, 'plus projections,' acts of configuration and emplotment, 'reader-as-textor'), (lexical) blending, coincidence, etc. (see below), may, in what follows, serve to illustrate the field of tension with which readers of *Finnegans Wake* are confronted.

Finnegans Wake,⁷ published in book form in 1939, occupies a peculiar position in the literary landscape. From the very beginning, as "Work in Progress",⁸ it has raised questions of meaning,⁹ of interpretation,¹⁰ of narrativity, and of the 'role' or rather *function* and *position* of

³ On the (un)translatibility of the word *λόγος* see Cassin et al., "Logos"; or, as is well known, *Faust I*, 1219-1235.

⁴ References to *Finnegans Wake* follow the format (*FW* page number(s).line number(s)).

⁵ To say nothing of the possible interpretations that may arise from the context of the end of John 1:1: "καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος" (Nestle-Aland, 292) (kai theos ēn ho logos).

⁶ According to current knowledge, the phrase "Ἐν ἀρχῇ" had already been used in the translation of Genesis 1:1 in the Septuagint (see *Septuaginta*, 75). The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Koine Greek, the Septuagint, was begun in the third century BCE – the oldest preserved manuscript fragment to contain what is believed the Septuagint translation of Genesis, namely the Papyrus Fouad 266, is from the first or second century BCE. Therefore, the beginning of the Prologue of the Gospel of John, for which scholarship dates the time of origin around the end of the first century CE (see Thyen, 215), is believed to refer to the wording of the Septuagint translation of Genesis 1:1.

⁷ Hereafter also cited as *FW*.

⁸ The title *Finnegans Wake* was only revealed and given the work when it finally appeared in book form. During the period of its serial publication (1924-1938) it was referred to as "Work in Progress," hereafter also cited as WiP.

⁹ The term *meaning* is used in this study not despite, but precisely because of all the issues involved (see Cassin et al., "Sense / Meaning").

the reader with an unprecedented degree of urgency. The quest which the history of *Finnegans Wake*'s reception and symbolic production represents, is the quest for the meaning and comprehension – filling the *void* with the desired and reassuring substance of meaning – of a work that appears to provoke such desires and defy such expectations at the same time. It is the wavering between the restraint of 'the unreadable' and the imperative of 'making readable.' The reader's fall into, and entanglement in, a *confusio linguarum* and, in its wake, his/her quest to determine the facts and facets concerning the concealed character(s) of the text's original Sin(*n*) are the radical experiences which *FW* effects.

The ten quotes above, reflecting these issues, belong – paradigmatically as it seems to me – to a discourse which we have come to term Modernism.¹¹ Those attempting to capture the peculiarity of *FW*'s position have referred to it, among other things, as “the most extreme product of the modernist literary imagination” (Lodge, 226), “the exclamation point to Modernism” (Staley, 6), “probably the farthest point to which language has been taken in the twentieth century” (Begnal, “Language,” 633), “ultimacy, both technically and thematically” (Barth, 67), and as “a summa of the culture of experiment” (Levenson, 273). The singular

¹⁰ This study assumes a broad understanding of the term *interpretation*. Thus it is not limited to the sense 'domain of hermeneutics/the literary critic' and 'part of literary criticism.' Interpretation is rather considered to be something that we do incessantly and inevitably. Seeking meaning and producing it is nothing less than *conditio humana*. Every reading, be it of a sentence or a passage, involves processes of interpretation.

¹¹ When Jane Goldman describes the term modernism, which identifies “a period that knew little of the term as it has now come to be understood” (Kolocotroni et al., xvii), as referring to “aesthetic modes associated with a period whose dates are always under critical negotiation, and whose heterogeneous modes refuse the homogenizing impetus of this flabby term” (Goldman, 225), she is echoing recent shifts in the critical discourse on modernism(s). These critical shifts – being a consequence of the challenging of traditional critical notions of modernism e.g. by feminist and postcolonialist critics, and in a more general sense the shift of focus away from 'the modernist aesthetic' towards 'the cultures of modernisms' (P. Brooker et al., 1f) –, which are reflected in the founding of New Modernist Studies, have been the impetus for “the ongoing redefinition of what we now understand by the term ‘modernism’” (ibid., 1). It is “the persistent association of modernism with the ‘aesthetic’” – the rationale behind the process of the canonisation of modernist writers by the New Critics – that “has been objected to by those who see modernism as thoroughly imbricated in the social realm and who want to reconnect it with the popular, or ‘mass’, culture against which it has so often been defined” (ibid., 7). As the quotations from Goldman and Brooker et al. suggest, there has not yet emerged an uncontested definition of modernism(s) and its periodisation. While one still comes across the choice “1910-1940” such closed definitions can always be contested (see Shiach). Recent emphasis is heavily on the diversity of the modernist phenomenon; the only common denominator in contemporary critical discussion of the features of modernism(s) seems to be the turning away from a “representational” concept of art (P. Brooker et al., 6). The use of the plural *modernisms* is an expression of this emphasis on the diversity and “sheer range of modernisms” (ibid., 4) instead of teleological chronology. The pluralisation is meant to bring into focus “that the history of modernity (and thus of modernism) should be seen as geographically and temporally ‘uneven’: modernity is not ‘singular’ but ‘multiple’, its development is intermittent, not smoothly progressive, and it takes diverse forms depending on time and place, and on different agents’ specific interventions, in particular sociocultural circumstances” (ibid.). If the term Modernism is capitalised in this study this is meant to emphasise my conviction that the traditional narrow definition of modernism with its Anglo-American focus is a more useful term for literary studies for identifying a specific literary context than the blurred term *modernism(s)* as used in New Modernist Studies. One should be aware of the fact that “to the degree that one suppresses the differences” between the various phenomena that have recently been subsumed under this term, “one also perforce ignores the various complexities that actually give the phenomena in question their place in the fabric of history” (Altieri, 778). Nevertheless, it is to be welcomed that an oeuvre like Khlebnikov's could, in this way, move closer to Joyce's.

scale and radicalness of Joyce's manipulation of language in *FW* and his apparent abandonment of fundamental narrative elements such as legible (in the sense of 'recognisable') language, plot, and character – prompting the suggestion that “its [*FW*'s] subject is the nature of indeterminacy itself” (Norris, “*Finnegans*¹,” 162) – have provoked many to consider *Finnegans Wake* the epitome of Modernist art's supposed unintelligibility. It has led Umberto Eco to regard Joyce as “an author who has put into question the very structure of language and all the rules of narrativity” (Eco, “Semiosis,” 137).

The majority of readers of Modernist literature in the first half of the twentieth century found themselves in search of a supposedly lost quality, often described as ‘intelligibility,’ as more and more works of art seemed to be asking one and the same question ever more emphatically: “[A]nd is there one who understands me?” (*FW* 627.14-15). For the majority felt increasingly less capable of answering this question in the affirmative and many were suspicious of those contemporary writers – whom we have come to regard as ‘the Modernists’ – who appeared to indulge in a “cult of unintelligibility” (Eastman, 57ff, 97). The new quality of the writing that has come to be termed Modernist led to a debate among the reading public and writers about the issues of ‘difficulty’ and ‘comprehensibility’ of literature, and thus, implicitly and explicitly, about the function of the reader.

It is the peculiar position of the reader of *Finnegans Wake*, precarious yet instrumental, which this study ventures to describe and explain. The term *reader position* is used here to cover those supposedly *external* factors that influence the reader in the process of reading a particular text, namely the text itself and those presuppositions about the text and its reading that stem from the *symbolic production*, as defined below, of the work.¹² Thus, highly personal and subjective factors, such as cultural and intellectual background, personality-related determinants, preferences, etc., which also influence the *reader position*, are excluded from consideration here; in this sense the category of *reader position* is of course an abstraction, a model that enables us to make general statements which transcend the highly idiosyncratic but which, at the same time, strives to not lose sight of the idiosyncrasy of individual reading processes. Chapters I and III are more concerned with the influence deriving from the factor *presuppositions*, whereas chapters II and IV focus more on the

¹² *Supposedly* is used here because considering the text an *external* factor involves the notion of an autonomous, self-contained, and objectifiable object. Yet, the *Wirkung* of a literary text necessarily precedes any consideration of it. In the moment one begins to read, the literary text begins to take effect. In this sense, the work of art cannot be considered independent of its *Wirkung* – because s/he who reads or speaks or writes about it is already *affiziert*, involved. The literary text is thus something that through its being read, through being perceived, ‘always already’ takes effect on the reader rather than being merely an external object that can be dealt with from a neutral position, and this is why the reader is of course not in an autonomous position with respect to the text either.

influence exerted by the factor *text*, although both factors necessarily interrelate, which is exactly the point of the concept *reader position* – a point which this study sets out to illustrate. The aim is to elaborate the *reader position* in *FW* through analysing its textual idiosyncrasies and through reconstructing historically the formation and development of the presuppositions involved. The *symbolic production* is a significant influence on the *reader position* – its reconstruction allows us to understand how those presuppositions which had a determining influence on earlier *reader positions* and those which still have a determining influence on current *reader positions* in *FW* were established. Against Iser and Eco it can be said that the reader's position cannot be defined on a purely textual basis, as the constructs of *implied reader* and *model reader* imply, since it is crucially influenced by a work's *symbolic production* as well.

The first chapter of this study is concerned with the “symbolic production” (Bourdieu, *Rules*, 170) of *FW*, that is, with “the production of the value of the work or, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work” (Bourdieu, *Field*, 37). Its first part discusses the contemporary reception of *WiP/FW* from the 1920s to the 1940s and the effect of the ‘promotional criticism.’ Its aim is to identify common topoi in the reception and symbolic production that, in turn, provide information about general and critical discourses on Modernism and on the work, as well as to point out assumptions about the ‘role’ and position of the reader with respect to Modernist literature in general and *FW* in particular. Part two retraces the broader tendencies that have characterised the study of *FW*, in particular in the field of the so-called Joyce industry, by considering the question of how the approach to *FW* has changed since the 1930s. The third part of chapter I focuses on the contribution of academia and literary theory to Joyce's canonisation and on the post-structuralist canonisation of *FW*. The first chapter is extensive precisely because bringing the “symbolic production” into focus, that is bringing into focus how a literary work's meaning(s), significance, and reputation ‘are made’ (as opposed to the Formalist notion of ‘как делать/сделан(а) ...’ (see Erlich, 66 n. 61, 191 n. 85), i.e. *how* the literary work of art is *made*, for instance in terms of the *devices* employed) by criticism, by the whole gamut of commentary in any available medium, in a word by the discourse on the work, is intended to fulfil various functions with respect to the ensuing chapters. Firstly, it serves to identify fundamental assumptions about the work that have influenced the reception and reading of *FW*, in short, the question of the *reader position*. Secondly, its purpose is to reconstruct how the common interpretive axioms were ‘emplaced’ at the very beginning and subsequently perpetuated; thus in a certain sense this study is also an attempt at drawing up a genealogy of critical ideas about *FW*. Thirdly, it

is intended to emphasise the (significance of the) debate about ‘the role of the reader’ which was led from the outset.

The *void*, in the sense of ‘gap’ – both terms overlap in certain aspects of their semantic spectrum¹³ – has become something of a central description category for the reader’s position particularly with regard to Joyce’s later texts. R. P. Blackmur once remarked on *Ulysses*: “[T]he gap between what is in ‘Ulysses’ and what is in the minds of contemporary readers [...] is there; and not to deal with it is not to catch the momentum of the book” (Blackmur, “Jew,” 98). The gap was of course not so much between ‘the content of *Ulysses*’¹⁴ and the minds of readers, as Blackmur suggested, but rather between the text and readers’ expectations. But more importantly Blackmur’s statement unwittingly points towards something else, namely to the reader’s involvement in the text. In this context, the gap, or rather the gaps are understood, with Roman Ingarden and Wolfgang Iser, to be in the text, with the reader’s mind expected to be particularly active in filling them. In *FW*, the reader’s involvement in the text is not simply a factor that needs to be considered, but is rather *the* constituent factor without which it cannot be discussed at all. The quality and originality of the work consist in this very factor. Not to deal with it is indeed not to catch the momentum of the work. Thus, describing and explaining the reader’s involvement in the text is one of the central objectives of this investigation.

The focus of this study is not on *meaning* but rather on the *processes of meaning constitution* and thus on the question of how the text (*FW*) provokes the production of meaning, which is a considerable difference. Some may claim that the questions of the production of meaning, or meaning constitution,¹⁵ have already been answered in the 1960s and 1970s. While this is certainly not the case it holds even less for a work like *FW*. Few other texts demand such an involvement from the reader with regard to the constitution of meaning – given this fact, it is remarkable that there are hardly any analyses of this readerly process. This is the starting point of the dissertation. For *FW* the issue of meaning constitution takes on a different dimension than for texts which can be considered *closed*, following Eco, or *readerly*, following Barthes. Without taking this issue into account the essential quality of the work cannot be adequately understood. The text of *FW* is first and foremost a *Wirkungspotenzial* (response-provoking potential) (see Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, 7; see also Iser,

¹³ One of the OED definitions of ‘void’ reads: “An empty or vacant space; an unoccupied place or opening in something or between things; a vacancy caused by the removal of something” (OED, “void, adj. and n.1,” B.3.b.). Cf. the following OED definition of ‘gap’: “An unfilled space or interval; a blank or deficiency; a break in continuity” (OED, “gap, n.1,” 6.a.). All OED references in this study are to OED Online.

¹⁴ Hereafter also cited as *U*.

¹⁵ Iser adopted the term *Sinnkonstitution* (see Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, 75, 175, 244, 246) (“meaning constitution”) from Husserl and Ingarden.

“Joyces *Ulysses*,” 258) for eliciting processes of meaning construction and thereby engaging its readers, as Iser wrote similarly about *U* (see Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 136). The present study describes this *Wirkungspotenzial* and demonstrates that here the processes of meaning construction are primarily of a translational, narrativising, and exoreferential nature.

The *word*, the primary concern of chapter two, is conceived as malleable in *FW*. Although the more than six-hundred-page text is replete with words, they are often only faintly evocative of the words that readers have learnt to consider adequate to describe the *world*. Post-structuralists might say language functions as *brisure* in *FW* – it is a ‘break’ or ‘gap,’ but a ‘joint’ as well (see Derrida, *Grammatologie*, 96, 102). It is a language that blocks access and understanding but at the same time elicits a resonance of faint familiarity, indeed to such a degree that readers feel constantly on the verge of understanding – without ever ceasing to undermine the illusion of attaining this understanding. According to Hans Robert Jauß, the “aesthetic distance” with which a literary work “[confronts] the expectations of its first readers [...] can disappear for later readers to the same degree to which the original negativity of the work has become self-evident and, as henceforth familiar expectation, has even become part of the horizon of future aesthetic experience” (Jauß, “Challenge,” 15). Although today *FW* does not rupture readers’ expectations to the extent it did in the 1920s and 1930s, some of the ‘distance’ between the reader and the text will remain insurmountable.

Finnegans Wake remains one of the most peculiar reading experiences in the realm of literature. As Terence Killeen phrased it: “Everyone who confronts *Finnegans Wake* knows literally what it means to have reading difficulties” (Killeen, 11). The most common experience of readers of the text is to read a line, a sentence, a passage, or a page without being able to make sense of one’s reading immediately, without being able to ‘convert’ the words, phrases, and sentences into a coherent, satisfactory meaning. The feeling being that language has been ‘manipulated’ in such a way as to block a satisfactory comprehension. Readers find themselves longing for comprehension and often feel provoked and frustrated by a text that only allows them to understand fragments, while the majority of the textual material remains obscure. The combination of devices employed by Joyce in order to condense meaning and to make his text indeterminate results in a reading experience characterised by the recognition that definite meaning cannot be had here “without an essential loss” (Derrida, “Translation,” 120).

FW does indeed call attention to itself as language, as ineluctably verbal, as Ihab Hassan has remarked, but to describe this language in effective terms is difficult. In a volume of essays that claims to be the “first to examine comprehensively the critical diversity of

Joyce's linguistic practices" (Milesi, blurb, unnumbered (i)), the language of *FW* has been described as: "nonce-idiom" (Milesi, 2), "translinguistic (and transcultural) babelization" (ibid., 14), "synthetic idiom" (ibid., 15), "a language which tries not to be language, but to be plastic, sculptural, gestural even: presence in the very midst of absence" (Docherty, 121), and as "fractured languages" (ibid., 123). The contributors have furthermore referred to "verbal eccentricities" (Milesi, 2), to "the untameable slipperiness of its portmanteau idiom" (ibid., 7f), to "verbal pyrotechnics" (ibid., 17), to "lexical excesses" (Senn, "Glides," 41), to "grammatical extravagances" (ibid., 41), to "linguistic idiosyncrasies" (Tadié, 44), to "Joyce's tendency to emphasize what Roland Barthes calls 'the rustle of language'" (ibid., 56), to an "elusive use of language" (Elam, 86), and to "linguistic fissions" (Garnier, 97) in order to convey its idiosyncratic nature. And yet, these are mere acts of designation. Chapter II of the present study is an attempt to indicate how the language of *FW* 'functions' with respect to the reader and seeks to identify some of the devices through which the reader is put in the position in which s·he finds him·her·self.¹⁶ It examines the reader's involvement in the text and offers a description of the reader's position in *FW*. Moreover, it develops a mode of analysis that allows us to account for and to describe coincidence and blending as important aspects of meaning construction in *FW*.

The *word* is defamiliarised so effectively that *the world* is difficult to recognise in *FW*. What exactly *FW* 'represents,' or if it does at all, is not clear. Some have claimed that the work is not involved in representation or that it represents only itself as writing. And yet, its image as Joyce's 'great unread' and 'great unreadable' is, as the use of the term *image* implies, merely a distorted version of reality as the very fact of the existence of numerous reading groups around the world, both past and present, shows.¹⁷ The unreadable text – this is, above all, a powerful topos that has been part of the critical discourse on the work since the very beginning.

Words apparently devoid of meaning, a book seemingly devoid of characters and devoid of 'the world,' these are the gaps, the indeterminacy, which readers have to deal with – a void, or open space, which they feel provoked, and are indeed called upon, to fill with some

¹⁶ The form 's·he' is used in this study instead of yet more awkward constructions such as *he or she*, *(s)he*, and *s/he*. The same applies to the forms 'his·her' and 'him·her·self.'

¹⁷ The notion of *FW* as 'the great unread' has indeed been a part of the work's reputation from the beginning. It has never gone out of critical fashion and has been cited over the decades, e.g., by Arnold Bennett in 1929 (see Deming, *Joyce*², 494); by J. Donald Adams in 1941 (see ibid., 754); by Adaline Glasheen in 1956 (see Glasheen, *A Census*, viii); by Susan Sontag in 1967 (see Sontag, "Sarraute," 103); by Jacques Lacan in 1973 (see Lacan, "Postface," 252); by Ihab Hassan in 1975 (see Hassan, 80); by Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon in 1982 (see Rose and O'Hanlon, *Understanding*, vii); by Derek Attridge in 1988 (see Attridge, *Peculiar*, 154); by George Steiner in 1991 (see Steiner, "Interview," 68); by Richard Kostelanetz in 2001 (see Kostelanetz, 212); by Lee Spinks in 2009 (see Spinks, 127).

familiar substance. After all, the reading groups, the numerous interpretations of the work and volumes of annotations reflect the readers' desire to 'translate' *FW* into something (more) meaningful. Some, like Susan Sontag, have criticised this desire with regard to modern art as reductive, as a way of taming a work, as a way of rationalising instead of experiencing its "pure, untranslatable, sensuous immediacy" (Sontag, "Against," 100). Such a desire Sontag criticises as particularly "reactionary" (ibid., 98) if it underlies criticism, as interpretation, which is necessarily content-orientated, amounts to a translation and transformation of works whose "merit [...] certainly lies elsewhere than in their 'meanings'" (ibid., 100) and in so doing "usurp[s]" their place (ibid., 102). On the one hand, it is certainly true that accounting for a work like *FW* in terms of 'content' (alone) is unbearably reductive.¹⁸ On the other hand, the fact that interpretation "makes art manageable, conformable" (ibid., 99) is, in itself, as much a way of access as it is a closure. "The commentaries, summaries, annotations, biographical anecdotes," etc. which often precede the reading of *FW* (Orr, 125) open the text for readers as much as they reduce its potential. Despite the awareness of the infinite interpretability of literary works, which is expressed in the general affirmation of the essential open-endedness of literary interpretation – Gadamer wrote that "[e]very reading that seeks understanding is only a step on a path that never ends. Whoever takes up this path knows that he or she will never be completely done with the text" (Gadamer, "Reply," 57) –, the aim and aspiration of interpretation in practice is still to provide privileged readings. And can interpretation be anything other than the establishing of one privileged meaning, the endeavour to extract a definite meaning from the equivocal text? And yet, the experience of reading *FW* is, at the very least, a corrective in so far as few readers will fail to recognise that "the notion of [...] replacing [*FW*'s] verbal texture by an authoritative translation [in the sense of *interpretation*, *commentary*, etc.], goes against the grain of our [...] experience of reading it" (Senn, "Dogmad," 99). *FW* does not defy interpretation, but it defies the authoritative claim which necessarily inheres in every act of interpretation. It defies the self-deceptive certainty which prevails when we think we have *understood*.

Chapter III examines the ways in which *the world* is brought to bear on *FW*. The text elicits two dynamics, which the chapter enquires into. These two dynamics point to the notion

¹⁸ What is it supposed to mean, in the case of *FW*, to (attempt to) forget about 'content/meaning' in order to experience "the pure, untranslatable, sensuous immediacy" (Sontag, "Against," 100) of the text, to attend to its "sensuous surface [i.e. form, according to Sontag]" (ibid., 103), to experience "the luminousness of the thing in itself" (ibid.), to focus on superficiality, on the superficialities (in the literal sense) of the text, on "appearances" (ibid., 98) – what Susan Sontag has referred to as an "erotics of art" (ibid., 104)? A 'reading of form(s),' as Sontag seems to advocate, is difficult to imagine (if by *reading* one does *not* mean 'written product of literary criticism,' if one does mean 'written product of literary criticism,' then the idea can be regarded as having been realised, in a way, in the, in a wider sense, formalist projects of twentieth-century criticism, namely Russian Formalism, structuralism, and post-structuralism), even if *FW* may appear particularly suited for such a reading.

of the text's essential self-reflexivity (in the case of the *esoreferential dynamic*) and to the notion of the text's essential allusiveness (in the case of the *exoreferential dynamic*) respectively. The former may be considered the 'expectation-breaking' or 'defamiliarising' dynamic, the latter the 'naturalising' dynamic. It is through the latter that *the world* is brought to bear on *FW*; its central element is the allusion. Although this dynamic has been condemned by the New Critics and set out of focus by the post-structuralist theory of intertextuality, it remains the most persistent aspect of readers' interpretive strategies with respect to *FW*. Through the recourse to the archive(s) of culture, the text is 'translated' into the terms of the *world* as we know it. The issues that are implicated in such a recourse are explored in this chapter.

The "woid," understood as a word formation in which the *word*, the *world*, and the *void* coalesce, suggests coincidence. The coincidence of different *significatory planes* – examined in chapters II and IV – is achieved, for instance, through lexical blending, one of the major characteristics of *FW*. It is in this respect that one can speak of the attempt at convergence of form and content in *FW*. And it is in this respect that coincidence develops its explanatory power as it provides a concept in terms of which one can conceive this convergence.

The 'falling together,' or rather blending, of these words in the form "woid" suggests at the same time the 'falling together' of their meanings, "as if they obeyed the principles of a telescopic ontology" (Foucault, *Death*, 84). But how can one 'think together' *word*, *world*, and *void*? Or rather, how can one integrate the aforementioned phrases from *Theogony*, the Gospel of John and Genesis? This is certainly an open question. And yet the integration of disparate elements is really what readers of literature are often induced to perform. There is an analogy to metaphor, for instance, in the case of which readers are also induced to bring together in their mind disparate and unexpected elements. One may think of Shakespeare who lets Macbeth voice the famous metaphor(s):

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (Shakespeare, 284)

Implied metaphors such as Donne's "No man is an *Iland*" (Donne, 98) or Joyce's "It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant" (*U* 1.146) may also come to

mind.¹⁹ It is, in Ricœur's terms, this "synthesis of the heterogeneous" (Ricœur, *Time*¹, ix), this "change of distance in logical space" (ibid., x) through "figuring the predicative assimilation" (ibid.; see also Ricœur, "Metaphorical," 147f), "that is the work of the productive imagination" (Ricœur, *Time*¹, x).

In *FW*, which induces its readers to conceive the 'falling together,' *co-incidere*, of the ἐπισφαλείς (epispheleis) Tim Finnegan, Earwicker/HCE, Adam, Humpty Dumpty, and the fall of man into languages from the hubris of the tower of Babel, this performance of 'thinking together' divergent signifiatory planes is constantly demanded. Yet, Joyce really only elaborated an idea that had already informed *Ulysses*, in which Odysseus's and Bloom's struggles and wanderings are, in a certain sense, coexistent, coincident, rather than 're-enacted.' The final chapter, IV, returns to the issue of coincidence, which is already touched upon in chapter II. It argues that coincidence – understood in the sense of 'the coinciding of ... and ...' – is an apt concept to describe salient aspects of *U* and *FW* and it is first and foremost an attempt to give an overview of the wide range of phenomena that the concept can encompass. Thus under the heading of coincidence the chapter assembles a discussion of the notions of form and content and their relation in *U* and *FW*, of coincidence of times and spaces in *U* and *FW*, of the coincidence of characters in both works, and of readers' acts of configuration and emplotment.

Although this study is concerned primarily with *FW*, *Ulysses* is implicitly ever-present. *Finnegans Wake* – it may well be speculated – would not have received the attention it did had it not been written by the author of *Ulysses*. Joyce's place in the canon rests much more on *Ulysses* than on *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, as chapter I illustrates many of the critical assumptions about *FW* can only be explained against the background of the 'event' that *Ulysses* was, and still is to a certain extent. The fact that to write about *FW* means to do so in relation, often implicitly, to *Ulysses* is obvious, for instance, in the following statement by Umberto Eco:

It may seem that *Ulysses* violates the techniques of the novel beyond all limit, but *Finnegans Wake* passes even this limit. It may seem that *Ulysses* demonstrates all the possibilities of language, but *Finnegans Wake* takes language beyond any boundary of communicability. It may seem that *Ulysses* represents the most arduous attempt to give physiognomy to chaos, but *Finnegans Wake* defines itself as *Chaosmos* and *Microchasm* and constitutes

¹⁹ References to *Ulysses* follow the format (*U* chapter number.line number(s)). All references to *Ulysses* in this study follow the line numbering of the Gabler edition.

the most terrifying document of formal instability and semantic ambiguity that we possess. (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 61)

It is covertly present in assertions about the meaningfulness of the work such as “[O]ur greatest living prose writer doesn’t spend seventeen years of his life in elaborating a language which no one will be able to understand” (Deming, *Joyce*², 679). The provocation that *Finnegans Wake* was and is – the threat as which it figures in Eco’s statement –, is, one might say, also a reaction to its peritextual element “PARIS, / 1922-1939” (*FW* 628), its seventeen years of composition, and to the comparison with the corresponding peritextual element of *Ulysses*, “Trieste-Zurich-Paris / 1914-1921” (*U* 18.1610-1611). There is a point in pointing out that those who have taken *FW* seriously have done so not least because it was written by the author of *Ulysses*.

As pointed out above, the central objective of this study is to get to grips with the intricacy of the reader’s position in *FW* by describing and explaining it in relation to the peculiar features of the text and in relation to the work’s symbolic production. Its aim could be described as the analysis of the conditions which have been constitutive of the reading of *FW* in the twentieth century as well as the examination of the conditions of reading *FW* at the beginning of the twenty-first century – or, in Peter Szondi’s words, as “the clarification of the criteria which the terms [in the sense of limiting conditions] of the text provide for understanding” (Szondi, *Einführung*, 185; my trans.).²⁰ It does so by analysing the reception and symbolic production of *WiP/FW* and by describing the processes of meaning construction. The textual analyses in this study draw mainly on *FW* II.4 because it may be considered a self-contained chapter – certainly more self-contained than other chapters of *FW* – and because it is particularly apt to illustrate the issues addressed in this study. It is chosen not least because it is paradigmatic for the text as a whole as it contains a few more transparent passages which contrast with the more opaque bulk of the chapter. This study is not concerned, it will have been understood, with what some would refer to as ‘the content of *Finnegans Wake*’ or ‘the meaning of *Finnegans Wake*.’ In the context of the issues explored in this study an effort is made to trace the manifold ways in which the premises of various literary theories, such as Formalism, New Criticism, Lukács’s Marxist theory, structuralism and post-structuralism, Eco’s semiotics, Iser’s *Wirkungsästhetik*, and genetic criticism, relate to *FW*; the relevance of their exposition lies exclusively in their relation to Joyce’s texts.

An attempt has been made to suggest the peculiarity of the issues indicated in this introduction through the title of this study. The term *haecceitancy* is a lexical blend (see ch. II

²⁰ Martha Woodmansee’s translation of this passage strikes me as imprecise (cf. Szondi, *Introduction*, 130).

below) formed from the term *haecceity* (the anglicised form of the Latin *haecceitas*), transferred from John Duns Scotus's theory of individuation, and from the word *hesitancy*. The term *haecceity* lends itself for several reasons. Primarily because it designates the "individuating difference" (Beckmann, "Haeceitas," 985) and the ultimate reality and singularity of each individual entity (see *ibid.*; see also Wolter); in terms of the act of reading it is meant to indicate the singularity of both reading *FW* in general and of each particular reading of *FW*. Furthermore, Scotus and his thought belong to the sphere of Scholasticism which, through his Jesuit education, was part of Joyce's intellectual horizon. Moreover, the related term *quidditas* was used by Joyce in a prominent passage in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*²¹ (see *P* 231).²² The former term was also used and appropriated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *Mille plateaux*,²³ by Philippe Sollers (see e.g. Goémé, 65-72, and Cusset, 160) and Julia Kristeva and thus links in a way the Middle Ages and what is called postmodernism, a scope which also characterises Joyce's oeuvre, thereby giving it an additional appropriateness. So does the fact that the term was a neologism, coined by Duns Scotus from the demonstrative *haec* ("this"), the emphatic suffix *ce* and the suffix *itas* used to form abstract nouns of quality from adjectives. This *haecceity* is the reason why readers, then and now, "hold back in doubt or indecision" (OED, "hesitate, v.," 1.a.), in other words *hesitate*, whether to read *Finnegans Wake* and if so how to read it.²⁴

When Clive Hart, one of the most experienced *FW* scholars, remarked in a Joyce centennial volume in 1982 that "[f]or forty years and more most of us have been frightened of *Finnegans Wake*" (Hart, "Afterword," 155), he was alluding to the provocation and challenge that *FW* represents for literary scholars and readers alike. It has been a long way for critics to accept the certainty of uncertainty with respect to *FW* and its consequences, and it represents no small provocation for the efforts and aspirations of literary criticism. Hence, the situation of the literary critic with respect to *FW* is characterised by a substantial embarrassment. S/he comments on a text, a very large part of which, s/he knows, will necessarily have to remain unaccounted for. Whether this is daring or naïve, or both, is an open question. If one intended to speak in a scholarly study only of things of which one can claim in good conscience to have a reasonable understanding, one would have to draw a veil over the work, and probably

²¹ Hereafter also cited as *A Portrait* and *P*.

²² It has been suggested that *haecceitas* would have been the more adequate term (see Noon, 51, 72).

²³ As was the blend *chaosmos* (see *FW* 118.21).

²⁴ Not least, the term *haecceitancy* also has the virtue of containing the letters *h*, *c*, *e*; and, in addition, the 'word' "HeCitEncy" (*FW* 421.23; cf. *FW* 119.18) occurs in *FW*. Due to its meaning "to stammer or falter in speech" (OED, "hesitate, v.," 2.), *hesitate* also points to the challenge of reading *FW* with respect to pronunciation.

over many other works of art too. But the task is precisely to explain by which means a work of art resists our efforts to understand and describe it.

I. THE RECEPTION AND SYMBOLIC PRODUCTION OF *FINNEGANS WAKE*

In *The Rules of Art*, Pierre Bourdieu writes “[t]he discourse on the work is not a simple side-effect, designed to encourage its apprehension and appreciation, but a moment which is part of the production of the work, of its meaning and its value” (Bourdieu, *Rules*, 170; see also Bourdieu, *Field*, 37).²⁵ According to Bourdieu, the “symbolic production” of a work of art (see Bourdieu, *Rules*, 166-173) includes “the whole accompaniment of commentaries and commentators who contribute directly to the production of the work of art by their reflection on [...] art” (ibid., 170) – in the case of literature literary criticism makes up the greater part of that which contributes to a work’s symbolic production but other factors play a critical role as well as the third part of this chapter illustrates. This chapter attempts to reconstruct, in outline, the “symbolic production” of *Finnegans Wake*. The question which arises in this context is how and by means of which arguments significance and value have been conferred on a supposedly incomprehensible work. It is exactly the factor of the ‘incomprehensibility’ of the work which makes the complex process of its symbolic production so instructive as fundamental questions of literature, meaning, and value have been negotiated here. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the discourse on the work has been part of its production – if, following Bourdieu, one considers it *symbolic*.²⁶ In other words, the objective is to trace how the discourse on the work has shaped what *FW* represents at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The symbolic production of *FW* that readers were faced with in 1939 is very different from that of 1959, which in turn is very different from that of 1984, or of 2014. Its tenor changes over time and within the symbolic production critical ideas and views vary in significance. This also means that the symbolic production of *FW* as it appears in 1944 had a very different effect on the reader position than the present state of the symbolic production of *FW* has on readers of today. The multidimensional nature of the process of *FW*’s symbolic production is illustrated by outlining the contemporary reception, its topoi, the common reading strategies and interpretive schemata, the Joyce scholarship, and the processes of university canonisation and the effects of literary theories and understanding them as agents and factors of this symbolic production. In order to do justice, at least to some degree, to the intricacy of the process (of the symbolic production) and the plethora of its

²⁵ With this concept Bourdieu goes far beyond the idea of the relatedness of work and commentary, which found conceptual expression, for instance, in Genette’s category of *metatextualité* (see Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 10).

²⁶ Documents and accounts of the reception of Joyce’s works are presented, for instance, in Deming; J. Kelly; Segall; J. Brooker; and Lernout and Van Mierlo.

aspects, the chapter is divided in three parts. The first part is concerned with the early, contemporary reception. The second part traces the premises and larger trends which have characterised the study of *FW*, in particular as they emerged within Joyce scholarship. The question of the contribution of the university qua institution and of literary theory to the symbolic production and canonisation of Joyce's work is addressed in the third part. The principal purpose is to illustrate the interrelation of symbolic production and reader position.

1. The Formation of Significant Topoi of WiP/*FW*'s Symbolic Production

Reading over Richard Kain's book on 'Ulysses,' 'Fabulous Voyager,' reading also Harry Levin's 'James Joyce,' and remembering Gilbert, Gorman, the Wordbook, and the rest: the whole clutter of exegesis, adulation, and diatribe [...]; reading all this sends the mind astray on far questions that have to do with the relation of the individual to his society in our time. How far has literature become inaccessible to its natural audience? How far has the natural audience (let us say for convenience the sum of those who go about the job of reading) itself lost the tools of access? Is it inevitable that the field of reference of the most responsible authors of our time should be largely unavailable to the most responsive existing audiences? Is it unavoidable that the area of conviction and belief that lies between such authors and such audiences should seem rather an area of the indifferent or the provisional? Is it necessary that the guidebook to the puzzle should replace the criticism of literature? How is it that the vice of scholarship should replace the élan of reading?
(Blackmur, "Jew," 96)

The topoi *incomprehensibility/unintelligibility, difficulty, and unreadability* – common ones in the early reception and symbolic production of Modernist works in general (see e.g. Riding and Graves, *passim*) – form a recurrent theme in *U*'s and WiP/*FW*'s reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) and 'production history,' by which is meant the history of their symbolic production.²⁷ The aim of the following overview of the latter's early reception and production history is to reconstruct three aspects: a) a sense of 'the event of Joyce' and 'the event of Modernism,' b) the formation of the symbolic production of Joyce's later works in relation to these topoi, and c) the implicit and explicit assumptions about the position of the reader of Joyce's later works. Reconstructing these aspects will help to provide an answer to the question which perspectives and positions readers of *FW* have adopted, and it will mark the point of departure for the question of which perspectives and positions they *can* adopt or *cannot help* adopting – a question to which this study as a whole attempts to give an answer.

²⁷ For the explicit use of these notions see the following pp. in Deming: *Ulysses* as "unreadable" (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 211, 230); *FW* as "unreadable" (Deming, *Joyce*², 517, 680, 762); *Ulysses* as "incomprehensible" (*Joyce*¹, 371; *Joyce*², 750); *FW* as "incomprehensible" (*Joyce*¹, 373; *Joyce*², 545, 576, 750); *Ulysses* as "difficult" (*Joyce*¹, 193, 371, 231; *Joyce*², 562, 753); *FW* as "difficult" (*Joyce*¹, 51; *Joyce*², 479, 502, 661).

The overview covers the period of *WiP/FW*'s initial reception and symbolic production from the late 1920s to the early 1940s.

1.1 The Event That Modernism Was

It is hardly possible to study Modernism without considering the event that Modernism as such and Joyce's later works in particular represent. To understand the event that Modernism was in the 1920s and 1930s means, in a way, to attempt to 'undo' the effects of canonisation by bringing to mind what exactly it was that caused the provocation expressed by early readers of Modernist works. One of the motives that arose over the course of *Ulysses*'s and *Finnegans Wake*'s composition – and one of the 'symptoms' of Modernism and experimental art in general – was certainly the "desire to exaggerate, to exhaust and expose" (Motte, 215).²⁸ The will to experiment and to innovate substantially results necessarily in a "gesture" that must be "ostentatious and oppositional" (ibid.), that "must astonish, and perhaps appall" (ibid.); the Modernists thoroughly exercised what Friedrich Schlegel had called the writer's "*unbezweifeltes Verwirrungsrecht*" (Schlegel, *Lucinde*, 9), his/her "undenied right to create confusion, to bewilder" (ibid.; my trans.). How else than in terms of experimentation – in the sense of wilfully violating the most basic conventions – can one account for such works as *Tristram Shandy*, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, and *Finnegans Wake*? In any case, in terms of conventionality *FW* has been described as "the utterly disruptive" (Culler, *Introduction*, 40).

For many, Ezra Pound's slogan "Make it new" epitomised the Modernist writer's will to innovation.²⁹ In the preface to his *Active Anthology*, published in 1933, Pound succinctly phrases what amounts to the *raison d'être* of Modernism: "Willingness to experiment is not enough, but unwillingness to experiment is mere death. [...] [T]he claim is that without constant experiment literature dies. Experiment is ONE of the elements necessary to its life" (Pound, "Prefatio," 397f). The astonishment and disapproval which characterise the response to the provocation of the Modernist experimental gesture constitute the event which such works as *Ulysses* and *FW* represent. The 'event of the new' was part of the Modernist aesthetic. In 1919, T. S. Eliot put this aesthetic of the literary event into the following words:

²⁸ As Warren Motte rightly points out, since there cannot be pure innovation, experimental literature involves a mixture of the dominant element of innovation *and* the element of tradition (see Motte, 214). Although the notion of experimental literature is certainly a modern one, the writer's will to innovate may be as old as literature itself and is recognisable even in periods in which *imitatio auctorum* served as the ideal.

²⁹ Kurt Heinzelman suggests that the meaning we have come to attach to Pound's slogan, which appeared in print for the first time only in 1934, differs substantially from Pound's idea of it (see Heinzelman, 131-133).

“My reputation in London is built upon one small volume of verse, and is kept up by printing two or three more poems in a year. The only thing that matters is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event” (V. Eliot, *Letters*, 285). It is significant in this respect to bear in mind that the modus of publication of *Ulysses* and *FW* – serialisation for over two and a half years in the case of *Ulysses* (March 1918-late 1920) and for fourteen years in the case of *FW* (April 1924-April/May 1938) – guaranteed the continuous appearance of reviews, and in the case of *WiP* the continuous appearance of ‘promotional criticism’ in *transition*, hence attention over a long period. Apart from the work’s standard-shifting, discourse-changing quality, the obscenity trials, its banning, the renown of the signatories of the letter of international protest engendered by the *Two Worlds* affair, its availability in le Paris des années folles, Judge John M. Woolsey’s ruling and the subsequent well-marketed publication are all elements of the event that *Ulysses* represents.

It is characteristic of ‘the event of *Ulysses*,’ ‘the event of *WiP/FW*’ and ‘the event of Modernism’ that they transcend traditional critical categories. Through exceeding literary conventions, experimental literature “always interrogates the fundamental premises and enabling features of literary art” (Motte, 214). For Joseph Warren Beach, an expert of such novelists of the second half of the nineteenth century as Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and George Meredith, terms such as ‘the novel’ seemed to be too well-defined by tradition to allow the inclusion of such works as *Ulysses*, much less of “Work in Progress.” Beach wrote in his *The Twentieth-Century Novel: Studies in Technique*, which appeared in 1932, in a chapter entitled “Post-Impressionism: Joyce”: “Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’ (1922) represents [...] the most complete break, in our time, with the entire historical tradition of the novel” (Beach, *Novel*, 403) and adds “[i]f it were not for the widespread influence it has had on other books which are obviously novels, we might leave it out of our account as being a freak of nature, a thing *sui generis*, and hardly in any proper sense a novel at all” (ibid.). According to Beach, *Ulysses* “is, to be sure, a fictitious narrative in prose, and that is a large part of any definition of the novel [,] [b]ut it has hardly more of a plot than ‘Tristram Shandy’” (ibid.). Instead of a plot, “a series of everyday occurrences serv[es] as a framework on which to hang the psychical fabric” (ibid.).³⁰ Beach concluded that “in ‘Ulysses’ we have, in many ways, a resemblance less to other novels than to contemporary poems – Ezra Pound’s ‘Cantos,’ Hart

³⁰ Beach linked Joyce and other Modernist writers to expressionistic and post-impressionistic painting because of what he perceived to be the “abstract composition” in their works (Beach, *Novel*, 424), meaning “departures from the conventional type of novel on the side of form” (ibid., 9f). He uses the two terms, expressionistic and post-impressionistic, to indicate “the extreme freedom and unconventionality with which they handle and reorganize the subject-matter offered them by life, transcending by methods primarily technical the more or less realistic stuff in which they work” (ibid., 10).

Crane's 'The Bridge,' and Eliot's 'Ash-Wednesday' and 'The Waste Land'" (ibid., 423). Of "Work in Progress" Beach says, "it would prove quite unprofitable to consider it in the light of a novel" (ibid., 423).

It thus seems far-sighted when in the earliest entry on Joyce in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, namely in the supplementary three-volume 13th edition from 1926, the unnamed author – probably Joyce's university friend C. P. Curran, who is the volume's author of the entry on Irish literature in English – writes: "This book [*Ulysses*], conceived and executed on a very ambitious scale, attracted much attention among critics and men of letters, in France as well as in England and America, as a portent of certain modern tendencies in the development of the novel" (Curran(?), 612). And yet, the ambiguity of the word *portent*, which can mean an indication of a momentous as well as of a calamitous event, is also obvious.

Such early critics of Joyce's works as Ernst Robert Curtius, Louis Gillet and Harry Levin were just as hesitant to call *Ulysses* and WiP/*FW* novels (see Curtius, "Technique," 323; Gillet, "New Novel," 264-266; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 17, 207). In *Exagmination*,³¹ nowhere does one find the use of the genre term *novel* with reference to WiP. In 1938, Eugene Jolas refers to the book as "prose-poem" (Jolas, "Homage," 169) and T. S. Eliot followed him in this categorisation (see Eliot, "Frontiers," 120). *Ulysses* seems to rest more accommodatingly in the category *novel* today.³² In Warren and Wellek's *Theory of Literature* the example of *Ulysses* is invoked to emphasise the flexibility of genre concepts: "Do genres remain fixed? Presumably not. With the addition of new works, our categories shift. Study the effect on theory of the novel of *Tristram Shandy* or *Ulysses*" (Wellek and Warren, 236). In contrast, the case of *FW* remains unresolved;³³ the work seems to exhaust this flexibility after all.³⁴ A recent attempt at explanation reads "*Finnegans Wake* is neither a novel, nor an anti-novel: it is, rather, both" (Fordham, "Anti-Novel," 71). David Hayman for instance seems to consider *FW* a poem (see Hayman, "Sentence," 154). And perhaps it is really the arabesque, described as an "artfully ordered confusion" (Schlegel, "Dialogue," 86; cf. Schlegel, "Gespräch," 318) – which appears so appropriate precisely because of the fact that its definition as genre concept remains vague in Schlegel's writings (see Polheim, 235-312) and

³¹ Hereafter also cited as *Exag*.

³² In "Joyce's *Ulysses*: Symbolic Poem, Biography or Novel?" (1968), Cleanth Brooks affirmed that *Ulysses* is a novel, that is, an intricately organised whole (see Brooks, "*Ulysses*," 86).

³³ In recent edited volumes on the history of the novel such as *The Oxford History of the Novel in English* and *The Cambridge History of the English Novel*, *FW* is represented as posing a challenge to the category 'novel' (see McCourt, 310, and see Attridge, "Modernist," 592). In *The Novel*, in the section "Uncertain Boundaries," a short chapter is devoted to *FW* in which Seamus Deane declares, "the *Wake* is not a novel, and it is not not a novel either" (Deane, "*Finnegans*," 907).

³⁴ Of course there are also those critics who believe(d) that *FW* is "primarily a novel" (Matthew Hodgart, qtd. in Peter, 263). The cover of a recent ebook edition of *FW* by the rather dubious Dead Dodo Publishing reads "A James Joyce Novel."

also because in Schlegel's conception it is linked to chaos und mythology (see Schlegel, "Dialogue," 82; cf. Schlegel, "Gespräch," 313) in coinciding modalities and not least as it is linked to *Tristram Shandy* (see Polheim, 13, 139, 211) – which, in this sense of genre, comes nearest to *FW*. If critics were not sure how to categorise Joyce's later texts, this was merely a symptom of the real issue at stake, namely the question how to read them. More than a few simply declared them 'unreadable.'

Those aspects which determined the reader position of the first generation of Modernism's readers, namely (the cultivation of) novelty, (the experience of an unprecedented) challenge, and (the impression of an) attack on literary conventions, do not mark the horizon of reading Modernism any more to the extent that they did in the first half of the twentieth century. Due to Modernism's canonisation the experience of a rupture has given way to the aura of literary classics. And yet it is important not to lose sight of the original provocation that Modernism represented, because otherwise neither the initial phase of the symbolic production nor the genealogy of certain presuppositions that influence today's reader position can be understood.

The significance of the historical context in which the Modernists' will to experiment unfolded has often been emphasised. In his attempt to reconstruct the mentality-historical (*mentalitätsgeschichtliche*) environment of 1926, of tracing the "thought patterns of the citizens of 1926" (Gumbrecht, *1926*, back cover), Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht diagnoses a general perception of the world as chaotic and unstable – a feeling of uncertainty (see *ibid.*, 336ff). This diagnosis, which also informs Bradbury and McFarlane's account of Modernism in their seminal eponymous volume, seems to be substantiated by three examples of literary criticism of the late 1920s and of the 1930s which were concerned in some way with Joyce. In an essay from 1927 about "the chief happenings to the spirit of man in this first quarter of our century" (Richards, "Nineteen," 311), I. A. Richards refers to "the currents that for more than a century have been sweeping against religion, flowing down from the uninhabitable polar zones of science" (*ibid.*, 312) and sees that "religion, hitherto man's chief means of envisaging the universe, is being challenged and affected even for believers" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, he speaks of "the disillusionment coming from the war" (*ibid.*, 313) and believes to discern a "[g]eneral disorientation" (*ibid.*, 314). Joseph Warren Beach writes in 1932 about "our bewildered, disillusioned times" (Beach, *Novel*, 308) and considers Joyce a subversive, Nietzschean spirit: "[H]is spirit is so corrosively critical that it seems to the average reader to leave nothing standing. [...] In this Joyce is typical of the period through which we are going, a period of

transition, of ruthless criticism and transvaluation of values” (ibid., 548).³⁵ In the late 1930s, David Daiches also considers the twentieth century, especially after the First World War, to be a period of cultural transition (see Daiches, 2, 7) – transition because the “community of belief [in common values] disintegrates” (ibid., 5) and a new one has yet to be established: “One by one the preconceptions of our fathers have been shattered, and instead of being replaced naturally with new beliefs [...], they have been replaced by nothing: in terms of ethics and theory of value generally, if not with complete literalness, what ought to have been a brave new world has turned out a wasteland” (ibid., 7). According to Daiches, the “extraordinary experimentation in literary technique” (ibid., 10) in the twentieth century is due to an “intensification of the subjective” (ibid.) as artists compensate for the lack of a “community of belief” by “new techniques in expression” and “highly individual standard[s] of value” (ibid., 9). Another contemporary critic has spoken of “a mood of restlessness” (Arnesen, 5), of “a new intensity” (ibid., 17) and a prevailing “sceptical temper” (ibid., 18) with respect to the 1920s.

In a piece on *Ulysses* from 1948, in which David Daiches’s line of reasoning from a decade before reverberates, R. P. Blackmur speaks of a “gap” between *Ulysses* and its readers (see R. P. Blackmur, “Jew,” 97f). What Blackmur suggests is that this gap is a “gap between the actual society in which we live and the ideals – the dogmas of vital purpose – to which the expressions of that actual society formerly bore direct relation” (ibid., 116). In Blackmur’s account, the first half of the twentieth century is a transition period (see ibid., 97) after “the breakdown of the Christian world” (ibid., 105). Blackmur maintains that the “loss of the authority in the forms of the ideal” (ibid., 100) led in Joyce’s case, and in the case of modern writers in general, to the “imposition of arbitrary aesthetic orders” (ibid., 101). Furthermore, because of the breakdown of the old order, which became itself the theme of *Ulysses* (see ibid., 99), and the ensuing period of transition, “contemporary readers can no longer see the Christian-Greek picture” (ibid., 115) – a polarity which is part of Joyce’s nature as Blackmur suggests (see ibid., 103) – as it has become for contemporary readers a mere “ancestral utopia” (ibid., 116). This “picture” is represented in the polarity of Stephen, who stands for the repudiation of faith (ibid., 100), the modern individual, and the artist, and Bloom, who represents acceptance (ibid.) of tradition (making him, according to Blackmur, “the most

³⁵ The ‘transvaluation of (all) values’ is of course a reference to Nietzsche who had written, for instance, in *Ecce Homo*: “Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of supreme self-examination on the part of humanity, become flesh and genius in me” (Nietzsche, *Ecce*, 326). Ernst Robert Curtius had considered Joyce in similar terms as Beach did when he wrote, in 1929, that “[t]he relativation [sic] of all organized orders is perhaps the most comprehensive intellectual perspective in which we might consider Joyce’s work” (Curtius, “Technique,” 319).

living part of the Christian world” (ibid., 116)), “the wanderer, the movement and enterprise in man, the only thing immortal in society which persists from form to form” (ibid., 109), and “the repository and resource that makes creation possible” (ibid., 113). What Blackmur seems to suggest in the end is that the gap can be crossed if the reader “educates” him·her·self to assume that this ‘Graeco-Christian picture’ is the essence of Joyce’s writing (see ibid., 116).

Daniel Albright has likewise recently suggested that “during the twentieth century art had to writhe in insecurity” (Albright, 31) because of the disintegration of the value system which had long sustained the arts (see ibid., 32ff); Albright identifies Nietzsche – who figures in many accounts as the ‘ur-father’ of Modernism – as the prophet of this disintegration. As a consequence, Albright reasons, artists themselves had to “propagandize new standards of value by which their art could be judged as successful” (ibid., 31f). In fact, as long ago as 1937 Tommaso Landolfi had the character of the critic in one of his short stories declare “a work of art can be free not only from linguistic conventions but from all conventions and [...] create its own rules” (Landolfi, 39).

Uncertainty – as a feature of the text substantiated by its contemporary cultural context – has for some time been a sort of catchword in *FW* criticism. It is not overtly manifest in *Exagmination*; yet, there are a few scattered comments that suggest, by implication, that not only a few of Joyce’s contemporaries may have considered the times uncertain. A comment on “the trend of the times” (Llona, 100) by Robert McAlmon, for instance, introduces a broader context in which to situate WiP: “a period post-dating the admission of the subconscious as important to individual and general human destinies, and when an acceptance of relativity forces the realization that facts and ideas are neither as hard nor as logical as some minds wish them” (McAlmon, 105); the radio, the aeroplane, and psychoanalysis are also mentioned as symptoms of a new “period” (see ibid., 111). In the second comment that runs in this direction, Victor Llona identifies a “thorough internationalization” (Llona, 100) which has swept away the “provincialism” of yesterday by “[t]he prodigious development of the means of locomotion and of the means for spreading thought” (ibid.) and by the “upheaval of the War” (ibid.).

The primary document for this sense of witnessing ‘bewildered, disillusioned times’ many took of course to be *The Waste Land*. Many of Eliot’s contemporaries viewed it as the expression of a moment of crisis and of disillusionment. In “*The Waste Land: A Prophetic Document*” (1989) Cleanth Brooks, born in 1906, writes that Eliot “shared with certain others a sense of the culture’s failure and breakdown” (Brooks, “*Waste Land*,” 100) and describes *The Waste Land* as a “nightmarish vision of a civilization breaking up” (ibid., 110). I. A.

Richards considered *The Waste Land* to be an expression of “[a] sense of desolation, of uncertainty, of futility, of the groundlessness of aspirations, of the vanity of endeavour” (Richards, “Science,” 124). Eliot himself spoke in 1923, in “*Ulysses, Order and Myth*,” of “the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Eliot, “*Ulysses*,” 222).

The historico-cultural explanation of Modernism as conceived by its early readers and critics understood the upsetting of literary conventionality as a consequence of a more general upheaval of the core values in the twentieth century. The uncertainty was epitomised in the question which values, if any, were still available after the upheaval which the twentieth century brought about. It is precisely because traditional values such as Christian morality, *ratio*, and the faith in the telos of world history, in a steady progress of social and cultural advance of civilisation, seemed not to be available any more, what was perceived as the Modernist attack on categories such as the novel, plot, etc. was deemed a further, barely tolerable destabilisation of the traditional, exactly as a provocation. If what were believed to be the last remaining certainties are shattered, for instance that literature should be comprehensible at least in principle, then the early horizon of reading is categorically characterised by uncertainty and the struggle against it.

1.2 À la recherche du sens perdu: The Event That “Work in Progress” Was

The first instalment of “Work in Progress” appeared in April 1924 in Ford Madox Ford’s short-lived *the transatlantic review*. Throughout 1925 further instalments were published in such diverse magazines and collections as the *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*, an anthology of Modernist writing published by Robert McAlmon’s Contact Editions; T. S. Eliot’s *Criterion*; Adrienne Monnier’s recently launched *Le navire d’argent*; and Ernest Walsh’s *This Quarter*. From 1925 to 1926 unauthorised reprints appeared in the United States in Samuel Roth’s quarterly *Two Worlds*.³⁶ From 1927 on, Eugene Jolas’s newly established magazine *transition* became the fairly exclusive forum for the serial publication of “Work in Progress”.³⁷ With the exception of the section published in *the transatlantic review*, the

³⁶ For an informed account of the *Two Worlds* issue see Spoo, 79f, 169-172.

³⁷ In addition to the works of the U.S. American expatriates in Paris, *transition* published, e.g., German Expressionist and Dadaist works and the French surrealists. Samuel Beckett’s first published work of fiction, the short story “Assumption,” appeared in *transition* in June 1929. *transition* also published the first English translation of a Kafka text, namely “Das Urteil” which was translated by Jolas as “The Sentence” in issue 11 in 1928. *transition*’s priority project was doubtless the serial publication of “Work in Progress.”

instalments published before were published again in *transition*. Instalments from Joyce's work appeared more or less regularly from the first issue, published in April 1927, to the final issue, in May 1938; yet appearing at less regular intervals from 1930 on (see Crispi and Slote, *How*, 490-493). Joyce also published selected parts as individual volumes in limited deluxe editions – the most famous of these six volumes³⁸ is undoubtedly *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (see *ibid.*).³⁹ As he had done in the case of *Ulysses*, Joyce constantly revised the text including the parts of the text which had appeared in publication. Thus, the text of *FW*, published in 1939, differs in part considerably from the text of *WiP* as it appeared in *transition* and in the individual volumes.

Reviews of “Work in Progress” only started to appear with the shift to *transition*.⁴⁰ The general bewilderment of its reviewers is well-documented in the second volume of Robert Deming's *James Joyce, The Critical Heritage*. An early review from May 1927 read: “It should disgust. [...] When will it strike Mr. Joyce that to write what it is a *physical* impossibility to read is possibly even sillier than to write what is mentally impossible to follow?” (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 375f). What made matters worse was that Joyce's *Ulysses* had already been deemed a major affront to intelligibility by many reviewers – a criticism Joyce reworked into *FW* through the reference to his “usylesly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles” (*FW* 179.26-27).

One of the significant features of the symbolic production of Joyce's later works, i.e. *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, is the author's role in the process of their symbolic production. Not only did Joyce enlist friends and supporters to promote his works, but he also purposefully inaugurated the process of their symbolic production by imparting interpretive keys. This was not uncommon for Modernist writers, one may think of Eliot's footnotes to *The Waste Land*, and contributed to the notion that a part of contemporary literature required commentary for the comprehension of its ideas – that is, required commentary not in order to be better appreciated but to be ‘understood’ at all. Joyce had commissioned friends and sympathisers to publish favourable criticism to promote, defend and in part to illuminate his new work. Alongside the instalments of the work such ‘promotional criticism’ appeared in

³⁸ The titles of the six volumes are *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (1928, Crosby Gaige; 1930, Faber and Faber), *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun* (1929, Black Sun P), *Haveth Childers Everywhere* (1930, Babou and Kahane; 1930, Fountain P; 1931, Faber and Faber), *Two Tales of Shem and Shaun* (1932, Faber and Faber), *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* (1934, Servire P), and *Storiella as She Is Syung* (1937, Corvinus P).

³⁹ Furthermore excerpts from these volumes and from the *transition* instalments were published in such outlets as Richard Aldington's *Imagist Anthology 1930* (1930), Jacob Bronowski and Hugh Sykes Davies's magazine *The New Experiment* (1931), C. K. Ogden's journal *Psyche* (1931), Milton Abernethy and Anthony Buttitta's magazine *Contempo* (1934), François Bernouard's *Les Amis de 1914*, *bulletin hebdomadaire de l'Académie de la Coupole* (1934), and Efstratios Tériade's magazine *Verve* (1938).

⁴⁰ Before the shift to *transition* the publication of Joyce's fragments seems to have caused little public and critical reaction (but see Slote, “Après I,” 368).

transition beginning with issue 8 (Nov. 1927) and continued to appear until issue 23 (July 1935) with the majority of pieces appearing in the years 1928 and 1929. Joyce selected twelve of these critical essays, along with two “letters of protest,” which were then published in the collection *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* in May 1929 – ten years before the publication of *Finnegans Wake* as it turned out.⁴¹ As in the case of the schemata for *Ulysses*, Joyce’s strategy was to provide certain clues to his “twelve Marshals more or less directing them what lines of research to follow” (Gilbert, *Letters*, 283). The publication of the volume *Exagmination* is an extraordinary phenomenon in itself, as one of its contributors, Victor Llona, points out – a volume of ‘critical’ essays that appeared before the work of literature which is its subject (see Llona, 102).

Many of the reviewers of *WiP/FW* were informed not just by their reading of the instalments of “Work in Progress” but also by these auxiliary interpretive resources. The first of these ‘explicatory interventions’ was a short piece by the editors of *transition*, a defence of Joyce and Stein whom they considered to “suffer alike from the inability of hasty reviewers to ‘understand’ their offerings” (Jolas and Paul, 173).

The Question of Authorial Explication: Authorised Exagmination

My grievance if any is against James Joyce, the author of that monstrous masterpiece, for writing a book such that large stretches of it are, without elaborate explanation, merely beautiful nonsense [...]. Perhaps Joyce did not realize how obscure his book is. Whatever the final judgement [...] of the place of Finnegans Wake may be, I do not think that most poetry (for it is a kind of vast prose poem) is written in that way or requires that sort of dissection for its enjoyment and understanding. But I suspect that the enigmas provided by Finnegans Wake have given support to the error, prevalent nowadays, of mistaking explanation for understanding.
(Eliot, “Frontiers,” 120f)

Joyce had been well aware of the need for explication of *Ulysses*, which in the estimation of the majority of early reviewers, and of early readers in general no doubt, had already been “tediously obscure” (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 210). He provided interpretive clues, for instance in the form of the schemata which circulated among his friends and his friendly ‘*explicateurs*’ and also through his assistance in the production of interpretive studies such as Stuart Gilbert’s *James Joyce’s Ulysses: A Study* (1930) and Frank Budgen’s *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934). The need for such clues and commentary with respect to *WiP/FW* was

⁴¹ Most of the essays collected in *Exag* appeared in the *transition* issues 9 to 15 from December 1927 to February 1929. Some of them were revised and expanded for the publication of *Exag*.

obvious from the very beginning. Yet, while the schemata for *Ulysses* are clearly Joyce's own, it is impossible to establish which ideas in *Exagmination* and in the aforementioned studies can be attributed to Joyce and which are interpretive conjecture. The fact that *Exag* is what Genette would term an epitext – or more precisely a “semiofficial allographic epitext” (see Genette, *Paratexts*, 348-351), a category which Genette illustrated by the example of Joyce (see *ibid.*, 350f) among others – was pointed out early on by Edmund Wilson (see Wilson, *Wound*, 225 n. 1). And thus “[w]e are left with nothing, questioning a perplexing indiscretion, a key which is itself locked up, a cipher which deciphers and yet is encoded” (Foucault, *Death*, 7).

In a way, G. V. L. Slingsby's “letter of protest” included in *Exagmination*, entitled “Writes a Common Reader,” set the tone for the criticism that was to be countered by the ‘critical’ essays in *Exag*. She found Joyce's new work “extremely difficult for a reader” (Slingsby, 190) and remained sceptical of the rationale behind the pieces of ‘criticism’ collected in *Exagmination*: “Whether or not a public can ever be trained to absorb this kind of thing seems to me extremely doubtful” (*ibid.*).

The ‘critics’ congregated in the pages of *Exagmination* were renowned and lesser-known writers like William Carlos Williams, Victor Lloná, Robert McAlmon, and John Rodker; writers-to-be like Samuel Beckett, Marcel Brion, and Thomas McGreevy; friends and collaborators of Joyce like Frank Budgen and Stuart Gilbert; the editors of *transition* Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, who was also a writer; and the literary journalist and associate editor of *transition* Robert Sage. The twelve essays collected in *Exagmination* are predominantly laudatory, and aimed at elucidating the work's central ideas. The issue of comprehensibility and the criticism of the excessive demands made on the reader were addressed implicitly and explicitly in all of the essays.

Famously, a young Samuel Beckett was not lenient towards readers' lack of understanding: “Here is direct expression – pages and pages of it. And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentleman, it is because you are too decadent to receive it” (Beckett, 13). Many of the other contributors seem to have had less difficulty to understand at least in part the general reaction towards a Joyce whose “recent books [...] [were] considered hermetic by the majority of readers” (Brion, 31). Although the commentaries are seldom sustained in their scepticism, the passages in which scepticism does show through are often revealing as the following examples illustrate.

Marcel Brion mused “[I]f the books of Joyce are as difficult for many to read as those of Einstein it is perhaps because both of these men have discovered a new aspect of the world

and one which cannot be comprehended without a veritable initiation” (ibid., 33). Victor Llona asked himself “Does not the author take the erudition of his readers too much for granted?” (Llona, 99) and answered his question himself by stating: “Mr. Joyce expects too much from his readers. Few, if any, will possess the knowledge of languages – and other sciences – that would allow them fully to grasp the niceties of meaning in this work” (ibid., 100). Assuming that “[w]hen completed [...] *Work in Progress* will still prove a hard nut to crack for the vast majority of its readers” (ibid.), he plainly explains what he considered the future ‘fate’ of the work: “Mr. Joyce will suscite a host of commentators who may in some respects smooth the way for the vulgum pecus” (ibid.), adding “[t]hese scholars, as is their wont, will fight and squabble over ‘obscure’ passages, draw up glossaries and indulge in long-winded dissertations as to the esoteric meaning of certain fragments” (ibid., 100f). Robert McAlmon’s statement “To what extent the imaginary being, the common man, or the common reader, can get a pleasurable sensation out of reading this work, is difficult to say” (McAlmon, 115) reflects the view that WiP has little appeal for a broader readership.

According to Robert Sage, Joyce “has drawn from an erudition that can be communicated in its entirety to only a few scholars” (Sage, “Before,” 168). He impressed upon readers that Joyce “has sealed up many parts of the work to even the erudite reader through the unamplified allusion to subjects familiar only to himself or a limited number of people” (ibid., 168f). “If his latest work presents titanic difficulties,” he explains, “it is because of the reader’s insufficient equipment rather than because Joyce has turned to writing gibberish” (ibid., 169). Sage also calls attention to the violation of readers’ expectations emphasising that “there is, properly speaking, no plot, no character development, no action, no narrative sequence” (ibid., 156) and sketches a kind of model reader for WiP, surprisingly not unlike the model reader of *FW* which Umberto Eco will describe fifty years later:

[T]he reader must be prepared at times to visualise several related images simultaneously, realising that these images are not necessarily bound together by surface-obvious associational chains but that their range may include any desired point in political or religious history, legend, fable, mythology, science, mathematics, current events, etc. (ibid.)

Eugene Jolas opines rather vaguely that “Joyce makes no concessions to communication other than a tantalizing invitation to the reader to seek and continue to seek” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 89). John Rodker seems to be sceptical too: “As to its meaning? [...] [T]he form is so elusive [...] and the associations often so personal to the author as to be incomprehensible to us that it seems half the matter is lost [...]. Is it possible this attempt to

make the unconscious conscious may but end in confusing the *rapport* between author and reader?" (Rodker, "Dynamic," 145). Yet his answer is characterised by the optimism – nourished by the 'precedent' *Ulysses* – that would come to mark the vast majority of the *FW* criticism of the following decades: "Possibly for a while. [...] I think of *Ulysses* and how with the complete work and some passage of time this 'Work in Progress' must become apparent to us" (ibid., 146).

The purpose of the critical essays collected in *Exagmination* was to "prepare" readers as Jolas emphasised in the last promotional article before the work's eventual publication in book form: "This complex, this enigmatic work has challenged contemporary speculation as no other book has done for a long time. Its fragmentary appearance will probably have militated against an immediate acceptance, but the reader has doubtless now been prepared through *Transition* and the exegetical efforts of *Transition* writers" (Jolas, "Homage," 169). Given the above-cited comments, the contributors themselves did not believe that it was the so-called common reader whom they were to prepare.⁴²

The idea that readers of "Work in Progress" were now prepared for an understanding of the text and Jolas's reference to its complexity and enigmatic nature only re-emphasised the notion that without interpretive support readers would be lost. By 1929 the 'design,' the "key" (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 260) as Larbaud phrased it, of *Ulysses*, namely the symbolic 'subtext' of the *Odyssey*, pointed out by Larbaud in his lecture in 1921, had yet to be demonstrated in detail by Gilbert, but again, according to *Exag*, there was a design to be perceived for the new work, namely "the philosophical framework upon which the text is draped" (Paul, 134). Yet, this time it was not a well-known literary framework as in the case of *Ulysses*, quite the contrary.

While *Exag* had a significant impact on Joyce criticism as illustrated below, the documents of the early reception do not bear witness to the sense of preparedness assumed by Jolas. On the contrary, as many of the reviews of *Finnegans Wake* attest, most of its readers lacked this supposed sense of preparedness. In any case, the notion of a work of literature that demanded keys or glossaries to be appreciated seemed suspicious to many (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 134; see also Barzun, 22). Modernist literature was criticised for sabotaging a perceived immediacy of the aesthetic experience (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 134) and it is

⁴² One statement, in Michael Stuart's *transition* essay "The Dubliner and His Dowdily: (A Note on the Sublime)," does imply that the *transition* critics were indeed to prepare "the common reader": "The critic's office, the truism may be repeated by arrangement with the publishers, is to bring into play those ideas which will aid the 'common reader' to a comprehension of the work" (Stuart, 152).

not without irony that T. S. Eliot would retrospectively join the choir of suspicious voices (see introductory quote of this section).

The significance of the fact that the peculiar hybrid of epitext and metatext which *Exag* represents stands at the beginning of the symbolic production of WiP/*FW* has all too often been overlooked. Comparable in the formation of the symbolic production to the act of laying the foundation stone, it illustrates, not least in how explicitly the reader position was negotiated here, the process of the symbolic production and the influence ensuing from it. In addition to establishing the ‘coordinate system’ of criticism of the work (see below), it emphasised the challenge that WiP constitutes for readers and the requirement to be willing to break free from one’s horizon of expectations and to venture forth into an unprecedented experience of reading and meaning constitution.

The Puzzled Critics: The Inconvenience of Elusiveness

Hostile reviewers say that Hannahan has produced the largest logograph in literature, a semantic monster rebus, a truly infernal charade or crossword puzzle. They say that the cramming of those million or billion allusions into a work of belles-lettres, that the flaunting play with etymological, phraseological, and hermeneutic complications, that the piling up of layers of never-ending, perversely antinomial meanings, is not literary creativity, but the composing of brain teasers for peculiarly paranoiac hobbyists, for enthusiasts and collectors fanatically given to bibliographical digging. That this is, in a word, utter perversion, the pathology of a culture and not its healthy development. Excuse me, gentlemen – but where exactly is one to draw the line between the multiplicity of meaning that marks the integration of a genius, and the sort of enriching of a work with meanings that represents the pure schizophrenia of a culture?
(Lem, 39)⁴³

Notwithstanding *transition*’s preliminaries, the reviewers, the majority of which were professional literary critics, the so called *men of letters*, professors of literature, and fellow writers, were at a loss about how to deal with works like *Ulysses* and WiP/*FW*. If it is correct to say that “the interpretative modes developed by the nineteenth-century poetics, which retained and even extended their importance far into the twentieth-century, found themselves virtually helpless” in relation to a work like *Ulysses* (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 131), this is certainly even more true of WiP/*FW*. Louis Gillet was one of the few critics who freely admitted that it took him “several years to absorb the shock” caused by *Ulysses* (Deming, *Joyce*², 724) – Adorno’s expression “the shock of incomprehensibility” (see Adorno, “Why,”

⁴³ In Stanisław Lem’s “Patrick Hannahan ‘Gigamesh,’” one of his fictional reviews of fictitious books, which appeared in the collection *Doskonała próżnia* in 1971, the reviewed work, Gigamesh by Patrick Hannahan, is an exaggerated version of *Ulysses* and *FW*.

131) reverberates forcefully here. The following reviews and assessments by H. G. Wells, Rebecca West, and Edmund Wilson, published between 1928 and 1941, have been selected as they represent a range of paradigmatic reactions and notions – particularly with regard to what they perceive to be the defects of the work – of the early phase of *WiP/FW*'s reception and symbolic production.

In a letter to Joyce from November 1928, H. G. Wells, who had written an appreciative review of *A Portrait* (see Deming, *Joyce*¹, 86-88) and whom Joyce had asked for support in promoting his “Work in Progress,” replied: “You have turned your back on common men, on their elementary needs and their restricted time and intelligence and you have elaborated. What is the result? Vast riddles” (Gilbert, *Letters*, 274f). He gave Joyce to understand that his “last two works have been more amusing and exciting to write than they will ever be to read” (ibid.). Asking himself “who the hell is this Joyce who demands so many waking hours of the few thousands I have still to live for a proper appreciation of his quirks and fancies and flashes of rendering?” (ibid.), Wells leaves no doubt about his view on the new work: “Your work is an extraordinary experiment [...]. It has its believers and its following. Let them rejoice in it. To me it is a dead end” (ibid.).

Rebecca West's review of “Work in Progress,” “James Joyce and His Followers”,⁴⁴ appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune Books* in January 1930. Stating that “[t]he distinctive attribute of ‘Work in Progress’ is that it is not written in English, or in any other language” (West, 327), West recognises “[m]ost of the words that James Joyce uses” (ibid.) as being “‘portmanteau’ words such as Lewis Carroll invented when he wrote ‘Jabberwocky’” (ibid.) She counters “[t]he common accusation [...] that it is incomprehensible” (ibid.) by suggesting that “[t]here emerges from the text clearly enough not only a superficial pattern of verbal suggestion which is intricate and amusing and occasionally poetically beautiful” (ibid.). According to West, *WiP* “cannot be read as quickly as ordinary English, just as a cross-word puzzle cannot be read as quickly as the words it contains set up in ordinary form” (ibid.). But if a writer “is to take ten, or twenty, or thirty years packing allusions into portmanteau words; and if his readers are to take twelve [...] or twenty-five, or forty years unpacking these allusions out of the portmanteau words” (ibid.) this arouses in West the express “suspicion that troops have been marched up a hill and then down again” (ibid.).

⁴⁴ By the time of the publication of this review, West's criticism of Joyce's work had already grown into a ‘war of lines’ with Joyce's supporters. It is thus also a reply to the attacks from Beckett and Williams in their essays in *Examination*. Williams's essay in turn was commissioned by Joyce as a reply to West's first review “The Strange Case of James Joyce,” which had appeared in *The Bookman* in September 1928. This first review was a shortened version of the title essay “The Strange Necessity” which had appeared in her essay collection *The Strange Necessity* in July 1928. For an informed account of the whole ‘affair’ see Austin Briggs, 83-102.

In his influential study of what he perceived to be the Symbolist tradition of Modernist writing, *Axel's Castle* from 1931, Edmund Wilson includes a chapter on Joyce in which he also devotes a few pages to “Work in Progress.” Wilson, for whom Joyce was “the great poet of a new phase of the human consciousness” (Wilson, *Axel's*, 221),⁴⁵ levelled his praise of “Work in Progress” with the following criticism. His doubts concerned “the effect of the superposition [...] of such a variety of parallels” (ibid., 234) which “[seem] sometimes less to enrich the book than to give it a mere synthetic complication” (ibid.). According to Wilson, “[t]he style [Joyce] [...] invented for his purpose works on the principle of a palimpsest:⁴⁶ one meaning, one set of images, is written over another” (ibid., 234f). Pointing out that readers “can grasp a certain number of such suggestions simultaneously” Wilson’s criticism is directed at the Joyce who, “with his characteristic disregard for the reader, apparently works over and over his pages, packing in allusions and puns [...] deliberately inventing puzzles” (ibid., 235).⁴⁷ In his *The Wound and the Bow*, published a decade later, Wilson devotes a whole chapter to *Finnegans Wake*. Although largely appreciative, Wilson also takes up his criticism of a decade ago when he criticises “Joyce’s growing self-indulgence in an impulse to pure verbal play” (Wilson, *Wound*, 232), leaving *FW* “somewhat overdone” (ibid., 233).

With regard to what they perceive to be the aesthetic defects of WIP/*FW*, these reviews are representative of the most common points of criticism, of the common topoi in the early phase of critical discourse on the work. If one were to summarise these points of criticism within one sentence, the quintessence would be that the majority of reviewers criticised the wilful difficulty – often paraphrased in the complaint about the supposedly excessive demands made by the author upon his/her readers – and obscurity of the text, which, being apparently written in cipher, appeared to have more in common with a riddle than with a work of prose.

Indeed, the disapproval which becomes manifest in these commentaries is ultimately an opposing of the notion of literature as elaborate riddle. The view of *Finnegans Wake* as a sort of “master riddle” (Hassan, 94) has been an extraordinarily influential topos.⁴⁸ It is expressed, e.g., in Glasheen (see Glasheen, *A Cenus*, vii) and in Lacan, who speaks of Joyce

⁴⁵ Like other critics Wilson hesitated to refer to Joyce as a novelist: “His prose works have an artistic intensity, a definitive beauty of surface and of form, which make him comparable to the great poets rather than to most of the great novelists” (Wilson, *Axel's*, 221).

⁴⁶ In the *transition 7* instalment of WIP from Oct. 1927, Wilson may have read the phrase “forged palimpsests” (*FW* 182.02).

⁴⁷ Wilson qualifies his criticism eventually: “I have offered the criticisms above only tentatively and without assurance: when we come to think about what we take at first to be the defects in Joyce’s work, we find them so closely involved with the depth of his thought and the originality of his conception that we are obliged to grant them a certain necessity” (Wilson, *Axel's*, 236).

⁴⁸ Curtius had already called the reading of Joyce’s *Ulysses* an “intellectual puzzle” (Curtius, “Technique,” 315).

as “l’écritain par excellence de l’énigme” (Lacan, *Sinthome*, 153) ‘the writer par excellence of the enigma.’ The notion of Joyce’s work as a riddle and an enigma has even found graphic expression in César Abin’s 1932 sketch of Joyce in the form of a question mark – a sketch which Abin drew according to Joyce’s specifications (see Jolas, “Friend,” 8). The conviction that something (story, plot, secret, confession, or even truth) has been *concealed* and that this something is to be *revealed* (through diligent study of the text) forms the basis of this notion. The negative reaction that is apparent in the commentaries above and in the early reception and symbolic production, which they represent paradigmatically, is due to the belief that something has been concealed that should not be concealed. In contrast, the greater part of *FW* criticism and of many an engagement with the work constitute the positive response to the notion of literature as elaborate riddle. It proceeds from the other side of the ‘riddle logic,’ namely the prospect of a revelation – that something is to be revealed, something truly substantial. In fact, until the 1980s, and even beyond, *FW* criticism was fueled almost exclusively by this idea; Wilson and *A Skeleton Key* mark the beginning, *A Wake Newslitter* does not mark an end.

As early as 1959, James Atherton had pondered in his important early study *The Books at the Wake*: “Perhaps – this must be the first word on such a subject – a final literary evaluation of *Finnegans Wake* will never be made, for any such evaluation must follow and be based upon complete understanding of the book” (Atherton, *Books*¹, 11). The state of affairs Atherton puts in a nutshell by pointing out that “[n]o such understanding has yet been reached and none seems to be in sight in spite of the increasing flow of illustrative material” (ibid.). And yet in the early days of *FW* criticism, the hope of dealing with an enigma that can eventually be solved often outweighed the doubt which the merely potential validity of this assumption entailed. Atherton’s comments, “[U]ntil all the quotations, allusions and parodies in *Finnegans Wake* have been elucidated the complete meaning of the whole work must escape us” (ibid., 20) and “[I]t [*FW*] is a puzzle to which the keys are provided” (ibid.), bespeak this hope too. Although from the beginning critics were conscious of the fact that “*Finnegans Wake* is wilfully obscure,” that “[i]t was conceived as obscurity; it was executed as obscurity; it is about obscurity” (Glasheen, *A Census*, xvi), the reasoning was that a ‘surface obscurity’ or ‘obscurity of form,’ as which it was regarded, could eventually be overcome through concerted efforts, deep study and patience. The idea of the ultimate revelation was too alluring; Glasheen insisted that “[t]he riddle alone is real, the riddle and man’s passionate itch to solve it” (ibid., vii). Had not Joyce himself once said he wanted to “keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant” (qtd. in Ellmann, *James*

*Joyce*¹, 535) and had he not been cited as boldly spelling out “The demand that I make of my reader is that he should devote his whole life to reading my works” (qtd. in *ibid.*, 716)? The premise of this mindset was that the revelation of an overall meaning could eventually be had by elucidating minor puzzles and allusions and gradually putting together the pieces of the puzzle. Robert Martin Adams described this mindset in 1962: “The Joyce we have had up to now was Daedalian — that is, he exercised over many minds the authority of a puzzle, which has to be solved on its own given terms and which promises, tacitly but nonetheless distinctly, that it has a final solution” (Adams, “Knife,” 512).⁴⁹ Few critics, such as Adams and Levin before him, challenged the idea of the Daedalian Joyce. Therefore, the potency of the view of *Finnegans Wake* as a “master riddle” has long influenced the reader position, and still does, and, more importantly, it affected the reader function (see below) in such a way that discovering ‘the (only possible) key/answer/truth’ became the telos of reading. At its horizon the notion of intentionality looms large.

What contributed to the expectation of revelation was what could be termed the ‘narrative paradox’ with which readers of *WiP/FW* were confronted: The apparent amount of storytelling in the long text did not yield any recognisable story. The perplexity and frustration caused by this paradoxical impression is apparent when in a review of *FW* from 1939 Edwin Muir referred to “an exorbitant amount of this storytelling without any story, an endless eddying of words that return upon themselves” (Deming, *Joyce*², 677) and deemed the whole work “so elusive that there is no judging it; I cannot tell whether it is winding into deeper and deeper worlds of meaning or lapsing into meaninglessness” (*ibid.*). It has already been suggested that the provocation of *FW* is not least one of length and of genre and concomitant expectations. Six hundred twenty-eight long pages were the impetus of the expectation and belief of being faced with a coherent narrative of some sort after all.

What was believed to have been concealed and was hoped to be revealed were in fact the traditional norms and categories of interpretation, which Wolfgang Iser has pointed out with respect to *Ulysses* (see Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 132), such as “intention, message, and harmony” (*ibid.*), etc., which “either remain in the dark or are destroyed; if one tries to hold on to such frameworks, the work will appear chaotic, or a sort of hoax, or at the very best a labyrinth for the reader to lose himself in” (*ibid.*). Iser had the advantage of addressing these norms from the safe remove of hindsight and was thus in a position to justifiably claim, in

⁴⁹ When Susan Sontag muses, in the 1970s, that “[t]he unintelligible in *Finnegans Wake* not only is decipherable, with effort, but is meant to be deciphered” in order to contrast Joyce and Artaud, about whom she writes “[t]he unintelligible parts of Artaud’s late writings are supposed to remain obscure — to be directly apprehended as sound” (Sontag, “Artaud,” liii), this mindset underlies her statement too.

retrospect, that as long as these norms were in operation “the whole range of modern art typified by *Ulysses* will seem [...] inaccessible” (ibid.).

1.3 Intimidating Literature: The Provocation of Difficulty

The question of (in)accessibility became the litmus test of Modernism’s public perception. The great consensus among Joyce’s contemporaries about his later works was that they were difficult, if not incomprehensible. Although *difficulty* is a profoundly subjective concept,⁵⁰ the early responses to *U* and *FW* document that the majority of the readership agreed in their perception of the works as difficult.⁵¹ And a great many among this majority felt not just perplexed but irritated and provoked by this perceived difficulty.⁵² As the reception of Faulkner, Joyce, Stein, Eliot, Pound, Woolf and others attest, there was a general sense that difficulty was the essential characteristic of those writers who have for a long time constituted the core canon of Modernism. Difficulty was, as Leonard Diepeveen writes in what is probably the most extensive and broadly researched study of the issue, “the most common frame for readers’ discussions of what was *different* and new about modernism” (Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 17). The discourse on difficulty constituted “one of the early twentieth century’s great cultural debates” (ibid., 1) as its subject was not just literature but the arts in general. The productivity of the topos of difficulty for the definition of Modernism shows itself for instance in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*. It reverberates in Richard Poirier’s assertion that “modernism in literature can be measured by the degree of textual intimidation felt in the act of reading” (Poirier, 272).

Pound’s and Eliot’s works were criticised for the same apparent offence against general intelligibility (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 131ff). Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, Pound’s *Cantos* and Joyce’s *Ulysses* were deemed to display an excess of self-concealing erudition and in doing so such works were considered, in José Ortega Y Gasset’s words, to “obviously [...] [address themselves] not to everybody [...] but to a specially gifted minority” (Ortega Y Gasset, 325). These works seemed to be written for a readership which Ezra Pound’s early

⁵⁰ Difficulty is what in today’s terminologies is called a fuzzy concept, i.e., vague, overlapping in use with words like obscurity, opacity, complexity, esotericism, unintelligibility, etc. (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 47).

⁵¹ While it is true that we only have access to the documented response of a fraction of early readers, primarily reviewers (e.g. in Deming) and readers’ letters (e.g. in Eberly, 43-51), their responses are assumed to be representative.

⁵² Diepeveen rightly points out that the resistance to difficulty is not just an intellectual issue but also an emotional one (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 64, 73f). In this respect Bernhard Fehr wrote in 1930: “It is understandable that Joyce’s many-tongued language has annoyed only too many – even the brightest readers – as constant incomprehension is a source of irritation and ill humor” (Fehr, *Gegenwart*, 67; my trans.).

reference to “*voi altri pochi* [“you other few”] who understand” (Pound, “Introduction,” 25) symbolises.⁵³ In the early 1930s, Joseph Warren Beach wrote “at the present time the misunderstanding between the public and the creative artist is more acute than usual” (Beach, *Novel*, 546). Seeing “alienated readers, even among the intellectual elite” (ibid.), Beach criticises in “twentieth-century fiction” the baffling effect of “an excess of the intellectual where it is not sufficiently formulated in good set terms” (ibid.). Attempting to identify “the features which puzzle and repel” Joyce’s readers in particular, Beach states, “[h]e is the classic example of that disposition among the modernists to pursue technique beyond the point where it can serve the ends of art. The whole trend is, in many ways, a continuation of the nineteenth-century movement of ‘art for art’s sake’” (ibid., 549).

The blame of aesthetic elitism is only another manifestation of the perceived exclusion of a majority of readers, which often found expression in the reproach for an apparent disregard for the so-called common or plain reader. Had not Valery Larbaud in his lecture on *Ulysses* qualified his initial reference to “[t]he reader” by saying, “I refer, of course, to the cultivated reader who can fully appreciate such authors as Rabelais, Montaigne, and Descartes; for the uncultivated or half-cultivated reader will throw *Ulysses* aside after the first three pages” (Larbaud, 5)? This elitism, this “discourse which insists on the categorical distinction between high art and mass culture” (Huysen, viii), which Andreas Huysen has called “the Great Divide,” has itself become a powerful topos in the discourse on Modernism of the last fifty years.⁵⁴ It has served as the point of departure for a critique and for the development of a “postmodern” aesthetic.⁵⁵

Eliot and Pound in particular countered reproaches for their apparent elitism by emphasising the ‘seriousness’ of their approach to art. Paradigmatic in this respect are Eliot’s

⁵³ See Kyburz. Similar attitudes distinguishing the few who understand from the otherwise incomprehensive masses can be found in comments by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, George, and Darío (see Einfalt, 469f, 474, 477f) among others.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Kenner, “Notes,” 11. Raymond Williams has countered the efficacy of the second notion in the binarism high culture *versus* mass (/popular) culture by pointing out that “there are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses” (R. Williams, 300).

⁵⁵ Leslie Fiedler, one of those most commonly associated with this critique, has expressed his views in his address at the Second International James Joyce Symposium in 1969, sixth month before his famous essay “Cross the Border – Close the Gap” would cause academics to unashamedly browse the pages of *Playboy*. (Fiedler had presented the ideas of his seminal essay before, in a lecture as part of a symposium on contemporary literature at Universität Freiburg in June 1968.) In his address he refers to “the limitations of Modernism” (Fiedler, 21), “that age so utterly lost in elitism and snobbism, the vestiges of class values totally alien to a democratic or mass society, [...] it was doomed from the first to die the academic death” (ibid., 22). Many of those who have mockingly pointed out that Bloom himself may not have (been able to) read *Ulysses* (see e.g. Carey, 20), also implied in assertions like “Bloom, who could never have a Ph.D., or M.A. or even B.A.” (Fiedler, 19), have referred to the great irony which lies in the fact that *Ulysses* is (among other things) about a couple who personify the Everyman and the Everywoman and their problems, a work very much concerned with the mundane (*and* the cerebral) and with popular culture (*and* with aesthetic theory); with “Seaside Girls” *and* with a theory of *Hamlet*, with consubstantiality *and* with masturbation.

demand “we must learn to take literature *seriously*” (qtd. in Diepeveen, “Seriously,” 263) and Pound’s comparison “the serious artist is usually, or is often as far from the *aegrum vulgus* as is the serious scientist” (Pound, “Serious,” 47). His use of the term *aegrum vulgus*, “diseased rabble” as he himself had translated it in *The Spirit of Romance* (see Pound, *Romance*, 250), of course only accentuated his attitude of artistic elitism. Eliot famously claimed in a statement which has been regarded as amounting to an emblematised apologia of Modernist literature: “[I]t appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results” (Eliot, “Metaphysical,” 289).

Turning to the canon of literary history, some of the Modernists’ contemporary critics attempted to put the notion of an ‘unprecedented’ degree of difficulty into perspective by pointing out that earlier poets and writers had also been considered difficult. Dante, Donne, and the French *symbolistes* (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 22f) were the writers one could agree on in this respect, whereas opinions were divided about Shakespeare.⁵⁶ But the general feeling was that here and now one had to deal with a whole generation of ‘difficult’ anglophone poets and writers. In this debate, some declared comprehensibility the common feature of all ‘great art,’ for others ‘great art’ was essentially difficult. Poetic language itself was pronounced intrinsically difficult by some (see *ibid.*, 28). Others, like Eliot, considered their art in terms of an accurate reflection of the complexity of modern culture and the modern human mind.

And yet, what was regarded as the deliberate obscurity for instance of the later chapters of *Ulysses* and of “Work in Progress” as a whole was felt to be too artificial, was considered to give the work, in the words of Edmund Wilson quoted above, “a mere synthetic complication.” Had the same Joyce not written *Dubliners* and *A Portrait* – works that were not considered incomprehensible? In Joyce’s case the radical manipulation of language in *WiP/FW* was perceived to be the ultimate step in the abandonment of the communicative aspect of literature in favour of maximal obscurity.

⁵⁶ In his article “Poetry and Portmanteaus: Was Joyce Really Fooling?” from 1944, Jacques Barzun for instance contextualised Joyce’s difficulty in the following ‘tradition of difficulty’: “[T]he great poets in any language are extremely difficult to read for the first time [...]. Think of Aeschylus, whose words are not in any dictionary; of Dante, who is unreadable without footnotes; of Goethe or Hugo, whose lines at their tightest defy parsing – or even more traditional, re-open Shakespeare or Milton and see how much unwinding it takes to sort out the meaning [...]. And they were all difficult: Carlyle was a riddle, Keats unintelligible, Browning a palimpsest, Meredith a teasing enigma, Swinburne unfathomable, Hopkins hermetic, and Bridges a defiance to common sense – until Pound and Eliot and Arden made us feel that a line that could be read at sight was a line *manqué*” (Barzun, 23). Barzun goes on to also include Hugo, Nerval, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Ducasse and Péguy as well.

In his attack on Modernist literature, *The Literary Mind* from 1931, the Marxist critic Max Eastman was led to conclude that “literature is not of necessity a communicative act” (Eastman, 97), as I. A. Richards had suggested in *Principles of Literary Criticism*.⁵⁷ Eastman refers to the works of “the modern poets” – meaning Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Graves, Tate, Cummings, Sitwell and Stein among others – as “the Cult of Unintelligibility” (ibid., 57ff, 97) and “the plague of unintelligibility” (ibid., 122). He criticised that the effect of the intellectual demands made by a part of modern literature on readers was to “narrow the circle of communication to a small group of specialists in a particular type of learning” (ibid., 71).⁵⁸ “Most of the ‘cognoscenti,’” Eastman writes with sardonic pleasure, “will be so tickled by the poet’s assuming they know everything he is alluding to, that they will get along better than others without the more specific pleasure of finding out what he is alluding to” (ibid.). According to his view, “[e]ven those who do find out will have enjoyed a cerebral exercise rather than the emotional and intellectual experience of the poem” (ibid.).

As Eastman points out, he had in fact discussed with Joyce the issue of the demands made on the reader and it was in the course of their conversation that Joyce is supposed to have said, “[t]he demand that I make of my reader is that he should devote his whole life to reading my works” (ibid., 100). Joyce supposedly also told Eastman that he “thought it necessary to issue his present work [“Work in Progress”] [...] with a preface by one of his friends, because it was a little too ‘difficult’ to be absorbed by the general reader all at once and without help” (ibid., 103; emphasis added). Such statements certainly corroborated the notion of the work as a riddle or a cipher, and seemed to substantiate the suspicion of obscurity as an end in itself.

⁵⁷ Here Richards wrote that “the arts are the supreme form of the communicative activity” (Richards, *Principles*, 26).

⁵⁸ The notion of a literature for the ‘happy few,’ in Stendhal’s words, had more than a few advocates. In his famous essay “La deshumanización del arte” (*The Dehumanization of Art*) from 1925, José Ortega y Gasset, who was to present his sociology of elites four years later in *La rebelión de las masas* (*The Revolt of the Masses*), states unambiguously that “the new art obviously addresses itself not to everybody, as did Romanticism, but to a specially gifted minority. Hence the indignation it arouses in the masses. [...] Through its mere presence, the art of the young compels the average citizen to realise that he is just this – the average citizen, a creature incapable of receiving the sacrament of art, blind and deaf to pure beauty” (Ortega y Gasset, 325). “We then have an art,” Ortega y Gasset goes on to explain, “which can be comprehended only by people possessed of the peculiar gift of artistic sensibility – an art for artists and not for the masses, for ‘quality’ and not for hoi polloi” (ibid., 327), and suggests readers should rise to the challenge and “try to understand” (ibid.). By the term *dehumanisation* he meant to express that the human element played a lesser role in the ‘new art,’ which is “brazenly set on deforming reality, shattering its human aspect” (ibid.). If by their uses of the term Wyndham Lewis (who had declared in the first issue of *Blast* from 1914, that “[d]ehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World” (W. Lewis, “Egos,” 141)) and Ezra Pound (who had used the same term in an interview with Zinaida Vengerova, published under the title “Английские футуристы” (Anglijskie futuristy, “English futurists”) in the avant-garde magazine *Стрѣлец* (Strelec, *The Archer*) in 1915, in which she quotes him as saying “наша задача ‘обесчеловечить’ современный мир” (naša zadača ‘obesčelovečit’ sovremennyj mir) (Vengerova, 842), which can be translated as “our task is to ‘dehumanise’ the contemporary world”) had something similar in mind with respect to their approaches to art must be left to speculation.

In his characterisation of reading Modernist works as a “cerebral exercise rather than [...] [an] emotional and intellectual experience,” Eastman, employing the topos of the ‘riddle for the few,’ raises the subject of aesthetic pleasure. Pleasure, or rather the lack thereof, was one of the contested notions in the early discourse on Modernism, one closely linked to that of difficulty. It is implicit in the complaints about ‘excessive demands’ or ‘disregard for the reader.’ The notion that a proper appreciation of any passage of Joyce’s last work necessitated an act of decipherment and decryption, as expressed implicitly in Wells’s comments and explicitly in West’s review, went hand in hand with the notion of *Finnegans Wake* as a riddle or a puzzle as evident in Wells’s, West’s and Wilson’s estimations. Reading *WiP/FW* was considered an act of “unpacking” arcane allusions as West called it.

The reader’s pleasure and lack thereof was thus a much debated issue in the early discourse on Modernist writers (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 149ff). Richard Poirier refers to this aspect when he writes “modernism happened when reading got to be grim” (Poirier, 272). The appreciation of Joyce’s last work was compared to the kind of pleasure afforded by crossword puzzles, a disparagement also bestowed on other Modernist works (see Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 156ff).⁵⁹ Yet, there can be no doubt that what for some amounted to a mere “cerebral exercise” was for others indeed the very source of pleasure. One of the elements of the medieval aesthetic that Eco identifies in the later Joyce is what he calls “il gusto del *labor interpretativo*” (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 347), namely “the idea of aesthetic pleasure, not as the flashing exercise of an intuitive faculty but as a process of intelligence that deciphers and reasons, enraptured by the difficulty of communication” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 81).⁶⁰ The difficulty experienced by some as tedious may indeed be the very pleasure of others.

The topos of difficulty was so central to the discourse on Modernism that it became in fact constitutive of the very definition of Modernism; perhaps in no other work’s symbolic production it was as dominant as in *WiP/FW*’s. In the discourse on Modernism the reader position of Modernist works has been defined by formative slogans, catchphrases, and clichés such as ‘a specially gifted minority,’ ‘the cultivated reader,’ ‘a small group of specialists,’ ‘the

⁵⁹ A late comment by Oliver Gogarty about *Ulysses* illustrates this sort of criticism: “How does it happen that America should have become the chief infirmary for Joyceans? The answer is because America is the country par excellence of the detective story, the crossword puzzle, and the smoke signal. All these are supplied by *Ulysses*. Here, too, where mental homes are numerous, are to be found that unique class who think that the unravelling of an enigma or a puzzle is the height of poetry” (Deming, *Joyce*², 765).

⁶⁰ Levin already pointed out that “the process of decoding,” instead of “a message,” “is the most enlivening and characteristic feature of his [Joyce’s] art”: “And the process of reading Joyce is no longer a pedestrian business of cutting through to his meaning, but precisely the kind of effort which any good poem involves. It is still a ‘game’ or ‘exercise’ if you like, but so are many of the monuments of civilization” (Levin, “Looking,” 694). Wayne C. Booth has also viewed *FW* in terms of “the pleasure of deciphering” (Booth, 301). For yet others, the pleasure of *FW* lay in the sheer boldness of experimentation, in the newness of language that could be enjoyed without having to “translate” the words or solve riddles (see e.g. Deming, *Joyce*², 732).

cognoscenti,' 'a literature for the happy few,' 'the disregard for the common reader,' etc. The presupposition that *FW* is a difficult work has remained constitutive of its reader position to this day. And yet this position has shifted from the negative attitude towards the demands of the text, perceived as arduous, of the vast majority of early readers to a positive stance of a growing minority of readers today, for whom the difficulty ascribed to the text has become the very source of interest and pleasure.

1.4 Educating Readers About Their Role: Demanding Cooperation

This shift is the consequence of the changed function of the reader over the course of the twentieth century. At its beginning one can situate the formulating of new demands placed on the reader position by the advocates of Modernism. The factor reader became a crucial category of the Modernism discourse. A number of critics and writers stressed the responsibility of readers of Modernist writing, considering it the readers' duty to cope with difficulty, to *cooperate* through the use of their full intellectual resources. In their study *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* from 1927, Laura Riding and Robert Graves, for instance, lamented the laziness and preference for passiveness of 'the modern reader' whom they portrayed as not being prepared to invest effort in understanding, or rising if challenged. They write, "[t]he chief condition the reader makes about the poetry he reads is that it shall not be difficult" (Riding and Graves, 108). For Riding and Graves, the issue is evident: "For if it is difficult it means that he must think in unaccustomed ways, and thinking to the plain reader, beyond the range necessary for the practical purposes of living, is unsettling and dangerous; he is afraid of his own mind" (ibid.). They criticise "the plain reader's literary conservatism: he will prefer an unoriginal but undisturbing poem to an original but disturbing one" (ibid., 97). In his article "Understanding Modern Poetry" from 1940, the poet and New Critic Allen Tate characterised "modern" poetry as "a kind of poetry that requires of the reader the fullest co-operation of all his intellectual resources, all his knowledge of the world, and all the persistence and alertness that he now thinks only of giving to scientific studies" (Tate, 123).⁶¹

Referring to Joyce's work, the art historian and friend of the Joyce family Carola Giedion-Welcker noted in her first review of *WiP* in 1929: "*Work in Progress* makes upon the preparedness and cooperation of the reader much greater demands than did *Ulysses*"

⁶¹ Tate identifies this "kind of poetry" as a tradition of difficult poets such as Dante, Marvell, Donne, Sydney, and Raleigh (see Tate, 122f).

(Giedion-Welcker, “Work in Progress,” 174).⁶² In a second review in 1938, she resumed her argument. “But what is the unprepared reader to say,” she asks the rhetorical question, “when the world of his safe vocabulary is toppling, when syllables are disguised and letters are deliberately altered?” (Giedion-Welcker, “Sprache,” 399; my trans.). As a result, “[c]alls for representational art and logical comprehensibility are being voiced” (ibid.; my trans.). Arguing that “[a]rt is certainly not a riddling for the few [,] [b]ut it is not a matter of course for all either” (ibid., 400; my trans.), Giedion-Welcker emphasises that art “requires active cooperation” (ibid.; my trans.).⁶³ Along similar lines the critic Margaret Schlauch wrote in 1939: “Joyce demands more active participation from his public than any other author” (Schlauch, 490). In fact, as she states emphatically, “[t]he reader or listener is expected to perform some minor part of the creative act” (ibid.). Being called upon “to fill in lacunae, supply links, embroider upon associations, rearrange the cunningly separated elements of a single pattern” (ibid.), one consequence of the demands placed on readers is, according to Schlauch, “a noticeable restriction in the number of those willing to enter at all upon so exacting a relationship” (ibid.).

As these comments illustrate, the discourse on Modernism began to shift towards ‘the factor *reader*’ already in the 1920s and 1930s. Works of literature requiring from readers “the fullest co-operation of all [their] intellectual resources, all [their] knowledge of the world, and all the persistence and alertness,” requiring “active cooperation” and “active participation” and readers being “expected to perform some minor part of the creative act [...] to fill in lacunae, supply links” – such apparently advanced notions were the ‘logical’ consequence of the experience and challenge of Modernist literature. The reader position was subjected to a definition involving the idea of ‘cooperation’ and ‘contribution’ early on here. Critics also pointed out the requirement to revise one’s reading habits (see Deming, *Joyce*², 696, 731f; cf. Sage, “Etc.,” 172). These points already implied what later critics were to call the “ability [...] to shed a number of ingrained [...] expectations [of] and assumptions” about literature and literary communication (Attridge, “Popular,” 32). When Wolfgang Iser wrote that the “radical switch engendered by *Ulysses* [...] necessitated a change of interpretative paradigm that would enable the critic to capture the experience undergone in *Ulysses*” (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 135), this statement also applies to *FW*. Reflecting on Modernist aesthetics, a

⁶² Giedion-Welcker’s review “*Work in Progress: Ein sprachliches Experiment von James Joyce*” appeared in *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* in September 1929 and is included in Füger, *Erbe* (see Füger, *Erbe*, 373-376). An English translation (“Work in Progress: A Linguistic Experiment by James Joyce”) appeared in *transition* 19-20 in June 1930. The, by comparison, marginal response to *WiP/FW* in the German-language countries during Joyce’s lifetime is documented in Füger, *Erbe*.

⁶³ The critical essay “James Joyce und die Sprache” (“James Joyce and language”), appeared in *Die Weltwoche* in 1938. It is included in Füger (see Füger, *Erbe*, 398-400).

number of critics came to the conclusion that “difficult” art “demanded not just an initial, but repeated encounters” (Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 122). Joseph Frank put this notion most succinctly in his influential essay “Spatial Form in Modern Literature” when he wrote that “Joyce cannot be read – he can only be re-read” (Frank, 234f).⁶⁴

Joyce’s last two works demanded repeated encounters, no doubt, but, above all, they palpably exemplified the need for critical commentary. The reception of these works illustrates what is meant by critical formulas such as “[i]n modernism, criticism became a necessary adjunct to artistic production” (Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 103).

Taking Which Reader by the Hand?: Guides Galore

The plain reader be damned.
(Jolas et al.)

The discussion about the so-called common reader is a further facet of the process of defining Modernism’s reader position. It is also the site of a concealed embarrassment and of the remedy for a narcissistic wound. The “common,” “plain” or “average” reader was often referred to in the discourse on Modernist texts. In *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, Riding and Graves, for instance, frequently refer to “the plain reader.” Evoking the notion of the disregard for “the common reader” (or “the plain reader”) was, as previously mentioned, a common critical strategy in the early discourse on Modernism. As Finn Fordham has pointed out, the notion of the common reader is as elusive as it is ill-defined by those who refer to it (see Fordham, “Dentist’s”). In his *Exag* essay, Robert McAlmon speaks of the common man as “the imaginary being” (McAlmon, 115).

Such references also had to do with the role of the reviewers. Literary critics like Edmund Wilson, whom Harry Levin has called “the last American man of letters” (Levin, *Memories*, 184), were the remnants of a waning era of literary criticism. The U.S. American

⁶⁴ This statement is of course linked to Frank’s argument about “the spatialization of form” in modern literature: “A knowledge of the whole [*Ulysses*] is essential to an understanding of any part; but [...] such knowledge can be obtained only after the book has been read, when all the references are fitted into their proper place and grasped as a unity” (Frank, 235). Frank held this to be a result of what he called “spatial form in modern literature” or “the spatialization of form”: “For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted: attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the limited time-area. These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative; and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning” (ibid., 231). And he refers to the “spatial apprehension” of a work (ibid., 235). Frank also considers the consequence of this “fragmentation of narrative structure” for the reader by saying that “the burdens placed on the reader by this method of composition [the “fragmentation of narrative structure” (ibid.)] may seem insuperable” (ibid.).

literary critic of the nineteenth century had been a “man of letters” or literary journalist rather than an academic.⁶⁵ This situation began to change in the late nineteenth century. By the middle of the twentieth century the process of “the removal of literary criticism from the arena of the educated public debate to that of academic institutions” (Guy and Small, 377ff; see also Martin, 269ff), an issue which is elaborated on below, had been completed. The “man of letters” had had a larger audience than the university critic. Wellek said about Wilson: “[A]s public critic he dominates the early twentieth century with a resonance unmatched by any of the New Critics” (Wellek, 122). Although his readers were in general educated, the idea of a broad audience allowed the “man of letters” type of critic to stylise himself – and in opposition to the university critic whose reference to an increasingly specialised discourse reduced his audience, necessarily academic as well – as writing also for a so-called common reader.⁶⁶

Whether critics stressed Joyce’s supposed disregard for the reader, as even Wilson (see Wilson, *Axel’s*, 235) and Levin (see Levin, *Introduction*¹, 171) tended to do, or whether they emphasised the requirement of the reader’s cooperation – the often implicit and sometimes explicit general assumption was that the readers of Joyce’s works had to be assisted in their reading, as it were, with guiding commentary. Wayne C. Booth points this out in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* when he writes, pointedly reformulating Frank’s aforementioned statement, that “[i]n all the skeleton keys and classroom guides there is an open assumption that his later works, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, cannot be read; they can only be studied” (Booth, 325). This opinion has endured;⁶⁷ Margot Norris writes in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* “[s]urely, no other existing literary work needs a ‘guide’ more sorely than [...] *Finnegans Wake*” (Norris, “*Finnegans*,” 161).

Such ‘guides’ as Booth and Norris mention were often addressed to that anonymous entity for the benefit of whom a number of critics claimed to write, namely “the common reader.” “The common reader” is in fact an aposiopesis and thus a cipher for ‘the need for guidance which Modernism’s readers have in common’; it is simply a projection which was to conveniently conceal the embarrassment of the educated readership in the face of the Modernist provocation. The “shock of incomprehensibility” (Adorno, “Why,” 131) was most

⁶⁵ The term *U.S. American* is used in deference to the Americas in the plural; in other words, in deference to the population of the ‘remaining’ 34 Pan-American states.

⁶⁶ The process of the institutionalisation of criticism in the university is discussed in the third part of this chapter below.

⁶⁷ The most recent “How to ... Joyce” titles comprise *A Word In Your Ear: How & Why To Read James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake* (2005), *How to Read Ulysses, and Why* (2002), and volumes in such series as Granta’s How to Read series (Derek Attridge, 2007), Bloom’s How to Write about Literature series (Kim Allen Gleed, 2010), and Macmillan’s How to Study Literature series (John Blades, 1996).

deeply felt (see Deming, *Joyce*², 724f; Wilson, *Wound*, 230f; Richards, “Nineteen,” 317) by the latter. Thus it was first and foremost the so-called educated readership to whom the literary critics, operating under the label of ‘guides for the common reader,’ were to explain the Modernist revolution. The early critics, for their part, were of course only marginally less puzzled. The accumulating commentaries and interpretive efforts enabled the former “to absorb the shock” (Deming, *Joyce*², 724) caused by Modernism. Nothing less was at stake than making the defying text(s) of Modernism ‘readable.’

Charles Duff’s *James Joyce and the Plain Reader*,⁶⁸ published in 1932, is an early example.⁶⁹ How, then, is “the plain reader” given an ‘understanding’ of WiP? Duff’s slim volume – one among the early introductions to Joyce’s work, along with Stuart Gilbert’s *James Joyce’s Ulysses, A Study* (1930), Paul Jordan-Smith’s *A Key to the Ulysses of James Joyce* (1927), Louis Golding’s *James Joyce* (1933), Frank Budgen’s *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934), and Herbert Gorman’s biography *James Joyce, His First Forty Years* (1924) – was intended as a guide to Joyce’s *Ulysses* and “Work in Progress” for the “plain reader”: “[A]n effort to help him over the worst obstacles” (Duff, 22). Duff’s guide comprises biographical information on Joyce, followed by a plot summary of *Ulysses*, and a few general, rather vague, ideas about “Work in Progress.” Its appendix includes a short bibliography of Joyce’s works and a short list of secondary studies including *Exagmination*, Wilson’s *Axel’s Castle*, and Louis Gillet’s “Mr James Joyce et son nouveau roman ‘Work in Progress’” which had appeared in *Revue des deux mondes*. Already by 1932, Duff felt compelled to note that “[c]riticism and commentary on Joyce is becoming voluminous” (*ibid.*, 75).

His assessment of “Work in Progress” reads: “[T]he myth and story of *Work in Progress* represents an experiment in reducing to language the ebb and flow of the stream of thought between almost unconsciousness and somnolent semi-consciousness” (*ibid.*, 57). Duff regards the work as “a kind of multi-dimensional emotive narrative capable of a dozen interpretations [,] or at times – and this is important – *deliberately devoid of any meaning*” (*ibid.*). He qualifies this assertion at once by saying “[i]t is devoid of meaning in the sense that much music is devoid of meaning, but merely intended to be evocative” (*ibid.*). Here Duff

⁶⁸ Charles St. Lawrence Duff (1894-1966) was an Irishman who had served as an officer in the British Merchant Navy during World War I and worked as a press officer in the news department of the British Foreign Office from 1920 to 1936. After retiring, he taught linguistics and languages at the University of London in the late 1930s and worked as a writer and translator of Quevedo, Zola, Zweig and Gorky among others (see “Duff,” 136). In the early 1930s two segments of Duff’s literary attempts appeared in *transition*.

⁶⁹ There have since been numerous introductions of the sort ‘Joyce for the general reader.’ William Powell Jones’s *James Joyce and the Common Reader* (1955), William York Tindall’s *A Reader’s Guide to James Joyce* (1959), and Anthony Burgess’s *ReJoyce* (1965) (the title of the British edition is *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader*) are examples.

echoes Robert McAlmon's statement in his essay in *Examination* that Joyce "wishes to believe that anybody reading his work gets a sensation of understanding, which is the understanding which music is allowed without too much explanation" (McAlmon, 110f).

Duff considers "Work in Progress" the "attempt to make language do much more of the work of music than any one has ever believed to be possible" (Duff, 19), confessing "It was not until *Anna Livia* [Plurabelle] reached my mind via the *ear* that I could honestly bring myself to regard it as a serious contribution to literature" (ibid.). He acknowledges that "there is no author living whose works are more difficult to survey, appraise, and criticize" (ibid., 68) and that with regard to WiP "all the critics are at sea" (ibid.). The plain reader, Duff argues, should not turn to Vico but rather to the plain story, "the psychological fable" (ibid., 67). If one was looking in 1932 for a study of "Work in Progress" outlining a "plain story," there was Wilson's character outline in *Axel's Castle* and Duff certainly refers to it here. For Duff, WiP, and *Ulysses* too, have an essentially "comical and humorous" (ibid., 64) quality: "*Work in Progress*, notwithstanding its complexity, is a magnificent piece of Rabelaisian, laughter-provoking literature, whatever else we may say about it" (ibid., 72).⁷⁰

As 'guide' to "Work in Progress" Duff's monograph was of little use to any reader – 'plain' or other. But perhaps Duff's endeavour should be seen in a different, more positive light as an act of challenging the ban on *Ulysses* rather than that what its title declared it to be. Common notions of the early response to "Work in Progress"/*Finnegans Wake* had already been prevalent in the reception and symbolic production of *Ulysses*. Thus, the reception and symbolic production of WiP/*FW* must be analysed in the context of the reception and symbolic production of its predecessor. In fact, the 'reader guide mentality' was manifested at a critical moment of the symbolic production of Joyce's works, namely in the event that involved the second obscenity trial over *Ulysses* and the publication of *Ulysses* in the United States. Bennett Cerf, the founder of Random House, was able to publish *Ulysses* in January 1934 after the charge of obscenity had been dismissed a month before, ending the thirteen-year ban on the publication of the book in the United States.⁷¹ The two-page Random House advertisement for *Ulysses* in the 10 February 1934 volume of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, which accompanied the publication of *Ulysses*, is another early example of the notion that Joyce's later works can hardly be enjoyed without a certain degree of critical

⁷⁰ The comparison of the later Joyce, the Joyce of *U* and WiP/*FW*, with Rabelais is the one which is most often drawn in the early reviews. One need only look at the index in the second volume of Deming to see that there are twice as many references to Rabelais as there are for instance to Vico.

⁷¹ In early 1932, Random House had secured the right to publish *Ulysses* in the United States. Bennett Cerf and Morris Ernst initiated a test case. Ernst, a lawyer who had specialised in defending books in obscenity cases, had been waiting for the opportunity of taking the *Ulysses* case to court (see J. Kelly, *Joyce*, 103ff).

“initiation”.⁷² The advertisement, entitled “How to Enjoy James Joyce’s Great Novel *Ulysses*,” offered a character correspondence list, describing Stephen Dedalus as “Joyce at 22” (“How,” 475); plot summaries of the episodes of two to five sentences length, including hints for Homeric ‘correspondences’; a little map of Dublin and comments by acclaiming critics. The advertisers at Random House did their best to let *Ulysses* appear as easily digestible and adventurous as the picture of a simply revamped turn of the century Dublin version of the *Odyssey* allowed. The lead of the article opened: “For those who are already engrossed in the reading of *Ulysses* as well as for those who hesitate to begin it because they fear that it is so obscure, the publishers offer this simple clue to what the critical fuss is all about” (ibid., 474). The prospective readers were assured that “*Ulysses* is no harder to ‘understand’ than any other great classic” (ibid.). Attempting to make them believe that “[i]t is essentially a story and can be enjoyed as such” (ibid.), *Ulysses*’s ‘readability’ was impressed upon the reading public: “Do not let the critics confuse you. *Ulysses* is not difficult to read, and it richly rewards each reader in wisdom and pleasure” (ibid.).

Against the grain of critical and public opinion *Ulysses* was marketed as a “not difficult to read”-novel by Random House.⁷³ The marketing strategy behind the advertisement was to convey the sense, that with the help of a few critical “clues” Joyce’s work “can be read and appreciated like any other great novel” (ibid.). But even though they were referred to as “simple clues,” the advertisement implicitly reemphasises their indispensability. This very fact was a topic for parody in an article in the June 1934 issue of *Vanity Fair*. John Riddell’s piece “The People’s Joyce” described itself as “a guide-book to all these guide-books to *Ulysses*, complete with map, thesaurus, and six (6) socially correct remarks about James Joyce to make to your partner at a formal dinner” (Riddell, 57). It addresses the novice who, the piece humorously claims, will be lost and puzzled if he “does not possess the right key to decipher Joyce” (ibid., 72b) and imparts “a word of warning to the inexperienced reader who contemplates setting out for the first time on a journey through *Ulysses*” (ibid., 57): “Indeed,

⁷² For background on the Random House advertisement see chapter six in C. Turner, *Marketing*.

⁷³ This sales strategy of the advertisement becomes obvious here: “This monumental novel about twenty hours in the life of an average man can be read and appreciated like any other great novel once its framework and form are visualized... just as we can enjoy Hamlet without solving all the problems which agitate the critics and scholars. The structure of *Ulysses* is composed of three elements: the symbolic narrative of the *Odyssey*, the spiritual planes of the *Divine Comedy* and the psychological problem of Hamlet. With a plot furnished by Homer, against a setting by Dante, and with characters motivated by Shakespeare, *Ulysses* is really not as difficult to comprehend as critics like to pretend” (“How,” 474). The interpretive background referred to here is more or less a direct quotation from S. Damon Foster’s essay (see Deming, *Joyce*², 483). The strategy was not to emphasise the work’s innovative “style” but rather to create interest on the level of ‘content’: “Beyond the esoteric significance of parts of the book, and beyond the tremendous wealth of details it offers [...] there lies as the solid basis of it one of the most exciting stories offered by modern fiction: the complete, unexpurgated record of a man’s uninhibited adventures, mental and physical, during the course of one full day” (ibid.).

the margins of his [Joyce's] chapters are strewn with the bones of unfortunate readers, whose bleached skulls are mute testimony to the perils that await the novice along the trail" (ibid.). This parody plays on the notion of the literary work that depends on critical commentary and on the phenomenon of the emergence of an industrious criticism, or a critical industry as it is often derogatively called, in any case a critical branch of explication and interpretation, that readily provides such commentary. It reinforced the notion of the difficulty of *Ulysses* in the public perception, particularly as *Vanity Fair* had wide circulation.

As different as their purposes may be, these three examples are symptomatic of the appropriation of Modernism. The assumption of the indispensability of commentary was the hallmark of the symbolic production of Joyce's later works from the outset. The great irony of Modernism's readership was that on the one hand it was supposed to be a more active reader position than ever before, on the other hand it let itself be persuaded to take up the far more passive position of having things explained to oneself. In place of the reader, whose responsibility, after all, had been called for, it was the nascent 'commentary industry' which undertook the task of coming to terms with and digesting Modernist works. The proliferation of commentary and reader guides has made Modernist texts appear all too 'readable.' Perhaps it is not exaggerated to say that in order to understand Modernist texts today, one will have to overcome their apparent readability. At all events, both, the early and the present-day reader is confronted with the fact that his/her position is defined by a supposed dependence.

1.5 Passing Judgement on One Book Entitled *Ulysses*

There is one significant moment in the symbolic production of *U* which also influenced and altered the perception, evaluation, and symbolic production of *WiP/FW* and of the Joycean oeuvre as a whole. In fact, the outcome of the second obscenity trial over *Ulysses* may be considered the 'official' licencing of Modernism. It is here that most of the aforementioned aspects of the symbolic production of Joyce's later works and of the reader position crystallise and culminate. The image of *Ulysses* as an intellectual challenge had been impressed upon the U.S. American public through the tenor of Judge Woolsey's decision in the obscenity trial over *Ulysses* and the publicity surrounding the trial. The decision, rendered on 6 December 1933 and reprinted in the first Random House edition of *Ulysses* from 1934, contained comments about "the obscurity which meets a reader of 'Ulysses'" (Woolsey, 395) and about "the length of 'Ulysses' and the difficulty of reading it" (ibid., 394). *Ulysses* figures as a work

of art whose appreciation necessitates study which thus precedes aesthetic contemplation: “‘Ulysses’ is not an easy book to read or to understand. But there has been much written about it, and in order properly to approach the consideration of it, it is advisable to read a number of other books which have now become its satellites. The study of ‘Ulysses’ is, therefore, a heavy task” (ibid.).

In making this point, Woolsey had followed the argumentation of the defence in the trial. Their strategy was to present *Ulysses* as a literary work “far too tedious and labyrinthine and bewildering for the untutored and the impressionable” (Moscato, 257). The argument of incomprehensibility could now be used as defence against the charge of obscenity: “If an author’s style is incomprehensible to all but a comparatively few who are concededly immune to what the censor calls the suggestive power of words, the work cannot be said to be obscene” (ibid., 258). Hence, the defence was at pains to point out that *Ulysses* “taxes a reader’s intellectual resources more severely than any other book in English literature” (ibid., 259) and that “[t]o comprehend it, one must have encyclopaedic knowledge” (ibid.).

The press coverage of the decision and of the ensuing publication of *Ulysses* was tremendous. *Time* magazine made it the cover story of its 29 January 1934 issue. T. S. Matthews’s cover article “Ulysses Lands” illustrates how thoroughly the notions of difficulty and of Joyce’s disregard for “the plain reader” defined the public discourse about his later works. The question “What is it all about?” (Matthews, 49) opens the discussion about the book in the reading of which “[t]rusting readers who plunge in hopefully to a smooth beginning soon find themselves floundering in troubled waters” (ibid.). Whereas “[a]rrogant Author Joyce gives them no help, lets them sink or swim,” “thanks to the exploratory works of critics, and notably such an exegetical commentary as Stuard [sic] Gilbert’s *James Joyce’s Ulysses* [...] the plain reader can now literally find out what *Ulysses* is all about” (ibid.). For Matthews it is beyond question that “[l]acking the sleuth-nose, the slot-trained paws of scholarship, even an intelligent reader will miss much the first time over the ground” (ibid.). Here too, the belief in the indispensability of interpretive clues and critical commentary is obvious: “Without a key to its plan this stream-of-consciousness Bible, with its elliptical shorthand, its apparently confused and formless method, may well seem an esoteric work of art” (ibid.).

The defence strategy to present *Ulysses* as “a modern classic”⁷⁴ (Moscato, 187ff, 255) – it was certainly helpful for this strategy that there existed a number of critical studies on

⁷⁴ The first reviewer to acknowledge the importance of *Ulysses*, the U.S. American neurologist Joseph Collins, of Irish descent, praised the work for its frankness, for coming nearer to the “perfect revelation” of human consciousness and the unconscious than any writer before. In a review for the *New York Times* from 28 May

Joyce's work⁷⁵ – and the ruling in the case served, in a way, to corroborate this assessment in the public perception. And yet, the critics and literary journalists agreed that it was destined to be a classic for the few: “If greatness is measured by universality of appeal, *Ulysses* cannot be called great. It will never be a bestseller. Old-line critics have mostly found it too hot to handle. But a growing body of modern critical opinion on both sides of the Atlantic has already acclaimed *Ulysses* as a work of genius and a modern classic” (Matthews, 49).⁷⁶

Ulysses's challenges to its readers thus became the standard against which the bewilderment over “Work in Progress” could be measured: “If readers think *Ulysses* is difficult, they will throw up their hands in horror over Work in Progress, whose entire ‘action’ takes place in the dreaming mind of a sleeper” and “whose language is accurately described by one admirer as ‘intensive, comprehensive, reverberative infixation; the sly, meaty, oneiric logorrhoea, polymathic, polyperverse’” (Matthews, 50).⁷⁷ And after all, what can one say when “[e]ven friendly critics admit that no plain reader will ever tackle such a book as *Work in Progress*” (ibid.).

It has become apparent that during Joyce's lifetime the process of the *symbolic production* of WiP/*FW* was dominated by two opposing positions, namely, on the one hand, the favourable one of the promotional criticism and of an influential critic like Edmund Wilson and a majority attitude ranging between scepticism and disapproval on the other hand. Donald Adams's appraisal of Joyce's oeuvre in *The New York Times* on 26 January 1941, a fortnight after Joyce's death, reflects the image which Joyce's last work had acquired during the second quarter of the twentieth century: Whereas “[i]n his early work, in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce made no extraordinary demands upon his readers,” “in *Ulysses* they are heavy” (Deming, *Joyce*², 754). In *Finnegans Wake*, however,

1922, he calls *Ulysses* “the most important contribution that has been made to fictional literature in the twentieth century. It will immortalize its author with the same certainty that *Gargantua and Pantagruel* immortalized Rabelais, and *The Brothers Karamazof* Dostoyevsky” (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 223). Only a few weeks later, in his first review of *Ulysses*, Edmund Wilson came to a similar assessment: “[F]or all its appalling longueurs, *Ulysses* is a work of high genius [...] setting the standard of the novel so high that it need not be ashamed to take its place beside poetry and drama” (ibid., 230). Both assessments were cited by the defence in the trial over *Ulysses* (see Moscato, 194, 420).

⁷⁵ By 1933 a number of scholarly and well-informed studies of Joyce's work were available. Among them were, e.g., S. Foster Damon's essay “The Odyssey in Dublin” (1929), Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses, A Study* (1930), Edmund Wilson's piece in *Axel's Castle* (1931) and Louis Golding's *James Joyce* (1933). Furthermore, studies existed in French, e.g., Edouard Dujardin's *Le monologue intérieur: Son apparition, ses origines, sa place dans l'oeuvre de James Joyce* (1931), and in German, e.g., Ernst Robert Curtius's *James Joyce und sein Ulysses* (1929). After all, Joyce appeared to be a writer worthy of critical attention. Judge Woolsey mentioned his reading of Gilbert's study. Random House's lawyer Morris Ernst also sent him Jordan-Smith's study and Gorman's biography in the hope that they would help the case for the defence (see Moscato, 226).

⁷⁶ Contrary to Matthews's prediction, Random House's marketing strategy was successful – *Ulysses* became a bestseller in the United States in the first quarter of 1934 (see C. Turner, *Marketing*, 210f and J. Kelly, *Joyce*, 133). In addition to smart marketing the sudden demand can be explained by the limited availability of a work that by 1934 was widely talked and written about and to which was attached the smell of scandal and genius.

⁷⁷ Matthews quotes from C. K. Ogden's review of WiP from 1929 (see Deming, *Joyce*², 493).

“they pass beyond all reasonable bounds” (ibid.) leaving Adams wondering “how many, in the years to come, other than literary historians and writers absorbed in the technique of their craft, will find that necessary effort sufficiently rewarding” (ibid.). “In the case of *Ulysses*,” Adams expresses his conviction, “there is little doubt that readers of sufficient tenacity and knowledge will be numerous, for in spite of its frequent obscurity and its occasional dullness there is an abundance of life between its covers, revealed in a manner not paralleled in any other writer” (ibid.). In contrast, for Adams there is reason to believe that “*Finnegans Wake* seems destined to be one of the dipped-into but unread curiosities” (ibid.). In his entry on Joyce in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* edition from 1947, Joseph Prescott wrote about *FW* along similar lines: “[A]t the time of Joyce’s death his work should have come to stand for the extreme of obscurity in modern literature” (Prescott, “Joyce,” 160).

As the discussion above has illustrated, the topoi *incomprehensibility* and *difficulty* permeate the discourse on Joyce’s later works. Although present from the beginning, the topos of *unreadability* really came to prominence only from the 1960s onwards (see below).⁷⁸ In a piece entitled “Why Read *Ulysses*?” on the website of The Rosenbach Museum & Library,⁷⁹ Vicki Mahaffey muses: “Oddly, many people assume that *Ulysses* endorses elitist values [...] [,] that it [...] is a celebration of genius and privilege and a denigration of mediocrity” (Mahaffey). According to her, “[t]his superficial but widespread misconception is supported by the book’s reputation for being not only unread but also essentially unreadable except by longhaired intellectual malcontents like Stephen Dedalus” (ibid.). The question which preoccupies Mahaffey is “How could this riotously funny, inventive, irreverent yet serious book be so misunderstood?” (ibid.). The answer is simple. For readers today *Ulysses* is not the provocation that it was for its early readers. Through shifts in critical values readers today have become ‘trained’ and accustomed to appreciate Modernist texts for what is perceived to be their richness, inexhaustibility or depth. It is not easy to see the work from the perspective of early readers after ninety years of steady critical attention. Few readers are able to still appreciate its original provocative quality. In contrast, as discussed below, by the 1960s and 1970s, *FW* had retained enough of this quality to figure as a model in French and Italian avant-garde circles.

Joyce’s early death in 1941 also seemed like a tragedy for the explication of *FW* – at least to those who expected or hoped for further authorial elucidation. By the time of his death, the only noteworthy attempts at criticism of *FW* were the *Exagmination* volume, Edmund Wilson’s chapter in *Axel’s Castle* and his two articles in *The New Republic* in 1939,

⁷⁸ On the topos of *unreadability* see the third part of this chapter.

⁷⁹ The Rosenbach Museum & Library holds the fair copy of the *Ulysses* manuscript.

Frank Budgen's chapter on "Work in Progress" in *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* as well as perhaps David Daiches's short section on it in *The Novel and the Modern World* and Louis Gillet's pieces from 1931 and 1940. The question of competence arose inevitably. The pursuit of making the text 'readable' was to contribute to the development of an institution which would readily invest time, effort, intellectual resources and disciplinary expertise to this end. It comes as no surprise that, given its post-World War II expansion, academia was the environment that was most beneficial to the development of such an institution. Therefore, the following part considers the period when the reception and symbolic production of Joyce's works takes place most visibly within the confines of academia.

2. Lego nec intellego ergo dubito: The 'How?' of Approaching *Finnegans Wake*

[Y]ou belong to one of the most remarkable institutions. It bears the name of a man who did everything, and admitted it, to make this institution indispensable [...]. The institution can be seen as a powerful reading machine [...]. [I]t is an institution for which he did everything he could to make it impossible and improbable in its very principle [...] even going as far as to undermine the very concept of competence.
(Derrida, "Ulysses," 37)

As 2014 marks the date of three-quarters of a century of academic criticism of *FW*, a complete picture of a critical history is outside the reach of this study. The following overview is thus not concerned with *FW* criticism per se but with retracing its broader tendencies as they become apparent within the criticism that is generally considered as belonging to the sphere of "the Joyce industry" – in particular those tendencies which were especially influential with respect to the reader position.⁸⁰ It considers the question of how the approach to *FW* has changed since the 1930s and how this affected the symbolic production and the reader position.⁸¹

⁸⁰ In contrast to this, the third part of this chapter considers developments that can be regarded as falling mainly outside of this sphere. The term *the Joyce industry* cannot properly be applied to the criticism that appeared before the 1950s, the decade when what is now called the Joyce industry began to develop. And yet in some way the *transition* 'criticism,' and Levin and Wilson do stand at the beginning of this development.

⁸¹ Surveys of Joyce criticism are to be found e.g. in Dunleavy; J. Kelly; and J. Brooker.

2.1 “Without the Work Done by *transition* ...”: The ‘Promotional Criticism’

[H]is new work [WiP] had already progressed beyond all academis [sic] sign-posts, having no reference-point other than a visionary quality of invention.
(Jolas, “Marginalia,” 101)

Accounts of *FW* criticism often begin either with the year 1941, when Harry Levin’s *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* appeared, or 1944, when Campbell and Robinson’s *A Skeleton Key* was published. Yet, a thorough overview of the development of the ‘coordinate system’ of *FW* criticism must begin with the years 1928/1929, namely with the essays of ‘promotional criticism’ in *Exagmination*, since it is here that many of the common critical frames of rationalisation in *FW* criticism have their origin. Thus one finds in the pages of *Exagmination* references to sleep and dream (Budgen, Jolas, Llona, Sage); outlines of Vico’s theories (Beckett, Gilbert); the idea, related to the Vico frame, of WiP as universal history (Sage) and of WiP as representing the universals in history (Beckett, Gilbert); the idea, also related to this frame, of recurrence (of configurations, sounds, themes, etc.) as a structural device (Beckett);⁸² references to the unconscious (McAlmon, Rodker);⁸³ the suggestion of the coincidence of form and content (Beckett, Gilbert); the suggestion of the “ubiquity of allusions” (Gilbert, Prolegomena, 68); references to the relativity of time and space in WiP (Brion, Paul, Sage); references to myth (Beckett, McAlmon, Sage); comparisons with Dante (Beckett, McGreevy); a reference to Giordano Bruno’s theory of contraries (Beckett); comparisons of the language of WiP with the language of Rabelais (Llona, Brion); the idea of Joyce’s wish to give language “greater flexibility” (McAlmon, 105), to create a “freer” medium for himself (ibid.) closer to music and dance (McAlmon); the view of Dublin as the centre of the work (McAlmon, Sage); references to the use of numerous languages (Budgen, Jolas, McAlmon);⁸⁴ the notion that Joyce’s works, from *Dubliners* to WiP, “form an indivisible whole” (Sage, “Before,” 149) and the view that “there is a strong personal dye” in WiP (ibid., 150); a reference to the significance of the original sin/fall of man motif and its connection with the title of the book (Paul, Sage), etc.

⁸² Beckett referred to “the endless substantial variations on these three beats [church, marriage, burial], and interior intertwining of these three themes” (Beckett, 7).

⁸³ McAlmon spoke of “[t]he stream of the subconscious” (McAlmon, 112). The term *subconscious* had come into common use in the course of the popularisation of Freud’s theories; it was often used synonymous with *unconscious*.

⁸⁴ Jolas refers to “a vocabulary which is not only a deformation, but an amalgamation of all the languages” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 82).

In Eugene Jolas's final advertisement for Joyce's "protean book of the night" (Jolas, "Homage," 169) in a 1938 *transition* article, Jolas, in an attempt at synthesis, referred to the work as the "tale of humanity's progress through the abyss of the ages" (ibid.), as an "enigmatic work" (ibid.), and as "a book dealing with the night-mind of man" (ibid.). Jolas identified the main "multiple characters" (170) as Earwigger, Anna Livia, Shem and Shaun, and "the adopted daughter" (ibid., 170) and pointed out that "[t]he 'story' deals with the outer and inner world of a lower middle-class family living in a hotel beside the prattling Liffey, in the vicinity of Phoenix Park" (ibid.). Declaring that "[w]e are [...] in the night-memory of the family – and of the human race" (ibid., 171), he identified the setting as Chapelizod, the valley of the Liffey, Phoenix Park, etc. Jolas reemphasised that the work's "dramatic dynamis is based on the Bruno theory of knowledge through opposites, and on the Vico philosophy of cyclic recurrence" (ibid., 170) and that "[o]ne of the chief myths which *Work in Progress* treats exhaustively [...] is that of original sin" (ibid., 172).

This 'coordinate system' was highly influential for the symbolic production of *WiP/FW* and for the early reader position and through its dissemination and actual perpetuation within the symbolic production it affects the reader position even today. The common denominator which critics have distilled from the ideas put forward in the *transition* essays, and which has been perpetuated ever since, is the idea of a dream-like cyclical world history in which a more or less ordinary family is related to constellations of a universal history. Robert Sage, for instance, had declared that Joyce is "creating a history of the universe and creating a language in which such a history would have to be related" (Sage, "Before," 157). As this critical denominator makes obvious, *Ulysses* played a significant role as a projection matrix for the interpretation of *WiP/FW*.

Thus, even if *Exagmination* may appear overly speculative – Hugh Kenner translated the volume's title as "Our sight-seer's stroll round the fortifications behind which he maintains the meaning of his *Work in Progress in camera*" (Kenner, *Dublin's*, 362) – it did provide the critical keywords and key subjects for criticism of the work. Without it, the ensuing criticism, which took up its central ideas, would simply be inconceivable.⁸⁵ These keywords still make up the contexts in which *FW* is situated, discussed and read by the majority of those readers who have recourse to introductory material and criticism. Textual

⁸⁵ Surprisingly, the significance of the volume for the reception and symbolic production history of the work is rarely acknowledged today as even its re-examination in the recent edited volume *Joyce's Disciples Disciplined* makes apparent. The introduction suggests that "zero" may be *Exag*'s "grim sum of [...] insight" (Conley, xv). There can be no doubt that without *Exag* (and Joyce's comments), that what '*FW* critics' regard as the basic critical 'parameters' would be very different ones. To take just a minor example, the text alone would never have justified the copious Vico commentary in *FW* criticism. In other words, the text alone would not have led a single reader or critic to come up with Vico as context in the first place.

interpretations, in contrast, were left to readers and critics as there are only three attempts in *Exag* to actually interpret a passage of WiP (Budgen, Gilbert, McAlmon).⁸⁶ Yet, the impact of *Exagmination* on early efforts at reading and interpretation cannot be overestimated. Edmund Wilson, who was one of the early interpreters of *FW*, for instance, emphasised the importance of the *Exagmination* ‘criticism’ for his own interpretive efforts; he considered it “rather doubtful whether without the work done by *Transition* it would be possible to get the hang of the book at all” (Wilson, *Wound*, 225 n. 1; see also *ibid.*, 233f, 234 n. 1; cf. McAlmon, 109f).

The earliest critical studies of *FW*, published in the 1930s and 1940s, all tended to provide ‘narrative translations’ of the text to some extent – regardless of the fact that the *Exag* essays implicitly problematised such an approach. The critics certainly read Beckett’s assertion that Joyce’s “writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*” (Beckett, 14). And Robert McAlmon, who had indicated that literature was less free as a medium than other forms of artistic expression like dance and music because they were “less inhibited by the demands of *meaning*” (McAlmon, 105) whereas literature was “bound up with the idea of story telling” (*ibid.*, 107), had implied that the expectation of storytelling was undermined by Joyce (see *ibid.*, *passim*). And had not indeed Robert Sage written:

[I]nstead of observing the traditional chronological scheme, with the narrative fibres sharply separated and treated as individual unities, [Joyce] has telescoped time, space, all humanity and the universe of gods and heroes. This latter fact – consistent with his own development but in opposition to all previous literary canons – should be emphasized in order that the uninitiated reader will understand at the outset that he is faced with a revolutionary four-dimensional conception of the universe, that the ‘characters’ who bop up briefly, disappear and reappear in various forms and in unexpected company are composite, that time plays no part, that Joyce reaches out into all space to take what he for the moment requires (Sage, “Before,” 155f)?

In an earlier piece in *transition*, which he reworked into his *Exag* essay, Sage had already warned readers and critics that “the ordinary reading attitude is useless as an approach to Joyce” (Sage, “Etc.,” 172) and that “[t]he reader must [...] at the outset make a radical mental readjustment” (*ibid.*). He had furthermore pointed out that “the revolutionary verbal structure [of WiP] is [...] neither a [sic] affectation nor an isolated phenomenon” (*ibid.*, 171f) but rather “an organic part of the creation, the inevitable device for materializing the conception of *Work in Progress*” (*ibid.*, 172). And what were critics and readers to make of those statements in

⁸⁶ Sage gives a ‘content explanation’ of the Anna Livia Plurabelle part without providing textual readings.

Exag which seemed contradictory? Elliot Paul, whose piece “Mr. Joyce’s Treatment of Plot” was the first essay on WiP to appear in *transition* (Dec. 1927), did speak of “‘elements’ of the plot” (Paul, 134). Robert Sage, in contrast, asserted that “there is, properly speaking, no plot, no character development, no action, no narrative sequence” (Sage, “Before,” 156).

But what conclusions was one to draw from these comments? It is hardly surprising that the accounts following *Exag* centred in one way or another on what was assumed to be ‘the core narrative’ of WiP/*FW*. Few readers and critics of the 1920s and 1930s dared to imagine a prose work – after all there were no formal markers identifying it as poetry – without *any* discernible signs of plot. The emphasis of many critical accounts on characters and plot certainly has to do with what Hans Robert Jauß has called the reader’s *Erwartungshorizont* (“horizon of expectation”). Which hints with respect to ‘the core narrative’ could then be drawn from the various comments in *Exag*? One of the most obvious markers of a novelistic narrative are characters. Had not several of the contributors referred to an Earwicker or Earwigger, or H.C.E., and to an Anna Livia, or A.L.P.? Some (Budgen, Gilbert, Beckett) had also referred to a Shaun or Jaun.⁸⁷ And had not Beckett identified “Part 2” as “the lovegame of the children” (Beckett, 7) and Thomas McGreevy mentioned “the mysterious Viking father of Dublin and the wayward Anna Livia, Dublin’s mother, [...] and the Broth [sic] of a boy Siegmund-Shaun” (McGreevy, “Note,” 218) – thereby implying a familial frame? References to a family became more frequent with the appearance of further parts of the text. Edmund Wilson (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 230; and later in Wilson, *Wound*, 219), Louis Gillet (Gillet, “New Novel,” 265), Eugene Jolas (Jolas, “Marginalia,” 101f; and Jolas, “Homage,” 170), and Frank Budgen (Budgen, *Making*, 294-304) all made references to ‘the family.’

Certainly, all of the *Exag* essays had pointed out that the concept of characters in WiP is problematic by emphasising the ‘universality’ of the ‘characters,’ their being “composites” of the binaries male and female, mountain and river, founder and city, etc., in other words, their being “abstraction[s]” (Sage, “Before,” 159). Indeed, Robert Sage was the only contributor in *Exag* who put a little more emphasis on “characters” (see *ibid.*, 159-162).⁸⁸ But the provocation of WiP seemed less threatening if after all there were such traditional narrative devices as characters. And indeed the terms “hero,” “characters,” “persons,” and

⁸⁷ The *Anna Livia Plurabelle* volume was published in 1928. *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun* appeared in August 1929, i.e. a few months after *Exag*. These titles may have emphasised the significance of characters in WiP as well.

⁸⁸ It was also in Sage’s essay that readers and critics were initiated into the clue that Earwicker and Anna Livia “are repeatedly alluded to by their initials or by series of words beginning with these letters” (Sage, “Before,” 159).

“figures” also appeared in a number of the *Exag* essays; others put the term *characters* in quotation marks (see e.g. Jolas and Paul, 173; Sage, “Before,” 156).

Out of those hints which can be read to affirm a novelistic reading and out of the textual fragments published in *transition*, the first critical accounts, of which an overview is given in the following sub-section, concocted a core narrative, which finds itself with some variation in Wilson’s essays, in Louis Golding’s *James Joyce* from 1933, in Frank Budgen’s *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* from 1934, and to some degree even in Harry Levin’s *James Joyce*. The major configurations evoking the family pattern of this core narrative established by criticism are: the parental HCE-ALP polarity, the fraternal Shem-Shaun opposition and the paternal and fraternal relationships to Issy suggestive of incestuous desires. According to this critical denominator, the Fall motif is epitomised in an alleged act of indecency or crime, committed by Earwicker/HCE, the nature of which, like any ‘event’ in the text, is shrouded in uncertainty.

2.2 A New Phase of Symbolism? Early Criticism of WiP/FW, 1929-1941

*Let me try to establish [...] some of the most important facts which
provide the realistic foundation for this immense poem of sleep.*
(Wilson, *Wound*, 219)

*We are bound to be disappointed, if we approach [...] [FW] with the notion
of extracting a quintessential content from the encumbrances of form.*
(Levin, *Introduction*¹, 183f)

It should not come as a surprise that the early criticism tended to naturalise and narrativise WiP/FW and thus accommodated it to the horizon of expectation. Even today the desire for plot, for a ‘core narrative,’ is characteristic of the reader disposition, if not necessarily to the degree it was in the first half of the twentieth century.

Edmund Wilson’s *Axel’s Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930*, which appeared in 1931,⁸⁹ was one among the first generation of studies of literary Modernism in terms of a definable movement.⁹⁰ Wilson regarded Yeats, Valéry, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, and Stein as the key figures “represent[ing] the culmination of a self-conscious and very important literary movement” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 1), a movement characterised, in

⁸⁹ The essays in *Axel’s Castle* appeared before in *The New Republic*. What was to become Wilson’s introduction was a revised version of his essay “A Preface to Modern Literature” which appeared in March 1929. The chapter on Joyce is the revised version of his piece “James Joyce” from December 1929.

⁹⁰ A notably early and so far unknown example of such studies is discussed in chapter I.3.2 below.

Wilson's view, by the further development and internationalisation of Symbolism – a movement which in turn had been defined in the English-speaking world by Arthur Symons in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1899, a book which was important for many writers-to-be, including Joyce and Eliot. “The literary history of our time,” Wilson wrote, “is to a great extent that of the development of Symbolism and of its fusion or conflict with Naturalism” (ibid., 25).⁹¹

For Wilson, Joyce was “a master of Naturalism as great as Flaubert, [who] [...] at the same time succeeded in dramatizing Symbolism by making use of its methods for differentiating between his various characters and their varying states of mind” (ibid., 24f). The Symbolist movement which Wilson sketched was “that second swing of the pendulum away from a mechanistic view of nature and from a social conception of man [...] [which made] poetry even more a matter of the sensations and emotions of the individual than had been the case with Romanticism” (ibid., 19f). According to Wilson, Symbolism was primarily driven by the conviction that in order to render sensations “as we actually experience them” (ibid., 21) adequately, the poet should use a language which is different from the “conventional [...] language of ordinary literature” (ibid.). In contrast to the latter, the Symbolist's language is one which makes use of unconventional, indeed arbitrary, symbols and which primarily suggests and evokes as Mallarmé had declared (see ibid., 20f). Thus he defined Symbolism as “an attempt by carefully studied means – a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors – to communicate unique personal feelings” (ibid., 21f).⁹²

In *Axel's Castle*, Wilson was mainly concerned with *Ulysses* – and it is with respect to the representation of the minds of his characters, in particular in the later chapters of *Ulysses*, that Wilson considers Joyce an exponent of Symbolism – but he devoted a few pages to WiP too. It was the first attempt to give a brief overview of ‘the narrative core,’ “the realistic framework” as Wilson calls it (ibid., 235), of WiP. In his view the work was “intended as a sort of complement to ‘Ulysses’” (ibid., 225);⁹³ such a premise would justify the novelistic approach to the text to some extent. Wilson gave the discussion about ‘the plot’ a new spin by speculating that “[t]he whole book is apparently to occupy itself with the single night's sleep of a single character” (ibid.). Having declared that “[t]he hero of the night's sleep in question

⁹¹ On the relation of the terms *naturalist* and *realist* see Chevrel, 405, 418ff.

⁹² Wilson claims “what the symbols of Symbolism really were, were metaphors detached from their subjects” (Wilson, *Axel's*, 21).

⁹³ This view may be due to a footnote in *transition* 18 (see Attridge, “Awake,” 146).

is, we gather, a man named H. C. Earwicker” (ibid., 229), Wilson goes on to provide a portrayal of this character (see ibid., 229f).

The notion of WiP/*FW* being a “complement to *Ulysses*” – a sequel by other means so to speak, but ultimately a sequel which can be made accessible by the same critical means – seems to have been common in the early reception of WiP/*FW*. If it had been possible, after a number of elucidating studies, to put the narrative of *Ulysses* into clearer focus – beginning in the 1930s – after the work appeared incomprehensible at first, why should the same not be possible in the case of Joyce’s new work? This mindset is exactly what is expressed by John Rodker’s comment in *Exag*, “I think of *Ulysses* and how with the complete work and some passage of time this ‘Work in Progress’ must become apparent to us” (Rodker, “Dynamic,” 145f). It is also discernible when Louis Gillet writes in 1940: “The scandal about *Ulysses* is still remembered [,] [a]nd now *Ulysses* is a classic” (Deming, *Joyce*², 724). In retrospect, Gillet asks, “[w]ould one dare say that this prodigious book appeared unreadable and barbaric [...] [,] or that it was regarded as a shapeless mass and an indigestible farrago?” (ibid.). And he confesses, denying himself any vanity: “It took me several years to absorb the shock and to succeed in understanding it” (ibid.). All this should make one “circumspect” as Gillet points out: “Let us be wary! *Finnegans Wake* is not easy reading. The labour of seventeen years cannot be absorbed in a day. Perhaps it is not for us but for the future to say the last word” (ibid., 724f).

For such ‘plot keenness’ as the early criticism showed, assumptions about Joyce’s intentions have probably played a role as well. These were nourished, for example, by Eugene Jolas quoting Joyce as having said:

I might easily have written this *story* in the traditional manner. Every novelist knows the recipe. It is not very difficult to follow a simple, chronological scheme which the critics will understand. But I, after all, am trying to tell *the story of this Chapelizod family* in a new way. Time and the river and the mountain are the real heroes of my book. Yet the elements are exactly what every novelist might use: *man and woman, birth, childhood, night, sleep, marriage, prayer, death*. There is nothing paradoxical about this. Only I am trying to build many planes of narrative with a single esthetic purpose. (Jolas, “Friend,” 11f; emphasis added)

Wilson’s chapter on *FW* in *The Wound and the Bow* was the revised and incorporated version of two essays which had appeared in *The New Republic* in June and July 1939. It established a broader narrative outline of what he considered the “realistic foundation”

(Wilson, *Wound*, 219) of the work. One of Wilson's premises is that ultimately "a few simple facts" can be abstracted from *FW*: "It is a help that, in forming our hypothesis, the principle of Occam's razor applies; for it is Joyce's whole design and point that the immense foaming-up of symbols should be reducible to a few simple facts" (ibid.). It is important to remember in this respect that Jolas had announced in 1938 that "[t]he 'story' deals with the outer and inner world of a lower middle-class family living in a hotel beside the prattling Liffey, in the vicinity of Phoenix Park" (Jolas, "Homage," 170). Repeating his view that the work is a 'complement' to *Ulysses* (see Wilson, *Wound*, 218), Wilson considers *FW* another manifestation of what he perceives to be "the constant human subject with which [...] Joyce's books [have] dealt": "the nexus of intimate relationships involved in a family situation" (ibid., 226). Yet, this nexus, Wilson writes, is difficult to apprehend as "[t]he various ['character'] pairs [...] shift their balance and melt into one another so readily that it is impossible to give any account of them which will cover all the cases in the book" (ibid., 224). Nevertheless, he provides an outline of Earwicker and his family (see ibid., 219ff). He suggests that "it becomes on a first reading the reader's prime preoccupation to puzzle out who the dreamer is and what has been happening to him" (ibid., 218f). While considering Earwicker a tangible character and an abstract principle at the same time, Wilson still takes the traditional concept of character as a basis and thus cannot but regard Earwicker as less convincing a character than Bloom: "[T]here has been too much literature poured into him. He has exfoliated into too many arabesques, become hypertrophied by too many elements" (ibid., 232). As has often been the case, *FW*'s inaccessibility was measured in terms of the experience of *Ulysses*: "*Ulysses* already dragged; one got lost in it. [...] One had to think about the book, read chapters of it over, in order to see the pattern and to realize how deep the insight went. And *Finnegans Wake* is much worse in this respect" (ibid., 236). It may also be noted that the idea of incest as a motif in *FW* stems from Wilson (see Wilson, "Earwicker," 203f; Wilson, *Wound*, 221, 237).

While Harry Levin's book is generally considered the first comprehensive study of Joyce's prose works, David Daiches's *The Novel and the Modern World*, published two years earlier in 1939, already represented an attempt at the broader picture – half of it was devoted to Joyce's entire prose works.⁹⁴ However, the discussion of *FW* in Daiches, only a few pages long, does not amount to more than being an appendage to his treatment of *Ulysses*. According to Daiches, *FW* "marks the completion of Joyce's journey from realism to symbolism" (Daiches, 83). His view that the paramount task of writers in a period of

⁹⁴ The study's claim to comprehensiveness, a claim which Daiches himself would not have made, in terms of covering all of Joyce's prose works, was of course only due to Joyce's untimely death in 1941.

disintegration of values is to establish new values (see *ibid.*, 154; see I.1.1 above) brings him to the conclusion that Joyce's work, especially with regard to *Ulysses* and *FW*, "his striving after aloofness, neutrality, and lack of attitude" and pure art (Daiches, 149) is a remnant of the "aesthetic attitude" behind *l'art pour l'art* and behind the psychological novel (*ibid.*, 114f): "*FW* is the end of a chapter and not the beginning. It is the final form assumed by the aesthetic escapist in response to the breakdown of public standards of value and significance" (*ibid.*, 154). Although not emphasising it to the extent that Wilson did, Daiches, too, suspects the presence of "a surface story" (*ibid.*, 152), even if he at once provides the caveat "if story it can be called" (*ibid.*): "That the narrative represents the dream of a Dubliner of Scandinavian origin whose psychological state is expanded into and identified with representative themes of European history and mythology the reader may be eventually able to gather" (*ibid.*).

As already mentioned, Harry Levin's *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* from 1941 often marks the point of departure of accounts of the beginning of academic Joyce criticism. A pupil of Irving Babbitt and F. O. Matthiessen at Harvard and also acquainted with T. S. Eliot, who was Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard in 1932-33, Levin's chief interests were Elizabethan drama and modern literature.⁹⁵ His view of *FW* was to a certain degree the opposite of Wilson's. In a review from 1939 which was a reaction to Wilson's reviews from the same year,⁹⁶ Levin had considered it a fallacy to regard *FW* as a novel: "The various studies of *Ulysses*, helpful as several of them have been, have encouraged the notion that Joyce had a 'story' to tell which was detachable" (Levin, "Looking," 696; cf. Levin, *Introduction*¹, 182). Levin deserves credit for being one of the very few early critics to see the limitations of the traditional "interpretative modes" (Iser, "*Ulysses* and the Reader," 131) and was willing to reach beyond them; it is not only for that reason that his may be regarded as the most perceptive of the early studies. According to Levin, "the real reason for putting critical emphasis on the 'story' and brusquely attempting to extract a quintessential content from the morass of form in which it lies embedded" is that "[o]ur reading habits are so purely the product of a naturalistic tradition that our main concern is still with the literal subject-matter of a work, and not with its techniques of presentation and patterns of symbolism" (Levin, "Looking," 696). "The real source of continuity," he writes, "is the flow of the language. Once we have conceded this, we have granted words a new importance. We realize that for

⁹⁵ For Levin, Matthiessen represented the "shift from the philological to the critical approach and from a historical to a contemporary emphasis" (Levin, *Memories*, 228).

⁹⁶ The fact that Levin's review is a response to Wilson's becomes more obvious in Levin's first review "New Irish Stew," which appeared in *The Kenyon Review* in autumn 1939.

Joyce they are matter, not manner. We begin to detach them and re-examine their syntactic, phonetic, and referential values” (ibid., 700f).

Levin’s *James Joyce* echoes this perspective. As Levin writes, “[c]ompounded of so many tales and legends [...], [*FW*] has no story to tell [,] [i]t does not narrate; it elaborates; it projects a poignant series of cross-references” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 198). In *FW*, he asserts, Joyce “subordinate[s] content to form: [...] forego[es] the normal suspenses and sympathies that bind the reader to the book, [...] and confer[s] complete autonomy upon words” (ibid., 184). He too considers Joyce’s oeuvre in terms of a transition from naturalism to the “symbolistic experiment” of *FW* (ibid., 19) and considers his subject’s life to be “inextricably woven into his work” (ibid., 11). Levin weaves the various strands and ideas into a compelling interpretation without giving it the veneer of a coherent narrative: “His work is enriched by such large resources of invention and allusion that its total effect is infinite variety” (ibid., 177f). According to Levin, *FW* can ultimately be grasped by Joyce alone: “Our attempts to criticize *Finnegans Wake*, in the two years since its definitive appearance, have been about as accurate and as adequate as the efforts of Æsop’s blind men to describe an elephant” (ibid., 140). And “[s]ince no one else” apart from Joyce “can be trusted to unravel his fullest implications or construe his ultra-violet allusions or improvise his lost chords, everyone else is relieved of responsibility” (ibid.). Hence he concludes “If we cannot fathom the depths of the book, we can enjoy its surfaces” (ibid.). The tradition into which Levin sees Joyce inscribing himself with *FW* is that of Rabelais, Sterne and Swift (see ibid., 165ff).

Although Levin is critical of the assumption that *FW* conceals a core narrative, on which Daiches and Wilson even more so proceeded, no less than theirs, his critical views are based on the ‘coordinate system’ established by *Exag* and the rest of the ‘promotional criticism,’ in fact to a greater degree than Wilson’s and Daiches’s. The influence of this ‘coordinate system’ within the early symbolic production may for instance be found in statements such as *WiP/FW* “is to deal with the night and with the subconscious” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 225; see Wilson, *Wound*, 218; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 140), in references to sleep and dream (see Wilson, *Axel’s*, 228f; Daiches, 152; Wilson, *Wound*, 218, 227ff, 239; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 141), in the assumption that “a single one of Joyce’s sentences [...] will combine two or three different meanings [...]; a single word may combine two or three” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 229; see Daiches, 148ff, 153, 155; Wilson, *Wound*, 233f, 236; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 152, 156f, 193), in the reference to “‘portmanteau(-)words’” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 229; Daiches, 153; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 187; see Golding, 18), in references to the manifold languages (see Wilson, *Axel’s*, 229; Golding, 18, 21; Daiches, 156; Wilson, *Wound*, 229) and

allusions (see Wilson, *Axel's*, 229, 235; Golding, 152; Daiches, 153; Wilson, *Wound*, 229; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 177f, 197), to “Earwicker’s failures and sins” and the related idea of the fall (Wilson, *Axel's*, 231, see also 230f, 234; see Wilson, *Wound*, 221f; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 157f), to a misdemeanour committed near Phoenix Park (see Wilson, *Axel's*, 234; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 158), to “all history and myth” (Wilson, *Axel's*, 236, see also 235f; see Daiches, 152; Wilson, *Wound*, 228f, 232; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 141, 144), to the ‘coincidence’ and ‘universality’ of characters (see Wilson, *Axel's*, 230, 234; Golding, 152f; Daiches, 151f; Wilson, *Wound*, 220ff, 228; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 142, 144, 149, 154, 161, 168), to the simultaneity of space and time (see Golding, 21, 144f; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 198), to Vico (see Golding, 152; Daiches, 153; Wilson, *Wound*, 225f, 243; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 142ff, 156), in the conception of Dublin as template for the universal (see Golding, 144; Daiches, 150ff; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 152, 158, 170), of Anna Livia as the river (see Wilson, *Axel's*, 231; Golding, 153; Wilson, *Wound*, 220ff, 235; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 149, 195), of Earwicker as the mountain (see Wilson, *Axel's*, 230; Golding, 152f; Wilson, *Wound*, 222), etc.

These three critics, Wilson, Daiches, and Levin, represent, among others like Louis Golding, the early Joyce criticism; their studies were in the first place concerned with establishing the significance and value of Joyce’s prose works. Consequently, their accounts and readings of *WiP/FW* were of a more general nature, unconcerned with the special kind of ‘close reading’ which *A Skeleton Key* set out to provide.

2.3 ‘Narrative Translation’ into *A Skeleton Key*, 1944

The first extensive ‘translation’ of *FW* into a novelistic narrative used as exclusive approach to the work, which was at the same time the first book-length reading of *FW*, was produced by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson in *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944),⁹⁷ which represents a significant moment in the symbolic production. Its influence on the reader position is to be found in the fact that it became a kind of unofficial translation of *FW* and that it demonstrated the very possibility of ‘macro-level’ plot-readings. It reassured readers and critics that the work has a plot: *FW* became a perfectly readable narrative here for the first time. *A Skeleton Key* marks an early culmination of the ‘quest for the plot’ of *FW*. The impulse at ‘translating’ the text – meaning translating the text of *FW* into a coherent narrative

⁹⁷ According to Joseph Campbell, they were only able to get *A Skeleton Key* published after the stir over Thornton Wilder’s *The Skin of Our Teeth*, caused by their claim that it was an unacknowledged adaptation of *FW*, had created some interest in their study of Joyce (see Campbell, 121-123).

on the basis of the more transparent words and phrases which lend themselves to the construction of such a narrative while erasing all the rest – finds its first obvious manifestation here: “To translate this dream logic into waking logic is the task that confronts the reader” (Campbell and Robinson, 361). Campbell and Robinson considered their work to have “laid bare” the “narrative of Joyce’s dream-saga” (ibid., x). They regard *FW* as “a mighty allegory of the fall and resurrection of mankind” and “a strange book, a compound of fable, symphony, and nightmare – a monstrous enigma beckoning imperiously from the shadowy pits of sleep” (ibid., 3). The quest metaphor is evident in their orotund diction: “The vast scope and intricate structure of *Finnegans Wake* give the book a forbidding aspect of *impenetrability*. It appears to be a *dense* and baffling *jungle, trackless and overgrown* with wanton perversities of form and language” (ibid., 3; emphasis added). The work “tasks the imagination, exacts discipline and *tenacity* from those who would march with it” (ibid.; emphasis added). They reassure readers that “some of the difficulties disappear as soon as the well-disposed reader picks up a few compass clues and gets his bearings” (ibid., 3f) and that little by little “the enormous map of *Finnegans Wake* begins slowly to unfold, characters and motifs emerge, themes become recognizable, and Joyce’s vocabulary falls more and more familiarly on the accustomed ear” (ibid., 4). At the same time, *caveat lector* is issued: “Complete understanding is not to be snatched at greedily at one sitting; indeed, it may never come” (ibid.). Campbell and Robinson put most emphasis on what they perceived to be the mythological aspects of the work,⁹⁸ claiming that in *FW* “myth and dream coalesce” (ibid., 360). They refer to the work as “a Treasury of Myth” (ibid., 361) and add that “[m]yths, like dreams, are an upworking [sic] of the unconscious mind” (ibid.). Campbell considered the work acknowledging the “homogeneity” of myths (ibid.).⁹⁹

The influence of *A Skeleton Key* has been stressed by McCarthy in his overview of influential studies of the first fifty years of *FW* criticism (see McCarthy, “Introduction,” 2f), and by Begnal in *Re-Viewing Classics of Joyce Criticism* (see Begnal, “Skeleton Key,” 36-45). In his review of *A Skeleton Key* from August 1944, Edmund Wilson wrote:

If you will read the Campbell-Robinson synopsis at the beginning of their *Skeleton Key*, you will see that the large architecture of *Finnegans Wake*, in

⁹⁸ In his “Marginalia to James Joyce’s *Work in Progress*,” Jolas had emphasised the mythological aspect of *WiP*. Here Jolas writes “The principle criterion of genius is the capacity to construct a mythological world” (Jolas, “Marginalia,” 101) and refers to “[t]he mythological symbolisms” (ibid., 104) used in the work. Furthermore, Jolas claims that “*Work in Progress* is, if we must indulge in identification, anti-naturalist, and, on the positive side, mythological. For it is primarily the story of mankind and the universe. The first mantic myth written in our age. A cosmography in hierophantic terms” (ibid., 101).

⁹⁹ With the publication of *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, five years after *A Skeleton Key*, Campbell should become the exponent of the theory of monomyth, the idea that the myths from different cultures and periods share an archetypal pattern.

spite of the complication of detail, is solid, precise and simple, as the principle themes of the book are matters of obvious universal experience, so utterly commonplace that the difficulty in grasping them comes sometimes from the sophisticated reader's unreadiness to accept anything so little esoteric as the basic facts of family life, the mixed moral nature of man and the phenomena of birth, growth and death rather than from the dense psychological web which Joyce has spun among them or the variegated legendry and language with which they have been embroidered. (Wilson, "Guide," 186)

While in accord with Wilson to some extent, the approach of Campbell and Robinson was of course diametrically opposed to Levin's view of the work. In his review of *A Skeleton Key*, Levin criticises that "Joyce's exponents are still suffering from an excess of hierophantic zeal, a belief that what must be so laboriously decoded must somehow contain a message of mystical profundity" (Levin, "Earwicker," 107). John V. Kelleher, a Harvard colleague of Levin of Irish descent, agreed. He considered the "basic mistake of Campbell and Robinson" to be their failure to see that "Joyce's originality lay always in his use of language and not in his use of themes" (Kelleher, 182). Sceptical to a certain extent and convinced that "[p]arts of the *Wake* simply do not repay the reader's effort, let alone Joyce's in composing them" (ibid.), yet Kelleher was aware of its significance: "But where he succeeded, he succeeded so magnificently and with such undeniable rightness that no one, who has read and begun to understand the book, can doubt that a revolution in the use and conception of language dates from its publication" (ibid.).

Although its approach and premises had been criticised from the beginning, even many of those reviewers of *A Skeleton Key* who considered it the "substitute" (Prescott, "Review," 138) that it is saw some merit in providing what they considered "the necessary minimum of understanding" (ibid.) and in "facilitat[ing] [the reader's] reading" (Burgum, 135): "They [Campbell and Robinson] have realized that, once one is not reading in the dark from phrase to phrase, but has the aid of knowing the general structure of the book, the translation is bound to come easier" (ibid.). Something about the text was thought to be revealed now.

What such narrative accounts of *FW* represent is after all a very common human strategy, namely complexity reduction. By focusing on one frame of rationalisation, one "Lesemodell" (Reichert, 8 and passim) ("model of reading"), one interpretive schema, in other words by selection of information and/or perspective, such approaches make a potentially overcharging work of literature comprehensible: "As readers we depend upon [...]"

this narrative [...] that guide[s] us through the turbulence of fluid sound- and wordshapes and lures us with the aesthetic appeal of familiar forms in a world of chaos” (Schwab, *Mirror*, 79). Such a novelistic narrative account as presented by Campbell and Robinson allows readers to conceive the text as a somewhat coherent whole and provides an attempt to answer, *in place of the reader*, the question ‘What does it all mean?’.

Jean-Michel Rabaté has described the ‘narrative paradox’ as readers of *FW* “retain a constant and insistent feeling that some kind of storytelling is going on” (Rabaté, “Narratology,” 137) but “cannot ascertain what [is narrated] or by whom” (ibid.); “as soon as we try to pinpoint the ‘events’ of a story,” Rabaté writes, “it trails off elsewhere” (ibid.). The act of ‘narrative translation,’ as presented in *A Skeleton Key*, is basically a dissolving of this ‘narrative paradox’ perceived by readers of *FW*; it makes representable what otherwise seems to elude representation.

Since the publication of *A Skeleton Key* the ‘narrative translation’ approach has continued to attract critics and scholars. Although not being translations in the sense of an *Ersatz-text* like *A Skeleton Key*, William York Tindall’s *A Reader’s Guide to Finnegans Wake* (1959), Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon’s *Understanding Finnegans Wake* (1982), and John Gordon’s *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary* (1986) stand in this tradition. Despite the fact that the ‘narrative translation’ approach has long been criticised for being too reductive and has gone out of fashion in recent decades, not least as “interepretations that merely restitute a narrative [...] fail to account for the experience of reading the *Wake*, in which the inability to focus on a narrative is crucial” (Schwab, *Subjects*, 96), there are still present-day incarnations such as Edmund Epstein’s *A Guide Through Finnegans Wake* from 2009.

The ‘quest for the plot’ has been, and still is, a broader tendency in *FW* criticism than this overview suggests.¹⁰⁰ It is perhaps not even an exaggeration to argue that most criticism of *FW* is informed in one way or another by it. And yet, Levin’s perspective on this issue has had its advocates as well. Hugh Kenner, for instance, was true to the Levinian spirit when he wrote in *Dublin’s Joyce* (1956): “Joyce worked seventeen years to push the work away from ‘meaning’, adrift into language; nothing is to be gained by trying to push it back” (Kenner, *Dublin’s*, 304). Ever since Wilson, and Campbell and Robinson, the idea of a ‘core narrative’ of *FW* has been perpetuated – so much so that when novice readers come across introductory material or secondary sources, which happens presumably more often than not, they will have

¹⁰⁰ The ‘quest for plot’ is exemplified, for instance, in Roland McHugh’s *The Finnegans Wake Experience*, his account of his study of the text. The second chapter “Learning to Read *Finnegans Wake*” is a prime example of the search for the Holy Grail – the key to the text, the chasing of allusions, a sense of the great discovery to be made pervades his account, one theory of its meaning being replaced by the next and then another one.

come across one form or another of this narrative. Yet such a narrative would indeed be very hard to detect by any reader who would approach *FW* without this second-hand ‘knowledge.’ The perpetuation of this supposed core narrative is presumably what Fritz Senn criticises when he writes, in the 1980s, “[b]y now *Finnegans Wake* is known to the entire literary crowd by osmosis, by hearsay, by rumor – at several removes, enough to generalize from” (Senn, “Dissatisfaction,” 236). How is it to be explained, one is compelled to ask, that *FW*, of all texts, invites mistaking interpretation for interpretandum?

2.4 Attempting to Establish “Firm Ground”: ‘The Commentary Era,’ 1950s-1970s

The concept of correctness must, I believe, give way entirely to pragmatism.
(Hart, “Elephant,” 6)

Since *A Skeleton Key* provided an early ‘macro-level’ plot-reading, one which came to be regarded as ever more obviously unsatisfactory, one major tendency in the 1950s and 1960s was an orientation towards the elucidation of smaller textual units, from words to passages, in the tradition of philological commentary. The aim was to establish ‘the facts’ – to make *FW* ‘readable’ through the kind of annotation that had ‘opened up’ *Ulysses*. This latter approach has been variously referred to as exegesis, explication, or *l’explication de texte*. The little journal *A Wake Newslitter*, which appeared from 1962 to 1980 and which was basically “a collection of *Wake* glosses” (Senn, “Industrial,” 2), became its main organ.¹⁰¹ The commentary branch of *FW* criticism was a development at the beginning of which stood the private correspondence between a handful of *FW* readers in the 1950s attempting to come to terms with the work.¹⁰² Their efforts at concerted elucidation ultimately led to the founding of *A Wake Newslitter* (*AWN*) in 1962. Adaline Glasheen’s *A Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles* from 1956 is generally regarded as the first published volume of this sort of *FW* criticism. In this approach the exoreferential dynamic (see below) took full effect. Considered en bloc, the publications which arose from this project (Glasheen, Atherton, Hodgart and Worthington, Christiani, Bonheim, O Hehir, etc. (see McHugh,

¹⁰¹ Fritz Senn and Clive Hart, the editors of *AWN*, were also concerned with establishing the larger, ‘structural’ patterns of the text. Yet, the elucidation of words, phrases, and passages, the compiling of word lists, etc. made up the bulk of contributions to *AWN*.

¹⁰² In 1950 began the correspondence between Adaline Glasheen and Thornton Wilder (see Wilder and Glasheen), Hugh Kenner joined in 1953 (see Kenner and Glasheen) and the circle of correspondents would soon also include James Atherton and Matthew Hodgart (Glasheen refers to this core of an international *FW* “reading group” in her preface to *A Census* (see Glasheen, *A Census*, xvi-xvii)); Clive Hart, Fritz Senn and Bernard Benstock and a few others soon followed.

Annotations, vii-ix)) had a considerable impact on the reader position: It appeared as if ‘the facts’ of the text were finally becoming accessible.

The ‘commentary project’ – i.e. the elucidation of phrases, sentences and passages and of what were assumed to be “allusions” – was carried out with the aim of getting a grasp of the whole through a better understanding of the text’s details. In retrospect Clive Hart described the impulse behind the project thus: “Unsure how to respond to it [*FW*], but hoping to establish some firm ground beneath our feet, we have concentrated overwhelmingly on detailed *explication de texte*” (Hart, “Afterword,” 155). The results of this critical endeavour were glosses, word lists, concordances, dictionaries, lexicons, etc (see McHugh, *Annotations*, vii). Roland McHugh’s collection of what in his view were the most helpful glosses in *Annotations to Finnegans Wake*, first published in 1980, represents in a way the outcome of the project and at the same time marks its end.¹⁰³

Clive Hart’s comments on *FW* in the year of the Joyce centennial 1982 amounted to a summary of the increasing scepticism which had arisen from the project of the philological annotation of *FW*: “Some decades ago the task of explication was often undertaken in the expectation that patient research would lead to the elucidation of a mystery” (Hart, “Afterword,” 156). “Not only our longer experience of the book, but also the growing familiarity of ideas of uncertainty, probability, approximation and open systems of thought,” Hart writes, “has led us to understand and to accept that in so far as there is a ‘mystery’ in *FW* it is fundamental, and fundamentally insoluble” (ibid.). Instead of contributing to an understanding of the work as a whole, its exponents realised that the ‘micro-perspective’ of commentary made the ‘macro-perspective’ of ‘plot-readings’ even more problematic: “[T]he more one understands of the detail, thanks to the continuing flow of explication, the more difficult it becomes to sustain a satisfying sense of the whole” (ibid.).

Thus, in the 1980s the ‘project’ of the “elucidation of [the] mystery” (ibid.) *FW* through micro-level commentary was declared a failure by two of the project’s pioneers, Clive Hart and Fritz Senn. When speaking at the “*Finnegans Wake* Contexts” symposium in 1987, Fritz Senn gave voice to his dissatisfaction with the state of *FW* criticism and to his frustration with the text itself. Despite three decades of commentary production, Senn frankly acknowledged “we do not understand much of *Finnegans Wake*” (Senn, “Dissatisfaction,” 226). The notion of “understanding” in this case, as Senn makes clear, is not to be equated

¹⁰³ McHugh’s preface to the third edition of *Annotations* offers a concise overview of the history of textual commentary (see McHugh, *Annotations*, vii-xi). As the list of sources in this latest edition of *Annotations* shows, this approach does still have its adherents; the most recent volume in the list is Cintra’s *A Vocabulary of the Portuguese in Finnegans Wake* from 2003.

with the expectation “that the basic and intrinsic obscurity of the *Wake* could ever be glossingly transformed into daylight lucidity and reason” (ibid., 228) but refers rather to “a subsistence minimum of comprehension” (ibid.). In Senn’s eyes, the understandable desire to “rise to the larger issues, see and discuss the work as a whole, not a collection of minute puzzles” (ibid., 231) is premature as long as criticism “cannot come to terms with its individual [micro-level] intricacies” (ibid., 232). He criticises that a few relatively well-explained passages that *FW* criticism has frequently turned to do not balance the numerous ones which have remained obscure (see ibid., 233).

What was the reason for this failure? The critical project of commentary, consisting of annotating the text, required close readings. Close readings, in turn, required criteria of relevance as Hart (see Hart, “Elephant,” see also Hart, “Perspective”) and Senn (see Senn, “Test-Case”) made clear. The questions that were so urgently posed by the experience of attempting to provide readings of *FW* were a) “[h]ow [one] might [...] decide what can usefully be thought of as ‘in the text’?” (Hart, “Fritz,” 7), b) how far one can go in the ‘translation’ of the *Wake*’s text into meaningful patterns, and c) how one was to establish a hierarchy of levels of meaning.¹⁰⁴ The overall issue was which of the differing readings which the text necessarily provokes through its strategies of ‘ambiguation’ are justified and on what grounds? The paradoxical situation was that some of these critics were certainly aware of the fact that the proliferation of meaning was calculated and that correctness was not available as a criterion, as the quote from Clive Hart above this section demonstrates. At the same time their aim was indeed to distinguish between ‘more correct’ meanings and “allusions” and rather unacceptable results of ‘overinterpretation.’ These essays by Hart (Hart, “Elephant,” “Perspective”) and Senn (Senn, “Test-Case”) asked the questions of *the limits of reading and interpretation* and of the possibility of distinguishing reading from interpretation – forced on its readers and critics by a text that seems to call such limits and differentiation into question.¹⁰⁵ Another reason for the project’s failure was the inability to see the fundamental difference between the *qualitas* of Joyce’s last two works, that is, critics still approached *FW* “with assumptions deriving in large part from our experience of *Ulysses*” (Hart, “Fritz,” 5).

The insight gained from the failure of establishing theories of relevance (see Senn, “Dissatisfaction,” 234) and of the general project of making the text ‘readable’ (see Hart, “Fritz,” 9f) is that in the case of *FW* there can be no establishing ‘the facts’ – the text

¹⁰⁴ The commentary project was also meant to counter “speculative readings” (Hart, “Elephant,” 1) of a text which had become “a splendid encouragement to excess” (ibid.).

¹⁰⁵ This dilemma caused critics to make awkward critical manoeuvres. Discussing the limits of interpretation, Michael H. Begnal wrote “limits do have to be placed somewhere” (Begnal, “Language,” 636) only to conclude: “Ultimately, we all decide for ourselves the limits of the novel’s discourse” (ibid.).

effectively undermines any such attempt. The reader position of the mid-1980s was thus affected by a turning away from the pursuit of ‘the facts,’ which was the consequence not only of the failure of the project but of the coming into effect of post-structuralism as well. Nevertheless the project, *and* the fact of its failure, play an important role in the work’s symbolic production.

2.5 ‘Decentering Structure’: Readings in the Post-Structuralist 1970s/1980s

The emergence of post-structuralist ideas fuelled the scepticism towards strategies of disambiguation regardless of whether they were directed at the micro-level of words or at the macro-level of plot. One of the early studies of *FW* that was informed by what can by and large be termed post-structuralist premises was Margot Norris’s *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake* from 1976, “A Structuralist Analysis,” as the subtitle says, with references to Derrida, Lacan, Heidegger and Lévi-Strauss. Norris claimed that *FW* represents an “attack on the traditional concept of structure itself” (Norris, *Decentered*, 121), a “decenter[ing] [of] literary structure” (ibid., 122) characterised by the ‘Derridean’ notion of “freeplay” (ibid., 123), the misconstruing early translation of Derrida’s ‘*le jeu*,’ and identifies in *FW* “that intellectual shift which locates meaning in relationships and structure rather than in content” (ibid., 3). As Levin had done, Norris criticised the “novelistic approach” to *FW* as a fallacy: “*Finnegans Wake* fails to support [...] novelistic premises and, indeed, there is ample evidence to suggest that the work is designed precisely to refute the realist epistemology that has dominated prose fiction since the eighteenth century” (ibid., 11). It fails to support such premises as “[t]he formal elements of the work, plot, character, point of view, and language, are not anchored to a single point of reference, that is, they do not refer back to a center” (ibid., 120) and thus the work “represent[s] a decentered universe, one that lacks the center that defines, gives meaning, designates, and holds the structure together” (ibid., 121). According to Norris, *FW* represents nothing less than “a critique of the novel itself and, consequently, a critique of the literary and intellectual traditions that have sustained it” (ibid., 15).

Holding that *FW* “explores the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, and the strange, cunning, antagonistic communication that is effected between them in dreams” (ibid., 99f), Norris describes the language of the work in terms of Freud’s concepts of displacement (see ibid., 101-108) and condensation (see ibid., 108-111). Hers is

mainly a psychoanalytical perspective – the “conceal[ed]” language of the *Wake* is accounted for through the notion of guilt by Norris (ibid., 80; cf. Wilson, *Wound*, 239 and Levin, *Introduction*¹, 158).

Although not overtly post-structuralist, John Bishop’s much-noticed study *Joyce’s Book of the Dark*, which appeared in 1986, clearly shows characteristics of the intellectual climate in U.S. American literature departments in the 1980s – a climate marked by the vogue of post-structuralist ideas. This becomes most obvious in Bishop’s thorough fusion of critical idiom and textual quotations, using the text of *FW* to comment on it ‘in its own terms’ – a strategy which becomes apparent already in Harry Levin’s *James Joyce*. Although statements such as “Never definitely ‘arrived at,’ meaning in *Finnegans Wake* ‘drifts’ and is constantly ‘rearrived’ at [...]; and consequently it hovers in a state of continual arrival and is constantly becoming” (Bishop, *Dark*, 384), in which the post-structuralist diction reverberates, are a rare occurrence in Bishop’s book, his implicit abandonment of the idea of the limits of contextual interpretation is an indication of the critical *Zeitgeist*. Like Levin and Norris, he was among those who criticised the view of *FW* as novelistic narrative (see ibid., 27, 310f).

Bishop realised that “the obscurity of *Finnegans Wake* is its essence” (ibid., 10).¹⁰⁶ His was not an attempt to explain this obscurity away – as many critics tend to do – but rather to make it the basis of his view of the work: His study makes the most thorough use of the interpretive schema ‘dream’/‘night.’ The obscurity of *FW*, Bishop contends, is the result of it being a dream work – not a work *about* a dream but a work which, supposedly in Joyce’s own words, “reconstruct[s]” and “imitate[s]” night and dream (ibid., 4ff, 16, 25). How significant the notion of *dream* is as an interpretive schema for *FW* has always been a matter of dispute.¹⁰⁷ But this holds true for practically any of the common frames of rationalisation of which the interpretive schemata ‘dream’/‘night’ and ‘Vico’ are merely the most prominent.

In *Joyce’s Book of the Dark*, Bishop maintained that Vico’s *Scienza nuova* is essential for an understanding of the work and also emphasised the influence of the Egyptian Book of the Dead and of Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* for *FW*.¹⁰⁸ His belief in the “dream

¹⁰⁶ And yet one must not necessarily share Bishop’s assumption, held also by Norris, that “[t]he indeterminacy [...] is created by the strange ontological conditions the work explores, particularly dreaming” (Norris, “*Finnegans*,” 162) (see Bishop, *Dark*, 4ff).

¹⁰⁷ There is likewise no consensus on the ‘configuration’ of the interpretive schema ‘dream.’ It has variously been suggested by critics that *FW* is the dream of one ‘character’ in the text, that the position of the dreamer can only be Joyce’s, that the reader takes on the position of the dreamer, that it is the dream of a collective unconscious, that the ‘characters’ in the text are aspects of one personality (namely the dreamer’s), that the dream notion is only a “convenient device, allowing the freest scope to introduce any material” (Weaver, qtd. in Atherton, *Books*¹, 17), etc. Against these assumptions Bishop set the notion of a sleeping, unconscious body (see Bishop, *Dark*, 126-145), rendering *FW* “a representation of a human body” (ibid., 143).

¹⁰⁸ Eugene Jolas had pointed out the Book of the Dead as a source for the “mythological symbolisms used” in *FW* (see Jolas, “Marginalia,” 104).

nature” of the book leads Bishop to claim that *FW* is structured by free association (see *ibid.*, 307) and that this technique is also required for reading the text (see *ibid.*, 450 n. 2): “What it really requires of its reader is the ability to pursue ‘distant connections’” (*ibid.*, 310) through “intuition and imagination” (*ibid.*, 309) rather than attempting to decode ‘the correct meaning’.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Bishop follows McCarthy (see McCarthy, *Riddles*) and others in assuming that “*Finnegans Wake* takes in every particular the form and style of the riddle” (Bishop, *Dark*, 311) and that the surface text conceals a “second,” deeper text and meaning (*ibid.*, 313f).

Professedly uninterested in explication and interpretation, post-structuralist readings tended to give priority to emphasising the radically verbal nature of *FW* and its consequences. With respect to the reader position the post-structuralist perspective has encouraged a less essentialist and less hermeneutic-oriented view of, and approach to, *FW*, and at the same time stimulated a challenging of traditional concepts, categories and perspectives, and epistemological ‘certainties.’ The influence of post-structuralism on the symbolic production of *FW* and on the reader position was caused less by the adaptations, such as Norris’s, having a momentous effect within ‘Joyce criticism’ but rather by the writings of its theorists and the impact of literary theory within the last fifty years. It may be regarded as the critical factor for *FW*’s canonisation as the following part illustrates.

3. The Status of the Artist in the Academy: Joyce’s Transition from “Cult” to Canon

Has there ever before been so short a transition between ostracism and canonization? [...] Those changes in status and interpretation – I suspect – followed a larger sequence of esthetic shifts as the twentieth century was moving from its first to its second generation, and from Bohemia to Academe.
(Levin, *Introduction*², xiii)

This part is concerned with the canonisation of Joyce’s works in general and of *Finnegans Wake* in particular in terms of an ‘institutional’ history of their symbolic production. Such an account of the ‘institutional forces’ underlying the processes of symbolic production and canonisation must develop a broader perspective than merely taking into account the published ‘Joyce criticism.’ Published criticism is certainly one significant aspect in the process of canonisation – which is itself an aspect of the symbolic production – but there are other factors such as developments within the disciplines of literary studies and the

¹⁰⁹ In “Work in Progress: A Linguistic Experiment by James Joyce,” Carola Giedion-Welcker implied that Joyce used free association as a method in *WiP* (see Giedion-Welcker, “Work in Progress,” 182).

dissemination of literary theory; such factors go beyond the influence of individual scholars and even of particular research communities such as “the Joyce industry.” Questions about the influence of the development of literary studies within the university on the process of the symbolic production and about the influence of the shifts of critical paradigms within literary studies on this process (of the symbolic production) and the shifting standards and criteria that are involved are brought into focus here.

Basing his study on Bourdieu, John Guillory suggests in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* that “[i]n the case of the literary curriculum, [...] the problem of what is called canon formation is best understood as a problem in the constitution and distribution of cultural capital” (Guillory, ix):

The literary syllabus is the institutional form by means of which knowledge is disseminated, and it constitutes capital in two senses: First, it is *linguistic* capital, the means by which one attains to a socially credentialed and therefore valued speech, otherwise known as “Standard English”. And second, it is *symbolic* capital, a kind of knowledge-capital whose possession can be displayed upon request and which thereby entitles its possessor to the cultural and material rewards of the well-educated person.¹¹⁰ (ibid.)

Guillory defines the literary canon as “an *imaginary* totality of works” (ibid., 30) and explains his definition thus: “No one has access to the canon as a totality [...] because the works invoked as canonical change continually according to many different occasions of judgement or contestation” (ibid.). Therefore the canon “never appears as a complete and uncontested list in any particular time and place” (ibid.). It is in the syllabus that the canon becomes concrete, more specifically in the sum of syllabi, as Guillory emphasises: “[T]he syllabus posits the existence of the canon as its imaginary totality. The imaginary list is projected out of the multiple individual syllabi functioning within individual pedagogic institutions over a relatively extended period of time” (ibid., 31).

When in 1960 Harry Levin noticed Joyce’s “quick transit from the avant-garde to the academy” (Levin, *Introduction*², 198), the astonishment resonating in his question “Has there ever before been so short a transition between ostracism and canonization?” (ibid., xiii) is understandable as Levin encountered Joyce’s works at a time when booksellers in the United

¹¹⁰ Guillory assumes, following Bourdieu, “that the distribution of cultural capital in such an institution as the school reproduces the structure of social relations, a structure of complex and ramifying inequality” (Guillory, 6). The canon, according to Guillory, is part of this process: “[I]n its concrete form as a syllabus or curriculum, the canon is a discursive instrument of ‘transmission’ situated historically within a specific institution of reproduction: the school” (ibid., 56).

States risked going to prison for selling *Ulysses* (see *ibid.*) or *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.¹¹¹ By the late 1950s, Joyce and the Modernist movement had become part of the literary canon; as it turned out, Levin's own pioneering study from 1941 had been a critical point in the process of Joyce's canonisation through the U.S. American academy. What was that "larger sequence of aesthetic shifts" Levin made responsible for the canonisation of Joyce's works? From which 'institutional forces' of canonisation did his works benefit – in other words, and following Guillory's perspective, how did Joyce's works become part of 'the literary syllabus' – and which effects did these forces have on the reader position?

3.1 Joyce's Works in Academia: The Beginnings

*[I]t also has had the effect of making [Joyce]
God's gift to the English Departments.
(Johnston, 18)*

*Ph.Deism is going to find Joyce the richest uranium field in the history
of human effort. We might as well build new shelves at once to hold the
commentaries that are even now moving off the assembly lines of print.
(McLuhan, 107)*

*And this crafty little book [Ulysses] will be judged by some to be
[...] overloaded with knowledge impatient to reveal itself by hiding,
[...] doctor's literature, just a shade too subtle in other words.
(Derrida, "Ulysses," 58)*

Until 1930 contemporary literature was not a common subject at U.S. American universities.¹¹² A survey from that year shows that only a third of the surveyed U.S. American English departments had offered courses in contemporary literature in 1930 (see H. C. Davidson, 411). The situation changed significantly over the next three decades (see Martin, 281).¹¹³ Edmund Wilson was able to write about contemporary literature exactly because as a

¹¹¹ Surprisingly enough, Levin voiced this opinion already in 1946: "A long and hazardous period of probation seems to face a writer when, ceasing to be a contemporary, he becomes a classic. But in the case of James Joyce, perhaps because he was so rigorously tested during his lifetime, this further trial has been cut short. [...] Joyce's books, which a few years ago we had to smuggle into this country, are today required reading in college courses" (Levin, "James Joyce," 125).

¹¹² In his 1908 study *Modernism and Romance*, R. A. Scott-James referred to the prevailing attitude when he justified his study of contemporary writers: "I need scarcely say that I have realised to the full the temerity of devoting a whole book to the discussion of living authors. [...] We are still told that it is impossible to form a final opinion about a writer until he can be seen under the perspective of distance; that, brought up as we are in the same atmosphere which he breathes, we are disqualified from judging his true merits or defects" (Scott-James, ix-x).

¹¹³ In "Criticism, Inc.," which appeared in 1937, John Crowe Ransom complained, "[c]ontemporary literature, which is almost obliged to receive critical study if it receives any at all, since it is hardly capable of the usual

“man of letters” type of critic he was not bound by the deliberate indifference to contemporary literature that predominated in the university literature departments.

The Cambridges of two different continents, homes to the University of Cambridge and Harvard University respectively, were two of the places where Joyce’s works became – to modify Richard Ellmann’s phrase – ‘university material.’ I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis, the two eminent English critics at the University of Cambridge, whom Terry Eagleton has called “the architects” of the new subject of English (Eagleton, 26), were “fashioning English into a serious discipline” in the 1920s (*ibid.*, 27).¹¹⁴ What they fashioned English to be was “not only a subject worth studying” but, in the Arnoldian spirit, “*the* supremely civilizing pursuit, the spiritual essence of the social formation” (*ibid.*). Both ‘taught’ *Ulysses* in the mid 1920s (see Russo, 275; and MacKillop, 88ff)¹¹⁵ – meaning they referred to it in their lectures – at a time when the work was banned in the United Kingdom.¹¹⁶ While Richards cautiously praised *Ulysses* (see Richards, “Nineteen”), Leavis famously excluded Joyce from “the great tradition” of the English novel. In Leavis’s view, *Ulysses* lacked an “organic principle determining, informing, and controlling into a vital whole, the elaborate analogical structure, the extraordinary variety of technical devices, the attempts at an exhaustive rendering of consciousness” (Leavis, *Tradition*, 25f). He considered the work “a pointer to disintegration – a view strengthened by Joyce’s own development” (*ibid.*, 26).¹¹⁷ The development of further “disintegration” referred to here, namely *FW*, he dismissed in his review “James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word.” According to Leavis, a verbal technique such as the one displayed in *FW* would have been justifiable only on the grounds of “a commanding theme, animated by some impulsion from the inner life capable of maintaining a high pressure”

historical commentary, is barely officialized as a proper field for serious study” (Ransom, “Inc,” 54). Still in *Theory of Literature*, which was published in 1949, Wellek and Warren demanded a greater recognition in the academy of contemporary literature (see Wellek and Warren, 36).

¹¹⁴ The subject English came indeed late to Cambridge; the Chair of English Language and Literature had been set up at University College, London in 1828, the King Edward VII Professorship of English Literature at Cambridge only in 1910. For an overview of the development of the subject of English in English academia see Goldie.

¹¹⁵ Marshall McLuhan studied under Richards and Leavis during his two years at Cambridge in the mid-1930s; according to W. Terrence Gordon it was Leavis who sparked McLuhan’s interest in Joyce (Gordon, 100; see also Marchand, 103).

¹¹⁶ *Ulysses* was banned in England effectively from 1923 to 1936 (see Medina Casado).

¹¹⁷ In dismissing Joyce, Leavis did not follow T.S. Eliot, whose critical views were of great influence not only for Leavis but for the New Critics as well. Eliot’s praise of Joyce, *Ulysses* in particular, found expression in his essay “*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth” from 1923 which commences: “I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape” (Eliot, “*Ulysses*,” 221). F. O. Matthiessen reported Eliot to have called Joyce in conversation “the greatest master of the English language since Milton” (Matthiessen, 135; see also Wilson, *Wound*, 228). On the occasion of Joyce’s death, he called *Ulysses* “the most considerable work of imagination in English in our time, comparable in importance (though in little else) with the work of Marcel Proust” (Eliot, “Message,” 468). It was also Eliot who edited the first anthology of Joyce’s works, *Introducing James Joyce: A Selection of Joyce’s Prose*, published in 1942.

(Leavis, “Joyce,” 211) but not on the grounds of a philosophical theory – a reference to the emphasis on Joyce’s ‘use’ of Vico (see *ibid.*, 211f).

It was certainly significant for the reception of Joyce’s works after WWII that the Leavisite British academy was not favourably disposed towards Joyce and that the Irish academy accepted “modern literature” into its curricula only in the 1960s (see Hughes, 2).¹¹⁸ In contrast, the expansion of U.S. American university education after the Second World War and the early interest in Joyce’s works of U.S. American critics like Edmund Wilson and Harry Levin led to the situation that it were primarily critics from the United States who made it their business to establish what may be called ‘Joyce criticism.’

At Harvard University, the course “(English 26) Contemporary English Literature (1890 to the Present Time)” provided the curricular framework for the study of Joyce’s works. I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, and Theodore Spencer each taught the course during the 1930s. Richards did so in 1931 as a visiting lecturer at Harvard. Within the context of the course, he gave a lecture on *Ulysses* (see Russo, 275; see also Moscato, 263)¹¹⁹ during the period of the ban on the work in the United States,¹²⁰ which represents a considerable momentum of the symbolic production. Richards, who has never really written about Joyce,¹²¹ later recalled “I lectured [...] on Joyce’s *Ulysses* – the first time, I am told, it had a public course on it anywhere – and on Dostoyevsky’s *The Possessed*” (Richards, “Future,” 32).¹²² Eliot gave the course in 1933, with the organisational assistance of Spencer, when he held the Charles Eliot Norton Chair of Poetry. According to the evidence of the defence in the *Ulysses* trial, *Ulysses* was on the reading list (see Moscato, 263; but cf. Daley’s copy of the course’s reading list which lists only *A Portrait* (see Daley, 6)). Theodore Spencer frequently taught courses like “English 26” and similar ones, for instance “English 60,” on contemporary literature and

¹¹⁸ From the beginning, there have of course been Irish critics who discussed Joyce’s works, especially among the intellectual Irish expatriates in the U.S. such as Mary and Padraic Colum, Ernest Boyd, and Vivian Mercier. Irish-American critics like Joseph Campbell and William Troy also played a role. Mercier referred to a “Joyce cult among the undergraduates of both universities in Dublin” in the later 1930s (Mercier, 295f). For an account of Irish interest in Joyce during the 1960s see Igoe.

¹¹⁹ Richards taught English at Cambridge from 1919 until the early 1930s and at Harvard from 1939 until 1963 (see Fry, 186).

¹²⁰ *Ulysses* was banned in the United States effectively from 1920 (but had been suppressed by the Post Office on three occasions before (see Vanderham, 1)), when the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice brought the editors of *The Little Review*, the U.S. American avant-garde magazine which had published *Ulysses* serially since March 1918, to trial for the perceived obscenity of the “Nausicaa” episode, to 1933. Samuel Roth’s expurgated and pirated edition of *Ulysses* was published in his *Two Worlds Monthly* in 1926 and 1927.

¹²¹ In his 1927 essay “Nineteen Hundred and Now” Richards wrote about *Ulysses*: “Only those who are unprepared for nothing, however painful, repellent, or abhorrent, that life can offer will escape shock, perhaps severe shock, from its [*Ulysses*’s] titanlike convulsions. [...] But upon those who are ripe its robust acceptance of everything has an enheartening, calming effect that comes like a culmination of all the tendencies of the century. The quiver that welcomes release from illusion is so close to the horror of disillusionment as to be sometimes indistinguishable from it” (Richards, “Nineteen,” 317).

¹²² The second course Richards gave at Harvard in 1931 was “Practical Criticism.”

poetry during the 1930s. Spencer, a poet who was acquainted with Eliot and Richards,¹²³ had studied at University of Cambridge between 1923 and 1925 and had come to know Richards there. He was among the Harvard faculty since 1928 and would edit and publish the first edition of *Stephen Hero* in 1944. Joyce's works often appeared on the reading lists of Spencer's courses. Francis Russell,¹²⁴ who entered Harvard in the mid-1930s, spoke in his reminiscences of "the cult of Joyce" (F. Russell, 30): "At that time [the mid-1930s] the cult of Joyce was just beginning to extend itself more widely in American academic circles from its rarefied beginnings among the overseas initiates" (ibid.; see also Aaron, 44). *Ulysses*, Russell writes, "became the fashion" and "[t]he fact that it was difficult to come by was an added incentive" (F. Russell, 30). According to Russell's account, the young English instructors at Harvard used Joyce's work as a means of challenging the academic establishment and its literary canon (ibid.). Russell described the experience of *Ulysses* as follows: "*Ulysses* was uphill work. Yet though we understood little, nevertheless we felt that we had been admitted to some secret society from which our elders were banned" (ibid., 31). At Harvard, Russell remembers, *Ulysses* was available in the "treasure-room of Widener Library, where after signing preliminary forms we sat at a designated desk under the sharp eye of a singularly withered spinster" (ibid., 31). Apparently it was also sold by The Kelmscott bookshop, which was one of the independent bookshops around Harvard Square most known for their choice of Modernist works (see ibid., 31f). But it is not only with respect to the courses of Richards, Eliot and Spencer that one can speak of Harvard as one of the early centres of U.S. American academic interest in Joyce. In 1929, the Harvard graduate S. Foster Damon's early essay about *Ulysses* in *The Hound & Horn*, one of the first published interpretations of the work, circulated at Harvard (see ibid., 30),¹²⁵ not forgetting Harry Levin of course, whose class on "Proust, Joyce and Mann," which he taught from 1939 on, was the first regular class exclusively on 'modernist literature' at Harvard.¹²⁶

But Harvard was not the only U.S. American university in the early 1930s at which Joyce became 'university material.' According to a letter from Joyce to his patron Harriet Shaw Weaver from October 1931, *Ulysses* was "on the extension lecture program for many

¹²³ Harry Levin, who graduated from Harvard with an A.B. in 1933, once remarked on Spencer: "T. S. Eliot's advent as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry in 1932-33 was a major influence on us [...], as it was on our two most sympathetic teachers, F. O. Matthiessen and Theodore Spencer (both of them ten years older than we were, and closer to Eliot than anyone else at Harvard)" (qtd. in Erickson, 98).

¹²⁴ Russell is noted as a biographer of Warren G. Harding.

¹²⁵ One of the early essays on *Ulysses*, "The Odyssey in Dublin" appeared in the Oct.-Dec. 1929 issue of the magazine *The Hound & Horn*, a literary quarterly based at Harvard. Damon was at the time an assistant professor at the English department of Brown University.

¹²⁶ It happened to be at Harvard where Derrida, who attended Levin's class (see Levin, "Harvard," 18 and Levin, Interview, 83), encountered Joyce's works in the mid-1950s (see Caputo, 25).

universities and [...] prescribed for the M.A. degree for next year [1932] in the New York university” (Ellmann, *Letters III*, 232f). Joyce’s reference to “many universities” is probably due to wishful thinking rather than to fact but William York Tindall did teach a class in modern literature at New York University, or, more precisely, at Washington Square College, from 1926 to 1931, the year he joined Columbia University, and introduced *Ulysses* into the class already in 1928 (see Mitgang; see also Fagnoli and Gillespie, 361), in his course “The Contemporary English and American Novel,” that is before Richards’s visiting appointment at Harvard. At the University of Chicago a certain Thornton Wilder, Pulitzer-distinguished even then, lectured on Joyce’s works among others in the 1930s. After Wilder’s departure, David Daiches gave seminars on Joyce at Chicago between 1937/’38 and the early 1940s. As the documents of the defence in the *Ulysses* trial reveal, in 1932 *Ulysses* was far from being widely read, its merit far from being generally accepted, neither among critics, nor in academia much less outside of these circles (see J. Kelly, 123-130). The trial over *Ulysses* and its outcome were to change this situation profoundly. The outcome of the trial and the press coverage of the “*Ulysses* case” in the United States reflect the shifting image of *Ulysses* – from “Improper Novel,” as the headline of an article in *The New York Times* from 1921 ran, to “modern classic” (Moscato, 206, 320) as the newspapers wrote in 1933.¹²⁷ In fact, the obscenity trials brought *Ulysses* to public attention in the United States in the first place. While press coverage of the 1921 trial was rather “spotty and unsympathetic” (Eberly 36; see also J. Kelly, 89) the trials of 1933 and ’34 received considerable attention from the press (see J. Kelly, 133). The notion of the “modern classic” gained momentum – in his assessment of the trial, Joseph Kelly emphasises “the importance of [the lawyers] Ernst’s and Lindey’s work to this definition. [...] The trial constructed Joyce’s reputation and defined his readership in America for the next two generations” (ibid., 115f) – but as has been illustrated difficulty and incomprehensibility remained the common topoi in the discourse on the work.

If Harvard, University of Chicago, NYU and Columbia, the two last-mentioned mainly due to Tindall’s teaching, were four ‘centres’ of the early academic study of Joyce in the United States, Frances Steloff’s Gotham Book Mart at Midtown Manhattan was another. Steloff’s bookshop, specialising in Modernist literature,¹²⁸ became somewhat of an “unofficial center of Joyce activity in America” (ibid., 194) in the late 1930s and in the 1940s (ibid.; see also Bowen, “New York”). One result of the dedication to Joyce of Steloff and the aficionados, writers, and scholars who frequented her bookshop, like Padraic Colum, William

¹²⁷ For the controversy over “the scandal of *Ulysses*” in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and the pronounced ideological lines it followed in times of political polarisation see Segall.

¹²⁸ Gotham Book Mart was, for instance, the official U.S. American agent for *transition*.

York Tindall, John Slocum, Thornton Wilder, and Edmund Wilson, was the founding of The New York James Joyce Society in 1947. Another result was the publication of various books on Joyce by Gotham Book Mart, among them Seon Givens's *James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism* in 1948, the first independent collection of critical essays on Joyce.¹²⁹ The introduction of Gotham's famous twentieth-anniversary catalogue "We Moderns" – it, too, being a momentum of the symbolic production – from 1940, the cover of which showed a painting carrying the title "The Life of the Party at *Finnegans Wake* in our Garden on Publication Day," read: "The gay and bawdy, the 'incredible' Twenties are with us no longer [...]. From out of the speak-easy Left-bank night of the vanished decade there emerges a monument or two of which we can be sure. Joyce is one. Hemingway is another" (qtd. in Steloff, 817).

Inclusion in university syllabi constitutes a critical point in the process of the canonisation of a writer, and in the symbolic production. As illustrated above, Joyce's works began to become 'university material' in the 1920s and 1930s and the academic processes soon took effect as this in turn initiated research in the form of theses and dissertations – a further critical moment in the twentieth-century symbolic production. Between 1933 and 1936 at least five Bachelor and Master theses on Joyce were written at North American universities such as Harvard, Reed College,¹³⁰ University of South Dakota, and University of Manitoba in Canada.¹³¹ Peter Pertzoff, who had attended Richards's class, wrote his Harvard Bachelor's thesis on Joyce in 1933. Joseph Prescott followed with his Harvard Bachelor's thesis on Joyce in 1935.¹³² A number of MA and BA theses on Joyce's works, including *FW*, were written at U.S. American universities in the 1940s.¹³³ Prescott went on to write the first doctoral

¹²⁹ Further Joyce-related publications of the Gotham Book Mart in the late 1940s and 1950s were Leon Edel's *James Joyce: The Last Journey*, Lucie Noël's *James Joyce and Paul L. Léon*, and the first *A James Joyce Miscellany*.

¹³⁰ Reed College had a professorship for contemporary literature, held since 1921 by Victor L. O. Chittick, and thus Reed students wrote BA theses on, or partly on, Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf in the early 1930s.

¹³¹ In the same period were written thirteen theses on T. S. Eliot, five theses on Virginia Woolf, two theses on Faulkner, one thesis on Stein, one dissertation on Wyndham Lewis, and one thesis on Dorothy Richardson. None were written about the works of Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams.

¹³² The other theses are: Burton McCabe, "The Classicism of James Joyce," Reed College, BA thesis, in 1936; Hugh Ansley Roberts "The 'Ulysses' of James Joyce," MA thesis, University of Manitoba (Canada), 1936; and Ralph T Matthews, "Trends in the Criticism of James Joyce's Novels," BA thesis, University of South Dakota, 1936.

¹³³ None were written in the years 1937 to 1939. The following list makes no claims of being complete: Mary Alethea Miller "James Joyce's *Ulysses*: A Survey," MA thesis, University of Texas, 1940; Norman John Kraeft, BA thesis, "A study of the Esthetic Theory of James Joyce," University of Illinois in 1941; a BA thesis entitled "A Note on *Finnegans Wake*" by William George Lamont at Reed College in 1941; Henry Edelheit, "The Influence of the French Symbolists on James Joyce's *Ulysses*," BA thesis, Harvard, 1942; Rosemary Florence Jones "Edouard Estaunié: *L'Empreinte*; and James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* – A Comparison," MA thesis at University of Kansas in 1943; Mary McNamara O'Donnell, "Joyce and Catholicism: A Study of the Religious Background of *Ulysses*," MA thesis, Smith College, 1945; William Labov, one of the most influential figures in sociolinguistics, wrote his Harvard Bachelor's thesis on "Varieties of Useful Logic in

dissertation in the United States devoted exclusively to Joyce's work; it was submitted at Harvard in 1944.¹³⁴ In the same year, the U.S. American Clementine Emily Wien submitted the first Canadian dissertation on Joyce, entitled "The Aesthetics of James Joyce," at the University of Toronto.¹³⁵ The first U.S. American dissertation partly on Joyce, in this case 'partly' amounts to one chapter, was written by Frederick Hoffman at Ohio State University and submitted in 1942.¹³⁶

Yet 'partly' is the tricky part: The earliest dissertation to discuss Joyce, submitted eighteen years before Hoffman's study, seems to be Elias Thorleif Arnesen's "Modernism and Literature," written at the University of Washington, from 1924. This interesting study has so far not been noticed by scholars of Modernism/modernism(s) as it was never published. It is interesting not so much for what it says about Joyce, which, if one disregards the numerous quotations from Joyce's works, only amounts to four pages, but rather because it attempted to give an outline of "modernism" in literature at a time – remarkably enough, three years before the publication of Riding and Graves's *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* and seven years before Wilson's *Axel's Castle* – when a critic like John Crowe Ransom did not dare to venture an answer to his question "[W]hat is Modernism?" (Ransom, "Future," 2) retreating instead to the answer "It is undefined" (ibid). Arnesen's is probably the first attempt at defining a "modernist" movement in literature and it considers Joyce to be one of its leading representatives. Therefore, the following discussion of his study is somewhat more detailed.¹³⁷ That he does not go into his use of the term "modernism" is an indication that the term was not completely uncommon in the 1920s (see appendix A below).

In his study, Arnesen (1893?-1983) attempts to describe the context of modernist art,¹³⁸ its literary manifestations and predecessors, emphasising the "definite interchange of methods, of aims, between the several arts and literature" (Arnesen, 1).¹³⁹ His aim is, explicitly stated, "to write an introductory aesthetic" (ibid., 2). According to Arnesen, the

Finnegans Wake" in 1948; an MA thesis with the title "The Religious Symbolism in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*" by William John Knightley at Wichita State University in 1948; and an MA thesis entitled "Relation of the Technique of Word Association in *Finnegans Wake* to Joyce's Conception of the Comic" at the University of Toronto by Ronald Gordon Nudell Bates in 1949.

¹³⁴ Titles of dissertations on Joyce's works are recorded in Hayashi, 10ff.

¹³⁵ Wien's dissertation is available online at Internet Archive:

<<https://archive.org/details/aestheticsofjame00wienuoft>>.

¹³⁶ At German universities no less than four dissertations on Joyce's works appeared between 1933 and 1937 (see section 3.3 below).

¹³⁷ Only parts of the thesis were available to me.

¹³⁸ Because the modernism Arnesen describes cannot be considered conterminous with the movement which has come to bear that name, the term is not capitalised here.

¹³⁹ Arnesen, who was born in Norway, was a professor of the English Department at San Francisco State Teachers College and San Francisco State College, as it was called later, since 1928. One of the very few pieces shedding light on Arnesen's life is an article about him as a visiting professor at Mexico City College in the *Mexico City Collegian* from 1952 (see Caskie).

modernist sensibility, reflected in the general consciousness and in the works alike, is marked by “complexity, intensity, mobility, [and] abstraction” (ibid., 28). He writes “modern industrial integration has brot [sic] about not only a general speeding up but has likewise given rise to a mood of restlessness” (ibid., 5) and asserts “[t]his twentieth century day we are quickened by a new intensity” (ibid., 17). The defining experiences of the age are industrialisation, “the ferment of revolution” (ibid., 8), and the World War, all of which contribute to what Arnesen considered the prevailing “sceptical temper” (ibid., 18). He suggests that the period spanning the second half of the 1910s and the first half of the 1920s was one of radical change by stating that “the artist of, say 1924, contrasts radically with his rival of eight years ago” (ibid., 5).

Arnesen describes modernist literature as a “phenomenon” of “more than three decades of [...] experimental growth” (ibid., 1), that is, as having its beginnings in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It was influenced by the developments in the arts: “[M]odernist literature exhibits traits heretofore held peculiar to recent fine art forms, and like them it reflects coeval environs as well as a recording personality” (ibid., 2); therefore his study focuses on “the whole field of modernist production” (ibid., 3) across the arts. One of the features of modernism which he identifies is “abstractionism,” defined by him as “a process in art eliminating representational elements” (ibid., 41) and as “preoccupation with technique” (ibid., 92). Joyce, along with Cummings, Pound, Wyndham Lewis, H. D., Eliot, and Stevens are discussed by Arnesen under the heading “Abstraction”.¹⁴⁰ Asserting that “the early symptoms of abstraction may be said to show in Symbolist, Naturalist, and Cubist sources” (ibid.), he considers the works of Cézanne, Baudellaire, Mallarmé, and Flaubert to already exhibit “the preoccupation with technique” (see ibid., 92-95). Referring to Joyce as “the foremost modernist prosateur” in Europe (ibid., 54), he calls *Ulysses* “a ‘virtuoso’ of many styles” (ibid.). About two-thirds of Arnesen’s discussion of Joyce’s work – of the kind of ‘impressionistic’ criticism which the New Critics objected to – is taken up by quotations from *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. It is obvious that he does not dare to venture statements concerning the content of the book, writing “[s]ome day the criticaster will tell us all about the *Ulysses*, producing clues to cryptic passages” (ibid., 63). His conclusion about *Ulysses* reads: “Joyce [...] depletes, disenchant, often wearies you. The entire antebellum culture is, on its final Odyssey, kissed adieu. [...] Joyce has done it all, and has anticipated future combinations of literary productions” (ibid.). Ultimately, Arnesen considers works like *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* failures. About *Ulysses* he writes “Incomplete, a failure, Ulysses

¹⁴⁰ Arnesen also discusses Proust, Woolf, Lawrence, Waldo Frank, Werfel, Strindberg, Rolland, James Branch Cabell, Sherwood Anderson, and Gorky in other sections.

is yet, essentially the most magnificent voyage of our day..." (ibid.). *The Waste Land* appears to him "too sophisticated and cryptic with its poly-lingual quotations, its over-frequent literary allusions" (ibid., 84; see also 83).

This overview of academic studies of Joyce's works is not to imply that it was commonly discussed at U.S. American universities by the 1940s. A. Walton Litz recalls studying *Ulysses* in an undergraduate class at Princeton as "an unusual thing for the late 1940s" (Litz, 220). And yet, as the overview of *FW*'s reception in Marvin Magalaner and Richard M. Kain's *Joyce: The Man, the Work, the Reputation* shows, even Joyce's last work had found its way into a few university graduate seminars in the 1940s and '50s (see Magalaner and Kain, 252). According to Magalaner, such seminars or graduate reading groups were offered by Harry Levin and John V. Kelleher at Harvard, who gave a joint seminar on *FW* since 1947, and by Tindall at Columbia. William York Tindall's graduate student *FW* reading group at Columbia was set up in 1940 and later became an official class (see Tindall, 24).¹⁴¹ Harold Bloom recalls having attended "occasional seminars" on *FW* held by Thornton Wilder at Yale in the early 1950s (Bloom, "Introduction"). The first dissertations on *FW* were written in the 1950s; Fred H. Higginson's was submitted in 1953, Henry F. Beechhold followed in 1956, and Bernard Benstock in 1958. The fact that Joyce criticism turned into a by and large U.S. American affair became more and more obvious in the two decades between the 1940s and the 1960s. After Joyce's death the majority of studies of Joyce's works which appeared in the 1940s were written by U.S. American critics like Levin, Wilson, Campbell and Robinson, Kain, and Tindall.

Rather than merely considering it the natural consequence of the disciplinarily instituted academic study of literature, the fact that Joyce's works found their way into academia is to be regarded as a paramount aspect of their symbolic production and as anything but the natural course of things, namely as something contingent. At the same time, the fact that in 1931 I. A. Richards, an eminent critic even then, considered Joyce's works worthy of study, of academic study in university courses, and that at least since the late 1950s these works are widely considered worthy of academic study, is neither a negligible factor with regard to the reader position then, nor with regard to the reader position of the past fifty-odd years. On the most general level the effect of canonisation – and what is canonisation but the documentation of *general* appreciation – is that the significance of a work is taken for granted, which is an especially important issue with regard to a text like *FW*.

¹⁴¹ It is evident from Lionel Trilling's essay "On the Teaching of Modern Literature" that this example does not reflect the general situation at Columbia in the 1940s.

3.2 The Early Reception of Joyce's Works in the German Academy

It is a remarkable aspect of Joyce's reception and symbolic production in academia that already in the early 1930s three dissertations on Joyce were written at German universities – they were published almost a decade before the first dissertation which considered Joyce's works thoroughly was submitted in the United States.¹⁴² The first academic consideration of Joyce in Germany was probably the critical appraisal of his then published prose works by the Anglist Walter F. Schirmer, then lecturer at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, in his *Der englische Roman der neuesten Zeit* (“the English novel of recent times”) from 1923. In the mid-1920s, the Swiss Bernhard Fehr, Professor of English Philology at Universität Zürich, and a certain Ernst Robert Curtius, then Professor of Romance Philology at Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, wrote critical appraisals of *Ulysses*.¹⁴³ In a newspaper review from 1925, Fehr called *Ulysses* an “event of world literature” (Fehr, *Beständen*, 164; my trans.). In the same year, Curtius referred to *Ulysses* as “a monumental undertaking that by far outclasses the vain and vapid modernism [Modernismus]¹⁴⁴ of contemporary literature” (qtd. in trans. in Weninger, 20; cf. Curtius, “Buch,” 108).¹⁴⁵ Goyert's German translation of *Ulysses*, the first complete translation of *Ulysses* in any language, which appeared in 1927, was a further igniting spark for Joyce's reception in the German-speaking countries.

It is difficult to ascertain when and by whom Joyce's works were ‘taught’ at German and Swiss universities. The 1927 leaflet by Rhein-Verlag advertising the German translation of that year, which was a limited, subscription-based luxury edition, asserted, under the title “The German Wissenschaft on *Ulysses*” (“Der Homer,” 12; my trans.), “[t]oday the work [*Ulysses*] is the subject of many a [university] seminar” (ibid.; my trans.). The evidence of the consideration of his works in the German academy that is available, are the three dissertations

¹⁴² Arnesen's dissertation can certainly not be considered an in-depth study of Joyce's work.

¹⁴³ After all Curtius had studied *Anglistik* among other things, that is, English literature and language.

¹⁴⁴ By 1925 the occasional use of the terms *modernism*, *modernist* and *Modernismus* with reference to literature were characterised by a rather vague field of reference (see appendix A below which renders Weisstein's account of the terms' conceptual history (see Weisstein) untenable). Thus, Curtius's reference to *Modernismus* is not to be equated with the more narrow sense of the term *modernism*, but is rather a contemporary synonym of the broader term *modernité* (with respect to literature) as understood in France (see also Klinger). In *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948) (*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*), Curtius spoke for instance of “[d]er Modernismus der Symbolisten” (Curtius, *Europäische*, 396) (“the modernism of the Symbolists”) (see also appendix A below).

¹⁴⁵ Curtius, who held *Ulysses* to be as “baffling and difficult as no other [work] in modern literature” (Curtius, *Sein Ulysses*, 8; my trans.), granted that Joyce's work “has the unmistakable sign of the great: inexhaustibility” (Curtius, “Technique,” 324). But the humanist Curtius is at the same time critical of it, saying that “a metaphysical nihilism is the substance of Joyce's work” (ibid.), he even calls *Ulysses* “a work of the anti-Christ” (ibid., 325) and sees its cultural value solely in considering it a “catharsis”: “The Inferno of *Ulysses* is [...] itself a purgatory. *Ulysses* unmasks, exposes, demolishes, degrades humanity with a sharpness and completeness which has no counterpart in modern thinking” (ibid.).

on Joyce written in the early 1930s.¹⁴⁶ Two of these appeared in 1933: Rudolf Hentze's on *Ulysses* was written at Universität Marburg and Günther Kulemeyer's on Joyce and Dorothy Richardson was written at Universität Greifswald.¹⁴⁷ The following year the first dissertation in German which dealt with *Ulysses* and with WiP appeared, written at Universität Marburg as well, namely Adelheid Obradović's *Die Behandlung der Räumlichkeit im späteren Werk des James Joyce: Versuch eines Querschnitts durch seine Weltanschauung* ("the treatment of spatiality in James Joyce's later works: attempt at a cross-section of his world view").¹⁴⁸ The reason for Marburg's early 'focus on Joyce' is certainly to be found in the effects of Curtius's work, who taught there between 1920 and 1924.

Apart from Curtius, Max Freund, at Philipps-Universität Marburg, and Sten Bodvar Liljegren, at Preußische Universität zu Greifswald (from 1933 on Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald), can be mentioned in the context of the early fortunes of Joyce's works in German academia. The Swede Liljegren was Professor of English Philology at Universität Greifswald between 1926 and 1939, except for a year as visiting professor at Columbia University in 1930/'31, where he lectured on Anglo-Irish and English literature. According to his own account, Liljegren established Irish Studies in Sweden (see Liljegren). There is an interesting passage in this account in which he states "When I moved to Greifswald, I found that, round 1930, there was something in certain literary circles there described as a 'Joyce craze'. As a matter of course, this state of things was also mirrored in such discussions among my German students as were devoted to new developments in literature" (Liljegren, 28). In the same volume, he writes, Joyce "was all the rage in the twenties when I was [...] at Lund [University]" (ibid., 24). Referring to Kulemeyer's dissertation whose supervisor he was, Liljegren reminisces, "[t]he inspiration to such studies was in particular due to the passages in [Bernhard] Fehr's *History of English Literature in the 20th Century*" (ibid., 28), which is a mistitling of *Die englische Literatur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (1923). Although it does not become clear whether he refers to Joyce or to

¹⁴⁶ The first dissertation (*Doctorat d'université*) on Joyce in France seems to have been Haskell M. Block's "Théorie et technique du roman chez Flaubert et James Joyce" at l'Université de Paris in 1948, followed by David Hayman's on *FW* also at the Sorbonne in 1955. The first dissertation on *FW* in Great Britain seems to have been A. Walton Litz's dissertation at University of Oxford, submitted in 1954, which he revised into *The Art of James Joyce* (1961). According to the Index to Theses, the earliest thesis on Joyce in Great Britain was D. W. James's MA thesis at the University of Wales in 1936. The earliest thesis on *Ulysses* in England was Guy M. Davenport's B.Litt. thesis at Oxford submitted in 1950.

¹⁴⁷ Further dissertations, such as Alfred Holder's *Beiträge zur Ästhetik des Romans der ausgehenden viktorianischen und nachviktorianischen Periode* ("contributions to the aesthetics of the novel of the late Victorian and post-Victorian period") (1933, Universität Tübingen) and Margrete Blumenthal's *Zur Technik des englischen Gegenwartsromans* ("on the technique of the English contemporary novel") (1935, Universität Köln), devoted only a few pages to Joyce.

¹⁴⁸ Both Marburg dissertations were supervised by the Anglist Max Deutschbein. Obradović states that her dissertation topic was suggested to her by Deutschbein (see Obradović, 66).

modern English literature in general, the statement “When students in other German universities heard about the lectures in Greifswald dealing with that subject, they were attracted in crowds and asked for questions conditioned by modern English literature [sic]” (ibid.) is noteworthy in any case. Liljegren’s courses at Greifswald were indeed concerned with “the newest English literature,” as one of those courses was entitled, between 1929 and 1932. At the same time, Liljegren was critical of Joyce’s works, describing at one point how he had his students at Lund vote for or against the studying of it (see ibid., 24). Kulemeyer, who had come from Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin to Universität Greifswald, was given his thesis topic, at the time of Liljegren’s visiting appointment at Columbia, by Wilhelm Kleinschmit von Lengefeld (see Kulemeyer, 40) who had done his doctorate at Universität Marburg in 1925.

In the case of Marburg, it is not inconceivable that the name James Joyce was heard in the seminars of Max Freund. Freund, *Lektor* at Universität Marburg between 1917 and 1925 (and between 1925 and 1947 Professor of German and chairman of the German department at Rice University), who was sympathetic to the Irish efforts towards independence (see Freund), and who once held the position of Examiner in the Royal University of Ireland in Dublin (see “Professor Emeritus,” 3) and was Professor at Queen’s College, Belfast, later known as Queen’s University of Belfast, between 1903 and 1914, gave seminars on “*Die zeitgenössische Literatur Irlands (mit Proben aus Yeats, Synge, Bernard Shaw, George Moore, Peares, Jospheh Plunkett usw.)*” (“contemporary Irish literature (with excerpts from ...)”), “*Irland und die Irländer*” (“Ireland and the Irish”), “*Die Entwicklung des irischen Nationalgefühls und der irischen Freiheitsbewegung im Spiegel der anglo-irischen Literatur*” (“the development of Irish national identity and of the Irish liberation movement as reflected in Anglo-Irish literature”), “J. M. Synge’s Plays,” “Modern Literature in the English Language” at Marburg between 1918 and 1922.¹⁴⁹ At Universität Zürich, Bernhard Fehr, who was acquainted with Joyce, held courses on contemporary English literature in the years between 1926 and 1938.¹⁵⁰

What, then, is Obradović’s approach to *Work in Progress*? The aim of her study is to trace Joyce’s “world view” as it is thought to become manifest in *U* and *WiP* (Obradović, x; my trans.); by world view she means philosophical and aesthetic positions. In fact, she reads

¹⁴⁹ See the digital archive of historical *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse* (prospectuses of the lectures, seminars, and the faculty of each semester) of Universität Marburg at <<http://www.uni-marburg.de/uniarchiv/vorlesungsverzeichnisse>>. Unfortunately, the *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse* of the years 1923 to 1930 have not been digitised yet.

¹⁵⁰ In 1926, Fehr gave a course “A Survey of English Literature 1880-1925”; the following year the title of the course was changed into “A Survey of English Literature 1880-1926.” This illustrates the degree to which Fehr took the idea of *contemporary* literature literally.

Joyce through Bergson – primarily through *L'évolution créatrice* and *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* – whom she regards as a significant influence on Joyce's work (see *ibid.*, 10, 12, 14, 39, 43). Bringing out from Bergson's philosophy of Duration the term *pénétration*, Obradović views *U* and *FW* as manifestation of *Durchdringung* 'penetration' (see *ibid.*, 5, 21, 46). These works she considers being characterised by "the progress of a fundamental de-spatialisation [*Enträumlichung*]" (*ibid.*, x; my trans.). The intention of Joyce in *WiP*, she writes, is to "illuminate the multifarious paths which consciousness is capable of pursuing in a half or completely blurred way" (*ibid.*, 4; my trans.). According to Obradović, *WiP* suggests the "combination of expressionist, dadaist and surrealist aspects" and their exaggeration (*ibid.*, 1; my trans.). But in her analysis she considers *WiP* "miles away" from Dadaism: "It only seems as if the word and sentence fragments of *Work in Progress* are illogical and non-causal. From what at first appears like utter nonsense arises upon closer examination one set of meanings [*Sinnkomplex*] after another; although new standards have yet to be created for this kind of art and technique" (*ibid.*, 41). Obradović regards Expressionism as the movement which most closely corresponds to Joyce's conception of art, writing "Joyce's art – also in the linguistically creative domain, i.e. morphology, syntax, stylistics – is art of expression [*Ausdruckskunst*], he allows, up to the bounds of possibility, language its character as *energeia*" (*ibid.*, 43). "Ultimately," she reasons, "Joyce lives in the [...] world of expressionism, which is the conversion of the Bergsonian philosophy into the realm of art" (*ibid.*, 46). Her conclusion, with its political overtone and taking up of Curtius's judgement,¹⁵¹ reflects the ambiguity with which many viewed Joyce's work in the 1920s and 1930s, not only in Germany:

There arises the question: Does an œuvre like James Joyce's still have any sense for us in the new Germany? The Joycean spirit, insofar as it led to decomposition, irresponsibility, and notorious relativisation – in a word: Joyce as a negative principle – is a thing of the past. What remains of it is the tendency of catharsis, not to recoil from traditions however sacred, the viability of which must be questioned. In addition, that basic significance will persist which Valéry Larbaud has claimed for Joyce's art [...]. The [...] principle of the dynamic (as long as it is a criterion of an increase of life [*Lebenssteigerung*] and does not switch into abstraction), the idea of pervasion, which is so characteristic of Joyce and which is the formula of his whole work,

¹⁵¹ See fn. 35 and 145 above.

is a lasting source of value because it bespeaks organic life. (ibid., 64f; my trans.)

A concern with psychology is the common ground of the three dissertations – their authors are either interested in the psyche of their subject, Joyce, or their interest lies in the representation of the characters' psyche in the works. In their perspective they are representative of the frame of reference of early twentieth-century criticism.¹⁵² Rebecca West wrote in 1930, “[i]t is impossible to discuss James Joyce without frequent references to psychology, since nearly all of his recent subject matter and much of his technique he derives from his knowledge of Freud and Jung” (West, 328).

The reception and symbolic production of Joyce by the German academy came to a halt due to the consequences of National Socialist art politics. *Ulysses* was banned in Germany semi-officially in 1938 for its portrayal of a Jew, and officially in 1942 when Joyce was classified as “*Feindautor*” (“enemy author”) and his works were declared “*schädlich*” (“harmful”) (see Weninger, 35f). It took German literary criticism until the 1960s to resume its early interest in Joyce and to produce significant Joyce criticism.¹⁵³

3.3 Joyce's Share in Literary Theory: The New Criticism

It is undisputed that “in the Anglo-American context modernism became codified and gained an institutional presence in the academy as a result of the New Critical hegemony from the 1940s through to the 1960s” (P. Brooker et al., 7).¹⁵⁴ The integration of literary criticism as part of the academic study of literature is not merely a phenomenon contemporaneous with the Modernist period, it is in a sense an outcome of the fact that “modernism required an

¹⁵² Frederick Hoffman's early U.S. American dissertation from 1942, for instance, was a study of the influence of Freud's theories on the works of modern writers. Hoffman refers to Mary Colum and Lionel Trilling as critics who had regarded *Ulysses* and *FW* as thoroughly exploiting Freud's ideas. He also refers to Levin's study, in which Freud is repeatedly mentioned, and to Jolas's assertion that Joyce knew psychoanalytic literature and made use of it in *FW*. (Yet, Jolas had also emphasised that Joyce's “passion for the irrational manifestations of life” had “nothing in common” with the attitude of the psychoanalysts (Jolas, “Friend,” 15)). According to Hoffman, Freud's theories played a major role for *FW*: “The dream of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker is [...] a complete panorama of unconscious life. Here are employed all of the devices which Freud explained in chapter seven of *The Interpretation of Dreams*” (Hoffman, 422). Hoffman summarised: “For the psychological basis of this blending of myth with dream content, Joyce has gone to Jung's concept of the ‘collective unconscious’; for the mechanisms of the dream mind he relies entirely upon Freud” (ibid., 423).

¹⁵³ Very few German critics have published criticism on *FW*. Fritz Senn has single-handedly ensured that the most knowledgeable criticism on *FW*, and on Joyce's works in general, from the German language area has come from Switzerland.

¹⁵⁴ The reference to the “New Critical hegemony” must be qualified in the sense that New Criticism did not dominate literary criticism in the United States at mid-century but rather “[w]hat the New Criticism dominated was the pedagogy of courses designed to introduce undergraduates to the reading of poems, plays, and novels” (Abrams, “Transformation,” 109).

expertise, a sophisticated discourse about literature” (Diepeveen, *Difficulties*, 224). In the discourse on the study of literature in the period between the turn of the century and the first three decades of the twentieth century, the practice of criticism, which had emerged outside of the academic study of literature, became the antagonist concept to the scholarly study of literature as practised at the university (see Graff, 121-144). In two of his early essays, T. S. Eliot had sketched a new kind of criticism – a sketch which found a reverberation in the critical projects of I. A. Richards and the New Critics. In “Tradition and the Individual Talent” from 1919, Eliot had pleaded for an “aesthetic” criticism (Eliot, “Tradition,” 4) “directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry” (ibid., 7). In “The Function of Criticism” from 1923, he had conceived criticism as “comparison and analysis” (Eliot, “Function,” 21), as an exercise in objectivity, “putting the reader in possession of [the] facts” (ibid., 20) of the work – “its conditions, its setting, its genesis” (ibid.).¹⁵⁵

Criticism was developed into a scholarly approach – a formal criticism directed upon the work itself as Eliot demanded – by I. A. Richards and the New Critics. Richards began to teach what he called “practical criticism” at Cambridge in 1925 (see Heath, “Richards,” 27). Through a revision of the English Tripos in 1926 practical criticism became institutionalised at Cambridge (see Martin, 296). Richards’s eponymous volume *Practical Criticism* appeared in 1929. In retrospect the success of Richards’s practical criticism is often correlated with arguments of pedagogical utility. According to this argumentation, practical criticism “entered the curriculum because of its usefulness in teaching English at the introductory level” (ibid., 295). It became “a standard of teaching and assessment” as it provided the subject of English with something that was “readily *examinable*” (Heath, “Richards,” 28). Richards’s approach laid emphasis on “[c]lose textual analysis with attention to the complex interrelations of the various elements of the poem treated as a specifically autonomous object” (ibid.), thus seeking to supersede the historical and philological emphasis of the academic study of literature which predominated not only in England, the United States and Germany.¹⁵⁶ The form and meaning of a poem became the major concern of practical criticism. Through his study of Moral Sciences at Cambridge, Richards inherited its psychological and positivist

¹⁵⁵ In his late lecture “The Frontiers of Criticism,” Eliot revised his earlier views to a certain extent by criticising “the criticism of explanation by origins” (Eliot, “Frontiers,” 118) and what he perceived to be the critical emphasis on “detection,” “elaborate explanation” and “dissection” (ibid., 120). The source hunting and explanatory approach to poetry and literature was, according to Eliot, “mistaking explanation for understanding” (ibid., 121). Eliot considered *FW* to have had a “bad influence” (ibid., 119) in that the work promoted such a kind of criticism because here, according to Eliot, understanding was not possible without “elaborate explanation” (ibid., 120).

¹⁵⁶ Leavis recognised the usefulness of practical criticism, yet his view of literature demanded a different version of practical criticism, one fused with moral evaluation, which he preferred to call “criticism in practice” (Bell, 417); Leavis’s approach would influence the study of English in Britain until the 1970s.

orientation; his objective was to place criticism on scientific grounds.¹⁵⁷ His works, such as *Principles of Literary Criticism*, represent an attempt to develop a systematic understanding and theory of poetry and criticism.

The U.S. American New Critics – the core New Critics were considered to be John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks, who got together in the 1920s – embraced Richards’s approach and founded their critical school on its basic premises. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren had become aware of Richards’s approach during their time at University of Oxford in 1929/1930 and Brooks was particularly influenced by Richards (see Brooks, “Richards”). Brooks and Warren’s *Understanding Poetry*, published in 1938, and Ransom’s essay “Criticism, Inc.” from 1937 are the founding documents of the New Critical appropriation of practical criticism. In his essay, Ransom pleaded for the academic establishment of criticism – and criticism was conceived by the New Critics as being essentially evaluative, or in Tate’s words, as being based on “the moral obligation to judge” (qtd. in Wellek, 147). With this demand the New Critics reacted on the one hand against the state of criticism (see *ibid.*, 145f) and on the other hand against the state of academic scholarship of literature with its philological and historical emphasis (see *ibid.*, 146). Like Richards, the New Critics endeavoured to supersede the prevailing historical method in the study of literature and the ‘faith in facts’ on the one hand and they wanted to counteract the suspicion of evaluation in the form of criticism¹⁵⁸ – the term criticism itself was subject to strongly differing definitions (see Martin, 318f) – which had long been dismissed by scholars as “whimsical impressionism” (Graff, 124) on the other hand. This objective also informed René Wellek and Austin Warren’s influential *Theory of Literature*, published in 1949;¹⁵⁹ their theory of literature shared many of the theoretical premises of the New Critical project.

New Criticism has mainly come to mean the elimination of authorial intention and of biographical and historical information as reference points of interpretation through the “reification” (Eagleton, 38) of the literary work as an autonomous object. The “special concern [...] for the rhetorical structure of the literary text” (Brooks, “In Search,” 42), which one of its proponents has identified as New Criticism’s core character, has come to mean the strong emphasis on the study of the language and on “close reading,” which translated into detailed analytic interpretation with special emphasis on demonstrating the work’s unity, on

¹⁵⁷ Psychology had been made part of the Cambridge Moral Sciences in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁵⁸ This objective they shared with the contemporaneous Chicago Aristotelianism.

¹⁵⁹ The title of their study is the translation of the title of Boris Tomashevsky’s exposition of Russian Formalism, *Теория литературы. Поэтика* (Teorija literatury. Poëtika, “theory of literature. poetics”) from 1925. Wellek, a member of the Prague Linguistic Circle during the 1930s, knew Tomashevsky’s work well.

the features of paradox, irony, and, following William Empson, ambiguity, and a work's 'contradictions' and 'tensions.' Gerald Graff considers the late 1930s and early 1940s as the "turning point for the consolidation of criticism in the university" (Graff, 152); the success of New Criticism in literature departments in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s institutionalised criticism within academic literary studies (see *ibid.*, 152-161). In the decade after World War II universities witnessed an accelerated absorption of the new "professionalised" criticism (see Martin, 312). The New Criticism became the "sophisticated discourse" which Modernism apparently required. It is certainly true that "[i]t is in the judgements and justifications of modern literature that criticism, in the first half of the century, achieved its most vital expression" (*ibid.*, 294). In addition, one can legitimately say that the New Criticism was "to a great extent responsible for the critical valorization of modernism, out of which the New Criticism had itself emerged" (P. Brooker et al., 7).

As the New Critics' genre bias was clearly towards poetry, Joyce's inclusion in the canon was certainly not ensured through any New Critical focus on his works.¹⁶⁰ As was the case with I. A. Richards, the New Critics were first and foremost concerned with poetry and therefore turned to Eliot, Pound and Donne rather than to Joyce. The exception here is R. P. Blackmur who published a piece of criticism on *Ulysses* in 1948 in which he referred to it as one of "the masterpieces of our time" (Blackmur, "Jew," 97). Yet, of those who are considered the nucleus New Critics, only Cleanth Brooks wrote about *Ulysses* (see Brooks, "*Ulysses*") and then only in 1968 when the efficacy of the New Criticism was already fading. Ransom did make a few ambiguous remarks about *FW* in 1939. In a short essay in his *The Kenyon Review*, entitled "The Aesthetic of *Finnegans Wake*," in which he refers to Joyce as a "literary giant" (Ransom, "*Finnegans*," 427), he declares the work to be "largely satirical, nonsensical, and negative" (*ibid.*). Yet he also finds some cautious words of praise, saying "[f]or the poets it is sure to become an inexhaustible source of courage" (*ibid.*, 428) because "[i]t shows at most places how to escape from conceptual prose, and into the contingent world [,] a difficulty that most poets seem unable to surmount" (*ibid.*), and describes it as "a lesson book for aestheticians" (*ibid.*). Ransom concedes, "[i]f Joyce's art is almost completely irresponsible, any poem is, and by definition should be, bent on introducing into discourse something of what prose defines as irrelevance" (*ibid.*). In a review of Levin's *James Joyce*, he called Joyce "the most difficult of authors" (Ransom, "Review," 430) and it becomes obvious that he does not hold *Ulysses* in very high esteem. Here Ransom expressed the view that in *FW* Joyce had gone too far with language: "The reading of Joyce after a certain time

¹⁶⁰ As is well known the larger critical bias of the New Critical canon resulted in the exclusion of most female writers and of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

grows into a rather grim business, or does at least for me; for language is more than music” (ibid., 432). The only unreservedly laudatory New Critical piece on Joyce’s works is Allen Tate’s appreciation of the *Dubliners* story “The Dead” in his “Three Commentaries: Poe, James, and Joyce” from 1950.

Perhaps Iser is right when he says that “the criteria formulated by New Criticism proved to be inadequate for the task [of explaining the nature of *Ulysses*]. For *Ulysses* is an open work: it resists all demands for closure and denies all attempts to reduce it to the clear-cut dimensions of a self-referential object” (Iser “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 134). A more obvious explanation for the New Critical disregard of Joyce may lie in the autobiographical aspect of works such as *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. A criticism intent on promoting the idea of the autonomous work of art, which becomes independent from the author “at birth” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 5), must have been troubled by works which provoked so strongly the reference to the writer’s life and biography, that is, factors “leading away” from the aesthetic object.¹⁶¹ What could have been the maxim of the New Critical conception of the relation between aesthetic object and composing subject, Stephen’s dictum “The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” (*P* 233), must have acquired an ironic note in the face of these works.

It is interesting to note that despite the indifference to Joyce’s works apparent in the writings of the New Critics,¹⁶² Joyce received as much attention as Eliot in the major New Critical outlets. In *The Kenyon Review* four pieces appeared on Joyce and Eliot each in the 1940s and eleven on Joyce and only four on Eliot during the 1950s.¹⁶³ *The Sewanee Review* included two on Joyce in the 1940s, among them Joseph Frank’s influential essay “Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” and three on Eliot; in the 1950s the *Sewanee* carried nine pieces on Joyce and eleven on Eliot. The *Southern Review* had two on each writer in the 1940s; it

¹⁶¹ In “The Intentional Fallacy” Wimsatt and Beardsley write: “There is a gross body of life, of sensory and mental experience, which lies behind and in some sense causes every poem, but can never be and need not be known in the verbal and hence intellectual composition which is the poem. For all the objects of our manifold experience, for every unity, there is an action of the mind which cuts off roots, melts away context” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 12). Not least, Ransom had excluded the autobiographical from the field of criticism in “Criticism, Inc.” (see Ransom, “Inc,” 58).

¹⁶² The critical school contemporaneous with New Criticism, namely the Chicago School, or the Chicago or Neo-Aristotelianism as it was also referred to, produced two critical studies of Joyce: Richard L. Levin and Charles Shattuck’s reading of *Dubliners* in terms of a symbolism derived from the interpretation of *Ulysses*, published in 1944, and Wayne C. Booth’s chapter “The Problem of Distance in *A Portrait of the Artist*” in his *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961).

¹⁶³ William Empson, whose *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) had also influenced the New Criticism, contributed a piece on “The Theme of Ulysses” to *The Kenyon Review* the main point of which was to counter those critics who claimed that *Ulysses* was a dismal work; Empson considered it a “very gay” (Empson, “*Ulysses*,” 28) work.

ceased publication in 1942.¹⁶⁴ Ransom's *The Kenyon Review* was also instrumental in funding Richard Ellmann's research for his biography of Joyce through a Kenyon Review fellowship in criticism.

If the New Criticism can be said to have had a beneficial effect on the canonisation and symbolic production of Joyce's works, it is primarily in three significant ways. These were, firstly, making the study of contemporary writers acceptable in the academy, secondly, what John Guillory has referred to as the New Critics' "valorization of difficulty" (Guillory, 169), and last but not least, the practice of close reading was certainly beneficial for the study of Joyce's prose texts. The two last-mentioned aspects were extraordinarily momentous for the reader position. If *FW* by itself demands one thing it is the special attention devoted to the specific use of words and language in the literary text which the New Criticism encouraged and promoted as "close reading." The New Criticism legitimised the attention to "verbal nuance[s], however slight, which [give] room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language" (Empson, *Seven*, 1) – William Empson's revised definition of ambiguity represents, as it were, the gist of close reading's objective – and thus provided a rationale for approaching one of the central issues of *FW* and for effecting the text's signifying potential (see Senn, "Test-Case"). The fact that "difficulty itself was positively valued in New Critical practice, that it was a form of cultural capital, just by virtue of imparting to cultural objects a certain kind of rarity, the very difficulty of apprehending them" (Guillory, 168), had a lasting effect on the reader position, in fact to such a degree that it has become the constant of reading *FW*; and it continues to have an effect on the academic study of literature in general. According to Guillory,

the valorization of difficulty as the general quality of poetic language was always an integral part of the New Critical agenda of canonizing the modernist poets. This project was not easy to accomplish, precisely because the notion of difficulty circulated between the wars as a negative criterion of judgement, as the basis for the resistance to modernist poetry. It was difficulty itself which had to be rehabilitated by invoking the precedent of the metaphysicals. The revaluation of difficulty on behalf of both metaphysicals and moderns is a consistent objective of [Cleanth Brook's] *The Well Wrought Urn*. (ibid., 169)

This valorisation was "predicated upon the rejection of popular, or 'mass', culture and [...] insisted on a hierarchy of aesthetic values" (P. Brooker et al., 7). As Guillory notes, "[t]he argument for the linguistic difficulty of literature [...] revalued literature," more

¹⁶⁴ The numbers for Joyce are based on a search in the The James Joyce Checklist database of the Harry Ransom Center. The numbers for Eliot are based on a subject search in the MLA International Bibliography database.

precisely those works of literature which were considered High Cultural artefacts as opposed to mass cultural artefacts, “as the cultural capital of the university by reading it in a new way, as the embodiment of a language distinct in its difficulty” (Guillory, 172). Ransom’s invocation of the “few choicer spirits here and there, who can respond to an order of fiction advanced either in its boldness or in its subtlety” (Ransom, “Communities,” 117) is not far from the elitist attitude of an F. R. Leavis who wrote in *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture*: “In any period it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends” (Leavis, *Mass*, 3).¹⁶⁵

New Criticism’s demise came in the 1960s. Through its thematic focus, so called myth criticism, a rather short-lived approach in the U.S. American landscape of university literary criticism, continued to benefit the study of Joyce’s works. Myth criticism came to prominence in the 1950s; Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) represents its point of culmination.¹⁶⁶ *Anatomy of Criticism* was an attempt at a comprehensive theory of literature and its study – it has often been regarded as a kind of proto-structuralist work. Frye’s aim was to objectify the study of literature through its systematisation and categorisation. Such trans-historic orders of literary genres as he presents would, in Frye’s view, supersede the arbitrary evaluative aspects of literary study. Frye’s was an explicitly Aristotelian conception. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, he considered *FW* “the chief ironic epic of our time” (Frye, *Anatomy*, 323).

If the 1940s saw the inauguration of something like ‘Joyce studies,’ its consolidation occurred in the 1950s. This period is sometimes described as the Ellmann-Kenner decade in overviews of Joyce criticism.¹⁶⁷ Richard Ellmann and Hugh Kenner contributed criticism of Joyce’s works to both *The Kenyon* and *The Sewanee* in the late 1940s and in the 1950s. The process of Joyce’s inclusion in the canon – a process which in a way began with the promotion of his works by Pound during the 1910s and by Larbaud during the 1920s, with Eliot’s praise of *Ulysses* in his “*Ulysses, Order and Myth*,” and with I. A. Richards’s and Edmund Wilson’s interest in Joyce’s works in the 1920s – was consolidated through the critical acclaim of Ellmann’s Joyce biography which appeared in 1959. The quintessence of

¹⁶⁵ Cf. fn. 58 above.

¹⁶⁶ For the impact of Frye’s *Anatomy* on U.S. American literary criticism see Lentricchia, 3-30. For an assessment of the supposed “intellectual lineage” of Frazer, Eliot, Frye and Campbell see Manganaro.

¹⁶⁷ Hugh Kenner, a pupil of Marshall McLuhan, became one of the most influential critics of literary Modernism with the publication of his seminal *The Pound Era* in 1971. Kenner, who did his doctorate on Joyce at Yale under Cleanth Brooks in the late 1940s – the study formed the basis of his *Dublin’s Joyce* (1956) – but never warmed to the New Criticism, developed an idiosyncratic approach to Modernist works – “a mix of philology, etymology, and close attention to syntax, coupled with literary history, cultural study, and biographical information” (Perloff, “Kenner,” 466). His prolific work on Joyce, spanning four decades, was hardly less influential than Ellmann’s in shaping the image of Joyce and his works.

Ellmann's biography, the size of which surpasses even *Ulysses* and *FW*, is a thoroughly humanist version of a great writer whose life could be read into throughout his works and whose works were full of his life. A further critical moment in the symbolic production, it made and fixed the image of Joyce for a whole generation of readers and critics, as Frank Kermode predicted (see Kermode, "Puzzles," 86). Its acclaim as being a "magisterial" and outstanding scholarly work, consolidated the study of Joyce and Joyce's place in the canon. And yet, it was a rather rough road towards consolidation in the 1950s. In the 1987 preface to the Morningside edition of his *Dublin's Joyce*, Hugh Kenner recalls the difficulty of finding a publisher for his study, apparently because its topic was Joyce (see Kenner, *Dublin's*, ix-x). Retrospectively Kenner also describes the general critical suspicion of *Ulysses*, considered "awkward, complicated, often indecent," and the dismissal of *FW* (*ibid.*, x).

The institutionalisation of 'Joyce studies' – part of the process of Joyce's canonisation – became apparent in the 1960s. The founding in 1963 and the ensuing success of the *James Joyce Quarterly*, an academic journal devoted exclusively to Joyce and his works, somewhat eclipsed earlier efforts such as the short-lived *James Joyce Review*, which appeared from 1957 to 1959 and the three appearances over five years (1957-1962) of the James Joyce Society's *A James Joyce Miscellany*. In 1967 the International James Joyce Symposium was established; this Swiss-U.S. American co-foundation became a biannual affair. At the first symposium *The James Joyce Foundation* was founded with 'headquarters' located first at Tulsa University and from 1989 on at Ohio State University.¹⁶⁸ The process of the institutionalisation of Joyce studies in the United States was accompanied by the acquisition, beginning in the early 1950s, of a wealth of manuscript and draft collections by several U.S. American universities such as University at Buffalo, Yale University, and Cornell University.

If the general New Critical valorisations can be considered beneficial for Joyce's canonisation, the second momentous theoretical paradigm in literary studies in the United States, post-structuralism, made Joyce figure prominently in the (counter-) canon of 'French theory' which was formed primarily by *Tel Quel* and its contributors. This is the phase of the rise of *Finnegans Wake*'s stock. It is linked to the development of French literary theory in the wake of the critique and revision of structuralism, which began in the mid-1960s, and the ensuing adoption and appropriation of 'French theory' by the U.S. American academy in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹⁶⁸ *International* was added to the name of the organisation in 1988.

3.4 “Travelling Theory”: From “*strukturalismus*” to “Post-Structuralism”

If the statement “[t]he French have produced little systematic literary theory and have, on the whole, avoided methodological discussion” (Wellek and Warren, 287), which to readers of Wellek and Warren’s *Theory of Literature* from 1949, must have appeared oversimplified then, today also appears thoroughly invalidated in the light of the development of literary theory in the second half of the twentieth century. “French theory,” a term which is generally used to imply primarily structuralism and post-structuralism, became the dominant paradigm of literary studies in the United States in the 1980s, and can be regarded more generally as the most influential paradigm in U.S. American literature departments in the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁹

As is well known, post-structuralism bears a genealogical relation to structuralism. Structuralism came to prominence in the Western world in the 1960s. The early stages of this “travelling theory” are Prague, Scandinavia, New York, and eventually France. The formulation of the paradigm of language as a synchronic sign system of differential elements (*la langue*) which forms the basis of this theory occurred in the late 1900s and early 1910s in the lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure – who had studied and attained a doctorate at Universität Leipzig under the *Junggrammatiker* school – at Université de Genève which were published posthumously by Saussure’s pupils Charles Bally and Albert Séchehaye as *Cours de linguistique générale* in 1916. The work was enthusiastically received among the linguists who would in 1926 found and/or become members of the Prague Linguistic Circle (1926-1948).¹⁷⁰ The Circle, which included Roman Jakobson, Sergei Karcevskiy, Jan Mukarovsky, and Nikolai Trubetzkoy among others,¹⁷¹ drew on Saussure and on the Russian Formalism of Jakobson’s earlier days to develop Prague “*strukturalismus*” – this is the term as first introduced by Jakobson in a piece in 1929 (see Jakobson, “Romantické,” 11; see also Jakobson, “Retrospect²,” 711f).¹⁷² Like the Muscovite Circle before, the Prague Circle focused primarily on linguistics and poetics. Following Saussure, *strukturalismus* posits that

¹⁶⁹ As in the case of the oft-cited “hegemony of New Criticism” it is important to point out that the fact that post-structuralism was the dominant theory in literary studies of the time does not imply that the majority of literary criticism of the time was post-structuralist in orientation.

¹⁷⁰ Jakobson first read the *Cours* in the early 1920s but had already heard about Saussure’s ideas a few years before (see Jakobson, “Karcevskij,” 518).

¹⁷¹ René Wellek joined the Circle in the 1930s.

¹⁷² Jakobson used a German term – *Struktur* (*struktura* being the Czech form) is of course of Latin origin (*structura*) and the suffix *-ismus*, common in German and as loan form used in Czech too, is of course also derived from Latin and ultimately from Greek – since German was, at that time, one of the leading languages of science. Whether Jakobson conceived it as a neologism or whether he was aware that the term was being used in psychology, in particular with reference to Edward B. Titchener’s work (see Angell, 232, 234, 240), is unknown.

“the elements of a language have a purely relational or differential identity; they have no inherent material identity but are defined by contrasts” (Culler, “Structuralism,” 113); such contrasts form the basis of Jakobson’s phonological theory of distinctive features. In its linguistic research Prague *strukturalismus* defined itself primarily through the analysis of the sound system of language. The theory of literature formulated by the Russian Formalists in the 1910s and 1920s – the very first attempt to formulate a theory of literature aspiring to scientific rigor¹⁷³ – was elaborated by the Circle into the semiotic poetics of Prague *strukturalismus*. Literary works were now treated and analysed as aesthetic structures. The fullest expression of this approach can be found in the Circle’s 1938 collection *Torso a tajemství Máchova díla* (“the core and the mystery of [Karel Hynek] Mácha’s work”) (see Erlich, 161f). As Jonathan Culler has pointed out, structuralism sought “to understand social and cultural phenomena not through causal or historical explanation but by examining the underlying structures or system of norms that make them what they are” (Culler, “Structuralism,” 110).

It were Jakobson’s personal circumstances which occasioned the dissemination of *strukturalismus*. As had been the case with Russian Formalism, the further development of Prague *strukturalismus* in its place of origin was made impossible as one of the consequences of the seizure of power of Communist regimes was making the Marxist approach to literature into a doctrine (see Erlich, 135-139, 163). The structuralism which developed in post-WW II France was due in no small part to the encounter between Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss at the *École libre des hautes études*, which was hosted by the New School for Social Research, in New York in 1942 and their ensuing collaboration. Here Jakobson held courses, in French, on phonology. The first recorded result of this encounter, Lévi-Strauss’s article “L’analyse structurale en linguistique et en anthropologie,” published in 1945 in *Word*, the journal of the recently founded Linguistic Circle of New York, is considered a pioneer document in the emergence of French *structuralisme*. Lévi-Strauss applied the concepts and principles developed in Jakobson’s structuralist phonology in his work on diverse anthropological phenomena. His structuralist analyses of kinship, myth, ritual, religion, and art which he wrote in the period from 1945 to 1956 were published in 1958 in the collection *Anthropologie structurale*.

First signs of the broader impact of structuralist ideas in France were to be seen roughly a decade after Lévi-Strauss’s *Word* article. Culler identifies three “key moments in the early history of French structuralism” (Culler, “Structuralism,” 115): the success of Lévi-

¹⁷³ According to Boris Eikhenbaum, Formalism sought to ground its analyses on “the scientific study of facts” (qtd. in trans. in Erlich, 72).

Strauss's *Tristes tropiques* from 1955 which "made structural anthropology accessible" to a larger audience (ibid.); Roland Barthes's essay "Le mythe, aujourd'hui" in his *Mythologies* from 1957 which defined a "semiological" project inspired by Saussure, Benveniste, and Hjelmslev; and the influence of Lévi-Strauss's work on Jacques Lacan, prompting Lacan's study of Saussure and Jakobson in the early 1950s. Thus, in France, in the 1950s and 1960s, structuralist linguistics, as conceived by the Prague Structuralists in the tradition of Saussure, became the paradigm for a range of other fields such as anthropology (Lévi-Strauss (and here already in the 1940s)), psychoanalysis (Lacan), literary studies (Barthes, Kristeva, Genette, Todorov), and Marxist political theory (Althusser). Culler regards Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault and Althusser as "the leading figures associated with French structuralism" (ibid., 110).¹⁷⁴ Barthes was certainly one of the most influential figures in the promotion of structuralism for the study of literature. His most notable contributions to a structuralist 'science' of literature are taken to be *Sur Racine* (1963), *Éléments de sémiologie* (1964), "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits" (1966) and *Critique et vérité* (1966).

The reception of *structuralisme* in literature departments in the United States began in the second half of the 1960s.¹⁷⁵ In October 1966, two academic projects sought to introduce *structuralisme* to U.S. American academia, the famous 1966 conference at then "Geneva School"-influenced Johns Hopkins (see Lentricchia, 63ff) on "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" in which Barthes, Lacan, Todorov, and Derrida participated among others and issue 36/37 of *Yale French Studies*, edited by Jacques Ehrmann, which included translations of writings by Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, and a bibliography on structuralism and literary criticism assembled by Tzvetan Todorov.¹⁷⁶ It was, however, not until the 1970s that *structuralisme* found a wider reception in literature departments in the United States through such introductory volumes as Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato's *The Languages of*

¹⁷⁴ Foucault himself rejected the label *structuraliste*; his theoretical orientation has been called a "structuralism without structures" (qtd. in trans. in Dosse, *Rising*, 332) by Jean Piaget.

¹⁷⁵ A very few like Eugenio Donato were 'pioneers' in this regard (see Hillis Miller, Biographical; Given Donato's comments on Derrida in his paper at the conference, "The Two Languages of Criticism," it is curious that there should be no mention of Derrida in his "Of Structuralism and Literature," which introduced, in the form of a lecture, German students and faculty of *Literaturwissenschaft* at Freie Universität Berlin into structuralism in the spring of 1967, a task which Geoffrey Hartman had begun in the same place six months earlier.). Although unaware of it, the most basic premises of structuralism had been known to many literary scholars in the U.S. since 1949 through Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*. Wellek, the former member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, wrote in the chapter "The Analysis of the Literary Work of Art": "'Structure' is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose" (Wellek and Warren, 141). This passage, along with the following one amount to an exposition, *in nuce*, of structuralist literary theory: "The system of language is a collection of conventions and norms whose workings and relations we can observe and describe as having a fundamental coherence and identity in spite of very different, imperfect, or incomplete pronouncements of individual speakers. In this respect at least, a literary work of art is in exactly the same position as a system of language" (ibid., 153).

¹⁷⁶ The issue focused on Lévi-Strauss, Lacan and Jakobson; there are only marginal references to Barthes.

Criticism and the Sciences of Man (1970), which was the conference proceedings volume of the 1966 Johns Hopkins conference, Michael Lane's *Introduction to Structuralism* (1970), Fredric Jameson's *The Prison-House of Language* (1972), David Robey's *Structuralism: An Introduction* (1973), Robert Scholes's *Structuralism in Literature* (1974), and Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* (1975). It soon became apparent that some of the French ideas and concepts introduced into literature departments in the United States as *structuralism* by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato challenged the very premises of the earlier formulations of *structuralisme*.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the 1966 conference derives its image of being a seminal event in U.S. American literary theory not from the fact that here for the first time the French advocates of *structuralisme* introduced their theories and ideas to a larger U.S. American audience. Rather it is generally presented as the point of inception of what has later been termed *post-structuralism*. Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss, presented in his paper "La structure, le signe, et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines" at the conference, and printed in *L'écriture et la différence* (1967) and in *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, is commonly regarded in U.S. American accounts of 'the history of literary theory' as the inception point of *post-structuralism*. Of the introductory volumes to structuralism listed above, only Jameson and Culler seemed to be aware of the transformation which *structuralisme* was subjected to in the period between 1966 and the first half of the 1970s. Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* became the most widely read of these introductions not least because it included discussions of Barthes's *S/Z*, of Kristeva and of Derrida, and thus followed closely the development "[b]eyond' [s]tructuralism," as the title of the tenth chapter indicated. This development had already been sketched in the small volume *Signs of the Times: Introductory Readings in Textual Semiotics* in 1971, but its publication was hardly of any immediate consequence not least because it was published 'only' by the 'press' of the Cambridge student magazine *Granta*. The book, edited by the Cambridge trio Stephen Heath, who had attended the seminar (1968-1969) by Barthes which would result in *S/Z*, Colin MacCabe and Christopher Prendergast, is an exposition of 'post-structuralist' ideas, presenting the work of Kristeva and Barthes as well as including a few references to Derrida.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ The conference volume entitled *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy* was published in 1970. It was retitled *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* on the occasion of the release of the paperback edition in 1972. In the preface written for the republished edition of 1971, the term *structuralism* was already laid to rest due to the 'disruption,' bearing the name Jacques Derrida, which had become apparent during the conference and which was referred to as "the structuralist controversy" (see Macksey and Donato, xv).

¹⁷⁸ The volume contains what is probably the first translation of a Kristeva text into English.

While structuralism posited the systemic quality of language and the rule-governedness of language as system, ‘post-structuralists’ emphasised that language essentially involves instability which defies its grounding in such stabilising categories.¹⁷⁹ Structuralists tended to believe in the laws of language which could be established by a (certain model of) linguistics conceived as a meta-science which would yield a scientific metalanguage and analytical categories that would provide the study of literature with scientificity, whereas ‘post-structuralists’ denied any foundation for such a belief. The heterogeneous ideas and concepts put forward by such figures as Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, Kristeva, and Deleuze would soon be referred to as “post-structuralist” in the United States, making *post-structuralism* an amalgamation of diverse strands in French thought and thus homogenising in a way a heterogenous body of theoretical work. Since he considers post-structuralism in terms of “different versions of structuralism” (Culler, “Structuralism,” 111) – in France the terminological distinction *structuralism* versus *post-structuralism* never existed, here *structuralisme* often encompasses (roughly) what is referred to by these two terms in the United States¹⁸⁰ – Culler can easily subsume the work of the later Barthes, Kristeva, Lacan and Deleuze under the single label structuralism.¹⁸¹ Culler considers post-structuralism a development of positions “manifest even in the early work of Barthes, Foucault, and Lacan” (ibid., 116). While he thus emphasises the continuity between these theories, many scholars put emphasis on the notion of a significant break between structuralist and post-structuralist ideas.¹⁸² Barthes himself has conceived the period between “Introduction à l’analyse structurale des récits” (1966) and *S/Z* (1970) in terms of a break (see Barthes and Heath, 44f); and he has credited Derrida, Sollers, and Kristeva as significant intellectual influence for this “theoretical mutation” (ibid., 45).

¹⁷⁹ While the Saussure of *Cours* was one of the primary references of structuralism (see e.g. Barthes, “L’aventure,” 11), the Saussure of *Anagrammes* became, from 1969 on, one of the references of post-structuralism (see e.g. Barthes, “Saussure,” 225f; Kristeva, “Paragrammes,” 292).

¹⁸⁰ Although there are a few examples of terms such as *post-structuraliste* in the early 1970s (see e.g. Pirard, 384). Other labels were used by the theorists so designated, especially by those who had at some point become aware of the limits of structuralism – in the later 1960s and early 1970s Kristeva referred to her practice, among other things, as *sémanalyse*, Barthes to his as *sémiologie* and later *sémiotique*. It is telling that in the first English introduction to what we would today term post-structuralist ideas, the volume *Signs of the Times*, the term *structuralism* and its cognates do not occur. Instead the pervading term is *textual semiotics*. The term *post-structuralism* is used in this dissertation nevertheless because it has become firmly established in the terminology of Anglo-American literary studies.

¹⁸¹ Derrida’s special position in the French conception of *structuralisme* is evident when in his *Histoire du structuralisme* François Dosse refers to Derrida in terms of “*ultra-structuralisme*” (Dosse, *Chant*, 30) – as Derrida had done himself in *L’écriture et la différence* (see Derrida, *L’écriture*, 28). One could, with equal legitimacy, speak of an ‘ultra-phenomenology in the *Wake-wake* of Heidegger.’

¹⁸² Consider, for instance, Réda Bensmaïa’s article on post-structuralism in the same encyclopedia in which Culler’s article appeared (see Bensmaïa).

In his two-volume *Histoire du structuralisme*, François Dosse has identified the mid-1970s as the time in which the decline of the structuralist paradigm in France began.¹⁸³ He describes what would now be termed ‘emerging post-structuralism’ as structuralism’s first fissures and dates their occurrence as 1967 (see Dosse, *passim*). The first pieces in which the roots of post-structuralist literary criticism and theory would become visible, are, according to many accounts, Roland Barthes’s “The Death of the Author” (1967) / “La mort de l’auteur” (1968) and his *S/Z* (1970, trans. 1974) and Julia Kristeva’s “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman” (trans. as “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” in 1980), in which she introduced the notion of *intertextualité*, and “Pour une sémiologie des paragrammes” (both from 1967). One could also add to this list Derrida’s early essay “Force et signification” (1963) and his essays on Jabès (1964) and Artaud (1965 and 1966), and Deleuze’s “A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?” (1967).¹⁸⁴ As mentioned above, the broader U.S. American reception of the diverse strands in French thought and their amalgamation into what would soon become known under the label *post-structuralism* began in the second half of the 1970s. What was also referred to as “Continental theory” was disseminated in the United States, among other things, through the so-called Yale Critics, or Yale School, since the early 1970s, through Derrida’s – who came to be regarded in the United States as the most pre-eminent of those French-speaking minds associated with the new ‘Theory’ of whom many became regular visitors in U.S. American academia – own regular teaching at U.S. American universities such as Johns Hopkins, Yale, Cornell, NYU, UC Irvine, etc. beginning in the late 1960s, through the new journal *Diacritics*, since 1971, and through the School of Criticism and Theory at the University of California, Irvine, since 1976.

In a way *FW* was already present, as a subject, in the first structuralist ‘rupture’ on U.S. American soil – when in 1958 prominent theorists of the New Criticism and of what was not yet known as structuralism in the United States first exchanged their different views of how literature was to be approached. That a decade or two later this exchange could be perceived as the first sign of a momentous shift was of course not yet apparent. In that year an interdisciplinary conference on “the nature and characteristics of style in literature” (Ashton, v) convened anthropologists, folklorists, linguists, literary scholars, philosophers, and psychologists at Indiana University. I. A. Richards, W. K. Wimsatt, and Monroe Beardsley gave papers there. It was there that Roman Jakobson presented his famous paper “Linguistics

¹⁸³ The academic institutionalisation of *structuralisme* in France occurred in the period between 1968 and 1975 (see Dosse, *Sets*, 133ff). French introductory volumes and surveys began to appear in 1967.

¹⁸⁴ Although their significance is undisputed, Lacan’s “L’instance de la lettre dans l’inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud” (1957/’66) and Derrida’s “La structure, le signe, et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines” (1966/’67) cannot really be considered pieces of *literary* criticism or *literary* theory proper.

and Poetics,” one of the classic expositions of *structuralism*. The presentation by Fred Higginson was in fact the only one which was concerned with the stylistic analysis of a specific literary text; its title was “Style in *Finnegans Wake*.”

3.5 “PARIS, / 1922-1939” – The French Joyce

*The literary revolution participated in, and to some degree initiated by, James Joyce might be defined as the displacement of the grounding of literature in some solid extralinguistic **logos**: God, the One, or the materiality of the external world. These grounds are, in Joyce’s work, replaced by a groundless, endlessly proliferating, self-cancelling, self-regenerating play of signifiers. *Finnegans Wake*, it might be argued, is the result of a principled and brilliantly inventive exploitation of this mode of writing.*
(Hillis Miller, “Zero,” 384).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Joyce, and particularly *FW*, became part of the ‘theory canon’ established by the writings of a number of the theorists and writers associated with the avant-garde journal *Tel Quel* – a watershed in, and hallmark of, *FW*’s symbolic production.¹⁸⁵ This (counter-) canon included writers such as Artaud, Bataille, Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Ponge, Proust, Roussel, Sade and Joyce, making the last-named one of the few exceptions – a further one being Dante – in an otherwise firmly French canon (see Ffrench and Lack, 5f).¹⁸⁶ Hélène Cixous, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan and Philippe Sollers, who all participated in the moment of *Tel Quel*,¹⁸⁷ all referred to Joyce in their writings.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Valentine Cunningham’s polemical question “And who would have considered putting *Finnegans Wake* on any syllabus were it not for Derrida’s and his poststructuralist followers’ enthusiasm for it?” (Cunningham, 46) reflects the ‘theory shadow’ which the work has been seen to cast since the 1970s.

¹⁸⁶ *Tel Quel* participated in the ‘structuralist moment’ as well as in the ‘post-structuralist moment,’ the latter from 1967 on. It is interesting to note that one can identify a post-structuralist literary canon but not a structuralist one. Since it was indifferent to aesthetic evaluation, the structuralist moment had not lead to the formation of a literary ‘reference canon’ as the post-structuralist moment did, although some structuralist analyses have become famous, as for instance, Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss’s analysis of Baudelaire’s “Les chats” and Vladimir Propp’s investigation of Russian folktales which was considered a kind of proto-structuralist analysis. In the writings of the French *structuralistes*, the name Joyce is not nearly as prominent as it was to become in the writings of Kristeva, Derrida, and the later Lacan for instance. In the context of “French theory” the star of Joyce’s name began to rise in the mid-1960s. The fact that Joyce spent the last third of his life in Paris in ‘voluntary exile’ was not insignificant in this respect, making it possible for French literary critics of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to naturalise him in a way as an appropriate subject of French literary criticism.

¹⁸⁷ This wording should not obscure the fact that some, like Derrida, participated in that moment only for a certain period and that some, like Lacan, were not as involved as others on a personal level. For an analysis of the role they played for *Tel Quel* see Ffrench.

¹⁸⁸ Although Joyce served Barthes as reference for avant-garde writing in his paper at the 1966 Johns Hopkins conference “Ecrire: Verbe intransitif?” (1966), one finds in his writings, which focused almost exclusively on French literature, no extended discussion of Joyce. Only recently, through the publication of the transcription of Barthes’s “detailed, scrupulously drafted notes” (Kate Briggs, xxviii) for his, as it were, last lecture courses at the Collège de France in 1979/1980 in *La préparation du roman*, which appeared in 2003, can one get a glimpse of something like ‘Barthes’s view of Joyce.’ In a session in March 1979, Barthes discussed Joyce’s *Epiphanies*

Consequently, by the 1970s the name Joyce had become a common one in French journals with a 'Theory' bent. Between 1972 and 1976 *Tel Quel* (nos. 54 and 55, 1973), *Change* (no. 11, 1972) and *Poétique* (no. 26, 1976) each put out an issue in which Joyce featured prominently. *Tel Quel* led all other journals in numbers of such issues (nos. 30, 1967; 54 and 55, 1973; and 83, 1980).

Many of the critical notions commonly regarded as post-structuralist seem to bear a close relation to a text like *FW*, which is the reason why these notions were so influential with respect to the reader position in *FW*. The belief in language as an essentially stable system had given way in 'post-structuralist thinking' to the notion of language and meaning as essentially unstable.¹⁸⁹ The very features that made *FW* unsuitable for structuralist analysis made it an attraction for post-structuralists.¹⁹⁰ By which means could a structuralist literary analysis, the main field of application of which was narratology, have approached a work that apparently defies narratological categories? The question 'Is *Finnegans Wake* a narrative?' (see Ryan, 9; see also Abbott, 310) may never be answered definitively, but the posing of the question alone is telling of the lack of narrative coherence perceived by many of its readers. *FW* makes it impossible to neatly distinguish the levels proposed by narratological analysis, whether we call them diegetic levels, *fabula-sjuzet*, *histoire-discours*, *histoire-récit*, story-narrative discourse, etc. The fact that "*Finnegans Wake* appears [...] as a machine containing matrixes of matrixes of stories, capable of narrating everything, and thus never really narrating one story" (Rabaté, "Narratology," 145) has led Jean-Michel Rabaté to ask the (rhetorical)

and declared that "Joyce's experience of these Epiphanies is very important" to him (Barthes, *Preparation*, 101) and that he has "experimented" with an "analogous form" (ibid.), which he called *l'Incident* ("Incident"), in several of his own works, for instance in *Le plaisir du texte*, and which he conceived as an "instantly meaningful event [...] and at the same time no pretention to a general, systematic, doctrinal meaning" (ibid., 102). He links the epiphany to the haiku and sees its particularity in Joyce's refusal of all commentary, his refusal to give it a meaning, which allows for the inconsequentiality of the *Incident* to become manifest. Barthes emphasised the epiphany's affinity with what he calls the *Moment de vérité* ("Moment of Truth"): "the sudden *bursting forth* of the uninterpretable, of the last degree of meaning, of the *after which there's nothing more to say*" (ibid., 107). Barthes's conclusion is that the novel cannot "sustain the 'truth' (of the moment)" like *Notations*, such as the haiku, the epiphany, *l'Incident*, and the *Moment de vérité*, can (ibid., 108). In this lecture Barthes also states that "the main character of *Ulysses* is actually language" (ibid., 104; cf. Golding, 142).

¹⁸⁹ While in the late 1930s David Daiches claimed that "this kind of dealing with language [in *FW*] [...] works (up to a point) if you are the only one to do it, if other writers are content to use the language as it is so that a stable medium remains with reference to which your coinages have meaning," and speaks in this respect of "a stable language with a definite meaning" (Daiches, 155), fifty years later Claude Jacquet can make the antithetical, post-structuralist claim that "*FW* reminds us that language is ambiguous, unstable, uncontrollable" (Jacquet, 33).

¹⁹⁰ The only analysis of *FW* which appears to be inspired by structuralist premises is an analysis of its language to be found in C. George Sandulescu's *The Language of the Devil: Texture and Archetype in Finnegans Wake* (see Sandulescu, 81-94). The first, and only full-fledged, structuralist reading of a Joyce text was presented in 1969 by Seymour Chatman (see Chatman). Chatman based his study of "Eveline" on Barthes's "Introduction à l'analyse structural des récits" (1966) and Todorov's "Les catégories du récit littéraire" (1966). In his narratological analysis Chatman operated with the terms *l'histoire* and *discours*, *fonctions* and *actions*, *noyaux* and *catalyses*, etc. and presented a structuralist analysis of each of the sentences of the short story.

question “Can it be that most applications of narratology to *Finnegans Wake* result in self-defeating tactics? [...] [I]n no other text are the indeterminacies of the speaking voice so dense and overwhelming that the reader has only a blurred impression that something is being told, though he cannot ascertain what or by whom” (ibid., 137).

What structuralist analysis could not account for became the very premises of post-structuralism. Notions such as meaning being absent in the sign because of its differential nature, and being dispersed along a chain of signifiers were conveyed by references to the “play of signifiers” and to the “endless deferral of meaning”¹⁹¹ – such notions also made communication, which was central for Roman Jakobson, a dispensable concept. Emphasis was put on the plurality of literary texts and on the ‘uncontrollability’ of language in general. The notion of the “single centre, essence or meaning” (Eagleton, 120) of a text was rejected in favour of such notions and concepts as *l’indécidabilité*, *dissémination*, *différance* and *illisibilité*. Literary texts were conceived as opening up an endless proliferation of meanings and readings. Marked by a general scepticism towards the concept of meaning, in particular the form of meaning implied in notions such as ‘to understand the meaning(s) of a literary work,’ the critical procedures of post-structuralist analyses called into question the notion of the limits of interpretation. Consequently, post-structuralism also challenged the concept of critical interpretation conceived as an *understanding* of the text and is thus marked by its distance to the premises of hermeneutics.¹⁹² Emphasis was also put on citation and intertextuality, on the instability of genre, on the “decentring” of structures and subjectivity, and on the dissolving of boundaries between ‘the serious’ and ‘the ludic.’ In Derridean readings texts were read “with an emphasis on how they undermine the human desire for stable centers of representation by constantly displacing signifiers, frustrating immediate ‘presence’ of meaning, decentering the subject or whatever constitutes a production of convention-bound reference, and dispersing it in the linguistic field” (Eysteinson, 48). The pun and other “wordplay,” such as the portmanteau word, were regarded as “paradigm for the play of language” (Culler, “Phoneme,” 4f).¹⁹³ Not surprisingly, there have been many voices

¹⁹¹ Some of the contemporary commentaries on *FW* seem to anticipate the post-structuralist diction, as when Carola Giedion-Welcker states that in *FW* “[t]he word is torn from its assured, established position and changed to a floating [*schwebend*] medium” (Giedion-Welcker, “Work in Progress,” 179f).

¹⁹² Far from seeing in the reader’s involvement in the ostensibly circular and cyclic *FW* the hermeneutic circle manifesting itself, post-structuralists rather saw in it, from the (post-)hermeneutic perspective, the entanglement and drift of the reader in(to) a hermetic vortex of the *jeu de la différence et de la dissémination* becoming manifest.

¹⁹³ Considering anagrammaticality, under which he subsumes puns and lexical blends, a phenomenon which, “durchkreuz[en]” (“crossing through,” “crossing out,” “thwarting”) grammar and rhetoric (Haverkamp, 140), bears the imprint of the promise of the unconscious of language to become manifest, Anselm Haverkamp, who views Joyce as “the author, in whom the ‘aesthetic’ side of anagrammaticality comes most clearly to the fore”

considering the post-structuralist approach to *FW* the most “appropriate” one (e.g. Fügen, “Schleifen,” 20; Haverkamp, 135, 137, 147; cf. Eco’s counterargument in Eco, “Semiosis,” 148f).¹⁹⁴ And yet, the one post-structuralist systematisation of narrative analysis available, Barthes’s *S/Z*, is no more promising than, for instance, “Introduction à l’analyse structural des récits.” Considering the disparagement of the *lisible* in its opening pages, the irony of *S/Z* is, after all, that it analyses a text which is much more on the *lisible* side of the spectrum than on the *scriptible* side, perhaps precisely because the latter would defy the identifiability of the codes proposed by Barthes.

What had been the standing of Joyce’s work in France before its ‘monopolisation’ by the *tel-queliens*? In other words, what was the French contribution to the symbolic production of *FW* in the years between 1950 and 1966? Sam Slote asserts that Joyce’s standing in French academia became a notable one only in the 1960s (see Slote, “Après 1,” 372ff). *Finnegans Wake*’s peritextual element “PARIS, / 1922-1939” (*FW* 628) is in a way a testimony to the fact that Joyce had become as much a part of the literary Paris of the 1920s and 1930s as his final work – although this holds true for his image rather than for Joyce as a social being. Since 1921, Valéry Larbaud had taken over Pound’s role as chief promoter of *Ulysses*.¹⁹⁵ Larbaud was instrumental in making a French translation of *Ulysses* available; French translations of *A Portrait* (1924), *Dubliners* (1926) and *Ulysses* (1929) appeared in the 1920s. In the conservative *Revue des Deux Mondes*, of all *revues*, in which at that time “it was forbidden by law to name [...] Gide or Proust” (Gillet, “Foreword,” 30), Louis Gillet was able to promote Joyce and *WiP/FW* in a number of pieces between 1931 and 1941 (see Gillet, *Claybook*). The French writers most apparently attracted to Joyce were certainly Raymond Queneau (see Slote, “Après 2,” 387-392), Michel Butor (see *ibid.*, 385-387) and Philippe Sollers. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, i.e. before the *tel-quelien* interest in him, Joyce’s work was present in interested French literary circles through various publications and prominent references during that time. The results of André du Bouchet’s ‘translation’ of excerpts of *FW*, a project he had begun in the late 1940s, appeared in 1950, 1957 and as a single volume of some thirty pages of ‘translated’ fragments in 1962.¹⁹⁶ In 1959/1960 the *Revue des lettres modernes* published a two-volume special issue on Joyce, edited by Joseph Prescott, with translations of

(*ibid.*, 147; my trans.), regards *FW* as possibly providing “evidence of the impossibility of the common aesthetics in the light of anagrammatical phenomena” (*ibid.*; my trans.).

¹⁹⁴ Derek Attridge has spoken, in 1984, of “the peculiar aptness of Joyce’s writing for anyone embarked upon a deconstructive engagement” (Attridge, “Deconstructive,” 28).

¹⁹⁵ Pound had arranged for the serialisation of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* (see fn. 120 above).

¹⁹⁶ Du Bouchet’s was not the first French ‘translation’ of *FW* excerpts. There had been a collaborative ‘translation’ of “Anna Livia Plurabelle” into French by Beckett, Philippe Soupault and others which appeared in *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1931. Michel Butor’s ‘translation’ of the work’s final two pages appeared in 1949 in *A James Joyce Yearbook*.

fourteen pieces of Anglo-American Joyce criticism. In Robbe-Grillet's important essay "Nouveau roman, homme nouveau," published in 1961 and reprinted in *Pour un nouveau roman* in 1963, Joyce was on the list of precursors of the nouveau roman – those writers whom Robbe-Grillet acknowledged for their achievements for the "evolution" of the novel (see Robbe-Grillet, 115). The year 1962 saw the publication of the French translation of Ellmann's biography of Joyce. Important French academic studies and introductory volumes by David Hayman (*Joyce et Mallarmé* 1956), Jean Paris (*Joyce par lui-même* 1957), and Joseph Majault (*Joyce* 1963) appeared. In early 1966, the *Figaro littéraire* carried a special on Joyce under the main page title "Joyce: un martyr plein d'humour et de fantaisie" ("a martyr full of humour and imagination"). The two-page tribute, to which Sollers and Butor contributed short appraisals, appeared under the title "Vingt-cinq ans après sa mort James Joyce de plus en plus vivant" ("twenty-five years after his death James Joyce comes more and more alive").

It does not seem exaggerated to assume that the two French studies comparing Mallarmé's and Joyce's work published during the 1950s, by Robert Greer Cohn and by David Hayman, were a significant impetus for the French avant-garde interest in Joyce. The numerous references to Joyce in Cohn's *L'œuvre de Mallarmé "Un Coup de Dés"* from 1951 suggested a common ground between Joyce's and Mallarmé's poetic views and practices.¹⁹⁷ Cohn's was a pioneering study in this respect. His introduction stated: "The name Joyce has returned very naturally to associate itself under my pen with the one of Mallarmé" (Cohn, 26; my trans.). Cohn maintains that "despite all the differences in length and genre, *Un Coup de Dés* has more in common with *Finnegans Wake* than with any other famous literary work" (ibid.; my trans.). One of the parallels between the Mallarmé of *Un Coup de Dés* and the Joyce of *FW* which Cohn identifies is that "[b]oth expand the resources of language by giving it an unprecedented expressive force through the use of a verbal 'grouping together'" (ibid., 436f; my trans.). However, while "Mallarmé contends himself with words with multiple absent echoes, Joyce is more inclined to make them appear directly on the page thanks to his telescopic expressions" (ibid.; my trans.). "These two writers," Cohn adds, "were extremely sensitive to the sound and form of letters" (ibid.; my trans.). In *Joyce et Mallarmé*, published in 1956, David Hayman expounded his view of the significant influence of Mallarmé on the writing of *FW* in particular, which he regards as an elaboration of *Un coup de Dés* and of the Mallarméan "stylistique de la suggestion." In the first post-structuralist exposition in English, the aforementioned *Signs of the Times*, Joyce is repeatedly put on a level with the post-

¹⁹⁷ The study is a revised version of Cohn's *Mallarmé's Un coup de dés; An Exegesis* from 1949, which was his Yale dissertation.

structuralist reference point par excellence, namely Mallarmé (see Heath et al., 48, see also 9, 26, 28, 53f, 75), as well. The impetus which sprang from the appearance of the French translation of *Opera aperta* in 1965 on the standing of *FW* and Joyce for the *tel-queliens* should likewise not be underestimated. Here too appears a ‘poetological genealogy’ between Mallarmé and Joyce (see Eco, “Poetics,” 53f), this time in the context of the poetics of the open work.

3.6 The Theorists’ Joyce: In the *Wake* of *illisibilité*

Once, scholars and savants [...] understood Joyce little and liked him less. And now without understanding Finnegans Wake a great deal more, men turn to the book like sunflowers to a secret sun.
(Hassan, 79)

UNLESBARKEIT dieser / Welt. ...
(Celan, 16)

Through Robbe-Grillet’s essay manifestos of the early 1960s it became apparent that the *nouveaux romanciers*, “committed to a renovation of the novel as a cultural form through a process of experimentation” (Motte, 216), claimed Joyce as one of their predecessors. The discourse on the nouveau roman in French literary criticism and the various links between the *nouveaux romanciers* and Joyce’s works and between the nouveau roman and early *Tel Quel* provided one of the critical topoi which became formative for the discourse on *Finnegans Wake*, its symbolic production, in France from the 1960s onwards, namely *illisibilité*. In the 1960s, the notion of *illisibilité* (“unreadability”) became a common theme in the French discourse on contemporary literature. The nouveau roman was often reproached for its perceived *illisibilité*; Alain Robbe-Grillet was the writer who was most assiduously declared “illisible” (see e.g. Picon, 304). The revaluation of the “avant-gardist gesture” (Motte, 215), of works deemed to be “experimental” and “difficult” – the Barthesian “texte scriptible” – in the *tel-quelien* literary criticism of the 1960s and 1970s led to a revaluation of the notion of *illisibilité*. *Illisible* became a label of distinction for the *tel-queliens*. Literary realism, in contrast, was held in low esteem by post-structuralists because it appeared to serve ‘transcendental signifieds.’

In the course of this revaluation *Finnegans Wake* was attributed the status of one of the *Ur-texte illisible*. By 1972 the notion of *illisibilité* had become so dominant in French

discussions of *Finnegans Wake* that Jacques Aubert was prompted to officially credit André du Bouchet for being the first to point out the *illisible* as *Finnegans Wake*'s distinctive feature (see Aubert, 69) – in his introductory note with the title “Lire *Finnegans Wake*?” Du Bouchet had characterised the work as “illisible” (Du Bouchet, 30).¹⁹⁸ The notion of *FW*'s *illisibilité/unreadability* is to be found in writings and discussions from the 1960s and 1970s by Susan Sontag,¹⁹⁹ Philippe Sollers,²⁰⁰ Julia Kristeva,²⁰¹ Jacques Lacan,²⁰² and Alain Robbe-Grillet²⁰³ among others.²⁰⁴ Derrida also employed the term in his writings, but never with respect to *FW*.²⁰⁵ It is ironic in this regard when the introduction of the “Joyce in Progress” section in *Tel Quel* 54 (Summer 1973) asked, “[w]hy this reputation of unreadability [...] for an oeuvre so clear (form and meaning)?” (NDLR, 3; my trans.).

The notion of *illisibilité* was transferred into the U.S. American discourse by Jonathan Culler. In his highly influential *Structuralist Poetics* (1975), Culler translated Barthes's notion of the *texte scriptible* as the *unreadable* text.²⁰⁶ His reference in *Structuralist Poetics* to *FW*'s supposed unreadability (Culler, *Poetics*, 106) linked Joyce's work with Barthes's concept.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁸ The notion of Joyce's “unreadable” texts had already been evoked by contemporary critics (see fn. 27 above). In France the notion had been voiced before as well. Louis Gillet had written in an article in 1940: “[A] text so charged with meanings, where the author creates each word and where it is necessary always to be hypercritical, becomes practically unreadable [*devient pratiquement illisible* (Gillet, “*Finnegan's*,” 109)]” (Deming, *Joyce*², 729).

¹⁹⁹ Susan Sontag had been the first to relate the supposed *illisibilité* of the *nouveaux romanciers*, “a whole school [...] of unreadable novels is being produced in France” (Sontag, “Necessary,” 262), to *Finnegans Wake*, “the first great example, and still the purest” of a literary work “not meant to be read” (ibid.) as she writes, in her essay “Is the Reader Necessary?": “*Finnegan's Wake* [sic] is not meant to be read at all; it is meant to be read about, talked about, written about. By this I don't mean to say that Joyce did not intend anybody to read it. On the contrary, he expected his readers to devote their whole lives to it. But this is just the point. Just what proves it to be, by ordinary standards, unreadable” (ibid.). Sontag revised this essay into “Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel” in which she refers to *FW* as “still largely unread and unreadable” (Sontag, “Sarraute,” 103).

²⁰⁰ In “Le roman et l'expérience des limites,” Philippe Sollers said with reference to *Finnegans Wake*: “In Joyce, legibility is created in the very heart of illegibility [*l'illisible*]” (Sollers, “Novel,” 70; cf. Sollers, “Roman,” 28). Sollers also refers to the “illisibilité” of Joyce in “Joyce et Cie” (see Sollers, “Cie,” 16).

²⁰¹ Julia Kristeva refers to Joyce as “illisible” in “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman” (see Kristeva, “Bakhtine,” 446; and Kristeva, “Le mot,” 152).

²⁰² Lacan refers to the *illisibilité* of Joyce in his “Sinthome” seminar: “Because it is quite a task to imagine the reason why Joyce is so unreadable. If he is so unreadable, it is perhaps because he arouses no sympathy in us” (Lacan, *Sinthome*, 151; trans. in Thurston, 61; I quote from Luke Thurston's unpublished translation of Lacan's seminar “Le sinthome” by permission of the translator). He gives yet another spin to it through his notion of “l'écrit comme pas-à-lire” (Lacan, “Postface,” 252).

²⁰³ In a panel discussion about the contemporary novel, which was part of the “Colloque international sur le roman contemporain” at Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, in 1978, Alain Robbe-Grillet referred to *FW* as “illisible” (Robbe-Grillet et al., 53).

²⁰⁴ Hugh Kenner wrote in *Dublin's Joyce* about *FW* that it is “in the lay sense Joyce's most unreadable book” (Kenner, *Dublin's*, 325). In a footnote Wayne C. Booth refers to *FW* as “this unreadable work” (Booth, 301 n. 26). *Illeggibilità* (“unreadability”) was also one of the major themes in the debate on the novels of the Italian *neovanguardia* in the 1960s (see Contarini, 105).

²⁰⁵ The earliest instance occurs in “Edmond Jabès et la question du livre” (Derrida, “Jabès,” 114). In “La parole soufflée,” Derrida quotes Antonin Artaud's words from “Manifeste pour un théâtre avorté” (1927): “Tout ce qui appartient à l'illisibilité ... nous voulons le voir ... triompher sur une scène ...” (qtd. in Derrida, “Soufflée,” 60).

²⁰⁶ In his 1974 English translation of *S/Z*, Richard Miller had translated *scriptible* as *writerly*.

²⁰⁷ See also Rabaté, “Lapsus,” 97.

The notion is present, almost as a matter of course, in the introduction to the essay collection *Post-Structuralist Joyce*: “[T]he aim is not to produce a *reading* of this intractable text [*FW*], to make it more familiar and exorcise its strangeness, but on the contrary to confront its unreadability” (Attridge and Ferrer, “Introduction,” 10).²⁰⁸ Today, the notion turns up even in introductions to *Finnegans Wake* editions. Seamus Deane begins his introduction for the Penguin Books edition from 1992 with the statement “The first thing to say about *Finnegans Wake* is that it is, in an important sense, unreadable” (Deane, “Introduction,” vii). John Bishop begins his introduction to the Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics edition from 1999 with a similar *caveat lector*: “There is no agreement [...] whether [...] [*FW*] is, in any ordinary sense of the word, ‘readable’” (Bishop, “Introduction,” vii).²⁰⁹ Just as the topos of difficulty became constitutive of the very definition of Modernism, so *illisible* became the epithet of the *nouvelle écriture tel-quelien*.

Tel Quel’s promotion of a *nouvelle écriture*, marked by the intricacy and the ‘materiality’ of language, and its valorisation of *illisibilité* made the name James Joyce and the title *Finnegans Wake* common references in the writings of its contributors. Philippe Sollers, who probably wrote the introduction to the 1973 “Joyce in Progress” section of *Tel Quel* 54, referred to Joyce’s as “[t]he most important work of twentieth century literature” (NDLR, 3; my trans.).

The first references to Joyce in the writings of those theorists loosely associated with the label “French literary theory” who discussed Joyce’s works, almost all fall into the first half of the 1960s. Lacan’s first reference to Joyce is notably early in this respect, it occurs in 1957 in the first published version of his lecture “Le séminaire sur ‘La Lettre volée,’” given in April 1955, which appeared in *La psychanalyse* in 1957 and in a different version in *Écrits* (see Lacan, “Lettre,” 35). Derrida refers to Joyce in 1962 in his first published work, namely in the introduction to his translation of Husserl, *L’origine de la géométrie* (see Derrida, “Introduction,” 104, 107). Sollers, who founded *Tel Quel* in 1960, first mentions Joyce in his essay “L’œil écoute” from 1962 (see Sollers, “L’œil,” 162). Cixous’s and Kristeva’s earliest references to Joyce come in 1964. Cixous’s article – then published under her maiden name Hélène Berger – “Stephen, Hamlet, Will: Joyce par delà Shakespeare” appeared in *Études anglaises*. Kristeva’s article, published in the Bulgarian student magazine *Rodna rech* a year before she moved to France, is an analysis of Western literature still demonstrating the typical

²⁰⁸ Interestingly, Derek Attridge, one of the authors of the introduction, has published a volume entitled *How to Read Joyce* in 2007.

²⁰⁹ *Ulysses*, too, has been called “an icon of the unreadable” in Alan Gilsenan’s documentary “Controversy and Censorship: *Ulysses* in the Public Eye” from 2004.

bias towards Joyce's works of much Marxist criticism of the first half of the twentieth century (see Filipova, 241).

All of these theorists presented important studies of Joyce and/or referred to him as an emblem of a radical *écriture* in the period between 1966 and 1984, effecting a shift in the terms and concepts of the symbolic production.²¹⁰ Following the recent fashion of Sartrean biography, Cixous began a *thèse de doctorat d'État* on the biography of Joyce in the early 1960s; it was published in 1968 under the title *L'exil de James Joyce, ou l'art du remplacement*.²¹¹ Her central thesis is – corresponding to Ellmann's – “to Joyce life and art are consubstantial” (Cixous, *The Exile*, xii; cf. Cixous, *L'exil*, 19). Cixous's volume is as copious in the treatment of its subject as Ellmann's biography – both works are approximately 850 pages long.

Although one finds in Kristeva and Sollers only a few extended discussions of Joyce, they do refer to Joyce in numerous writings. It would thus be utterly wrong to underestimate the significance of their championing of Joyce for the discourse on literature of the time as well as for the symbolic production of *FW* and *U*. Their most extended discussions are Sollers's contribution at the James Joyce Symposium of 1975, “Joyce et Cie” and his shorter “La voix de Joyce” in his *Théorie des exceptions* from 1986, and Kristeva's paper on *Ulysses* at the 1984 Joyce Symposium “Joyce ‘the Gracehoper’ ou le retour d'Orphée.” In her earlier seminal writings Joyce serves, for instance, as model of a *roman polyphonique* (“polyphonic novel”) in the Bakhtinian sense in “Le mot, le dialogue et le roman” (1967) (see Kristeva, “Le mot,” 152) and as a revolutionary instance of *la pratique signifiante “texte”* (“text-practice”) in *La révolution du langage poétique* (1974) (see Kristeva, *La révolution*, 98); in both their writings “the name Joyce” always functions “as emblem of the most radical aspects of twentieth-century literature” (Kristeva, *Revolution*, 82).²¹²

In his review of Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* from 1964, Sollers regards Mallarmé and Joyce as a beginning (see Sollers, “Deleuze,” 95 n.). His first published pronouncement on Joyce exceeding mere reference is a tribute to Joyce in an issue of the *Figaro Littéraire* from January 1966, the year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, where he wrote:

²¹⁰ Although his work does not fit conveniently into the category “French theory,” Umberto Eco's *Opera aperta* from 1962 represents a starting point in this respect. The publication of two translated extracts from this study mark the earliest appearance of the subject ‘Joyce’ in *Tel Quel*; they appeared in the issues 11 (1962) and 12 (1963) under the title “Le Moyen-âge de James Joyce.” It is perhaps with reference to these extracts from Eco that Jean-Louis Houdebine has suggested that “the name Joyce was inscribed from the beginning in the history of *Tel Quel*” (Houdebine, 35). Eco's contribution is discussed in more detail in chapter II below.

²¹¹ Cixous was a pupil of Jean-Jacques Mayoux, professor of English literature at the Sorbonne, who is credited by Sam Slote as “the principal exponent of Joyce in the French academy” in the 1960s (Slote, “Après 1,” 374). The same claim has been made for Jean Paris (see Lernout, *French*, 113).

²¹² Kristeva's view of the link between Joyce's work and her concept of intertextuality is discussed in more detail in chapter III below. For a discussion of Kristeva's treatment of Joyce see also Becker-Leckrone, 90-134.

The revolutionary aspect of Joyce is really to be at the opposite of all precocious and muddled ‘Modernism’. It becomes more and more clear (and a recent book such as Umberto Eco’s *L’œuvre ouverte* is already the sign) that the meaning of books like *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* is to be found in a double aspect: that of *language* that can not be self-sufficient anymore (within a pre-established rhetoric), but this relativises itself in a work ever more radically [...] consisting in/relating to/directed at *l’écriture*; and that of the ‘totality’ of our world and of our thinking which is more than ever called into question (with the entire Greco-Roman culture). (Sollers, “Réfléchi,” 9; my trans.)

In “Le roman et l’expérience des limites,” a paper given in 1965 and published in *Tel Quel* 25 in 1966, and included in Sollers’s *Logiques* from 1968, Sollers asserts that Proust, Joyce and Kafka were “revolutionary” writers and claims that the *nouveaux romanciers* must “accomplish what was embryonic in these three authors” (Sollers, “Novel,” 59). “[T]he limits these authors reach in their writing,” writes Sollers, “signal [...] a rupture which we pretend [...] to recognize by the name *avant-garde*, in order to avoid seeing it” (ibid., 64). About *FW* he writes: “In Joyce, legibility is created in the very heart of illegibility [*l’illisible*] [...]. The limit reached by *Finnegans Wake* is paramount: the reader is put in the position of becoming the deciphering act which can never be definitive and global but which manifests itself as circular metamorphosis and sliding [*glissement*]” (ibid., 70).

Lacan’s extended discussion of Joyce comprises the paper he presented at the 1975 Joyce Symposium which anticipated the issues of his twenty-third *Séminaire*, which in turn took place from November 1975 to May 1976.²¹³ Through his study of Joyce, Lacan reconsidered and substantially redefined his concepts of *symptôme* (*/sinthome*) and *jouissance* and their relation and further elaborated his discussion of the Borromean knot.²¹⁴ In *Finnegans Wake*, he recognises an “opaque *jouissance* of excluding sense” (Lacan, “Joyce II,” 36; my trans.) and declares that “this *jouissance* is the only thing of his text that we can get hold of” (Lacan, “Joyce I,” 27; my trans.). Two years before, in his *Séminaire XX* (1972-73), Lacan had already reflected on the similarity of the language of *Finnegans Wake* and the subject-matter of analytic discourse, the slip of the tongue.

It is not surprising that Derrida, whose near-definition of deconstruction reads “plus d’une langue” (Derrida, *Mémoires*, 15), called Joyce “a great landmark in the history of deconstruction” (Derrida et al., 26). Already in his early critical engagement with Husserl,

²¹³ Lacan’s *Séminaire XXIII* was published in book form only in 2005 under the title *Le sinthome*.

²¹⁴ For a somewhat more detailed discussion of Lacan’s ‘reading’ of Joyce see Rößler.

Joyce served Derrida as a paradigm of equivocity, as the antipole of Husserl's pursuit of univocity (see Derrida, "Introduction," 104). Yet, he presented his readings of Joyce only two decades later, in the 1980s. "Deux mots pour Joyce," his discussion of *FW*, was a presentation given during the centennial celebrations "Pour James Joyce" at the Centre Georges-Pompidou in 1982. His second contribution, "*Ulysse* gramophone," was the paper he presented at the 1984 Joyce Symposium. In his two talks Derrida uses the metaphorical image of Joyce's later texts as computer or "literary 'software'" (Derrida, "Two," 148) programed to appropriate everything, reinscribing it, and thereby to anticipate everything, inscribing its readers and critics in advance (see *ibid.*, 147f; see also Derrida, "*Ulysses*," 48).²¹⁵ In "*Ulysse* gramophone" Derrida speaks in this regard of *Ulysses* as an "overpotentialized text" (Derrida, "*Ulysses*," 48), a text which has "already [...] anticipated [...] the scene about academic competence and the ingenuity of metadiscourse" (*ibid.*).

In "Deux mots pour Joyce," Derrida states that the equivocality of writing in *FW* "talks several languages at once, parasiting them" (Derrida, "Two," 149). In other words, *FW* plays with the coincidences within and across the different linguistic systems, "something that has been woven by the accidents of history" (qtd. in trans. in Rabaté, *Cambridge*, 161; cf. Lacan, "Joyce I," 26) as Lacan once perplexedly remarked, which stem from the limited number of letters and sounds which many languages share.²¹⁶ Derrida suggests that the act of translation – necessary as it is – is not only difficult but that it inevitably reappropriates the text of *FW* into one language; while the text manifests many languages, we "fail to translate the multiplicity of languages" (Derrida, "Two," 155), we "erase" this multiplicity (see *ibid.*):

So what happens when one tries to translate this [...] [phrase "he war" (*FW* 258.12)]? It is impossible not to want to do it, to want violently – and reading

²¹⁵ Slavoj Žižek has described this quality thus: "The 'modernism' of Joyce resides in the fact that his works – at least *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* – are not simply external to their interpretation but, as it were, take into account in advance their possible interpretations, and enter into dialogue with them. In so far as an interpretation or a theoretical explanation of a work of art endeavours to 'frame' its object, one can say that this modernist dialectics provides another example of how the frame is always included in, is a part of, the framed content: in modernism, theory about the work is comprised in the work, the work is a kind of preemptive strike at possible theories about itself" (Žižek, 12). In *The Limits of Interpretation*, Eco describes *FW* as "a sort of computer which has received the input of all available knowledge and which returns an output of new connections effected among the various elements of this knowledge" (Eco, *Limits*, 147). Derrida's computer/software metaphor – computer technology, and perhaps here things come full circle, was also considered 'a great landmark in the history of deconstruction' by Derrida (see Kittler, 219) – seems reminiscent of Gilles Deleuze's assertion that "the modern work of art is a machine and functions as such" (Deleuze, "Machine," 145; see also Foucault, *Death*, 51-75); with reference to *Finnegans Wake* Deleuze had spoken of a "machine for producing epiphanies" (*ibid.*, 155) and resonances (*ibid.*, 151). Stanislaw Lem has exploited the notion of computers being the only ideal readers of works such as *U* and *FW* in a virtuoso manner in his short piece "Patrick Hannahan *Gigamesh*" (see Lem).

²¹⁶ In this sense, what Jonathan Culler has said about the 'unsettling' effect of puns holds true for *FW*'s blends as well: "To groan at puns, one might conjecture, is viscerally to reaffirm a distinction between essence and accident, between meaningful relations and coincidence, that has seemed fundamental to our thinking" (Culler, "Phoneme," 4).

itself consists, from its very first movement, in sketching out translation. [It] calls for translation, both orders and forbids transposition into the other language. Change me (into yourself) and above all do not touch me, read and do not read, say and do not say otherwise what I have said [...]. And the call to translate rejects you: thou shalt not translate me. [...] Beyond immense difficulties, a limit remains essential. [...] The essential limit [...] pertains to the graft [...] of one language onto the body of another. (ibid., 154f)

He explains the impossibility of adequate translation thus: “The translation of a Babelism involving at least two languages would demand an equivalent which would restore not only all the semantic and formal potentialities [...], but also the multiplicity of languages in it, the *coition* of that event” (ibid., 156).

It may not be so surprising in the face of his philosophical project that Derrida expressed his feeling that Joyce had “‘read us all – and pillaged us’ [...] [r]ead and pillaged in advance” (ibid., 151) – and that in this statement a trace of Bloomian “belatedness” seems to reverberate (see also ibid., 148),²¹⁷ or rather of the notion of a pre-empting. Derrida speaks of Joyce “setting up a hypermnesiac machine, there in advance, decades in advance, to compute you, control you, forbid you the slightest inaugural syllable because you can say nothing that is not programmed on this 1000th generation computer” (ibid., 147), refers to “this hypermnesia which *a priori* indebts you, and in advance inscribes you in the book you are reading” (ibid.), and suggests that “everything we can say after it [*FW*] [...] is already comprehended by it” (ibid., 149), etc., because no matter how ingenious or ‘against the grain’ a reading – and the classic so-called deconstructive readings are usually at least that – of a given passage of *FW* is, no matter how elaborate imaginative associations are tied together, in the end the certainty required to believe that the passage is *not* ‘always already’ devised to be read this way is deflated by the disillusion caused by the experience of the overwhelming signifying potential of the text. No matter how original and rich the reader’s contribution to the text, the reader will always be left with the feeling that s/he only actualised what the signifying potential provides, that the contribution was ‘always already’ part of the text’s design. The text simply makes the delusion of originality and, still less, adequacy of interpretation unavailable.

²¹⁷ The reference here is to the notion of belatedness in Harold Bloom’s writings of the 1970s. One could, by the same token, speak of the belatedness of the Joyce of *FW*, as originator of its language, with respect to Francesco Colonna, Johann Fischart, Lewis Carroll, and Velimir Khlebnikov.

Furthermore, in so far as deconstruction can be said to be a practice/attitude/performance,²¹⁸ perhaps available to Derrida alone, which illustrates how language itself defies our assumptions, by producing an “irreducible remainder or excess” which “escapes any gathering in a hermeneutic” (Derrida, “Rams,” 149), in particular those rooted in what is assumed to be the all-pervasive metaphysics of presence – a practice, to use Derrida’s own words, focusing on “read[ing] literature more thoroughly by attending to it *as language*, as the production of meaning through *différance* and dissemination” (Derrida, “Deconstruction,” 174)²¹⁹ – it seemed to be inevitable that Derrida should have felt “[r]ead and pillaged in advance” by Joyce (Derrida, “Two,” 151), since in *FW* the possibility of such a practice of reading appears to be already inscribed.²²⁰

Since the theorists mentioned did not publish extended discussions of Joyce before 1975, the first recognisably post-structuralist reading of Joyce, predictably a reading of *FW*, was Stephen Heath’s “Ambiviolences: Notes pour la lecture de Joyce,” published in *Tel Quel* 50 and 51 in 1972.²²¹ It was written at the prompting of Sollers and was “intended to serve as something of an introductory approach to Joyce for the *Tel Quel* of the time” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 31). In this piece, Barthes’s pupil Heath employs premises and a diction that would become characteristic for post-structuralist readings: “[A] text such as *Finnegans Wake* is not to be read according to a process of unification. The text is not homogenous, but ceaselessly discontinuous, a hesitation of meaning into the perpetual ‘later’” (ibid., 32).²²² Heath describes “Joyce’s writing” as “a constant attention to language in which the limits of communication are undone in the spreading out of a play of the signifier in the passage

²¹⁸ In other words, if one does not consider it something that is ‘always already’ at play (see Derrida, *Mémoires*, 123f).

²¹⁹ Derek Attridge has described deconstructive criticism as a criticism that “would weave itself through the text being read, and weave that text through itself, and thread other texts through both, in a patient and careful movement of displacement and dissemination, at once exposing and destabilizing, however momentarily, the boundaries and hierarchies that have enabled the text to be pinned into (and to serve as a reinforcement of) an ideology or a metaphysics that denies it its specificity, its inexhaustibility, its unrecoverable otherness” (Attridge, “Deconstructive,” 26).

²²⁰ Derrida acknowledged as much when he claimed that “every time I write, and even in the most academic pieces of work, Joyce’s ghost is always coming on board” (Derrida, “Two,” 149), emphasising the ‘omnipresence’ of “[o]ne who ha[d] [almost] faded into impalpability [...] through [near] absence” (U9.147-148) in Derrida’s writings in the two decades between 1962 and 1982. As for his thinking about literary texts, Derrida has focused on such texts, which, according to him, “implement, in their very movement, the demonstration and practical deconstruction of the *representation* that was made of literature” (Derrida, *Positions*, 69).

²²¹ In *The French Joyce*, Geert Lernout has suggested that the appendix to Cixous’s *L’exil de James Joyce*, “Thoth et l’écriture” from 1968, and her “Joyce, la ruse de l’écriture” from 1970 (*Poétique* 4 (419-432), trans. as “Joyce: The Ruse of Writing” in Attridge and Ferrer, *Post-Structuralist*) are early examples of post-structuralist readings of Joyce as well.

²²² Heath’s (who was a pupil of Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, and Roland Barthes) and Jonathan Culler’s courses at Cambridge and Frank Kermode’s graduate seminar at University College London were the seedbeds for “French theory” in the conservative landscape of Britain’s English departments in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

through the ceaseless productions of which may be grasped ‘the drive of meaning’” (ibid., 52). Defining *FW* as “a narrative of language” (ibid.), Heath understands it as “a writing of fragmentation and hesitation in the detours of which, changing language in language, the area of the production of meaning, of the engendering of sense and its subject, may be grasped in its activity” (ibid., 50). Since “Joyce’s writing is obliged to effect a constant activity of refusal of available meanings, explications, discursive forms” (ibid., 34), “[t]he text is never closed and the ‘ideal reader’ will be the one who accedes to the play of this incompleteness, placed in ‘a situation of writing’, ready no longer to master the text but now to become its actor” (ibid., 32).²²³

It is symptomatic of the delays of “travelling theory” that Heath’s post-structuralist study – the term *post-structuralist* was of course not yet in use in 1972²²⁴ – in *Tel Quel*, the main references of which are, not surprisingly, the *Tel Quel* contributors Kristeva, Sollers, Barthes, and Derrida, appeared at the same time as Robert Scholes presented a (self-proclaimed) structuralist reading of *Ulysses*.²²⁵ Post-structuralist ideas erupted onto the scene of the “the Joyce industry” in the mid-1970s – although occasionally certain French names

²²³ In his *The Nouveau Roman: A Study in the Practice of Writing*, published in the same year, Heath posits that “it is only ‘with Derrida’ that our reading of Joyce becomes contemporary with the text” (Heath, *Nouveau*, 204 n. 75). He defines the “situation” of the nouveau roman as “post-Joyce”: “Its situation is that work of textual reactivation in which the work of Joyce represents so important a stage” (ibid., 29).

²²⁴ The term *post(-)structuralist*, in today’s sense, began to appear in print in the 1970s. Its common usage occurred only in the 1980s. It seems to have appeared in print for the first time in Frank Kermode’s piece “The Conference Game” (originally a BBC Radio 3 transmission broadcasted in Dec. 1970, it was published in printed form in *The Listener* in early 1971), in which Kermode refers to the “post-structuralist methodologies of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida and the whole *Tel Quel* group” (Kermode, “Conference,” 240). Around the same time, George Steiner referred to “recent French ‘post-structuralism’” (Steiner, “Mandarin,” 8) in his review of the English translation of Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses*. Jeffrey Mehlman, then one of the editors of *Diacritics*, used the term in 1972 (see Mehlman, 21). Hayden White referred to Foucault as a “post-Structuralist” (White, 24) in 1973. Richard A. Macksey, one of the organisers of the 1966 Symposium at Johns Hopkins, made use of the term in his piece “The Consciousness of the Critic” in 1974. Here Macksey implies that the term is in broader use when he refers to the present as “an age when it seems to be a reflex of mind to call anything that moves either ‘structuralist’ or ‘poststructuralist’” (Macksey, 313). Murray Krieger used the full range of terms, “post-structuralisms,” “post-structuralist,” and “post-structuralism,” in his introduction to the summer 1976 special issue of *Contemporary Literature* (17.3), entitled “Directions for Criticism: Structuralism and its Alternatives” (see Krieger), which was published in book form under that title a year later. In 1979, Josué Harari’s *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* appeared (Harari had been a member of the student committee of the 1966 Johns Hopkins conference), the first book which carried the term in its title. Even in *Diacritics* the term appeared more frequently only from 1976 on. (This overview is based on searches of the databases MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, Project Muse, and Periodicals Archive Online).

²²⁵ Scholes’s “*Ulysses: A Structuralist Perspective*” appeared in *James Joyce Quarterly*; it was later included in his *Structuralism in Literature*. Scholes considers Joyce a structuralist *avant la lettre*, particularly with reference to his later works, asserting that “Joyce’s later work can not only be seen more clearly from a structuralist perspective but [...] it is structuralist in its outlook and methodology” (Scholes, 166). Scholes’s is an attempt to “look at certain representative aspects of *Ulysses* in the light of a few structuralist notions derived from Saussurean linguistics and the genetic epistemology of Jean Piaget” (ibid.); there is one fleeting reference to Lévi-Strauss. The basis of his discussion is a definition of structure by Jean Piaget in his *Le structuralisme* (the English translation of which appeared in 1970), which comprises, according to Piaget, “the idea of wholeness, the idea of transformation, and the idea of self-regulation” (qtd. in trans. in ibid.). The “structuralist notions” Scholes refers to are the terms *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* which he applies in order to describe *Ulysses*.

surfaced in articles, Heath's piece and *Tel Quel* as a whole had remained unnoticed – and it would take a decade for the majority of those who found themselves suddenly to be regarded as 'traditionalists' to absorb it. In 1975, with Lacan and Sollers as keynote speakers at the Fifth International James Joyce Symposium at Paris, the participants witnessed a clash of U.S. American academic Joyce criticism and the avant-gardism of *Tel Quel* and of Lacan's theories (see Aubert and Jolas; cf. Levine, 17, 26 n. 1). Then 'the French Joyce' and 'the American Joyce' still operated in two entirely different spheres. While considerable effort had been put into the critical project of making Joyce 'readable' on the part of 'traditional criticism,' Joyce's appeal to the *tel-quelien*s rested to a great degree on his image as being *illisible*. In a sense, Jennifer Levine's "Rejoycings in *Tel Quel*" in the "Structuralist/Reader Response Issue" of the *James Joyce Quarterly*, published in 1979, was the official sign that U.S. American Joyce criticism had come to acknowledge the "'new'" (Levine, 17) 'French Joyce' and began to come to grips with it.²²⁶ By 1984, the year in which the volume *Post-Structuralist Joyce* appeared (see Attridge and Ferrer, *Post-Structuralist*),²²⁷ post-structuralist views had become established in U.S. American Joyce criticism and thus the keynotes given by Derrida and Kristeva at the Ninth International James Joyce Symposium, which took place in that year, took place in a different context than the ones given by Lacan and Sollers a decade earlier (see Beja et al.; cf. Benstock, *Ninth*).²²⁸ In this respect the particular significance which is attached to these names and positions within the symbolic production of Joyce's works has a lot to do with the broad impact of literary theory in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond.

If the paradigms of literary theory discussed here, the New Criticism, structuralism, and post-structuralism, have something in common, it can generally be said to be their primary concern with language – a focus which was certainly not counter-productive for the study of *FW*. In this respect, and in their de-emphasis of contexts such as biographical, sociological, historical, psychological, etc., they can – in a simplifying way – be said to be

²²⁶ Margot Norris's 1976 study *The Decentered Universe* was an early U.S. American appropriation of some of the premises of post-structuralism but it was on the whole not as close to the *tel-quelien* ideas as Heath's pieces were and as, though to a lesser extent, Colin MacCabe's *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* from 1978.

²²⁷ This volume furthered the reception of French post-structuralist Joyce criticism. Translations of French papers by Derrida, Cixous, Heath, and Rabaté among others appeared here for the first time. It is a telling aspect of the 'signs of the times' that an Englishman like Heath did not feel the need to translate his *Tel Quel* articles into English, neither would Jean-Louis Houdebine do later; and French 'Joyce critics' like Jean-Michel Rabaté and Daniel Ferrer began to publish articles in English only in the 1980s.

²²⁸ The context of post-structuralism still seems to be a fertile ground for studies of Joyce in the same way that post-structuralist theories and works are read in the context of Joycean influence as recent publications such as Ruben Borg's *The Measureless Time of Joyce, Deleuze and Derrida* (2007), Peter Mahon's *Imagining Joyce and Derrida: Between Finnegans Wake and Glas* (2007), and Sheldon Brivic's *Joyce through Lacan and Žižek: Explorations* (2008) illustrate.

differing aspects of a general formalism prevalent in twentieth-century Western thinking about literature.²²⁹ A further feature of the New Criticism and post-structuralism in particular may be considered influential, namely what may be termed, following John Guillory, “the valorization of difficulty” (Guillory, 169), the appreciation of intricacy and complexity, that has influenced for some time the academic study of literature. If the New Criticism and post-structuralism are discussed in this chapter rather than other types of literary theory, such as New Historicism, the various forms of cultural studies, or genetic criticism, the reason is that the former were unquestionably more influential with regard to the reader position in *FW*.

The numerous commentaries and commentators which have contributed to the symbolic production of *FW*, and of which the first chapter has discussed some of the more important and in various senses paradigmatic ones, are co-producers of the accumulation and concentration of value judgements, of disapproval and appreciation, of study and analysis, of reference and research, of dispute and consensus, of theoretical involvement and public perception that *FW* represents as a work of art and has represented at various stages of its reception history and ‘production history.’ Joyce’s place in the canon today as the epitome of literary Modernism has resulted in a prestige of his works, in particular the later works, conferred upon few other writers. Rodolphe Gasché has gone so far as to suggest that the term *postmodern* means “post-Joycean writing” to literary critics (see Gasché, 111). It is not unreasonable to suspect that this prestige is to a large degree the consequence of “the valorisation of difficulty.” Leslie Fiedler confessed this lure of the difficult in his address given at the Second Joyce Symposium, held in 1969, when he spoke of his youthful “desire to make it into a world which excluded me by proving myself in possession of a work [*Ulysses*] too difficult to be available to others” (Fiedler, 23). The image of Joyce and his works is one of highbrow literature. It is evident when Derrida speaks of Joyce’s as a “polymathic work” (Derrida, “*Ulysses*,” 46). It is evident in the 1955 photograph of Marilyn Monroe reading *Ulysses*. It is evident when Richard Brown, analysing the photograph, speaks of *Ulysses* as “a kind of Everest for readerly intellectual achievement” (Brown, 172). It is evident when in an introductory volume for students *FW* is referred to as “one of the most complex literary works of the twentieth century” (Bulson, 100). And it is evident too when Pericles Lewis writes in his entry on *FW* in *The Modernism Lab*, a Yale online student resource project, “The novel

²²⁹ This tendency began, strictly speaking, with Russian Formalism in the mid-1910s. Yet, this is not meant to ignore the fundamental differences between these paradigms. New Criticism can for instance be situated, without any qualification, within the scope of hermeneutics, whereas structuralism, and post-structuralism tend to be critical of hermeneutics. The New Criticism also lacks recourse to theories of language and linguistics which characterise structuralism and post-structuralism, albeit very differently inflected theories of language in each case.

[*FW*] [...] is best read by a group of highly educated people, each one of whom may be able to understand some fragment of this often incomprehensible magnum opus” (P. Lewis, “*Finnegans*”).²³⁰ And yet, *FW* remains a work with an awkward standing with respect to the syllabus. A look at current university syllabi in the United States shows that it is ‘taught’ in seminars – and not only by those comparatively few professors and junior researchers whose research focus lies on *Finnegans Wake*. But it is certainly not overstated to say that in the sum of university syllabi the work plays a negligible role.²³¹

The process of canonisation and the prestige linked with it does of course have a mutual effect for the writer’s work and for the critic’s work. The writer’s work, upon which critics confer prestige, can in turn become, once its place in the canon is firmly established, the source for the prestige of the literary critic. Thus, for the critic Joyce’s place in the canon can be a source of what Pierre Bourdieu, in *Homo Academicus*, refers to as the capital of “intellectual prestige” (see Bourdieu, *Academicus*, 53, 238). In this case, intellectual prestige, which is, according to Bourdieu, a specific form of cultural capital, is based on the general recognition of the pre-eminent position of a writer within the canon and is conferred upon the critic through his/her study of the writer’s work. In a larger context this concerns the specialisation within the discipline, what is often referred to as the research focus, field, or profile. Frank statements about such questions of prestige are rare. Geert Lernout has expressed as much when he said, “It is obvious, I think, that to be a Joycean entails a considerable amount of prestige in most English departments (Joyce is the most difficult of modern writers), especially in the States and in most European countries with the possible exception of the United Kingdom” (Lernout, “Tertium,” 185). One need only contrast this statement with one made by Tolkien scholar Jane Chance to realise the dimensions of the issue: “Some of my colleagues in the English Department at Rice [University] laugh when my course on Tolkien is brought up – they think he is a joke” (Chance). She writes, “I am sure that I have been dismissed on occasion by some medievalists as lightweight because of my interest in him, or that my other work in some other way has been trivialized” (ibid.) and suspects that “[t]his is probably a holdover from the day when anything popular was regarded by the academic world as crass and lacking in quality or depth” (ibid.).

Readers rarely approach works like *FW* without being aware of, and influenced in one way or another by, the work’s reputation. Its reputation may be considered a caricature – and

²³⁰ One of the effects of the process of canonisation is that there are hardly critics any more who adopt a mainly critical attitude of Joyce’s later works; but see Dettmar’s comments on *FW* (Dettmar, 209-217).

²³¹ One symptom of its ‘unfitness’ for university seminars are the non-existent student editions, student introductions, student guides, casebooks, SparkNotes and CliffsNotes that do exist for *Ulysses*.

yet a powerful one – of what its symbolic production amounts to. In other words, it is derived from the exaggeration of features which are assumed to be characteristic of the work. It is in this exaggerated and contracted form (of reputation) that the symbolic production influences the position of the reader at first. The more aware of the scope of the symbolic production the reader becomes, the more independent will be his·her position from this initial influence. Put another way, the more competent in critical reading the reader is, the more aware s·he will be of these influences and the more s·he will be in a position to call the presuppositions into question.

While the present chapter considers the influence of the symbolic production on the reader position, the following chapter is concerned with the influence of the factor text on the reader position by analysing the process of reading pertaining to *FW*. Considering the reading of *WiP/FW* Joyce may well have felt with Saint Augustine that “it is much more [...] rewarding to discover meanings that are won only with difficulty” (Augustine, 63). Be that as it may, in a century when an increasing part of literature became an intellectual challenge and demanded an ever more active reader’s mind, Joyce’s works, in particular *U* and *FW*, left many bewildered about the dimension which the invitation to participate in ‘making’ them assumed. In this sense, the ‘birth of the (*FW*) reader’ coincides with the “synthetic writer” prevailing over the “analytic writer” as they have been defined by Friedrich Schlegel. Schlegel formulated in fragment no. 112 of his *Kritische Fragmente*, published in 1797:

The analytic writer observes the reader, what he is like; then he calculates, starts his machines, in order to achieve the desired effect. The synthetic writer constructs and creates for himself a reader as a reader should be; he imagines his reader not as passive and dead, but as alive and cooperative. The writer allows what he has created to grow in stages before the reader’s eyes or entices him to create it himself. He does not set out to have a particular effect on the reader, but rather he enters with the reader into the sacred relationship of deepest sym-philosophy and sym-poetry. (Schlegel, “Fragments,” 161; my trans.²³²)

²³² My translation follows to a great extent Jauß’s translation of the passage (see Jauß, “Retrospective,” 62) but departs from it in a few instances.

II. READING AS PERFORMANCE: BETWEEN PROCESSING AND PERFORMING
FINNEGANS WAKE

*Reading is already translating [...].*²³³
(Gadamer, "Sprache," 91; my trans.²³⁴)

[R]eading itself consists, from its very first movement, in sketching out translation.
(Derrida, "Two," 154)

For better or worse, we have to change the Wake into what it is not.
(Senn, "Dogmad," 115)

Finnegans Wake challenges the internalized structures of aesthetic perception and constitution of meaning so thoroughly that the text [...] becomes paradigmatic for a fundamentally new interaction with readers.
(Schwab, *Subjects*, 227)

If in *Ulysses* "the reader's involvement in the text is a matter of the utmost importance" (Iser, "Ulysses and the Reader," 135), as Wolfgang Iser writes, in *FW* it is yet more crucial, and peculiar. It is the aim of this chapter to examine this fact and to develop a mode of analysis which allows for taking the special position of the reader of *FW* into account. This is necessitated by the inadequacy of the two most promising theories of the reading process, namely Umberto Eco's and Wolfgang Iser's, in the face of *FW* as explained in the following section. The linguistic idiosyncrasies of the text (such as the devices of lexical distortion, of the lexical blend, and of obfuscation) and its *minus functions* (see below) have profound effects on the reader position which this chapter analyses.

The first discussion which approached the issue of the reader's position in *WiP/FW* in a more or less analytical way was John Rodker's contribution to the Fall 1928 issue of *transition*, "The Word Structure of Work in Progress" (rpt. in *Exag* as "Joyce & His Dynamic"). Starting from the question how literary communication functions, Rodker claims that author and reader "use words and these words and the meanings commonly attached to them, provoke in the reader associations" which can be said to be customary (Rodker, "Dynamic," 141). "Yet," Rodker continues, in a line of thought strikingly similar to the notion

²³³ George Steiner regards translation as "conditio humana" (Steiner, "Translation," 1), saying that "[e]very language act is a translation": "Any articulation of semantic material [...] necessitates decipherment by the recipient. [...] [I]t must be decoded, which is to say transposed into terms available to the receiver. At every structural and functional step, such transposition is equivalent to translation" (ibid.). Steiner refers to translation as "the reciprocal decipherment of semantic intentionality" (ibid.).

²³⁴ Gadamer's statement is missing in the translation of this essay which appeared as a supplement in the second edition of the English translation *Truth and Method*.

of *Leerstellen* and *Konkretisation* developed by Ingarden in the late 1920s and elaborated by Iser, “the reader is susceptible to contacts profounder than those [...], indeed he commonly supplies them to complete the author’s indications which for a multitude of reasons the author has found himself unable or unwilling to fill in” (ibid., 141f).²³⁵ Positing that language is “affective” (ibid., 142), Rodker explains that in Joyce’s method of word formation

any word, however unjustifiable and nonsensical it may seem, moves the mind to an attempt to visualise that word. The new term borrows from and consequently lends to the term it apes, the abortive associations which accompany it cannot but enrich with their frustrated vibrations the term which was the basis of the invention. (ibid.)

Joyce, Rodker concludes, “because of his pursuit of the innumerable paths of association by means of all the word-ways capable of delimiting them [...] brings to fruition what was foreshadowed in *Ulysses*; the possibility of a complete symbiosis of reader and writer” (ibid., 143). He adds, “the only obstacle which now remains being the inadequacy of the reader’s sphere of reference – not to the emotional content – but to the ideas, objects and events given” (ibid.). The focus of his argument thus lies on the contribution of the readers and on the associative potential of Joyce’s coinages.

Even in one of Northrop Frye’s essays on *FW* from the 1950s, the ‘turn’ to the *factor* reader, as one who *does*, who performs something which the work effectively provokes, can be sensed. Declaring, in his “Quest and Cycle in *Finnegans Wake*,” in which he compares Joyce and Blake, that *FW* belongs to the epic tradition and that one of the major elements of epic fiction is the quest of the hero, Frye writes

Who then is the hero who achieves the quest [in *FW*]? [...] Eventually it dawns on us that it is the *reader* who achieves the quest, the reader who, to the extent that he masters the book of ‘Doublends Jined,’ is in a position to look down on its rotation, and see its total form as something more than rotation. [...] [L]eaving it to the ‘ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia’, as Joyce calls him, to reforge the broken links between myth and consciousness. (Frye, “*Finnegans*,” 113)

²³⁵ Thus there is a notion of the active contribution of the reader in the act of reading as early as 1928, i.e. before Ingarden and Rosenblatt and long before Sartre, Castellet, and Eco. And yet, given the issues facing readers of Joyce’s last works this insight is not surprising; it is really provoked by the experience of these texts. Thus it is equally futile to suggest that Robert M. Adams ‘anticipated’ Iser when he writes in 1962 about “Joyce’s penchant for building his novels around a series of holes in the pattern of reader-information” (Adams, *Surface*, 26), or that Margaret Schlauch did so in 1939 by writing “The reader or listener [of Joyce] is expected to perform some minor part of the creative act. He is required to fill in lacunae, supply links, embroider upon associations, rearrange the cunningly separated elements of a single pattern” (Schlauch, 490).

1. Eco's and Iser's Theories of Reading: Theories of Reading *Finnegans Wake*?

The 'turn' to the *factor* reader and the theorising of this factor is closely linked to the names Umberto Eco and Wolfgang Iser. In their expositions of their 'theories of reading' they frequently refer to *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses* respectively. And yet, *FW* in particular represents a challenge to these theories, illustrating the boundaries of their explanatory potential.

1.1 Umberto Eco's Poetics of the Open Work

What may have initially drawn the medievalist Umberto Eco to James Joyce – the writer whom he considers to be essentially “medievally minded” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 6) and, as he wrote, “the node where the Middle Ages and the avant-garde meet” (Eco, “Author’s Note,” xi) – is their common Catholic background.²³⁶ Eco reads Joyce’s works as the narrative of an apostasy – a reading that should be viewed in the context of Eco’s own spiritual development. In addition, both shared an interest in the aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas. In Joyce’s *A Portrait*, Stephen derives his aesthetic theory from Aquinas. Eco wrote his dissertation on Aquinas’s aesthetics, published in 1956 as *Il problema estetico in San Tommaso*, and references to Joyce’s works surface here already (see Eco, *Problema*, 87f n. 29, 88f n. 35, 132).

FW would eventually play an essential part in Eco’s conception of the “open work” as developed in the same-titled book *Opera aperta*, published in 1962.²³⁷ Here Eco describes what he perceives to be the aesthetics of indeterminacy in modern art – as the subtitle *Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* suggests – and develops a theory of aesthetic communication and of interpretation. It is a critique of Croce’s aesthetics influenced by the ideas of Luigi Pareyson. Predating his turn to semiotics, which will mark his career as theorist from *La struttura assente* onward, and acquaintance with Jakobson’s and Lévi-Strauss’s ideas,²³⁸ but already marked by forays into information theory, *Opera aperta* owes

²³⁶ The following section, i.e. II.1.1, has been published before as part of my article “*Finnegans Wake* as Proving Ground for Theory and Agent Provocateur in Literary Studies” (see Rößler).

²³⁷ The English version of *Opera aperta* is a partial translation and a revised and enlarged edition of the Italian original; it was published under the title *The Open Work* only in 1989. The English collection of various translated essays of Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, published in 1979, contains the translation of the first chapter of *Opera aperta*, entitled “The Poetics of the Open Work.”

²³⁸ I am referring to the year of publication of the first edition of *Opera aperta* here.

its significance to the elaboration of the concept of “openness” and to its emphasis on ‘the role of the reader’ in the ‘co-production’ of the literary work.

In this respect Eco’s perspective anticipated U.S. American reader-response criticism and German *Rezeptionsästhetik* (“aesthetics of reception”) which both had their ‘founding year’ in 1967.²³⁹ In his last lecture, entitled, in English translation, “The Theory of Reception: A Retrospective of its Unrecognized Prehistory,” Hans Robert Jauß acknowledged Eco’s contribution to the development of reception theories by crediting him for “draft[ing] the first theory of an open, constantly progressing constitution of meaning, a theory by which the work of art, seen as an open structure, requires the active co-production of the recipient” (Jauß, “Retrospective,” 66). According to Jauß, *Opera aperta* marks the beginning of the debate on ‘the reader’ as well as the rediscovery of the communicative function of literature (see *ibid.*, 65). Yet, Eco has never considered himself belonging to the field of reception theories; in the retrospective of *Lector in fabula* he labels *Opera aperta* an unwitting example of text pragmatics.

Through the concept of openness, Eco endeavours to account for what he perceives to be the pervasive presence of disorder, deliberate and systematic ambiguity and indeterminacy in modern works of art: “[N]owadays it is primarily the artist who is *aware* of its [the poetics of the open work’s] implications. In fact, rather than submit to the ‘openness’ as an inescapable element of artistic interpretation, he subsumes it into a positive aspect of his production, recasting the work so as to expose it to the maximum possible ‘opening’” (Eco, *Open Work*, 4f; emphasis added). Eco refers to the state of the arts in general; he introduces his study of openness with references to works by composers such as Luciano Berio, Henri Pousseur, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez and by the sculptor Alexander Calder. For Berio, whom Eco had introduced to *Ulysses*, and Boulez in particular Joyce’s works became influential (see Klein); John Cage is mentioned by Eco only in the second edition (see Eco, *Aperta*², 212ff). The transition to the deliberate composition of open literary texts begins, in Eco’s view, with the French Symbolists Verlaine and Mallarmé. Kafka’s and Brecht’s works are also mentioned as notable instances of openness but Eco’s great paradigm is Joyce’s work in which he engages at length in *Opera aperta*; his study thus constitutes a critical juncture in the symbolic production of *FW*.

²³⁹ In that year, Hans Robert Jauß gave his inaugural lecture at Constance, “Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Literaturgeschichte?” (published under the title “Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft” and translated as “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*), and Stanley Fish’s *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* appeared.

That it has become a common critical notion should not hide the fact that Eco's concept of openness was going against the grain of structuralist notions of the time. After the French translation *L'œuvre ouverte* appeared in 1965, Claude Lévi-Strauss criticised Eco's position by emphasising closure as a defining feature of works of art: "*What makes a work of art a work is not its being open but its being closed. A work of art is an object endowed with precise properties and [it possesses], as it were, the rigidity of a crystal*" (qtd. in trans. in Bondanella, 25, emphasis added; cf. Caruso, 81f).²⁴⁰ Consequently, in his preface to the second edition Eco is eager to emphasise that his study is not to be understood as structuralist (see Eco, *Aperta*², 13).

Eco differentiates three levels of openness of works of art. The most extreme form of the open work is the *opera in movimento* 'work in movement' (Eco, *Open Work*, 12ff), the openness of which allows the interpreter to "complete" it him·her·self (ibid., 19); such works are characterised by the invitation to "make the work together with the author" (ibid., 21). He regards the idea behind Mallarmé's *Livre* (ibid., 12) and the works of the aforementioned composers and sculptors as belonging into that category. Eco's study is primarily concerned with the second level of openness: "works, which though organically completed, are 'open' to a continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of incoming stimuli" (ibid., 21). With reference to *Finnegans Wake* he writes: "[T]he work is *finite* in one sense, but in another sense it is *unlimited*" (ibid., 10), i.e. unlimited in terms of its openness. Finally, Eco refers in a more general sense to the fundamental openness of every work of art, "effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings" (ibid., 21).

The openness of modern works of art requires a different kind of reception effort: "a particularly independent cooperation on behalf of the recipient, often a reconstruction, always variable, of the offered material" (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 85; my trans.²⁴¹) that makes use of the "full emotional and imaginative resources of the interpreter" (Eco, *Open Work*, 9). In putting the emphasis on the recipient as "active principal of interpretation" (Eco, "Introduction," 4), Eco reevaluates 'the role of the reader' within the discourse of literary theory.

The continuous elaboration of his concepts is a crucial feature of Eco's work in the field of literary theory – as illustrated by the revision of *Opera aperta* in the second and fourth edition of 1967 and 1976 – spanning four decades from the late 1950s to the late 1990s. *Finnegans Wake* remains a point of reference in a number of his various 'theory' works of

²⁴⁰ Eco had his turn when he dismissed Lévi-Strauss's, and Lacan's, work as "ontological structuralism," essentialist in its premises, in *La struttura assente*.

²⁴¹ The English translation in Eco, *Open Work* (p. 44) is not accurate enough here.

that time. From the idea, first conceived in *Opera aperta*, that “the text postulates the co-operation of the reader as a condition of its actualization” (Caesar, 122f), Eco arrives at the conclusion that “the text is a product whose ‘interpretative fate’ must be part” (ibid., 123) of its generative process, as formulated in the two works published in 1979, namely *The Role of the Reader* and *Lector in fabula*. In the former, Eco defines the open text as “a paramount instance of a syntactic-semantic-pragmatic device whose *foreseen* interpretation is a part of its generative process” (Eco, “Introduction,” 3). In this respect, open texts are only the “extreme and most provocative exploitation – for poetic purposes – of a principle which rules *both the generation and the interpretation* of texts in general” (ibid., 4f; emphasis added).

Although the distinction between “*apertura*” ‘openness’ and “*chiusura*” ‘closure’ (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 30) is already present in the first edition of *Opera aperta*, Eco elaborated on the relationship between open and closed texts (*opera chiusa*) only in *The Role of the Reader*. His 1965 essay “Le strutture narrative in Fleming” represents Eco’s first analysis of a closed text. According to Eco, the closed text is characterised by limiting *itself* its potential area of response. Closed texts are defined as texts that “obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers” (Eco, “Introduction,” 7); such texts are in fact “open to any possible ‘aberrant’ decoding” (ibid.). Eco’s examples of closed texts in *The Role of the Reader* are taken from popular culture, for instance, Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels and the Superman comic books. It was held against him that this juxtaposition tends to be normative (see Eco, *Aperta*², 9).

One often finds Eco’s distinction between open and closed texts cited in connection with Roland Barthes’s distinction between *writerly* (*scriptible*) and *readerly* (*lisible*) texts and *text of bliss* (*texte de jouissance*) and *text of pleasure* (*texte de plaisir*). Although it is based on a very different idea of textuality, Barthes’s characterisation of the *writerly* resembles Eco’s concept in its notion that “the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text” (Barthes, *S/Z*², 4). In *The Role of the Reader* (Eco, “Introduction,” 40), Eco himself mentions Barthes’s notion of *texte de jouissance* as if it were synonymous with his concept of open texts. And yet, Barthes’s is an ambiguous concept, intentionally so, vaguely hovering between the idea of writing as act and process, i.e. excluding “finished” works, and the idea of a descriptive category of literary works approaching what Eco calls “work in movement.”

The issue of interpretation is one of the major concerns in Eco’s theoretical writings. The notions of *intentio operis* and “limits of interpretation” addressed in the following

passage, in which he describes the mode of operation of the open text, are fundamental to Eco's theory of interpretation:

An author can foresee an ideal reader [...], able to master different codes and eager to deal with the text as with a maze of many issues. But in the last analysis what matters is not the various issues in themselves but the maze-like structure of the text. You cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it be, cannot afford whatever interpretation. (ibid., 9)

His emphasis on the limits of possible interpretations has to be understood as a reaction to deconstructionist readings which he criticises for constituting an "any-reading-goes"-stance, in other words what he perceives to be *overinterpretation* (see Eco, *Limits*, 148). The difference between Eco's and Derrida's view of signification and meaning is evident in their diverging readings of Charles Sanders Peirce. A simplified description of Peirce's idea of "unlimited semiosis," vital to Eco's semiotic theory, would be the following: The meaning of every sign can only be understood through another sign, its "interpretant," as Peirce calls the second sign, which, in turn, can only be understood through yet another sign, and so on ad infinitum. While Derrida sees in Peirce a precursor to his own project (see Derrida, *Grammatologie*, 71), Eco assumes a pragmatic end of unlimited semiosis in the consensual agreement of the community of readers on privileging one interpretation over another (see Eco, *Limits*, 39ff; see also Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 143).

In Eco's view, the theoretically infinite interpretability of any literary text is constrained by a community or culture and by the necessity on part of the interpreter to consider the text's intention. Even though it is "difficult to say whether an interpretation is a good one, or not" (Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 144), Eco believes in the idea of privileged interpretations. In *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, he explains his understanding of *intentio operis*:

The text's intention is not displayed by the textual surface. Or, if it is displayed, it is so in the sense of the purloined letter. One has to decide to 'see' it. Thus it is possible to speak of the text's intention only as a result of a conjecture on the part of the reader. The initiative of the reader basically consists in making a conjecture about the text's intention. (ibid., 64)

Eco's emphasis on 'the role of the reader' in *Opera aperta* seemed outlandish in the landscape of literary studies in the early 1960s. It would become mainstream only in the reader response- and Constance School-influenced 1970s. In *The Role of the Reader* and in

Lector in fabula, Eco elaborates his theory of the reader to include the concept of the *lettore modello* ‘model reader’ to conceptualise the reader’s presence in the text. One can hardly fail to notice the similarities to Iser’s concept of the *implied reader*. Eco explicitly mentions Joyce’s ‘reference’ to an “ideal reader” of his work as an inspiration for his concept (see Eco, *Limits*, 46). In *Lector in fabula* he writes the author must “foresee a model of the possible reader supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them” (qtd. in trans. in Bondanella, 90). One has to keep in mind here that ‘author’ in Eco’s theory is “nothing else but a textual strategy establishing semantic correlations and activating the Model Reader” (Eco, “Introduction,” 11).

The assumption is that “[a]t the minimal level, every type of text explicitly selects a very general model of possible reader” (ibid., 7).²⁴² Eco suggests, that a text “presupposes a model of competence” (ibid., 8) *coming from* the reader but at the same time the text “*creates* the competence of its MR [Model Reader]” (ibid., 7). A lucid articulation of this communicative scheme author – text – reader, conceptualised by Eco to explain the production and interpretation of a text, is to be found in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Here Eco writes:

A text is a device conceived in order to produce his Model Reader. I repeat that this reader is not the one who makes the ‘only right’ conjecture. A text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures. The empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text. Since the intention of the text is basically to produce a Model Reader able to make conjectures about it, the initiative of the Model Reader consists in figuring out a Model Author that is not the empirical one and that, in the end, coincides with the intention of the text. (Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 64)

The last part of *Opera aperta* is a comprehensive study of Joyce’s works.²⁴³ In writing *Finnegans Wake* Eco sees Joyce establishing “a principle [...] that would govern the entire development of contemporary art,” namely its splitting up into “two separate universes of discourse” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 86).²⁴⁴ Joyce has added a second one to the traditional content-

²⁴² Later Eco conceived of texts as producing model readers at two levels (see Eco, *Limits*, 55).

²⁴³ Since Eco’s study of Joyce’s poetics was published separately, in revised form, as *Le poetiche di Joyce: Dalla ‘Summa’ al ‘Finnegans Wake’* in 1966, it is not included in the subsequent editions of *Opera aperta*. The English translation, a revised version of *Le poetiche*, was published as *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce* in 1982 and reprinted in the wake of the publication of *The Open Work* in 1989.

²⁴⁴ *FW* also became a point of reference for the Italian avant-garde circle “Gruppo 63” (see Eco, *On Literature*, 123), co-founded by Eco in the year following the publication of *Opera aperta*. Mario Diacono’s ‘translation’ of two pages of *FW* appeared in 1961, Alfredo Giuliani’s poetry was influenced by *FW*, and Luigi Schenoni’s

driven discourse, one that “carries out, at the level of its own technical structures, a type of absolutely formal discourse” (ibid.). Eco characterises *Finnegans Wake* as being “itself a metaphor for the process of unlimited semiosis” (Eco, *Role*, 70) and as a work that “seems to instantiate such notions as ‘infinite regression’” (Eco, *Limits* 142). He describes *Finnegans Wake*, his model of an open text, as

in a sense unlimited. Each occurrence, each word stands in a series of possible relations with all the others in the text. According to the semantic choice which we make in the case of one unit so goes the way we interpret all the other units in the text. [...] The principle tool for this all-pervading ambiguity is the pun, the calembour, by which two, three, or even ten different etymological roots are combined in such a way that a single word can set up a knot of different submeanings [here the English translation misses the point of “nodo di significati” (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 36); the translation should be *meanings*, not *submeanings*], each of which in turn coincides and interrelates with other local allusions, which are themselves ‘open’ to new configurations and probabilities of interpretation. (Eco, *Open Work*, 10)

At the same time, he emphasises that this principle of operation does not imply that the work lacks specific sense.

Referring to the model reader which the text presupposes, Eco writes: “The model reader of *Finnegans Wake* is that operator able to simultaneously realise the maximal number of overlapping readings” (Eco, *Lector*, 58f; my trans.). He adds: “As regards those kind of readers that are not postulated by the text and to the generation of which it does not contribute, the text becomes unreadable [...] or it becomes another book altogether” (ibid., 59; my trans.). *Finnegans Wake* “foresees, demands, and requires a model reader endowed with an infinite competence, superior to the empirical author James Joyce – a reader able to discover allusions and semantic connections even where they escaped the notice of the empirical author” (Eco, *Six Walks*, 109f). One of the elements of the medieval aesthetic that Eco identifies in the later Joyce is what he refers to as “il gusto del *labor* interpretativo” (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 347) ‘the joy of the interpretive effort,’ namely “the idea of aesthetic pleasure, not as the flashing exercise of an intuitive faculty but as a process of intelligence that deciphers and reasons, enraptured by the difficulty of communication” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 81).

Given Eco’s subsequent insistence on the limits of interpretation, his identification of *Finnegans Wake* as “the most terrifying document of formal instability and semantic

¹ ‘translations’ of parts of *FW* appeared between 1974 and 2004. For an overview of Joyce’s influence on Gruppo 63 see Zanotti, 351-357.

ambiguity that we possess” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 61; cf. Eco, *Aperta*¹, 311) in *Opera aperta* may not come as a surprise. At the same time, Eco – marvelling at the scope of Joyce’s offer to participate in making his last work – appreciates Joyce’s courage to leave his readers “free and responsible in the face of the provocation caused by chaos and its possibility” (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 361; my trans.).

1.2 Wolfgang Iser’s Theory of the Act of Reading

Wolfgang Iser, arguably one of the pre-eminent German theorists of literature, developed and elaborated his *Wirkungsästhetik* (theory of aesthetic effect and response) in his writings of the 1970s. Iser’s aim was to give a phenomenological description of the reading process, or in Iser’s words “to construct a heuristic model of the activities basic to text-processing” (Iser et al., 61). The starting point for Iser’s theory of aesthetic response is the phenomenological aesthetics of Roman Ingarden, a Husserl pupil, as developed in Ingarden’s *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (trans. as *The Literary Work of Art*) published in 1931. Following Ingarden’s concepts of *Unbestimmtheitsstellen* ‘places of indeterminacy’ and *Konkretisation* ‘concretisation’ of literary works (see Ingarden, *Work of Art*, 249-252, 332-343; cf. Ingarden, *Kunstwerk*, 253-257, 343-356),²⁴⁵ Iser’s theory, which elevates *Unbestimmtheit* ‘indeterminacy’ into the fundamental category of literary works, assumes that *Leerstellen* (commonly translated as “gaps” or “blanks”)²⁴⁶ within the text open up a scope of interpretation and thus allow the reader to contribute to the constitution of meaning (see e.g. Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 236).²⁴⁷ Iser’s work from this period constantly emphasises that “the constitution of the meaning of the text [...] [is] a distinctive activity of the reader” (Iser, *Implizite*, 7; my trans.). The central claim in his early programmatic essay “Die Appellstruktur

²⁴⁵ One of the stimulating passages for Iser in Ingarden reads: “[T]he reader usually *goes beyond* what is simply presented by the text (or projected by it) and in various respects *completes* the represented objectivities, so that at least some of the spots of indeterminacy are removed” (Ingarden, *Work of Art*, 252).

²⁴⁶ The term *Leerstelle* was already used by Ingarden. On the issue of the term’s translation see Thomas, 56f.

²⁴⁷ Iser first formulates these ideas in 1969 in his inaugural lecture at Universität Konstanz, entitled “Die Appellstruktur der Texte: Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa.” It was first published under this title in the series *Konstanzer Universitätsreden* in 1970. “Indeterminacy and the Reader’s Response in Prose Fiction” is the revised, English version. It appeared in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (Ed. Hillis Miller) in 1971 and is included in Iser’s *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*. In the German version Iser wrote: “It are the *Leerstellen* which allow the contribution to the *Mitvollzug* [“cooperation or a cofilfillment; literally, it is a coexecution in the sense of a cocarrying out” (Merleau-Ponty, 185)] and to the constitution of meaning of the *Geschehen* in the first place” (Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 236; my trans.).

der Texte,” and in the following works in which he elaborated his theory, such as *Der implizite Leser* from 1972 (trans. as *The Implied Reader*, 1974) and *Der Akt des Lesens* from 1976 (trans. as *The Act of Reading*, 1978), is that “meanings in literary texts are generated in the act of reading; they are the product of a complex interaction between text and reader” (Iser, “Indeterminacy,” 5); to this statement Iser adds, against what was the still dominant *Werkästhetik* in the tradition of, for instance, Wolfgang Kayser and Emil Staiger, that these meanings are precisely “not qualities that are hidden in the text” whose tracing is exclusively reserved for interpretation (ibid.; cf. Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 229). Iser regards literary texts as “networks of structured meaning potential which the reader actualizes in the act of reading, thus constituting meaning from the perspective interplay of textual schemata” (Iser, “Reply,” 37).

As Eco did in *Opera aperta*, Iser considers “indeterminacy [...] the fundamental precondition for reader participation” (Iser, “Indeterminacy,” 10; cf. Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 236, 247). According to Iser,

the indeterminate elements of literary prose – perhaps even of all literature – represent a vital link between text and reader. They are the switch that activates the reader into using his own ideas to fulfill the intention of the text. This means that they are the basis for a textual structure in which the reader’s part is already incorporated. (Iser, “Indeterminacy,” 28)

And yet one of the fundamental differences between *Opera aperta* and *Der Akt des Lesens* is to be found in the declared scope of these studies. Eco’s study is one of avant-garde art, in which he considers indeterminacy to be the overriding aspect. In contrast, Iser’s aim is to describe indeterminacy as a fundamental feature of all prose works.²⁴⁸ Of course, Iser also points out that the degrees of indeterminacy vary from one work to another and in general have increased since the eighteenth century (see ibid., 6) so that some ‘modern’ works in particular are exceedingly indeterminate. Iser, who considers *Ulysses* and *FW* exemplary texts of indeterminacy (see ibid., 9, 27; cf. Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 235, 246), refers quite often to Joyce and Beckett in *Der Akt des Lesens*, but the majority of references are to Fielding, the subject of his dissertation. Iser is of course aware that it is Modernist literature and the developments in literature which it effected which ultimately “led to a change of paradigm in literary theory” (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 134), namely to the ‘turn to the reader.’

Curiously, there are two different lines of argument present in Iser’s writing. On the one hand, he emphasises the significance of indeterminacy, in particular of texts like *Ulysses*

²⁴⁸ Iser has explained his exclusive focus on prose texts by stating that “narrative texts provide the greatest variety of facets pertinent to an analysis of the act of reading” (Iser et al., 65).

and Beckett's, on the other hand, he speaks of texts that "go too far" in this respect. In this notion of the text 'going too far' in its indeterminacy may really lie the explanation for one of the peculiar lacunae in Iser's writing, namely *FW*. In "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" Iser writes,

A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative. In this process of creativity, the text may either not go far enough, or may go too far, so we may say that boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play. (Iser, "Reading Process," 275)

When Iser speaks in "Die Appellstruktur der Texte" of "some modern texts" (Iser, "Indeterminacy," 27), such as Beckett's, in which "indeterminacy exceeds the reader's limit of tolerance" (ibid., 6; cf. Iser, "Appellstruktur," 247),²⁴⁹ he clearly does it not to dismiss them but to emphasise the particular quality of Beckett's texts which he, just as obviously, holds in high regard. The same holds true for *Ulysses*, which Iser describes as "a key work of modern art" (Iser "Ulysses and the Reader," 136) and a "revolutionary work" (ibid., 139).²⁵⁰ But *FW* may just be that text which, for the reader Iser, goes too far – or does it rather go too far for Iser the theorist? Given his high regard for *Ulysses* and for Beckett's texts and given the fact of his knowledge, at least since the late 1970s, of the German translation of Eco's *Opera aperta*,²⁵¹ how is the disregard of *FW* in Iser's writings of the 1970s and 1980s to be explained?²⁵² The reason for this, one is tempted to speculate, may lie in his theory's claim to give a phenomenological description of the reading process, which must necessarily be applicable to all literary prose texts. Yet, a work like *FW*, which presents its readers with a challenge that is quite peculiar to it, certainly constitutes a challenge for the scope of such a theory. Iser's description of the reading process throughout *Der Akt des Lesens* is based on the presupposition of narratological categories being in effect; for instance, what Iser calls the

²⁴⁹ Interestingly, in the first 'defence' of WiP, Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul had written that Joyce had done "a great deal to restore to the act of reading its integral and proper pleasures and to submerge extraneous moral, social and other values in an artistic composition" (Jolas and Paul, 177; emphasis added).

²⁵⁰ Iser published his first article on Joyce, an analysis of the parody of styles in "Oxen in the Sun," in 1964; he revised this and extended it into a part of *Der implizite Leser* (see ch. 7 and 8 in *The Implied Reader*).

²⁵¹ The German translation of *Opera aperta*, entitled *Das offene Kunstwerk*, appeared in 1973. Iser first refers to it in *The Act of Reading* from 1978.

²⁵² After all, Iser did mention the work in his "Die Appellstruktur der Texte" (see Iser, "Indeterminacy," 9; cf. Iser, "Appellstruktur," 235) along with *Ulysses* in the context of the "over-precision of the grid of representation" (Iser, "Appellstruktur," 235; my trans.): "[T]he more a text tries to be precise (i.e. the more 'schematized views' it offers), the greater will be the number of gaps between the views. Classic examples of this are the last novels of Joyce, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, where the overprecision of the presentation ["Überpräzisierung des Darstellungsrasters" (ibid.)] gives rise to a proportionate increase in indeterminacy" (Iser, "Indeterminacy," 9). It is doubtful if this statement is valid in the case of *FW*.

‘vehicles’ of textual perspectives (“*Perspektivträger*”), namely narrator, characters, and plot (see Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, 164). Once a text like *FW* which appears to defy such categories has to be described in the theory’s terms, the explanatory power of the theory wanes.²⁵³

A further reason for the failure of both Iser’s and Eco’s theories to yield satisfying results in the face of a text like *FW* concerns the category of the implied reader, or model reader. Like Eco’s model reader, Iser’s model of the implied reader allowed him to conceive the “act of reading [as] being inscribed in the text” (Iser, *Implizite*, 9; my trans.):

He [the implied reader] embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect – predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader. (Iser, *Act of Reading*, 34)

Both Iser’s and Eco’s theories face the same difficulty. Iser’s description of the reading process assumes a comprehending subject/reader. The respective chapter in *Der Akt des Lesens* speaks, as in its subtitle, of “Erfassungsakte” (e.g. Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, 177) (“acts of comprehension”), translated in *The Act of Reading* as “Grasping a Text.” It thus cannot adequately describe the position of a reader which is characterised more often than not by failure to comprehend – that is, the position of a *FW* reader. Once something like an implied reader, or model reader, is ‘derived’ from the text, as Iser and, later, Eco do, then one faces the dilemma, in the case of *FW*, that one really describes a reader position which bears little to no relation to the position of real readers – as the model reader is *per definitionem*, i.e. according to Iser’s and Eco’s own definitions, that hypothetical construct which, being part of the text’s structure, *understands* the text.²⁵⁴ If the indeterminacy of a prose text exceeds a certain degree, such heuristic constructs as model reader and implied reader become less useful for the explanation of the reading process. Eco’s theory becomes more or less useless,

²⁵³ If Iser’s theory, in contrast to Eco’s, is not given a more detailed description here this has two reasons. Firstly, Eco’s theory is developed, at least to some extent, against the background of *FW*, which makes it more pertinent for the discussion at hand. Secondly, as stated above *FW* eludes description through the categories in which Iser conceives the reading process because these categories were developed on the basis of considerably less indeterminate texts.

²⁵⁴ Iser’s definition of the implied reader contains the statement “there must be inscribed into the text conditions of actualisation which allow for the constitution of *the meaning of the text* in the mind of the receiver” (Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, 61; my trans., emphasis added). And even if Eco writes at one point “this reader is not the one who makes the ‘only right’ conjecture. A text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures” (Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 64), it becomes apparent in his definitions (quoted above) that the model reader is characterised by that “infinite competence” of adequate actualisation. Terry Eagleton has pointed out that the concept of the ideal reader was for those who made use of it “a convenient heuristic [...] fiction” (Eagleton, 105), “absolved from all limiting social determinants” as Eagleton adds (*ibid.*), “for determining what it would take to read a particular text ‘properly’” (*ibid.*).

at least for the explanation of the reading process in the case of *FW*, at the very moment it cannot but postulate that the model reader of *FW* is that operator “endowed with an infinite competence, superior to the empirical author James Joyce – a reader able to discover allusions and semantic connections even where they escaped the notice of the empirical author” (Eco, *Six Walks*, 109f). The logical, albeit absurd, consequence of this position is that for “those kind of readers that are not postulated by the text and to the generation of which it does not contribute, the text becomes unreadable [...] or it becomes another book altogether” (Eco, *Lector*, 59; my trans.). Here Eco’s originally reader-centred theory of meaning constitution is caught up by its strong grounding in a ‘text-centredness’ and thus loses its explanatory potential in the face of exceedingly indeterminate texts.

Although Iser does not provide a description of the reading process of exceedingly indeterminate texts, his outlines of “‘minus functions’” (see Iser, *Act of Reading*, 207-212) and of the effects of the “secondary negations” of Beckett’s texts (see *ibid.*, 222-224) may serve as an indication of how Iser might have conceived the issue of *FW*. The adaptation of Yuri Lotman’s concept of *минус-прием* (minus-priem, “minus-device”) (see Lotman, 49, 52f), which in *The Act of Reading* becomes *minus function* and is considered to be a type of gap, is probably the most pertinent aspect of Iser’s study with respect to *FW*. Here Iser writes:

It is typical of modern texts that they invoke expected functions in order to transform them into blanks. This is mostly brought about by a deliberate omission of generic features that have been firmly established by the tradition of the genre. Thus the narrator’s perspective now denies the reader the orientation it traditionally offered as regards evaluation of characters and events; the character perspective loses the traditional linear plot that enabled it to bring out values and norms incorporated in the characters. (Iser, *Act of Reading*, 208)

In this way the Modernist text does not “fulfill its traditionally expected functions, but instead uses its technique to transform expected functions into ‘minus functions’ – which is the deliberate omission of a generic technique – in order to invoke their nonfulfillment in the conscious mind of the reader” (*ibid.*, 207f). It is in this “mode of communication” that Iser sees the *Leerstelle* “assum[ing] its full significance”: “In negating techniques expected for the structuring of the text, it acts as a matrix for the productivity sparked in the reader” (*ibid.*, 211). As a consequence of readers’ realisation of the *minus functions*, they are “constrained to abandon all [their] familiar means of access to the text” (*ibid.*). As they become aware of the “provisional and experimental” (*ibid.*) nature of their interpretive decisions, all of these are

subject to reorientation (see *ibid.*). What the Modernist texts through their *minus functions* thus effect is, according to Iser, the following:

1. It gives rise to a mode of communication through which the openness of the world [...] is transferred in its very openness into the reader's conscious mind.
2. This mode of communication becomes operative through the incessant invalidation of established connections caused by the range of the possible alternatives [...], so that the reader experiences the historicity of his own standpoints through the act of reading itself.
3. This experience corresponds to the openness of the world, and so the serial variations constantly turn definitive, current, and given world-views into mere possibilities of how the world can be experienced. The content of these possibilities remains largely undefined [...], for any precise definition can only be made against the background of openness, and so must inevitably lead to an awareness of its conditionality and hence of its own limitations. (*ibid.*, 211f)

While Beckett's texts are effective in very different ways than *FW*,²⁵⁵ some of Iser's conclusions with respect to the former are valid for the latter as well; for instance when Iser writes that through "this use of language the reader is forced continually to cancel the meanings he has formed, and through this negation he is made to observe the projective nature of all the meanings which the text has impelled him to produce" (*ibid.*, 223) and adds that "[t]his is the reason for the uneasiness which most Beckett readers feel" (*ibid.*). Likewise, the realisation of the historicity of our concept of meaning has been provoked already by *FW*:

Furthermore, the demand put on the reader to cancel his own projected meanings brings to light an expectation all readers cherish, in relation to the meaning of literary texts: meaning must ultimately resolve the tensions and conflicts brought about by the text. Classical and psychological aesthetics have always been at one over the postulate that the final resolution of initial tension in the work of art is coincidental with the emergence of meaning. With Beckett, however, we become aware that meaning as a relief from tension embodies an expectation of art which is historical in nature and consequently loses its claim to be normative. The density of negations not only lays bare the historicity of our concept of meaning but also reveals the defensive nature of such a traditional expectation – we obviously anticipate a meaning that will remove the illogicalities, conflicts, and, indeed, the whole contingency of the world in the literary work. To experience meaning as a defence, or as having a defensive structure, is, of course, also a meaning, which, however, the reader can only become conscious of when the traditional concept of meaning is invoked as a background, in order for it to be discredited. (*ibid.*)

²⁵⁵ It would be very difficult, for instance, to identify the "negations" in *FW* as Iser does with the texts of Faulkner and Beckett.

Had Iser considered *FW* more closely, it would have occurred to him that some of his statements about *Ulysses* in his essay “*Ulysses* and the Reader” from 1982 bear more relation to the situation of *FW*, both in 1982 and today, than they bore to *Ulysses* in 1982. This is the case when Iser writes that “[i]n *Ulysses*, the intention, message, and harmony either remain in the dark or are destroyed; if one tries to hold on to such frameworks, the work will appear chaotic, or a sort of hoax, or at the very best a labyrinth for the reader to lose himself in” (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 132). In addition, to *FW* even more than to *Ulysses* applies the following statement by Iser:

If traditional modes of interpretation are rendered helpless by *Ulysses*, this is because the novel dispenses with a basic concept that was virtually taken for granted throughout the history of interpretation: namely, that the work of art should represent reality. In spectacular fashion, *Ulysses* puts an end to representation and hence to the expectations produced by the typical nineteenth-century novel with its illusion of reality. (ibid., 133)

Having apparently abandoned representation, Iser regarded *Ulysses* as being conceivable only in terms of its *Wirkung* (response; but see Iser, *Act of Reading*, ix n. 1) (see Iser, “Joyces *Ulysses*,” 258). The much more radical project of putting an end to representation is however *FW* – at least if one conceives of representation in the way Iser does here. When Iser says of *Ulysses* “this indefatigable quest for an underlying organizational schema makes it evident that [...] the reader’s involvement in the text is a matter of the utmost importance” (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 135), the very issue he describes is much more urgently felt by readers of *FW*. In many ways, and perhaps on a greater scale than *Ulysses*, *FW* is “first and foremost a structure for eliciting responses and thereby engaging its readers” (ibid., 136).²⁵⁶

The very few statements which Iser did make about *FW* in the early 1990s reflect an almost post-structuralist perspective. In his project of a literary anthropology in *Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre* (1991; trans. as *The Fictive and the Imaginary*), Iser writes in his outline of “the fictionalizing act of combination” (Iser, *The Fictive*, 8) that in *FW*

lexical meanings are used to derestrict semantic limitations. The lexical meaning of a particular word is faded out and a new meaning faded in, without the loss of the original meaning. [...] [I]t is the instability of the references that produces the oscillating semantic spectrum, which cannot then be identified

²⁵⁶ In “Die Appellstruktur der Texte” Iser had written about the reading of *Ulysses*: “Here the act of reading constitutes itself as a constant process of selection from the abundance of the suggested aspects, for which the particular world of imagination of the reader supplies the criteria of selection. Thus, a lot has to be contributed in every reading for a meaning configuration to occur” (Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 246; my trans. (this passage has been omitted in the English translation)).

absolutely with any of its lexical components, though it cannot exist without the stability of each of them.²⁵⁷ (ibid., 7)

In the section headed “Games in the Text” Iser writes:

Something similar occurs with the signifier in *Finnegans Wake*. The contamination of signifiers strips each one of its convention-governed designations, with the result that as a ‘map’ such contaminated signifiers point to a ‘territory’ that never consolidates itself. One of the effects is to make any transcendental signified and the reciprocal reading of signifiers appear as manifestations of an obsolescent semiotics. Here the aleatory plays out the boundaries of the conceivable. (ibid., 270)

These late references to *FW* may have been due to Gabriele Schwab, one of Iser’s pupils. In her *Entgrenzungen und Entgrenzungsmymen* from 1987, which she revised into *Subjects Without Selves: Transitional Texts in Modern Fiction*, Schwab discusses *FW*, amongst other texts, from the perspective of reader response theory and psychoanalytic criticism. She points out how “[t]he cryptic form of the *Wake* [...] creates other conditions for reception. By refusing any ‘automatic’ constitution of meaning, it confronts one with the materiality of the text.” (Schwab, *Subjects*, 120). At the same time she suggests that in *FW* “[s]ignification becomes more open as the text offers multiple frames of reference and an unlimited pool of possible associations” (ibid., 101). Speaking of the use of “aesthetic devices that require a high degree of attention and reflexivity” (ibid., 99), she emphasises the peculiar position of the reader of *FW* and the radical break which it implies:

Finnegans Wake establishes a radical break in our reading habits. By refusing to provide a stable semantic orientation, a transparent narrative, or an immediately accessible meaning, Joyce’s text provokes a crisis of literary communication that radicalizes the disruptive communicative strategies of literary modernism. *Finnegans Wake* challenges the internalized structures of aesthetic perception and constitution of meaning so thoroughly that the text [...] becomes paradigmatic for a fundamentally new interaction with readers. (ibid., 227)

Schwab also points to the fact that the text does “allow for partial constitutions of meaning [...]. These partial meanings, however do not spontaneously fall within an overall pattern of understanding the text” (ibid., 120), not least because “[a] reading of *Finnegans*

²⁵⁷ This passage reads quite differently in the German original. In *FW*, Iser wrote here, “telescoping [...] is used to dissolve the semantic determinacy of the lexicon. The lexical meaning is faded out in order to be able to fade in an indexical meaning” (Iser, *Das Fiktive*, 28; my trans.).

Wake cannot rely on [...] narrative conventions” (ibid., 109): “[The] fissures and fault lines in the familiar grounds of our reading practices may not be sutured from a macrostructural perspective because the ordering principles of the *Wake*’s condensed macrostructure do not disclose themselves in the reading process and can at best only be reconstructed with an intense amount of intellectual labor” (ibid.).²⁵⁸

It becomes clear that Eco’s and Iser’s approaches to theorising ‘the reader’s’ activity in the process of literary communication fail to yield satisfying results when confronted with the intricacy of this activity in the case of *Finnegans Wake*. The following analysis examines some of the issues ensuing from this intricacy. The response which *FW* provokes is described by recourse to the terms *perform* and *performance* conceived in a broad sense, ranging from the aspect of the cognitive processes of meaning construction to the aspect of what is done with the text in group readings.

If such a profoundly familiar cognitive instrument like language – which we understand as integral part of our being human – is being manipulated in such a way that it constantly unsettles us in our desire to understand, the very fact justifies the questions how this is achieved, and how readers handle this situation and what it demands from them. The perceived immediacy of language comprehension – in the sense of reading *familiar* words even if they are used in creative ways – is disrupted in *FW*. Readers of the text are confronted with comprehension problems on all levels of language processing; due to the high frequency of neologisms and lexical distortions, word recognition alone is often a challenge.²⁵⁹ Regardless of their level of English proficiency, readers experience a lack of automaticity in word recognition.²⁶⁰ *FW*’s defamiliarised language is an impediment to the immediate identification of words, to the immediate processing of visual information, that we are

²⁵⁸ Regarding the question of a possible macro-structure of the text, Schwab oscillates between positing one and allocating a projection of one to the ‘activities’ of the reader: “One of the distinguishing features of the *Wake* is its peculiar relationship between parts and whole. While reading, one gains the impression that the parts refuse to be translated into a whole that contains them. Rather, they generate a network of wholes, which manifest themselves in a condensation of different macrostructures. Before it becomes perceivable, this condensation must be translated into conceivable layers of order. The network of fragmented and layered traces of an immense pool of narratives that are either encapsulated in the etymological history of certain words or generated by the abundant mirroring and echoing devices can be ordered according to a multidimensional system of axes. Each signifying element occupies numerous spaces on the axes. Moreover, the different axes themselves relate to each other in various ways without allowing one to subsume them under one metaorder. This whole system, however, can hardly be experienced and consciously identified during a regular reading” (Schwab, *Subjects*, 108).

²⁵⁹ It seems to be of little surprise that readers “tend to recognize high-frequency words more quickly and easily than low-frequency words” (Reeves et al., 167).

²⁶⁰ It is often said or implied in introductory volumes to *FW* that readers with extensive knowledge of European languages are better equipped to read the text. However, even a reader with profound knowledge of all the languages spoken in Central, Northern, Southern and Western Europe and knowledge of Gaelic would still find him·her·self in the same awkward position as those readers who have command of English alone.

otherwise used to – and more often than not even in the realm of literature.²⁶¹ It is certainly no exaggeration to claim that “[w]ord recognition is the foundation of the reading process” (Gough, 225). As is the case with many of our cognitive abilities, word recognition is often perceived as automatic and effortless by the majority of the population in so-called developed countries in the twenty-first century. The complexity of word recognition is only revealed when one seeks a ‘scientific’ description of the process as a look at the different theories and models of word recognition (see Roberts et al. 235-242) makes clear. The second and third parts of this chapter describe and explain some of the issues related to word recognition in *FW*.

2. Defamiliarised / Defamiliarising Words: The Lexical Blend

Legere = To gather together letters into a word, to read.
(Beckett, 11)

If Joyce could coin one kaleidoscopic word with an infinite series of meanings, a word saying everything in one instant yet leaving its infinity of meanings reverberating and mingling in the mind, he would have reached his ideal.
(Daiches, 148f)

[W]e have granted words a new importance. We realize that for Joyce they are matter, not manner. We begin to detach them and re-examine their syntactic, phonetic, and referential values.
(Levin, “Looking,” 701)

The most prominent form of neologism²⁶² and lexical distortion in *FW* is certainly the lexical blend.²⁶³ It has been identified by critics as “the principal tool for [the text’s] all-pervading

²⁶¹ The subtitle of this study is meant to emphasise the link between the implications of the phrase *to make sense* and the significance of the sense(s) of sight (and hearing), bringing to the fore “the ‘sensory’ sense of *sense*” (Cassin et al., “Sense / Meaning,” 963; emphasis added) and thus calling into play the concept of *aisthēsis* (see *ibid.*, 949-951), for the process of meaning construction pertaining to *FW*.

²⁶² *FW* defies categorisation in more than just the obvious ways. Although from the perspective of their formation, a great number of words – it is difficult to estimate to what percentage the text of *FW* consists of lexical blends – in *FW* can be described as lexical blends, their categorisation from the diachronic perspective of the lexicon is in some way impossible. Although they are often referred to as neologisms this is not correct in the strict linguistic sense of the term. A neologism is “a word which becomes part of the norm of the language, and thus is part of the brief of a lexicographer” (Bauer, *Productivity*, 39). This is certainly not the case with *FW* as rarely any of its coinages have entered the lexicon. (The famous exception is the word *quark*, which owes its inclusion in the lexicon to Murray Gell-Mann’s borrowing of Joyce’s word. The question of coinage is further complicated by the fact that the word *Quark* does exist in German. The OED Online also lists *magnoperous* (as derivative of the verb *magnoperate* “*adj. nonce-wd.* (perh.) operating in a grand manner” (OED, “magnoperate, v.”) and *riverrun* (as a form of the noun *river run* “The course which a river shapes and follows through the landscape. Also *fig.* Usu. with allusion to Joyce” (OED, “river run, n.,” 2.) as Joyce’s coinages). On the other hand, a nonce-formation is defined as a form which ceases to be a nonce formation “as soon as the speakers using it are aware of using a term which they have heard already” (Bauer, *Word-Formation*, 45). Yet, as *FW* is a

ambiguity” (Eco, “Poetics,” 55)²⁶⁴ and as “a cornerstone of [the text’s] method” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 149).²⁶⁵ Yet, theoretical reflection on the phenomenon, as propounded by Gilles Deleuze, Umberto Eco and Derek Attridge, is rare in *FW* criticism.

Lexical blends can very roughly be described as words that are the result of fusing two or more words into a single lexical item. Laurie Bauer’s basic linguistic definition says a blend is “a new lexeme formed from parts of two or more other lexemes” (Bauer, *Introducing*, 238).²⁶⁶ The volume on morphology in the Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science (/HSK) series defines blending as “a process of word formation in which two (or, rarely, three) separate source items are telescoped into a new form, which usually exhibits overlapping and retains some of the meaning of at least one of the source items, but is rarely an exact synonym” (Cannon, 952), and in which “there must be some shortening of the source items” (ibid.). A lexical blend like “chaosmos” (*FW* 118.21), arguably one of the most well-known and most transparent blends in *FW*, is only comprehensible as a telescoping into each other, of the two words *chaos* and *cosmos*.²⁶⁷ Given the linguistic peculiarity of the phenomenon of blending it comes as no surprise that a generally accepted definition has not yet been proposed. Blends are typically seen as a form of wordplay (see e.g. Lehrer, “Blendalicious,” 115; Kemmer, 81).

literary text which is part of the canon, its coinages are in a sense institutionalised. The fact that its coinages are known to more than a handful of readers and are recognised by them and that they will be known, due to *FW*’s inclusion in the canon, to more readers in the future undermines the idea of regarding the work’s word formations as nonce-formations. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of English Language* refers to the *FW* coinages as “literary neologisms” (see Crystal, *Encyclopedia*, 134).

²⁶³ The more recent term *lexical blend* is used here to refer to the linguistic phenomenon which has variously been termed portmanteau, contamination, amalgamation, telescope word, and blend. The term *blending* was already used for this word formation process around the turn of the twentieth century (see Bergström, 8, 41-73).

²⁶⁴ Eco refers to “the pun” here but his immediately following description makes obvious that he is actually speaking about lexical blends. Attridge has pointed out the considerable differences between pun and portmanteau (or blend) (see ch. “Unpacking the Portmanteau” in Attridge, *Peculiar*).

²⁶⁵ Attridge described “Joyce’s method in *FW*” as “maximiz[ing] lexical associations” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 112 n. 26).

²⁶⁶ All discussions of blends agree that cases in which blends are made up from three or more source lexemes are rare.

²⁶⁷ *Cosmos* is the privileged interpretation – at first sight *demos*, *nomos*, *commos*, *thermos*, *thumos*, even *sparagmos* or *Eskimos* may also qualify as source words – because all of its letters are present in “chaosmos” and because conceptually it denotes the opposite of chaos and is thus directly related to *chaos*. Yet, as obvious as this instance is, these criteria cannot be generalised for all blends in *FW*.

2.1 The Lexical Blend in the Early Symbolic Production

The lexical blend or rather ‘the portmanteau word’ is an ever-present catchword within the symbolic production of *WiP/FW*. Budgen did not refer to ‘the portmanteau’ but described Joyce’s process of word manipulation in the following way:

The universality of Joyce’s theme dictates an intensive technique – a greater density of word texture. Meanings can no longer lie side by side. Here they overlap and there into one word he crowds a whole family of them. A letter added or left out – the sound of a vowel or consonant modified – and a host of associations is admitted within the gates. And one letter may stand pregnant with meaning as a rune. [...] The words seem to glitter with significance as they lie on the printed page. We speak them and they flow like a river over our consciousness evoking images vivid and unexpected as those of a dream. (Budgen, “Norse²,” 39f)

According to Gilbert, in *WiP* “the treatment of pairs of ideas is *symbolical*, in the exact meaning of that word; ideas are *fused together*” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 61f). Through his use of “portmanteau words” (ibid., 58, 60) Gilbert sees “Joyce exploit[ing] the incongruous, basis of all humour” (ibid., 62), stating further that in *WiP* incongruities are “*symbolised*, merged in one” (ibid.). Joyce’s use of lexical blends caused comparisons with Lewis Carroll’s use of the device from the very beginning.²⁶⁸ Carroll is credited with being the first writer to have popularised them through his “Jabberwocky” and through his term for the phenomenon, *portmanteau*. In his *Exagmination* essay, Stuart Gilbert points out the similarities between Carroll’s portmanteaux in “Jabberwocky” and Joyce’s, but sees a “difference in texture” and “complexity” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 60) between them. Eugene Jolas situates Joyce in a contemporary context of verbal innovation, citing Léon-Paul Fargue, the Surrealists, Gertrude Stein, Hans Arp, only to quote at length from *Cymbeline* to show that Shakespeare had likewise taken considerable liberty with language, and had likewise sought to “give language a more modern elasticity, to give words a more compressed meaning through disassociation from their accusomed [sic] connections” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 84).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ The comparison appears already in one of the earliest reviews of *WiP*, H. S. Canby’s “Gyring and Gimbling: Or Lewis Carroll in Paris.” Harry Levin considers Humpty Dumpty “[t]he official guide to [Joyce’s] vocabulary” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 187). Atherton wrote, “many of the wildest and most startling features of *FW* are merely the logical development, or the working out on a larger scale, of ideas that first occurred to Lewis Carroll” (Atherton, *Books*¹, 124).

²⁶⁹ Presumably influenced by Joyce’s new work and without using the word portmanteau, I. A. Richards attempted to show in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (see Richards, *Philosophy*, 64f) that Shakespeare had already made use of blends (see also Richards, “*Troilus*,” 210).

In addition to Carroll's use of portmanteaux, a further context for the use of this device was established through the interpretive schema *dream* which began to emerge in the promotional commentaries. It was Padraic Colum who was the first to point out the dream context to the reading public without actually using the word *dream*. In his preface to the 1928 deluxe edition *Anna Livia Plurabelle* his last sentence read "For the work in its entirety deals with what is nocturnal – with the night-side of our lives, and with no other side" (Colum, xix).²⁷⁰ In his *transition* piece "The Revolution of Language and James Joyce," Jolas had already mentioned the "subconscious" and the dream but only in terms of a new scientific and artistic context for experimentation (see Jolas, "Revolution¹," 109, 111, 115).²⁷¹ Jolas did not yet present 'the dream' explicitly as that which the work represents – although the piece contained a first remark which seems to indicate the subsequent significance of the dream context by saying Joyce "creates a verbal dreamland of abstraction" (ibid., 115). The same holds true for Budgen's *transition* essay which also emphasised the significance of the dream context:

Whatever the elements brought together they have the rightness of a dream wherein all things we ever knew or experienced occur not in their time sequence but according to their necessary importance in the pattern dictated by the dream's own logic and purpose. And this I apprehend to be the key to the understanding of Joyce's book and the secret of its peculiar beauty. Joyce has penetrated into the night mind of man, his timeless existence in sleep, his incommunicable experiences in dreams and with the materials that he finds there he is writing the life and adventures of the human mind. (Budgen, "Norse¹," 213)

It is only in the revised version of Jolas's piece in *Exagmination* that 'the dream' was explicitly identified as that which is represented in the text:

For it is the condition between waking and sleeping as well as sleep itself which James Joyce is presenting to us in his monumental work. Here for the first time in any literature, the attempt is successfully made to describe that huge world of dreams, that a-logical sequence of events remembered or inhibited, that universe of demoniacal humor and magic which has seemed impenetrable so far. [...] The dynamics of the sleep-mind is here presented

²⁷⁰ Colum's preface first appeared as an article entitled "The River Episode from James Joyce's Uncompleted Work" in *The Dial* in April 1928.

²⁷¹ If the original *transition* essays are cited here rather than the *Exag* essays this is due to emphasising the chronology of the ideas and pieces.

with an imagination that has whirled together all the past, present and future, as well as every space related to human and inorganic evolution. (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 91)

With the interpretive schema *dream* in circulation, it was merely a question of time before the first critics would refer to Freud. Rebecca West (see West, 328) and Edmund Wilson were probably the first who related the language of *FW* explicitly to Freud’s concept of *condensation* without using the term itself (cf. Levin, *Introduction*¹, 186).²⁷² In *Axel’s Castle*, Wilson wrote, “Joyce has profited, in inventing his dream-language, by Freud’s researches into the principles which govern the language actually spoken in dreams: certain people, it appears, do make up ‘portmanteau-words’ in their sleep” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 229). Freud had described the process of condensation in dream work in *Die Traumdeutung*.²⁷³ Here he wrote,

[t]he condensing activity of the dream becomes most tangible when it has selected words and names as its object. In general words are often treated as things by the dream, and thus undergo the same combinations, displacements, and substitutions, and therefore also condensations, as ideas of things. The results of such dreams are comical and bizarre word formations.²⁷⁴ (Freud, *Interpretation*, 277)

Freud also cited a few examples of such recollected lexical blends in dreams (see *ibid.*, 277-281). In *On Dreams*, Freud wrote about the process of condensation “[t]here will be found no factor in the dream whence the chains of associations do not lead in two or more directions, no scene which has not been pieced together out of two or more impressions and events” (Freud, *On Dreams*, 34f).²⁷⁵ He pointed out that through the dream work “the different elements are put one on top of the other” (*ibid.*, 37). Freud emphasised that these components have a common element. If a common element is not present, then, according to Freud, “the dream work takes the trouble to create a something, in order to make a common presentation feasible in the dream. The simplest way to approximate two dream thoughts, which have as yet nothing in common, consists in making such a change in the actual expression of one idea

²⁷² In his *Exagmination* piece, Robert Sage referred to Joyce’s “condensation of material” in *WiP* (Sage, “Before,” 162).

²⁷³ Freud’s *Die Traumdeutung* was translated into English as *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1913; a second, revised edition followed in 1915 and a third, revised edition in 1932.

²⁷⁴ Two pages before that Freud writes “The construction of collective and composite persons is one of the chief resources of the activity of dream condensation” (Freud, *Interpretation*, 275).

²⁷⁵ Freud condensed *Die Traumdeutung* into an essay entitled *Über den Traum* which was published first in 1901 and as a monographic edition in 1911. It was translated into English as *On Dreams* in 1914.

as will meet a slight responsive recasting in the form of the other idea” (ibid., 37f).²⁷⁶ Freud’s idea of the process of condensation in dreams became a more or less common frame of reference in the symbolic production once the context of dream for WiP was established.²⁷⁷

One of the earliest, general descriptions of the creation and processing of ‘portmanteau words’ – part of a critique of Joyce’s use of the device – was given by Rebecca West in her review of “Work in Progress,” which appeared in January 1930. West described “portmanteau words” as “a paste of words that have been superimposed one on another and worked into a new word that shall be the lowest common multiple of them all” (West, 327). She offers an explanation for the choice of the blend’s source words: “These words have been chosen [...] either because of some association of ideas or of sound” (ibid.). West counters the “common accusation” of the text’s incomprehensibility by saying that “[t]here emerges from the text clearly enough not only a superficial pattern of verbal suggestion” (ibid.). For her, the idea behind Joyce’s use of language in WiP can be reduced to the logic and processes of encoding and decoding, of “packing allusions into portmanteau words” (ibid.) and of the reader’s task to “unpack” (see ibid.) them. She calls the text’s language “a second medium, which cannot be comprehended by any audience unless they can transport it by mental effort back into the first medium” (ibid.), that is, into ‘comprehensible language.’ According to West, it is necessary, and indeed possible, to “unmake his [Joyce’s] words into the constituents of which he made them” (ibid.). Her view of *FW* is thus one of a text in cipher, the author of which fancies himself in playing games with his readers, expecting them to invest an unreasonable amount of effort and time into deciphering allusions. More subtle and complex analyses of the device were set forth in the linguistics-orientated 1960s and 1970s.

²⁷⁶ Of course it cannot be established whether Joyce had read this booklet. If he did, the following passage may have been of interest to him in the context of writing *WiP/FW*: “Every one is aware that we are unable to look at any series of unfamiliar signs, or to listen to a discussion of unknown words, without at once [a correct translation should read *at first* instead of *at once* (cf. Freud, “Traum,” 679)] making perpetual changes through *our regard for intelligibility*, through our falling back upon what is familiar” (Freud, *On Dreams*, 69f). In this context, Freud speaks of an element of dream-work which is motivated by “a regard for intelligibility” (ibid., 69). He writes, “[i]ts mode of action thus consists in so coordinating the parts of the dream that these coalesce to a coherent whole, to a dream composition. The dream gets a kind of façade [...]. There is a sort of preliminary explanation to be strengthened by interpolations and slight alterations” (ibid., 68f). For a discussion of Joyce’s familiarity with some of Freud’s writings see the introduction in Kimball.

²⁷⁷ Another point of contact between WiP and Freud identified by early critics (e.g. Carola Giedion-Welcker and Rebecca West) was a perceived similarity between the creative process which WiP seemed to foreground and the practice of free association used in psychoanalysis (see Deming, *Joyce*², 499; West, 328; Levin, *Introduction*¹, 185). A further link between blends and the unconscious has been their occurrence as one type of slips of the tongue (see e.g. Cannon, 953 and Lehrer, “Identifying,” 383-85).

2.2 The Lexical Blend Theorised

The analyses of the blend by such theorists as Gilles Deleuze and Umberto Eco, outlined in this section, were ultimately a consequence of the structuralist concern with, and theorising about, language. In his essay “A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?”,²⁷⁸ Gilles Deleuze, writing about the “portmanteau” in Carroll and Joyce,²⁷⁹ speaks of a “wholly paradoxical object or element” (Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 273) – a displaced object “jump[ing] ceaselessly” (ibid., 275) which he calls “the empty square” (ibid., 273), also calling it “object = x” and “the riddle Object” (ibid., 274).²⁸⁰ According to Deleuze, the empty square is indeed “at once word and object” (ibid., 277). It is “eminently symbolic [...] [and] belongs to no series in particular” (ibid., 273). Deleuze’s assumption here is that structure is inherently “serially” organised; in the case of language he distinguishes a series of the signifier and a series of the signified and conceives “the empty square” as that “[w]hat is in excess in the signifying series” (Deleuze, *Logic*, 50). “Such an object,” writes Deleuze, “is always present in the corresponding series” (Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 273). It functions as “the convergence point of the divergent series as such” (ibid., 274) and is “immanent to the two series at once” (ibid.) “never ceas[ing] to circulate in them, and from one to the other” (ibid., 273).²⁸¹ He concludes his reflection on the lexical blend by saying,

[i]t is incorrect to say that such a word has two meanings; in fact it is of another order than words possessing a sense. [...] It is this non-sense [*non-sens*], in its ubiquity, in its perpetual displacement, that produces sense in each series, and from one series to another, and that ceaselessly dislocates the series in relation to each other. [...] It never ceases at once to hollow out and to fill in the gap between the two series. [...] [T]his is how non-sense is not the absence of signification but, on the contrary, the excess of sense, or that which provides the signifier and signified with sense.²⁸² (ibid., 276)

²⁷⁸ Deleuze’s essay, apparently written in 1967 but published only in 1973 in vol. 8 (*Le XXe siècle*) of *Histoire de la philosophie*, is, also, a review of the works of Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Lacan, and Foucault. It was translated as “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?”.

²⁷⁹ A few scattered remarks on Joyce by Deleuze had been collected by Jean Paris in *Change* 11 in 1972 (see Deleuze, “Joyce”).

²⁸⁰ Deleuze cites an intriguing range of examples of the “object = x,” such as, the letter in Poe’s “The Purloined Letter,” the handkerchief in *Othello*, the crown in *Henry IV*, the place of the king in Foucault’s opening description of Velázquez’s painting in *Les mots et les choses*, “mana” and the notion of the “floating signifier” in Lévi-Strauss, Jakobson’s notion of the zero phoneme, and the portmanteau words in Carroll and *FW* (see Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 273-76).

²⁸¹ According to Deleuze, “[t]he two series of a structure are always divergent (by virtue of the laws of differentiation)” (Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 274).

²⁸² Displacement Deleuze holds to be essential in the relation of two series (see Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 273) – a “fundamental” structural property (ibid., 275).

Deleuze refers to the nascent ideas of what would later become known as post-structuralism when he writes that “[f]or structuralism [...] there is always too much sense, an overproduction, an overdetermination of sense” and that “[s]tructuralism owes nothing to Albert Camus, but much to Lewis Carroll” (ibid., 263). In Deleuze’s thinking, the lexical blend – being, as a ‘word-object,’ the “convergence point” of the series of the signifier and of the series of the signified – becomes a paradoxical element of “non-sense” which provides the series, through its ceaseless circulation in them, with sense.²⁸³ Deleuze refers to Lévi-Strauss in saying that “sense always results from the combination of elements that are not themselves signifying” (ibid.), thus being an effect; and in this way sense results from non-sense: “Non-sense is not at all the absurd or the opposite of sense, but rather that which gives value to sense and produces it by circulating in the structure” (ibid.).

In “The Semantics of Metaphor,” Umberto Eco discussed the lexical blends in *FW* to address the more general issue of the nature of language.²⁸⁴ For Eco, *FW* is “itself a metaphor for the process of unlimited semiosis” (Eco, “Metaphor,” 70). Following Peirce, Eco states, “this is the very characteristic of a language considered as the place of unlimited semiosis (as for Peirce), where each term is explained by other terms and where each one is, through an infinite chain of interpretants, potentially explainable by all the others” (ibid., 74). Eco’s understanding of “unlimited semiosis” implies a view of language as a sign system of essentially metonymic relationships thus privileging the metonymy side of the Jakobsonian model of the binary axes of metaphor and metonymy: “[L]anguage, in its process of unlimited semiosis, constitutes a multidimensional network of metonymies” (ibid., 78). Starting from this understanding of Peirce’s notion, Eco posits that “each metaphor can be traced back to a subjacent chain of metonymic connections” (ibid., 68). According to Eco, the lexical blend in *FW* “constitutes a particular form of metaphor” (ibid., 72) and adds, it “constitutes a forced contiguity between two or more words [...]. It is a contiguity made of reciprocal elisions, whose result is an ambiguous deformation” (ibid.).²⁸⁵ “This forced contiguity,” Eco suggests, “frees a series of possible readings – hence interpretations” (ibid.). ‘The role of the reader’ in *FW* is described by Eco as follows: “[T]he reader of *FW*, controlled by the text, is in fact led into a game of associations that were previously suggested to him by the co-text” (ibid., 76).²⁸⁶ Eco holds that all associations established by the reader, and by Joyce himself in the

²⁸³ Deleuze points out that “portmanteau words are only one device among others to ensure this circulation” (Deleuze, “Structuralism,” 276).

²⁸⁴ Eco’s “Semantica della metafora” appeared in 1971 in his *Le forme del contenuto* and was revised and translated for inclusion in *The Role of the Reader*.

²⁸⁵ In fact, Eco uses the term *pun*. On Eco’s misuse of the term *pun* for *portmanteau* see fn. 264 above.

²⁸⁶ Elsewhere Eco defines co-text as “the actual [textual] environment of an expression” (Eco, *Limits*, 215).

process of creating blends and puns, are ultimately pre-established by “a network of subjacent contiguities” (ibid., 74) or, as he phrases it, by “contiguity internal to semantic fields” (ibid., 77), meaning that “all connections were already codified before the artist could recognize them by pretending to institute or discover them” (ibid.).²⁸⁷ For all its ingenuity Eco’s reasoning in subsuming blends under the category of metaphor is problematic because in blending there is no similar element of transfer between ‘literal’ and figurative meaning, which has been considered essential to metaphor (cf. Willer, 90-93, 141-147 and passim).

Derek Attridge, the only ‘Joycean’ who discussed the blend as a linguistic phenomenon more broadly, writes that the lexical blend – Attridge uses the term *portmanteau* – “insists on a productive act of reading, because its effects are simultaneous, and because the result is an expansion of meaning” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 153). According to Attridge, the blend “refuses, *by itself*, any single meaning” (ibid., 152). He assumes that the Wakean blend represents the post-structuralist concept of signification *in nuce*, suggesting that “there is no escape from its [the portmanteau’s] insistence that meaning is an *effect* of language, not a presence within or behind it, and that the effect is unstable and uncontrollable” (ibid., 150) and emphasising that through his “portmanteau style” “Joyce has set in motion a process over which he has no final control” (ibid., 156) – this is clearly the notion of signification as unmasterable, uncontrollable as expressed in the Derridean concept of “the play of dissemination.”

Derrida did not write about the blend per se but commented on the aspect of the simultaneity of meaning in a word and the ensuing *indécidabilité* (“undecidability”) in his “La pharmacie de Platon” (1967-1968). His example was not a lexical blend but his comments are as relevant to the blends in *FW* as if his example had been “chaosmos” (*FW* 118.21). In fact, in one of the footnotes of the essay he writes that “the whole of that essay [...] [is] itself nothing but a reading of *Finnegans Wake*” (Derrida, “Plato’s,” 88). One of the reasons for Derrida to suggest this is his elaboration concerning the word *φάρμακον* (*pharmakon*) in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. The word has a range of meanings some of which are antithetical.²⁸⁸ Derrida summarised his main point elsewhere in the following way: “[P]hilosophical discourse cannot master a word meaning two things at the same time and which therefore cannot be translated without an essential loss. Whether one translates *pharmakon* as ‘poison’ or ‘remedy’ [...] the undecidability is going to be lost” (Derrida, “Translation,” 120).

²⁸⁷ Eco also speaks of the essentially metonymic nature of language as “contiguity in the code” (Eco, “Metaphor,” 81).

²⁸⁸ Such words with antithetical meanings – the Hegelian *Aufheben* is an equally prominent example (see Büttgen) – are a phenomenon for which Derrida uses the term *brisure* (see Derrida, *Grammatologie*, 96, 102), which is itself an instance of such words, ranging between the meanings of “break” and “joint.”

What Derrida emphasises here is the absence of difference which subverts Saussure's conception of language as a system in which the meaning of signs emerges only in relation to – namely as difference from – other signs. This is exactly what Joyce is doing in *FW*. Whereas Derrida's philosophy, from a position of epistemological doubt and anti-foundationalist critique, subverts Saussure's theory by conceiving the relational character of signs as something interminable, as an infinite process rather than a stable relation, for which Derrida's notion of *différance* as the intertwining of difference and deferral stands, Joyce subverts Saussure's theory of language by collapsing the difference between signs and by disturbing the apparent transparency between *signifiant* and *signifié*.²⁸⁹ In other words, the blend *chaosmos* does not allow us to resolve the coincidence of its opposite meanings, the oscillation between 'chaos' and 'cosmos' with both ideas being present at the same time in the same place in the synthesis expressed by the blend, "without an essential loss"; it is this undecidability in *FW* which so disturbed Empson in his study *The Structure of Complex Words* (see Empson, *Structure*, 65-69).²⁹⁰ Already in his very first published work Derrida conceived of Joyce as a paradigm of equivocity (see Derrida, "Introduction," 104). In "Two Words for Joyce" Derrida links this equivocity explicitly with Joyce's method of word formation in *FW*:

He repeats and mobilizes and babelizes the (asymptotic) totality of the equivocal, he makes this his theme and his operation, he tries to make outcrop, with the greatest possible synchrony, at great speed, the greatest power of the meanings buried in each syllabic fragment, subjecting each atom of writing to fission in order to overload the unconscious with the whole memory of man: mythologies, religion, philosophies, sciences, psychoanalysis, literatures. (Derrida, "Two," 149)

With the exception of Eco, who considers it to some extent, these theorists and critics have little to say about the processing of blends by the reader. Yet, Eco's example of the "game of associations" which, according to him, the reader lets him·her·self be induced to play, owes more to his notion of unlimited semiosis than to an adequate description of blend processing. Even if all the associations which Eco presents in his diagram (see Eco, "Metaphor," 75) were "previously suggested to him [the reader] by the co-text" (*ibid.*, 76), their recovery and interrelating would be beyond the human capabilities of word processing.

²⁸⁹ It thus comes as no surprise that a number of post-structuralist critics have considered the blend and the pun paradigmatic for the post-structuralist understanding of signification (see e.g. Culler, "Phoneme," 4f, and Hillis Miller, "Ariachne's").

²⁹⁰ This is certainly not the case with all blends in *FW*; the *coincidentia oppositorum* in "chaosmos" is indeed a special case.

Eco's conception resembles indeed a game of associations but is not compatible with the findings of language processing research. The cognitive processing of lexical blends – the most pertinent aspect of the phenomenon for an examination of the reading process pertaining to *FW*, and thus of the reader position – has only in the last two decades become an occasional topic in research on lexical blending.

2.3 Lexical Blending Research

Due to the diversity and seeming arbitrariness, with respect to morphological rule-governedness, of this linguistic phenomenon, lexical blending has so far had a rather peripheral status within the broad field of linguistics.²⁹¹ As a word formation process, which it undeniably is, it falls into the domain of the study of morphology. But morphologists often point out that blends more often than not exhibit a disregard for the morphological boundaries of their source lexemes in the process of their blending. Lexical blends “typically share phonological similarities, and only incidentally morphological structure, with one or both of their source lexemes” (Kemmer, 73), meaning that “the blend is [often] not really composed of morphemes in the sense of recurrent minimal meaningful parts [...], but of phonological strings that trigger meanings” (ibid., 77). Hence a morphological analysis of the blend may not render useful results. This is the reason why blending, although regarded as a word formation process, has an odd standing in morphology; some scholars arguing that it is not a part of morphology at all.²⁹² As a consequence of their seemingly arbitrary nature in terms of morphology, blends have been considered much less rule-governed than other word formation processes (see Bauer, *Word-Formation*, 235) and, consequently, less well-suited for morphological description.²⁹³ The linguist Suzanne Kemmer writes, “lexical blends are so

²⁹¹ It is not surprising that lexical blends have received scant attention in linguistics given the fact that linguists have so far not been able to convincingly explain creativity in language. David Crystal correctly points out that a satisfactory understanding of creativity in language requires a definition of language that finally recognises the importance of language play (see Crystal, *Play*, 8). There have long been value judgements at work in the evaluation of creative language use – while metaphor has received considerable attention, the (certainly less common) phenomenon of blending is still regarded as ‘mere wordplay.’ A change in the status of lexical blending seems to become apparent as in 2010 the first International Conference on Lexical Blending, organised by the Centre de Recherche en Terminologie et Traduction, took place in Lyon.

²⁹² Laurie Bauer, for instance, noted that it is “extremely doubtful whether such words can be analyzed into morphs, and thus whether they form a real part of morphology” (Bauer, *Introducing*, 39).

²⁹³ The process is considered less rule-governed because the coiner of the blend seems to be “free to take as much or as little from either base as is felt to be necessary or desirable” (Bauer, *Word-Formation*, 235). The question whether blending is a rule-governed process or not has not been consensually answered (see Bauer, *Productivity*, 95). Some linguists claim it is a rule-governed process (e.g. M. Kelly, “Brunch”), others claim the opposite (e.g. Lehrer, “Identifying,” 363). In Bernard Fradin's view blends are extra-grammatical and thus unique (see Fradin). The question of their productivity is controversial too; some see their productivity as

varied in form that no neat taxonomy can do justice to the full range of the phenomenon” (Kemmer, 71).²⁹⁴ The difficulty of clear-cut differentiation between blending and other word formation processes, such as compounding and clipping, have been noted by many morphologists. The following section will give an overview of the few existing linguistic discussions of blend processing.

In her study, Adrienne Lehrer – using insights from psycholinguistic research on lexical access and retrieval – has conducted empirical research on the conditions for the successful processing of blends (see Lehrer, “Identifying”). According to this study (see Lehrer, “Blendalicious,” 126f), the factors which play a role in processing lexical blends are:

1. context;
2. “the number and percentage of letters (or phonemes) of the source word” (Lehrer, “Blendalicious,” 126) – source words being the words which have been blended – present in the blend (The less segments they share, the more difficult is the recognition of the source words used to form the blend.);
3. “the frequency of the source words” (ibid.), meaning how familiar we are with the word, how often we have seen and used it;
4. “the number of neighbours of the source words” (ibid.), *neighbors* being those words which contain a certain amount of the same letters in the same sequence – meaning that the difficulty of identifying a source word increases in proportion to the number of its neighbors;
5. of all the possible source words that come to our mind we tend to identify those two or three words as source words which we perceive as having a “semantic connection” (ibid., 127).

Lehrer assumes that the factors for processing blends are essentially the same as those which have been identified in psycholinguistic studies of lexical access in general (see Lehrer, “Identifying,” 360f, 385).

Another, more theoretical analysis of the cognitive processing of lexical blends is presented by Suzanne Kemmer. Schema theory as applied in Ronald Langacker’s approach of Cognitive Grammar on the one hand and Fauconnier and Turner’s model of conceptual

marginal compared to other word formation processes, other see the process as highly productive, diagnosing a contemporary popularity of blends. This issue is related to the relatively low rate of lexicalisation of lexical blends, which is a further reason for their ephemeral status. Laurie Bauer has pointed out that “there is a notion, among professional linguists as well as among lay people, that nonce formations are, in some sense, ‘not proper words’. They are unusual, in the sense that they are not already known like the majority of words, but in the sense that they simply exploit the synchronic possibilities of the language system, they are perfectly normal, and perfectly respectable objects of study.” (Bauer, “System,” 838; see also fn. 262 above).

²⁹⁴ See also Kemmer (p. 72) for the problems she faces with her own proposed taxonomy.

blending on the other hand form the theoretical context of her analysis (see Kemmer). Following Langacker's schema-based approach, Kemmer proposes to think of blends as "words that are cognitively linked to pre-existing words which are co-activated when the blend is used" (ibid., 71) through schemas, defined by Kemmer as "essentially routinized, or cognitively entrenched, patterns of experience" which can be "used to produce and understand linguistic expressions" (ibid., 78). Following Fauconnier and Turner, she defines "the semantics of a lexical blend" as "a coherent cognitive structure that selectively incorporates and integrates aspects of the semantics of the activated words" (ibid., 71). She calls these "co-activated words" "*source lexemes*" (ibid.), which are "more cognitively entrenched (i.e. routinized)" (ibid.) than the lexical blend. In lexical blends, Kemmer suggests, one can analyse the bringing together of two "conceptual domains" (ibid., 83) with the resulting blended concept being more than the sum of the source domains (ibid., 85f) – what Fauconnier and Turner call "emergent structure" (see Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 42ff).²⁹⁵

The prime difficulty of transferring the assumptions and conclusions from research on lexical blends into an analysis of the language of *FW* is that this research rarely concerns itself with what would fall into the category of opaque blends – if one distinguishes the semantic transparency and opacity of lexical blends. The blend "chaosmos" (*FW* 118.21) could for instance be said to be marked by a greater degree of transparency than the blend "assaucyeties" (*FW* 384.27) discussed below. Most of the example blends from research come from the fields of journalism and advertisement. While these fields aim at comprehensibility, a text like *FW* in particular, is on the far end of the opposite side of the scale, far removed from what could be termed comprehensibility-orientated communication.²⁹⁶ Researchers of lexical blending proceed from the assumption that coiners of blends ultimately want their coinages to be understood by their addressees – hence linguists' papers refer to the "recognizability" of the source words. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the factors, which Lehrer identified, apply to the same degree for the processing of blends in *FW*.

²⁹⁵ It should be noted that the objective of Kemmer's paper is to argue for the suitability of certain models from linguistics and cognitive science to account for lexical blending.

²⁹⁶ Barbara MacMahon has suggested that contrary to general opinion the language of *FW* is marked by recognisability and transparency. She argues that far from "defying final and coherent interpretation" (MacMahon, "Effects," 231) Joyce's "word substitutions are constructed in such a way as to allow the reader to use meanings of both written and implied words in coming to one final and coherent interpretation" (ibid., 241). The words and phrases on which she bases her view (see MacMahon, "Freudian," 324) are characterised by two remarkable features, namely a) by the fact that the vast majority of them appears, in the very translation MacMahon proposes, in *Annotations*, and b) by the fact that her examples are so simple as to lend no support to her argument. Her assessment is based on the simplistic view that there exists an *x-is-actually-y*-relation "between uttered/written and intended/implied words" (ibid., 318).

Although language processing has been researched for decades, we are far from a thorough understanding of it, let alone blend processing. What makes blends such a complex phenomenon is the intricate link between the blend and its source words. A characterisation of the blend in semiotic terms may serve to describe this intricacy. The non-lexicalised blend, that is blends which have not become part of the lexicon of a language, is the rare instance in which a *representamen* (C. S. Peirce) (or *sign vehicle* (Morris)) has as its *object* (C. S. Peirce) (or *denotatum* (Morris)) other words²⁹⁷ – expressed in Saussurean terminology this means a *signifier* acquires its *signified* only through referring to other *signs*. The non-lexicalised blend refers first and foremost not to an extra-linguistic object or mental concept but to other words. Since it derives its meaning from other words, which themselves each ‘refer’ to another *object/denotatum*, it can be said that the blend is an instance of a deferred, a ‘second-level’ or ‘secondary’ meaning generation.²⁹⁸ In addition, ‘the meaning’ of the blend is different from the meanings of the source words in that a conceptual integration of their meanings is required, as elaborated below.

Non-lexicalised blends, which appear in abundance in *FW*, can be viewed, in the Peircean terminology, as quasi-indexico-iconic signs which point to (through their indexical aspect; have “real connections” in Peirce’s diction) symbolic signs – in other words, the lexical blend being the “pointing finger” (the index) for something else, namely the symbolic signs (the source words) pointed to²⁹⁹ – by “resembling” (as Peirce says about the way in which icons refer to their objects) them to a certain extent (i.e. by sharing with them a letter string and/or phonological string).³⁰⁰

Which consequences for the reader position arise from the occurrence of the device lexical blend? The degree of “automaticity” with respect to accessing the ‘resembled’ source words is related to the factors identified by Lehrer. Thus in processing “chaosmos,” readers will immediately “access” the entry for *chaos* in their mental lexicon because the whole word is present in the blend, forming its initial sequence, and is thus easily identifiable. Accessing the *cosmos* entry will certainly be to some degree less immediate. In comparison, the accessing of entries in the processing of “assaucyeties” (*FW* 384.27) will be to a

²⁹⁷ For an overview of the complex correlation between these terms see Nöth, 90 Fig. Si 3, 94 Fig. M 3.

²⁹⁸ In lexicalised blends such as *smog* this second-level meaning generation does not play a role any more.

²⁹⁹ Peirce defines indexical signs as follows: “Indices [...] represent their objects independently of any resemblance to them, only by virtue of real connections with them” (C. S. Peirce, *Essential*, 461). Another of Peirce’s definitions of the index reads: “A sign, or representation, which refers to its object not so much because of any similarity or analogy with it, nor because it is associated with general characters which that object happens to possess, as because it is in dynamical (including spatial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand” (C. S. Peirce, *Philosophy*, 107).

³⁰⁰ One of Peirce’s definitions of the icon says that “[i]cons [...] serve to represent their objects only in so far as they resemble them in themselves” (C. S. Peirce, *Essential*, 460f).

considerable degree less immediate than in “chaosmos.” In contrast to the processing of familiar words, which we perceive as automatic and effortless, opaque blends like “assaucyeties” require a conscious and deliberate effort, in order to make sense of them. In these instances sense-making, that is meaning constitution, presents itself as a constructing of meaning – so characteristic of the reader position in *FW* –, an effort which goes beyond the usual effort in word processing, which manifests itself in being far more time-consuming. At any rate, the vocabulary of *Finnegans Wake* is certainly not as “denotative” (Hart, “Introduction,” first p.), “clear-cut” (ibid., second p.), and easily ‘parsable’ as the “Syllabifications” and “Overtones” sections in Clive Hart’s *Concordance* once suggested.

3. Between Reading, Reading Aloud, Reading Together, and Struggling to Read

[N]o reading can ever exhaust the full potential [of a text], for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities [...]. With all literary texts, [...] the reading process is selective, and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations.
(Iser, “Reading Process,” 280)

In addition to questions of word recognition, of ‘neologism’ and blend processing, illustrated below, the main issues involved in, and facets of, reading *FW* are those of obfuscation, of incoherence in language processing, and of the text’s *minus functions*. It is their combined effect which has made the text appear unreadable to many people. These issues are examined here in order to define more closely the conditions that arise for the reader position.

3.1 Sound and Word Recognition I

*Whatever is capable of being sounded or enunciated
will find its echo in Finnegans Wake.*
(Levin, *Introduction*¹, 197)

*At that point language indicates the source of an internal movement;
its ties to its meaning can undergo a metamorphosis without its having
to change its form, as if it had turned in on itself, tracing around a fixed
point (the “meaning” of the word, as they used to say) a circle of possibilities
which allows for chance, coincidence, effects, and all the rules of the game.*
(Foucault, *Death*, 17)

The issue of sound is an intricate one in blending – Suzanne Kemmer argues that phonological rather than morphological properties are relevant to the formation and

processing of blends (see Kemmer, 73-77). Far from being pertinent to blends only, sound is generally significant in word processing. According to Roberts et al., readers glean three types of information from written words: “(a) *orthographic* information, the processing of sequences of letters in text, (b) *meaning* (or *semantic*) information, which includes vocabulary knowledge, and (c) *phonological* information, the speech segments embedded in spoken and written words” (Roberts et al., 231). One of the major debates in word recognition research has been led over the question whether or not phonological information plays a role in reading word recognition. Today the majority of studies on word recognition report phonological effects (see e.g. *ibid.*, 237; Pollatsek and Rayner, 279ff). Although there is no consensus as to the exact nature of these effects and the relative strength of phonological influence, many recent studies agree that lexical and phonological information are simultaneously and automatically retrieved in the process of word recognition (see Dehaene, 26). The access of phonological information, in other words converting graphemic information into phonological information, “plays an essential role when we read a word for the first time” (*ibid.*, 27; see also Wittmann and Pöppel, 231).

The relevance of phonology in word processing allows readers to grasp, in principle, the intended phonological resemblance of *FW* phrases such as the one which perplexed Lacan, namely “Who ails tongue coddeau, aspace of dumbillsilly” (*FW* 15.18), for which the gloss in *Annotations* reads “*F*[rench] où est ton cadeau, espèce d’imbécile?” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 15), or “Fee gate has Heenan hoity, mind uncle Hare?” (*FW* 466.29-30), which is annotated as “*G*[erman] wie geht es Ihnen heute, mein dunkler Herr?” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 466) and “Loab at cod then herrin” (*FW* 587.2) ‘translated’ as “*s*[ong] Lobet Gott, den Herrn” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 587). Due to such play on the phonological dimension of words – made possible by the fact that the same or similar sounds can be expressed by different combinations of letters, which is itself a result of the fact that the set of sounds of a particular language is finite and that different languages share certain sounds or have similar ones; “this marvelous property of language to extract wealth from its own poverty” (Foucault, *Death*, 17) as Foucault so trenchantly observed – *FW* is said to be “a writing that plays on the hinge between sound effects and written effects” (Rabaté, *Lacan*, 177). Such phenomena, particularly on the word level but also on the phrase level, have been referred to as puns by Joyce critics.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ A generally agreed upon definition of the pun does not exist. This may be due to the range of phenomena which have been referred to by this term (see Dane). Arthur Koestler defined the pun as “the bisociation of a single phonetic form with two meanings – two strings of thought tied together by an acoustic knot” (Koestler, 64f). In the pun he finds exemplified “the bisociation of *sound and meaning*” (*ibid.*, 90). The OED definition reads: “The use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations, or of two

While sound seems to play a significant role in the process of word recognition in general, it acquires a particular importance in reading a text like *FW*, in which a considerable proportion of words is not part of any reader's lexicon and in which 'wordplay' is so pervasive, and thus for the reader position.³⁰² An example will serve to illustrate the intricacy of the interlinked processes and aspects of word recognition, phonological effects and meaning construction in *FW*. The questions that arise for every reader who attempts to comprehend the word "assaucyeties" (*FW* 384.27) in *FW* II.4 are: 'What could it possibly mean?' and 'Why is it spelt this way?'. Since due to the influence of the symbolic production most readers, even most first-time readers, of *FW* approach the text with knowledge of the fact of its excessive 'wordplay' – no introductory volume fails to emphasise the prominence of the pun and/or portmanteau and to provide a few catchy examples – they are aware that many of the word formations require some form of deliberate 'decoding' in order to be able to establish a meaningful context.³⁰³

Because of the three initial syllables many readers will perceive a faint phonological resemblance to the word *associations* so that one may say the word formation is a neological pun on the word *associations*. Through general assumptions about the elaborateness of Joyce's 'wordplay' imparted by the symbolic production – the most extreme form of which is manifest in an assertion such as "[T]here are no nonsense syllables in Joyce!" (Campbell and Robinson, 360)³⁰⁴ – readers have been conditioned to presuppose that such 'wordplay' is meaningful in ways beyond mere phonological resemblance. Thus, many readers will assume that there must be a reason why Joyce selected the combination of letters "assaucyeties" to resemble *associations* instead of any other conceivable combination which could equally evoke such a resemblance like *azoseeyayshons* or *asseaucieschons* – the assumption being that the choice of the strings of letters in "assaucyeties" is not arbitrary in being merely a phonological echo of *associations* but is instead lexically meaningful.³⁰⁵ Suspecting blends behind many of the longer word formations will lead readers to seek familiar strings.

or more words of the same or nearly the same sound with different meanings, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words" (OED, "pun, n.1"). A perfect example of a pun in *FW* is "Is love worse living?" (*FW* 269 F1).

³⁰² The statement that *FW* "depends as much on [...] visibility as on [...] audibility" (Beckett, 15) is in this sense justified.

³⁰³ *Decoding* is used here in the sense of a language use requiring an act of translation on the receiver's part – readers feel compelled to translate certain words, e.g. blends, into familiar words. It is not used in the sense of finding or having a key to reveal a secret message or to reveal 'the meaning.'

³⁰⁴ This assertion seems to echo Robert Sage's statement in *Examination* that the words in *WiP* were "composed" by Joyce "always with sound philological authority" (Sage, "Before," 166).

³⁰⁵ Indeed, a few lines earlier the word "rockbysuckerassousyoceanal" (*FW* 384.3-4) occurs in which the phonological resemblance to *associational* is realised with a slightly different string, namely *-ousy-*.

Readers familiar with Latin will probably recognise the string *-etiam-* as a familiar word. If “assaucyetiams” is a blend – a note of uncertainty will always resonate – the Latin word *etiam* is indeed a likely source word as there are no English words which contain this string of letters and as this string is generally rare in modern Western European languages.³⁰⁶ From the point of identifying the string *-etiam-* as the Latin word *etiam*, it is only a small step to contemplate how the remaining strings can be accounted for. The difficulty lies in the fact that these strings are not as unique as *etiam* and thus less easily identifiable. Some readers will identify the string *-saucy-* as implying the word *saucy* which ranges in meaning between ‘cheeky,’ ‘suggestive,’ and ‘wanton.’ Of course the most influential factor in measuring out the probability of the presence of such ‘source words’ in “assaucyetiams” is context and thus the question whether the context supports such identifications. The identification of *saucy* is given some degree of support as the immediate context mentions a “he” (*FW* 384.20), “the hero” (*FW* 384.23), who is said to be “light and rufthandling her ragbags et assaucyetiams” (*FW* 384.26-27).³⁰⁷ The larger context of the passage suggests a description of love-making as this phrase is followed by the phrase “that was palpably wrong and bulbubly improper, and cuddling her and kissing her” (*FW* 384.28-30). There is thus some degree of support for the reading that “he” is handling “her” luggage *and* touching “her” body – in such a reading the initial string “*ass-*” is probably identified as meaningful by some readers.³⁰⁸ At the same time, the context also supports the identification of *etiam* since “*et*” precedes “assaucyetiams” – *et etiam*, ‘and also,’ being a fixed phrase in Latin. There are of course other conceivable identifications. The string *-aucy-* may just as well be identified as the French word *aussi*, which covers a range of similar meanings as *etiam* so that *-aucyetiam-* may be considered as doubling the meaning ‘also.’

What do readers make of the phrase “light and rufthandling her ragbags et assaucyetiams” (*FW* 384.26-27) then? There may be as many answers to this question as there are readers of this text, but it is to be suspected that at least some readers will construct its sense a) in terms of a further reference to the virility of the athletic “hero” who is repeatedly

³⁰⁶ The word formation can thus be considered a punning blend, i.e. a blend which is to operate as a pun; a famous example of this is the oft-cited “collideorscape” (*FW* 143.28) which is a blend formed by the words *collide*, *or*, and *escape* in such a way as to be a homophonic pun on *kaleidoscope*.

³⁰⁷ In 1923, in a very early phase of composition, the phrase read “he alternately righthandlethandled fore and aft on and offside her palpable rugby and association bulbs” (see Deppman, 314 figure 1). In Otto Jespersen’s *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*, in a short section on “the desire to play with language” (Jespersen, 298) and on slang in particular, the word *rag* and the words *Rugby* and *Association football* are discussed successively yet without the suggestion of a connection (see *ibid.*, 299f); Joyce made use of Jespersen’s study (see Deppman, 328).

³⁰⁸ This reading is based on a literal reading of “ragbags.” Other readings may proceed from reading “ragbags” as *ragtag* or from the fact that Jespersen suggests that *rag* is a shortened form of an old slang expression (the red rag) for the word *tongue* (see Jespersen 299f).

linked to rugby and football, or soccer – *associational* football could be implied by the resemblance of “assaucyeties” to the word *associations* – (see *FW* 384.3-4, 395.35-396.2) and described as a “champion” (*FW* 384.23), and b) in terms of a phrase implying the handling, and touching, of ragbags and its possible suggestive associations in combination with the string *ass-* in “assaucyeties.”

It becomes obvious what is meant when critics like Derek Attridge write that through his manipulation of language “Joyce has set in motion a process over which he has no final control” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 156). Certainly, authors generally have neither control over the ways in which their works are read, nor over their interpretation.³⁰⁹ And yet the proportion and method of language manipulation and the general opacity of *FW* lead to such a degree of ‘openness’ in terms of the required meaning construction that one can say that the text demands more from its readers than cooperation. The meaning construction demanded of the reader goes beyond the common demands of literary communication to the effect that in the case of *FW* meaning only ‘emerges’ if it is constructed to a considerable extent. The amount of inferences which readers are provoked to draw and elaborations they are induced to make in order to gain a coherent view, or sense, of a *FW* passage substantiates Culler’s suggestion that “[o]ne can maintain [...] that to read *Finnegans Wake* is not so much to recognize or work out for oneself connections inscribed in the text as to produce a text: through the associations followed up and the connections established, each reader constructs a different text” (Culler, *Deconstruction*, 37).³¹⁰ Exceeding the *cooperatio significans* which Schlegel, Ingarden, Sartre, Eco and Iser have referred to and/or described, readers of *FW* really find themselves in the position of the *agens significans* or ποιητής (poiētēs) in the sense of Hans Robert Jauß’s conception of *poiesis* in *Ästhetische Erfahrung und Literarische Hermeneutik*³¹¹ – they are

³⁰⁹ As this study illustrates, in the case of *U* and *FW* this statement must be qualified with respect to the considerable control which Joyce has exerted over the interpretive schemata which have so long dominated and structured readings of these texts.

³¹⁰ As does Iser’s concept of *Leerstellen*, the psycholinguistic inference model accounts for the fact that recipients have recourse to their knowledge to fill in information gaps which naturally exist in speech as well as in texts. Such contributions during language comprehension on part of the recipient are called inferences. Inferences occur on all levels of language processing (see Rickheit and Strohner, 569); on the word-level they serve, for instance, lexical disambiguation (ibid.). The concept of inference is the very expression, in the form of a model, of the constructivist (/constructionist) view of language comprehension, i.e. the anti-essentialist view that language comprehension is not to be understood as *extracting* a given sense, for instance from a text, but as an active process on behalf of the recipient who contributes in order to achieve comprehension by *constructing* meaning and sense. Inference research arose from the research done by John Bransford and his colleagues in the early 1970s (see e.g. Bransford et al.); their aim was to prove the constructivist nature of language comprehension. For an overview of inference research see e.g. Rickheit and Strohner.

³¹¹ Here Jauß defines *poiesis* as one of the three basic categories of aesthetic experience (see Jauß, *Experience*, 34). Within the context of his project of an aesthetics of reception, Jauß, in *Ästhetische Erfahrung und Literarische Hermeneutik* (1977 and 1982; trans. into English as *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, 1982), reconceives the term *poiesis* – rather he sees a change of its meaning in the twentieth century – to mean “a process whereby the recipient becomes a participant creator of the work” (ibid., 56).

literally left to their own resources with regard to meaning construction. The claim that there are few other texts in which readers find themselves in a similarly extreme position is not exaggerated.

There cannot be established reliable criteria for the interpretation of the text's blends – no line can be drawn which would aid readers to distinguish between 'adequate' results of their processing and results that would have to be considered 'overinterpretations.' It is even problematic to say that *FW* invites or provokes 'overinterpretation' as this statement implies the availability of criteria allowing one to distinguish between 'adequate' interpretation and 'overinterpretation.' No reader is in a position to say whether the preceding meaning construction of "assaucyeties" is 'adequate' or whether it is an 'overinterpretation.' Rather it can be said that the text subverts the very notion – a fundamental one in hermeneutics – of the *Angemessenheit* ("adequacy") of interpretation.³¹²

The preceding discussion proceeded from the point of recognition of the string *-etiam-* but it could just as well have proceeded from any other strings which a given reader may identify as meaningful. The following section illustrates an aspect which further complicates the analysis of processing lexical blends in *FW*, namely the fact that different readers will perceive different phonological resemblances for a given letter string, as even readers with similar levels of language knowledge will often pronounce unfamiliar words differently.

3.2 Sound and Word Recognition II

Reading aloud makes the online³¹³ word processing and the internalised sound patterns coming into effect here manifest in that it becomes apparent which phonological strings readers perceive as meaningful. Reading unknown words aloud means that readers process visual information, strings of letters, and, through the access of information stored in their mental lexicon, perceive certain strings as meaningful, which in turn influences the pronunciation of the word. The example word formation "creakorheuman" (*FW* 214.22) will help to illustrate the influence of different linguistic backgrounds on its perception and processing by readers. The formation which compounds, in all probability of first sight, the

According to him, the understanding of the development of modern art "demands the elaboration of an aesthetics of reception [...] which can formulate the aesthetic activity demanded of the viewer through new definitions of the poesis of the receiving subject" (ibid., 57). Modern art, Jauß writes, "frees aesthetic reception from its contemplative passivity by making the viewer share in the constitution of the aesthetic object" (ibid., 56).

³¹² On the topos of the *Angemessenheit* of interpretation see Limpinsel.

³¹³ The term *online* here refers to the cognitive processes as they occur moment by moment when the reader proceeds through a text (see van den Broek et al., 108ff).

English word *creak* and the Latin form of a Greek word, *rheuma*, is a homophonic pun on ‘Graeco-Roman’ or ‘Greek or Roman.’

The probability that the string *-r(h)euma-* will be identified as meaningful is of course higher for those readers who know the Greek word $\rho\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, or its Latin form *rheuma*, which means ‘that which flows,’ ‘current,’ ‘stream,’ since these readers will find it easier to link *creak-* or rather the homophone *creek* and *-rheuma-* and thus see a logic behind this combination. The pronunciation of the word formation will very likely vary according to the reader’s linguistic background. Of those readers with no knowledge of the Greek or Latin word, readers with knowledge of the German word *Rheuma* (“rheumatism”) will probably have the least difficulty in identifying *-rheuma-* as meaningful, since the German word and the string have the exact same spelling. However, it is beyond dispute that without the knowledge of its original Greek meaning it will be difficult to see the ‘logic’ of its occurrence. German readers may pronounce the string *-eu-* [ɔy], which is very similar to the diphthong in *boy*.³¹⁴ English-speakers and Hiberno-English-speakers may retrieve the word *rheumatism* or *rheumatic* and will thus pronounce the diphthong [u:] and the whole word formation [kri:kɔ'ru:mən]. Italian readers will probably perceive a similarity to the first two syllables of *reumatismo*, the diphthong in which is pronounced [eu], which does not exist in Standard English but which is audible for instance in the Italian Pronunciation of *Europa* in which the initial diphthong is a glide from [e] towards [u]. This pronunciation of the diphthong is presumably the one which $\rho\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ had in ancient Greek (see William Allen, 80). In contrast, modern Greek may pronounce it [ɛv], similar to the initial vowel consonant cluster in *reverence*. French readers without knowledge of either of these forms may pronounce the string *-eu-* [ø], as in French *peu*, or [œ], as in *jeune*, rather than [y] as in *rhumatisme*. Therefore “creakorheuman” will perhaps evoke a phonological similarity to the words *vigoureusement* or *rigoureusement* for French readers.

The word formation “creakorheuman” occurs on the last pages of the “Anna Livia Plurabelle” chapter.³¹⁵ These pages were selected by Joyce for a gramophone recording,

³¹⁴ The pronunciations presented here and in the following section are those of the standard variety of the respective language.

³¹⁵ The sentence was added in late 1927 or sometime in 1928. It did not occur in the version of “Anna Livia Plurabelle” which appeared in *transition* 8 in November 1927 but only in the first deluxe edition published by Crosby Gaige in October 1928 (on p. 56). It appears in the exact same form in the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* edition published by Faber and Faber as volume 15 of *Criterion Miscellany* in 1930.

prepared in collaboration with C. K. Ogden, in 1929.³¹⁶ For those interested in Joyce's 'intention' with regard to the word formations the recording is not particularly illuminating as the selected pages contain hardly any complex word formations. Yet, interestingly enough, on the recording Joyce pronounces the word formation discussed here [kri:kə'rəmən], that is, as if it consisted of the phonological strings of the words *creak-o(r)-raw-man* (cf. *FW* 242.13) rapidly pronounced as if stringed together in one word. Joyce's pronunciation of the syllable *-rheu-* can only be described as idiosyncratic since in the aforementioned languages the string *-eu-* is never pronounced [ɔ].³¹⁷ Thus, one can say that Joyce did not pronounce the actual letter string of his coinage but rather pronounced what he intended, in all probability, the word formation to imply, namely a reverberation of "Greek or Roman" or "Graeco-Roman."

The sentence in which the word occurs reads "Your rere gait's creakorheuman bitts your butts disagrees" (*FW* 214.21-22). Neither the preceding nor the following sentences – the passage (*FW* 214.20-30) appears like a dialogue between someone who accuses and someone justifying him·her·self – provide a recognisable context for "creakorheuman" as "Greek or Roman" or "Graeco-Roman" except perhaps for the earlier occurrence of "Amphitheayter" (*FW* 214.14).³¹⁸ In a chapter which abounds in allusions to rivers, more than a few readers will suspect *creak-* to imply *creek*. There are other plausible 'translations' such as 'rear gates creak' and 'rare gait'; a 'Graeco-Roman gate' is also conceivable. Moreover, there are various Butt Creeks around the world. Not to mention Butt Bridge which spans the Liffey since 1879. *Bitts* and *butt* are also nautical terms. In this way Joyce blended different ideas on the micro-level of sentences, phrases, and words so that the result is not a palimpsest, of which generally only one layer is visible, but – for lack of a more adequate term – the text of *Finnegans Wake*, in which blending has really become autotelic.

It is in the obsolete sense of "making up or supplying (what is wanting); making up for (a lack of something)" (OED, "perform, v.," II.7.c.) of the word *perform* that one can say the reader is performing *FW* by reading it and by constructing its meaning. In language processing the mind always strives to identify and establish familiar patterns in unknown words of an otherwise familiar language. By reading *FW* aloud, readers are indeed "filling the void uncertainty with some [familiar] [...] substance" (Senn, "Dogmad," 115) and thus

³¹⁶ The recording is available online, for instance at <<https://archive.org/details/JamesJoyceReadsannaLiviaPlurabelleFromFinnegansWake1929>>.

³¹⁷ This is true at least for the standard varieties of these languages. The languages selected for the preceding discussion are those of which Joyce had knowledge of pronunciation.

³¹⁸ Joyce described the chapter to Weaver as "a chattering dialogue across the river by two washerwomen who as night falls become a tree and a stone" (Gilbert, *Letters*, 213). Due to its emphasis in *Exag* (see Sage, "Before," 161f; see also McGreevy, "Catholic," 126), this 'interpretation' became a prominent one of the symbolic production.

necessarily disrupt the coincidence of words (e.g. of *Roman* and *rheuma*) and meanings in word formations like “creakorheuman.”

What the preceding discussion has not taken into account is that some readers may read *FW* exclusively by means of *Annotations*. These readers will not be concerned with the processes of word recognition and meaning construction to the same degree as readers who do not mainly rely on *Annotations* not least because a certain number of ‘translations’ are preprovided. For instance, the glosses in *Annotations* for “creakorheuman” are “Graeco-Roman” and “Gr[reek] rheuma: stream” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 214) and for “assaucyeties” readers will find “Rugby & Associational (footballs)” and “L[atin] etiam: & also” (ibid., 384).

3.3 Obfuscation in *FW* 386.24-387.11

His work as a whole, supported by [...] all the undermining doubts sown by that text, systematically imposes a formless anxiety, diverging and yet centrifugal, directed not toward the most withheld secrets but toward the imitation and the transmutation of the most visible forms: each word at the same time energized and drained, filled and emptied by the possibility of there being yet another meaning, this one or that one, or neither one nor the other, but a third, or none.
(Foucault, *Death*, 13)

Every reader of *FW* is aware that comprehension problems are not only due to unfamiliar words as the majority of the words of the text are familiar to readers with a thorough knowledge of English. What gives readers the impression that the text often becomes incomprehensible is the combination of lexical distortions and what Pound called the text’s “circumambient peripherization” (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 346). When Attridge writes about *FW* that “[t]he mass of interlaced material makes it impossible to draw out *any* single thread as central” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 164), he refers to plot, time sequence, character, and voice (in the sense of who is speaking, thinking, narrating), and thus to the macro-structure of the text. None of these macro-structural elements is established to such a degree of discreteness that readers may ‘use’ them for orientation; in fact, they have become *minus functions*. On the micro-level of the sentence and the passage it is not the mass of interlaced material but the incoherence of this material which “makes it impossible to draw out any single thread as central.” Most of the long sentences in *FW* do not generate in readers’ minds the perceptual state called coherence. Coherence describes whether or not we perceive the structuring of thoughts/material in a sentence, passage, text to be easily comprehensible. It is thus connected

with another perceptual state which one may call comprehensibility. As perceptual states they are necessarily subjective; although a subjectively perceived quality shared by the vast majority of readers of the text can indeed become an objective quality of the text. Joyce crams so much seemingly unrelated material into most of the longer sentences – thus not allowing for coherence to emerge – that it is impossible for readers not to lose the thread. It is difficult to see but also to construct a thematic connection between the different parts of the longer sentences. The train of thought which underlies the arrangement of the material is deliberately concealed in order to make comprehension, the (re)construction of the underlying train of thought, difficult.

One of the higher-level aims of the mind in processing language seems to be disambiguation; the human mind always strives for ambiguity resolution through taking context into consideration.³¹⁹ By offering readers no easily recognisable, stabilising, and disambiguating context – one of the most important factors for the comprehension of blends and verbal ambiguities in general – *FW* demands a higher processing effort from the reader. The disambiguating effect of context is undermined by Joyce by making opacity into a principle. If a whole text is opaque, instead of only a word or passage, then context cannot have a stabilising effect. This is not to imply that context is not a factor for meaning construction in *FW* but rather that it is a factor of limited effect. The following sentence of medium-length will serve as an illustration for this.³²⁰

Bootersbay Sisters, like the auctioneer Battersby Sisters, the prumisceous creators, that sells all the emancipated statues and flowersports, James H. Tickell, the jaypee, off Hoggin Green, after he made the centuries, going to the tailturn horseshow, before the angler nomads flood, along with another fellow, active impulsive, and the shoeblacks and the redshanks and plebeians and the barrancos and the cappunchers childerun, Jules, everyone, Gotopoxy, with the houghers on them, highstepping the fissure and fracture lines, seven five threes up, three five sevens down, to get out of his way, onasmuck as their withers conditions could not possibly have been improved upon, (praisers be to deeseese!) like hopolopocattls, erumping around their Judgity Yaman, and all the tercentenary horses and priest-hunters, from the Curragh, and confusionaries and the authorities, Noord Amrikaans and Suid Aferican cattleraiders (so they say) all over like a tiara dullfuoco, in his grey half a tall hat and his amber necklace and his crimson harness and his leathern jib and his cheapshein hairshirt and his scotobrit sash and his parapilagian

³¹⁹ *Ambiguity* is an oft-encountered term in discussions of *FW*. However, *opacity* would be the more accurate term in some cases since *ambiguity* implies that the reader/hearer has the choice between two, or more, familiar meanings. The reader's situation in *FW*, however, is often more accurately described by the term *opaque*.

³²⁰ If a sentence running more than 7 lines is considered a long sentence, then it can be stated that long sentences make up three-quarters (468) of the total of 597 lines of chapter II.4. Of the long sentences there are three between 8 and 10 lines, ten between 10 and 20 lines, three between 20 and 30 lines, four between 30 and 40 lines, and two between 40 and 50 lines. The length of sentences in II.4 is not representative of the text as a whole as there are also chapters containing predominately short sentences such as I.1.

gallowglasses (how do you do, jaypee, Elevato!) to find out all the improper colleges (and how do you do, Mr Dame James? Get out of my way!), forkbearded and bluetoothed and bellied and boneless, from Strathlyffe and Aylesburg and Northumberland Anglesey, the whole yaghoodurt sweepstakings and all the horsepowers. (FW 386.24-387.11)

A reading of this sentence driven by the aim to understand its major propositions in order to integrate them into an overall narrative will probably result in an attempt to sort out clauses and phrases. The sentence begins with a ‘reference’ to “Bootersbay Sisters,” who are described as “the prumisceous creators” who sell “all the emancipated statues and flowersports”.³²¹ The initial comparison is already ambiguous – to whom do the specifying descriptions refer, to Bootersbay Sisters or to Battersby Sisters? Are the two possibly identical? One James H. Tickell is said to (have) be(en) “going to the tailturn horseshow.” This is qualified by the temporal information “after he made the centuries” and “before the angler nomads flood,” by the circumstance of his going “along with another fellow,” and by the phrase “active impulsive.” The difficulty, in general, for readers is to make sense of the confusion of clauses, to grasp which phrase is related to which other phrase, and to identify to which ‘character(s)’ the personal pronouns point. Further figures are mentioned in the sentence, namely “the shoeblacks and the redshanks and plebeians and the barrancos and the cappunchers childerun, Jules, everyone, Gotopoxy.” To whom do these names refer? Are they the ones who are said to be “highstepping the fissure and fracture lines [...] to get out of his way”? Out of whose way? Are they the ones about whom it is said that “their withers conditions could not possibly have been improved upon”? To which phrase does the comparison “like hopolopocattls, erumping around their Judgity Yaman” relate? And to whom or what does the proper noun “Judgity Yaman” refer? Another enumeration follows: “and all the tercentenary horses and priesthunters, from the Curragh, and confusionaries and the authorities, Noord Amrikaans and Suid Aferican cattleraiders [...] all over like a tiara dullfuoco.” Is there still any relation to Bootersbay Sisters or to James H. Tickell here? To whom does the description “in his grey half a tall hat and his amber necklace and his crimson harness and his leathern jib and his cheapshein hairshirt and his scotobrit sash and his parapilagian gallowglasses” point? And who wants, and what does it mean, “to find out all the improper colleges [...], forkbearded and bluetoothed and bellied and boneless, from Strathlyffe and Aylesburg and Northumberland Anglesey”? And what are readers to make of the end of the sentence: “the whole yaghoodurt sweepstakings and all the horsepowers”?

³²¹ In order to enable the reader to follow the argument, the phrases from this passage are quoted again in the following analysis.

Another way of attempting to comprehend the sentence is to focus on individual words, on the lexical creativity, and thus on ‘translating’ the lexical items. Such a reading will in many cases be ‘assisted’ by *Annotations*, since this volume has become a sort of widely accepted ‘dictionary’ to Joyce’s text. *Annotations* informs readers that Battersbay Bros. were Dublin auctioneers (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 386). There is at least some degree of coherence here in that the preceding sentence already contains ‘references’ to “auctioneer” (*FW* 386.19) and “auctions” (*FW* 386.23); but apart from this the preceding sentence does not provide any recognisable context. The “Sisters” are ‘described’ as “prumisceous creators.” *Annotations* glosses this phrase listing “promiscuous caterers,” “pumiceous craters,” and “creatures” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 386). The blend “prumisceous” may just as well lead readers to consider it a blending, for instance, of *prude*, *promiscuous*, and *righteous* or of *pruriginous*, *promiscuous*, and *curvaceous* – all of them suited to describe, in rather amusing combinations, persons in positive as in negative respect. It is unlikely that the fact of the subsequent phrase “emancipated statues” appearing in the translation of Eugène Véron’s *L’esthétique* (see Véron, 153), entitled *Æsthetics*, from 1879 contributes any additional context to a reading of this passage; an instance of the exoreferential dynamic (see below). The gloss provided for “the jaypee” is “J.P.” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 386). James H. Tickell may well be a Justice of the Peace – yet, is this of any relevance? What does the information “College Green in Dublin was once called Hoggin-Green” (*ibid.*) contribute to an understanding of the passage?

Glosses for “going to the tailturn horseshow” include a reference to the Dublin Horse Show and to the “Tailteann Games” (*ibid.*), an ancient sporting event held in Ireland until the twelfth century with revival attempts made in the late nineteenth and in the early twentieth century. Or is “tailturn” rather meant to imply the idiomatic expression(s) “turn-tail” and/or “to turn tail”? The annotation for the phrase “before the angler nomads flood” reads “Anglo-Norman (invasion of Ir.)” (*ibid.*). Are such ‘allusions’ meant to emphasise the historical subject matter of the passage? It is certainly due to the presence of such ‘allusions’ that at least some readers will suspect “active impulsive,” glossed as “active & passive” and “impulsive” (*ibid.*), to contain a reference to the Pale. For “the shoeblacks and the redshanks and plebeians and the barrancos and the cappunchers childerun” *Annotations* lists “redshanks: original Celtic occupants of Ir.,” “Sp[anish] barranco: ravine (Schlucht), fig,” “Capuchin,” “cowpunchers,” and “Coppinger” (*ibid.*), which provides little if any obvious coherence apart from the fact that the terms shoeblack, plebeian and cow-puncher imply low social status. The glosses for “Gotopoxy, with the houghers on them” read “Cotopaxi: volcano,” “hours,” and

“Peep O’Day Boys called ‘houghers’ [...]” (ibid.).³²² As there seems to be a resemblance between “Gotopoxy, with the houghers on them” and “Godavari, vert the showers!” (*FW* 213.20), these two phrases may well be variations of some set phrase or religious formula.³²³ How can the form “Gotopoxy” be explained?

No gloss is provided for “highstepping the fissure and fracture lines, seven five threes up, three five sevens down, to get out of his way.” The phrase, formed with “proper” English words, illustrates that the comprehension problems of *FW* readers cannot be attributed exclusively to unfamiliar words and lexical distortions. What does “fissure and fracture lines” denote? Since the ensuing sentence calls up a range of terms related to volcanos, it may be taken to refer to cracks in the earth’s crust; it has indeed been used this way (see OED, “fracture, n.,” C₁). However, the meaning of the phrase in the context of the sentence remains opaque.

The ensuing phrase “onasmuck as their withers conditions could not possibly have been improved upon,” glossed in *Annotations* as “inasmuch as the weather” and “horse’s withers” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 386), does contain a ‘reference’ to horses – the highest part of the back between the shoulder blades of a horse is called withers – but rather seems to describe animals or persons through the phonological resemblance of *withers* and the adjective *withered*. Such a reading is of course influenced by the higher degree of acceptance to our sense of language use of the phrase *withered conditions* in comparison to “withers conditions.” If it is taken to refer to persons rather than animals this would probably be due to the preceding mention of shoeblacks, etc. and the apparent connection between low social status and harsh living conditions. Knowledge of the colloquial phrase “as muck,” which is used as an intensifier in the sense ‘very, completely’ (OED, “muck, n.1,” P₁), does not illuminate the form of the word since there is little apparent connection between *inasmuch* (*as*) and *as muck*. The interjection “(praisers be to deeseeseel!)” may suggest a ‘reference’ to the Dublin City Corporation (D.C.C.), the organisation responsible for civic government in Dublin.³²⁴

For the comparison “like hopolopocattls” *Annotations* lists “Mt Popocatepetl: volcano” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 386). A further issue in *FW* becomes apparent here. The word *opolopo* means “plenty” in Yoruba – “plenty of cattle” is certainly not an absurd

³²² The last-mentioned gloss is not correct as the Houghers were identified with the Whiteboys rather than with the Peep O’Day Boys (see Connolly).

³²³ In *FW* set and idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and song titles and lines, are often suggested by phonological resemblance.

³²⁴ In *Ulysses* the topic of cattle is associated with Mr. Deasy; in *FW* II.4 the phrase “(praisers be to deeseeseel!),” which may contain a phonological suggestion of the former, is succeeded by “hopolopocattls” (*FW* 386.35; emphasis added).

combination. Yoruba does not appear on Joyce's dubious list of the forty languages he used in *FW* (see Joyce, *Book IV*, 343). But this fact alone does not suffice to dismiss the possibility of its use altogether. English-Yoruba dictionaries exist since the nineteenth century. The incorporation, in various ways, of words from other languages is one of the factors which guarantee the opacity of *FW*. In lexical blends, for instance, the fact that even one source word could potentially be a German, Italian, French, Irish, or Yoruba word increases the number of conceivable options beyond anyone's linguistic competence.

Regardless of the presence or non-presence of Yoruba, the volcano 'reference' is supported by the word "erumping" following it, which is an obsolete word meaning "to break out as an eruption" (OED, "† erump, v."). The glosses for "Judgity Yaman" include "L[atin] jugiter: perpetually",³²⁵ "J[apanese] yama: mountain," "Fujiyama, volcano," and "C[hinese] Yamen: mandarin's office" (McHugh, *Annotations*, 386), which do not provide a satisfactory explanation. If "Gotopoxy," "hopolopocattls," and "Judgity Yaman" are considered to imply *volcano*, this is seemingly supported by the ensuing sentence, the beginning of which (*FW* 387.12-13) provides a context for such a reading (see also McHugh, *Annotations*, 387).³²⁶

The horse topic is further 'emphasised' by the phrase "and all the tercentenary horses and priesthunters, from the Curragh, and confusionaries and the authorities, Noord Amrikaans and Suid Aferican cattleraiders (so they say) all over like a tiara dullfuoco." *Annotations* offers "Priest-hunters claimed bounty on priests under the Penal Laws in C17-18 Ir.," "Curragh of Kildare (racecourse)," "confession," "Du[tch] North American," "L[atin] Afer: Africa," and "It[alian] del fuoco: some fire" (ibid.). The blend "confusionaries" may be the result of blending *confusion* and *confessionary* or *Confucian* and *missionaries* – there is simply no available context to support or dismiss either of these hypotheses. The comparison "all over like a tiara dullfuoco" also remains opaque. The word "tiara" is used for various forms of formal and traditional headgear. In Italian *Terra del Fuoco* is the name for the South American archipelago Tierra del Fuego. Neither fact serves to elucidate the comparison satisfactorily.

The descriptive phrase "in his grey half a tall hat and his amber necklace and his crimson harness and his leathern jib and his cheapshein hairshirt and his scotobrit sash and his

³²⁵ The Latin form is *iugiter*, a fact which makes the 'translation' "Judgity" → iugiter appear less likely.

³²⁶ Yet, to speak in this case of a "collocational chain" (Wales, 148f), that is a "sequence of lexical items drawn from the same lexical set" (ibid.), which Katie Wales has posited in her linguistic analysis in *The Language of James Joyce*, would overstretch the idea behind the linguistic term *collocation* as these words – being neologisms and archaisms, and being generally not directly semantically related – are not words which *usually* co-occur. It may be more appropriate to speak of a fuzzy set *volcano*. If such a set is identified by the reader, that is if two vaguely related terms seem to point towards a common semantic field, then it may indeed help to "delimit the meanings of neologisms" in proximity (ibid., 149).

para-pilagian gallowglasses” is annotated as “(7 items of clothing),” “cut of his jib: personal appearance,” “sheepskin,” “gallowglasses: heavily armed Ir. Soldiers,” “Gr[reek] parapelagios: along the sea,” “pilage: fur,” and “Pelagian heresy” (ibid.). The preceding sentence already contains a remark about “their half a tall hat” (*FW* 386.17). The term “gallowglasses” seems to owe its inclusion in a list of clothing items to its erroneous spelling, which makes it faintly reminiscent of the word *glasses*.³²⁷ While the coherence, or the appearance of coherence, within this phrase seems to be maintained through the common denominator ‘items which one wears,’ if “jib” is overlooked, the next and last part of the sentence appears as incoherent and opaque as the sentence as a whole.³²⁸

There are plenty of glosses for “to find out all the improper colleges (and how do you do, Mr Dame James? Get out of my way!), forkbearded and bluetoothed and bellied and boneless, from Strathlyffe and Aylesburg and Northumberland Anglesey, the whole yaghoodurt sweepstakings and all the horsepowers,” such as “Sweyn Forkbeard: son of Harald Bluetooth: Danish king,” “Ivar the Boneless, Viking,” “Strathclyde, Aylesbury, Northumberland & Anglesey all ravaged by Vikings,” “Liffey St, Ailesbury Rd, Northumberland Rd & Anglesea Rd, D,” “Ar[menian] joghovourt: people,” “Swift’s yahoos,” “sweepstake” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 387). Yet, they too only confirm John Bishop’s assessment that “even if we consult the available reference works and have the allusions and foreign words explicated for us, they only render what is already unintelligible a little more clearly unintelligible” (Bishop, *Dark*, 26f).

Taken as a whole, the sentence appears like a babbled list and description of persons – indeed like a private conversation, loaded with references revealing themselves only to those ‘inside’ the conversation – which readers cannot but perceive as incoherent. From auctioneers to horseshows, interspersed with terms referring in one way or another to Irish history and to volcanoes, to talk about cattle raiders and colleges, discerning a thread which ensues from the arrangement of the material and constructing the coherence which the passage lacks is difficult because of what must appear to readers as an erratic and irreconcilable jumble of thoughts/material. This sentence is but an example of what is characteristic of most passages of *FW* II.4.

³²⁷ In O’Donovan’s translation of the *Annals of the Four Masters* the following phrase appears: “[t]he bands of kernes and galloglachs or gallowglasses, supported by the Irish chieftains of the later ages” (O’Donovan, 119 n. z). The Gaelic form is *gallóglach* and its plural *gallóglai*gh. Concerning the corruption the OED says: “The etymologically correct form galloglakh appears later than the erroneous galloglass, which was probably the result of the plural gallogla(gh)s” (OED, “galloglass, n.”).

³²⁸ On Joyce’s fondness for lists in general see e.g. Eco, *Infinity*.

What are the implications for the reader position? As has been emphasised, the comprehension problems in this sentence are due to diverse factors, of which lexical distortion is only one; most pertinently, it is their combination which makes the text so opaque. There are, for instance, many subordinate clauses in this sentence, the accumulation and vagueness of which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to tell which parts of the sentence refer to which other parts. It cannot even be identified what is the main clause and what are subordinate clauses. If one can estimate, while reading, the relevance of information in a sentence, one can skim over what is perceived as not immediately relevant for comprehension. Joyce's inflation of the sentence and the readers' inability to reconstruct a 'hierarchy of information' lead to a situation in which every phrase becomes potentially relevant.³²⁹ Readers are inundated with words and phrases whose relations often do not become apparent to them. To put it in John Crowe Ransom's words, Joyce is indeed "obfuscating discourse" (Ransom, "*Finnegans*," 426) through various means – and is doing so deliberately. Each reader whose aim is to comprehend must answer for him·her·self the questions which the sentence raises. It is thus left to him·her to establish coherence, to construct subjectively satisfactory meaning. Yet, it is rather unlikely that readers will construct coherence and meaning for the whole sentence. Instead, and this is a general feature of reading *FW*, only a fraction of the 'semantic potential' of such a sentence will be involved in the meaning construction.

In his essay "Joyce, Semiosis, and Semiotics," Eco gives the impression that textual coherence is so stable in *FW* that the validity of an interpretation can be measured against it:

How to prove that a given interpretive conjecture is, if not the only right one, at least an acceptable one? The only way is to check it upon the text as a coherent whole: any interpretation given of a certain portion of a text can be accepted if it is confirmed, and must be rejected if it is challenged, by another portion of the same text. In this sense the internal textual coherence controls the otherwise uncontrollable drift of the reader. (Eco, "Semiosis," 148f)

In view of the problematic nature of coherence in *FW*, Eco's very argument becomes its own counterargument.

By giving the impression of concealing 'its meaning(s),' *FW* provokes – in this context *teases* seems to suggest itself – readers to search for it, to search for and to create patterns of meaning, to translate and disambiguate its words and phrases, to contribute associations and coherence, and thus to construct its meaning. In the very fact of readers being

³²⁹ Franco Moretti has seen this 'strategy' already at work in *Ulysses* (see Moretti, 322f).

enticed to contribute so much that they cannot but get the impression that it is they who make the text ‘come to life,’ or ‘come to mean,’ lies essentially the potential for pleasure but also for frustration. There seems to be a threshold where readers begin to have the impression of having to contribute too much in order to make the text cohere and to make it ‘yield’ a meaning, a threshold where they begin to feel that their meaning construction becomes arbitrary. Here the issue of the *reader function* (see below) comes into play.

Translation is essentially what happens in both of the previously described approaches to understanding the sentence.³³⁰ In the first case, it is translation which focuses on integrating a passage into an overall narrative. This approach – one may call it ‘reading for narrative coherence’ – will be characterised by the construction of coherence and a reading driven by adapting what we read to our expectations of narrative and the established critical contexts in which *FW* is read. This drive for narrative coherence is strong as indeed it seems to “require a more strenuous effort to believe that a narrative lacks coherence than to believe that somehow, if we could only find out, it doesn’t” as Frank Kermode once suggested (Kermode, *Genesis*, 53). In the second case, translation focuses on making unfamiliar words and phrases familiar by searching for the most subjectively satisfactory translations; one may call this approach ‘reading for decoding word meaning.’ The approaches are not mutually exclusive, so that readers will often be involved in both acts of translation. Yet, there is a difference in that the first approach tends to be reductive in leaving out that which cannot be reconciled, cannot be made to cohere within the framework ‘narrative.’ The second approach tends to be excessive in attempting to exhaust the potential of meanings of a given passage. It has become apparent that a reading aiming at ‘lexical decoding’ produces semantic surplus which makes the struggle to win coherence even more difficult. Both tendencies follow logically from the respective aims of the approaches. If the reader’s aim is to relate a part to the whole and to consider that whole as coherent, s/he will reduce the complexity of the task by ignoring the detail. If, however the reader’s aim is to attempt to make sense of the detail, s/he will provide too many rather than too few translations of words and phrases. Emphasis on the narrative must necessarily reduce the signifying potential of the micro-level, while emphasis on the signifying potential of the micro-level must necessarily reduce the persuasiveness of the supposition that this potential can ever (be made to) cohere on the macro-level.

³³⁰ What *Annotations* provides, then, are selective *translations* of what are assumed to be unfamiliar words and phrases – a fact which Roland McHugh himself does not seem to realise or acknowledge (see McHugh, *Annotations*, xiii). In contrast to the ‘narrative translations,’ it does not assemble these translations into a coherent narrative.

Our acts of translation should make us aware of the fact that “our transformations *are* transformations, both necessary and doubtful” (Senn, “Dogmad,” 116).³³¹ Adorno has identified this being forced to translate as the aporia of interpretation: “What is deadly about the interpretation of art [...] even philosophically responsible interpretation, is that in the process of conceptualization it is forced to express what is strange and surprising in terms of what is already familiar and thereby to explain away the only thing that would need explanation” (Adorno, “Surrealism,” 86). In this sense, one can say, in the words of Y in Tommaso Landolfi’s “Dialogo dei massimi sistemi,” “[t]ranslated, [...] [*FW*] is unrecognizable and loses everything [;] [i]t [...] [is] stripped of all meaning” (Landolfi, 43).

3.4 Performing Group Readings: *Finnegans Wake* ‘sub specie ludi’

There is a further aspect of reading *FW* which can be subsumed under the term *performance*, related to the circumstance that the text is often read and discussed in groups. Indeed, in our time there are few other texts which are traditionally read in groups. The practice of reading and interpreting *FW* collectively was established early on; a group reading of *WiP* is already mentioned in Golding’s *James Joyce* (see Golding, 151f). William York Tindall’s *FW* reading group at Columbia, set up in 1940, and further university reading groups which were established during the 1940s and 1950s have already been mentioned. The aforementioned culture of correspondence and joint discussion of the 1950s, from which developed what is called above the philological commentary branch of *FW* criticism, was also characterised by the purpose of joining efforts. Consequently, the opening sentence of the first *Newsletter* read “*Finnegans Wake* needs to be read communally” (Senn and Hart, 1). The assumption which informed this practice owed much to an understanding of Joyce’s use of allusion derived from *Ulysses* and to the idea that the more fields of expertise – in terms of knowledge of languages and of the encyclopaedia of culture – would contribute to the elucidation, the greater the progress to be made. The sense of a text overtaxing the individual reader and literary scholar alike is apparent in the first *Newsletter*’s introductory editorial statement that “[t]he book [*FW*] involves so many disciplines, so much diverse knowledge and experience, that the individual scholar, working at his own point of view, cannot hope to see it in the round” (ibid.). The

³³¹ This holds of course true for the understanding of translation as “[t]he action or process of turning from one language into another; also, the product of this” (OED, “translation, n.,” II.2.a.) as well, which is the reason why the term translation in this narrow sense is put in quotation marks in this study when used in relation to *WiP/FW*. It is no small irony that in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, of all things, the transformations of “Jabberwocky,” of all texts, are mistaken for the evidence of translatability (see Laugier, 716).

hope of elucidating *FW* has since been seriously abated but the tradition of group reading has outlived this hope.

Group readings are by no means a phenomenon of what we call the modern era. As William A. Johnson has pointed out in *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire*, in which he conceives reading as a “sociocultural system” (W. Johnson, *Readers*, 11ff), “[r]eading [in this society] function[ed] as group entertainment, intellectual fodder, and aesthetic delight, but sociologically play[ed] a role beyond the sum of its functional components” (ibid., 39) in so far as “literature became and remained central to the construction and identity of elite *community*” (ibid., 32). Johnson describes “a culture of reading,” as he calls it, which includes group readings of texts aloud and “the group practice of active interrogation of the meaning of a text” (ibid., 200). Literature is “asserted in this period as a major realm of activity in which the elite distinguish themselves as the better (as well as the more rich and powerful) stratum of society” (ibid., 204). Therefore, two thousand years ago a socio-cultural valorisation of “literary pursuits” seems already to have come into effect.

As Gabriele Schwab has pointed out, “[t]he contact between reader and text is not ‘neutral,’ but motivated and structured by emotional investments, desires, cultural and aesthetic values, and receptive habits” (Schwab, *Mirror*, 16). It is especially in reading groups that the socio-cultural aspects of reading come to the fore. All members of reading groups share culturally ingrained assumptions about the cultural significance of reading literature; and reading groups devoted to one individual work or one writer also share the assumption that certain works and writers have particular merit. The motives for participating in a *FW* reading group are manifold – plain curiosity, the lure of an intellectual challenge, and the opportunity for intellectual showmanship may only be the most obvious ones. But the basic motive is the desire to participate in what is still considered “high culture” by many – and the cultural capital derived from this participation – and is thus a form of socio-cultural self-affirmation.

A certain ludic element is characteristic of *FW* group readings. Generally, *FW* has often been referred to in terms of game or play. These notions of *play(ing)* and *game* have ranged from the implications of the term *wordplay*, the notion of a writer playing with language, the notion of the language of *FW* as manifestation of “freeplay” or “language game(s),” the notion of a writer ‘playing games’ with his readers, the notion of a text playing with its readers, to the notion of readers playing with a text which ‘entices’ them to approach it as if it were a game. These notions are present when Margot Norris, making use of a term

connected with Derrida, writes “If Joyce violates the laws of language, he does no more than to adapt the language to a vision in which law has been supplanted by play – a linguistic freeplay” (Norris, *Decentered*, 130), when Eco says the reader of *FW* is “led into a game of associations” (Eco, “Metaphor,” 76), when Senn suggests that “[t]he game [...] is particularly characteristic of *FW*” (Senn, “Glas,” 97; my trans.), describing it as “a game of multiple meanings and coincidences of wording” (ibid.), and when Gabriele Schwab identifies “entirely unusual and innovative language games in *FW* [...] entic[ing] the reader into deciphering hieroglyphics and identifying defamiliarized shapes” (Schwab, *Subjects*, 98).

Regarding group readings the ludic element consists in an oscillation between joint interpretive free associating and joint narrative construction.³³² More often than not *FW* reading group sessions are concerned with making sense of a short passage of the text. Thus the focus of group readings tends to be what above has been termed ‘reading for decoding word meaning’ – negotiated in discussions between the members of the group against the background of the different individual views of the adequacy and relevance of interpretation – but usually the attempt will be made to link what meaning is constructed in one way or another to the centre of this interpretive discourse which is called Joyce and which encompasses all that which a particular reader connects with that name. The ludic element encompasses the joint construction and negotiating of meaning *and* the competitive striving for the most convincing and/or most original reading as pertaining to group readings alone. Furthermore, it encompasses the ‘decoding’ itself, what Eco called “the pleasure of the interpretive labor” (Eco, *Aperta*¹, 347; my trans.) understood as “a process of intelligence that deciphers and reasons, enraptured by the difficulty of communication” (Eco, *Chaosmos*, 81) and,³³³ it is important to add, captivated by the appeal of a work of art which has the reputation of being challenging and enigmatic.³³⁴

³³² A transcription of a recorded group discussion by Joyceans is to be found in McHugh, *Experience*, 62-66. A reconstruction of the “spirit” of a group reading session of members of a U.S. American *FW* reading group at one of the Joyce Symposiums is offered in Borodin, 157-161. Fritz Senn’s piece “Vexations of Group Reading” gives an insight into the issues related to *FW* group readings.

³³³ See also fn. 60 above.

³³⁴ Harry Levin seems to have indicated these aspects in more general terms, calling *FW* “a wonderful game – by no means a private affair, but one in which many may join, each with his own contribution” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 177).

4. Coincidence and Readers' Performance from the Perspective of Cognitive Science

The reader must be prepared at times to visualize several related images simultaneously, realizing that these images are not necessarily bound together by surface-obvious associational chains.
(Sage, "Before," 156)

In order to be able to account for and describe coincidence as an aspect of meaning construction in *FW*, this study draws on a model from cognitive science. The recourse to such a model is not to imply that it provides an adequate description of actual cognitive processes but rather that it provides a useful model to describe aspects of the process of meaning construction on the one hand, and to describe coincidence on a textual level in terms of its different planes and layers, on the other.

Making perspicacious propositions about the process of meaning construction in relation to a work like *FW* is certainly difficult. All the more if a general theory of 'the literary reading process' is to account for a broad range of literary texts. It has been shown that theorists putting forward such a general theory of the reading process, like Eco and Iser, have not been able to satisfactorily account for the idiosyncrasies of the processes involved in the modality of how readers, confronted with a work like *FW*, construct meaning. When Iser refers to *Ulysses* as "first and foremost a structure for eliciting responses and thereby engaging its readers" (Iser, "Ulysses and the Reader," 136), a slight but decisive specification of this realisation leads to the fundamental insight which *FW* provokes, namely that this text is *first and foremost* a *Wirkungspotential* 'response-provoking potential' for eliciting 'translational,' inferential, elaborative, exoreferential and narrativising responses and thereby engaging its readers in substantial meaning construction.

Constructing meaning in *FW* requires a specific performance on the reader's part and the nature of this performance is necessarily cognitive.³³⁵ One aspect of this performance is to bring to the text an 'organisational schema' or frame of rationalisation. This is the common strategy behind what has been described above as 'reading for narrative coherence' and as an instance of complexity reduction – a necessary process to make the "gigantic mass of information [...] deprived of all coherence" (ibid., 134) conceivable as a narrative in the first place. As *minus functions* all those means which have traditionally been used to transport narrative, such as character and plot, are not developed in such a way as to be identifiable by

³³⁵ The notion of cognitive performance has nothing in common with Austin's concept of performatives nor with the appropriation of Austin's concept in cultural studies. As has been pointed out above, *performance* is used here, among other things, in the obsolete sense of "making up or supplying (what is wanting); making up for (a lack of something)" (OED, "perform, v.," II.7.c.).

readers of *FW* except as omissions. Readers have to construct and project them themselves, for instance through acts of configuration and emplotment (see Ricœur, *Time*¹, 77, 53-76; *Time*², 25); and this constitutes the reader position. “Followability” in the Ricœurian sense (see *ibid.*, 66f) is denied – there is no recognisable “configurational arrangement transform[ing] the [...] [‘]events[’] into one meaningful whole” (*ibid.*, 67); it would have been deeply interesting indeed to read an analysis of *FW*’s “narrative configuration” and “imaginative variations” (Ricœur, *Time*², 101) in *La configuration dans le récit de fiction* in addition to those of Woolf, Mann and Proust. For the very reason that “[i]t is not only centralized narrative that disappears in *Finnegans Wake*, the mass of interlaced material makes it impossible to draw out *any* single thread as central – whether it be plot, time sequence, character, symbolic structure, mythic framework, voice, attitude, dogma, or any other of the threads that run through conventional novels” (Attridge, *Peculiar*, 164), the demands made on readers’ cognitive performance, their ability to ‘translate’ a text – another aspect of readers’ performance – which alternates between difficult-to-comprehend and incomprehensible into something familiar and thus comprehensible, are high.³³⁶

These statements proceed on the assumption – by no means a new one – that human cognition plays a significant role in the process which is often termed literary communication. The heterogeneous young field of cognitive science – an interdisciplinary project to which research in linguistics, psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence and neuroscience contributes – is concerned, among other things, with the cognitive basis of language.³³⁷

4.1 Cognitive Science and the Study of Literature

In the last decade of the twentieth century, literary studies have very occasionally come into contact with cognitive science; in the first decade of the twenty-first century this contact has increased and it has become more broadly visible due to chapters on the influence of cognitive science on the study of literature in introductory volumes to, and handbooks of, literary studies. Peter Stockwell’s *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* from 2002 is the first

³³⁶ Following Barthes, Jonathan Culler used the term *naturalization* for the description of this performance (see ch. 7 in Culler, *Poetics*), Monika Fludernik uses *narrativization* (see Fludernik, 22-25), and Wolfgang Iser used the term *Normalisierung* (see Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 233).

³³⁷ The so-called cognitive turn in linguistics and psychology, which spanned the two decades of the 1950s and 1960s, is in many respects a consequence of the work of Noam Chomsky and his theory of transformational grammar (see Bechtel et al., 33-43).

introductory volume of its kind which received a broader reception.³³⁸ Early on, the field of narratology, particularly within the scope of the so-called new narratologies, was a fertile ground for concepts from cognitive science.³³⁹

There is a general scepticism whether cognitive science can contribute anything substantive to the concerns of literary studies. The very different self-conception of the disciplines – empirical research and the self-understanding as being a science on one side and a field of the humanities that tends to keep its distance from, and likes to maintain suspicion of, empiricism and scientificity on the other – is made into an argument against “compatibility” (see Huber and Winko, 8, 11).³⁴⁰ One of the forms in which this argument appears is the criticism that findings and concepts from fields concerned with non-literary forms of language use ignore the aesthetic quality of literary phenomena – sometimes this argument is taken to the point where such phenomena are declared to be incommensurable – and thus the validity of such theoretical ‘moves’ is claimed to be questionable.³⁴¹

The transfer of concepts from the sciences into literary studies has been taking place for quite some time – one need only think of structuralism, the linguistic premises of which were conceived of in terms of ‘hard science,’ and of the vogue of chaos theory in the 1990s.³⁴² What frequently seems to make the case of cognitive science a contentious issue is the reaction against what some critics have called the “empirisation of the mind” (Zymner, 136; my trans.). The perceived assault which the posits of neuroscience and, though to a lesser extent as it seems, cognitive science mean for the very idea of *Geist* – which led to the ‘mind-brain debate’,³⁴³ a re-ignition of the long-standing debates about materialism and determinism – have caused a defensive attitude towards ‘borrowings’ from these fields of research on the part of more than a few humanities scholars, or rather on the part of *Geisteswissenschaftler* of

³³⁸ The earliest attempts to bring literary studies into contact with cognitive science were those by Mark Turner in *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science*, published in 1991 and by Reuven Tsur in *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* published in 1992. For an overview of early cognitive science-oriented approaches in literary studies see also Huber and Winko, 10f. In Germany, the edited volume *Literatur und Kognition* (2009) marks the first broader acknowledgement of the increasing influence of cognitive science on *Literaturwissenschaft*. The edited volume is the result of a panel on cognition and communication at the Deutscher Germanistentag of 2007.

³³⁹ See, e.g., Monika Fludernik’s *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* published in 1996. The “cognitive turn” in narratology was proclaimed by Elrud Ibsch as early as 1990.

³⁴⁰ It is not insignificant in this respect that the last dominant paradigm of literary theory with a strong scientism, namely structuralism, was superseded by a phase marked by epistemological doubt, namely post-structuralism.

³⁴¹ In one sense, the model of conceptual blending can even be said to be derived from literary phenomena, as Mark Turner has claimed that “the theory of blending [...] arose almost entirely from the study of literary and inventive linguistic expressions” (M. Turner, “Cognitive,” 18).

³⁴² It must be noted that as an interdisciplinary field cognitive science extends across the modern academic categories of social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities.

³⁴³ In Germany the debate was led, for instance, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; particularly vehemently in July 2008.

a strictly Diltheyan orientation. A further point of criticism is the supposed triviality of the results of using models from cognitive science (see Huber and Winko 11).

The objective of the following considerations is to illustrate how the conceptual blending model in particular can indeed contribute to a more specific description of coincidence as a significant aspect of the construction of meaning which readers of *FW* specifically perform.

4.2 Conceptual Blending and Issues of ‘Applicability’

When Gilles Fauconnier refers to his model of mental spaces as “theoretical constructs devised to model high level cognitive organization” (Fauconnier, *Mental*, xxxi) this holds true for conceptual blending as well. The model of conceptual blending has not been, and indeed cannot be, empirically tested. It is a theoretical model and as such does not have a stronger claim to validity than other models; its utilisation does certainly not make the results presented in this study any more ‘scientific,’ ‘correct’ or ‘definitive’ than those of any other study of literary criticism as it shares the speculative and contentious character of any such study. The recourse to models developed within cognitive science is thus not meant to imply scientificity. This utilisation is of a firmly heuristic nature – it is not based on the conviction that cognitive science should serve as a general meta-frame, or its premises as paradigms, for literary studies. This is also the reason why this study does not consider itself to belong in any of its parts to the field of cognitive poetics.

Before delineating the model itself, some contextualisation of its bases is provided, outlining its purpose, background assumptions and theoretical influences. The theory of “conceptual blending,” also referred to as “conceptual integration” or simply “blending,” was set forth by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner,³⁴⁴ two linguists by training who turned to the emerging field of cognitive linguistics in the 1980s. Cognitive linguistics grew out of the results of research in the 1970s and early 1980s notably by Len Talmy, Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff and Charles Fillmore. Fauconnier has given an overview of the general assumptions of the field in an encyclopaedia article on cognitive linguistics (see Fauconnier, “Cognitive”). The aim of cognitive linguistics, he writes here, is to go beyond the description and analysis of language and its structure to an investigation of the “more complex backstage operations of cognition that create grammar, conceptualization, discourse, and thought itself”

³⁴⁴ See Turner and Fauconnier; Fauconnier and Turner, “Central”; Fauconnier and Turner, “Networks”; Fauconnier and Turner, “Principles”; and Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*.

(ibid., 542). According to Fauconnier, we owe to cognitive linguistics the recognition that using language means that “we draw unconsciously on vast cognitive and cultural resources, call up models and frames, set up multiple connections, coordinate large arrays of information, and engage in creative mappings, transfers, and elaborations” (ibid., 540).

Conceived as a semantic theory of (primarily textual) discourse meaning, Fauconnier and Turner have developed conceptual blending into a more general cognitive theory, positing that conceptual blending is a “basic mental operation” (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, vi) which “plays a decisive role in human thought and action” (ibid.), in particular for the construction of meaning. This latter stage of the theory is set forth at length in their book *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities*, published in 2002. Here Fauconnier and Turner claim that a vast array of manifestations of human thought and action can be explained by positing a “general mental capacity” (ibid.) which underlies and makes possible the bringing together, or rather ‘thinking together,’ of elements from different domains: “[H]uman beings are exceptionally adept at integrating two extraordinarily different inputs to create new emergent structures” (ibid., 27).³⁴⁵ As mental processes do in general, it operates largely on an unconscious level. Fauconnier and Turner have acknowledged Arthur Koestler’s “idea that creativity involves bringing together elements from different domains” (ibid., 37) – Koestler termed this concept, which he developed in *The Act of Creation* from 1964, “bisociation of matrices” – as a precursor to their concept.³⁴⁶

One of the basic issues that the theory is meant to account for is the (on-line)³⁴⁷ construction of meaning, a process which Fauconnier has referred to as the “high-level, complex mental operations that apply within and across domains when we think, act, or communicate” (Fauconnier, *Mappings*, 1) and which Fauconnier and Turner illustrate by using the following example:

When we see a picture of the newborn baby, we cannot suppress our feeling that we are seeing a baby. In fact, the two-dimensional arrangement of colors in the photograph has almost nothing in common with a baby, and it takes a brain evolved over three billion years and trained through several months of

³⁴⁵ George Lakoff has linked conceptual blending and Freud’s concept of condensation, stating that they “appear to be the same mechanisms” (Lakoff, 90). Comparing the two concepts, Lakoff writes: “But whereas Freud saw these mechanisms as irrational modes of primary-process thinking, cognitive scientists have found these modes to be an indispensable part of ordinary, rational thought, which is largely unconscious” (ibid.).

³⁴⁶ In *The Act of Creation*, Koestler writes: “I have coined the term ‘bisociation’ in order to make a distinction between the routine skills of thinking on a single ‘plane’, as it were, and the creative act, which, as I shall try to show, always operates on more than one plane” (Koestler, 35f). Koestler calls this bisociation a way of “escaping our more or less automatized routines of thinking and behaving” (ibid., 45): “[S]ignalled by the spontaneous flash of insight which shows a familiar situation or event in a new light, and elicits a new response to it,” “[t]he bisociative act connects previously unconnected matrices of experience” (ibid.).

³⁴⁷ See fn. 313 above.

early life to construct the identity between the picture and the baby. Because the brain does this instantly and unconsciously, we take the construction of meaning for granted. Or rather, we tend to take the meaning as emanating from its formal representation, the picture, when in fact it is being actively constructed by staggeringly complex mental operations in the brain of the viewer. (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 5; see also Werber, 277-285)

For Fauconnier and Turner, language is a system of forms (see Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 73). From their supposition that form does not present meaning but rather that “[f]orm prompts meaning” (ibid., 5) follows their view that “language does not represent meaning directly, instead, it systematically prompts the construction of meaning” (ibid., 142).³⁴⁸ Systems of form and systems of meaning are, according to Fauconnier and Turner, “inseparable” (ibid., 11).

Fauconnier and Turner’s theory is influenced by George Lakoff’s theory of conceptual metaphor.³⁴⁹ Following Lakoff, they understand such phenomena as metaphor and metonymy to be “powerful conceptual mappings at the very core of human thought” (Fauconnier, “Cognitive,” 540; see also Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 17).³⁵⁰ Yet, in their view metaphor is a result of a more basic process, namely blending (see Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 90, 106). They also adopted Lakoff’s assumption of the embodiment of thought and language, suggesting that “conceptual structure arises from our sensorimotor experience” (Fauconnier, “Cognitive,” 540).

Furthermore, conceptual blending is based on Fauconnier’s theory of mental spaces – a theory of knowledge representation and language processing.³⁵¹ As has been mentioned, mental spaces are “theoretical constructs devised to model high level cognitive organization” (Fauconnier, *Mental*, xxxi). Fauconnier defines mental spaces as “small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 40).³⁵² They are “very partial assemblies” (ibid., 102) connected to “long-

³⁴⁸ Fauconnier has explained elsewhere: “Language does not ‘represent’ meaning; it prompts for the construction of meaning in particular contexts with particular cultural models and cognitive resources. Very sparse grammar guides us along the same rich mental paths, by prompting us to perform complex cognitive operations. Thus, a large part of cognitive linguistics centers on the creative on-line construction of meaning as discourse unfolds in context” (Fauconnier, “Cognitive,” 540). As already mentioned, the constructivist notion of the processing of language as an active and dynamic act of meaning construction on the part of the reader (and listener respectively) was formulated in cognitive psychology by Bransford, Barclay and Franks, and in a more general sense in the work of the psychologists Frederic Bartlett and Jean Piaget. It has later been adopted by cognitive linguists like Fauconnier and Turner.

³⁴⁹ It was set forth in Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* published in 1980.

³⁵⁰ A similar view of metaphor was held by Giambattista Vico (see e.g. Bryan, 259-262).

³⁵¹ An account of mental spaces theory is given in Fauconnier, *Mental*.

³⁵² According to Fauconnier, mental spaces “are built up from many sources. One of these is the set of conceptual domains we already know about [...]. A single mental space can be built up out of knowledge from

term schematic knowledge” like frames and to “long-term specific knowledge” like memories (ibid., 40).³⁵³ Mental spaces “can be modified as thought and discourse unfold” (ibid.).

How is one to conceive conceptual blending then? Fauconnier and Turner’s so-called network model (of conceptual blending) posits a ‘process’ involving four mental spaces, namely *input spaces*, *cross-space mapping*, *generic space* and *blended space* or simply *blend* (see ibid., 40f). The mental operations which underlie conceptual blending, and which take place simultaneously (see ibid., 44), involve setting up networks of mental spaces, which means a) constructing *input spaces* (see ibid., 41), b) establishing a set of “mappings” between the *input spaces* (ibid.),³⁵⁴ c) establishing a *generic mental space* which “maps onto each of the *inputs* and contains what they have in common” (ibid.), and d) “projecting” selectively from those *inputs* into a novel ‘*blended*’ *mental space*, which then dynamically develops *emergent structure* (see ibid., 40-47). Conceptual integration involves at least two but can have multiple inputs (see ibid., 279). In addition, a number of constitutive and governing principles have been posited for the process of blending (see ibid., 309-334).

Fauconnier and Turner call *emergent structure*, which the blend develops, that which is the new aspect of the result of blending and which is therefore “more” and “different” from the content of the inputs, i.e. “the creation of new meaning in the blend” (ibid., 20). This central aspect of blending also differentiates it, according to Fauconnier and Turner, from analogy and analogical reasoning (see ibid., 35).³⁵⁵ *Emergent structure* is generated in three ways: through *composition*, *completion* and *elaboration* (see ibid., 48). *Composition* is (vaguely) explained as follows: “[B]lending can compose [in the sense of putting together] elements from the input spaces to provide relations that do not exist in the separate inputs” (ibid.). The term *completion* is intended to describe that we unconsciously contribute

many separate domains. [...] In the unfolding of a full discourse, a rich array of mental spaces is typically set up with mutual connections and shifts of viewpoint and focus from one space to another” (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 102f). Elsewhere Fauconnier writes about mental spaces: “[W]hen we engage in any form of thought, typically mediated by language (e.g. conversation, poetry, reading, storytelling), domains are set up, structured, and connected. The process is local: a multitude of such domains – mental spaces – are constructed for any stretch of thought, and language (grammar and lexicon) is a powerful means (but not the only one) of specifying, or retrieving, key aspects of this cognitive construction. Reference, inference, and more generally structure projection of various sorts, operate by using the connections available to link the constructed mental spaces” (Fauconnier, *Mental*, xxxvii).

³⁵³ In cognitive science *frames* are knowledge representation units. The term is sometimes used synonymous with other terms such as *scripts*, *concepts* and *schemata*.

³⁵⁴ Fauconnier borrows the term *mapping* from mathematics: “[A] mapping, in the most general mathematical sense, is a correspondence between two sets that assigns to each element in the first a counterpart in the second” (Fauconnier, *Mappings*, 1 n.1).

³⁵⁵ A further distinguishing feature between analogy and blending is, according to Fauconnier and Turner, the being restricted to compatibility of the former and the encompassing of incompatibility of the latter (see Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 29): “Often the point of the blend is not to obscure incompatibilities, but, in a fashion, to have at once something and its opposite” (ibid.). The lexical blend “chaosmos” (*FW* 118.21) illustrates this understanding of blends quite well.

background knowledge in order to “run” the blend (see *ibid.*); pattern completion is the most basic kind of contribution (see *ibid.*). *Elaboration* refers to the “imaginative” mental contributions we make when running the blend. Fauconnier and Turner emphasise that “there are always many different possible lines of elaboration” (*ibid.*); “the creative possibilities of blending stem from the open-ended nature of completion and elaboration” (*ibid.*, 49).

Building an integration network, that is, ‘mentally performing’ conceptual blending, is not a sequence of discrete conscious operations – “there is always extensive unconscious work in meaning construction” (*ibid.*, 71). Input formation, projection, completion, and elaboration all take place simultaneously (see *ibid.*, 72). Furthermore, we may unconsciously make “many parallel attempts to find suitable projections, with only the accepted ones appearing in the final network” (*ibid.*, 71f).

Some of Fauconnier and Turner’s grandiose-sounding claims in *The Way We Think* do indeed seem exaggerated. For instance, when in their more general aim to give a cognitive description of ‘products’ of human creativity, an endeavour which has unquestionably been inspired by Koestler’s example, they go so far as to claim that “conceptual blending underlies and makes possible all these diverse human accomplishments, that it is responsible for the origins of language, art, religion, science, and other singular human feats, and that it is indispensable for basic everyday thought as it is for artistic and scientific abilities” (*ibid.*, vi).³⁵⁶ Conceptual integration and the *compression* involved, they further claim, have the potential to provide “global insight, human-scale understanding, and new meaning [...] mak[ing] us both efficient and creative” (*ibid.*, 92). It seems rather doubtful whether it makes sense to single out a specific cognitive operation and demand that it be considered the source of such diverse accomplishments and feats rather than attributing it to the complex and (obviously) efficient interaction of all kinds of known and unknown processes in the human mind. Yet, if one postulates a model to theorise a basic cognitive process, as Fauconnier and Turner do, it is not surprising that it is made to account for many heterogeneous manifestations, as their examples show, and that such a model has to remain vague in a certain sense in order to accommodate the broadest range of phenomena.

In *The Way We Think*, blending is consistently described as a cognitive process of response, that is, as a process that is the result of a situation that prompts someone to cognitively perform blending, for instance a hearer in response to something that is said, a reader in response to a textual situation, a viewer in response to an image, and other non-

³⁵⁶ And yet, something like the chimeras in ancient mythologies, to use an illustrative example, which are composed of the parts of various animals, can indeed be convincingly described as the result of conceptual blending processes of an earlier stage of human consciousness.

linguistic, non-graphic scenarios. In the case of reading a text, Fauconnier and Turner would argue it is language – a “stimulus” in response to which entrenched cognitive processes take place – systematically prompting the construction of meaning. Thus, here blending is theorised by Fauconnier and Turner from the perspective of reception, that is, of the ‘cognitive system’ ‘taking something in’ which prompts conceptual integration. It is from this perspective that one can say *FW* makes use of linguistic forms which prompt readers to perform conceptual blending.³⁵⁷

As the examples in Fauconnier and Turner make obvious, and as the notion of meaning construction implies, individually varying aspects such as knowledge and mental capacity – playing a significant role in the concept of mental spaces in general and in the blending aspects of *completion* and *elaboration* – influence the cognitive process of blending. It is this subjective element, varying from one person to the next, which eludes adequate consideration in the theory of conceptual blending.

Although they emphasise that “[b]ecause blending is neither deterministic nor compositional, there is more than one way to construct an acceptable blend” (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, 64), the very use of the term ‘acceptable,’ the significance of subjective response and the examples given in *The Way We Think* reveal that issues of what by and large can be subsumed under the term (the ‘right’) interpretation play a role in Fauconnier and Turner’s account of their model (see e.g. *ibid.*, 65). This is also due to the fact that “the imagination has wide latitude in recruiting, projecting, and blending additional background knowledge, context, and memories in order to develop a full meaning on the basis of a particular mapping scheme and a choice of particular domains” (*ibid.*, 166). With regard to the question of the “freedom and limits on interpretation” (*ibid.*) Fauconnier and Turner perform a curious double manoeuvre. While emphasising the “very strong” constraints imposed by “ease of activation and degree of entrenchment” (*ibid.*, 168) in order to rule out that ‘anything goes,’ they argue at the same time for an acknowledgement of the “latitude of the imagination” over entrenchment (*ibid.*).

Fauconnier and Turner write “[b]lending is a compression tool *par excellence*” (*ibid.*, 114) – *FW* is arguably the literary work of compression *par excellence*, in its figurative sense of “the condensation of thought or language” (OED, “compression, n.,” 1.c.) where condensation refers to the increase of density. One might think that for this reason alone the model of conceptual blending has some explanatory value for the study of *FW*. However, any expectations of a simple, ‘direct’ application of such a model to the analysis of a literary text

³⁵⁷ Cf. Fauconnier and Turner’s statement “Expressions are prompts for conceptual integration patterns. We use them to prompt other people to perform conceptual integrations” (Fauconnier and Turner, *Think*, xvi-xvii).

would of course be unwarranted. There are very specific reasons against it. As Fauconnier and Turner's emphasis lies on celebrating the potential-for-insight-and-new-meaning aspect of their concept, they seem to lose sight of the fact that blending can just as well contribute to greater complexity instead of reducing complexity by "converg[ing] on human-scale patterns" (ibid., 376).

If one were to put it in Fauconnier and Turner's words, what makes *FW* so complex and 'difficult' is that its formal and conceptual integrations are constructed in such a way that makes it hard for readers to convert them to "human scale" – human scale being "the level at which it is natural for us to have the impression that we have direct, reliable, and comprehensive understanding" (ibid., 323). While it is indeed not obvious whether the conceptual blending of the *Odyssey* and 16 June 1904 Dublin and its compression of time and space in *Ulysses*, results in "the hallmark virtue of advanced blending capacity," namely "efficient, intelligible, strong compressions across ranges of meaning that would otherwise be diffuse and unmanageable" (ibid., 180), it is certainly obvious that the formal blending – Fauconnier and Turner subsume puns and lexical blends under the category "formal blends" (see ibid., 365ff) – in *FW* results in a reading situation that can certainly be characterised as "diffuse and unmanageable." This is so because *FW* violates at least some of the governing principles of conceptual integration, such as "the Unpacking Principle," which states that "the blend all by itself should prompt for the reconstruction of the entire network" (ibid., 332). In *FW* it is precisely *not* the case that "all the conceptual engineering that went into building it [e.g. a lexical blend] can be retrieved by a member of the relevant linguistic and cultural community" (ibid., 367). Consequently, readers of *FW* realise almost immediately that not even the appearance of something like "the Relevance Principle," which states that "an element in the blend should have relevance, including relevance for establishing links to other spaces and for running the blend" (ibid., 333), has been preserved.

The short section on "formal blends" (see ibid., 365-368) is quite unsatisfactory as such blends do not receive the same rigorous analysis in their study as other linguistic forms do. The few blend examples they cite are characterised by semantic transparency. They consider instances in which formal and conceptual blending go hand in hand as rare but striking. This is only one of the intriguing open questions: Does the formal blending all by itself 'signal' and prompt the conceptual blending, or does that require the awareness of the concept 'lexical blend/portmanteau'?

Lexical blends are linguistic chimeras, that is, hybrid *Gestalten*.³⁵⁸ And *FW* is the labyrinth, but no Ariadne's thread is of help since the labyrinth is not stable but changes its *Gestalt* through our entanglement in it; as the labyrinth itself is composed of these chimeras. When we return to a passage we have traversed before, it is not the same anymore. And we realise that it was never laid out in order to lock something in but to lock out the inflexible, the mentally ossified, those who are intent on never straying from 'the right' path, those unwilling to come adrift by allowing oneself to 'see things in a different light,' to kaleidoscope (itself an instance of such linguistic chimeras), to σκοπεῖν καλὸν εἶδος (see Brewster, 1), not escaping what will be an *inelastic collision* but throw oneself into it.

5. The Aspect of Coincidence in the Process of Meaning Construction in *FW* II.4

A reading of the beginning of *FW* II.4 will serve to introduce the ensuing elaboration of a mode of analysis, inspired by conceptual blending, for the description of the meaning construction performed by readers of *FW*.

5.1 A Reading of *FW* 383-384

In reading *FW*, it is often difficult to form a coherent mental representation of what one reads, in other words, to *comprehend* a phrase, sentence or passage, because readers cannot identify the text's propositional information. Often readers are neither able to immediately say after reading a phrase, sentence, or passage what it says on the most basic level about objects, subjects, facts and circumstances in the non-fictional world, nor what it says about such things in the fictional world of the text. In this respect *FW* II.4 segments into two parts – the somewhat more transparent beginning is outweighed by the opaque rest of the chapter.

The chapter begins with fourteen-lines in italics rhyming, except for the antepenultimate and penultimate lines, in *-ark*. In terms of word forms and grammaticality the language contains only a few examples deviating from 'plain English.' It can therefore be assumed that for most readers the beginning will appear like a chant by someone gloating

³⁵⁸ The concept of *Gestalt* is brought into play in this context in particular in terms of its link with visual perception and of the *Gestalt*-criterion of *Übersummativität* 'super-summativity.'

over the misfortune of “*Muster Mark*” (383.1).³⁵⁹ The voice(s) gloating over Mark seem(s) to spell out with relish the attractiveness of “*Tristy*” (383.11), a “*spry young spark*” (ibid.), for “*her*” (383.12) and take(s) pleasure in informing the reader, or Mark or both, about the inevitable cuckoldry in unequivocal terms. What also comes to notice in the *chorus*-like opening of the chapter is the bird vocabulary, the ‘reference’ to Dublin (“*Palmerston Park*”) and mention of clothing items.

The names and the situation are supposed to conjure up the story of Tristan and Isolde, as the short paragraph following the *carmen maledicum* makes clear. It appears like a narrator’s voice giving a description of the scene of the (quasi-) *chorus*, indicating that the preceding chant of gloat was a “song” sung by “seaswans” (383.15).³⁶⁰ “All the birds of the sea” (383.17), some of which are mentioned by name, are said to have “smacked the big kuss of Trustan with Usolde” (383.18). The names are those of Tristan and Isolde but for an exchange of the initial vowels. The *u*-for-*i/a*-pattern, is obvious in two further instances, namely in “kuss” and in “Muster Mark” so the *u*-exchange occurs in the names, in Mark’s case in the title, of all the major characters from the legend.³⁶¹ *Smacked* can be construed as the sound of the birds mimicking the kiss.

The next short paragraph, introduces “they” (383.19), specified a few lines later as “four,” “listening in, as hard as they could” (383.22). Its beginning evokes a ship-on-the-sea setting. The first difficulty which readers encounter is to figure out what the four are listening to. It is harder to make sense of this passage as it becomes increasingly difficult to integrate phrases like “in Dubbeldorp, the donker, by the tourneyold of the wattarfalls, with their vuoxens and they kemin in so hattajocky” (383.22-24) into a coherent and meaningful narrative. Does this passage specify at all what the four are listening to? There follow further references to all kinds of birds, “sycamores” (384.1), and “auspices” (384.3). At the end of the paragraph “they” are described as “sighing and sobbing, and listening” (384.4-5). Opaque phrases such as “rockbysuckerassousyoceanal sea” (384.3-4) and “Moykle ahoykling!” (384.5) will either be skipped by readers, will be approached by consulting *Annotations*, and/or will provoke attempts at ‘translation’ and meaning construction.

³⁵⁹ Since the references in this section and in the following one are exclusively to *FW*, the abbreviation *FW* has been omitted for the sake of readability.

³⁶⁰ This information makes it plausible to view the *-ark*-rhyme as the sound made by gulls. In this onomatopoeic sense, one can read the first line as “three *arks* for...,” meaning three gull calls or “three *squarks* for...,” with *squark* and *squawk* being alternative spellings of *squawk*. At the same time, it is not by chance that the string also occurs in *Mark* and in “Noah’s *ark*” (*FW* 383.09; emphasis added).

³⁶¹ The *u* in *Trustan* and *Usolde* also indicates *Mark*’s perspective as he *trusted* *Tristan* and will accuse both ‘*You sold(e)!*’ in the sense of ‘you betrayed me.’

In the following paragraph, the four are referred to as “the big four, the four maaster waves of Erin” (384.6), are repeatedly described as “old” (see 384.7-13), and are identified as “Matt Gregory” (384.7, 384.10-11; 386.13), “Marcus Lyons” (384.8; 387.14, 388.34, 397.21), “Luke Tarpey” (384.11) and “Johnny MacDougall” (384.14, 386.6; 389.17-18).³⁶² If one cared to contemplate the names, readers well-versed in the Bible may find the first names to be evocative of the names of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The introduction of the names is interwoven with a few commonplace religious references like “saying grace together” (384.9, repeated in varying form in 384.16), “thank God” (384.12), “for Christ sake” (384.15), and “Amen” (384.15), and perhaps “with their palms in their hands” (384.15-16) as a description of clasping hands in prayer. The phrases which follow their introduction are again hard to integrate: “the way they used to be saying their grace before fish, repeating itself, after the interims of Augusburgh for auld lang syne” (384.15-17) and “pulchrum’s proculs” (384.18) certainly require some form of deliberate ‘decoding’ and meaning construction even if the reader knows about Early Christian symbolism, the Augsburg Interim, and is proficient in Latin.³⁶³ The second half of page 384 does at last contain a description, slightly vague but in suggestive terms, of what the four are listening to. Here the kissing (384.19, 384.30) and “cuddling” (384.21, 384.29) between “he,” “the hero, of Gaelic champion” (384.23), and “her,” “his colleen bawn and dinkum belle” (384.21), is narrated. The lines following this description are again less transparent. The rest of the chapter is by any standard fairly opaque.

The chapter as a whole poses – as most parts of *FW* do – the question of voice: Who is speaking – (a) narrator(s) or (a) character(s)? There are four parts introduced by the first names of the four which can be taken to indicate that they are speaking one after another. But in each part of what appears to be their narration the four are referred to as “they,” “their,” and “the four” instead of the ‘we’ which readers would expect in this case. At the same time, there are phrases such as “that reminds *me*” (387.13-14, 390.15; emphasis added), “what do you think of the four of *us* and there they were now” (387.15-16; emphasis added), “the four of *us*” (389.25; emphasis added), “all repeating *ourselves*” (398.8; emphasis added) as well. This issue of voice is taken up in the last chapter of this study.

³⁶² The names of the four also appear elsewhere in the book (see 214.34-36, 256.21, 405.4-6, 475.24-30, 476.25-28, 519.31-520.13).

³⁶³ The fish was an important symbol in Early Christian symbolism; as such it is also present in the Gospels, most famously in Matthew 4:19. The Greek word for fish, ἰχθύς (*ichthys*) (capitalised ΙΧΘΥΣ) inspired the acrostic Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ (*Iēsus Christos, Theu Yios, Sōtēr*) which translates “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Saviour.” In his *Exagmination* piece “Before *Ulysses* – And After,” Robert Sage identifies HCE with the salmon and ALP with the trout (see Sage, “Before,” 162).

5.2 The Potential of Significatory Planes in *FW* II.4

The critical accounts of *FW* II.4 substantiate what Fritz Senn meant when he said, “we do not understand much of *Finnegans Wake*” (Senn, “Dissatisfaction,” 226). Senn explained his claim thus: “Characteristic of our Wakean insights is their uneven distribution. Those passages which we seem to understand best become richer and richer as we go on [...]. Other passages [...] remain inert, almost wholly impenetrable” (ibid., 233). The frustration experienced by many readers of *FW* at some point is the result of the proportion of passages that yield satisfactory results for readers aiming to perceive or construct its meaning and passages that fail to do so (see ibid.). With regard to *FW* II.4 it is quite obvious that the more transparent two initial pages contrast strongly with the more opaque rest of the chapter. In this respect, it is the reductive quality of most critical accounts of the chapter, and of *FW* in general, their tendency to simplify, which is problematic rather than their orientation towards character and plot. Character and plot are central to our understanding of narrative as readers perceive narratives as being mainly transported by these elements.³⁶⁴ Thus, the majority of readers, if not all readers, will construct the meaning(s) of narratives by means of these elements.

As already mentioned, the following analysis of *FW* II.4 makes use of a mode of analysis which allows for the description of the *significatory planes* involved in the process of meaning construction and for emphasising coincidence as a significant feature of the text. The heuristic concept of significatory planes is inspired by the function of input spaces and generic space in the representation of blending networks in Fauconnier and Turner. Their theory of conceptual blending serves as the basis for the mode of analysis developed here.³⁶⁵ Readers’ attention to different textual cues in the chapter prompts the number of *significatory planes* constructed by them. Not only will different readers construct a different number of such planes, but the planes themselves will also vary from reader to reader.³⁶⁶ The following section is concerned with describing potential {significatory planes} for the meaning construction of readings of *FW* II.4.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ In the field of narrative theory, for instance, cognitive approaches to character and plot posit a “read for character’ control system” (Margolin, 54) and consider plot “a force which drives the reader” (Dannenberg, 437).

³⁶⁵ That means the basic principles of Fauconnier and Turner’s theory are posited.

³⁶⁶ Depending on the way of how readers who do consult the volume make use of it, *Annotations* may either provide the exclusive input or additional input for the construction of such planes.

³⁶⁷ Braces are used to indicate individual significatory planes. The significatory planes which are described here are aspects commonly found in interpretations and overviews of the chapter. The fact that narrative meaning is primarily character-orientated is accounted for by linking the significatory planes to the category of character.

▪ {AGE: Four old men}

The textual cues for the signficatory plane {AGE}, leading to the construction of a plane in which the four become four old men, are, firstly, the frequent appearance of the word “old” (with reference to Mark: 383.5, 383.9, 396.15-17; with reference to the four: 384.7-13, 386.4, 386.15, 393.31; many further occurrences in the text, e.g. 214.33-36) and, secondly, phrases implying a sentimental evocation of the past such as “in the good old bygone days of Dion Boucicault” (385.2-3), “It brought the dear prehistoric scenes all back again, as fresh as of yore” (385.18-19), and “all wishening for anything at all of the bygone times” (386.6-7).³⁶⁸ *Annotations* provides additional input for this plane through listing songs such as “As Slow Our Ship” (383.20) by Thomas Moore and “Auld Lang Syne” (384.17) which are classic musical expressions of nostalgia.

Textual cues like the repeated occurrence of “remembore” (384.35, 387.17, 388.18, 390.34, 392.11, and in variant form 396.36) may play into the construction of the four as “obsessed with ‘bygone times’” (Tindall, 212). *Bore* covers a range of meanings from “to weary by tedious conversation” (OED, “bore, v.2”), to “to persevere by slow and laborious means to the attainment of a distant object” (OED, “bore, v.1,” 3.c.), for instance a memory; on this plane the blend “remembore” suggests a clichéd understanding of the habits of people of old age.³⁶⁹ The recurrent occurrence of the very phrase “... repeating her-/him-/yourself/them-/ourselves” (384.16, 388.32, 389.15-16, 389.36, 394.6, 397.7-8, 398.8) and of phrases like “the four of us and sure, thank God, there are no more of us” (384.11-12; see 384.14, 385.31-32, 387.31-32, see also 94.31-32) suggest repetition and repetitiveness. In addition to recurrent phrases, the impression of repetitiveness is also an effect of the repeated occurrence of topics like drowning (see 387.26-29, 388.11, 391.23) and auctions (see 386.19-24, 390.18, 391.3). On this plane the setting is often assumed to be a bar and the scene one of drinking or even drowning in drink – suggested for instance by the repeated occurrence of the phrase “the four of us” (e.g. 384.9) which is considered evoking the drinking song “One More Drink for the Four of Us” (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 384f; see also Shay, 53).

The signficatory plane {AGE} has been present in critical accounts through descriptions of the four as “four old men, reminiscing about their faded youth in contemporary Dublin, wandering through the tricky canyons of memory in search of the past”

³⁶⁸ The critical view of the chapter was significantly influenced by Joyce’s comment to Weaver that the chapter was “‘a study of old age’” (qtd. in Ellmann, *James Joyce*¹, 566).

³⁶⁹ Another meaning of *bore*, “a tide-wave of extraordinary height” (OED, “bore, n.3,” 2.), can be the cue for a different plane as the four are also described as waves (see *FW* 384.6).

(Begnall, "Love," 139).³⁷⁰ Their musings have appeared to many critics as "rambling and disconnected" (ibid., 144) and their "memories confused" (Budgen, "Chapters," 187). The topics of their "ramblings" (Rose and O'Hanlon, *Understanding*, 201) have been said to be "first class ladies undressing [395.10], old statues in Dublin [386.22, 386.25], cases of drowning [see above], divorce courts [390.19-20], colleges [385.8-13, 389.6], history and auspices [392.27, 397.29], ships [394.17] and morning papers [391.20] and *Arrah na Poghue* [384.34, 385.3-4, 388.25-26] and Dion Boucicault [385.3, 391.23] and watering mouths [386.4, 386.11, 393.1] and lemon squash [386.9-10, 390.32] and elders and ancients [389.19]" (Rose and O'Hanlon, *Understanding*, 204).³⁷¹ Some have considered them "diseased" (ibid., 201) or decrepit (see Budgen, "Chapters," 187) – symptoms of old age may be constructed from phrases like "dephlegmatised his gutterful of throatyfrogs" (394.21) and "phlegmish hoopicough" (397.24). Others have regarded them as "(quasi-)senile" (Glasheen, *A Census*, xxi; Tindall 212; Begnall, "Love," 154) and/or drunk (see Tindall, 212; see also McHugh, *Annotations*, for 384.10-12 and 386.3-4).

Those who consider the chapter primarily negotiating "themes indigenous to old age, the theme of loss and dispossession, and of the imperishability of desire" (Norris, "Mixing," 132), prompted by passages like "they all four remembered [...] how they used to be at that time [...] cuddling and kiddling her [...] when they were all four collegians" (384.35-385.8), construct the four as old men, "their virility diluted to neutrality with femininity" (Budgen, "Chapters," 187), in memory of a better, youthful and virile past and sharing the desire for such lost qualities. Such a construction will be marked by the apprehension of the four as standing in opposition to the "*spry young spark*" (383.11) Tristan and to Isolde who is described in terms of eternal youthfulness in phrases like "our angel being, one of romance's fadeless wonderwomen" (395.30-31) and "modern old ancient Irish prisscess" (396.7-8). There is a clear distinction made in terms of age between Mark and the four on the one hand and Tristan and Isolde on the other hand. A phrase such as "Where the old conk cruised now croons the yunk" (387.36-388.1), when 'translated' in the sense of 'where the old king ruled now ... the young,' can be a cue for a reading in terms of the old being superseded by the young. Most of the critical accounts of the chapter have interpreted it along these lines.³⁷² The

³⁷⁰ *A Skeleton Key* says about the four: "Life once stirred in them and shaped them; but it has moved on, so that they now are but cast-off shells" (Campbell and Robinson, 9).

³⁷¹ The references to lines in *FW* are not meant to imply that these passages refer to such topics but are meant to indicate the possible textual cues for such readings.

³⁷² Edmund Wilson was the first who interpreted the Tristan and Isolde scene as "foreshadowing [HCE's] own decline" in terms of the son(s) taking the place of the father (Wilson, *Wound*, 223). Campbell and Robinson stated that HCE's body, having passed out and lying on the floor of his bar (as they read pp. 381-382 to indicate), in his intoxicated dream is becoming King Mark but that "his spirit, rejuvenated in the sonlike image

passage 396.4-18 appears like a justification of Isolde's "turning from the elderly Mark [...] to the young, virile Tristram" (Glasheen, *A Census*, 61).

▪ {HISTORY: Four annalists}

The textual cues for {HISTORY}, the plane on which the four are conceptualised as (pseudo-) historians of some kind, are what appears like a mass of historical references, such as "after the interims of Augusburgh" (384.16-17) and "the Flemish armada, all scattered, and all officially drowned" (388.10-11), and names like "Boris O'Brien" (385.15), "Soteric Sulkinbored" (393.8), and "Lapoleon" (388.16) being reminiscent of Brian Boru, Sitric Silkenbeard and Napoleon. Thus, readers get the impression that the four are preferentially concerning themselves with talk about events from "one of the farback, pitchblack centuries" (385.6-7).³⁷³ Furthermore, the four names of the compilers of the *Annals of the Four Masters*,

of the successful lover, will know again the joys of youthful love" (Campbell and Robinson, 248). At the same time, they regarded Tristan as an image of a future Shaun as the son who is the future (ibid., 255). Glasheen assumed that "Issy is cast as Isolde of Ireland, turning from the elderly Mark who is HCE to the young, virile Tristram who is Shem" (Glasheen, *A Census* 61). Hayman considered Tristan "representing" primarily Shem, but also Shaun, and "Mark-HCE [...] by turns the dread authority figure [and] the superseded and impotent voyeur" (Hayman, "Tristan," 95). Hayman also believed that the chapter "treat[s] aspects of the compensatory rise-fall which is central in the book's philosophy – the 'Ecce Puer' theme of youth replacing age" (Hayman, *First-Draft*, 21), dealing with "the corruption of age as an aspect of the fall" (ibid.). Begnal regarded the chapter as "the presentation of a conflict in which youth supplants age" (Begnal, "Love," 141). Mark being "replaced by the virile Tristan" (ibid., 142) "symbolizes" HCE being replaced by Shaun, or by Shaun *and* Shem (ibid.). For Rose and O'Hanlon, Mark is a cuckold HCE figure (see Rose and O'Hanlon, *Understanding*, 204). Using Joyce's sigla, McHugh views Mark as one realisation of "[t]he ultimate male protagonist [...] Π" (McHugh, *Annotations*, xv), generally referred to as HCE, and Tristan as one of the aspects of the "unity, Λ" of the "[r]ival male particles □ and ^" (ibid.), which most critics call Shem and Shaun.

³⁷³ The {HISTORY} frame is a further frame which critics regard as having been substantiated by Joyce himself. In a letter from Oct. 1923, Joyce referred to the "foursome episode" in what appears like an absurd statement as "a picture of an epicene professor of history in an Irish university college seated in the hospice for the dying etc after 'eating a bad crab in the red sea'" (Gilbert, *Letters*, 205); this statement is quoted in *Annotations* (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 392). A few weeks earlier Joyce had written that the four set forth "the theory of history [...] (after Hegel and Giambattista Vico)" (Gilbert, *Letters*, 204). In an early draft of "Mamalujo," which was Joyce's name for the four and their 'episode,' probably from mid-April 1923 (see Slote, "Compositional," 11f), which is among the Joyce manuscripts which the National Library of Ireland acquired in 2006, the aspect 'professor(s) of history' was indeed present: "And such was their memory that they had been appointed extern professors to the four chief seats of learning in Erin, the Universities of killorcure, killthemall, killeachother, killkelly-on-the-Flure, whither they wirelessly four times weekly lectures in the four modes of history, past, present, absent and future" (Joyce, NLI MS 41,818, p. 6f). It was likewise quite pronounced in the *transatlantic review* instalment: "And then again they used to give the grandest universal lectures [...] from sea to sea [...] according to the pictures postcard in the Latimer Roman history of Latimer repeating himself [...] to the oceanfuls of collegians green and high classes and the poor scholars [...] in the four trinity colleges of Ulcer, Moonster, Leanstare and Cannought, the four grandest colleges of Killorcure and Killthemall and Killeachother and Killkelly-on-the-Flure" (Joyce, "From," 218). Through the expansion of the sketch in 1938 (see Deppman), the former prominence of this passage (*FW* 388.27-389.19) was covered. In another letter to Weaver from Oct. 1923, Joyce referred to the four as "old gentlemen-historians" (Ellmann, *Selected Letters*, 296) and provided a schema for them, similar to the types of schema he provided for *Ulysses*, in which he listed for each of the four the corresponding name of the Evangelist, of the annalist, and of the Irish province among other things (see ibid., 297). Consequently, critics felt confident to emphasise the 'intended' historical dimension. Tindall considers the chapter "a commentary on commentaries, it is centered on the nature of history" (Tindall, 212). Begnal regards it as "a vignette presented by the narrator to elucidate further some of Joyce's speculations on myth and history"

a seventeenth-century chronicle of Irish history, appear on the second last page of the chapter (398.15) with phrases such as “They were the big four, the *four maaster* waves of Erin” (384.6; emphasis added), “all the other analist” (395.4), and “Anno Domini” (398.31), a set expression commonly found in chronicles, serving as further cues for the plane.

Critics have referred to the four as “the Four Masters, legendary chroniclers of their country’s legends” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 146), “keepers of records” (Budgen, “Chapters,” 187), and “reiterative recorders of time past” (Rose and O’Hanlon, *Understanding*, 201), as “spill[ing] out an incoherent flux of peevish historical memories” (Glasheen, *A Census*, xxi-xxii), and as “historians” “survey[ing] past events” (Slote, *Imperfect*, 143), whose “history is a mishmash of events” (*ibid.*, 145).³⁷⁴

In this signficatory plane the notion of repetitiveness becomes the notion of history repeating itself (e.g. in phrases like “in the Latimer Roman history, of Latimer repeating himself” (388.31-32), “for teaching the Fatima Woman history of Fatimiliafamilias, repeating herself” (389.14-16), and “like another tellmastory repeating yourself” (397.7-8)) and, thus, for the cyclical view of history which *FW* is assumed to represent in one way or another.³⁷⁵ In their repetitiveness the four have been deemed by some critics to resemble and parody Vico’s theory of the succession of ages (see Tindall, 210). Others hold that in the chapter Joyce is “satirizing the bold colors and melodrama of Irish history and its historians” (Deppman, 317).

▪ {Tristan and Iseult}

A further plane is brought into play through knowledge of the Tristan and Isolde *Stoff* and in particular Joseph Bédier’s version of the legend.³⁷⁶ In Bédier’s *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut* from 1900, four malicious Cornish barons envy Tristan and, having found out about the love between him and King Mark’s bride Isolde, devise plans so Mark may witness their true feelings for each other.³⁷⁷ The four persuade Mark, for instance, to spy on the two by hiding in a tree.³⁷⁸ Such contextual knowledge may serve to support the prominence of the

(Bernal, “Love,” 146). Rose and O’Hanlon assert that “Joyce intended a strong historical dimension” (Rose and O’Hanlon, *Understanding*, 203) for the episode.

³⁷⁴ According to Slote, “trying to untangle these historical allusions is quite counter-productive” as “misapprehension, misrepresentation, misalignment, and miscoordination stand as the four cardinal presuppositions for this historical accounting” (Slote, “Imperfect,” 147).

³⁷⁵ Elsewhere in the text an altered but still recognisable form of “Mamalujo” is also linked with history in the phrase “saith our herodotary Mammon Lujius in his grand old historiorum” (*FW* 13.20-21).

³⁷⁶ Bédier’s was an attempt to reconstruct the Ur-Tristan which he believed to have predated the twelfth-century versions of Thomas of Britain and Béroul (see Gallagher, 426f).

³⁷⁷ With the publication of *Letters of James Joyce* in 1957, Joseph Bédier, whose *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut* Joyce recommended Weaver to read (see Gilbert, *Letters*, 241), became the most commonly cited source for Joyce’s taking up of the Tristan and Isolde *Stoff* in *FW* (see e.g. Atherton, *Books*², 235f, and Hayman, “Tristan”).

³⁷⁸ The spying scene occurs in a number of the different versions of the legend (see e.g. Spearing, 51-74).

voyeurism theme prompted by textual cues like “spraining their ears, luistening and listening to the oceans of kissening, with their eyes glistening” (384.18-20) and “their pair of green eyes [...] peering in [...] through the steamy windows, into the honeymoon cabins [...] and the saloon ladies’ madorn toilet chambers” (395.7-10). It is reinforced by the repeated reference to the four “listening” (383.22, 384.5-7, 384.19, 385.2, 385.35, 386.10, 387.16, 395.12) and by specific phrases like “listening in, as hard as they could” (383.22) and “listening and spraining their ears for the millennium and all their mouths making water” (386.10-11).³⁷⁹ In addition, the word “gaze” (389.22, see also 389.26) occurs. Traces of this aspect of the plane can be caught in descriptions of the four as “leer[ing] at the lovers” (Glasheen, *A Census*, xxi-xxii) and as “emblematic of the voyeurist” (Glasheen, *Second*, xlv).³⁸⁰ In comparison to most versions of the legend as tragic romance ending in the love-death of Tristan and Isolde – according to Hayman (see Hayman, “Tristan,” 95) Joyce is interested in the legend because of its supposed Celtic roots – in *FW* it becomes a kind of burlesque.³⁸¹

▪ {IRELAND: Four provinces}

The textual cue for the plane {IRELAND} is the prominent introduction of the four: “They were the big four, the four maaster waves of Erin” (384.6).³⁸² “The three great waves” – not four as some critics have perpetuated Edmund Wilson’s mistake – are a motif of Irish

³⁷⁹ In Bédier’s *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut*, the emphasis of the spying scene is, in fact, on eavesdropping as King Mark is advised to “entendez [...] quels discours Tristan tient à la reine” (Bédier, *Tristan*¹, 101). For a discussion of hearing and listening in *FW* see Bishop, *Dark*, ch. 12.

³⁸⁰ The result of alternative inferences drawn from the *seeing* and *listening* cues is a reading which is regarding the four as “the audience at a play” (Begnall, “Love,” 140) and Tristan and Isolde as “characters on a stage” (ibid.) and readers, “[n]ever privy to the thoughts or feelings of Tristan and Isolde” (ibid.), are left “listening [...] to the observations of Mamalujo, another part of the audience” (ibid.). Such a reading is constructed through cues like “(only a quartebuck askull for the last acts)” (383.24-384.1) and “(Lady, it was just too gorgeous, that expense of a lovely tint, embellished by the charms of art and very well conducted and nicely mannered and all the horrid rudy noisies locked up in nasty cubbyhole!)” (385.36-386.3).

³⁸¹ David Hayman emphasised this point (see Hayman, “Tristan,” 98, 100). He cites Bédier and Richard Wagner as Joyce’s principal sources for the *Stoff*. Hayman asserts that Joyce deliberately turns “one of the crown jewels of *fin de siècle* aestheticism” (ibid., 95), which according to Hayman the romance had become through Wagner’s opera (1867-69), into a “Wagnerian parody” (ibid., 100). Hayman’s genetic work on the chapter led him to conclude that “[i]t is entirely possible that Joyce was contemplating using the Tristan tale much as he had the *Odyssey*, as a template for his new novel” (Hayman, *Transit*, 58): “More explicit and baldly ironic than the *Odyssey* parallel, [the Tristan and Isolde *Stoff*] is presented even less consecutively, chronologically, or fully. [...] Along with other narratives reproduced or reenacted in the text, it helps fill a void by constituting a narrative subtext for an essentially non-narrative textual procedure. These same procedures enabled Joyce to suggest a Tristan subtext contributing to the book’s major ‘narrative’ concern: the fall, exonerated, and reinstatement of the male or daylight force embodied by the everyman HCE” (ibid., 59).

³⁸² At the same time, two of the four, who are Cornish barons in Bédier’s version of the story, seem to be referred to as “Welshman” (*FW* 390.13) and “Scuitsman” (*FW* 391.4) in the text.

mythology (see P. W. Joyce, *Smaller*, 529).³⁸³ Apart from this, the input for this plane is predominately due to epitextual references, such as Joyce's schema for "Mamalujo," reprinted in *Annotations* (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 398), identifying the four among other things as the four historical Irish provinces Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connacht.³⁸⁴ Textual cues contributing to the construction of the four as being symbolic of Ireland may also be those which are related to male femininity/female masculinity like "they were four dear old heladies" (386.14-15), "they were all summarily divorced [...] by their dear poor shehusbands" (390.20), and "four [...] beautiful sister misters" (393.17). Ireland qua image and Irish culture have been related to femininity in two significant ways. Firstly, one of the symbols of Ireland was the Poor Old Woman, the Sean-Bhean Bhocht, also personified in Kathleen Ni Houlihan. Secondly, Ernest Renan in the 1850s, and following him Matthew Arnold in the 1860s, put forth the notion of the essentially feminine aspects of 'the Celtic nature'.³⁸⁵

With the exception of Isolde, the "Irish prisscess" (396.8), the 'protagonists' origins are hard to establish.³⁸⁶ And yet, one aspect of the {IRELAND} plane may be constructed as Tristan, taking Isolde, being "the stranger who takes Ireland" (Glasheen, *Third*, 289); the cue for this aspect is the phrase "(Eburnea's down, boys!)" (396.1), which appears like a comment on the love-making placed at the centre of its description.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ It will be remembered in this regard that in the *Odyssey* Homer calls both Proteus and Phorcys ἄλιος γέρον (halios gerōn) (see Hom. *Od.* 4.365, 4.384, 13.96, 13.345), i.e. "old man of the sea" (Homer, *Odyssey*¹, 145, 147, *Odyssey*², 9, 27), which may provide a link with the plane {AGE}.

³⁸⁴ In the only reference pertinent to the chapter in *Exagmination*, Beckett wrote: "[T]he Four [...] are the four winds as much as the four Provinces, and the four Episcopal Sees as much as either" (Beckett, 21). Beckett also provided a clue or interpretation of the rationale behind Joyce's blending of tetrad configurations. His question "Why [...] should there be four legs to a table, and four to a horse, and four seasons and four Gospels and four Provinces in Ireland?" (ibid.) Beckett answers himself by saying that Joyce is "conscious that things with a common numerical characteristic tend towards a very significant interrelationship" (ibid.).

³⁸⁵ See e.g. Cairns and Richards, 42-57, and Pittock, 61-93.

³⁸⁶ The Tristan "composite" in *FW* is assumed to include the Norman Almeric Tristram (variously spelt A(r)moricus, Almericus, Americ, Amor(e)y), who became the first Earl of Howth in the twelfth century – Joyce listed him in a "key" to the work's opening passage which he provided for Weaver (see Gilbert, *Letters*, 247f); therefore, Tristan has been viewed as "one of Ireland's Norman conquerors" (Glasheen, *Third*, 289). (The beginning of *FW*, "Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fit'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armoriga" (3.4-5), can be read to describe the arrival of both Almeric Tristram and the Trist(r)a(i)n(t)/Tristram of the legend.) The place name *Lohnois* in Eilhart indicates Tristan's origin, and is assumed to refer to the historical Scottish region Lothian. In contrast, in the Arthurian legends Tristan's place of origin is *Lyonesse*, a legendary lost land or city which may have been part of Cornwall or have bordered it. He is at least a knight at the Cornish court of King Mark. In *FW* he is also said to be "of Gaelic champion" (384.23). *Gaelic* refers to Irish, Scottish and Manx Celts but may in this instance also mean Gaelic football which is an Irish sport. There are 'references' to *rugby*, *soccer*, and *associational* football in "rockbysuckerassousyocanal" (384.3-4). The love play between Tristan, "Americas Champius" (395.35), and Isolde is also described in words reminiscent of sports vocabulary (see 395.36-396.2).

³⁸⁷ The Latin adjective *eburneus* means "made of ivory" – at one point Isolde is described by the words "nothing under her hat but red hair and solid ivory" (*FW* 396.9-10). *Eburnea*, the feminine form of the adjective, resembles *Hibernia*, the Latin name for Ireland.

On this plane the four have been regarded as “serenad[ing] Isolde – first propositioning her – then claim[ing] [...] to have had her already” (Glasheen, *Third*, lvi), as some critics have taken 399.11-17 and 399.20-28 to imply. The text of Thomas Moore’s “As Slow Our Ship,” which is *Annotations*’s gloss for 383.20, can be considered an additional cue for the plane, fitting into the picture of Isolde on a ship having to leave her homeland.

- { RELIGION: Four Evangelists }

This plane is characterised by the small number of its textual cues. There are a few ‘references’ to religion, often either plain ones like “let us ran on to say oremus prayer” (398.11-12) or covert ones like the ‘references’ to the Catechism (384.35-36, 385.7), but the Christian names of the four (see 384.7-384.14) are certainly the most obvious cue.

The method of describing the signficatory planes which contribute to the meaning construction may serve as a point of departure for a more comprehensive and complex description of the readers’ meaning construction process with respect to *FW*. These planes are really only the basis for the complex blends which readers of *FW* are induced to perform, and which have only been indicated in this section. After all, readers’ meaning construction in *FW* II.4 is the result only of the interplay of the various signficatory planes. It requires the integration of at least two planes to construct what Fauconnier and Turner describe as conceptual blend. Budgen’s statement “They [the four] are the guardians of tradition, keepers of records, male sibyls, seekers after higher truths, lecherous admirers of male and female flesh. Their records, however, are lost, their memories confused and their virility diluted to neutrality with femininity, yet they achieve an immortality of decrepitude” (Budgen, “Chapters,” 187), for instance, which is certainly indicative of a mixing of different images, can be said to be the result of a blend into which at least three planes have found their way, namely those which above have been called {HISTORY}, {AGE}, and {RELIGION}. It can be assumed that after repeated returns to a certain passage, readers will discern more cues and thus construct more planes and consequently more elaborate blends than at the first reading.

Apart from inducing readers to construct complex blends on the basis of different signficatory planes, how does the factor text affect the reader position? As the preceding analyses illustrate, the issues involved in reading *FW* are for instance those of word recognition, of ‘neologism’ and blend processing, of sound and (in)coherence in language processing, and of the text’s *minus functions*. Through the combination of various devices generating considerable indeterminacy, the text provokes its readers to venture on large-scale

acts of translation, of meaning construction, of configuration and emplotment and thus puts the reader in the position of the *agens significans*, as the subsequent chapters make plain.

As indicated in this chapter, the process of meaning construction with regard to *FW* is characterised by readers' orientation towards 'external' sources of meaning. The issues arising from this orientation are examined in the following chapter, which considers, on a more general level, the wider question of what the fact that the phrase "palms in their hands" occurs in Revelation 7:9 and in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* effects for the reading of the phrase "with their palms in their hands, like the pulchrum's procus" (*FW* 384.17-18), and thus for the reading of *FW* in general.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁸ Bunyan's text, in a descriptive passage about the Celestial City toward the end of Part 1, reads: "[T]he City shone like the Sun, the Streets also were paved with Gold, and in them walked many men, with Crowns on their heads, Palms in their hands, and golden Harps to sing praises withall" (Bunyan, 153). The palm has different meanings in Christian symbolism but is most commonly considered "a symbol of the victory of the faithful" (Hassett, 432). Part of the issue certainly consists in the lexical resemblance between "pulchrum's procus" and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

III. LANGUAGE “CURVING BACK UPON ITSELF” OR THE TEXT AS ‘ECHO CHAMBER’: THE DYNAMICS OF ESOREFERENTIALITY AND EXOREFERENTIALITY

One can conceive the *Wirkung* of, response to, and criticism of *Finnegans Wake* as being characterised by two opposing but interrelated ‘dynamics.’ These two dynamics can be described in terms of *esoreferentiality* and *exoreferentiality*. The term *esoreferentiality* points to the notion of *FW*’s essential *self-reflexivity*, whereas *exoreferentiality* points to the notion of the work’s essential allusiveness and to the practices of “source-hunting” and “allusion-hunting.” From the beginning, approaches to, and critical accounts of, *FW* have oscillated between these two notions. The aim of this chapter is to examine the two dynamics in view of understanding the position of the reader of *FW*.

1. The Esoreferential Dynamic

1.1 Modernism: ‘Self-Reflexivity’ versus ‘Representation’

*Here form is content, content is form. [...]
His writing is not about something; it is that something itself.*
(Beckett, 14)

Work in Progress is, if we must indulge in identification, anti-naturalist [...].
(Jolas, “Marginalia,” 101)

*And what book, or rather what language, calls attention to itself as language,
as ineluctably verbal and quite finally so, more than *Finnegans Wake*?*
(Hassan, 90)

In literary criticism, the terms *self-reflexivity* and *self-referentiality* – both terms are often used as synonyms (see, e.g., Baldick) – are employed to cover a broad range of meanings, of which the following is only a partial listing. One of the most famous positions in this regard is the Formalist concept of the *self-referentiality* of poetic language which also came to inform structuralism. The term *self-reflexivity* is also used to describe “works of fiction that repeatedly refer to their own fictional status” (ibid.). In this sense it is sometimes equated with the term *metafiction* which has been defined as a “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (Waugh, 2). A somewhat different understanding of

the concept is suggested when the term is used to refer to instances in which passages apparently perform what they ‘talk about.’ An example would be when a text introduces the idea of *déjà vu* by repeating verbatim a sentence or passage that the reader has already come across in the text, that is, by creating the experience of *déjà lu*. In contexts informed by semiotics a different notion of *self-referentiality* can be encountered, where *fictionality* and *self-referentiality* are sometimes equated; according to this perspective, in fictional texts *reference*, in its semiotic sense, is suspended, or one speaks of pseudo-reference, as “agents and objects depicted in [...] [the literary text] have no real-world existence” (Nöth, 349).

There is a further tendency in the use of the terms *self-reflexivity* and *self-referentiality* which is relevant here and which is elaborated on in this section, namely the one in which the concepts of *self-reflexivity* and of the *non-representational*, or *anti-mimetic*, become terms in an equation. It is based on a logic implying that that which does not recognisably refer to, or ‘represent,’ ‘the world’ (any more) – for example through defamiliarising language – cannot but refer only to itself, or represent only itself (as writing and/or language). It becomes manifest in statements such as the following:

[T]he increasing emancipation from [art’s] original representational function [*Abbildungsfunktion*] [...] commences in France already in the generation of Flaubert and Baudelaire, becomes radical with Mallarmé and in Symbolism and culminates in the non-representational [*gegenstandslosen*, literally “object-less”] self-referentiality [*Selbstreferentialität*] of art/literature in modernism. (Einfalt, 435; my trans.)

This perspective also involves the notion of the autonomy of language.

It is this tendency which becomes evident when it is claimed that Joyce’s later works are “concerned not with representing experience through language but with experiencing language through a destruction of representation” (MacCabe, 4), that “as [his] text, his language, become more and more autonomous, they can no longer be thought to be representational” (Jameson, “Joyce,” 197), that they “[dispense] with a basic concept that was virtually taken for granted throughout the history of interpretation: namely, that the work of art should represent reality” (Iser, “*Ulysses* and the Reader,” 133) and that “in spectacular fashion” they “[put] an end to representation and hence to the expectations produced by the typical nineteenth-century novel with its illusion of reality” (ibid.),³⁸⁹ and when *FW* is said to employ “strategies that attempt a deconstruction of representation” (Attridge and Ferrer, “Introduction,” 10).

³⁸⁹ These remarks of Iser refer to *Ulysses* alone, but they can be extended to include *FW* without distorting his argument.

What adds to this tendency in the case of *FW* is the view that the text is not only considered non-representational on the level of ‘content’ in not offering a recognisable representation of ‘the world,’ but that it is regarded as non-representational also on a ‘formal’ level. The work is considered to have abandoned the conventions of literary representation itself by doing its utmost to break out of the formal conventions of narrative. In this perspective *FW* is non-representational because the mode of the novel makes use of certain formal conventions for representation which *FW* abandons, the most basic one of which is developing ‘recognisable’ characters. By 1929, when Beckett’s famous statement on the idiosyncratic relation of form and content in *WiP*, quoted above, appeared in *Exagmination*, the conception of the novel, and the concomitant readerly expectations directed towards the novel, or what was taken to be a novel, as primarily the representation, the *Darstellung*, of a content had been questioned by works such as *Ulysses*. Yet content remained, for the vast majority of readers, the primary category in terms of which ‘the novel’ as genre was conceived.

When *FW*’s *self-reflexivity/referentiality* is posited, the quoting of Beckett’s statement above often provides a seemingly appropriate context (see, e.g., Henke, 186, 189). In other words, Beckett’s axiom represents the point of departure of this significant notion (of *FW*’s *self-reflexivity/referentiality*) within the symbolic production. Yet, it is far from clear what Beckett meant by it. Perhaps he wanted to suggest something along the lines of the language of the work being what today would be termed *iconic*; the context of Beckett’s statement suggests that his emphasis is indeed more on the notion of *iconic* language than on *non-representational*. It does occur in a passage on the equivalence of form and content. His language, Beckett says about Joyce, performs what it ‘talks about.’ Beckett uses the description “direct expression” and explains: “When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep. (See the end of *Anna Livia*) [...] When the sense is dancing, the words dance. Take [...]. The language is drunk. The very words are tilted and effervescent. [...] [T]he sense [...] is for ever rising to the surface of the form and becoming the form itself” (Beckett, 14). Beckett suggests that Joyce succeeds in forming words in such a way that their form is a “sensuous suggestion” (ibid., 15) of their meaning. The example he gives from *WiP* is “in twosome twiminds” – an adequate coinage, according to Beckett, to express, in form, the meaning of the word *doubt* with its semantic aspects of “hesitancy, of the necessity of choice, of static irresolution” (ibid.). Here Beckett certainly speaks of what today would be termed iconicity. Iconicity is characterised by a resemblance between *representamen* (or *sign vehicle* following Morris or *signifier* following Saussure (see Nöth, 88 Fig. Si 1, 90 Fig. Si 3)), that which is the formal

aspect of the sign, and *object* (or *signified*), that which is the referential or conceptual aspect of the sign.

What does the notion *non-representational* imply? *Representation* has long been one of the, if not *the* foundational concept(s) in the discourse about art (see e.g. Lichtenstein and Decultot, 659-661) and yet it is difficult to simply speak of representation as if it were a well-defined concept because of the range of phenomena it is supposed to encompass and because of the shifts within its conceptual history (see Dokic; and Werber; see also Lichtenstein and Decultot; and Schlenstedt).³⁹⁰ *Non-representational* in the realm of the literary is often conceived as the opposite of *mimetic* and is thus used to designate art that does not “seek to reproduce aspects of the physical world” (OED, “non-, prefix,” 3.a.). Yet, neither is there a fantastic world depicted in *FW* – in the conventional sense of *the fantastic* in the realm of the literary. Representation in the context of mimesis and Realism means ways of resemblance between art and ‘the world,’ “the idea of a fully accurate or faithful reflection of reality” (Prendergast, *Triangle*, 4). The Realism which dominated the second half of the nineteenth century, aspired to transcend the fictionality of the novel towards the representation of reality itself. In contrast, anti-mimetic tendencies in the nineteenth century culminated in Symbolism with its rejection of ‘the representation of reality’ and its emphasis of man’s environment as “forêts de symboles” (Baudelaire, 33). It is this anti-mimetic tendency which many considered to be the connection between Symbolism and Modernism. Ford Madox Ford, for instance, writes in 1938: “They [Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, among others] are of enormous importance because they led [...] toward the *non-representational* works of Mr. Joyce, Miss Stein and the whole school of their imitators” (Ford, 664; emphasis added). Through the Modernists and their precursors the concept of representation came under pressure. It is not surprising that Realism and mimesis were theorised and championed by Erich Auerbach and Georg (or György) Lukács ‘in the face of’ Modernism and of the *literarische Moderne*, that is at a time, the late 1930s, mid-1940s, when literary *Moderne*·Modernism appeared to have become a dominant movement.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Notoriously, the term *representation* is not confined to the purview of aesthetics. It has been used, as is known, in various ways in the context of semiotics. It is sometimes used to denote the essential feature of language, namely its *stare pro* character according to which a *sign vehicle* (*/representamen/signifier*) (arbitrarily) represents a concept or object. In this sense it becomes a “synonym of the referential function of semiosis in general” (Nöth, 94). Given the complex history of the term and the issues involved, such as its entanglement with mimesis (see Lichtenstein and Decultot, 659ff), it is not merely a question of replacing *representation* with *presentation* or with forms such as (*re*)*presentation* or *re/presentation* in order to account for the ongoing shifts to which the concept is subject (see Schlenstedt, 868ff).

³⁹¹ Auerbach, in fact, included *Ulysses* in the category realist novel (see Auerbach, 481f), whereas Lukács attacked “the Surrealism of Joyce” (Lukács, “Balance,” 34).

Eventually the concept of representation also came under pressure through the discourse which is termed the linguistic turn (see ch. 1 and 2 in Prendergast, *Order*) – after all, “the end of representation” and “the crisis of representation” are catchphrases only since the 1960s. But rather than addressing in depth “a problematic largely determined by the semantic ambiguity of the concept of *mimêsis* in Greek philosophy” (Lichtenstein and Decultot, 659),³⁹² Auerbach and Lukács, and concepts of mimesis in general, were now criticised for not recognising the issue of the complex relation of language and ‘reality’ and for underemphasising the ‘mediatedness’ and artificiality of mimesis, its having-been-produced. This is what is meant when it is claimed that “contemporary aesthetics [...] rejects imitation [...] by virtue of a foundational conviction according to which every act of reference – by perception and above all by language – to reality eliminates any possible homology or isomorphism between discourse and reality” (ibid., 674). Barthes’ notion of *l’effet de réel* and more generally the argument presented in *S/Z* is more pertinent here than Foucault’s more abstract notion of representation as an *episteme* confined to the seventeenth and eighteenth century.³⁹³ Yet, Foucault also comments on the ‘self-reflexivity’ of modern literature as a turning away from representation. Beginning in the nineteenth century and culminating in the twentieth century, literature

becomes detached from all the values that were able to keep it in general circulation during the Classical age (taste, pleasure, naturalness, truth), and creates within its own space everything that will ensure a ludic denial of them (the scandalous, the ugly, the impossible); it breaks with the whole definition of genres as forms adapted to an order of representations, and becomes merely a manifestation of a language which has no other law than that of affirming – in opposition to all other forms of discourse – its own precipitous existence; *and so there is nothing for it to do but to curve back in a perpetual return upon itself, as if its discourse could have no other content than the expression of its own form.* (Foucault, *Order*, 300; emphasis added)

Post-structuralists like Stephen Heath were likewise fond of referring to “that mutation of writing (dated by Sollers, 1869 *Les Chants de Maldoror*) which refuses the transparent language of representation to think language as *signifying*” (Heath, “Towards,” 28).

³⁹² On this problematic see e.g. Lichtenstein and Decultot.

³⁹³ In his history of Western knowledge, of man’s relation to words and things in *Les mots et les choses*, Foucault defines representation [*représentation*] as being distinguished from resemblance [*ressemblance*] – more precisely he argues that the seventeenth-/eighteenth-century “classical” *episteme* of representation takes the place of the Renaissance *episteme* of resemblance. According to Foucault, the Renaissance *episteme* is characterised by the idea of the resemblance between sign (language) and object (thing). The classical *episteme* is a break in so far as it is based on the idea of representation.

Thus, while some critics, such as Lukács, dismissed the modernists for their apparent rejection of *mimesis*, others, such as the Russian Formalists, had hailed them for their very use of a “self-referential” and “defamiliarising” language.³⁹⁴ The notion of *self-reflexivity/-referentiality* has its roots in Formalist ideas; in Jakobson’s famous structuralist definition of the poetic function the emphasis is clearly on this notion.

1.2 Theorising Defamiliarisation and Self-Reflexivity: Russian Formalism

In poetry we are no longer referred back to the world, [...]. It seems [...] that the word alone declares itself. Then language takes on all of its importance. It becomes essential. [...] This means primarily that words, having the initiative, are not obliged to serve to designate anything or give voice to anyone, but that they have their ends in themselves.
(Blanchot, 41)

*There is the misery and the celebration of the **signifier** [...].*
(Foucault, *Death*, 167)

Jakobson’s definition of the poetic function of language, which he regards as dominating in poetic language, “The set (*Einstellung*) toward the MESSAGE as such, focus on the message for its own sake, is the POETIC function of language” (Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” 356) is arguably the most famous theoretical foundation of the notion of poetic self-reflexivity.³⁹⁵ The “poetic function,” he adds, “promot[es] the palpability of signs” (ibid.). This notion is already present in Formalist writings.

Russian Formalism, which emerged in Russia in the mid-1910s and fell victim to the enforced conformity to the ‘official’ approach of Marxist criticism by the end of the 1920s, is often considered the beginning of what today is known as literary theory (in the narrow sense of the term). Formalism grew out of the same objective that would give rise to the New Criticism in the 1930s, namely the rejection of biographically, sociologically, and philosophically inspired criticism and the aim to make the study of literature more scientific and more ‘language-centred.’ In an overview of the contribution of the Formalist ‘school,’ Boris Tomashevsky wrote in 1928 “‘Poetics’ – once a domain of entirely subjective sensations, of almost unconscious personal impressions, inexpressible except in formulaic statements of appreciation – has become a subject of rational study, the concrete problem of

³⁹⁴ I employ a broad notion of *modernist* here which would include a movement like Russian Futurism.

³⁹⁵ On the phenomenological context of the term *Einstellung* see Hansen-Löve, *Formalismus*, 212-214.

the science of literature” (Tomashevsky, 132). Primarily linked with the names Boris Eichenbaum, Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky, and Yuri Tynianov, Formalism was to no small degree a critical response to the challenges which Russian Futurism posed. And thus this response was implicitly the theorisation of the ‘crisis of representation’ which became manifest for instance in Russian Futurism. The close links between literature and its theorisation that are so characteristic of the moment of *Tel Quel* is also characteristic of the relation between Russian Futurism and Russian Formalism (see Erlich, 65f).³⁹⁶

Shklovsky’s and Jakobson’s early writings in particular were marked by the orientation of their theorising towards poetic language as they encountered it in the works of the Russian Futurists – a movement which appeared yet more radically non-representational than French and Russian Symbolism. They were seeking to derive from their experience of Futurist poetic language general laws of poetics (see Erlich, 65-68, 72f). In 1933, Jakobson wrote, “[t]he distinctive feature of poetry lies in the fact that a word is perceived as a word and not merely a proxy for the denoted object or an outburst of an emotion, that words and their arrangement, their meaning, their outward and inward form acquire weight and value of their own” (qtd. in trans. in *ibid.*, 183). Although Jakobson had by then already reached beyond Formalism, his characterisation of poetry is clearly developed against the background of his experience of Futurist poetry.

Formalists set the focus on the work as a self-contained object and on its aesthetic and formal quality in order to be able to determine its “literariness” (*литературность* *literaturnost'*),³⁹⁷ i.e. its ‘distinguishing features.’ Eichenbaum wrote that the literary scholar “ought to be concerned solely with the inquiry into the distinguishing features of the literary materials” (qtd. in trans. in *ibid.*, 172). The psychological, sociological, biographical and historical were dismissed as speculative approaches which do not contribute anything to the analysis of the work itself and its ‘architecture.’ Formalists discarded the form-content dichotomy conceived as two separable domains and replaced it with the concepts of *материал* (material, “material”) and *прием* (priem, “device”) (see *ibid.*, 186-191). The *device* was “the basic unit of poetic form, the agency of ‘literariness’” (*ibid.*, 190). The Formalists emphasised the importance of the *devices* from which a poem is “made” – conceived as “a deliberate technique [...] of forming [the poem’s] material, language, and

³⁹⁶ For an account of the close and formative connection between Formalists and Futurists and for Jakobson’s admiration for Khlebnikov in particular see Jakobson’s reminiscences *My Futurist Years*.

³⁹⁷ The transliteration follows system III in Shaw’s *The Transliteration of Modern Russian for English-Language Publications* with the exception of Russian names which appear in their most common English form.

deforming its subject-matter” (ibid., 76). They sought to define the quality which distinguished “poetic language” from non-poetic language – which they conceived as two separate spheres. One of the qualities which they identified in poetic language was expressed by their concept of ‘making strange,’ which became a hallmark of Formalism. Although Shklovsky attempted to demonstrate the validity of his concept by giving examples from Tolstoy, thus emphasising its universal validity, it clearly reflects the connection of Formalism to Futurism. Another distinguishing feature between the two spheres, according to Jakobson, is that in poetic language “the communicative function” is “reduced to a minimum” and that poetry is “oriented toward the mode of expression” (qtd. in trans. in ibid., 183) – that is, the notion of a self-reflexive language. These two concepts of Formalism are pertinent to the ways in which *FW* was conceived by critics. Before discussing the influence of the concept of self-reflexivity, the concept of ‘making strange’ is addressed in order to show the similarity of the topics and lines of reasoning of the two discourses of Formalism and of early *FW* criticism.

According to Viktor Shklovsky, one of the founding members of the Petersburg Society for the Study of Poetic Language, short form *Опояз* (Opojaz), the purpose of art is to convey a new *восприятие* ‘perception,’ and “sensation” of things which would break their automatised habitual perception and thus purify, so to speak, man’s perception. Shklovsky presented his concept of *остранение* (ostranenie, “defamiliarisation,” “making strange”) in his essay “Искусство как прием” (Iskusstvo kak priem, *Art as Device*) in 1917. Here Shklovsky writes,

as perception [*восприятия* *vosprijatija*] becomes habitual, it becomes automatic. [...] Habitualization [*Автоматизация* *Avtomatizacija*] devours works, clothes, furniture, one’s wife, and the fear of war. [...] [A]rt exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensations of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’ [*остранения* *ostraneniija*], to make forms difficult [*затрудненной формы* *zatrudnennoj formy*], to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an*

*object: the object is not important.*³⁹⁸ (Shklovsky, “Art,” 279f; cf. Shklovsky, “Искусство,” 62f)

In the case of reading it is indeed true that due to the automaticity in word recognition it is often only with unknown words or words with altered spelling or neologisms – what Formalists described by means of the terms *затрудненная форма* (*zatrudnennaja forma*, “difficult/impeded form”) and *фактурное слово* (*fakturnoe slovo*, textured word) (see Hansen-Löve, “Faktur,” 215; cf. Shklovsky, “Фактуре,” 99) – that we perceive what has been referred to as the materiality of the word.³⁹⁹ The gist of Shklovsky’s argument had already surfaced in his lecture “Воскрешение слова” (*Voskrešenie slova*, *Resurrection of the Word*) three years earlier, which, being a defence of Futurist poetry, in some sense marked the beginning of the connection between the emerging Russian Formalism and Russian Futurism (see Markov, 141). In his 1915 article “Предпосылки футуризма” (*Predposylki futurizma*, *Premises of Futurism*), Shklovsky wrote, “[t]his is an incomprehensible and a difficult language; one cannot read it as one reads a newspaper, but our demand that poetic language be understandable is too much a habit” (qtd. in trans. in *ibid.*, 283).

This sense of a revolutionary, creative, and utterly unconventional literary use of language leading to a purification and vitalisation of a language, the words of which are felt to have lost their concreteness, also pervades the *Exagmination* pieces which appeared over a decade after Shklovsky’s essay and whose authors were most likely unaware of Shklovsky and Russian Formalism in general.⁴⁰⁰ Jolas, waving the banner of “the Revolution of the Word,” was of course at the forefront of situating Joyce in such a context of verbal galvanisation. After all, Jolas’s “Proclamation,” which had appeared in the opening page of *transition* 16-17 in 1929, carried slogans such as “The literary creator has the right to disintegrate the primal matter of words imposed on him by text-books and dictionaries,” “He has the right to use words of his own fashioning and to disregard existing grammatical and syntactical laws,” and “The writer expresses. He does not communicate” (Jolas et al.). His essay in *Exagmination* begins: “The real metaphysical problem today is the word. The epoch when the writer photographed the life about him with the mechanics of words redolent of the

³⁹⁸ While Shklovsky implies that it is necessary to make the familiar unfamiliar in order to really perceive it, Freud held that we cannot but perceive the unfamiliar (in terms of language) “through our falling back upon what is familiar” (Freud, *On Dreams*, 70). Reverberations of Shklovsky’s notion are to be found in Kristeva’s piece “Pour une sémiologie des paragrammes”: “[L]iterary practice is revealed to be the discovery and the exploration of the possibilities of language; an activity that frees man from certain linguistic (psychical, social) networks; a dynamism that *breaks the inertia of language-habits*” (Kristeva, “Towards,” 28; emphasis added).

³⁹⁹ Although in the case of language it is certainly more appropriate to use the term *quasi-materiality*.

⁴⁰⁰ As Viktor Erlich has pointed out, similar pronouncements like Shklovsky’s, in terms of the dehabitualising effect of poetic language on perception, have been made by Jean Cocteau in the 1920s and by T. S. Eliot in the 1930s (see Erlich, 179f).

daguerreotype, is happily drawing to its close. The new artist of the word has recognized the autonomy of language” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 79). Here are obvious parallels to the famous Russian Futurist manifesto *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*, as illustrated below, and to the Formalist notion of poetic self-reflexivity.⁴⁰¹ In his essay, he furthermore referred to “the inadequacy of worn-out verbal patterns for our more sensitized nervous systems” (ibid.) and to the aim of “a few scattered poets,” among them Joyce, “to give words a more compressed meaning through disassociation from their accustomed [sic] connections” (ibid., 84). Beckett claimed in *Exag* that English “is abstracted to death” (Beckett, 15). Joyce’s writing, in contrast, has “all the inevitable clarity of the old inarticulation. Here is the savage economy of hieroglyphics. Here words are not the polite contortions of 20th century printer’s ink. They are alive. They elbow their way on the page, and glow and blaze and fade and disappear” (ibid., 15f). Beckett recognises an “inner elemental vitality” (ibid., 16) and a “reduction of various expressive media to their primitive economic directness” (ibid.) in Joyce’s use of words. Budgen even asserted that “[t]he difficulty in entering into the imaginative world of *Work in Progress* lies in no unessential obscurity on Joyce’s part but in our own atrophied word sense due in large measure to the fact that our sensibilities have been steam-rolled flat by a vast bulk of machine made fiction” (Budgen, “Norse²,” 41). Rodker writes that “writing and speech are so denatured that it is important, if we are not forever to be deprived of part of our emotional inheritance, that these primitive forms be returned to us. Joyce is doing this for us; the result is an intense and basic revitalising of words and our attitude to them” (Rodker, “Dynamic,” 144). Williams explains along similar lines:

Joyce maims words. Why? Because meanings have been dulled, then lost, then perverted by their connotations (which have grown over them) until their effect on the mind is no longer what it was when they were fresh, but grows rotten as *poi* — though we may get to like *poi*. Meanings are perverted by time and chance [...]. At worst they are inactive and get only the static value of anything, which retains its shape but is dead. [...] Joyce is restoring them. [...] The words are freed to be understood again in an original, a fresh, delightful sense. Lucid they do become. Plain, as they have not been for a lifetime, we see them. (W. C. Williams, 184f)

⁴⁰¹ Although *transition* published a number of Russian writers, like Alexander Blok, in English translation, Jolas was apparently not aware of Russian Futurism. His first references to “*zaoum*” and “Russian Futurism,” associated with Ilia Zdanevich (known as Iliadz), occur in 1948 (see Jolas, “Jabberwocky,” 192).

The parallels between Shklovsky's notion of poetic language, 'made strange' for the purpose of revitalising our perception, and these statements, which represent the earliest attempts at elucidating "Work in Progress," are striking.

Shklovsky's argument has certainly not gone unchallenged. Using his example, one can say that by making the formal dimension of the word (the *sign vehicle/representamen/signifier*) *stone* "unfamiliar" the mental image or concept of stone does not necessarily become "stony" again, or more "stony" – in other words more fresh, vivid, immediate – in our perception, but rather the (defamiliarised) form of the word *stone* becomes more palpable as 'form,' or as *signifier* if one prefers to use this term. In other words, to make words, language unfamiliar means first and foremost to foreground their character as signs.⁴⁰² *FW* exposes the sign as (manipulable) sign. The immediate experience of readers of *FW* is one of language oscillating between strange and familiar elements – preventing the automaticity in language processing which leads us to believe that language is something, if not our own 'thing,' on which we cannot possibly lose our grip – rather than of language as access to a fictional world. Herein lies the esoreferential dynamic's dimension with regard to the reader position. Joyce was certainly not the first writer to foreground what has often been referred to as the materiality of language by manipulating and playing with the 'form' of words. Lewis Carroll, the Russian Futurists, and the Dadaists are only the most obvious examples of those immediately preceding Joyce. Yet, in *FW* the manipulation of the 'form' of language certainly reaches a climax.

The concept of self-reflexivity, though not appearing under that name, was another Formalist hallmark. Jakobson, in particular, further developed this Formalist notion into his concept of the poetic function and gave it a semiotic foundation. As early as 1916, the Russian Formalists, in this case Lev Jakubinskij, spoke of "linguistic representations acquir[ing] an autonomous value" (qtd. in trans. in Todorov, 11). As suggested above, Jakobson defines poetry in 1919 in terms of "an *utterance oriented toward the mode of expression* [*высказывание с установкой на выражение*]" (qtd. in trans. in Erlich, 183)⁴⁰³ and elaborates: "[T]he communicative function [*функция коммуникативная*], inherent in

⁴⁰² This was already expressed by Harry Levin when he wrote: "We have learned to look upon them [words] as objects of immediate apprehension, more real in themselves than their penumbras of meaning. They were always symbols, to be sure, but we had fallen into the careless habit of confounding the symbol with its referents. Joyce, conceding the priority of the word to the thing, renews our perception of language as an artistic medium" (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 194).

⁴⁰³ This definition from 1919 may be regarded as the prototype of Jakobson's famous definition of the poetic function of language quoted above.

[...] ‘practical’ [...] language, is reduced to a minimum” in poetic language (ibid.).⁴⁰⁴ Jakobson followed these statements with a pronouncement which is the most explicit in linking Futurist poetics and Formalist theorising: “[P]oetry is the formation of the self-valuable [*самоценного*, *samocennogo*], ‘самовитого’ [*samovitogo*] word, as Khlebnikov calls it” (Jakobson, “Новейшая,” 305; my trans.). In Tomashevsky’s *Теория литературы. Поэтика* (*Teorija literatury. Poètika, Theory of Literature. Poetics*), which Viktor Erlich calls “the most comprehensive exposition of Formalist methodology” (Erlich, 183), poetic language is, quite similar, “one of the linguistic systems where the communicative function is relegated to the background and where verbal structures acquire autonomous value” (qtd. in trans. in ibid.). Their definitions of poetic language are clearly the theoretical elaboration of the Futurists’ invocation of the “self-sufficient word.”

The rejuvenation of poetic language was the paramount theme of the Russian Futurists. In their first and most famous manifesto “Пощёчина общественному вкусу” (*Poščečina obščestvennomu vkusu, A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*), published in 1912, the Russian Futurists – or the ‘Hylaeans’ David Burliuk, Velimir Khlebnikov, Aleksei Kruchenykh, and Vladimir Mayakovsky to be precise – proclaimed “the poet’s *right*” “[t]o enlarge the *scope* of the poet’s vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words (Word-novelty)” (Burliuk et al., 51). In their booklet “Слово как таковое” (*Slovo kak takovoe, The Word as Such*) from 1913, Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov wrote: “[B]efore us language was required to be: clear, pure, honest, melodious, pleasant (tender) to the ear, expressive [...]. We think rather that language must be first of all *language*, and if it has to remind us of something, then better the saw or the poisoned arrow of a savage” (Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov, 60f). Emphasising the novelty of their approach to poetry they declare, “before us the wordwrights were concerned too much with the human ‘soul’ [...] we – the Futurist bards – paid more attention to the word than to Psyche” (ibid., 61). The manifesto continues, “the Futurist wordwrights use chopped-up words, half-words, and their odd artful combinations (transrational language) thus achieving the very greatest expressiveness” (ibid.). *Слово как таковое* (*slovo kak takovoe*, “the word as such”) and *самовитое слово* (*samovitoe slovo*, the neologism has been variously translated as *the self-sufficient/self-validated/selfsome/self-valuable/self-spun word*) were common notions of Futurism.⁴⁰⁵ They

⁴⁰⁴ Jakobson’s essay, published under the title *Новейшая русская поэзия* (*Novejšaja russkaja poèzija*, “newest Russian poetry”) in 1921, was written in 1919 and intended as a preface to an edition of Khlebnikov’s collected works (see Jakobson, “Новейшая,” 354). It is here that Jakobson is considered to have laid “the foundations for that functional poetics through which he would become the founding father of a structural, linguistically grounded ‘poetry of grammar and grammar of poetry’” (Hansen-Löve, “Paradigma,” 148; my trans.).

⁴⁰⁵ On the principle of lexical innovation *слово-новшество* (“word novelty”) see Flaker, 16ff.

implied, in the words of a contemporary critic, that “[t]he word’s shape, the combination of letters in it, their appearance, and their sound are more important than any possible meaning. [...] Since the word is tonal or graphical material, one can increase it, fragment it, or simply invent it (transrational language)” (qtd. in trans. in Markov, 291). Indeed, had Jolas come across the passage on Russian Futurism in D. S. Mirsky’s *Contemporary Russian Literature, 1881–1925* from 1926, he might have drawn parallels between Khlebnikov and Joyce.⁴⁰⁶ Mirsky praised Khlebnikov with these words:

Words and forms had for him an existence of their own, and his work in life was to create a new world of words. [...] All things were only a material for him to build up a new world of words. This world of words is without a doubt a creation of genius, but it is obviously not for the general. He is not and probably never will be read except by poets and philologists [...] for he was a lord of language: He knew its hidden possibilities and forced it to reveal them.⁴⁰⁷ (Mirsky, 268f)

After all, Khlebnikov, too, created lexical blends in his poems (see Neuhäuser, 287; see also Cooke, 20ff, 97), and he, Kruchenykh, and Mayakovsky employed puns as well (see Neuhäuser, *passim*).

The concept of the self-reflexivity of poetic language was developed further by the Prague structuralists and it became enriched with structuralism’s new vocabulary. Mukarovsky described the poetic function in 1932 as follows:

The function of poetic language consists in the maximum of foregrounding [*aktualizace*] of the utterance. [...] In poetic language foregrounding achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression and of being used for its own sake; it is not used in the services of communication, but in order to place in the foreground the act of expression, the act of speech itself. (Mukarovsky, 19)

A few years later, at the Fourth International Congress of Linguists, Mukarovsky employed the vocabulary that was to become so characteristic of international structuralism: “[T]he

⁴⁰⁶ Khlebnikov, and the Russian Futurists in general, would certainly have been pertinent in Jolas’s list of contemporary writers who experimented with words: “While Mr. Joyce, beginning with *Ulysses*, and now in his still unnamed work, has been occupied in exploding the antique logic of words, analogous experiments have been made in other countries. In France, Germany and Italy, the undermining process has been going on for the past fifteen years. In order to give language a more modern elasticity, to give words a more compressed meaning through disassociation from their accusomed [sic] connections, and to liberate the imagination with primitivistic conceptions of verbs and nouns, a few scattered poets deliberately undertook to disintegrate their own speech” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 83f).

⁴⁰⁷ A few years later, at a time when he had become loyal to the party line of Socialist realism, Mirsky took a much more dismissive view of ‘formal experimentation’ when he compared what he considered the “pure nonsense” of “Work in Progress” with Russian Futurism (see Deming, *Joyce*², 591).

organizing distinction of art, and by which it is distinguished from other semiological structures, is the direction of its aim not towards the *signifié* but towards the sign itself” (qtd. in trans. in Kristeva, “Activity,” 6).

Another link between Futurism and *FW* is the notion inherent in the idea of *звук* (*zaum*), the so-called transrational language, that “sound creates meaning and is not subordinated to it” (Markov, 344). Jakobson himself made the connection between Khlebnikov and Joyce in 1961 in one of his retrospects: “Perhaps the strongest impulse toward a shift in the approach to language and linguistics [...] was – for me, at least – the turbulent artistic movement of the early twentieth century” (Jakobson, “Retrospect¹,” 631). Listing the names Picasso, Joyce, Braque, Stravinsky, Khlebnikov, and Le Corbusier, Jakobson praises them, among other things, for “their unique feeling for the dialectic tension between [...] the two aspects of any artistic sign, its *signans* [/signifier] and its *signatum* [/signified]” (ibid., 632). “Poetic language,” Jakobson wrote, “called for a new type of analysis and particularly required us to study the interplay between sound and meaning” (ibid., 633). The study of speech-sounds, the interplay between sound and meaning, was Jakobson’s special interest from the beginning (see Erlich, 182f) and it was a significant concern of the Formalists in general (ibid., 212-229). It is safe to assume that Joyce’s inclusion in Jakobson’s list is due to the fact that in *FW* the very issues that had already become apparent in the poetry of Khlebnikov, namely the conflict *within* the sign and the interplay between sound and meaning (see e.g. Cooke, 67-103; Vroon), resurfaced with new urge. Given the obvious parallels between the issues with respect to ‘poetic language’ that emerged in Russian Futurist writing and in Joyce’s *FW*, it is not far-fetched to suggest that if the Formalists had not had Futurist poetry as their object of study and as grindstone for their theories but *Finnegans Wake*, their theories and concepts would probably not have been very different ones.

The notion of the self-reflexivity/referentiality of literary language became in post-structuralist writing an obsession with the signifier – now language in general was considered to ever only refer to itself. Tied to the concept of autonomy, as the notion of self-reflexivity is, one can generally state that thinking about literature in the twentieth century was influenced by concepts of autonomy with respect to differing conceptions of language. Formalism’s emphasis on the autonomy of poetic language was superseded by structuralism’s emphasis on the autonomy of language as system and, in Jakobson’s case, the autonomy of the poetic function, which in turn was superseded by post-structuralism’s emphasis on the autonomy of the signifier. Accordingly, in post-structuralist accounts *FW* becomes “a writing that crosses

language (languages), ceaselessly pushing the *signified* back into the *signifier*” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 57). *FW*, according to Stephen Heath, projects a “horizon of writing as space of inscription of differences [...] and the possibility of ‘origin’ lies only in the wake of the writing, in the perpetual turning of sense into form, of signified into signifier” (ibid., 52f).⁴⁰⁸ In *Structuralist Poetics*, Jonathan Culler argues along very similar lines about *FW*: “The signifier is no longer a transparent form through which one accedes to meaning; it is displayed as an object in its own right” (Culler, *Poetics*, 106). Derek Attridge writes, in *FW* “the material properties of the signifier continually play havoc with any attempt to ascertain a stable referent” (Attridge, “Wakean,” 87).

Given the aforementioned notions of *FW* as a “destruction of representation” (MacCabe, 4) and as an “attempt [at] a deconstruction of representation” (Attridge and Ferrer, “Introduction,” 10), in how far can it be said that *FW* is non-representational? In the case of *FW* one certainly cannot speak of “the concreteness of the represented world” (Iser, *The Fictive*, 14) but rather of the abstractness of the represented world, or one may say that *world* is not represented at all in *FW* since *world* cannot be conceived abstract but only concrete – depending on one’s idea of representation.⁴⁰⁹ *FW* is non-representational in the sense suggested in the previous chapter, namely that *it is often difficult to form a coherent mental representation of what one reads (i.e. to comprehend a phrase, sentence or passage) because the reader cannot identify the text’s propositional information, i.e. s/he is neither able to say immediately after reading a phrase, sentence, or passage what it says on the most basic level about objects, subjects, facts and circumstances in the non-fictional world nor what it says about such things in the fictional world of the text.* This constitutes one dimension of the reader position. If something like *world* is represented in *FW*, this something is obfuscated through defamiliarised language – a language which virtually acts as ‘*l’anti-effet de réel,*’ whereby reference is deferred through what above has been termed ‘secondary’ meaning generation and whereby language acts as barrier, thus provoking a ‘referential disillusionment’ (cf. Barthes, “Reality,” 148) and ultimately turning the ‘constraint of intelligibility’ (cf. ibid., 146) and ‘representation’ into minus functions; a discourse, then,

⁴⁰⁸ More examples from Heath could be cited. Apropos of translation he writes: “To translate is to establish the meaning, to isolate the signified in order to pass it through the alternative signifier of another language. Nothing is more monological than translation in its dependence on the compromise of the sign. The writing of *Finnegans Wake* is a writing against this logic in its attention to the work of the signifier” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 60). The last point is made explicit once more in the assertion that “the attention of Joyce’s writing is on the side of the signifier” (ibid., 65 n. 51).

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Iser’s statement in “Die Appellstruktur der Texte”: “[T]he indeterminacy of a text may be so resistant to counterbalancing that any identification with the world we live in is impossible” (Iser, “Indeterminacy,” 8; cf. Iser, “Appellstruktur,” 233).

which does *not* “accept ‘speech-acts’ justified by their referent alone” (ibid., 147) and whose bliss of neologisms and of grammatical and textural distortion appears to be an end in itself.

What *FW* makes us aware of is our reflex of naturalising that which estranges and disconcerts. ‘The world’ is brought to bear on *FW* through readers’ interpretive frames and strategies. While esoreferentiality can be viewed as the ‘expectation-breaking’ or ‘defamiliarising’ dynamic, exoreferentiality may be viewed as the ‘naturalising’ dynamic. The naturalisation taking place in most interpretive acts with respect to *FW* is based on the idea that there is an underlying fictional world of some coherence and that this fictional world does bear resemblances to ‘the world,’ or rather to the world as it is to be found in the archive(s) (see below). The force of aspects which disturb naturalisation is attenuated in this process. The fact that most readers, professional and non-professional alike, conceive ALP and HCE primarily as human characters, woman and man, rather than primarily as river and mountain, as Joyce once indicated, is not surprising in this respect. Therefore it should not be entirely unexpected that more energy has been devoted to emphasising the work’s exoreferential aspects than vice versa – a fact to which the ‘branch’ of philological commentary of *FW*, described in the first chapter, bears witness.

2. The Exoreferential Dynamic

The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.
(Eliot, “Metaphysical,” 289)

[Joyce’s] scheme of bending vast communities of readers [...], to detain them by means of an interminable transreferential chain of translation.
(Derrida, “*Ulysses*,” 47)

Joyce’s oeuvre appears to be characterised by a proliferation of material – from the economy of words, themes, motifs, etc. in his early poems and the short stories of *Dubliners* to the conventional length of *A Portrait* and *Exiles* to the escalation of material in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Of course, this neat presentation is upset by the fact that at the same time Joyce was writing the early *Dubliners* stories he was also composing *Stephen Hero*, a lengthy novel, which was the result of expanding a prose sketch entitled “A Portrait of the Artist,” and which – having been abandoned in its long form – would become the precursor material for the considerably shorter *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Thus, in a way the tendency

of proliferation did exist almost from the beginning.⁴¹⁰ ‘Material’ in the case of *FW* is a more complex issue than in the other works because the question of the nature of this material remains an open one. In this respect, the often-used term *allusion* is one of the most problematic ones with regard to *FW*.

Proliferation, in its sense of “increase in the [...] extent of something; multiplication, expansion” (OED, “proliferation, n.,” 3.), is an especially apt term in this respect since it not only allows to describe the increase of material in terms of quantity, but also the tendency of *Ulysses* and *FW* to ‘send’ its readers into the archive(s) of culture in search of each and every nuance of meaning.⁴¹¹ The often-cited image of these texts as encyclopaedia-like is not appropriate because an encyclopaedia contains its own frame of reference.⁴¹² The encyclopaedia’s purpose is to present knowledge about the world in such a way that it need not refer the consulter to some source outside itself; and if it does refer to another source, it does so in the most overt way imaginable by citing the source. *FW* may rather be described as a catalogue of lexical items which call for ‘translation’ into the terms of the archive(s) of culture, calling for something like a *Clavis Homerica* but at the same time eluding the very possibility of such a translation. Due to the scope of its lexical distortions and opaqueness, *FW* has provoked acts of ‘translation’ on a vast scale; and this is perhaps the most remarkable feature of the text’s history of reception and symbolic production. Such critical projects of ‘translation’ as *A Skeleton Key* and the work that appeared under the labels *explication* and *exegesis* during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s attest to the exoreferential dynamic which the text has elicited. These large-scale acts of ‘translation’ into the terms of the archive(s) have often been mocked as “allusion hunting” and “source hunting”; and this practice has been castigated as “show[ing] the worst vices of pedantry and research as substitutes for reading” (Blackmur, *New Criticism*, 11).⁴¹³

The notions of *allusion* and *source* are indeed the decisive conceptual frames in the explanation of readers’ exoreferential orientation. These practices of reading and interpretation represent the readers’ desire to ‘translate’ *FW* into something (more) meaningful. The question is thus not whether *FW* is highly allusive or not – the decisive

⁴¹⁰ It is also true that some of the poems in *Pomes Penyeach* were written during the time of the composition of *Ulysses*.

⁴¹¹ This is what Derrida called Joyce’s “*coup*” (Derrida, “*Ulysses*,” 47).

⁴¹² A recent example of this view is the attribution to *FW* of a “programmatic tendency towards encyclopaedic all-inclusiveness” (Milesi, 7). This notion is already emphasised in *A Skeleton Key*: “The Wake, at its lowest estimate, is a [...] complete and permanent record of our age. If our society should go to smash tomorrow [...] one could find all the pieces, together with the forces that broke them, in *Finnegans Wake*. The book is a kind of terminal moraine in which lie buried all the myths, programs, slogans, hopes, prayers, tools, educational theories, and theological bric-a-brac of the past millennium” (Campbell and Robinson, x).

⁴¹³ In the case of *A Skeleton Key* the exoreferential dynamic lies also in ‘translating’ *FW* into a traditional plot-driven narrative.

aspect is that the text invites, or provokes, its readers to ‘play’ with the archive, to seek its meaning in the inexhaustible repository of the archive(s) of culture to which it seemingly refers in all its elements.⁴¹⁴ In *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*, Sam Slote muses from the entries found in Joyce’s notebooks that “[i]t appears that Joyce was amassing a heterogeneous stockpile of phrases in order to litter his work with all sorts of echoes of the world around him” (Slote, “Compositional,” 6). Does this make *FW* “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres [*and* peripheries] of culture” (Barthes, “Death²,” 146) – to appropriate a wording from Barthes? Contrary to Fredric Jameson’s claim, Joyce’s is not a practice of citation (see Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 3), in the sense of a verbatim reproduction as we find it in *The Waste Land* or *Cantos* – which Marjorie Perloff sees as “foundational” texts of appropriation and citation (see Perloff, *Unoriginal*, 12, 17) – but a practice of appropriation through distortion,⁴¹⁵ or transformation, which erases the origin(al) and does not allow it to be easily traceable. Of course the very fact of the deformation of the language in *FW* makes references – if one really assumes their occurrence in *FW* – covert and leads to the circumstance that the text becomes a kind of inexhaustible ‘echo chamber,’ that is, that practically everything is considered an allusion. In other words, the notion of the ubiquity of allusions in *WiP/FW* and the apparent obscurity of the allusions serves to expand the context of the text virtually into infinity, which in turn serves to make the text appear – through its quasi-unlimited field of reference – inexhaustible.

2.1 *Finnegans Wake* and the Notion of Overinterpretation

In *The Limits of Interpretation*, Umberto Eco presents a discussion about an allusion which had taken place in the pages of *A Wake Newslitter* in 1964/’65 as an instance of critics recognising and ‘respecting’ what he calls the *intentio operis* (see Eco, “Semiosis”). Eco views this discussion as a case of wrong interpretation, or, to use another of Eco’s terms, *overinterpretation*,⁴¹⁶ as which it is eventually recognised by the critics because it is not

⁴¹⁴ Derrida conceived “the Joyce scholar” as someone who “plays with the entire archive of culture – at least of what is called Western culture” (Derrida, “*Ulysses*,” 48).

⁴¹⁵ Clive Hart wrote in *Structure and Motif*, “even more impressive than his undoubted linguistic capacity was his remarkable power to adapt and integrate literally any raw material that came to hand” (Hart, *Structure*, 23f).

⁴¹⁶ In “Joyce, Semiosis, and Semiotics,” Eco does not yet refer to the discussion as an instance of overinterpretation – a term which he has never defined and which he seems to have used only from 1990 on and not yet in the 1990 volume *The Limits of Interpretation*. Yet, in this piece he speaks about the same topic, namely the limits of interpretation as imposed by the *intentio operis*. Whereas in *The Limits of Interpretation* the ‘vice’ against which Eco castigates are “wrong” (Eco, *Limits*, 148) interpretations, in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* the notions “wrong” and “bad” interpretation (ibid., 60) and “misinterpretation” (ibid., 60f)

supported by the context, leading them to revise their initial interpretations, and thus as prove that wrong interpretations can be identified and that Popperian falsifiability is pertinent to literary interpretations as well. This discussion, which arose from the question if the word “berial” (*FW* 415.31) is an allusion to Stalin’s secret service chief Lavrentiy Beria, resulted from the question what is the latest historical event that is alluded to in *FW*.

Contrary to Eco’s claim it is not the context which “privileges” (Eco, “Semiosis,” 150) one interpretation over the other but an instance of anachronism exposed by knowledge of the text’s genetic history which undermines one of the interpretations: The word is present in a fragment from 1929 but Beria came into such a position that his name would be known in the Western World only in 1938.⁴¹⁷ Had the word not appeared in the earlier version, the claim that its interpretation as an allusion to Beria is false would have been made with much less confidence; it could certainly not be ‘falsified’ with reference to context alone. Rather than being an example of “overinterpretation” as which Eco presents it, without using the term, the discussion is an example of what is termed here the exoreferential dynamic. It is not surprising that in a decade which can be described as the heyday of “allusion-hunting” in *FW* criticism, the 1960s, the word formation “berial” becomes an allusion to Beria – after all there are textual cues which provide an enticing context for such an interpretation as it is immediately preceded by the phrases “he is not on our social list” (*FW* 415.31) and a page earlier by “So vi et! we responded” (*FW* 414.14) – and the word “anschluss” (*FW* 95.28) becomes an allusion for the *Anschluß Österreichs* (see Eco, *Limits*, 149). The same dynamic is at work when in a current interpretation “moletons” (*FW* 353.26) becomes an allusion to Vyacheslav Molotov (see Fordham, *Fun*, 94).

It is certainly a bold move by Eco to use *FW* to discuss the limits of interpretation as it is the kind of text which poses the greatest challenge for any attempt to conceive such limits, as Eco does, as a semiotic strategy inferable from the text itself. Eco’s idea of interpretation is that readers must recognise “a semiotic strategy” (Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 64) which is “not displayed by the textual surface” (ibid.) but which they must somehow “conjecture” (ibid.) from their encounter with the text. This “strategy” of the text, which Eco calls *intentio operis*, is to produce a model reader. In other words, the reader’s task is to make a guess (recognise the *intentio operis*) which model reader, i.e. hypothetic reader who is most likely to interpret the text adequately, the text presupposes. One could also say the reader’s task is to make a

have been replaced by the term *overinterpretation*, which he links with Joyce by suggesting that Joyce’s work is one of those particularly affected by overinterpretation (see Eco, *Overinterpretation*, 53).

⁴¹⁷ It is obvious that when using the word *context* in this connection Eco means ‘textual context’ and not something in the sense of ‘genetic context’ as Jean-Michel Rabaté has suggested (see Rabaté, “Beria,” 70).

guess how the text expects to be read.⁴¹⁸ Eco's approach is an elaborate way to emphasise that the text wants to be read in a certain way – without having to revert to authorial intention and without having to point out how such a strategy would become manifest in the text and without failing to acknowledge 'the role of the reader' although Eco emphasises that this 'role' is predefined – and that this certain way, which amounts to producing acceptable interpretations, can be "conjectured" because it is implicitly inscribed into the text as a strategy. The *intentio operis* simply operates as Eco's corrective against what he calls overinterpretation, it is meant to impose limits on the "uncontrollable drives of the reader" (ibid., 65).⁴¹⁹ According to Eco, it is the text's internal coherence which "controls" (ibid.) the interpretive 'drift' of the reader.⁴²⁰

Eco's argument cannot but fail in the face of a text like *FW* which undermines the very notion of overinterpretation – that is, the assumption of the determinability of correct interpretation and wrong interpretation or acceptable interpretation and unacceptable interpretation. A text for which no criteria of determinability can be established and which defies the assumption of internal coherence as a stabilising criterion, really provokes what Eco calls overinterpretation and at the same time renders the very notion inapplicable; not least because, as has been suggested above, the very fact of the deformation of the language in *FW* leads to the circumstance that practically everything in the text is considered an allusion. The issue that through its method, and through our conception of *FW* as essentially allusive, the text can be made to allude to almost anything by ingenious readers and critics becomes obvious e.g. in the last of the appendices in Ruth Bauerle's study *Picking Up Airs* (see Bauerle).

The pages of *A Wake Newslitter* have really been the foremost 'playground' of the exoreferential dynamic. Von Phul's piece, to which Eco refers, is just one example among the many teeming with "possible" "references" and "apparent" "allusions" (see Von Phul). *FW*

⁴¹⁸ In *The Role of the Reader* Eco wrote, "when reading *Ulysses* one can extrapolate the profile of a 'good *Ulysses* reader' from the text itself, because the pragmatic process of interpretation is not an empirical accident independent of the text *qua* text, but is a structural element of its generative process" (Eco, "Introduction," 9).

⁴¹⁹ Interestingly enough, Joyce himself provided readings for passages of *FW* that would certainly have been considered an instance of overinterpretation by Eco had they been put forward by anyone else but Joyce himself. In a letter to Weaver from 26 July 1927, he gave seven explanations for the phrase "L'Arcs en His Cieling Flee Chinx on the Flur," which became with minor revisions *FW* 104.13-14: "1) God's in his heaven All's Right with the World 2) The Rainbow is in the sky (arc-en-ciel) the Chinese (Chinks) live tranquilly on the Chinese meadowplane (China alone almost of the old continent(s) has no record of a Deluge. Flur in this sense is German. It suggests also Flut (flood) and Fluss (river) and could even be used poetically for the expanse of a waterflood. Flee = free) 3) The ceiling of his (III) house is in ruins for you can see the birds flying and the floor is full of cracks which you had better avoid 4) there is merriment above (larks) why should there not be high jinks below stairs? 5) The electric lamps of the gin palace are lit and the boss Roderick Rex is standing free drinks to all on the 'floor of the house' [...]" (Ellmann, *Selected Letters*, 325f).

⁴²⁰ How problematic such an assumption is in the case of *FW* has already been emphasised by Clive Hart in 1966 (see Hart, "Perspective," 157-161).

has long become a text for readers who draw satisfaction from literature understood as a challenge, for readers who are willing to spend a lot of time revelling in bringing the archive to bear on this text, thus effecting the exoreferential dynamic. This frame of mind becomes palpable in a commentary such as the following by Geert Lernout:

[T]he feeling that we experience when we find an explanation for something that is puzzling us. The discrepancy between the amount of energy expended and the results obtained is forgotten. I have personally sensed this when I spent far too much of my time ploughing through several months' worth of *Irish Times* issues, reading every single line on every single page of every single newspaper. The waste of more than hundred hours was made up by finding out exactly who Frisky Shorty was. (Lernout, "Radical," 48)

It is also apparent in Roland McHugh's account of the process of his meaning construction of *FW* in his *The Finnegans Wake Experience* (see McHugh, *Experience*, 24-43). And it comes to the fore when Ruth von Phul states, "[t]here is obviously a connection between my interest in crosswords and cryptography and my fascination with Joyce" (Kahn, 38). The exoreferential dynamic manifests itself from the very beginning. This is just as obvious when Thornton Wilder writes to Gertrude Stein in January 1940: "I have been for months engaged with *Finnegans Wake*, decoding that unbroken chain of complicated erudite puzzles. [...] Finally I stopped, and put it away from me as one would liquor or gambling; I ceased tearing off to the public library to verify Persian moon goddesses, and the astronomical conditions over the British Isles in January, and the Danish word for goat" (Burns and Dydo, 254).

The discussion in *A Wake Newslitter* cited by Eco is also a good example of the strong intentionalism prevalent in *FW* criticism. *FW* effectively undermines the belief in the inferrability of intention – the more effectively *FW* undermines it, the more persistently it resurfaces. No matter how often it is declared unsound, intention cannot be abolished as a factor which is unconsciously active in our idea of meaning in language. But one should always be aware that ultimately the notion of intention always serves to privilege certain readings and that one of the very issues at stake in *FW* is to effectively undermine the notion of the inferrability of intention and the notion of privileged interpretations. The hope to discover or define criteria for the determinability of correct interpretation and wrong interpretation may have been abandoned in *FW* criticism, but the belief that there must exist the one privileged interpretation of a given word, phrase, and passage is not shaken so easily. The idea that after all there must be a (set of) privileged interpretation(s) indeed rests to a certain degree on the assumption that Joyce may have concealed his intention, but since he

was no madman must have had comprehensible thoughts in his mind when he conceived words, phrases and passages – and his notes and early drafts are taken as support of this – and that it is now possible and appropriate to reconstruct glimpses of his intention through genetic criticism.⁴²¹ These issues of intention and genetic criticism are elaborated on below.

But to return to the notion of overinterpretation – readers of *FW* are confronted with the problem that a given passage appears to offer a range of meaning potential, often merely through the slightest of suggestions. Is it an “overinterpretation” to regard the Tristan and Isolde element in *FW* II.4 as being a play which the four attend and which they hear rather than see because of their bad eyes or which they hear in the radio and that it is this play which reminds them of *Arrah-na-pogue*; or that the play is *Arrah-na-pogue* reminding them of the Tristan and Isolde story? Some of the discourse in parentheses, such as “(only a quarteback askull for the last acts)” (*FW* 383.24-384.01) and “(Lady, it was just too gorgeous, that expense of a lovely tint, embellished by the charms of art and very well conducted and nicely mannered [...])” (*FW* 385.36-386.02) may elicit such a reading. Is it an “overinterpretation” to say that the Noah story runs through II.4? How can we tell? Under which conditions is it justifiable to rule out the possibility? After all, the phrase “*Noah’s ark*” (*FW* 383.09) occurs early in the chapter. In addition, the ship is a significant motif of the chapter and various ‘references’ to floods and flooding, such as “the universal flood” (*FW* 388.12), “flood of Noahsdobahs” (*FW* 388.18-19) and to drowning (see *FW* 387.26-29, 388.11, 391.23) occur. In such a reading “Dubbeldorp” (*FW* 383.23) may be interpreted as ‘double village,’ as metaphorically evocative of the fact that, according to the biblical narrative, the animals were brought to the Ark in pairs. The preceding phrase “upborne the fates, the wardorse moved” (*FW* 383.20-21) can equally well be linked to Genesis 7:18 as to Genesis 1:2, as *Annotations* suggests. According to the account in Genesis 7:20, the waters of the Flood are specified by the unit of length ‘fifteen cubits’ – how far-fetched is it to ‘see’ this suggested in the phrase “on the *fifteen inch* loveseat, behind the chiftaness stewardesses *cubin*” (*FW* 384.22-23; emphasis added)?

FW provokes dynamics of meaning constitution whose results Eco would have to consider “overinterpretation” – not least because of the notion of its essential allusiveness which has led to a situation in which the apparently common phrase “when it was dark” (*FW*

⁴²¹ Perhaps the German word *nachvollziehbar* is more pertinent here than *comprehensible*. The verb *nachvollziehen*, for which there is no equivalent in English, is especially pertinent to the discussion of intention since it is useful to describe the ‘logic’ of intentionalism. It means ‘to re-enact in one’s mind, to re-perform, repeat, trace the train of thought or reasoning of another person in one’s own mind.’ The adjective *nachvollziehbar* means that something, in particular a train of thought or reasoning, but also actions and motivations, are capable of this, i.e. that *nachvollziehen* is feasible.

383.19) becomes a “reference” to Guy Thorne’s novel *When It Was Dark: A Story* from 1903 (see Deppman, 341 n. 31), and in which the word “bulbubly” (*FW* 384.29) becomes an echo of “Abdullah Bulbul Ameer,” a 1877 song by the Irish William Percy French (see Deppman 331, 345 n. 59). *FW*, it must be concluded, is allusive to such a degree to which the reader is ready to construct it as allusive. It is a text which, by opening the range of possible interpretations, by apparently expanding as much as possible the field of reference, attracts readers who are willing to spend a lot of time revelling in its signifying potential. The only thing one can say with respect to the issue of the limits of interpretation is that some interpretations convince more than others, are intersubjectively more satisfying than others and this has as much to do, perhaps more, with our mental make-up as with the text.

2.2 “Treasures Subtly Buried”: The “Ubiquity of Allusions” in *Finnegans Wake*

[W]hat I [...] have found striking, when reading the text and especially the commentaries on it, is that not only is the Joycean text teeming with enigmas, but it could be said that he played on that, in the knowledge that there would be joyceans for two or three hundred years. These people are occupied uniquely with resolving the enigmas – namely, at least, why Joyce put it in that way. Of course, they always find a reason – he put it in that way because there’s such-and-such a word right after it.⁴²²
(Lacan, *Sinthome*, 153; trans. in Thurston, 62)

The notion of the extreme allusiveness of *FW* has in fact been established as one of its essential features by criticism – the fact that *Annotations* has become a natural reference volume is just the most obvious evidence in this regard. If “in *Finnegans Wake* allusion has become the substance of the work” (Thornton, 236), the very fact would indeed “[invite] readers not only to take note of the allusions themselves, but to ponder the significance of such an overwhelming density of allusion” (Rickard, 169). More important, however, is to ponder the significance of the fact that the notion of allusion has become such an influential one in the symbolic production and to ask the question whether this notion is not first and foremost one of the strategies of naturalising this text, of accounting for its oddness.

Exagmination emphasised the notion of the substantial allusiveness of WiP. Marcel Brion spoke of “the prodigious quantity of intentions and suggestions which the author

⁴²² “Quand on lit le texte de Joyce, et surtout ses commentateurs, ce qui frappe, c’est le nombre d’énigmes qu’il contient. Non seulement ça foisonne, mais on peut dire que Joyce a joué là-dessus, sachant très bien qu’il y aurait des joyciens pendant deux ou trois cents ans. Ce sont des gens uniquement occupés à résoudre les énigmes. Cela consiste, au minimum, à se demander pourquoi Joyce a mis ça là. Naturellement, ils trouvent toujours une raison, il a mis ça là parce que, juste après, il y a un autre mot, etc” (Lacan, *Sinthome*, 153).

accumulates in each sentence” (Brion, 33). According to McAlmon, the text is “sprinkled with classical allusions” (McAlmon, 108); a further comment of his made it plain that the apparent range of allusion exceed the “classical” ones: “Church music sounds here, and the half remembered refrain of a sentimental ballad of the 90’s breaks in to be itself broken in upon by a barroom ballad or the ribald refrain of a bawdy house song” (ibid., 112). Sage declared that “Joyce’s erudition results in numerous allusions outside the usual range of knowledge” (Sage, “Before,” 158). As he imparts to his readers, Joyce “is fascinated by the curious and little-known elements of human knowledge; and he has inserted literally thousands of references to these strange subjects in his text” (ibid., 163). Sage re-emphasises his image of Joyce as ‘master allusionist’ by saying that the author has “sealed up many parts of the work to even the erudite reader through the unamplified allusion to subjects familiar only to himself or a limited number of people” (ibid., 169). Such an emphasis on the quantity of allusions leads Sage to conceive WiP as a sort of literary brain-teaser, referring to “[t]he treasures subtly buried in it [WiP]” which “offer ample rewards for the efforts spent in reaching them” (ibid.). This effort involves, as he points out, “read[ing] and reread[ing] the opulent text” (ibid.), which will in turn “open up continually” (ibid.) as Sage assures his readers. He thus conceives an image of the ideal reader of the text, namely the “intelligent reader” (ibid.) who is ready to accept an intellectual challenge and to put a considerable amount of time and effort into making sense of an enigmatic work of literature.

The *Exagmination* piece which puts most emphasis on the allusive character of WiP is, however, Gilbert’s. Gilbert refers to the “ubiquity of [...] allusions” in WiP (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 68 n.1) and writes: “[A]s a mine of suggestion and allusion it [WiP] is practically inexhaustible [sic]” (ibid., 67). In his explications of words, phrases, and passages (see ibid., 59f, 67-75) the words *alludes*, *suggests*, *implies*, *echoes*, and *recalls* occur frequently. These explications present, in his own words, “a practical illustration of the manner in which to read the work (perhaps not without some mental effort, certainly with ultimate enjoyment) and look for the allusions embedded, obscurely sometimes [...] and beneath the surface, in the text” (ibid., 63). Gilbert’s piece is the only one in *Exagmination* which contains this kind of explication – the only one which actually illustrates how readers can approach the text, how a particular passage of the text can be given meaning through a practice of reading which may best be described as associative and indeed as ‘allusion hunting’ and, furthermore, as receptive to the multilingual dimension of the words and word formations. His practice of meaning construction can thus be viewed as something like operating instructions for the reader. It may therefore have been the most influential piece for

those who, in the later 1920s, in the 1930s and 1940s, were determined to make the text ‘readable’ for themselves and for others; and thus an often overlooked but surely momentous factor of the symbolic production. An examination of Gilbert’s explications will illustrate that the majority of the allusions he identifies are rather opaque and would probably not have been identified as allusions by readers without the awareness imparted by Gilbert that practically anything in the text may be an allusion.

Initially he presents an elucidation of the short passage “Not all the green gold that the Indus contains would over induce them to steeplechange back to their ancient flash and crash habits of old Pales time ere beam slewed cable or Derzherr, live wire, fired Benjermine Funkling outa th’Empyre, sin right hand son” (ibid., 59).⁴²³ The whole passage, Gilbert writes, “alludes to the dawn of pre-history when Vico’s thunderclap came to rescue man from his wild estate” (ibid.). According to his commentary, the last part of the passage is “built on an old music-hall refrain” (ibid.) which ran “There’s hair, like wire, coming out of the Empire.” He explains that the phrase “ere beam slewed cable” (*FW* 289.9) “hints at the legend of Cain and Abel” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 59). The name “Benjermine Funkling” (*FW* 289.10) he glosses thus: “‘Benjamin’ means literally ‘son-of-the-right-hand’; here the allusion is to Lucifer [...] as well as to Benjamin Franklin” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 59). Gilbert goes on to suggest that “[i]n the background of the passage a reference to the doom of Prometheus, the fire-bringer, is certainly latent” (ibid., 60). He also points out that the passage is illustrative of “the manner in which a *motif* foliates outwards through the surrounding text” (ibid.) – in this case the motif of electricity – calling attention to the words “flash,” “beam,” “cable,” “wire,” “fire,” to the ‘reference’ to Benjamin Franklin, to German *Funke* in “Funkling,” and to the Latinised Greek combining form –pyr(o)- in “Empyre.”

The second, considerably longer passage Gilbert explicates was part of the fragment published in *transition* in summer 1928; it would eventually become *FW* 448.34-452.7. The following examples are those that are most likely to fall into the category of traditional allusion. Gilbert asserts that the phrase “of all them that pass by the way” (449.7-8) is an “echo of the lines ‘O all you who pass by’” in Lamentations 1:12 (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 68). “[S]tellar” (449.3) he explains by saying “the allusion is to Dean Swift’s [Jonathan Swift] Stella; in the following sentence Vanissy (Vanessa) continues the motif” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 68). “Mona Vera Toutou Ipostila” (449.10-11) he glosses in the following way: “[t]he one true Catholic (toutou i. e. fondling and everywhere) and Apostolic Church” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 69). The name “Peter Roche” (*FW* 449.16) suggests, according to

⁴²³ This passage was later partly revised to become *FW* 289.6-10.

Gilbert, the beginning of Matthew 16:18: “Thou art Peter and upon this rock” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 69). The line “’Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near” from Thomas Moore’s “Meeting of the Waters” Gilbert finds resonating in “frind of my boozum” (*FW* 449.16) (see Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 69). The words “rearin antis” (450.7) are said to be “an echo of ‘*rari nantes*’” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 71), a phrase from Virgil’s *Aeneid* which became a proverb (*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*). A curious case is the annotation for “I’d tonic my twittynice Dorian blackbudds off my singasongapiccolo to pipe musicall airs on numerous fairyaciodes” (ibid., 65) which Gilbert claims to be echoing the nursery rhyme “I’d teach my nine-and twenty blackbirds how to sing” (ibid., 72).⁴²⁴ There is no indication that a nursery rhyme containing such a line existed.⁴²⁵

The notion of WiP/*FW* as “a mine of suggestion and allusion” was taken up by the criticism that appeared after *Exagmination*. In fact, it evolved into an axiom of the symbolic production. Edmund Wilson wrote in *Axel’s Castle*: “Joyce, with his characteristic disregard for the reader, apparently works over and over his pages, packing in allusions and puns” (Wilson, *Axel’s*, 235). In his *James Joyce*, Harry Levin held the work to be “enriched by such large resources of invention and allusion that its total effect is infinite variety” (Levin, *Introduction*², 177f).⁴²⁶ Campbell and Robinson even went so far as to suggest that “[a]ll the literal and allegorical references compressed into these paragraphs [the first four paragraphs of *FW*] would fill many volumes with historical, theological, and literary data” (Campbell and Robinson, 36). Clive Hart, too, referred to the “great load of allusion and reference” (Hart, *Structure*, 30) in *FW*.

Perhaps more than any other work, *Ulysses* appeared ‘readable’ for the majority of its readers only after it was thoroughly annotated – that is only after it was shown how, and how thoroughly, it participates in the archives of culture and how, and how thoroughly, Joyce’s Dublin experience is incorporated into it. But in the case of *FW* it gradually became clear that investigating if there existed an auctioneer “Bootersbay Sisters” or “Battersby Sisters” (*FW* 386.24) and a “James H. Tickell” (*FW* 386.26), that knowledge about the Interim of Augsburg (cf. *FW* 384.16-17) and the St. Brice’s Day massacre (cf. *FW* 390.01) did not lead to an elucidation of the text or passage. Given the fact that allusion is such a central factor for

⁴²⁴ The passage was later slightly revised into *FW* 450.17-20.

⁴²⁵ The nursery rhyme “Sing a Song of Sixpence” contains the line “Four and twenty blackbirds” (see Opie, 470).

⁴²⁶ Yet, Levin was at the same time sceptical about the hope or conviction that *FW* could ever be ‘elucidated,’ his view being that only Joyce himself could be “trusted to unravel his [Joyce’s] fullest implications or construe his ultra-violet allusions or improvise his lost chords” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 140) and readers were thus free to “enjoy its [the book’s] surfaces” (ibid.). “Lacking the full perspective that Joyce alone had eyes to see,” Levin wrote, “we have been left with one of the white elephants of literature” (ibid.).

critics of *FW*, it is surprising that the concept of allusion itself has never received extended consideration in *FW* criticism.

2.3 The Concept of Allusion: In View of *Ersatz* Meaning and Anti-Intentionalism

*[T]hough people may read more into Ulysses than I ever intended,
who is to say that they are wrong: do any of us know what we are creating?*
(qtd. in Power, 89)

*To turn the capacity of recognising recondite references into a
shibboleth by which culture may be estimated is a perversion [...].*
(Richards, *Principles*, 218)

*It is not surprising [...] that one's first reaction is to mount a massive operation
of meaning-projection in order to haul the texts back within the limits of normal
thinking.*
(Iser, "Indeterminacy," 27f)

Allusion remains an ill-defined and fuzzy category. Yet, there are two central points which no definition of allusion fails to establish, namely its nature as reference to something and its dependence on recognition. Thus, most definitions of allusion in handbooks and dictionaries of literary terms accord in one way or another with the following *OED* definition of allusion: "An implied, indirect, or passing reference" (*OED*, "allusion, n.," 1.) to someone or something.⁴²⁷ And although this someone/something is sometimes specified by phrases like "to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (Abrams, "Allusion," 12), there are really no limits to the scope of what that something may be. Therefore, definitions of allusion often gloss over the issue of the scope of allusion by stating that what the allusion refers to are "facts which are assumed to be familiar" (Stenzel, 93) or "identifiable elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual" (Miner, "Allusion²," 39). The reluctance to define what forms an allusion can take is characteristic of the definitions as virtually anything can be regarded as an allusion – a word, a phrase, a number, a name, a symbol, a theme, a motif, a metaphor, a character, a rhyme scheme, a prose rhythm, syntax, etc.

⁴²⁷ Many reference books define allusions as indirect, covert references (see, e.g., Abrams, "Allusion," 12; Stenzel, 93; Baldick) rather than direct, overt references – in contrast to Hebel's assertion, some twenty-five years ago, that the concept of allusion has been broadened during the 1970s and 1980s to include overt references (see Hebel, 6).

What is the scope of allusion? Does straightforward naming constitute an allusion, for instance of famous literary characters such as Tristan and Isolde or of a dramatist and his best known plays, as in the case of “Dion Boucicault” (*FW* 385.03) and “Arrah-na-pog(h)ue” (*FW* 384.34, 385.3-4, 385.22, 388.25-26)? How faintly reminiscent of something may an association be so that the ‘activating’ cue may reasonably be called an allusion? How many readers would perceive the phrase “upborne the fates, the wardorse moved” (*FW* 383.20-21) to be reminiscent of the phrase “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 383) which appears in the beginning of the account of divine creation in Genesis 1:2? And what about the linking which is required to perceive a reminiscence of the central motif of *À la recherche du temps perdu* in *FW* II.4, namely memory (“mémoire involontaire”) evoked by sensory perception? After all, it is the four’s *hearing* of the kissing to which the “it” refers to in the phrase “[i]t brought the dear prehistoric scenes all back again, as fresh as of yore” (*FW* 385.18-19) – that is, it is their hearing of the kissing which evokes the memories of their youth. Is this linking too far-fetched to be called an allusion?

Most definitions also accord in emphasising that the use of allusion assumes readers’ recognition of the presence of the allusion and their knowledge of what the use of the allusion implies.⁴²⁸ The concept of allusion is thus characterised by its “emphasis on the ability to decode” (Stenzel, 93; my trans.): “[A]llusions require specific knowledge on the reader’s part” (*ibid.*, 94; my trans.). Allusions, the definitions assume, are usually “intended to be recognized by the generally educated readers of the author’s time” (Abrams, “Allusion,” 12). Modernism is viewed as the aberration in this respect:

[S]ome [allusions] are aimed at a special coterie. [...] Some modern authors, including Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, include allusions that are very specialized, or else drawn from the author’s private reading and experience, in the awareness that few if any readers will recognize them prior to the detective work of scholarly annotators. (*ibid.*)

Such a view is historically short-sighted in that for instance the *Comedia*’s “wealth of doctrine and its many references to historical, theological, and ancient matters made it somewhat inaccessible, even to its first readers” (Parker, 240). Dante too has been referred to in terms of

⁴²⁸ This emphasis on familiarity is expressed for instance in the following excerpts from definitions of allusion: “That which is spoken with reference to something supposed to be already known, and therefore not expressed” (S. Johnson, *Dictionary*, no pagination). Allusion “requires the reader’s familiarity with the original for full understanding and appreciation” (Miner, “Allusion¹,” 18). “A poet’s deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources” (Miner, “Allusion²,” 39). “When using allusions a writer tends to assume an established literary tradition, a body of common knowledge with an audience sharing that tradition and an ability on the part of the audience to ‘pick up’ the reference” (Cuddon, 28). “Indirect mentioning of facts which are assumed to be familiar” (Stenzel, 93; my trans.).

a “poetics of allusion” (Jacoff and Schnapp, 1) and the need for commentary which the *Comedia* provoked is comparable to the critical response elicited by Eliot’s and Joyce’s works. On the other hand, it is true that Modernism in particular has made the general statement about allusions that “in their actualisation the existence of a literary canon has always manifested itself as it has in no other device” (Stenzel, 94; my trans.) problematic.

Allusion as understood in its traditional sense may be said to be a textual element to which a supplementary meaning is added. It is through being understood as allusion, that is, through attributing to it a ‘surplus of meaning’ by establishing an ‘additional’ context for its interpretation, that such an element may be said to acquire supplementary meaning and this supplementary meaning is, paradoxically, assumed to be that which the element primarily signifies.⁴²⁹ The same idea underlies the concepts of allegory, symbol (in the non-semiotic sense in which the term is usually employed in literary studies), and the multiple Scriptural senses.⁴³⁰ It is not only since Freud that this idea has found expression in the opposition latent–manifest meaning. Thus, if the phrase “as slow their ship” (*FW* 383.20) is described as an allusion to Thomas Moore’s song “As Slow Our Ship” from his *Irish Melodies*, it acquires a supplementary meaning. The ‘manifest meaning’ which readers of the passage attribute to the phrase is presumably the indication of location and the speed of locomotion. If it is considered to be an allusion to Moore, the ‘latent meaning’ may be constructed – and for this construction the {Tristan and Isolde} plane plays an important role – as the scene of Isolde’s lamentation on the ship for having to leave her homeland. In Bédier’s text, on the ship Isolde initially bemoans her fate of having to leave Ireland.⁴³¹ In the context of the {Tristan and Isolde} plane, Moore’s lyrics add a further layer of meaning to an understanding of the phrase as a description of location. The melancholic tone of Moore’s lyrics and the sadness depicted in the passage of Bédier’s text open up a contrast to the apparently frivolous atmosphere aboard in *FW* II.4. The text of Moore’s “As Slow Our Ship” reads:

*As slow our ship her foamy track
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still look’d back
To that dear isle ’twas leaving:—*

⁴²⁹ In this regard it does not really make a difference whether one conceives *FW* as allusive or in terms of an ‘poetics of suggestion’ as the difference is really merely one of terminological nuances. In the latter case too one assumes that the matter suggested is the primarily meaningful one.

⁴³⁰ This notion has of course been more generally considered one of the elementary features of literature (see Küpper 12-14, who refers to Aristotle and Lotman as perhaps the two most unmistakable of those who define literature in this way; see also Kermode, *Genesis*, passim).

⁴³¹ Bédier’s text says about Isolde’s departure “[t]he farther it [the ship] bore her from the soil of Ireland, the more sadly the young girl bewailed her lot” (Bédier, *Tristan*², 42). Her lamentation is couched in the words “Accursed be the sea that bears me, for rather would I lie dead on the earth where I was born than live out there, beyond” (ibid.).

*So loath we part from all we love,
 From all the links that bind us;
 So turn our hearts as on we rove,
 To those we've left behind us.
 [...]
 As travellers oft look back at eve,
 When eastward darkly going,
 To gaze upon that light they leave
 Still faint behind them glowing,—
 So, when the close of pleasure's day
 To gloom hath near consign'd us,
 We turn to catch one fading ray
 Of joy that's left behind us. (Moore, 83-84)*

Yet, in *FW* another understanding of allusion, an understanding which is closer to our traditional understanding of the sign than to that of allegory and literary symbol, often tends to replace this traditional understanding of allusion. In contrast to the assumption of an element having a supplementary meaning, this understanding is characterised by the notion of something which stands for something else and 'receives' its meaning through this something else. In medieval times, the formula *aliquid stat pro aliquo*, something standing for something else, was used to characterise the concept of sign. Indeed, "[t]he representative function (*stare pro*) of the sign has been a criterion of the definition of the sign from Augustine to Jakobson" (Nöth, 85). When *FW*'s unfamiliar word forms are treated primarily as allusions, as they often are, the difference to the traditional understanding of allusion lies in the fact that it is through the assumption of the unfamiliar word form referring to something else – the assumption of *FW* being allusive – that meaning is created in the first place; that is, here the relation of the *stare pro*-character of the sign becomes one of substitution. Allusion in this case is not understood in terms of a surplus of meaning – rather the unfamiliar word or phrase is considered meaningful only *qua* allusion. The specific situation in the case of *FW* is that the *something else* tends to become the sought-after translation for the *something* which is thus always in danger of being substituted, of being regarded as not self-sufficient, of being considered to be meaningful only as reference to the *something else*. In other words, the *something else* becomes the indispensable explanation of the *something* and thus a *condicio sine qua non*. Speaking in Goodmanian terms, the literary worldmaking in which readers of *FW* are involved is one of excessive deletion and supplementation (see Goodman, 14-16): Deletion of the unfamiliar *something* and supplementation with the familiar *something else* characterise the reader position. The worldmaking of *FW* readers is thus one of naturalising and of making *vraisemblable*.

Sometimes the ‘logic of substitution’ appears self-evident as in the case of the allusion which the element “mild aunt Liza” (*FW* 388.04) is assumed to be – self-evident because the context seems to force the substitution. The Liebestod aria in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* begins with the words “Mild und leise” and the pertinence of this context is evident in a scene which appears like a condensed dramatic parody of the *Stoff* in a few lines (see *FW* 388.01-06) and directly following the words “Tuesy tumbles” (388.04), with “Tuesy” being the anagram of Yseult. What relevant ‘manifest’ meaning can an apparently odd sentence like “And mild aunt Liza is as loose as her neese” have at all – after all, it is the only occurrence of an aunt Liza in the text – if its ‘latent,’ allusive meaning (see Hodgart and Worthington, 141) is seemingly opening up such a relevant context as Wagner’s opera in a chapter in which the *Tristan and Isolde Stoff* is central?⁴³²

Although theories of language may posit that the process of referring which is immanent in the sign is infinite and involves signifiers alone rather than affecting signifiers *and* signifieds, as some, including Derrida, have done – a posit for which *FW* was taken to be a substantiating illustration –, readers, indeed human beings, apparently cannot do without the idea that a word must refer to something identifiable, conceivable – though not necessarily in the sense of an existing object in the world. However, in the case of the many opaque unlexicalised word formations in *FW* the signified can be said to be initially empty, i.e. there is no mental concept available for a person encountering an unknown word – Jakobson has described this as a “*signans* with a zero *signatum*” (Jakobson, “Goldstein’s,” 269).⁴³³ Indeed readers of *FW* cannot but contribute the reference – reference in the sense of what the *aliquid/sign vehicle/signifier/representamen* refers to, what it represents in terms of *aliquo* – themselves, whether they are aware of it or not. We assume that there must be something to which the letter combination, which we identify as *word*, refers – be it a meaning in the form of a mental *concept* as Saussure conceived the *signified* or in the form of *sense* and *reference* as in the case of the Peircean *interpretant* and *object*.⁴³⁴ What facilitates this contribution on the side of the reader in the more opaque parts of *FW* is on the one hand the resemblance of the word formations to familiar words as described in the previous chapter and on the other hand the concept of allusion. The assumption of the allusiveness of an opaque text functions like the promise of meaning to come.

⁴³² The phrase ‘as loose as her knees’ may imply unchastity or slackness of the joints. Furthermore, in Homer ‘to slay’ is repeatedly expressed by the phrase “to loose the knees of” (λύειν γούνατά) the victim (see Onians, 180).

⁴³³ In *Newest Russian Poetry*, Jakobson referred to such a word as “‘беспредметного’ неологизма” (bepredmetnogo neologizma, “object(ness)-less neologism”) (Jakobson, “Новейшая,” 336).

⁴³⁴ This is not to imply that *sign vehicles* (*/representamina/signifiers*) refer to meanings but rather that they ‘refer’ to something that we equate with their meaning.

The concept of allusion undeniably involves the idea of intention. Allusion as understood in most critical writing on *FW* is based on a strong notion of intentionalism. The acceptance of strong intentionalism manifests itself in various notions about the text and its interpretation permeating the symbolic production. It underlies for instance the view that all the meanings that the text of *FW* provokes were intended by Joyce. More generally it underlies, as a matter of course, all interpretations guided by the assumption that a specific meaning in a given word, phrase, or passage, and only that meaning, was intended by Joyce. Furthermore, it provides the basis for the view that Joyce intended his work to be full of allusions and that by using an allusion he refers the reader to a specific text or fact which adds a specific meaning to the text. Such strong notions of intentionalism take the form of statements such as, in *FW* “every syllable is meaningful” (Hart, “Elephant,” 8),⁴³⁵ and *FW* is “the single most intentionally crafted literary artefact that our culture has produced” (Bishop, “Introduction,” vii) – implicit here is the belief that every syllable, every letter can and must be accounted for.⁴³⁶ Surprisingly, sometimes intentionalism is even strong in the mindset of those who emphasise the plurality of meaning and interpretation (see *ibid.*, xiv).

“Allusion-hunting” and “source-hunting” in *FW* reigned supreme at a time when what was called the intentional fallacy had become common currency in literary criticism. Apparently a work like *FW* makes it impossible not to consider it in terms of intentionality. In his *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in Finnegans Wake* from 1959, James Atherton made the “attempt [...] to track down as many as possible of Joyce’s allusions” (Atherton, *Books*¹, 20).⁴³⁷ The late 1950s were a time in *FW* criticism when the idea that “until all the quotations, allusions and parodies in *Finnegans Wake* have been elucidated the complete meaning of the whole work must escape us” (*ibid.*) was nurtured by a confidence that at least in principle the identification of allusions was possible. In general, Atherton is concerned with identifying allusions, with opening up contexts for an understanding of *FW*’s meaning(s). The discussion of allusion as a concept or as an issue is not his concern. Intentionality also underlies the view of *FW* as puzzle and enigma which has been so influential in *FW*’s symbolic production. Indeed it may be said that the idea of intentionality has reached a climax in the discourse on *FW*.

⁴³⁵ Interestingly, in the same essay Hart castigates intentionalism.

⁴³⁶ This assumption also formed the basis of the interpretive strategy presented in the previous chapter.

⁴³⁷ When Atherton’s *The Books at the Wake* was published in 1959, it was only the fourth book-length study of *FW* after *A Skeleton Key* (1944), David Hayman’s two-volume *Joyce et Mallarmé* (1956) and Adaline Glasheen’s *A Census* (1956). And yet, this is not to say that criticism of *FW* was sparse by 1959. In his introduction, Atherton states that “several hundreds of articles and over thirty books” which are concerned at least in parts with *FW* had so far appeared (Atherton, *Books*¹, 11). Like Glasheen’s work, Atherton’s book was the result of the collaborative effort described in the section on Joyce criticism above.

The concept of allusion in its traditional intentionalistic understanding was a New Critical *bête noire*. In “The Intentional Fallacy” (1946/1954), Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that intention should not be made the standard of criticism of a poem because firstly intention is “neither available nor desirable as a standard” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 3) and secondly, because the life of the poet, his/her experiences, cannot account for the meaning of the poem. Consequently, it is wrong to assume that the poet him·her·self is in the best position to judge his/her work. Evaluation and exegesis based on the poet’s biography, letters, and comments as privileged sources for meaning is thus to be overcome. Wimsatt calls such approaches “author psychology” and distinguishes them from criticism (see *ibid.*, 10). Wimsatt and Beardsley want to counter the “commonplace to suppose that we do not know what a poet means unless we have traced him in his readings” (*ibid.*, 14) which, they argue, arose because of the challenge of the allusiveness of a poet like Eliot. Conceiving the poem as a self-sufficient, autonomous, unified and integrated aesthetic object, as the New Critics did in general, Wimsatt and Beardsley counter this argument by saying that the poem’s meaning must come from the words themselves, not from a source “outside” the poem.⁴³⁸ They write: “There is a difference between internal and external evidence for the meaning of a poem” (*ibid.*, 10). The notion of internal evidence refers to “the semantics and syntax of a poem, [...] our habitual knowledge of the language, [...] grammars, dictionaries, and all the literature which is the source of dictionaries” (*ibid.*). It has to be established by “poetic analysis” (*ibid.*, 18) which is the “objective way of criticism” (*ibid.*). A condensed version of their views may read: The poem may have originated in the mind of the poet but it becomes independent from him and speaks for itself; consequently critical inquiries are settled only by dealing with the text itself. Nothing “outside” the poem is “necessary for the meaning of the verbal symbol” (*ibid.*, 16) because the verbal symbol is complete in itself.

Interestingly, Wimsatt and Beardsley do not consider allusion in terms of a reference to an “outside.” If Eliot’s lines “I had not thought death had undone so many./ Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled” (Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 62) represent an allusion to Dante’s *Comedia*, then, they appear to suggest, the relevant context of the *Comedia* is internal to *The Waste Land*, and thus allusion is not considered in terms of external reference any more. Wimsatt and Beardsley approvingly cite Matthiessen: “[E]verything of importance ... that is

⁴³⁸ Similar pronouncements had been made by the Russian Formalists: “(1) The [...] analysis [...] should not leave the domain to which the work belongs – that is, the domain of literature. That which is *given* in the work itself should be enough, and one is entitled to consider only that in determining the true literary value of that work. Whatever is hidden from the reader need not intervene and can only falsify our impression. (2) A biographical fact, even when it is the source of a poetic inspiration, does not explain the poet’s work *at all*” (Tomashevsky, 125f).

apposite to an appreciation of ‘The Waste Land’ has been incorporated into the structure of the poem itself or into Eliot’s notes” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 15). Eliot’s notes they declare to be part of the poem and as such they should not be taken at face value. In their eyes, the success of an allusion does not lie in the reader’s recognition of the presence of an allusion but in the “suggestive power” of the finely crafted language and in the expressiveness of the imagery, symbols, metaphors, etc. that altogether make it a ‘verbal icon’: “Eliot’s allusions work when we know them and to a great extent even when we do not know them, through their suggestive power” (ibid.; cf. Richards, *Principles*, 218). If they are obscure and reveal their meaning only if the reader does ‘detective work,’ they are not successful.

Thus, the effectiveness of the allusion is not related to its recognition as an allusion. Either allusions resonate with “suggestive power” and thus succeed to convey meaning or they do not and fail to convey meaning. In other words, intention, if successful, manifests itself and comes into effect in ‘the work itself.’ Through a “poetic analysis,” which acknowledges only “internal evidence,” the critic should inquire whether the word, line, or passage in question makes sense as allusion – even if the poet intended an allusion, for Wimsatt and Beardsley its meaning must be warranted by ‘the poem itself’ and not alone by its “status” as allusion. Again, if the allusion has any significance it must come from its “suggestive power.” Wimsatt and Beardsley did not deny that an author may have intended the allusion, but what counted was if the allusion was effective enough for its meaning to be recognised without reference to information “outside” the poem such as statements by the poet or knowledge of the works used for composition.⁴³⁹ Their argument, particularly with respect to allusion, is not very lucid and in places seems rather circular.⁴⁴⁰ This is not surprising as allusiveness may well be the greatest challenge to get around for anti-intentionalists.

According to the New Critics, the task of the critic was close reading – what was deplored as allusion and source hunting had no place in their understanding of criticism. It is in this context that Blackmur castigates “the tremendous exegesis of TS Eliot and James Joyce which has so far shown the worst vices of pedantry and research as substitutes for

⁴³⁹ Likewise, Brooks decries “‘symbol-mongering’” (see Brooks, *Shaping*; Brooks, “*Ulysses*,” 1, 68; Brooks, “Fiction,” 144, 149) as “a grotesque parody of anything like an adequate ‘close reading’ [...] magnifying details quite irresponsibly; [...] feverishly prospect[ing] for possible symbolic meanings and then forc[ing] them beyond the needs of the story” (Brooks, “Fiction,” 144) because it is a practice that implicitly questions the New Critical axiom that everything that is apposite to a reading of the work has been incorporated into the work itself and can be identified by attention to what is ‘on the page’ before one’s eyes.

⁴⁴⁰ The circularity of the argument in places may be seen in a statement like the following: “Allusions to Dante, Webster, Marvell, or Baudelaire doubtless gain something because these writers existed, but it is doubtful whether the same can be said for an allusion to an obscure Elizabethan. [...] [H]ad Eliot, as is quite conceivable, composed these lines to furnish his own background, there would be no loss of validity” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 15).

[close] reading” (Blackmur, *New Criticism*, 11; cf. Richards, *Principles*, 217f, 292). Given the New Critical notion of the self-sufficiency of the work of art, the exoreferential dynamic provoked by *Ulysses* and *FW* cannot but have irritated the New Critics. Beginning in the second half of the 1960s, the concepts of allusion and source were again challenged, this time by the post-structuralist concept of intertextuality. The post-structuralist critique of the notion of the autonomous and self-sufficient work of art led, under completely different premises, likewise to the repudiation of understanding intertextuality as reference to an ‘outside’ of some kind on the part of its exponents, as elaborated further below. The antecedent excursus on the issues of intention and source(s) in genetic criticism is part of the more general set of issues discussed in this chapter.

2.4 Excursus: The Genetic Fallacy

*He works over it, word by word, changing a word here, [...] a word there [...].
[T]he Steps of the progress have been only too effectually effaced; and while
the poet, who has seen the thing from the beginning, still sees the relation of
point to point, the reader, who comes to it only in its final stage, finds himself
in a not unnatural bewilderment.
(Symons, 197f)*

*I would have been pleased to see his manuscripts. We shall really understand
Joyce's thought only on the day when we can have it in its first state,
before all the retouches with which he complicated it.
(Gillet, “Living,” 91)*

Genetic criticism is currently the most prolific and most pursued research agenda in *FW* criticism. This approach is concerned with the process of composition, making use of the material which exposes those stages of composition that precede the published work. As a recent introduction to the field points out, “the chief concern [of genetic criticism] is not the final text but the reconstruction and analysis of the writing process” (Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, front flap). Geneticists focus on what they call, following Jean Bellemin-Noël, “the ‘avant-texte’: a critical gathering of a writer’s notes, sketches, drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence” (ibid.).⁴⁴¹ The immediate origins of genetic criticism are to be

⁴⁴¹ In the case of Joyce such material, with the exception of Joyce’s correspondence, has been published in 1977-1979 as facsimile in the sixty-three volume *The James Joyce Archive*. The *FW* notebooks and manuscripts comprise thirty-five of these volumes.

found in the *critique génétique* which developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁴² The manuscripts of Joyce became an object of interest for the latter in the late 1970s (see Slote, “Après 1,” 380). Yet, in a way genetic criticism has been part of the study of *FW* from the beginning. Edmund Wilson’s comparison of three versions of “Anna Livia Plarabelle” as it evolved from 1925 to 1928, reprinted in the appendix of *Axel’s Castle* (see also Wilson, *Wound*, 235), was borrowed from Robert Sage’s essay in *Exag* (see Sage, “Before,” 164). Sage was thus the first ‘critic’ to make use of a proto-genetic approach to the work.⁴⁴³

The edited volume *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake: A Chapter-by-Chapter Genetic Guide*, a comprehensive genetic study published in 2007, aims to serve as an “introduction to *Finnegans Wake* from the perspective of its composition” (Crispi and Slote, “Introduction,” 3).⁴⁴⁴ As the editors of the volume admit, “there is no [...] consensus as to how genetic methodologies should be employed with *Finnegans Wake*” (ibid., 4). The study of the composition process of the work is certainly illuminating and useful. There is, however, the temptation to attribute an authority to the *avant-texte* for the interpretation of the (published) text which cannot be justified. Genetic criticism is apt to make us aware of the fact that “a great deal of the *Wake*’s verbiage derives from notes taken from a variety of sources (newspapers, books, overheard conversations, etc.)” (Slote, “Compositional,” 6). As had already been the case with *Ulysses* but even more uncompromisingly, *Finnegans Wake* “emerged through constant revision, rewriting, and textual accumulation and distortion” (ibid., 12).⁴⁴⁵ It is interesting to see that “[t]he language of the earliest passages does not show the linguistic complexity of the final text” (ibid.).⁴⁴⁶ In the case of these early passages the language was ‘adjusted’ “cumulatively on subsequent drafts” (ibid.).⁴⁴⁷ Genetic criticism clearly demonstrates that the progress in WiP was one towards distortion, towards making the words and the text ever stranger, apparently with the aim to maximise the indeterminacy, density and suggestiveness of the text’s vocabulary.

The genetic study of *FW* has long been driven by the illusion that on the basis of the “pre-texts” the effaced progress from comprehensible thought, as point of departure, to

⁴⁴² The ‘founding documents’ of *critique génétique* are Louis Hay’s “Des manuscrits, pour quoi faire?” from 1967 and Jean Bellemin-Noël’s *Le texte et l’avant-texte: Les brouillons d’un poème de Milosz* from 1972.

⁴⁴³ Genetic criticism in Joyce studies today is influenced by French *critique génétique*, but there exists a tradition of genetic criticism within ‘*FW* criticism’ which goes back to the 1950s, namely in the work of A. Walton Litz, David Hayman, and Fred Higginson. For overviews of the development of genetic criticism of *FW* see Hayman, “Genetic,” 6-12 and Lernout, “Radical,” 20-24.

⁴⁴⁴ See also Finn Fordham’s study *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake* from 2007.

⁴⁴⁵ Sam Slote’s part of the introduction of *How Joyce Wrote* gives an overview of the complex compositional process of *FW* (see Slote, “Compositional”).

⁴⁴⁶ And yet, the early drafts, which are “essentially English” (Slote, “Compositional,” 22), “are not without linguistic distortion in terms of rhythm, pace, syntax and diction” (ibid., 12).

⁴⁴⁷ This fact had been demonstrated early by Robert Sage in his *Examination* essay (see Sage, “Before,” 164).

obscure text can be reconstructed, that is, traced back. The aim is to recover through recourse to the writer's notes the process which Arthur Symons, commenting on the process of composition in Mallarmé, leading to the "impenetrability" of his language, described (see introductory quote of this section). Doubtless critical views of the 'content' of *FW* were influenced by studies like David Hayman's *A First-Draft Version of Finnegans Wake* from 1963. Many critics concurred with Hayman that the manuscripts, and Hayman's book, as the result of their study, are "capable of revealing the basic plan of each passage and the root ideas" (Hayman, *First-Draft*, 3). Conceived in this way "the idea of 'genetic' approaches to [...] *Finnegans Wake* is bound to promise more than it can hold" (Rabaté, "Fourfold," 384).⁴⁴⁸ In order to avoid such a "genetic fallacy" (*ibid.*, 399) it is important to understand "where a genetic approach can be useful: rather than act as a hermeneutic arbitrator and fix reference in a positivistic manner (i.e., 'this means that'), a genetic approach can illustrate the ways in which reference and denotation are corrupted beyond repair" in *FW* (Slote, "Reading," 204).

It is not difficult to imagine that the majority of scholars attempting to come to terms with *FW* regarded the argument of "The Intentional Fallacy" as refuted by the very challenge that *FW* represented. The degree of distortion itself appeared enough to invalidate the argument. After all, to focus the argument on Eliot and declare his allusions to "work when we know them and to a great extent even when we do not know them, through their suggestive power" after the very fact of the notes, that is by knowing Eliot's notes, must have appeared flawed. *FW* simply did not come with notes, and here one had to deal with a degree of opacity which overshadowed Eliot's work. Opacity in literature appears to virtually provoke notions of intentionality – if obviously great effort has been put into distorting the verbal material one automatically assumes first of all that something meaningful is to be concealed, that is, that the opacity is deliberate and not accidental, and secondly that hints, clues, keys in some form or other are provided by the mystery-monger, particularly if he is known to have done so in the past. And why, critics may have asked themselves, should one refrain from consulting manuscripts if such keys are not supplied in the form of handy notes? Confronted with a text which appeared to render useless that which the New Critics allowed exclusively as "evidence," namely "our habitual knowledge of the language, [...] grammars, dictionaries, an all the literature which is the source of dictionaries," a text which the New Critics did not care or dare to explicate, a text which presented completely different problems for readers and critics than *The Waste Land*, a text which called for interpretation and which did speak for itself but which seemed to say, in strange words and ways, so many conflicting

⁴⁴⁸ In his *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* from 2001, Rabaté was still inclined to grant such authority to the *avant-texte* (see Rabaté, *James Joyce*, 196ff).

things at the same time that the text itself could not be made to provide its own criteria of relevance as the New Critics suggested, these critics turned to whatever documents they could get hold of in the pursuit of the ‘key(s)’.⁴⁴⁹

Furthermore, it seems counter-intuitive to completely disregard intention when one speaks of an artefact, as it seems counter-intuitive to not regard those poets/writers commonly considered genius as particularly intentional subjects. In view of Wimsatt and Beardsley’s argument critics might have asked themselves: Wherein does intentionality manifest itself if not in the conscious, elaborate composition of a complex masterpiece of world literature? After all, it was easier to conceive Joyce as the mastermind and master riddler of whose design one might get hold of by exploring his process of composition than to say that *FW* was a failure because it lacked the suggestive power to express an identifiable meaning when for many the great issue lay exactly in its suggestive power which defied any attempt at delimiting its signifying potential. The higher a writer’s prestige, the stronger, it appears, our notion of intentionality. The willingness to uphold the authority of the author is based on the notion that Joyce was “always eager to discuss his work and intentions” and that he was “always his own best reader” (Bishop, “Introduction,” xiv). The general conviction about Joyce’s will to self-explication, albeit in an indirect, string-pulling manner, has made it hard for Joyce criticism on the whole to accept the abandonment of the authority of the author as it was postulated from the mid-1940s on – first by the New Critics and from the late 1960s on by the post-structuralists. This image of Joyce as the ‘key giver’ is apparent in such statements as the following: “Joyce’s death less than two years after publication must be acknowledged as the greatest blow to any expectation of a full explication. The author’s own willingness during his lifetime to provide ‘the keys to’ had been instrumental in bringing *Ulysses* so clearly into focus in so short a time” (Benstock, *Joyce-Again’s*, 40).

As is the case in Atherton’s *The Books at the Wake*, the difference between allusion and source is often blurred in *FW* criticism. If the source of a phrase in *FW* II.4 is the translation of Édouard Schuré’s *Femmes inspiratrices et poètes annonceurs* (1908), entitled *Woman: The Inspirer* (1918), which describes the love affair between Richard Wagner and Mathilde Wesendonck, as Geert Lernout has shown (see Lernout, “Radical,” 39-45), is its use automatically an allusion to Wagner or more specifically to this relationship? Joyce took the

⁴⁴⁹ Some may occasionally have felt, very much against the New Critical basic convictions, like “the great critic” in Tommaso Landolfi’s short story “Dialogo dei massimi sistemi” – which amounts to a literary footnote to *WiP/FW* – who, confronted with the strange language of Y’s poems, recognises: “Actually, [...] I [...] am not competent to judge these poems; therefore I’m not even trying to define what criteria should be adopted. The only one who is competent to judge them is the author himself, just as he is the only one who knows, more or less, the language” (Landolfi, 43; cf. Levin, *Introduction*¹, 140).

phrase “lyrical blooms,” which ultimately became “the best favourite lyrical national blooms” (*FW* 385.24-25), from the translation of Schuré’s work (see Lernout, “Radical,” 42). The attempt of establishing the sources of the word material of *FW* led to a situation in which sources tended to become confounded with allusions.

The project of identifying sources is driven by the desire to find a context for the word material of *FW* – a context which, it was hoped, would provide a frame of reference, a frame of meaning. What genetic studies have often shown is that the scraps which Joyce used from various sources – books, newspaper and encyclopaedia articles, etc. – were often used in contexts which have no discernible links to the original contexts so that the source seems to be made irrelevant and a view of the ‘citation’ as a deliberate reference or allusion seems problematic, if one assumes that a discernible link is a link which at least some readers could have established without recourse to Joyce’s manuscripts (see *ibid.*, 39-45). What complicates, and in part calls into question, the notion of allusion as a deliberate thematic reference to another work in this respect is the fact that what made material interesting for Joyce was often ‘style’ as opposed to ‘substance’; Joyce, we are told by various sources, often noted down words or phrases or topics that simply struck his fancy.⁴⁵⁰

A further example will illustrate the issue of the conflation of allusion and source. Source/allusion study has established that Finnish words were used in the composition of the phrase “by the tourneyold of the wattarfalls, with their vuoxens and they kemín in so hattajocky” (*FW* 383.23-24; see Bates) and that the actual source is the 11th *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Finland (see Rose and O’Hanlon, “Finn,” 70f). This information ended up in *Annotations* as “*r* Tornio,” “*Fi* vuoksi: flood, high tide,” “*Fi* joki: river,” “*r* Vuoksen,” and “*r* Kemi” (McHugh, *Annotations*, 383), that is *Annotations* lists the Finnish rivers Tornio, Vuoksen, and Kemi and the Finnish words *vuoksi* and *joki*. With its line-by-line glossing *Annotations* has all the features of the traditional philological commentary. According to McHugh, it is a “glossary” (*ibid.*, vii), providing “explanatory notes” (*ibid.*). The volume self-avowedly presents the results of “*Finnegans Wake* [...] exegesis” (*ibid.*). Yet are these notes “of help in the actual understanding of what is being said” (*ibid.*, xiv) here? It is hard to imagine that these words should be considered allusions. So what do these notes explain? What is actually “explained” here, is that in all probability Joyce used individual words from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Finland – and no more. Yet *Annotations* gives the impression that these words are references or allusions to the rivers. Irrespective of

⁴⁵⁰ It is well known, for instance, that in a letter Joyce commissioned his step-grandson to mark, among other things, passages in *Huckleberry Finn* “wherever the words or dialogue seem to call for the special attention of a European” (qtd. in Ellmann, *James Joyce*², 699).

Annotations, readers, not knowing what the *aliquo* of the words “vuoxens and they kem in so hattajocky” might be, tend to take the words to be allusions, or to be neologisms whose primary quality is being suggestive of familiar words.

The search for the sources of *FW* has never been done for its own sake, that is, to merely identify the range of sources of the word material. It is always driven by the desire to establish context, to make the source to be discovered the basis of one’s interpretation or ‘elucidation’ of a given passage, to “ground the text by limiting the infinity of its possible meanings” (Lernout, “Radical,” 33) as Lernout writes affirmatively about genetic source study.⁴⁵¹ It entails bringing intention and context back into play – context in the sense of one ‘privileged’ context, namely the only one that can be ‘verified’ through genetic study (see also McHugh, *Experience*, 70-74). And in a way this is quite understandable – the more opaque the meaning of a text we accept as literary, the stronger is the urge to establish the seemingly concealed meaning. It seems as if we cannot accept the idea of a literary text which lacks meaning – in particular if this text is six hundred twenty-eight pages long. And if one assumes the intentionality of the text’s opaqueness, the urge to discover what it is that had to be so elaborately concealed is strongest. Here, again, the psychology of the secret comes into effect.

Behind such a reasoning lies the tacit rationale that the identification of the sources of the material which went into *FW* yields the appropriate context for reading this specific material. But this is more often than not a positivistic fallacy. It may indeed be possible by studying the notebooks to “decide with some degree of probability which parts of the world went into the book and which parts probably did not” (Lernout, “Radical,” 45) – but the belief that through the knowledge of the source one can establish the appropriate context is quite misleading. More often than not the impetus behind the attempt to identify a source is the hope, or rather the firm conviction, of catching through it a glimpse of Joyce’s intention, that is, the belief that what Joyce read and took notes of offers us an overview of the themes he was interested in and that these themes can then be identified in *FW*.⁴⁵² Jean-Michel Rabaté has repeatedly referred to this notion as “the genetic fallacy” (Rabaté, *James Joyce*, 186f). This is the same type of reductionism which underlay *A Skeleton Key*. Does this entail not to take any interest in sources? No. But it is a self-defeating strategy to privilege ‘the source’ as indicative of intention or meaning or context in a work in which the processes of transformation and appropriation are so fundamental. The very knowledge about the complex

⁴⁵¹ It is this mixing up that makes statements like “Findings that derive from [...] [this] approach [...] are true in a different sense for the simple reason that *they can be proven wrong*. [...] [W]e are doing a type of research that is *falsifiable* and therefore scientific” (Lernout, “Radical,” 48) so critical.

⁴⁵² Such a view is explicitly expressed in Lernout, “And Yes.”

writing process which the study of the manuscripts and drafts has made possible is apt to instil into the critical awareness doubts about such reductionism. While genetic criticism allows one to state that in one of the first drafts of the scene between Tristan and Isolde from 1923 Joyce wrote “Rollon thoudeep anddark blueo ceanroll!” (see Deppman, 314) which then was a contracted quotation of the first line of stanza CLXXIX of Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* but which Joyce reworked into “listening, to Rolando’s deepen darblun Ossian roll” (*FW* 385.35-36), such insights should indeed help us to be more wary about claims that this phrase *must* or *should* be considered an allusion to Byron.

In contrast, genetic criticism should rather be concerned with making use of the possibility to present the process of composition as just this: As a process the end of which may, in most cases, be marked by the published work, but at the beginning and at any given point in the process of composition of which may be something different in many respects. This perspective allows the literary critic to question the teleological moment which seems to be inherent in thinking about the composition of a literary work and to describe the genesis of a text as a process – a process in which the look at the moment of composition A allows a different work to emerge than does the look at the moment of composition B. Thus it is not about understanding the ‘finished’ work through its genesis but to emphasise the openness which characterises every work during the process of composition and which is only erased through the, in a way, definitive form of the published work. After all, it is this openness which *FW* aims at in particular, emphasised by the fact of its interim title “Work in Progress”.⁴⁵³ The recognition of this openness may also serve to undermine the temptation of a strong notion of authorial intention. The perspective of genetic criticism opens up a space to conceive a work more three-dimensional, in a sense, with respect to its genesis by conceiving this genesis as a process which contains its unrealised possibilities thus creating for us a “Möglichkeitssinn” (“sense of possibility”), in Musil’s sense (see Musil, 16), for its ‘having-become.’

As indicated, after the waning of the New Critical appeal such reductionism as described above was again challenged, now by the post-structuralist concept of intertextuality. While *The Waste Land* was the text around which Wimsatt and Beardsley had woven their argument against intentionality, *FW* became one of the texts which were cited as the literary

⁴⁵³ The complex compositional history of *FW* II.4 merits attention in this respect. “Tristan and Isolde” and “Mamalujo” were among the very first sketches for WiP made by Joyce in March 1923; they all involved “themes that are medieval, Irish, and hagiographic” (Slote, “Compositional,” 10). Rather surprisingly, these two sketches were worked into WiP – they were intricately fused in this process (see Deppman, 307-311) – at a very late stage in 1938 (see Slote, “Compositional,” 29).

‘witnesses’ in the post-structuralist attempt to decentre the very roots of the concept of intentionality, namely subjectivity and authorship.

2.5 “A Very Special Example” of Intertextuality

In post-structuralist writing the concept of *text* was radically expanded; the notion of world as textuality (*textualité*) became one of the major ideas of French literary theory in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. The concept of intertextuality (*intertextualité*), the theory of the links between texts, stands in fact at the very beginning of the post-structuralist concept of textuality; it also stood at the beginning of what emerged as Julia Kristeva’s post-structuralist theorising – a sophisticated conception of literature, characterised by the combination of a semiotics of culture, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Marxist ideas.⁴⁵⁴ Influenced by her reading of Bakhtin she developed the idea of the text as intersection. Its originality lies in the theorising of the relationships between texts as one of the essential, constitutive features of the field of literature (see Kristeva, *Le texte*, 69) – a literary work cannot, in this view, be conceived other than a nexus, a view which leaves little space for the notion of the autonomous work of art – as the fact itself that literary texts refer to other texts in various ways had already been acknowledged in the early period of the history of literature (see e.g. D. A. Russel, “*De imitatione*”). Significantly, the name Joyce was involved in the exposition of intertextuality. In Kristeva’s view it is only with the “break [which] occurred at the end of the nineteenth century” (Kristeva, “Word,” 71) – becoming manifest for instance in “the ‘modern’ novel of the twentieth century – Joyce, Proust, Kafka” (ibid.) (for Kristeva) and in the writings of Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, and Bely (for Bakhtin, according to Kristeva) – that “the problem of intertextuality” begins to appear as such, although it is, as she makes clear, not a modern phenomenon (ibid.). In 1985, Kristeva will say that the texts of Joyce are “a very special example” of the dynamics of intertextuality (Kristeva and Waller, 282): “It is impossible to read *Finnegans Wake* without entering into the intrapsychic logic and dynamics of intertextuality” (ibid., 282).

The definition of intertextuality as it was conceived by Kristeva, elaborating Mikhail Bakhtin’s concepts of *диалогичность* (dialogičnost’) and *диалогизм* (dialogizm) (both terms have been variously translated as *dialogism/dialogicity/dialogicality*), posited that “any text is

⁴⁵⁴ Kristeva’s seminal essay which introduced the concept of intertextuality originally appeared as “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman” in April 1967 in *Critique* and was later included as “Le mot, le dialogue et le roman” in her *Σημειωτική*.

constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, “Word,” 66; see also Kristeva, *Σημειωτική*, 115, 146, 149).⁴⁵⁵ Kristeva described the concept of intertextuality as the result of “the recognition that a textual segment [...] is the result of the intersection of a number of voices, of a number of textual interventions, which are combined in the semantic field, but also in the syntactic and phonic fields of the explicit utterance” (Kristeva and Waller, 281). According to Kristeva, every text is in fact intertext – “a network of sign systems situated in relation to other systems of signifying practices [...] in a culture” (Godard, 568). The *world* merged into the notion of a “texte infini” (Barthes, *Plaisir*, 59) as epitomised in the famous Derridean catchphrase “Il n’y a pas de hors-texte” (Derrida, *Grammatologie*, 227) which was meant, among other things, to express that *world* exists only through language and that “no meaning can be determined out of context, but [at the same time] no context permits saturation” (Derrida, “Living,” 81). Intertextuality was a means to open up the idea of text, to overcome its structuralist conception as a closed, autonomous system and to reconceive it as a dynamic plurality. Linked to this view of the text was the view of the subject – a factor which had been disregarded by structuralism – as dynamic (Kristeva’s *sujet en procès*) and plural:

[W]hat is being dealt with is a specific dynamics of the subject of the utterance, who consequently, precisely because of this intertextuality, is not an individual in the etymological sense of the term, not an identity. In other words, the discovery of intertextuality at a formal level leads us to an intrapsychic or psychoanalytic finding, if you will, concerning the status of the “creator,” the one who produces a text by placing himself or herself at the intersection of this plurality of texts on their very different levels – [...] semantic, syntactic, or phonic. This leads me to understand creative subjectivity as a kaleidoscope, a “polyphony” as Bakhtin calls it. (Kristeva and Waller, 281)

For Kristeva, intertextuality thus implied “a dynamics involving destruction of the creative identity and reconstitution of a new plurality” (ibid., 282) – and this, she emphasised, was as true for the reading subject as it was for the writing subject (see ibid.). According to her perspective, “writing as a signifying practice achieves the deconstruction and the dissemination of the subject in the fabric of the text, which no longer could be conceived as a closed structure. Henceforth it was to be understood as the intersection of multiple signifying complexes” (Kristeva, “Barthes,” 409). Her study of the work of Lacan led her to posit “the

⁴⁵⁵ In her *La révolution du langage poétique*, Kristeva replaced the term *intertextualité*, which to her now appeared to have become trivialised, with the term *transposition* (“transposition”) (see Kristeva, *La révolution*, 59f; cf. Kristeva, *Revolution*, 59f).

exteriority and the autonomy of the signifier [...] with regard to the conscious subject who thinks he has mastered its utterance” (ibid.) – it led her, in other words, to conceive the subject as determined by symbolic systems.

The structuralist notion of the autonomy of language as a system vis-à-vis the subject had already replaced the traditional Enlightenment idea of the autonomy of the subject, that is to say a rational subject which masters language. Post-structuralists went a step further in proclaiming the dissolution of the notion of an autonomous *agens*-subject (see e.g. Kristeva’s “Le sémiotique et le symbolique” in her *La révolution*; see also Barthes, *S/Z*¹, 16f). To simplify one could say that for post-structuralists it is not the author who creates a work which is a definable whole, but language which operates always uncontrollably in/as the plurality and nexus that is called text. It was Barthes who articulated most pointedly the consequences of Kristeva’s ideas for the concept of authorship – polemically also in reaction to Sartre’s “Qu’est-ce que la littérature?” (1947). In late 1967, the readers of the U.S. American avant-garde magazine *Aspen* would read, only a few months after Kristeva’s “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman” had appeared in *Critique*, in a piece by Roland Barthes entitled “The Death of the Author”: “[L]iterature is that neuter, that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes” (Barthes, “Death¹,” first p.).⁴⁵⁶ Writing, for Barthes, had become an intransitive concept: “[F]or Mallarme [sic], as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author: to write is to reach [...] that point where language alone acts, ‘performs,’ and not ‘oneself’” (ibid., first to second p.).⁴⁵⁷ In one of the most oft-cited passages Barthes explains the presuppositions of intertextuality without using the term:

We know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, no one of which is *original*: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture. [...] [T]he writer can only imitate a gesture forever anterior, never original. (ibid., third p.)

⁴⁵⁶ Roland Barthes’s “La mort de l’auteur” was first published in an English translation by Richard Howard as “The Death of the Author” in issue 5+6 (Fall-Winter 1967) of the magazine *Aspen*. *Aspen* was a U.S. American multimedia magazine, for which Brian O’Doherty was asked to edit an issue in 1967 to which Barthes contributed his famous essay. It is this (unpaginated) version of the essay which is cited here. The French original was published in 1968 in the journal *Manteia*. A different English translation appeared a decade later in the collection *Image-Music-Text*.

⁴⁵⁷ The concept of *écrire* as an intransitive verb was formulated by Barthes as early as “Écrivains et écrivants,” an essay from 1960.

Probably with intentionalism and ‘biographism’ in mind, Barthes states that “[t]o give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to *close* the writing” (ibid., third to fourth p.). In the place of the author Barthes famously inaugurates the reader as “the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of” (ibid., fourth p.).

According to Kristeva, the “spectacular turn” (Kristeva, “Barthes,” 409) from structuralist sign-centred “semiology” to post-structuralist ‘textual’ analysis of “signifying practices” – signifying practices such as literature “as bearer of a surplus of signification that the system of the sign is unable to contain” (Kristeva, “Activity,” 9) – which offered a perspective to consider “the process of signification as a work and a production that exceeds the sign, the fixed sense and the closed structure” (ibid., 8), and which constituted a “complete break” (Kristeva, “Barthes,” 411) in Barthes’s theorising, was the acknowledgement that “writing as a signifying practice achieves the deconstruction and the dissemination of the subject in the fabric of the text, which no longer could be conceived as a closed structure. Henceforth it was to be understood as the intersection of multiple signifying complexes” (ibid., 409). Intertextuality, Kristeva posited, “invalidates all talk of an author: writing is the perpetual displacement of voices and the text within an unlimited space, the point of convergence of these various codes; carried off by the plurality of his own text, the author is dispossessed of himself, as it were, now an elusive figure, indistinguishable from the text, lost in the domain of references” (ibid., 410). Her project aims at “avoiding the closure of meaning and the diktat of unity and coherence” (ibid.).⁴⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that although theorists like Kristeva, Barthes and Foucault wanted to undermine the notion of the writer as genius-endowed creator, the frequent references in post-structuralist writings to a narrow canon of writers made these writers ‘revolutionary,’ ‘ahead of their time,’ ‘exceptional’ and thus in a way reinscribed their ‘genius,’ even if it was only their writing (*écriture*) conceived as “intransitive” (see Barthes, “To Write”) which was declared to be all this.

The New Critics sought to break the influence and authority of the writer on the meaning of his·her work by regarding literary works as autonomous. Their aim was to undo the concept of the writer ‘controlling’ the meaning of his·her work, that is, the writer him·her·self being *the* authority on his·her work’s meaning; in other words to contest the efficacy of the notion of *αὐτὸς ἔφα* (autos epha, “he himself said (it)”). In the writer’s place they put the critic, or rather the New Critic, who often happened to be a poet too, as the

⁴⁵⁸ These are Kristeva’s words describing Roland Barthes’s approach, for which her own theorising had become influential, among others, from 1966 on. They describe Kristeva’s own idea of literature just as well as they do those of Barthes since 1967.

authority on the meaning of the work; one authority is replaced by another authority. In contrast, post-structuralists refused the concept of stable meaning altogether. They ‘dethroned’ ‘the author-writer’ as the exemplary conscious and intentional subject in order to question the very concepts of meaning and of the autonomy of the subject. The concept of authority, which is associated with these concepts (meaning, author) was challenged in general. The question of the meaning(s) of a work did not belong to the primary interests of post-structuralists any more. Here the traditional notions of subjectivity, authorship and intentionality came under pressure through the notion of the ‘incontrollability’ of language, that is, the inability to keep language in check, and through the notion of man being constituted by language⁴⁵⁹ – herein the post-structuralists took Heidegger at his word who had said, in the context of his readings of Hölderlin (see e.g. Hölderlin, 245), “It is not we who have language; rather, language has us” (Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s*, 23) and “Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man” (Heidegger, “Poetically,” 267).

Kristeva’s concept was never meant to be a category for the analysis of the relationship between individual texts only. The very concept of intertextuality precisely discards the notion of an element in one work, conceived as an integrated whole, *referring* to another work, conceived as an integrated whole. Barthes writes at one point “the intertext is not a problem of sources, for the source is a named origin while the intertext is without locatable origin” (Barthes and Heath, 46). The often fairly abstract concepts and notions of post-structuralist theory did not lend themselves easily to textual analysis. Those who were convinced of the merit of these ideas for the analysis of literary texts found themselves in a situation in which they had to be adapted in order to make them available as useful categories in critical analyses.⁴⁶⁰ In the end, intertextuality lent itself to such an adaptation not least because it seemed to provide an up-to-date label for traditional critical practices, such as study of sources and allusions. It is in view of the results of such adaptations when a ‘narrow’ definition of intertextuality is referred to. In his *Palimpsestes* (1982), Gérard Genette presented the most prominent example of such an adaptation, or ‘pragmatic’ approach to intertextuality – an elaborate taxonomy and definitions applicable to textual analyses. It is the ‘narrow’ definition of intertextuality, divorced of many of its post-structuralist premises and

⁴⁵⁹ In a lecture given in 1972 at Université catholique de Louvain, Lacan says, “The speaking being, this is of course a pleonasm. It is as if only because it is speaking that it is a being, since there is only being in language” (Lacan, “Mort,” 2; my trans.). (The lecture was videotaped for a documentary by Françoise Wolff which appeared as *Jacques Lacan parle* in 1982).

⁴⁶⁰ This is the case, e.g., when Broich and Pfister propose to “operationalise” the term “for the practice of text analysis” (Broich and Pfister, x; my trans.).

often implying notions of intentionality which are incompatible with these, which has gained general acceptance within the field of literary studies; and this may also be a sign of the conflict-prone, probably even aporetic, character of intertextuality as conceived by Kristeva (see Culler, *Pursuit*, 110-118). This means that for the most part, this study being no exception, the concept of intertextuality is used to indicate concrete links between specific texts. Genette, who preferred to use the generic term *transtextualité*, defined intertextuality as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another” (Genette, *Second Degree*, 1f) and limited it in his taxonomy to the phenomena of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion. Allusion he defines as “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible” (ibid., 2).

The link between Joyce and the ‘intertextual moment’ of twentieth-century Modernism which Kristeva had established was soon taken up by a piece which is characterised by its intellectual proximity to the emerging post-structuralist ideas.⁴⁶¹ In 1972, Stephen Heath wrote:

[A] context of reference, produc[es], according to a process of limitation [...], a fixed meaning. Joyce’s texts, by contrast, in their unstabilization, their ‘hesitancy’, refer not to a context – and thus not to a ‘Reality’ [...] – but to an intertext. In these texts, that is, the context is splintered into a multiplicity of instances of discourse, fragments of sense; into a plurality, or dialogue, irreducible to the single line of a truth. (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 39)

From Kristeva’s “Pour une sémiologie des paragrammes” (1967/1969), Heath, at the outset, quotes the etymologically inspired definition of reading as “an aggressive participation, an active appropriation of the other” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 31), her definition of writing as “‘to read’ become production” (ibid.), and her coinage “writing-reading” (*l’écriture-lecture*) (ibid.; cf. Kristeva, “Paragrammes,” 181) and asserts “Joyce’s writing is [...] that writing-reading defined by Kristeva” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 43). He writes, “[t]he practice of writing-reading in Joyce’s texts is the recognition of the text not as absolute origin or source (expression of ‘Reality’, expression of the Author, &c.) but as intertextual space, dialogue of forms which write it as it writes them. The urge for totality [...] is the acknowledgement of the problem of intertextuality” (ibid., 39). In view of the idiosyncratic range of material which Joyce used, Heath says, “Writing [...] becomes an activity of assemblage” (ibid.). Quoting a

⁴⁶¹ The link between the concept of intertextuality and Joyce can also be seen in the special issue of *Poétique* (27, 1976) on intertextuality, in which a piece by André Topia on *Ulysses* was included.

letter from Joyce to Weaver from March 1931 in which Joyce listed the books he used for writing a certain passage (see Gilbert, *Letters*, 302), he asserts that “[t]his heterogeneous material has no value of unity of meaning in Joyce’s writing [...]. The value is to be found in the heterogeneity, in the very distance between these diverse elements that the writing will cross in a ceaseless play of relations and correspondences in which every element becomes the fiction of another” (Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 40). What most critics would label allusion (see *ibid.*, 42), Heath, who does not use the word allusion, refers to as “transforming citation” (*ibid.*) and locates it in-between the practices of parody, pastiche, plagiarism and forgery (see *ibid.*, 41-44).

Heath’s piece follows the understanding of intertextuality as conceived by Kristeva, and yet it cannot escape the conflict inherent in the Kristevan concept in the moment it begins to exemplify: All of Heath’s examples are listed in Atherton’s “list of literary allusions” in *FW* (see appendix in Atherton, *Books*¹). A further example of the use of the concept with regard to *FW* will exemplify the ‘narrow’ definition of intertextuality. In a recent article, Scarlett Baron compared *FW* and Flaubert’s *Bouvard et Pécuchet* from the aspect of “both authors’ [...] utterly intertextual writing methods” (Baron, “Radical,” 138). About the intertextual practice in *FW* she writes: “Joyce’s method, as reflected in his note-taking habits, seems to have been geared entirely towards the production of a radically intertextual text, in which borrowed words are ineluctably severed from their source-texts” (*ibid.*, 139), making it a practice which followed “a logic that almost always remains elusive” (*ibid.*). According to Baron, “Joyce copied in a mode of confident and playful self-awareness, distorting and decontextualizing borrowed textual fragments to generate novelty from repetition” (*ibid.*, 144). “By composing works in which intertextuality is at once a subject and a method,” Baron writes, they rendered “older accounts of the relations between texts (in terms of say, influence or allusion) inadequate” (*ibid.*, 145). And yet, apart from the critical idiom employed, Baron’s is essentially a traditional study of allusion and influence.

Regardless of their underlying definitions of intertextuality, these pieces make plain that while the theory of intertextuality may help to explain the relationship between literary texts and the broader context of their interdependence without having to revert to the concept of intentionality, it does not provide an answer to the question why a text like *FW* can apparently be elucidated *only* through recourse to other texts. The final section of this chapter is concerned with issues of intertextuality and of the exoreferential dynamic as they become apparent in *FW* II.4.

2.6 Aspects of the Exoreferential Dynamic in *FW* II.4

In which terms can the qualitative difference of intertextual elements be described? Manfred Pfister has proposed the following six qualitative criteria to determine degrees of intensity of intertextual elements (see Pfister, 26-30). The degree of markedness – Pfister uses the Formalist notion of *laying bare* (*обнажение* *obnaženie*) – of the intertextual element as intertextual element is termed *referentiality* (see *ibid.*, 26), a criterion which is indeed difficult to distinguish from that of *communicativity* which refers to the degree of intentionality and markedness of intertextuality in the text (see *ibid.*, 27). *Autoreflexivity* denotes the degree to which intertextuality becomes itself a topic in the text (see *ibid.*, 27f). *Structurality* refers to the degree to which the “pre-text(s)” (*ibid.*, 28; my trans.) become(s) the structural background of the text. The degree of pointedness of the intertextual reference is designated by the term *selectivity* (see *ibid.*, 28f).⁴⁶² And *dialogicity* refers to the degree to which there is a “semantic and ideological tension” (*ibid.*, 29; my trans.) between the texts. In addition, two quantitative criteria are established, namely the frequency of intertextual elements, and the number and range of pre-texts that are brought into play.

In general, intertextual elements are rarely marked in *FW* – exceptions being, among others, the work’s title and the Tristan and Isolde ‘references’ in II.4.⁴⁶³ This does not come as a surprise in a text in which genetic criticism has shown distortion and appropriation to be central elements. The Tristan and Isolde *Stoff* is clearly marked by the standards of *FW* – few critics fail to notice its significance particularly for chapter II.4.⁴⁶⁴ In fact, much of the general assessment of the chapter owes to meaning constructions based on this intertextual element. Through the occurrence of the names *Tristan* and *Isolde* – in the beginning of the chapter as “Trustan” and “Usolde” (*FW* 383.18), at its end as “Iseult” and “Tristan” (*FW* 398.31) – this element is relatively easy to identify as an intertextual one for readers. Elements of the Tristan and Isolde legend, in Bédier’s version, that are recognisable in II.4 are the scene on the ship (which in the legend is taking the two lovers to Mark) (see *FW* 383.20-21), their falling passionately in love with each other on the ship and their kissing there (see, e.g., *FW* 383.18,

⁴⁶² *Selectivity* is certainly the most subjective criterion. The privileging of quotation in this respect is not incontestable: “[T]he quoting of a verse from *Hamlet* is a more pithy and more pointed reference to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* than the naming or the paraphrased characterisation of its eponymous hero” (Pfister, 28; my trans.).

⁴⁶³ The term markedness refers to the assumption of the availability of signals indicating intertextuality to readers. *Markedness* simply denotes the explicitness of intertextual elements and can thus be equated with the criterion of referentiality. On the markedness of intertextuality see e.g. Broich.

⁴⁶⁴ Interestingly enough, Atherton mentions only in passing what most readers would consider the most obvious ‘allusion’ and/or ‘source’ in the chapter and one of the most marked ones in the whole text, namely the Tristan and Isolde *Stoff*.

384.19), the betraying and cuckolding of Mark (see *FW* 383.1-14), the spying scene (see *FW* 383.22, 384.05, 384.18-19, 395.07), and Tristan's singing skills (see *FW* 385.23-36). Through its markedness, that is through being easily recognisable, and the prominence of the *Stoff* in literary history, the *referentiality* and *communicativity* of the intertextual element 'Tristan and Isolde' are high. The degree of *structurality* is high since it is an integral element of chapter II.4. *Dialogicity* is also high because of the ironic note which it attains through its seemingly burlesque character.

One is tempted to say that in general *referentiality* and *communicativity* are rather low in *FW*.⁴⁶⁵ But the question really is: From the perspective of which reader can such a statement be correct? From which perspective does one approach these criteria – from the perspective of the “allusion-hunter” experienced in *FW* meaning construction or from the perspective of the reader who is not very familiar with the text? From the perspective of the former the degrees of *referentiality*, *communicativity*, and *structurality*⁴⁶⁶ will be high. In contrast, *referentiality* and *communicativity* will be low for ‘inexperienced’ readers who may have read or heard about the allusiveness of *FW* and may thus suppose a high degree of *structurality* and a high frequency but at the same time may find it difficult to discover any allusions. All six criteria may be low for readers unacquainted with any form of *FW* criticism whatsoever, readers having no preconception of the work. The issue involved here is the considerable influence of the symbolic production on the reader position. And what is one to make of the reader who makes ample use of *Annotations* – does the criterion of *communicativity* still apply in this case?

One aspect which Pfister's model of scaling the intensity of intertextual elements does not explicitly take into account is perhaps the most important one, namely the extent to which they elicit a surplus of meaning.⁴⁶⁷ After all, with respect to the above-mentioned elements of Tristan and Isolde, of Thomas Moore's *Melodies* and of Dion Boucicault it is their being understood as allusions, or intertextual elements, which may bring a great range of additional context into play. The exoreferential dynamic sets readers on the track of the Tristan and

⁴⁶⁵ A number of phrases and sentences in *FW* can be considered to fall under what Pfister calls *autoreflexivity*. The most famous being, arguably, the phrases “[t]he last word in stoltelling” (*FW* 424.35) and “inferring from the nonpresence of inverted commas (sometimes called quotation marks) on any page that its author was always constitutionally incapable of misappropriating the spoken words of others” (*FW* 108.33-36), which have been regarded as references to Joyce's ‘intertextual’ method. (There are hardly any quotation marks in *FW* as in any of Joyce's works, with the exception of *Dubliners* which was originally published with quotation marks; Joyce preferred to use dashes but in *FW* the use of dashes is the exception). For further passages in this direction see, e.g., Heath, “Ambiviolences²,” 44. If the Tristan and Isolde story is considered a play which the four hear, this would also fall under *autoreflexivity*, constituting a case of *mise en abyme*.

⁴⁶⁶ After all, the notion of the essential allusiveness of *FW* alone suggests a high degree of *structurality*.

⁴⁶⁷ Although one might assume that high degrees of *communicativity* and *structurality* will necessarily result in such a surplus.

Isolde story and of Dion Boucicault's plays and readers contribute meaning derived from these 'exterior' texts. The more difficult it is for readers to construct meaning in a given passage, the more reliant they are on the meaning which supposed allusions can be made to contribute, that is, the more significant the exoreferential dynamic becomes in the readers' meaning construction. The Tristan and Isolde *Stoff* may bring such aspects as the love triangle, cuckoldry, the violation of social norms, the opposition youth–age, passion and exile into the meaning construction process for *FW* II.4. Aspects which cannot easily be linked to the text and context are less likely to be brought in. The philtre, for instance, and thus the theme of involuntary love, which is a significant element in the legend, does not seem to have any reverberations in the chapter.⁴⁶⁸ In comparison, the only link between *FW* II.4 and Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue* (see *FW* 384.34, 385.3-4, 385.22, 388.25-26) seems to be the motif of the kiss.

The common element which links these two intertexts of *FW* II.4, *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut* and *Arrah-na-Pogue*, is the topic of the violation of social norms becoming manifest in a kiss. In Tristan and Isolde, an involuntary, at least artificially induced, love conflicts with social norms, since King Mark, Isolde's husband (-to-be in the beginning of the legend), is Tristan's (maternal) uncle and liege lord.⁴⁶⁹ This constellation was a double transgression, namely according to the tenth commandment of the Decalogue on the one hand and to Lev. 18, which constitutes a part of what is known as the Holiness Code, on the other. In *Arrah-na-Pogue*, instead of love it is the kiss between foster-sister and foster-brother which is of a transgressive quality.⁴⁷⁰ The virtue of loyalty which the play extols is an ironic counterpoint to the philtre-induced breach of loyalty by Tristan. Ever since Edmund Wilson brought "[t]he idea of incest" (Wilson, "Earwicker," 203) into play, critics have seen it as a significant motif in *FW* (see Nash). *FW* II.4 has been understood to represent "the desire of adults directed toward the young" (Norris, "Mixing," 132) – at one point the text says "thoh the dayes gone still they loves young dreams" (*FW* 398.21-22). Some critics have conceived of Issy as "the archetype of temptation to her father, the living desire that lures him through the restless night of *FW*" (Glasheen, *A Census*, 61) and have pictured her to represent "the bewildering, tempting, diversity that leads man to his fall" (ibid.). Others have interpreted the episode as illustrating "Tristan-Shaun's incestuous triumph" over "Earwicker-Mark's incestuous designs on Isabel" (Tindall, 212). Another case of the violation of social norms with respect to

⁴⁶⁸ It is 'referred' to in *FW* I.7 as "a philtred love, trysting by tantrums" (*FW* 189.05).

⁴⁶⁹ In Bédier's, as in Berol's and Eilhart's versions of the legend, Tristan is Mark's nephew.

⁴⁷⁰ Though there is no blood relationship, if raised together there are familial bonds between foster-sister and foster-brother.

familial bonds which may have played into the Tristan and Isolde story of *FW* II.4 is that which surrounded the publicised divorce case between Maud Gonne and John MacBride in 1905. In this case charges became public which led to rumours about an indecent “incident” between MacBride and Iseult Gonne, Maud Gonne’s illegitimate daughter (see Balliett, 36f, 39). These serious topics are neutralised, however, by the apparently burlesque character of the chapter.⁴⁷¹ What constituted a violation of social norms in the Middle Ages may not do so in the early twentieth century. The moral code which brought down Parnell in 1890 and which made *Ulysses* a scandal in the period from the late 1910s until the 1930s, and beyond in the case of Ireland, may appear ridiculous according to moral standards of the twenty-first century. Likewise, the story of Tristan and Isolde can be set in the early twentieth century in order to reveal the ‘time-boundedness’ of its moral dilemma, or in order to free the story from its moralistic perspective, or even in order to deplore the loss of the validity of this moral code.

The example of the kiss makes apparent how additional context for the meaning construction of *FW* II.4 comes into play through what has been termed here the exoreferential dynamic. To emphasise the difference between the concepts *allusion*, *intertextuality* and *exoreferentiality*, it is important to see the perspective which they entail. The term allusion represents the perspective of ‘production’ and authorial intention. While the ‘narrow version’ of intertextuality often resembles the perspective of allusion, the Kristevan concept of intertextuality shares the *qualitas* of Foucauldian *discours*, a kind of non-subject-oriented, structural formation that is thought to be ‘always already’ in effect. In contrast, *exoreferentiality* represents the perspective of readers’ acts of meaning construction, their orientation towards the archive. If a reader conceives the rather well-known passage “every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle [...] was moving and changing every part of the time” (*FW* 118.21-23) as ‘echoing’ the passages about the creation of cosmos from chaos in the beginning of *Metamorphoses* (see *Ov. Met.* I 5-68), and the discussion of the metamorphoses of the elements in Pythagoras’s speech (see *Ov. Met.* XV 244-251), and in particular those passages in *Metamorphoses* that express the concept of constant change and

⁴⁷¹ David Hayman has emphasised the burlesque character of Joyce’s reworking of the Tristan and Isolde *Stoff* in *FW* II.4 (see Hayman, “Tristan,” 98, 100) (It will probably be remembered in this regard that Harry Levin considered *FW* to be “a gargantuan burlesque, not of any other given work, but of the entire cultural heritage” (Levin, *Introduction*¹, 192).). Hayman’s view of it as burlesque is also informed by his assessment of Joyce’s notes in the *Scribbledehobble* notebook as characterised by “the reduction to absurdity of youthful love, the flattening out of heroic circumstances through the medium of absurd analogies and anachronisms” (Hayman, “Tristan,” 100). He writes, “[t]he setting suggested by the notes is a pleasure steamer complete with ‘jazz band, chess, casino’” (ibid.). Hayman describes the earliest available draft version of the Tristan and Isolde sketch, the transcription of which appeared in his *A First-Draft Version Version of Finnegans Wake* (see Hayman, *First-Draft*, 208-210), as “a shipboard flirtation *cum* poetry and seduction during which the lovers drink ‘deep draughts of purest air serene’ instead of the philtre” (Hayman, “Tristan,” 107).

shift (see *Ov. Met.* I 17, XV 165-178) – with its reverberance of the ‘Heraclitean’ πάντα ρεῖ/χωρεῖ (*panta rhei/chōrei*) which forms their philosophical context – and this is assumed to be an instance of *exoreferentiality* then what this points to is first and foremost the reader’s acts of meaning construction. The base *referentiality* in the term *exoreferentiality* is not meant to evoke *reference* in its semiotic sense. Its purpose is rather to focus attention on the *orientation* of the *reader* towards the archive of culture with respect to his/her acts of meaning construction.⁴⁷² The focus is entirely on the part of the reader taking the initiative provoked by the text (i.e. on subjective processes of linking, searching for relations, establishing connections and perceiving similarity), rather than on the notions of a fulfilling of the author’s expectations or of an inevitable pointing-beyond-itself or citationality of (literary) language. At the same time, the perspective of exoreferentiality may shed some light on the fact of readers’ dependence on the archive with respect to their acts of emplotment.

The divergent dimensions of the two dynamics, esoreferential and exoreferential, with regard to the reader position may be summarised as follows. The former denotes the defamiliarising effect. The language of *FW* is the obstacle which counteracts the construction of a coherent mental representation. What *FW* effects in this respect is a being weaned off, an ‘un-accustoming’ to, the apparent transparency between the formal dimension (“signifier”) and the conceptual dimension (“signified”) of the sign, of language. The latter dynamic denotes the naturalising effect: The obstacle is circumvented by “mount[ing] a massive operation of meaning-projection [, involving large-scale acts of deletion and supplementation enabled by the concepts of *allusion* and *source*,] in order to haul the texts back within the limits of normal thinking” (Iser, “Indeterminacy,” 27f). Although literary theory, in particular in the 1970s and 1980s, has described the esoreferential dynamic as characteristic of *FW*, the dimension of the exoreferential dynamic which this text has elicited, and which the present chapter has attempted to explain, is really as characteristic as the former for, in fact, both are interrelated.

⁴⁷² In a certain sense, the categorisation of *signifier* and *signified* (see Cassin et al., “Signifier / Signified”), so influential in the history of ideas of the twentieth century (see *ibid.*), is thus translated into the orientation of readers, their being fixed on two facets, two dimensions, two dynamics; this holds less for the notion of their definite, one-to-one relation and of the transparency between them than for the conceptual differentiation between the formal dimension of words, the letter string, and the ‘meaning dimension’ of words and their complex relation (Conversely one could speak of *signifiant* and *signifié* as the translation of the categories *αἰσθητά* (*aisthēta*) and *νοητά* (*noēta*) onto the conception of the word). In the case of *esoreferentiality* and *exoreferentiality*, this relation is arbitrary, not in the sense of Saussurean unmotivatedness, but rather in the sense of “based on or determined by individual preference or convenience *rather than by necessity* [...]” (“arbitrary,” 3 a, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (10th ed., 1997); emphasis added). Hence, *esoreferentiality* and *exoreferentiality* denote two dynamics which are produced by the text and which provoke orientations of the reader.

The interrelation of form and content, which has been touched upon in the context of esoreferentiality in the beginning of this chapter, marks the point of departure for the discussion of coincidence in the final chapter.

IV. ASPECTS OF COINCIDENCE IN *ULYSSES* AND *FINNEGANS WAKE*

In fact, there is constant concern with simultaneity [in Ulysses], as well as with the parallelism of the infinite possibilities presented by the splitting up of everything that has symbolic content, and one feels throughout an effort to imprison and bind the infinitude of the incomprehensible that envelopes the world and constitutes its reality, with chains of symbols that so far as possible must be given simultaneous expression.
(Broch, 76)

In a way, the present chapter elaborates an aspect of Joyce's later works that has already been approached from a different perspective in chapter II.⁴⁷³ Chapter II covers aspects such as the coincidence of reading and interpretation in *FW*, the coincidence of signficatory planes, and the coincidence of words in lexical blends. The concept of *coincidence*, which marks the central concern of the present chapter, is apt to provide more descriptive potential than merely serving as a figurative term for the 'falling together,' *co-incidere*, in *FW* of the falls of Tim Finnegan, Earwicker/HCE, Adam, Humpty Dumpty, and the fall of man into languages from the hubris of the tower of Babel. Due to its wide semantic range, one can make the concept of *coincidence* productive for the description of fundamental features of *FW* on the one hand and of the processes of meaning constitution which it provokes on the other – that is, make it productive in going beyond the narrow notion of *coincidentia oppositorum*. Therefore *coincidence* is understood here in the widest sense conceivable, spanning the whole semantic spectrum from "[t]he fact or condition of being coincident; the occupation of the same place or part of space" (OED, "coincidence, n.," 1.a.), to "[o]ccurrence or existence at the same time; simultaneous occurrence or existence" (ibid., 2.), to "[e]xact agreement or correspondence in substance, nature, character, etc." (ibid., 3.a.), and to "[a] notable concurrence of events or circumstances having no apparent causal connection" (ibid., 4.). Understood in this wide sense, the notion of *coincidence* exceeds the temporal aspect to which the term *simultaneity* is limited by offering semantic dimensions such as 'spatial conformity,' 'correspondence,' and 'chance' as well; at the same time and in contrast to the popular use of the term *coincidence*, 'chance' is not the primary semantic aspect of the term's employment in this study. And yet, who would want to deny the legitimacy of speaking of the coincidence, understood in this last-mentioned sense, of what are perceived as meaningful graphemic and phonological strings within individual languages and across different languages, and

⁴⁷³ In this respect it is important to distinguish the differing contexts of the use of the terms *blending* and *coincidence* in this study. *Blending* is a term that is primarily used in this study in the specific context of cognitive processing, whereas *coincidence* is primarily suggested as a term and concept under which can be subsumed various characteristic features of the text and the plot.

consequently of the coincidence which is due to the scope for acts of meaning construction and which Joyce encouraged through the sum of the devices employed in *FW*, or of the coincidence, not unrelated, which readers, of and against which background, come across *FW*. For this very reason, the coinciding of the meanings *Zufall* (“chance”) and *Zusammenfall(en)* (“falling together”) in this term is a happy coincidence which is readily exploited here. At all events, we would be well advised to resist the temptation of considering coincidence in terms of the concept of *unity*.

Coincidence is here meant to concern the relations of ‘form’ and ‘content’ and of characters in time(s) and space(s) as these relations have frequently emerged as central dimensions of Joyce’s later works in the symbolic production. The idea behind making the concept of coincidence productive is not only to supplement the understanding of *FW* as characterised by circularity and cyclicism with that of *FW* being marked by coincidence. The concept of coincidence, it is suggested, is in fact apt to supplement such well-trodden interpretive paths as ‘dream,’ ‘myth,’ ‘Vico,’ etc. Thus not only will the concept be used here to discuss, in the first, more succinct, part of the chapter, the correlation of ‘form’ and ‘content’ on the one hand and the attempt at convergence of form and content in Joyce’s later works on the other hand, but also to describe, in the second part, what will be called the coincidence of characters, times and spaces in *U* and *FW*. It is argued that these aspects already play a role in *Ulysses*. Therefore, this chapter discusses some of the aspects of *Ulysses* which Joyce elaborated in *FW* in order to point out lines of elaboration between the two works. In terms of the reader position the chapter brings two dimensions into focus: While the first part illustrates how readers are enticed to perceive and/or conceive the convergence of ‘content’ and ‘form,’ the second part investigates the range of readers’ acts of configuration and emplotment.

One of the most characteristic coincidences with regard to *Ulysses* is that of realism and the foregrounding of ‘form,’ a topic that has been touched upon in the previous chapter. It has often been noted that the work which is known for its formal idiosyncrasies and innovations is at the same time known for its realist aspects. It will be remembered, for instance, that Erich Auerbach included *Ulysses* in the category ‘realist novel’ (see Auerbach, 481f). In particular in the discussions of *Ulysses* that appeared before the 1970s, the facets ‘formal idiosyncrasies’ and ‘realism’ represented the dichotomy of form and content.

1. 'Content' and 'Form'

Content and *form* are ubiquitous terms in literary studies and in literary criticism, but few would still dare to give definitions of the two terms; they have remained notoriously vague, not because of the paucity of definitions but, on the contrary, due to the multiplicity of definitions and uses of the terms (see e.g. Städtke), in particular when they are contrasted. We intuitively link plot with 'content' – that is, if we do not commit the fallacy of contrasting plot with 'story' and equating the former with 'form' and the latter with 'content' – while features like verse form and organisation into chapters or acts are usually linked with 'form.' But where exactly is one to draw the boundary between 'content' and 'form'? In the relation content–form, content is considered “something mental, which induces the forming, which form brings into existence and which is represented by the shaped (materialised) form” (Städtke, 463f; my trans.), while form is considered to refer to “the manifestation⁴⁷⁴ [*äußere Erscheinung*] as well as the structure of an artefact, the arrangement of its elements as well as aspects of its shaping [*Gestaltung*]” (Werle, 247, my trans.; cf. Schildknecht, 612). If these definitions are taken as a basis, one is led to conclude that both terms exist only as abstractions not least because they are correlates; that is, one cannot be thought without, and is really implied in, the other.⁴⁷⁵

And yet, despite the post-structuralist caveats and attempts to destabilise such thinking, we do tend to think in binaries.⁴⁷⁶ In literary criticism it has long been commonplace to talk of form and content or of space and time in order to prioritise one of either. But as in the case of the concept of signifier and signified, there really cannot be one without the other.⁴⁷⁷ Human beings perceive the world in the dimensions of space *and* time (cf. Kant, *KrV*, 101-117 §1-6), or rather that which they regard as such. Likewise, as the Formalists and others before them (see Städtke) contended, it is highly problematic to suggest that in literature there can be form without content or vice versa. Thus one of the forms of coincidence which is emphasised in this chapter is the coincidence of form and content and the coincidence of the dimensions of time and space. If one speaks of the coincidence in

⁴⁷⁴ That is *manifestation* in the sense of “the particular form in which someone or something is manifested” (OED, “manifestation, n.,” 1.b.).

⁴⁷⁵ In this sense, the content-form dichotomy corresponds to the signified-signifier dichotomy.

⁴⁷⁶ The previous chapter could be read as developing a binary concept as well, but is really meant to concern complementarity.

⁴⁷⁷ In the case of signifier and signified, this is what post-structuralist theorists tended to suggest through the notion of the signifier's autonomy. The emphasis on coincidence can thus be seen as the insistence on the link between categories which have been conceptually distinguished with good reason, but whose fundamental interrelationship and interdependence, as a result, tends to be forgotten or at least underemphasised – and thus as the insistence not to settle into one-sidedness.

Ulysses of realist aspects and of formal innovation, one will have to acknowledge that realist novels do not have less form than a work like *Ulysses*, but rather that what are perceived as formal aspects are less foregrounded in the former. Furthermore one will have to acknowledge that there is no formal innovation in *Ulysses* which can exist independent of what is considered content. But if in any poem, novel, short story, play, etc. content is always formed content and if form always presupposes what is called content, then how can one speak of ‘the attempt at convergence of form and content in Joyce’s later works’ as is done above? The answer to this question is that Joyce foregrounds what are considered formal aspects by employing such devices – for instance the headlines in “Aeolus,” the dramatic form in “Circe,” the question-answer form in “Ithaca” – which *allow readers to recognise a relation* between them and ‘the content’ of these chapters.

Beginning in 1919, Joyce’s concern with formal aspects of his work took centre stage – from this point on Joyce began to foreground form in *Ulysses* (see Groden, 17, 37 and *passim*; see also Crispi). This foregrounding of form is visible for every reader in the eleventh chapter, “Sirens,” which was written during that time and it has been the hallmark of Joyce’s work from then on. In what does the Modernism of *Ulysses* consist? Derek Attridge suggests that one factor is that “the novel is significantly more highly structured, and its structure is more foregrounded, than any of its predecessors” (Attridge, “Modernist,” 586).⁴⁷⁸ In its most obvious form this foregrounding becomes manifest in the headlines in “Aeolus,” the vignettes in “Wandering Rocks,” the opening of “Sirens,” if considered in the context of the chapter as a whole, the language parody of “Oxen in the Sun,” the drama form in “Circe,” and the catechism form in “Ithaca.” S. L. Goldberg spoke in this regard in 1961 disapprovingly of “that precarious intellectualization of structure under which some of the later writing collapses completely” (Goldberg, 281). From the beginning, *Ulysses*’s readership and its critics were divided into those who regarded the realist aspects as dominant and those who laid emphasis on the formal aspects. In 1922, Pound famously said about *Ulysses* “[i]t is the realistic novel par excellence” (Deming, *Joyce*¹, 266) and that it is “[a]lways realistic in the strictest Flaubertian sense, always documented, always posted on life itself” (*ibid.*, 265). Probably in order to counter the “charge of formlessness and incoherence” (*ibid.*, 366), Gorman, in contrast, wrote in 1927:

As a matter of fact, James Joyce is incessantly preoccupied with form and, in *Ulysses*, had subdued his material to a form both elaborate and rigorous. His scheme, the setting of modern realities in relation to an ancient myth, required

⁴⁷⁸ A further aspect cited by Attridge is “the absence of any narrating consciousness” (Attridge, “Modernist,” 587).

a new technique; and such a new technique he invented, unconstrained by the prejudices of an audience unable to forget its preconceived notions of what a novel should be. (ibid.)

The form-content dichotomy became the matter of contested debate between Marxist advocates of socialist realism and proponents of Modernist and avant-garde writing – the name James Joyce played a major role in parts of this debate. Advocates of socialist realism tended to put emphasis on ‘content,’ while proponents of Modernist and avant-garde writing tended to give priority to consideration of ‘form.’ With regard to Joyce, the debate took place between Georg Lukács and Theodor W. Adorno. The following section reviews how the historical form-content debate, which runs like a common thread through the previous three centuries of aesthetic reflections (see Städtke, 463-465, 470-494), in its twentieth-century configuration, illustrated its arguments by reference to *Ulysses*. Against the background of this debate, the attempt at the convergence of form and content in Joyce’s later works is discussed.

1.1 “Atrophy of Content”: Soviet Cultural Policy Versus One Book Entitled *Ulysses*

In his reply to Lukács’s “Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen des Avantgardeismus” (1958; trans. as “The Ideology of Modernism”), Adorno, the defender of avant-garde art, recognises in Lukács’s essay the “assertion that in modern art the emphasis on style, form and technique is grossly exaggerated” (Adorno, “Reconciliation,” 153). He objects to Lukács that “[i]nstead of recognizing the objective function of formal elements in determining the aesthetic content of modern art, he wilfully misinterprets them as arbitrary ingredients added by an over-inflated subjectivism” (ibid.). What Adorno reacted to with these comments was what he knew to be Lukács’s position on ‘the question of content and form’ from the latter’s essays of the 1930s.

Under the subheading “Content and Form,” Lukács had written in 1932:

We have now returned to [...] the question of content and form. We said that the mechanical and one-sided exaggeration of the content led to an experiment in form. The grounds for this we have already shown [...]. To resume once again, in this case the form is independent of the content, confronting it rigidly from outside as something foreign; form and content are kept quite separate from one another. [...] In the field of literature, we get an experiment in form. *For in the materialist dialectic content is the overriding moment that ultimately determines form*, in the living dialectical interaction between the two. For all its dialectically necessary activity, autonomy and inherent dynamic, form is only

the essence of the content become visible, palpable and concrete. And form and content are constantly changing places [read: *blending*], ‘so that content is nothing but the revulsion [*Umschlagen*] of form into content, and form nothing but the revulsion of content into form. This mutual revulsion is one of the most important laws of thought’.⁴⁷⁹ It only arises if the dialectically dynamic whole is concretely portrayed with all its determinations. If partial moments are allowed to acquire a rigid autonomy, then content and form similarly come to stand in a rigid relation to each other, and the mode of depiction becomes indifferent to the matter depicted. This indifference destroys the unity of content and form, and in this way it leads to the form’s autonomy, to an experiment in form. Thus the exaggeration of the content, which was originally intended as materialist, even if mechanically so, ceases to be in any way a possible support for the materialist principle. On the contrary, this exaggeration is what comprises the very essence of the formal experiment; the form, which in this case cannot become the portrayed expression of the content, cannot coalesce with the content and change places with [read: *change into*] it, must therefore acquire an autonomy of its own.⁴⁸⁰ (Lukács, “Reportage,” 59f; emphasis added)

Two years later, in an attack on avant-garde writing, nominally literary Expressionism, which became one of the igniting sparks for the so-called Expressionism Debate of 1937/’38, Lukács referred to “[t]he atrophy of content as the necessary result of expressionism’s deliberate creative method” (Lukács, “Expressionism,” 108) and says about Expressionism:

The grasping of the essence, the supposedly ‘purest form’ of objectivity, collapses into the ‘non-objective’ art of absolute caprice. The impressionist lack of content, as seen in the accumulation of inessential and only subjectively significant superficial features, now undergoes a formal – though only formal – intensification: the purely subjective ‘expression’, emptied of content and separated from the objective reality, can only produce in its totality an empty series of ‘eruptions’, a rigid combination of sham movements. (ibid., 109)

Lukács repeated his point about the over-emphasis on form of avant-garde writing in an essay from 1938 in which he dismissed Joyce’s work. Joyce had first become the target of

⁴⁷⁹ Here Lukács cites Hegel, a section of whose *Die Wissenschaft der Logik (Die Lehre vom Wesen, 1813)* (trans. as “The Science of Logic”) on “content and form” (see Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, 264f § 133) provide the basis of his argument. Although in a footnote to the quote Lukács states, “It goes without saying that Hegel, as an idealist, does not emphasize the content as the overriding moment” (Lukács, *Essays*, 241 n. 12), he is also following Hegel in prioritising content over form in a certain sense, or, more precisely, Hegel “always conceives ‘forms of presentation’ from the perspective of ideational content” (Schildknecht, 614; my trans.; see also Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 29). Hegel’s term *Umschlagen* denotes here what Hegel in a different context referred to as “das Dialektische ihres Überganges ineinander” (“the dialectical of their merging into each other”) (Hegel, *Geschichte*, 533).

⁴⁸⁰ Vestiges of Lukács’s argument are to be found even in Jameson’s recent introduction to his *The Modernist Papers*, in which he refers to “the historical moment designated as modernism, in which the ideological forms of an older content are somehow neutralized and bracketed by an abstraction that seeks to retain only from them their purely formal structures, now deployed in a kind of autonomy” (Jameson, “Introduction,” xvii and see xiii-xvii).

the advocates of socialist realism in Karl Radek's dismissal of *Ulysses* at the All Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. There Radek, who headed the IJK's International Information Bureau, decreed "literature is a social weapon, [...] it expresses the struggle of classes" (Radek, "Contemporary," 109) and concluded with the directive: "I wish to say to Soviet and foreign writers: Our way does not lie through Joyce, but along the high-road of socialist realism" (Radek, "Speech," 182). As with most audible literary critics in the Eastern bloc, Lukács's view of literature – at least since the 1920s – was one of taking art into the service of the socialist societal model.⁴⁸¹

The essay "Es geht um den Realismus" (1938; trans. as "Realism in the Balance") was Lukács's contribution to the Expressionism Debate. In it he attacked "the Surrealism of Joyce" (Lukács, "Balance," 34) and Dos Passos, not least, as he wrote himself, because "Bloch held them up as the towering figures of modern, avant-garde literature" (qtd. in trans. in Weninger, 45). Ernst Bloch had written in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935; trans. as *Heritage of Our Times*) that surrealism is "the last 'Expressionism'" and that Joyce is "the monument of 'Surrealists'" (qtd. in trans. in Weninger, 42). Lukács reproaches Joyce and what he calls the "Avantgardeismus" ("avant-gardism") for an over-emphasis on the subjective and for an underemphasis of "objective reality." He also rebukes them for "paucity of content": "One inescapable consequence of an attitude alien or hostile to reality makes itself increasingly evident in the art of the 'avant-garde': a growing paucity of content, extended to a point where absence of content or hostility towards it is upheld on principle" (Lukács, "Balance," 41). He writes,

it is but a very narrow doorway which leads to Joyce or the other representatives of avant-garde literature: one needs a certain 'knack' to see just what their game is. Whereas in the case of the major realists, easier access produces a richly complex yield in human terms, the broad mass of the people can learn nothing from avant-garde literature. Precisely because the latter is devoid of reality and life, it foists on to its readers a narrow and subjectivist attitude to life (analogous to a sectarian point of view in political terms). In realism, the wealth of created life provides answers to the questions put by the readers themselves – life supplies the answers to the questions put by life itself! The taxing struggle to understand the art of the 'avant-garde', on the other hand, yields such subjectivist distortions and travesties that ordinary people

⁴⁸¹ This perspective can be seen germinating already in the pre-Marxist views of the young Lukács of the late 1900s (see Varkonyi).

who try to translate these atmospheric echoes of reality back into the language of their own experience, find the task quite beyond them. (ibid., 57)

In this respect *FW* certainly represents the apotheosis of what Lukács's attacks as "the anti-realist, avant-garde tendencies" (Lukács, "Grundlagen," 13; my trans.) in the then contemporary literature.⁴⁸²

In the essay to which Adorno responded, "Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen des Avantgardeismus," published twenty years later in 1958, Lukács's distinguishing criterion had become a different one:

In such a comparison of tendencies [avant-garde versus "critical realism"] the emphasis must be put on questions and answers of ideology [...]. What must be avoided at all costs is exactly what plays the major role in the bourgeois-avant-garde theory of art: the attempt to distinguish by referring to formal criteria, in particular style, literary technique, the technically formative aspect. (ibid.; my trans.⁴⁸³)

'Form' was thus replaced by 'ideology' – which would later be replaced by the symbol-allegory dichotomy in Lukács's summa *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (usually trans. as "the specificity of the aesthetic") (see Lukács, *Eigenart*², 736-740 and 696-742; see also Lukács, *Eigenart*¹, 310f, 378f) – as the pivotal point of reference. Distinguishing the two tendencies of avant-garde literature and "critical realism" he asserts,

[t]he differences, the contrasts which become apparent are no longer those of the technique of writing, of form – in the formalistic sense – but rather those of the poetic '*Weltanschauung*,' those of the forming of a world view in the work, those of the writer taking a stance on his vision of reality, those of the evaluation of the captured world view. (Lukács, "Grundlagen," 15; my trans.)

The emphasis on the equation 'content before form' proved to be insufficient not least because Lukács realised that a writer like Thomas Mann, who figures as his exemplary representative of "critical realism," made use of some of the same devices, such as interior monologue, that Joyce had used. Nevertheless he regarded the use and status of this "technique" in both works as completely different:

⁴⁸² In 1934, the Marxist critic R. Miller-Budnitskaya had criticised that "Joyce's wordbuilding [in "Work in Progress"] [...] is profoundly antagonistic to the idea of language as a reflector of the objective material world" (Deming, *Joyce*², 657).

⁴⁸³ As the translation of this essay, "The Ideology of Modernism" by John and Necke Mander in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (which is the English trans. of Lukács's *Wider den mißverstandenen Realismus/Die Gegenwartsbedeutung des kritischen Realismus*), takes liberties with the original, I have translated the passages cited here myself, based, in part, on their translation.

[T]he fact that with Joyce the stream-of-consciousness technique is no mere technical device; it is at the same time the inner form of the epic representation of situations and characters; as aesthetic formative principle of *Ulysses* it is thus something aesthetically absolute. With Thomas Mann, on the other hand, the stream of consciousness [in *Lotte in Weimar*] is simply a technical device, used in order to expose and to make evident something that goes far beyond its immediacy.⁴⁸⁴ (ibid., 14; my trans.)

Thus in Lukács's writing the name Joyce became a sort of epitome of subjectivism and of 'form for form's sake.' The realist aspects of a work like *Ulysses* were either not recognised or remained simply unacknowledged in early Marxist criticism. Apart from the interior monologue, which conspicuous textual features may have incurred this reproach of 'form for form's sake'? In *A Portrait* and much more distinctively in *Ulysses*, Joyce strove for a poetics in which 'formal design' reflects aspects of 'content.' In the former, Joyce used, for example, free indirect discourse, or narrated monologue as it is also called – Hugh Kenner's "Uncle Charles Principle" (see Kenner, *Voices*, 15-38) describes the same narrator-related device⁴⁸⁵ – to achieve this end. The language and intellectual dimension of the first chapter, which depicts Stephen's early childhood, is markedly different from the language and intellectual dimension of the last chapter, which presents a more mature, erudite Stephen. The language is appropriate for the degree of maturity of the novel's main character and readers witness Stephen's intellectual maturing over the course of the novel not least through the increasing sophistication of the language and of the thought which the free indirect discourse and the characters convey. With regard to *Ulysses* it has been pointed out time and again how what we perceive to be the most conspicuous formal aspects of "Aeolus," "Sirens," and "Oxen in the Sun" reflect, to a certain degree, what we consider to be the content of these chapters (see, e.g., Bowen, "Ulysses," 462, 490f, 509ff). Therefore, the convergence of form and content in the not so evident cases of the "Circe" and "Ithaca" chapters are considered here briefly.

Why did Joyce choose a quasi-dramatic form for the 'representation' of unconscious impressions in "Circe"? In "Circe," the unconscious itself becomes a stage on which the absurd and the repressed act unchecked. Through his use of elements of the drama form, Joyce was able to give the impression that the unconscious itself is allowed to speak, is

⁴⁸⁴ Lukács does not use the terms *Bewußtseinsstrom* or *innerer Monolog*, the German equivalents of stream of consciousness and interior monologue, but uses "Technik des freigelassenen Assoziationsverlaufs" (roughly "technique of the released stream of associations") and "das freie Spiel der Assoziationen" ("the free play of associations").

⁴⁸⁵ But see also Wollaeger, 9f.

allowed to stage what is never supposed to be unveiled. Thus the use of dramatic form in “Circe” involves nothing less than the elimination of the narrative voice in order to create an ‘immediacy’ of reactions of characters in dialogue and to a lesser extent through stage directions. It is also the most convenient way to let the many characters simply appear – after all they are something like apparitions, or hallucinations (see e.g. *U* 14.1533, 15.4487) – as can be done in drama without having to introduce them in some way.

In “Ithaca” the relation of ‘content’ and ‘form’ is more subtle since it becomes manifest in a gap (*Leerstelle*). The question and answer format ironically counterpoints the most significant lacuna and desideratum of the chapter, namely the question ‘Will Bloom and Stephen’s encounter make a difference of any kind whatsoever?’ and its answer. Many questions are asked and answered in the chapter – questions of seemingly nominal relevance, such as the questions concerning the ebullition of the water in the kettle (see *U* 17.255-256), the quicker drinker (see *U* 17.377), and the largest volume in Bloom’s book collection (see *U* 17.1415), as well as important questions about the relationship of Bloom and Stephen, such as their previous encounters (see *U* 17.466-476), Bloom’s hospitality and Stephen’s subsequent reaction (see *U* 17.359-370, *U* 17.929-934 and *U* 17.954-955), and their exchange about Hebrew and Irish, Stephen’s ensuing recital of the Little Harry Hughes legend and Bloom’s subsequent reaction (see *U* 17.724-849). Yet, for most readers, including William Empson (see Empson, “Ultimate”), the question concerning the consequences of Bloom and Stephen’s encounter has been the central one among those that remain unasked and unanswered by the chapter.⁴⁸⁶ The text (see *U* 17.929-988) projects a scenario for an affirmative answer (see *U* 17. 960-972) only to immediately make it appear unlikely (see *U* 17. 973-988). The large black full stop or dot at the end of “Ithaca” which marks the answer or non-answer to the final question (see *U* 17.2332) in a way represents the gap. It is thus left to readers to answer it for themselves.

In the case of *FW*, the relation of ‘form’ and ‘content’ likewise became a central topic in the symbolic production.

⁴⁸⁶ And why would we expect an answer? After all “[n]o literature in the world has ever answered the question it asked, and it is this very suspension which has always constituted it as literature” (Barthes, “Word,” 202).

1.2 “Here Form Is Content, Content Is Form”: *Finnegans Wake*

[In *Finnegans Wake*] [f]orm and contents [...] interpenetrate each other much more intensely [than in *Ulysses*].
(Giedion-Welcker, “Work in Progress,” 174)

[I]n *Finnegans Wake*, [Joyce] [...] subordinate[s] content to form: [...] forego[es] the normal suspenses and sympathies that bind the reader to the book, [...] and confer[s] complete autonomy upon words.
(Levin, *Introduction*¹, 184)

[A] principle was established that would govern the entire development of contemporary art. From Joyce onwards, there are two separate universes of discourse. The first is a communication about the facts of man and his concrete relations. Here it makes sense to speak about the ‘content’ of a story. The second carries out, at the level of its own technical structures, a type of absolutely formal discourse.
(Eco, *Chaosmos*, 86)

A year before Beckett considered the relation of ‘form’ and ‘content’ in WiP in terms of iconicity (see Beckett, 14f), Stuart Gilbert had emphasised “the exploitation of every potentiality of the language to create a complete harmony between form and content” (Gilbert, “Prolegomenon,” 70; cf. Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 56) in WiP.⁴⁸⁷ What these characterisations pointed to is the notion of a congruence or coincidence of ‘form’ and ‘content’ in WiP/*FW*. However, it is more illuminating to speak of coincidence *in* ‘form’ and ‘content’ rather than of the coincidence *of* form and content in *FW*.⁴⁸⁸ In other words, coincidence can be perceived as a feature of both aspects, as it can mark an attribute of lexical blends (see ch. II), which are more often than not regarded as formal elements, as well as an attribute of the ‘falling together’ of different signifiatory planes (see ch. II and below), which are more likely to be considered content elements. If one element can be identified through which the convergence of form and content is likely to become manifest, it must be *coincidence*. This statement is not meant to reintroduce the dichotomy through the backdoor, but rather it acknowledges the fact that due to the functioning of mental representation some features of a text will be regarded as belonging to the domain of form rather than to that of content and vice versa. With the exception of *FW* II.2, formal aspects in *FW* are not as foregrounded as in *U*. The argument that form is foregrounded in *FW* is essentially an argument *ex negative*: Since what one understands by content is in many ways ‘unavailable’

⁴⁸⁷ Rephrasing this point, Gilbert later also stated: “As his work develops, we find a growing interest in form, a finer tessellation [sic] of thematic patterns, and a closer linking up of style with subject, till of *Work in Progress* one may literally assert *le style c’est le thème*” (Deming, *Joyce*², 538).

⁴⁸⁸ Not least because, as suggested above, content and form always coincide.

in *FW*, then what one perceives must primarily be form. But in *FW* form can only be said to be foregrounded in so far as it is the form of language which is foregrounded. A statement such as “[O]ne of the [...] peculiarities of *Finnegans Wake* is that its content, what it is ‘about’, is indivisible from its form, from the language in which it is told” (Norris, “*Finnegans*,” 149) does really make less sense than it appears. In every work of literature it is language bringing forth ‘content’ which does not exist independently of language but only in language. If the language of a work appears intelligible, as it usually does, readers are able to construct a mental representation of the work, which in turn gives the impression that ‘content’ exists independently of language and ‘form.’ Yet, if they are unable to construct a mental representation because the language is too opaque for instance, then the ‘access’ to ‘content’ is blocked.

What is considered ‘form’ has always already a stake in what is called ‘content’ *and vice versa* in the sense of the ‘*a priori* perfect,’ and this statement is inconsistent only *prima facie*. This does not mean that form *per se* cannot be perceived. Seeing the famous Gestalt psychology example Rubin’s vase for the first time, it may take the observer a few moments to recognise either the vase or the faces. In these few moments all s/he perceives is form devoid of content. For recognising words as meaningful, that is recognising a ‘content’ in a ‘form,’ the brain needs a few hundred milliseconds. This switching of form into content, into meaning, is obstructed in *FW*. But it nevertheless usually occurs at some point, as the consequence of deliberate effort of which we are nevertheless not always aware. It was Karl Bühler who coined the term “Aha-Erlebnis” (“aha-experience”) for designating the pleasurable experience of the sudden recognition of meaningful patterns, which is often termed ‘insight.’ The phenomenon has some explanatory power for the meaning construction in *FW* in which the perception of meaningful patterns is often happening suddenly rather than gradually and in which this perception involves the gratifying experience which Fritz Senn has called the “thrill of recognition” (Senn, “Dissatisfaction,” 234).

Our mind’s urge to make form meaningful, if there is some resemblance with what is already known to us, is strong. If one sees the letter string *lk sedm n v p p o g f k j o p f k m v b k*, or “bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawn-toohooordenenthurnuk” (*FW* 3.15-17) for that matter, on a printed page or on a screen instead of in a work of literature, most people will assume that this is the result of someone having randomly pressed the keys of the keyboard. And this assumption itself is to give it a meaning in terms of pragmatics – the letter string itself may be meaningless, a mere product of coincidence but it is explainable through recognising the act that led to its having been put

down; what Ricœur refers to as a “preunderstanding of the world of action” (Ricœur, *Time*¹, 54). Thus, even to perceive something as meaningless can be said to be meaningful in a certain way. To perceive scribble on a paper as scribble is to assign it meaning, namely ‘scribble.’ Perhaps in this sense *FW* is the best example to discuss the indissolubility of the link between ‘form’ and ‘content.’ Readers assume that the words in *FW* which they do not recognise, similar to the words of an unfamiliar language, do have some meaning after all but that they simply do not yet know what it is. Thus they consider them meaningful in the first place.

It is difficult to identify in *FW* a similar wealth of devices as in *U*, firstly, because the use of one device in *FW*, namely lexical distortion, is more comprehensive than any single device in *U* and, secondly, because perceiving the more subtle devices in *FW* would require an understanding of their content function. Nevertheless, it is not exaggerated to speak of the attempt at convergence of form and content in *FW* for instance with respect to the aforementioned element of coincidence in ‘form’ and ‘content’ precisely because it allows readers to establish a relationship between that which is commonly considered form and that which is more likely to be associated with content.

2. Characters in Time and Space / The Character of Time and Space

In *Ulysses*, the eighteen hours of Leopold Bloom’s 16/17 June 1904 Dublin coincide with the ‘epicised’ six weeks of the mythical ten-year Mediterranean voyage of Odysseus and these specifics are one of the bases of *Ulysses*’ meanings. In *FW*, this specificity was abandoned in favour of an all-encompassing ‘poetics of coincidence’ in which coincidence’s primary function is ensuring indeterminacy. Whereas in *U* determinate characters, such as Bloom and Odysseus, coincide in a particular time and space, *FW* escalates in this respect by staging the concurrence of indeterminately coinciding ‘characters,’ times, and spaces *and* indeterminately colliding written characters within lexical blends – thus constituting one facet of the attempt at convergence of form and content in *FW*. This part explores various aspects of coincidence as pertaining to the categories of time and space in Joyce’s later works.

2.1 *Ulysses*: Bloom and Stephen Suffering the Presence of the Past

Lukács's disapproving critique of *Ulysses* can also serve as a point of departure for the consideration of time and space. In his essay "Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen des Avantgardeismus," Lukács distinguishes the "*Weltanschauung*" of the avant-garde and of realism. Whereas in the great realist works the "ontological being" of their central characters, "the human, the utterly individual and typical nature of these characters, their aesthetic significance is inextricably linked with their rootedness in specific historical, human, and social relations of their being" (Lukács, "Grundlagen," 16; my trans.), "for the avant-garde, 'man' is [...] the individual, detached from all social relations and ontologically existing independent of them" (ibid.; my trans.) – a *Weltanschauung* which Lukács sees epitomised in Heidegger and in his concept of *Geworfenheit* ("thrownness") (see Lukács, "Ideology," 17). The representation of the "specific hic et nunc [...] [of] Joyce's Dublin" (Lukács, "Grundlagen," 18; my trans.) Lukács dismisses as "by-product, [but] not an integrating moment of the aesthetically essential" (ibid.; my trans.). Furthermore, he posits the "Geschichtslosigkeit" (ibid., 17), literally 'historylessness,' in the representation of characters in Joyce, Eliot, Benn, Musil, Kafka, and Beckett: "[T]his being in itself is without inner history" (ibid., 18; my trans.).

While Lukács's criticism of the "*Geschichtslosigkeit*" of the characters in *U*, their being 'without history,' and his reproach that *Ulysses*'s characters are not 'rooted' in "specific historical, human, and social relations of their being" – a criticism which implies that Joyce's *A Portrait*, the German translation of which appeared before that of *Ulysses*, namely in 1926, was unknown to Lukács – would not be unfounded with respect to *FW*, as discussed below, the following section illustrates its misjudgement in the case of *Ulysses*.⁴⁸⁹ Not only do the major characters in *Ulysses* have complex personal histories, they are also portrayed as each having a consciousness that clearly assumes a past, a present and a future. The fact that a recognisable conception of time and space underlies the narrative in *Ulysses* is closely linked to *Ulysses*'s realist aspect.

⁴⁸⁹ Adorno countered Lukács's claims about *Ulysses* by writing that "[e]ven in Joyce's case we do not find the timeless image of man which Lukács would like to foist on to him, but man as the product of history" (Adorno, "Reconciliation," 158f). Furthermore, he points out: "Lukács evidently believes that when the [...] Dublin in Joyce make[s] [...] [itself] felt as a sort of 'atmospheric backcloth for the action' [...], it somehow goes against the programme but nevertheless remains of secondary importance. But in arguing thus for the sake of his thesis, he clearly reduces something very substantial, a growing epic plentitude with all its negative potential, to the status of a mere accessory" (ibid., 161).

Perhaps Lukács meant to criticise something that remains implicit in his argument at best. Something that Karl Heinz Bohrer approaches in his collection *Das absolute Präsens: Die Semantik ästhetischer Zeit* (“the absolute present (tense): the semantics of aesthetic time”) as the “time-loss [*Zeit-Verlust*]” of aesthetic phenomena and of literary presentation (Bohrer, *Präsens*, 153; my trans.; see also 143-153, 7) in Modernism, as the “aesthetic-contemplative dissolving of temporal dimensioning” (ibid., 152; my trans.), and as a “process of de-temporalisation [*Entzeitlichung*]” (ibid.; my trans.) directed against the orientation towards the future and/or the past. But how can one say that “[f]or the older form of modernism – that of Pound, Yeats, Wyndham Lewis, Eliot, and even Joyce [...] – the past remains a source of order, even when it is railed against and decried” (Ricoeur, *Time*², 26), as Ricoeur writes with reference to Kermode’s *The Sense of an Ending* (see Kermode, *Sense*, 115), and speak of “the experience of an absolute present (tense) [*das absolute Präsens*] [...] [which] is the centre of *klassische Moderne*’s time emphasis” (Bohrer, *Präsens*, 160; my trans.) at the same time? In other words, how can it be that in *Ulysses* the past is a source of order, as Kermode and Ricoeur maintain, and that, at the same time, an *absolute present (tense)* manifests itself here, as Bohrer suggests?

As if tacitly responding to Lukács, Kermode affirms “modernism [...] was emphatic about its living relation to the past” (Kermode, *Sense*, 114). In his view, *Ulysses*’s relation to “the indispensable and relevant past” (ibid., 123), that is its ‘modernisation’ of myth (see ibid., 113) and its relation to the literary tradition (e.g. Homer), in other words its remaking and rewriting of the past (see ibid., 122), is what makes it intelligible (see ibid., 116). What Kermode suggests then is that the past is “indispensable and relevant” for us readers. Through our mental make-up we are “required to measure change, since it is on change, between remote or imaginary origins and ends, that our interests are fixed” (ibid., 179). This is, not surprisingly, Ricoeur’s starting point: Through acts of configuration readers construct a temporal order for the plot which their acts of emplotment shape (see Ricoeur, *Time*², 25). In other words, through acts of configuration readers construct a past for the characters through which the characters and the plot become intelligible to them.⁴⁹⁰ Characters such as Bloom and Stephen are perceived as highly developed, apparently ‘complete,’ not least because they are conceived as having a past, a personal *Geschichte* – and of course it is this history which *readers are called on to construct* through acts of configuration and emplotment; Lukács’s criticism can in this respect be regarded as a refusal to engage with Joyce’s text. Readers thus create a temporal order of things in *Ulysses*. If the focus is shifted from the characters’

⁴⁹⁰ See Raleigh for a particularly conspicuous example.

experience of time, which is the subject of the subsequent section, to the perspectivation of the past in *Ulysses*, it is tenable to say with Bohrer that Joyce is concerned with “an experience of immediate reality, its sheer presence” (Bohrer, *Präsens*, 163; my trans.), since the past is presented solely through the characters’ memory (disregarding the issue of voice in “Ithaca”) – that is, (un)filtered through the characters’ consciousness and unconscious and their representation by means of speech, interior monologue and free indirect discourse – which is necessarily “präsentisch” (present; in the present tense) (cf. *ibid.*, 174), and in this sense it is legitimate to speak of the “prevalent time-form of contemplative absolute presence” (*ibid.*, 159; my trans.). Both perspectives are consistent within their respective explanatory focus. The emphasis of the concept of coincidence in the present study is not least meant to shift the focus away from discussions of prioritisation of present over past and past over present within the field of Modernism. The different points of departure of the aforementioned analyses, namely the characters’ experience of time and its perspectivation as presented in the text on the one hand, and readers’ acts of meaning construction with respect to temporal aspects of emplotment on the other, will frame the direction of the following exposition.

What the major characters in *Ulysses* share is a sense of the past as burden, is a suffering from the past intruding into the presence – the past being an unwelcome presence so to speak.⁴⁹¹ *Ulysses*, it is tempting to suggest, stages the coincidence of past and present in a “broad present,” as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has called and conceived what he refers to as the present chronotope, in which the characters – and this is their shared “experience of time” (see Ricœur, *Time*², 100ff) – “fail to leave any past behind” (Gumbrecht, *Gegenwart*, 16; my trans.⁴⁹²) themselves and in which, instead, pasts inundate their present (cf. *ibid.*).⁴⁹³ In this respect *Ulysses* may be considered a preliminary stage of Wakean ‘characters’ whose burdens coincide in past, present and future and thus of the coincidence of times in *FW*.

In *Ulysses*, this burden of the past is connected with personal loss and with conservative and exclusionary societal forces. Through Stephen, readers encounter the

⁴⁹¹ Gavin Steven’s repartee “The past is never dead. It’s not even past” (Faulkner, 92) in Faulkner’s *Requiem For a Nun* famously expresses this sense of the presence of the past too.

⁴⁹² In the English version of Gumbrecht’s collection, *Our Broad Present: Time and Contemporary Culture*, this idea has been rendered as “we are no longer able to bequeath anything to posterity” (Gumbrecht, *Broad*, xiii), which certainly does not amount to the same thing.

⁴⁹³ Ernst Bloch might have regarded this as an instance of *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* – a concept which Fredric Jameson translates as “simultaneity [sic] of the nonsimultaneous” and/or “synchronicity of the non-synchronous” and which he describes as “the coexistence of realities from radically different moments of history” (Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 307). For Bloch’s concept see Dietschy. In contrast, Bergson would have conceived it as an instance of *durée toute pure* (“pure duration”) when the ego “forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another” (Bergson, *Time*, 100; cf. Bergson, *Essai*, 76).

resentment against heteronomy that becomes palpable, for Stephen, through the pervasive presence of the Catholic Church in Irish everyday life – established over the course of more than one-thousand-five-hundred years⁴⁹⁴ – and through the seven-hundred-year English rule, established in 1171. In Bloom’s case these forces bear the name anti-Semitism. Christian anti-Semitism, in particular the view that the Jews – because, as the New Testament set forth, they did not recognise, or did not want to recognise, in Christ the messiah which had been prophesied to them – are to blame for the death of Jesus was common by the fourth century (see de Lange, 130), and hence also has a history that is over one and a half millennia old. For Stephen, the burden of his familial past is epitomised in the loss of his mother whereas the burden of his ancestral past derives from his conviction that Ireland is a country in which selling one’s soul and one’s saviours have become time-honoured customs (see *U* 16.736-737). In *A Portrait*, Stephen denounced this perceived aspect of vice of his ancestral past: “No honourable and sincere man [...] has given up to you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of Tone to those of Parnell but you sold him to the enemy or failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another. And you invite me to be one of you. I’d see you damned first” (*P* 220). For Bloom the loss of his son and of his father constitute the burden of his familial past. The burden of his ancestral past is “belong[ing] to a race [...] that is hated and persecuted” (*U* 12.1477) and that for centuries has been stigmatised by Christians as having “sinned against the light” (*U* 2.361).

Bloom’s and Stephen’s familial past each become a haunting presence in painful memories which in turn have an influence on their behaviour on 16 June 1904. Bloom often wallows in reminiscences in *U* – the past plays a significant role in his stream of consciousness. In a certain sense one can say that Bloom reminisces over the day loved ones he has ‘lost,’ namely his son and his father to death, his daughter, who has left home, to a young student (see *U* 4.406-407), and his wife to a lover (see *U* 4.439-450, 4.524-530).⁴⁹⁵ The first of these reminiscences on this June day concerns Milly. The fact that his daughter became fifteen the day before and that he finds her card, thanking her parents for the birthday gift, in the mail, evoke in Bloom thoughts of Milly when she was young (see *U* 4.284, 4.416-417, see also 6.123, 13.1189-1203, 17.860-928). This fact and probably the circumstance that he will attend a funeral late in the morning make him also think of his short-lived son Rudy (see *U* 4.419-420). He will have memories of his lost son all day long (see *U* 6.75, 11.1067-

⁴⁹⁴ The introduction of Christianity into Ireland is more likely to have taken place already in the fourth century rather than only through St. Patrick in the fifth century (see Richter, 231).

⁴⁹⁵ The things he has lost also include his childhood and youth (see *U* 13.1069); sitting around the young students in “Oxen of the Sun,” Bloom reminisces about his schooldays and his first sexual encounter (see *U* 14.1041-1071).

1069, 14.266-267, 14.1074-1077, 15.4956-4967, 17.2280-2284). He also remembers his father (see *U* 5.197, 5.207, 6.125-126, 6.359-364, 6.838, 6.997, 7.206, 15.252-292, 17.1882-1926), particularly often in the “Hades” chapter.

Most often Bloom reminisces about the happier days with Molly. One example which spans the whole text is the remembrance of Bloom’s and Molly’s first meeting (see Zeller, 141-147), at which, coincidentally, Stephen, then only a boy, was also present. This occasion is remembered by Bloom (see *U* 4.344-345, 6.1007-1013, 11.725-732, 13.1090-1108, 14.1359-1374, 15.3162, 17.46-57, 17.466-470) and by Molly (see *U* 18.330, 18.1182-1184, 18.1311-1327). But there are many more memories of their happier days, the “pleasant old times” (*U* 4.210), in Bloom’s mind (see *U* 4.205-210, 8.156-173, 11.554-558, 11.576-580, 11.1056-1060, 13.891, 13.1184-1185, 13.1209-1210) in particular in “Sirens” and “Nausicaa.” At one point during his reminiscences Bloom thinks “Happier then” (*U* 8.170). These thoughts and reminiscences are of course due to the imminence of Molly’s infidelity. Until “Sirens” the consummation of Molly’s affair with Boylan is the threat of a future event which he considers useless to prevent: Bloom believes “will happen, yes” (*U* 4.447-448), “He’s coming in the afternoon” (*U* 6.190). In “Sirens” the threat becomes painful certainty for Bloom. The air “Tutto è sciolto,” which is often translated as ‘all is lost,’ from Bellini’s *La sonnambula* (see *U* 11.610-642) becomes the motif at the approximate moment of his wife’s infidelity and Bloom despairs: “All lost now. [...] Yes: all is lost” (*U* 11.635-641, see also 11.1242).⁴⁹⁶ Hope is stirred up, “Too late now. Or if not? If not? If still” (*U* 11.1067), only to immediately be lost again – his epithet now reads “I feel so lonely Bloom” (*U* 11.1136-1137). It is only about sixty pages later, that is after “Cyclops” and half of “Nausicaa,” that readers will ‘enter’ Bloom’s thoughts again and continue to witness his emotional reaction (see *U* 13.841-850). Of course Bloom’s reaction to the Citizen in “Cyclops” is a direct consequence of this preceding ‘wound.’ At the end of the day his wife’s infidelity will be only one more painfully accepted – through “abnegation” and “equanimity” over “envy” and “jealousy” (*U* 17.2195) – memory of a past loss. Clive Hart has suggested that “[f]or Bloom it is that irretrievable past which represents the true Ithaca” (Gunn and Hart, 19) – “the domestic kingdom waiting to be repossessed” (*ibid.*).

Bloom is fully aware of the transience of life, aware that all things must pass – the funeral drives this point home forcefully. Probably with the imminent funeral in mind he muses “Heatwave. Won’t last. Always passing, the stream of life” (*U* 5.563). When in “Hades” he imagines the situation of the mourning widow he is reminded of Queen Victoria’s

⁴⁹⁶ Readers search in vain for a passage in which Molly tells Bloom the time of Boylan’s arrival (cf. *U* 11.188).

deep mourning for her husband Prince Albert, cogitating “the past she wanted back [...]. It never comes [back]” (*U* 6.553-554). He also has a sense that he himself is growing old (see *U* 11.583, 11.1069-1071, 13.835-836). One of the “generic conditions imposed by natural [...] law” (*U* 17.995-996) of which Bloom is conscious is that the process of life knows only one progression, namely “from infancy through maturity to decay” (*U* 17.1006). When he thinks of Howth, as he often does (see *U* 4.444, 8.899-917, 11.582, 11.1183, 13.1097-1102, 13.1178), where he and Molly exchanged caresses and where he proposed to her,⁴⁹⁷ and of making a trip there, he resolves “No. Returning not the same. [...] The new I want” (*U* 13.1103-1104); the next thought is, typically, “Nothing new under the sun” (*U* 13.1104-1105). Seeing Boylan on the street and recalling their happier days, Bloom concludes “Can’t bring back time” (*U* 8.610).

And yet, Bloom considers the future as often as he does the past. Being confronted with death and memories of the past in “Hades,” Bloom assures himself “Plenty to see and hear and feel yet” (*U* 6.1003). He reminds himself, for instance, of having to get an extension of the loan period of a library book (see *U* 4.360), considers making a trip to Milly in Mullingar in August on bank holiday (*U* 4.452-453), thinks about Molly’s upcoming vocal performance at Belfast “on the twentyfifth” (*U* 5.152), and resolves to “[g]o further next time,” that is be more daring, in his erotic correspondence with Martha (*U* 5.272-273). Furthermore, he thinks of the predicted “total eclipse this year: autumn some time” (*U* 8.570), a gift for Molly’s birthday, which will be in September, occurs to him (see *U* 8.1119) and he plans to organise a concert tour (see *U* 16.516-530) with Molly as “leading lady” (*U* 16.526). He also has plans for the distant future, namely of travelling to London (see *U* 16.499-516), a topic which is introduced by the irony reverberating in the phrase “a longcherished plan he meant to one day realise” (*U* 16.499).

The encounter with Stephen seems particularly inspiring. Bloom’s conversation with Stephen and the prospect of a modest financial reward make Bloom entertain the idea of writing “something out of the common groove” (*U* 16.1229-1230), to which is added in parentheses, again not without a note of irony, “(as he fully intended doing)” (*U* 16.1230). Bloom, who “relishes” “[t]he vicinity of the young man [...], educated, *distingué* and impulsive into the bargain” (*U* 16.1476-1477), considers “[a]ll kinds of Utopian plans” (*U* 16.1652) in particular such that would include Stephen and Molly in an intellectual and

⁴⁹⁷ Molly also reminisces a lot in “Penelope” – about Bloom and Rudy but most famously about other men in her life. She thinks of the scene at Howth as well (see *U* 18.1571-1582) and on the final pages reminisces of Bloom proposing to her at Ben Howth, her girlhood in Gibraltar and her first kiss (with lieutenant Mulvey) there blend inextricably (see *U* 18.1572-1609).

artistic ménage a trois which, he imagines, would promise concert tours and profitable high-class duets (see *U* 16.1654-1661 and 16.1807-1865) and certainly “musical and artistic conversaciones” (*U* 16.1835, see also 17.935-938), not least since “[i]ntellectual stimulation, as such, was, he felt, from time to time a first-rate tonic for the mind” (*U* 16.1221-1222). Bloom shows Stephen a revealing picture of Molly (*U* 16.1421-1470) probably in order to lend weight to his ideas. In “Ithaca” readers are told that Bloom even contemplates a future “reconciliatory union” (*U* 17.942) between Stephen and Milly. Bloom clearly sees in him a future (see *U* 17.779-780) – as does Molly (see *U* 18.1339-1367 and 18.1548-1554).⁴⁹⁸

Thus, initially Bloom assumes that there will be future occasions to show “marks of hospitality” to Stephen (see *U* 17.371-376). After Stephen has rejected Bloom’s invitation to stay for the night (see *U* 17.954-955), they exchange proposals in order to maintain their acquaintance: “To inaugurate a prearranged course of Italian instruction, place the residence of the instructed. To inaugurate a course of vocal instruction, place the residence of the instructress. To inaugurate a series of static, semistatic and peripatetic intellectual dialogues” (*U* 17.962-965). Yet, as he reflects on “[t]he irreparability of the past” (*U* 17.975) and on “[t]he imprevidibility of the future” (*U* 17.979-980),⁴⁹⁹ Bloom is at the same time aware of the unlikelihood of their realisation as the text makes obvious:

What rendered problematic for Bloom the realisation of these mutually self-excluding propositions?

The irreparability of the past: once at a performance of Albert Hengler’s circus in the Rotunda, Rutland square, Dublin, an intuitive particoloured clown in quest of paternity had penetrated from the ring to a place in the auditorium where Bloom, solitary, was seated and had publicly declared to an exhilarated audience that he (Bloom) was his (the clown’s) papa. The imprevidibility of the future: once in the summer of 1898 he (Bloom) had marked a florin (2/-) with three notches on the milled edge and tendered it in payment of an account due to and received by J. and T. Davy, family grocers, 1 Charlemont Mall, Grand Canal, for circulation on the waters of civic finance, for possible, circuitous or direct, return.

Was the clown Bloom’s son?

No.

Had Bloom’s coin returned?

Never. (*U* 17.973-988)

⁴⁹⁸ There are two passages which let Bloom appear to be in search of a son, namely *U* 6.74-84 and *U* 14.271-274 (in the latter the connection with Stephen is made explicit). Mulligan refers to Stephen as “Japhet in search of a father” (*U* 1.561). In “Circe,” one of the prostitutes asks Bloom whether he is Stephen’s father (see *U* 15.1290-1291). But the father-son theme was also provoked by the schemata, some of which identified Stephen as Telemachos and Bloom as Odysseus.

⁴⁹⁹ Joyce’s coinage *imprevidibility* is based on Latin *praevidere* and thus may be understood as ‘unforeseeability.’

While his familial past is a constant preoccupation of Bloom on 16 June 1904, the incubus of the Jewish past erupts into his Dublin present in the late afternoon at a pub in the northern city centre when contempt and hostility breaks its way and Bloom, the “perfect stranger” (*U* 15.1195), the “victim predestined” (*U* 17.838), “[t]he wandering jew” (*U* 9.1209), is “accused of ruining” (*U* 16.1119-1120): “Those are nice things [...] coming over here to Ireland filling the country with bugs. [...] Swindling the peasants [...] and the poor of Ireland. We want no more strangers in our house” (*U* 12.1141-1151). The Citizen, Bloom’s accuser, rants against “allowing things like that to contaminate our shores” (*U* 12.1672). His threat to Bloom, “By Jesus, I’ll crucify him so I will” (*U* 12.1812), and Bloom’s escape from the pub lead to the ironic description of the escape in terms of divine deliverance reminiscent of the Ascension (see *U* 12.1910-1918).

In a way this incubus had surfaced already in the morning when Bloom contemplates the valley of the Dead Sea and the fate of “[t]he oldest people”:

A barren land, bare waste. Volcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. No wind could lift those waves, grey metal, poisonous foggy waters. Brimstone they called it raining down: the cities of the plain: Sodom, Gomorrah, Edom. All dead names. A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. [...] It bore the oldest, the first race. [...] The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead. (*U* 4.219-227)

The diaspora, “[a]ll that long business that brought us out of the land of Egypt and into the house of bondage” (*U* 7.208-209), is the reason why Bloom is in Ireland in the first place, and why Bloom’s father experienced an odyssey of his own of “migrations and settlements in and between Dublin, London, Florence, Milan, Vienna, Budapest, Szombathely” (*U* 17.1907-1908). While Bloom’s immediate emotional reaction to the scene in the pub is never given – when readers are presented with his reaction he has already recovered himself (see *U* 13.1215-1224) – his reaction to this imagined scene of “a dead land” is indeed strong: “Grey horror seared his flesh” (*U* 4.230). Bloom, that life-affirming though “muchinjured but on the whole eventempered person” (*U* 16.1081-1082), really suffers the Jewish fate here.

Like Bloom, Stephen suffers from the past through personal loss. With this loss is linked a deep feeling of remorse. Stephen, whose apostasy is one of the major themes of *A Portrait*, has refused to pray with the family on his mother’s request at her death bed. He is haunted by memories of his dying mother and by his feeling of remorse for “cross[ing] her

last wish in death” (*U* 1.212).⁵⁰⁰ More than his dying mother’s sorrow over his refusal, Stephen obviously feared “the chemical action which would be set up in my soul by a false homage to a symbol behind which are massed twenty centuries of authority and veneration” (*P* 265). It is at this point that the burdens of his familial past and of his ancestral past coincide. A kind of climax is the apparition of Stephen’s mother in “Circe” (see *U* 15.4231-4242), in which the past erupts as painful, undigested presence; Bloom likewise perceives apparitions of his parents (see *U* 15.252-292) and of his son (see *U* 15.4956-4967) in “Circe.” In German the notion *von der Vergangenheit eingeholt werden*, literally ‘being caught up by the past,’ the sense of which may be translated as ‘the (sins/ghosts of the) past re-emerge(s) to haunt one in the present,’ makes this influence of the past idiomatically manifest.

Except in “Scylla and Charybdis” (see *U* 9.221-224 and 9.825-827) and “Circe,” Stephen is reminded of his mother by the circumstances and the comments, doings, and sight of others (see e.g. *U* 14.379-380 and 14.1123-1125). The nightmarish images in “Telemachus” (see *U* 1.102-103 and 1.249-270, cf. 3.46-47) are aroused by Mulligan’s comments. The thoughts of his mother continue in “Nestor” (see *U* 2.139-147 and 2.165-169) when Stephen, looking at the boy Sargent, sees in him his own childhood and thinks of “[a]mor matris: subjective and objective genitive” (*U* 2.165-166). With the death of his mother had gone the one person who had most loved him in this world: “She had saved him from being trampled underfoot and had gone, scarcely having been” (*U* 2.146-147). His mother is one of the first thoughts in Stephen’s mind on 16 June and it is also the last glimpse readers catch of Stephen’s thoughts in *U*, evoked by the sound of a church bell reminding him of a passage in the *ordo commendationis animae* spoken by the priest at his mother’s deathbed (see *U* 17.1226-1231; see also 1.276-277, 1.736-738, 9.221-224). What Stephen has to endure in order to understand “[w]hat is that word known to all men” (*U* 3.435) is the loss of a loved one. And perhaps Stephen’s remorse feeds on not having been, or not being, able (see *U* 1.102) to utter a genuine “invitation to improvisation in the disorders of desire” (Cavell, 185) such as ‘(How can I ever) thank you for having saved me from being trampled underfoot’ or, which amounts to the same thing, ‘(How could I ever) thank you for having loved me in(to) this world.’

As Stephen’s personal history is well-known through *A Portrait*, Joyce did not dwell on Stephen’s *A Portrait* past in *Ulysses*. Only “Proteus,” in which an idle Stephen lets his

⁵⁰⁰ At one point in *U* Bloom’s and Stephen’s grief over their respective losses almost converge. In “Oxen of the Sun” Lynch, speaking of child death and “survival of the fittest” (*U* 14.1267-1285), triggers in Bloom memories of Rudy (implicit) and of his first meeting of Molly and Stephen at Mat Dillon’s house (see *U* 14.1359-1378). A moment earlier Lenehan, speaking about Stephen’s mother, had triggered in Stephen painful memories (see *U* 14.1123-1126).

thoughts roam, is pervaded by his memories of his childhood, youth, and more recent past, in particular Clongowes, Belvedere, and Paris (see also *U* 1.311-312, 2.69-74, 9.136, 9.210-211, 9.576-580, 9.641-642, 9.662, 9.952-953, 17.134-147).⁵⁰¹ It is interesting that although Stephen may be said to have the greatest aspirations of any character in *Ulysses*, namely becoming an acclaimed writer, he certainly is the major character whose thoughts, at least the ones presented to the reader, are least concerned with the future – as if his thinking “Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past” (*U* 9.89) really is a kind of axiom for him; perhaps also because nothing has come of his lofty aspirations yet. In stark contrast to the end of *A Portrait*, Stephen, stuck in Dublin, is somewhat disillusioned. His return to Dublin and his being stranded have brought him back down to earth at least for the time being (see *U* 3.136-146, 9.952-954). The self-proclaimed Daidalos, *nomen atque omen* in the ‘apronym’ Dedalus, the “hawklike man” (*U* 9.952) has become a “Lapwing. Icarus” (*U* 9.953). If one assumes that the plans for future exchange with the Blooms will not be put into action, and since readers do not know whether Stephen told Bloom something about his future plans when they speak about “literature” and “careers,” or what Stephen’s thoughts may be about the future of “Ireland,” “the Roman catholic church,” and “the Irish nation” (see *U* 17.11-17), on their way to 7 Eccles Street, then the most distant point in the future that he thinks of on 16 June seems to be that next Tuesday will be summer solstice (see *U* 3.491).⁵⁰²

As in Bloom’s case the supra-subjective societal conditions also play a major role in Stephen’s assessment of the past and the present, shaping his sense of history as a nightmare (see *U* 2.377 and 7.676-678). Had Hegel been a Jew, like Bloom,⁵⁰³ or a non-Protestant Irish, like Stephen, would he still have thought “[w]orld history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom” (Hegel, *Lectures*, 54)? Early in *Ulysses* Stephen makes clear what according to his view living in Ireland means, namely being “a servant of two masters [...] The imperial British state [...] and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church” (*U* 1.638-644). His creed “You will not be master of others or their slave” (*U* 3.295-296) is now almost only a memory of a more high-spirited phase – he had already resolved this in *A Portrait*. It had been the reason for leaving Ireland and going to Paris.

⁵⁰¹ Interestingly, in *Ulysses* Stephen does not think nearly as much of his time at University College.

⁵⁰² Somehow this thought seems out of place. It is rather one that Bloom would have, who, at one point, also thinks of the approaching solstice (see *U* 17.654-656). It seems like Joyce the author intruding on Stephen’s thoughts by wanting to drop a hint for the reader about the time of the events, especially as the thought is introduced by the phrase “by the way” which introduces a few of Stephen’s, Bloom’s, and Molly’s thoughts (see *U* 4.485, 5.385, 7.751, 13.921, 18.1164-1165) but is somewhat awkward for ‘representing’ the thought process.

⁵⁰³ Although, as is known, “in reality [he’s] not” (*U* 16.1085; see also *U* 17.527-531).

The Martello tower, which he currently shares with his most intimate adversary and which features prominently in the beginning of *Ulysses*, is a symbol of the British Empire.⁵⁰⁴ And after having in a sense taken possession of it, he is driven out of it by a “conqueror” (*U* 1.405) and “penitent thief” (*U* 9.101), “[t]he Sassenach” (*U* 1.232) Haines, and the “gay betrayer” (*U* 1.405) and “[u]surper” (*U* 1.744) Mulligan. In *A Portrait*, Stephen had spoken almost contemptuously of his ancestors who had “allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them” (*P* 220). In his argument with the privates, Stephen, in his inebriated state in “Circe,” speaks, for instance, of the “brutish empire” (*U* 15.4569-4570).⁵⁰⁵ The death of Parnell and the circumstances surrounding the death of his mother (see *U* 8.28-35) on the other hand bear for him the marks of the oppressiveness that he felt the Catholic church in Ireland entailed – he refers to Ireland as “the *faubourg Saint Patrice*” (*U* 16.1161). Stephen suffers from the idea that his renouncing his faith may have hastened his pious mother’s death. “Her eyes on me to strike me down” (*U* 1.276) are not the eyes of May Dedalus but are really the eyes of that “crazy queen, old and jealous” (*U* 1.640) which stare at him from “smouldering eyes,” robed in piety, commanding him to “[k]neel down before me” (*U* 1.640) and “[r]epent” (*U* 15.4198, 15.4212). It is this queen, “the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church” (*U* 1.643-644), which he considers to aim at “[b]reak[ing] [his] spirit” (*U* 15.4235). It is really this mother, Mater Ecclesia, of whom he demands “Let me be and let me live!” (*U* 1.279) and

⁵⁰⁴ The towers, built in the early nineteenth century at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, are a symbol of the defence strategy of the British Empire.

⁵⁰⁵ The feeling of heteronomy connected with the English rule in Ireland, which had been established with the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in 1171, prepared by the papal bull “Laudabiliter,” and the resentment against British rule is expressed in various ways and by various characters in *Ulysses*. One of the manifestations of the demand for more sovereignty, the Irish Home Rule movement, which emerged in the later nineteenth century, was the expression of the persistent demand for repeal of the Acts of Union from 1800, which in turn had been the consequence of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. The anti-British attitude becomes obvious, for instance, in the singing of two ballads commemorating the Irish Rebellion of 1798: “We are the boys of Wexford” is sung by two newsboys in the hallway of the *Evening Telegraph* office (see *U* 7.427-428) and Ben Dollard’s rendition of “The Croppy Boy” (see *U* 11.991-1149) upon the request of the congregation in the Ormond hotel bar in “Sirens.” Furthermore, it becomes manifest in the selling of “commemoration postcard[s]” (*U* 7.703) of members of the radical nationalist group which was responsible for the assassination of two high-level British officials in 1882 which became known as the Phoenix Park murders. Repressive measures by the English authority, “the commissioner of police forbidding Irish games in the park” (*U* 12.858-859), and a “[g]reat nationalist meeting in Borris-in-Ossory” (*U* 7.619-620) are mentioned. Bloom, who supports home rule himself (see *U* 18.1187-1188), recalls the anti-English tirades, “Up the Boers! Three cheers for De Wet!” (*U* 8.434-435), four-and-a-half years ago during the protests against Joseph Chamberlain. The barman of the cabmen’s shelter’s anti-English “philippic” (*U* 16.986; see *U* 16.985-1009) is a somewhat softer version of the views aired in the nationalist and xenophobic atmosphere in “Cyclops.” In this chapter, the Citizen, a staunch advocate of the Irish nationalist cause, talks himself into an anti-English fury (see *U* 12.1190-1191, 12.1240-1257, 12.1365-1375) and starts an argument with Bloom (see *U* 12.480-483, 12.498-500) whom he does not consider Irish (see *U* 12.1791, 12.1811, 12.523) and therefore does not concede him the right to voice, and does not respect, his opinion about the Irish cause – the argument almost becoming violent but for Bloom being escorted to safety. On Bloom’s Irishness and how he is viewed by others see also *U* 7.87, 7.272, 12.1430-1431, 12.1628-1637, 13.415-416, 15.4606, 18.379.

whose claim to his soul he counters by repeating “with rage” (*U* 15.4223) his vow of renunciation “*Non serviam!*” (*U* 15.4228).

Perhaps it would have proven useful to Stephen, who uses a Nietzsche ‘reference’ for a blasphemous joke (see *U* 14.360-364), to take a closer look at the latter’s “Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben” (1874) (trans., i.a., as “On the Utility and Liability of History for Life”) in which Nietzsche had warned that “[t]here is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of historical sensibility, that injures and ultimately destroys all living things, whether a human being, a people, or a culture” (Nietzsche, “Utility,” 89). But in order to create a culture which affirms life, Nietzsche writes, modern man has to learn to forget, for “[a]nyone who cannot forget the past entirely and set himself down on the threshold of the moment, [...] will never know what happiness is” (*ibid.*).⁵⁰⁶ Nietzsche maintains that “[t]he historical sensibility, when it rules *uncontrolled* [...], uproots the future because it destroys illusions and robs existing things of that atmosphere in which alone they are able to live” (*ibid.*, 131).

In another sense the past really is Stephen’s intellectual anchor as his often cerebral thoughts revolve around men and minds of the past – around men of literature, of philosophy, of the Bible and of theology, of Greek and Irish mythology, and of ancient and Irish history. While Shakespeare is his most elaborated topic of the day and literature represents the vastest field of his thoughts, myriad-minded his mind is also occupied with such figures as Pope Marcellus, Photius, Arius, Valentine, Sabellius, William Blake, Pyrrhus and Caesar, Aristotle, St. Columbanus, Averroes and Moses Maimonides, “Silken” Thomas Fitzgerald, Perkin Warbeck and Lambert Simnel, Jonathan Swift, Dante, St. Augustine, Antisthenes, Thomas Aquinas, St. Patrick, Joachim of Flora, etc. Thus, one can also consider Stephen to have realised in a way for himself what Nietzsche, as a young man, dreamt of in 1874, namely of

individuals, who form a kind of bridge over the turbulent stream of becoming. [These] [i]ndividuals do not further a process, rather they live timelessly and simultaneously, thanks to history, which permits such a combination; they live [...] [as that] republic of geniuses of which Schopenhauer once spoke. One giant calls to another across the desolate expanses of time, and this lofty dialogue between spirits continues, undisturbed by the wanton, noisy chattering of the dwarfs that crawl about beneath them. The task of history is to be their mediator and thereby continually to incite and lend strength to the production of greatness. (*ibid.*, 151)

⁵⁰⁶ I make use here of a passage of the analysis of Nietzsche’s “Betrachtungen” presented in my Magisterarbeit “The Nightmare of History: Historicity in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*” (Universität Leipzig, 2007).

Nietzsche identifies as the antidotes against the “*historical sickness*” (ibid., 163) “the ahistorical,” by which he means “the art and power to be able to *forget* and to enclose oneself in a limited *horizon*” (ibid.), and the “suprahistorical,” that is, “those powers that divert one’s gaze from what is in the process of becoming to what lends existence the character of something eternal and stable [...], to *art* and *religion*” (ibid.). Perhaps it is only when Stephen becomes productive – “when something more, and greatly more, than a capful of light odes can call [his] [...] genius father” (U 14.1118-1119) as Vincent remarks in “Oxen of the Sun,” knocking Stephen off his perch – that he can overcome the haunting presence of the past. This would presuppose to forgive himself with respect to his “agenbite of inwit” and in so doing exculpate his future from the burden of guilt.

The losses of Stephen’s and Bloom’s respective familial past are bound to specific places. Like Bloom, Stephen avoids going home (see U 1.739-740) in the double sense of neither returning to the Martello tower, nor to his family. The latter ‘home’ is the place where his mother suffered and died a miserable death, “her squalid deathlair” (U 9.825), and where there will never be a mother again; and perhaps where there is a father whom Stephen holds partly responsible for her death (see U 1.90). For Bloom the “[h]appier then” (U 8.170, 8.608) places are Dillon’s and Howth, and their life at Pleasants Street and Lombard Street West. The “worse” (U 18.1220) places are the City Arms Hotel where they lived when Rudy died, the Queen’s Hotel at Ennis, where his father committed suicide, and in future it will also be Eccles Street, where Molly cuckolds him. The places of burden of Stephen’s and Bloom’s respective ancestral past are Ireland, epitomised by the Martello tower, and the ‘lost place’ and space of exile of the Jewish diaspora, epitomised by Agendath Netaim (see U 4.191-213 and 14.1079-1095).

2.2 “Wandering Rocks”: Coincidence in Time and Space

[L]ike Flaubert, Joyce wanted his depiction to have the same unified impact, the same sense of simultaneous activity occurring in different places. [...] Joyce had the problem of creating this impression of simultaneity for the life of a whole teeming city [...] through hundreds of pages.
(Frank, 233)

*The relations of time and space have been transformed, at first quite slowly, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, quite decisively. The possibilities of transport and communication have engendered completely new forms of organization.*⁵⁰⁷
(Koselleck, “Formal,” 96)

Joyce’s penchant for building his novels around a series of holes in the pattern of reader-information.
(Adams, *Surface*, 26)

Coincidence in time and space is particularly tangible in the “Wandering Rocks” chapter. Here “occupation of the same place or part of space” and “occurrence or existence at the same time” become the principles of the episode’s ‘content.’ The demands on readers’ configurations of time and space are particularly high here as it is up to them to configure coincidence.

To which extent Joyce relied on topographical facts in *Ulysses* can be seen particularly well in this chapter. The extent is such that critics have regarded “Wandering Rocks” as the chapter in *Ulysses* which represents, although in a quite intricate way, the most convincing attempt at verisimilitude. Critics have re-enacted the events of the chapter with a stopwatch (see Hart, “Wandering,” 200, 215f).⁵⁰⁸ They have wondered over every factual deviation (see, e.g., Ian Gunn and Hart, *passim*), have been able to convincingly conjecture those itineraries the circumstances of which are omitted in the narrative (*ibid.*, *passim*) and have been confident enough to draw up a chart of the characters’ movements exact to the minute (!) (see fig. 1 in appendix B below,⁵⁰⁹ see also Hart, “Wandering,” 216 appendix B).⁵¹⁰ As readers we equate

⁵⁰⁷ For an elaboration of this statement see Koselleck, “Acceleration.”

⁵⁰⁸ Clive Hart, practising “a literal form of ‘practical criticism’” (Hart, “Wandering,” 200) – which could also be called ‘verisimilitude research’ –, re-enacted “the events of each of the sections [of “Wandering Rocks”] [...] in Dublin (often with several repetitions) [with a stopwatch] and [noted] the mean times” (*ibid.*, 215), gathered “information about the frequency of trams, the normal speed of a cavalcade” (*ibid.*, 200) and enquired of the proper authority about the “probable rate of flow of the Liffey two and a half hours after high tide on that June day” (*ibid.*, 197).

⁵⁰⁹ The figures and images in appendix B below must be rotated. In order to do this click *View* on the menu bar, then *Rotate View*.

⁵¹⁰ *James Joyce’s Dublin: A Topographical Guide to the Dublin of Ulysses* is, among other things, an interesting record of critics’ acts of making *vraisemblable*.

such adherence to factual detail, to the actualities of the world as they exist outside the pages of books, with ‘realism.’

“Wandering Rocks” is the only chapter, of those in which they appear, in which the action neither with regard to Bloom, nor with regard to Stephen is really advanced in any way. In this chapter the urban experience becomes the centre of attention, in particular that of turn-of-the-century Dublin. “Wandering Rocks” is cinematographic in the literal sense, namely ‘that which records/captures/depicts motion/movement’ (cf. Senn, “Hear,” 16). The most conspicuous formal aspect is its subdivision into nineteen vignettes. These reflect the nineteen different scenes of the city life of turn-of-the-century Dublin that readers are presented with in the chapter. The device through which the impression of coincidence is achieved is the interpolation. The following analysis of the chapter is therefore confined to this device. In “Wandering Rocks” an interpolation is a non-marked insertion which provides the reader who recognises it with information about apparently unrelated occurrences that take place at the same time somewhere else and these occurrences are elaborated in the course of the chapter so that the interpolations establish temporal and sometimes causal links between the vignettes. For a visualisation of the intricacy of aspects of simultaneity/coincidence in plot and narrative structure in “Wandering Rocks” see fig. 2 in appendix B below, which illustrates the complexity of readers’ potential acts of configuration.

The first interpolation in “Wandering Rocks,” which can be identified as such only by reference to a map and thus demands configurations of space, is the description of Maginni (see 10.56-60).⁵¹¹ His description follows the identification of Conmee’s location through the phrase “walked along Mountjoy square east” (10.54-55). The interpolation shows Maginni to be “at the corner of Dignam’s court” (10.59-60). Only a look at the map reveals that the two characters are separated in space (see fig. 4 in appendix B below). Maginni will serve as a recurring element in the chapter (see 10.600 and 10.1239).⁵¹² Whether the Kelleher-scene (10.96-98) is a second interpolation cannot be established with any certainty. Conmee indeed passes O’Neill’s funeral business “where Corny Kelleher totted figures in the daybook while he chewed a blade of hay” (10.96-98) – but whether Conmee looks through the door or window and sees Kelleher inside or not, and only the latter case would make this an

⁵¹¹ Since the references in the rest of this section are exclusively to *Ulysses*, the abbrev. *U* has been omitted here for the sake of readability.

⁵¹² Recurring elements are those elements, i.e. characters and objects, which recur in at least three different vignettes without ever being central to one vignette; this is the case with HELY’S, the throwaway, the poster of Mary Kendall, Denis J Maginni, and Denis Breen.

interpolation, is a matter of uncertainty.⁵¹³ Further uncertainties with respect to the question of interpolations are encountered in the first vignette. The sentence beginning with “A listless lady, no more young, walked alone the shore of lough Ennel ...” (10.164-166), referring to Mary Rochfort (see 10.163), is not an interpolation although it appears to be one at first glance. This becomes apparent only when the reader is aware that the interpolations describe events that take place at the same time as the events narrated in the text which immediately precedes and/or follows the interpolations – that is, only when the reader realises the ‘logic’ of these interpolations. Since the events of the “Wandering Rocks” chapter take place in the afternoon (see 10.2-3, 10.395, 10.484), the phrase “listlessly walking in the evening” disqualifies this passage as interpolation. Thus this sentence is rather to be thought of as Conmee imagining Mary Rochford or imagining what he would write about her. Another uncertainty is implied in the case of the external analepsis introduced by the sentence “Don John Conmee walked and moved in times of yore” (see 10.174-178 and 10.184-188). One has to know that the village of Rathcoffey and Clongowes Wood College (see 10.185-186) are situated in another county, County Kildare, west of Dublin and thus far away from Conmee’s route (for his route see fig. 3 appendix B below), to realise that this is either Conmee reminiscing his time as rector of Clongowes Wood College (readers of *A Portrait* will remember him), that is internal, a part of his stream of consciousness, or it is a flashback, that is external, the narrative voice opening up for readers a scene from the past. In any case, it is again not a description of a current event taking place at the same time. The same holds true for the sentence at 10.131-132.

Vignette II⁵¹⁴ elaborates a character and scene, and an uncertainty, from vignette I. Kelleher, who works at O’Neill’s (see 5.12-13 and 10.96-97) and whom Conmee either sees or does not see there, may himself see or may not see “Conmee stepp[ing] into the Dollymount tram on Newcomen bridge” (10.213-214). Since Newcomen Bridge is not far from O’Neill’s it is certainly within the realms of possibility – but nevertheless it remains an open question. Whether readers attribute to this passage the status of interpolation depends on their perspective on this question. A more easily identifiable case of interpolation concerns the phrase “while a generous white arm from a window in Eccles street flung forth a coin” (10.222-223) which links vignette II with vignette III – ‘more easily’ because knowledge of the Dublin topography makes it possible for readers to recognise it as an interpolation. More precisely, one has to know that H. J. O’Neill’s was in north-eastern Dublin (see appendix B

⁵¹³ Clive Hart’s list of interpolations (see Hart, “Wandering,” 203-214 appendix A) is complete but skips over the Conmee-Kelleher issue.

⁵¹⁴ The Roman numerals refer to the nineteen vignettes of the “Wandering Rocks” chapter.

fig. 3 below) to know that a coin being flung from a window in Eccles Street, which is situated farther west (see appendix B fig. 4 below), must be an interpolation. Here simultaneity of the events is also indicated through the use of the word *while*.

The following vignette also elaborates a character from vignette I. The one-legged sailor (see 10.7-11) turns into Eccles Street (see 10.228-229; see fig. 3 appendix B below), crossing the way of two of the Dedalus sisters (see 10.233) who are the characters which the following vignette involves. The sentence beginning “J. J. O’Molloy was told ...” (10.236-237) is an interpolation linking vignette III with vignette VIII and becomes apparent as such only in the latter vignette. Vignette III is also the first one, leaving the indeterminable Conmee-Kelleher question out, which provides a context for an earlier interpolation, namely that of the preceding vignette: “The blind of the window was drawn aside. [...] A plump bare generous arm shone [...]. A woman’s hand flung forth a coin” (10.252-253). It becomes clear from the context that the woman must be Molly (see 10.222-223, 10.542-543); this is confirmed in the last chapter (see 18.346-347).

Vignette IV shows the two Dedalus sisters of the previous vignette at their home, presumably in the suburb of Cabra (see 15.4884, 17.146-147). Into their dialogue is inserted the sentence “Father Conmee walked through Clongowes fields, his thinsocked ankles tickled by stubble” (10.264-265, cf. 10.185-186). Here readers come across a very special case of interpolation – it is the only interpolation which may not present an event happening simultaneously. Thus it may be an interpolation of a past event, of Conmee’s time as rector at Clongowes. Yet it may nevertheless be an interpolation of a simultaneous event, namely of Conmee’s memories of his past – this would make it the only interpolation to present events occurring in the mind of a character. Again the question arises for readers whether to consider the corresponding passage in vignette I as external flashback or as memories. The interpolation: “The lacquey rang his bell” (10.281) connects the Dedalus family through its link with vignette XI (see 10.643). The passage at the end (10.294-297) is a recurring element interpolation; it describes the throwaway, thrown away by Bloom earlier (see 8.5-6, 8.57, 17.330-332), being washed away by the Liffey’s flow. It recurs in vignettes XII (see 10.752-754) and XVI (see 10.1096-1099).

As in the Conmee-Kelleher case, it is impossible to determine whether the recurring element HELY’S, the five sandwich men, in vignette V are seen by Boylan through the door or shop window of Thornton’s (see 10.299) or not (see 10.310-311). Only in the latter case would it be an interpolation. “A darkbacked figure under Merchants’ arch” (10.315) can definitely not be seen by Boylan so the interpolation is apparent – for the reader who knows

his-her “Wandering Rocks”-topography that is. The reader has to know that Thornton’s was located at the intersection of Grafton Street and Tangier Lane – and how would s/he without the aid of secondary material?

Vignette VI is one of the few without an interpolation and yet there is a link to other vignettes as Artifoni reappears in XVII (see 10.1101) and disappears in XIX (see 10.1281-1282). Stephen, wandering around after his Shakespeare bravura, comes across Artifoni in front of the Trinity College gates here.

That the phrase “The disk shot down the groove, wobbled a while, ceased and ogled them: six” (10.373-374) in VII is an interpolation only becomes apparent in IX. Definitely identifying the HELY’S element (see 10.377-379) as an interpolation would require knowledge of the location of Boylan’s office, which is never given in the text. Another recurring element appears here for the first time, the posters of the “charming soubrette” (10.380, 10.495-496, 10.1142, 10.1220) Marie Kendall. As it becomes obvious at some point that the ‘main character’ of vignette VII, Miss Dunne, is Boylan’s secretary a further link emerges, namely that the phone call Boylan is about to make in V (see 10.336) is very possibly the one readers are presented with in VII.

Vignette VIII provides interpolations and links with various other vignettes. The first, the sentence “From a long face a beard and gaze hung on a chessboard” (10.425), establishes a link with XVI, revealing it, deferred, to be an interpolation. A further link is the occurrence of the name “J. J. O’Molloy” (10.433) which together with the name “Ned Lambert” (10.399) establishes as interpolation the sentence in III cited above. It becomes obvious in VIII that the scene which this interpolation depicts is taking place before the events presented in VIII. The scene of a “young woman” “detach[ing]” “with slow care [...] from her light skirt a clinging twig” (10.201-202, 10.440-441) reminds the retentive reader of a description in vignette I (see 10.199-202), revealing it as an interpolation too.

A reader’s retentiveness is also beneficial to recognise that the beginning of IX (10.468-469) is the subject of an interpolation in VII. Vignette IX also contains a long interpolation (see 10.470-475) combining the itineraries of two characters. In order to recognise the interpolation, readers must know where the action of IX, replete with specifications of location, takes place, namely at Temple Bar (see 10.512) south of the Liffey (see appendix B fig. 5 below), and recognise that the scene of the interpolated passage is the Four Courts (see appendix B fig. 6 below) and that, having acquainted themselves with Dublin’s topography, therefore these are two different scenes. A further link is provided by the pun on Boylan’s name (see 10.486) – the pun makes obvious that it is Boylan whom

Lenehan will be going to see “now in the Ormond” (10.484) and thus establishes a link with VII as Boylan’s secretary had informed her employer about Lenehan’s wish to meet him there (see 10.394-395). The Marie Kendall poster element reappears (see 10.495-496). The interpolation “The gates of the drive opened wide to give egress to the viceregal cavalcade” (10.515-516) is revealed as such only in the last vignette. Two further interpolations occur in IX, one that links the vignette with a later one and one that links it with an earlier one. “A card *Unfurnished Apartments*” (10.542) which “reappear[s] on the windowsash of number 7 Eccles street” (10.542-543) had “slipped from the sash” (10.251) in III. In contrast, readers only become aware of the fate of “Master Patrick Aloysius Dignam” (10.534) in XVIII. Again, readers have to know that “Mangan’s” (10.534) is south of Temple Bar to realise that it is an interpolation. A further link can be found in a wording in IX – “Merchants’ arch” and “A darkbacked figure scanned books on the hawker’s cart” (10.520-521) may remind readers of their earlier occurrence in V (see 10.315-316). The darkbacked figure, it becomes apparent, is Bloom (see 10.520-524) who is the character around whom the next vignette centres.

It is not clear where exactly Bloom is. The earlier interpolation in V and the scene in the preceding vignette may indicate that he is at Merchants’ arch but through a piece of information in the penultimate chapter further locations become possible (see 17.2048-2049). In any case, Bloom is at Temple Bar and certainly – at least according to the itinerary given in “Ithaca” – not within sight of Maginni who attracts all the attention on O’Connell bridge (see 10.599-600, and see fig. 5 appendix B below), which makes his appearance an interpolation.⁵¹⁵ A further interpolation may be recognised through the recurrence of the phrase “an elderly female” (10.625) in connection with courts. Here an interpolation elaborates an earlier interpolation, in IX, and through this earlier interpolation readers may recognise that the scene (10.625-631) is again the Four Courts. Bloom, buying or borrowing an erotic novel, *Sweets of Sin*, for Molly, is aroused by the scene he reads (see 10.606-624). The scene in the book represents the glaring contrast to his own unfulfilled marital sex life which is now limited to bringing his wife erotic reading material.

The beginning of XI provides a link with an earlier vignette, IV, and interpolation, in IV. The lacquey ringing his bell in IV is the lacquey of the auction-rooms in XI (see 10.643) and the Dilly “[g]one to meet father” (10.289) in IV is of course the Dilly crossing the path of her father in XI. Since “Dillon’s auctionrooms” (10.643) are at some distance from the campus of Trinity College (see fig. 5 appendix B below) where the bicycle race (see 10.651-

⁵¹⁵ The itinerary of Lenehan and M’Coy in Ian Gunn (see Gunn and Hart, 50f map 18) is not quite correct as it indicates that they take Fownes Street instead of Crown Alley but only the latter will take them past Bloom (see U 10.520-524).

653) takes place (see 13.135-136), the informed reader will assume that this is an interpolation. The recognition of the next interpolation requires again topographical knowledge. “Mr. Kernan” (10.673) walking along “James’s street” (10.674) is at a considerable distance of both Dillon’s auction-rooms and Trinity College. The route of the viceregal cavalcade (see 10.709-710), which is once again the subject of an interpolation, only yields an overall picture in the final vignette.

The inner life of the aforementioned Mr. Kernan is the subject of the twelfth vignette which opens with a very similar wording as his interpolation in the preceding vignette. The sudden occurrence of dialogue (see 10.740-741) links vignettes XII and XIV. Two recurring elements constitute two further interpolations, firstly the throwaway (see 10.752-754) and secondly Denis Breen (see 10.778-780). Their recognition as interpolations depends again on the topographical knowledge of the reader. Kernan is the first major character in the chapter to actually see the cavalcade, which he misses “by a hair” (10.797) despite hurrying towards Bloody Bridge to pay obeisance.

Stephen, the focus of XIII, after the short walk from College Green passes the time by the same activity and in the same place as Bloom, rummaging book carts at Temple Bar (see 10.830, and see fig. 5 appendix B below). Two interpolations occur in XIII. The first introduces the description of “two old women” “trudg[ing] through Irishtown” (10.818-819), that is East Dublin. The second (see 10.842-843) affords readers the last glance of Conmee. Since vignette I breaks off with Conmee reading the none and the interpolation informs readers that Conmee *has* read the Little Hours and now *is* “murmuring vespers” (10.843),⁵¹⁶ it is clear that this interpolation presents a scene which lies after the action of vignette I. Dilly, who runs into Stephen, is again the link between the members of the sorely afflicted Dedalus family. “Wandering Rocks” is the only chapter which allows itself to shed a cold, undistorted light on their conditions. Stephen’s remorse is evoked through the sight of one of his suffering siblings: “She is drowning. Agenbite. Save her. Agenbite. All against us. She will drown me with her” (10.875-876).⁵¹⁷

The beginning of XIV repeats verbatim an interpolation in XII – which readers may now recognise as such. The two interpolations of XIV, namely of Farrell (10.919-920) and of

⁵¹⁶ If one assumes the simultaneity of the interpolation and the events in the vignette which surround it, then Conmee is very early with his vespers. But Conmee does not seem to be very particular about the times of the prayers anyway – when he reads the none he thinks, as the free indirect discourse makes clear, “should have read that before lunch” (*U* 10.191).

⁵¹⁷ Meditating on drowning and how he is afraid of water and could not save a man from drowning as Mulligan had done, Stephen thinks in “Proteus” about his mother: “I could not save her” (*U* 3.329-330). When he sees his sister Dilly in “Wandering Rocks” the motif recurs: “She is drowning. Agenbite. Save her. Agenbite. All against us. She will drown me with her, eyes and hair. Lank coils of seaweed hair around me, my heart, my soul. Salt green death. We. Agenbite of inwit. Inwit’s agenbite. Misery! Misery!” (*U* 10.875-880).

Hugh C. Love (10.928-931), require for their recognition the knowledge that the “Kildare street club” (10.920) was at the corner of Kildare Street and Leinster Street, that is at the southeast corner of Trinity College campus, and that “James and Charles Kennedy’s” (10.929) was a shop at the corner of Mary’s Abbey and Capel Street, that is in fact around the corner but still a fair way off from where the scene of XIV takes place (see fig. 5 appendix B below) – so is Farrell’s location. The interpolated scene of the reverend Hugh C. Love links XIV with VIII and occurs obviously after the action of VIII.

Two interpolations also feature in XV. The first one (10.962-963) anticipates again in a very similar wording the beginning of the next chapter, “Sirens” (see 11.64-65).⁵¹⁸ The second (10.984-985) features Boylan and thus links XV with V. Here readers catch a glimpse of Boylan’s progress after the scene in V. Both can be established as interpolations through the identification of the locations mentioned in the vignette, the Ormond hotel and La Maison Claire in the case of the interpolations, and Cork Hill and Parliament Street as the scene of the action of XV (see fig. 5 appendix B below). And yet, without recourse to the topographic research that was done as part of annotating *Ulysses* it would probably be impossible to find out that La Maison Claire was located at 4 Grafton Street. The cavalcade passing Cunningham, Power and Nolan (10.1031-1041), heard by them all but seen only by the last-named, provides the link with the last vignette.

In XVI, the wording “a longfaced man whose beard and gaze hung intently down on a chessboard” (10.1046-1047) echoes the sentence “From a long face a beard and gaze hung on a chessboard” (10.425) in VIII, the latter thus becomes marked as interpolation. The one-legged sailor from vignettes I and III reappears, this time “at the area of 14 Nelson street” (10.1063). From the information about his location in the three vignettes readers can reconstruct the sailor’s course (see fig. 3 appendix B below). It thus allows for the sequence of the events concerning him to be determined which incidentally coincides with the sequence of his scenes in I, III and XVI. The location of the coffee or tea room in XVI is not so easy to determine. It becomes clear only when readers find out that “D. B. C.” (10.1058) is not only an in-joke of Mulligan, “We call it ...” (ibid.), but is really a wordplay on the abbreviation of the actual Dublin Bread Company which had a dining and tea room at Dame Street (see fig. 5 appendix B below). A further hint that the location must be at Dame Street – making the one-legged sailor appearance an interpolation – comes by way of the sequence of onlookers in XIX. Mulligan and Haines see the cavalcade when it is between Dame gate (see 10.1217), that is the western end of the street at City Hall, and Commercial Buildings (see 10.1230).

⁵¹⁸ The first interpolated scene in XV occurs before the scene at the beginning of “Sirens.” Otherwise Cunningham, Power and Nolan would see the cavalcade (which only Nolan will see) much earlier than they do.

The last throwaway element interpolation (see 10.1096-1099), linking IV, XII and XVI, gives the topographically-trained reader to understand that it is washed away along the quays east of Butt Bridge and thus cannot be seen by any of the characters in “Wandering Rocks.”

XVII links with other vignettes only through the reappearance of two characters: through Artifoni it is linked with VI and through Farrell it is linked with XIV; and through the reappearance of the “blind stripling” (10.1105) in the final vignette. It is again only through the sequence in XIX that the Farrell scenes can be roughly determined temporally. Given the direction of Farrell’s movement described in XVII, the interpolation in XIV describes a scene which must occur before the *erzählte Zeit* of XVII. In XIX Farrell is again where the interpolation in XIV has first shown him to be, having returned the short distance from Merrion Square to Leinster Street (see fig. 3 appendix B below).

The beginning of XVIII makes evident that the interpolated scene of Dignam in IX occurs before the *erzählte Zeit* of XVIII as well. Like Miss Dunne and Lenehan and M’Coy, Dignam also sees “the image of Marie Kendall” (10.1141), linking the vignette with VII and IX. Shortly afterwards Dignam sees Boylan (see 10.1150-1152), providing links to V and XV, and showing Boylan engaged in the conversation that was the result of the interpolated scene in XV.

Through imparting a meticulous sequence of characters and locations, the final vignette, XIX, provides the necessary frame for determining the general sequence of events and the various itineraries in the chapter. As the cavalcade passes through the city from Phoenix Park (see 10.1180) in the northwest to the Mirus bazaar (see 10.1268-1269) in the southeast (see fig. 6 appendix B below) many of the previous vignettes’s characters see the cavalcade and their reactions to the Crown’s representative are recorded here. Thus it provides ample links to the preceding vignettes. The interpolations of the cavalcade in IX and XI mark the beginning of the route. In the beginning of XIX (see 10.1180-1181), readers come again across the interpolated scene in XI. Remembering the scene of Miss Kennedy and Miss Douce (see 10.1197-1199), in “Sirens” the attentive reader becomes aware that this scene and the beginning of the “Sirens” chapter constitute simultaneity. Four of the five recurring elements in “Wandering Rocks” appear in the last vignette. The poster of Marie Kendall is seen by the male passengers of the cavalcade (see 10.1220-1223). The dotty Mr. Breen is “plucked [...] back from under the hoofs of the outriders” (10.1232-1233). The HELY’S sandwichmen are passed by the cavalcade (see 10.1236-1238), so is Maginni (see 10.1238-1240). The events and characters from three further interpolations are embedded in XIX, namely Richie Goulding and the elderly woman in IX (see 10.1190-1195), the bicycle

race in XI (see 10.1258-1260) and the two women in XIII (see 10.1275-1276). Also embedded are the two scenes in which the cavalcade has been seen by characters in the preceding vignettes, at the end of XII and XV respectively (see 10.1183-1184 and 10.1211-1213). Another link is provided by “the programme of music which was being discoursed in College park” (10.1248-1249) which is probably the result of the “barekneed gillies smuggling implements of music through Trinity gates” (10.365-366) in VI.

The most tangible manifestation of coincidence for readers is on the level of the character movements – characters, that is, as entities in a specific time and in a specific place ‘within the plot.’ The movements of many characters coincide in “Wandering Rocks”:⁵¹⁹ Conmee encounters, in other words is at the same time in the same place as, the one-legged sailor in front of the Convent of the Sisters of Charity in vignette I, the one-legged sailor encounters the two Dedalus daughters (and Molly’s arm) at the corner of Lower Dorset and Eccles Street in III; Stephen encounters Artifoni at the College Green entrance of Trinity College in VI; Lenehan and M’Coy encounter Bloom at Merchant’s Arch in IX; Dilly Dedalus encounters her father Simon at Dillon’s, Bachelor’s Walk in XI and her brother Stephen at Clohissey’s, Bedford Row in XIII; Simon Dedalus encounters Father Cowley and Ben Dollard at Reddy and Daughter’s, Lower Ormond Quay in XIV; Boylan encounters Bob Doran (in an interpolation) at Maison Claire, Grafton Street in XV; Mulligan and Haines encounter John Howard Parnell in the Dublin Bread Company’s tearoom, Dame Street in XVI; Artifoni unknowingly encounters Farrell at Merrion Square North who in turn encounters the blind stripling at the corner of Merrion Square North and Merrion Street Lower in XVII; Dignam encounters Boylan and Doran at the short part of Grafton Street between Wicklow Street and Nassau Street in XVIII. In addition, in the final vignette the cavalcade passes many of the characters of the preceding vignettes (see figures 5 and 6 appendix B below): Kernan, who is too late at Bloody Bridge; Goulding in the porch of Four Courts; the elderly woman at King’s, Upper Ormond Quay; Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy at the Ormond Hotel bar at Lower Ormond Quay; Simon Dedalus between the Ormond and the greenhouse at Upper Ormond Quay; the reverend Love at Cahill’s corner,⁵²⁰ Lenehan and

⁵¹⁹ The emphasis of this enumeration lies also on another aspect of coincidence, namely “[a] notable concurrence of events or circumstances having no apparent causal connection” (OED, “coincidence, n.,” 4.) in contrast to arranged meetings.

⁵²⁰ It is rather unlikely that Love should be the only person of all those mentioned in the final section who is not within sight of the cavalcade. This makes it plausible to argue that “Cahill’s corner” (*U* 10.1202) does not refer to Timothy Cahill’s pub (see Gunn and Hart, 57), from where he could neither see nor, one may at least doubt it, hear the cavalcade, but to the printers Cahill & Co of 35-37 Great Strand Street who in 1908 extended their premises to 40 Lower Ormond Quay. The printer is an appropriate address for Love to be – after all he plans to write, or is writing, a book (see *U* 10.438). Thus Love is at the corner of Lower Ormond Quay and Lower Liffey Street from where he can see the cavalcade at a distance but would not be seen from the carriages of the

M'Coy on Grattan Bridge; Nolan at the door of Kavanagh's, Parliament Street; Rochford and Flynn at the corner of Parliament Street and Dame Street; Mulligan, Haines and Parnell at the Dublin Bread Company's tearoom, Dame Street; Dilly Dedalus at the corner of Fownes's Street and Dame Street; Denis Breen at the statue of William III in College Green; HELY'S at Ponsonby's at the corner of College Green and Grafton Street; Maginni and Boylan at the northern part of Grafton Street between College Green and Nassau Street; Farrell at Leinster Street South; Dignam at Merrion Square North; the blind stripling at Broadbent's at the corner of Merrion Square East and Lower Mount Street; the two old women at the crossroads of Northumberland Road and Haddington Road; and Artifoni at the crossroads of Northumberland Road and Lansdowne Road. Significantly, Conmee, Stephen, and Bloom do not cross the path of the cavalcade – their paths being literally ἀ-σύμ-πτωτος (a-sym-ptōtos), that is, 'not falling together' (see fig. 4 appendix B below).⁵²¹ Interestingly, the chapter is framed by notable occurrences of coincidence. At the end of "Scylla and Charybdis" Stephen's and Bloom's wanderings coincide at the entrance of the National Library (see 9.1203). In the following chapter, "Sirens," Bloom's and Boylan's paths coincide outside and inside the Ormond Hotel bar and dining-room (see 11.302-359).

Time is an intricate factor in "Wandering Rocks" in particular if considered from the perspective of readers' configurations. There are only three occasions in *Ulysses* in which the temporal setting of this chapter is indicated. The first, in the very beginning, is Conmee thinking "Five to three" (10.2-3). The second is Boylan's secretary telling him to meet Lenhan at the Ormond at four (see 10.395).⁵²² The third comes only in the last chapter, namely Molly thinking that it was "¼ after 3 when I saw the 2 Dedalus girls coming from school" (18.344), which gives an indication of time for vignette III. These few indications in combination with the interpolations allow readers to draw up a rough time frame for the episode. Yet drawing up an elaborate, detailed timetable such as Clive Hart's chart (see fig. 1 in appendix B below) cannot be done on the grounds of the information given in the chapter alone – it requires indeed the kind of 'verisimilitude research' described by Hart. That it can be done convincingly after all has been taken to be a sign of the chapter's high degree of verisimilitude.

cavalcade and hence makes "obeisance unperceived" (*U* 10.1203), making this an anachronism and perhaps a deliberate ambiguity with which Joyce plays here.

⁵²¹ In fact, Stephen and Bloom's paths, as has been suggested, do converge to some extent; they occupy the same place but not at the same time.

⁵²² In "Sirens," Lenehan enters the Ormond at *U* 11.228 and Boylan at *U* 11.337. The clock strikes four at *U* 11.380-386 and Bloom thinks it is "Four now" at *U* 11.445.

The specificity of place has been emphasised in the previous section in order to draw attention to the double-dimension – time and space – of coincidence as understood here and to illustrate how Joyce is eager to accentuate the specific places of the characters' coinciding ways. What becomes obvious is that the reader, in particular the non-Dublin reader, of *Ulysses* becomes aware of the full scale of coincidence and interpolations only with the help of maps, that is, through knowledge of the topography of the setting. Joyce could not assume the topographical facts to be known by many of his readers. Thus by representing an elaborate topographical setting and refraining from explaining its subtleties in the text, he put stake on his readers' curiosity and inquisitiveness. It becomes clear what Robert M. Adams meant when he wrote about "Joyce's penchant for building his novels around a series of holes in the pattern of reader-information" (Adams, *Surface*, 26). In fact, the topography of Dublin is the central gap (*Leerstelle*) of "Wandering Rocks" and a pivotal one of the text as a whole; today the full force of the gaps becomes of course only tangible for those few readers, if there are such readers at all, who forego recourse to the archive of introductory material and *Ulysses* criticism. Readers of *Ulysses* find themselves confronted with a text which challenges them to construct not only a temporal but also a spatial order for the plot in the process of their acts of emplotment. Reclaiming aspects of Ricœur's concept of the 'narrative character' of architecture (see Ricœur, "Architecture"), one could speak of readers' acts of "'configuration' of [narrative] space" (ibid., 68) in this regard. And yet, due to the intricacy of the spatial and temporal configuration of "Wandering Rocks," it verges on the impossible to produce in the moment of reading or rereading a single intelligible order of the plot which takes into account each and every aspect, as this would require making present to oneself, in one's mind, not only the topographical details represented in figures 3 to 6 in the appendix but also the temporal structure visualised in figure 2.

Even today, after decades of critical absorption of the Dublin background, acquaintance with Dublin's topography can help to resolve some things in *Ulysses*. In vignette I, readers track Father Conmee, the rector of Clongowes (see *P* 60, and *U* 9.211) and prefect of studies at Belvedere when Stephen was there, on his way from "the convent of the sisters of charity" (*U* 10.8-9) to "Artane" (*U* 10.3). Given the fact that the O'Brien Institute actually was, and still is, neither in Donnycarney nor in Fairview, as Gifford has it (see Gifford, 116 n. 6.537 and 260 n. 10.4), but in Marino, it is more likely that Cunningham and Conmee are trying to get the young Dignam into St. Joseph's Industrial School in Artane rather than into the O'Brien Institute. If Conmee were to head for the latter there would be little reason for him to walk as far as Donnycarney (see *U* 10.842-843), whereas it would make sense if he is

on his way to the industrial school at Artane which was situated west of Malahide Road on the site of Artane Castle, approximately a mile north of O'Brien Institute. Thus Conmee's itinerary in Ian Gunn's map 16 (see appendix B fig. 3 below) is not quite correct.

If one were to describe the device of interpolation in terms of coincidence, various factors should be taken into consideration. Described from the perspective of an experienced, or well-informed, reader of *Ulysses*, the device of interpolation works in the following way: The reader learns what happens at the same time at a different place. And yet this description distorts the understanding of how the device really works because it leaves one of the constitutive features of its use in "Wandering Rocks" out of consideration. Thus, described from the perspective of early and first-time readers, first-time readers, that is, who are free from the influence of introductory material, it is the Aha-effect which plays a significant role for the device. The Aha-effect occurs when readers realise, necessarily delayed, that is not at the same time as when they are first reading the passage, that there are elements within the self-contained vignettes,⁵²³ that is in the same place, which content-wise belong to a different vignette, in other words for which another vignette provides the appropriate context.⁵²⁴

There are various other levels and instances of coincidence in *Ulysses*.⁵²⁵ Bloom's and Stephen's paths converge in "Oxen of the Sun," "Circe," "Eumeus," and "Ithaca" and diverge again in "Ithaca." It is only by coincidence that Bloom finds Stephen in Bella Cohen's brothel in "Circe" (see 15.1278). Bloom's and Boylan's paths converge too as Bloom sees Boylan three times over the course of the day (see 6.197, 8.1168-1193, 11.302-458). One of the most notable instances of coincidence is certainly the "matutinal cloud (perceived by both from two different points of observation Sandycove and Dublin)" (17.40-42). The cloud is linked with images of death as Stephen perceives it when memories of his mother "beset his brooding brain" (1.265-266). It is probably not the cloud which triggers memories of his dying mother but Mulligan singing "Who Goes With Fergus" (see 1.239-241 and 1.249-253). Nevertheless, Stephen links the cloud with the image of his dying mother in "Ithaca," as it was clearly no apparition of a cloud which caused his breakdown, as he claims (see 17.40-42), but an apparition of his mother (see 15.4156-4257). When Bloom perceives the cloud dark thoughts about the diaspora beset his mind (see 4.218-240). Both scenes are introduced by the same phrase, namely "A cloud began to cover the sun slowly, wholly" (1.248, 4.218).

⁵²³ The 'self-containedness' of the vignettes is formally marked by the asterisks after each vignette (except for the last one).

⁵²⁴ This effect diminishes of course the more readers are conscious of the device during their reading, e.g. in subsequent readings. 'Informed' first-time readers are kept from, or deprive themselves of, experiencing the pleasure of this effect.

⁵²⁵ Clive Hart has drawn up a timetable of corresponding events where he shows how correspondences in terms of events, themes and motifs can be considered indicating simultaneity of action (see Gunn and Hart, 81-85).

It can be argued, against Lukács, that a specific sense of time and place characterises the characters in, and the plot of *Ulysses* and provides the basis of *Ulysses*'s realist aspects. With respect to *FW*, in contrast, one cannot speak of the character's "rootedness in specific historical, human, and social relations of their being." Here readers cannot rely on such anchoring elements as determinate characters, time(s) and space(s). Such categories present themselves to the reader only in the form of coincidence as the following section illustrates. While on the one hand *FW* affords readers a greater degree of freedom with respect to their acts of configuration, on the other readers of *FW* certainly have to embark on more extensive acts of configuration – if they are intent on producing a single intelligible order of events – than readers of *Ulysses*, which presents to the reader a configuration that is easier to grasp (see Ricoeur, *Time*², 25) and to elaborate, with the possible exception of "Wandering Rocks." Nevertheless, in both texts certain aspects are apt to provoke configurations and emplotment in terms of coincidence.

2.3 The Coincidence of 'Character,' Times and Spaces in *Finnegans Wake*

συλλάψεις ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμπερόμενον διαφερόμενον,
 συνᾶδον διαᾶδον· ἐκ πάντων ἐν καὶ ἐξ ἐνὸς πάντα.⁵²⁶
 (Heracl., 25 Mch; cf. DK 22 B 10, and Mouraviev F 10)⁵²⁷

Individuality is the concretion of universality [...]. The individual and the universal cannot be considered as distinct from each other.
 (Beckett, 7)

[A]n imagination that has whirled together all the past, present and future, as well as every space [...].
 (Jolas, "Revolution²," 91)

In *FW*, the dominance of causality, one thing because of another, in narrative is eclipsed by the principle of coincidence, (in) one thing is also another. The concept of coincidence suggests itself as a critical category not least because it is opposed to causality – and *FW* is to narrative causality as Schönberg's *Variationen für Orchester* is to tonality and as Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* is to perspective: plainly defiant. This principle is most tangible –

⁵²⁶ This dictum of Heraclitus (*syllapsies hola kai uch hola, sympheromenon diapheromenon, sunadon diadon ek pantōn hen kai ex henos panta*) has been translated as "Things grasped together: things whole, things not whole; (something) being brought together, (something) being separated; (something) consonant, (something) dissonant. Out of all things (comes?) one thing, and out of one thing all things" (Robinson, 15).

⁵²⁷ The reference is to the Marcovich numbering system (see Marcovich, 102-110), to the Diels-Kranz numbering system (see Diels, 153), and to the more recent Mouraviev numbering system (see Mouraviev, 39f).

if *tangible* is a reasonable word to use at all with respect to *FW* – in the ‘composite character’ strategy, which had been pointed out by Jolas and Paul as early as 1927 (see Jolas and Paul, 173). The inception of this concept of coincidence is already discernible in *U*. This is not the concrete coincidence of which “Wandering Rocks” is illustrative but rather coincidence on the more abstract level of the so-called Homeric ‘correspondences’ or analogies.⁵²⁸

The coincidence of the wanderings of Odysseus, the exiled Greek decennial voyager, and Bloom, ‘the wandering Jew,’ the coincidence of myth and modernity – this is the level of coincidence which Joyce elaborated in *FW*. And already in *Ulysses* one is inclined to speak of several signifiatory planes in this respect, and already here the major characters were conceived as being centred around more than two planes. Bloom is conceived as showing features of Odysseus, Moses, the Wandering Jew, “Everyman” (17.2008), the down-to-earth man, the personification of what to others is ‘the enigma of Jewishness,’ etc. On this abstract level Stephen is also Telemachos, Hamlet, Ikaros, the (aspiring) artist, the intellectual, the personification of what to others is ‘the enigma of the artist,’ etc. and Molly is also Penelope, Calypso, “Gea-Tellus” (17.2313), the (established) artist, the carnal woman, the personification of what to others is “the enigma of femininity” (Freud, qtd. in Dornhof, 518; my trans.), etc. Joyce’s propensity to elevate characters, events, constellations to the scale of ‘the universal’ is yet more distinctive in *FW* in which some critics distinguish between “‘Earwicker,’ a twentieth-century man who keeps a pub in Chapelizod [...]; ‘HCE,’ the more broadly allegorical figure [...]; and the ‘siglum’ Π [...], which represents the basic unified male principle of the book” (McCarthy, “Structures,” 586f).

How do readers of *U* and *FW* become aware of the idea of character coincidence? It is invariably through the influence of the symbolic production. In the case of *U*, early readers, and critics, have become aware of the ‘Homeric subtext’ primarily through what, following Genette, one may call paratextual elements, to be more precise through the paritextual element of the work’s title and through the epitextual element of the schemata – the information of which most readers acquired through Gilbert’s *James Joyce’s Ulysses: A Study* from 1930.⁵²⁹ Today readers become aware of it rather on the metatextual level of published

⁵²⁸ What is the difference between understanding the ‘Homeric subtext’ in terms of ‘correspondences’ or in terms of coincidence? It is legitimate to ask whether ‘correspondences’ is not the more appropriate term since coincidence implies, in one of its meanings, ‘exact agreement,’ whereas the many differences between Odysseus and Bloom, or Telemachos and Stephen, are obvious enough. Coincidence is an appropriate term, nevertheless, because the concept is apt to emphasise the fact that something also ‘happens’ to the other text, namely that it becomes a presence *in* the later text, is ‘in the present.’ The other text is precisely not merely referred to – the influence is mutual not one-sided. *Ulysses* has become a context for the *Odyssey* which in turn has become, in a certain sense, contemporary through it.

⁵²⁹ Some may have acquired it as early as 1921/1922 through Valéry Larbaud’s lecture (Dec. 1921) which was subsequently published in French in *Nouvelle Revue Française* (April 1922) and in a shortened version in

criticism and introductory material. In the case of *FW*, early readers became aware of the significance of the idea of coincidence through the peculiar hybrid of epitext and metatext which *Exag* represents; likewise, today most readers pick it up through criticism, *FW*-related web content and/or in seminars and reading groups.

Having been made aware, in one way or another, of the character coincidences in *U*, readers may keep the *Odyssey* in mind when following Bloom's wanderings through the text. They may recall that Odysseus's home was usurped by the suitors of Penelope when they learn that Bloom's home is about to be 'profaned.' They may think of Odysseus's description of the effects of the sedative lotus, when in the "Lotus-Eaters" chapter Bloom is thinking of drugs, "Drugs age you after" (see *U* 5.474-475), as he also does when contemplating the Eucharist, "Now I bet it makes them feel happy" (see *U* 5.357-361). In "Hades," the chapter in which Bloom attends a funeral at the cemetery, readers may bear in mind Odysseus's descent into the underworld, the realm of Hades, in the *Nekyia*. When reading the gigantising description of the Citizen in "Cyclops" (see *U* 12.151-167) readers may remember Polyphemos, Odysseus's adversary in the *Cyclopeia*, and may also recall how Odysseus blinds him when they come across the phrase "he near drove his gear into my eye" (see *U* 12.2-3) and Bloom's use of the proverb of the mote and the beam from the Sermon on the Mount (see *U* 12.1237-1238). Bloom's interception of the ball in "Nausicaa" (see *U* 13.349-350) may bring to mind the ball game of Nausikaa and her companions in Book VI of the *Odyssey*. In "Oxen of the Sun," the thunder, "[a] black crack of noise in the street here" (see *U* 14.408-415), may remind them of Zeus's punishment of Odysseus and his men on Helios's request in Book XII. When Bloom appears to become a "womanly man" (*U* 15.1798) in "Circe" readers may think of Odysseus reproaching Kirke for wanting to rob him of his manhood.⁵³⁰ When in "Ithaca" the returned Bloom contemplates "retribution" (*U* 17.2200) but dismisses the thought, "Assassination, never, as two wrongs did not make one right" (*U* 17.2201), the reader may bear in mind the contrast of the carnage to which Penelope's suitors fell victim at the hands of Odysseus and Telemachos. These are examples of how a blending of these two planes may bear on a reader's reading of *Ulysses*. The emphasis in this case is on the 'actualising' of the *Odyssey* in the sense of 'making (it) present to oneself' (German *sich*

English in *Criterion* (Oct. 1922). The character 'correspondences' were detailed in two different schemata which circulated in the 1920s and 1930s among friends and friendly critics, namely the Gorman schema which included 'correspondences' and which was published in 1959, and the Linati schema which included no correspondences but only the listing of Homeric 'persons' and which was published in 1972.

⁵³⁰ The adjective ἀνήνωρ, anēnōr, (see Hom. *Od.* 10.301, 10.341) means unmanly, literally 'without/of no manhood.'

vergegenwärtigen with its link to *Gegenwart* (presence, present)), and thus ‘investing (it) with presence and present.’

As Bloom is symbolically Odysseus and various other characters, Earwicker, or HCE, is also various ‘other’ ‘characters.’ The difference is that while in *Ulysses* there is a primary character plane it is not clear if this is still the case in *FW* – the differentiation between a realism-oriented plane and a symbolical one is certainly no longer possible in the latter – where ‘characters’ are “thick-textured” (Gillet, “Living,” 90), that is various aspects of original and familiar characters are interwoven into ‘character agglomerations.’ If in *FW* II.4 Mark is supposed to be HCE and Tristan is supposed to be Shem and/or Shaun and if Isolde is supposed to be Issy, is there any support for this in the text? No, it is the reader, and certainly the critic, who are establishing such ‘correspondences’ through their acts of emplotment. Through the symbolic production of *Ulysses* and through *Exag*, readers of Joyce’s last work have been induced to establish ‘correspondences’ and symbolic, and/or allegorical, patterns. In *Exag* the corresponding passages read: “mythical heroes of the past, characters of biblical legend and notabilities of recent times are treated as one and the same protagonist” (Gilbert, “Prolegomena,” 54),⁵³¹ “Noah, Premier Gladstone and ‘Papa’ Browning are telescoped into one” (Paul, 132, see also 134), “the ‘characters’ who bop up briefly, disappear and reappear in various forms and in unexpected company are composite” (Sage, “Before,” 156), and “the characters, as usual, merge: they are Anna and Humphrey, the city and its founder, the river and the mountain, the trout and the salmon, the male and the female” (ibid., 162).

Thus readers and critics of *FW* have been led to establish ‘correspondences’ of the type Bloom-Odysseus, Molly-Penelope, or at least assuming X (e.g. Isolde) to be an ‘aspect’ of Y (e.g. Issy). Once such an interpretive frame ‘controls’ the reading, certain textual cues become productive in this respect. One of the textual cues prompting the relating of “*Muster Mark*” with HCE in *FW* II.4 is the locational ‘reference’ to Dublin in the vituperation of Mark which forms the prelude of the chapter (see *FW* 383.6). As the nature of HCE’s alleged crime, or fall, may be voyeuristic, the voyeurism cues in II.4, discussed in chapter II above, may also prompt his identification with King Mark and the four.⁵³² The cue for equating Isolde with Issy is already given through the very similarity of the names.

While in *Ulysses* Bloom is the character who is ‘present on the page’ and Odysseus is the character readers may project every now and then, in *FW* the situation may also be

⁵³¹ In a letter from January 1924, Joyce referred to “Shem-Ham-Cain-Egan etc and his penmanship” (Gilbert, *Letters*, 208) – *Egan* may be a misinterpretation of Joyce’s handwriting and of the biblical name Esau – thus emphasising the idea of character ‘composites.’

⁵³² Those who have linked Mark with the four, have regarded “the Four [as] HCE in impotence and dissolution” (Glasheen, *Second*, xlv; see also Begnal, “Love,” 141).

reversed so that Mark and Tristan are the characters ‘on the page’ and onto them many readers and critics project HCE/Earwicker and Shem and/or Shaun – thus, beyond the question ‘Who is speaking?’ looms that of ‘Who is being spoken about?’. Unlike Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* – a work which may have had a more significant bearing on *FW* than Vico’s philosophy not only because Ovid’s lament, the theme of having seen something that inevitably is one’s doom (‘foreshadowed’ or reworked in Ov. *Met.* III 173-193), could be HCE’s epithet: “cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci?” (Ov. *Tr.* II.103) (“Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes guilty?” (Ovid, *Tristia*, 63)) –, it often does not become apparent who is becoming who else, or rather, to use terms more appropriate for *FW*, which ‘characters’ coincide. According to Wilson, Earwicker is Tristan and Iseult is Issy (see Wilson, *Wound*, 220f). Campbell and Robinson link HCE rather with Mark and Shaun with Tristan (see Campbell and Robinson, 248, 254f).⁵³³ Other critics have also regarded the four (and all other minor ‘characters’) as aspects of HCE (see, e.g., Wilson, *Axel’s*, 230; Tindall, 5). The most famous character coincidence of the work, ALP as the wife and mother *and* the river (Liffey), which has been established as early as 1927 (see Paul, 134; see also McGreevy, “Catholic,” 125, and Sage, “Before,” 159), is given pride of place on the last pages of the book (see *FW* 619-628). And yet the phrase “they saw her meander by that maritime way” (*FW* 209.4-5) in I.8 may well be among the most ‘tangible’ indications of her as river – Anna Livia the river, this is not a purely symbolical plane – in the whole text. Such passages subtly suggest ‘fluviality’ but readers will not come across a passage where the coincidence is expressed more explicitly – no catchy pin-down phrase à la ‘Ava Lafluvia Pantarheilla in allheure ouverfleauinky meermiditch potaminine aquafemity’ is to be found.

In contrast to *FW* II.4, in the end of II.3, for instance, it is easier to identify textual cues prompting configurations and emplotment in terms of coincidence of ‘characters’ as the coincidence of HCE and King Roderick O’Conor is emphasised by the attributive phrase “poor old hospitable corn and eggfactor” (*FW* 380.11; emphasis added) preceding the name of the latter. Such *h... c... e...* phrases are significant as it has early been revealed to readers and critics that HCE and ALP “are repeatedly alluded to [...] by series of words beginning with these letters” (Sage, “Before,” 159). Pages 380 to 382 are mainly a description of Roderick and of his drinking the leftovers. This last section of II.3 has been assumed to be a blending of Earwicker closing his pub and of the feast of King Roderick O’Conor who after the feast, “when he found himself all alone” (*FW* 380.34-35), is “suck[ing] up” (*FW* 381.30) “whatever surplus rotgut [...] was left” (*FW* 381.32) until “he came acrash” (*FW* 382.18-19)

⁵³³ See also fn. 372 above.

and “slumped to throne” (*FW* 382.26).⁵³⁴ Readers find between the end of II.3 and the beginning of II.4 only one link, namely the reference to a “ship” (*FW* 382.27, 383.20). The suggestion of Roderick/Earwicker/HCE passing out encouraged the idea of II.4 as a dream of HCE (see Campbell and Robinson, 21, 248, 254f). But even though there are three occurrences of *h... c... e...* phrases in II.4 (see *FW* 393.14, 398.05, 398.13) these are neither linked with Mark or Tristan nor with the four in the ‘more obvious’ way which distinguishes the preceding case (*FW* 380.11).

In *FW* the categories of time and space are just as kaleidoscopic and inextricably interwoven as the one of ‘character.’ Whereas in *Ulysses* readers are in a position to decide how much importance they attach to the dimensions of time and space available, myth and modernity, in *FW* this position has vanished. Thus *FW* will break with a recognisable conception of time and space which underlies the narrative in *U*. In *FW* criticism, due in part to Brion’s statement that “WiP is essentially a time work” (Brion, 31), there has been from the very beginning a tendency to emphasise temporal aspects and to ignore consideration of spatial aspects. Moreover, in discussions of *FW*’s temporal aspects the notion of cyclicism was privileged.⁵³⁵ The conception of *FW* being characterised by the coincidence of times and spaces is intended, among other things, to counterbalance the weight of the critical idea of cyclicism in *FW* which, along with the notion of circularity, is more implicated in the concept of causality than coincidence is.

Although the catchword and idea of simultaneity and the idea of coincidence, the latter at least to some extent, were just as present in *Exag*, they have not gained momentum in the symbolic production. In 1927, Jolas and Paul wrote “Mr Joyce enjoys synthesizing human events, present and past, historical and legendary” (Jolas and Paul, 173). In the same year Paul stated “The treatment of space is equally elastic. Phoenix Park, Dublin, becomes interchangeable at one time with the Garden of Eden, again with the Biblical universe. The Wellington monument and the surrounding drill-field contains the field of Waterloo, when the author is so minded” (Paul, 133). In *Exag* the baffled readers and critics read the following comment by Brion:

When we are made to pass, without any transition other than an extremely subtle association of ideas, from Original Sin to the Wellington Monument and when we are transported from the Garden of Eden to the Waterloo battlefield we have the impression of crossing a quantity of intermediary planes at full

⁵³⁴ Many critics take the passage 370.30-36 to be the announcement of closing time.

⁵³⁵ Clive Hart’s *Structure and Motif* exemplifies the over-emphasis on the idea of *cyclicism* and *circularity* (see Hart, *Structure*, 44-75) and the underemphasis on the idea of *simultaneity* (see *ibid.*, 75-77) in *FW* criticism.

speed. Sometimes it even seems that the planes exist simultaneously in the same place and are multiplied like so many ‘over-impressions.’ (Brion, 32)

Budgen stated that “*Work in Progress* gives a bird’s eye view of the time landscape. We see it all at once” (Budgen, “Norse²,” 45). Jolas spoke of “an imagination that has whirled together all the past, present and future” (Jolas, “Revolution²,” 91) and Sage reinforced this idea by pointing out that “instead of observing the traditional chronological scheme, with the narrative fibres sharply separated and treated as individual unities, he [Joyce] has telescoped time, space, all humanity and the universe of gods and heroes” (Sage, “Before,” 155). These notions of simultaneity and coincidence were then touched on, for instance, by William Troy (see Troy, 312) and by Campbell and Robinson (see Campbell and Robinson, 3).

As pointed out above, one of the many fundamental differences between *Ulysses* and *FW* becomes apparent in the treatment of time and space. In the case of *U* readers will at some point, through rereading and gaining familiarity with the text, be able to conceive the text as a narrative whole. The diverse strands of the plot will gradually fall into place, producing a single intelligible order of events. One of the conditions allowing this ‘falling into place’ is the reader being able to establish the temporal and spatial dimensions of the plot. In contrast, *FW* does not allow readers to pull the threads together to form a coherent narrative whole. Readers will be hard put to identify the setting of any part of the text as *FW* “does not contain within itself a clear determination of a time and place” (Attridge, “Wakean,” 88). With regard to *FW*, readers’ configurations of time and space are local rather than global, temporary rather than permanent. What is the *erzählte Zeit* of *FW*: one night, a millennium, history itself, “*aiôn* that flows away” (Alliez, 24), a moment within some form of conscious mind? The notion of cyclicism requires the presupposition that time passes in *FW*. If *FW* demonstrates cyclicism, which cannot be conceived other than temporally, one should be able to argue convincingly, that is beyond the commonplace formula ‘last sentence = first sentence,’ that time passes in *FW*. But how could one substantiate that between “O foenix culprit!” (*FW* 23.16) and “and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father” (*FW* 628.1-2) or between “Missaunderstaid.” (*FW* 363.36) and “It was put in the newses what he did” (*FW* 196.20) time passes? One cannot escape the feeling that despite its *Erzählzeit* *FW* unfolds an instant,⁵³⁶ that rather than time passing everything in *FW* seems to unfold at the same instant: And indeed, given “[t]he retreat of plot in the face of a principle of coexistence [of voices]”

⁵³⁶ The question ‘What is the *Erzählzeit* of *FW*?’ is just as reasonable. A convenient answer would be: 628 pages. But if the focus of the definition of *Erzählzeit* is “conventional *time* of reading” (Ricoeur, *Time*², 79; emphasis added), what is the answer? Must the notion of a conventional time of reading not disqualify itself in this case? After all, which temporal convention would encompass the experience of reading *FW*?

(Ricoeur, *Time*², 97) in *FW*, we have to acknowledge that “[t]he coexistence of voices [...] [has been] substituted for the temporal [and spatial] configuration of action” (ibid.). The notion of time passing which often underlies views of the *erzählte Zeit* of *FW* is in fact nothing less than the result of acts of configuration and emplotment.

As mentioned above, many critics have read the end of II.3, for instance, as HCE and King Roderick coinciding in time and space: The time after closing time in HCE’s pub coincides with a twelfth-century “gettogether thanksbetogiving day at Glennfinnisk-en-la-Valle, the anniversary of his first homy communion” (*FW* 380.8-10) – here one can assume two signifiatory planes linked to the category of setting. Roderick O’Conor, or rather Ruaidhrí Ua Conchobhair (1116?-1198), was King of Connacht and the last High King of Ireland. There is a townland Glenfin in County Roscommon, Connacht, (see P. W. Joyce, *Origin*, 366) so that the idea of a twelfth-century setting is not inconceivable.⁵³⁷ But at the same time a modern pub setting is evoked through the phrase “in his umbrageous house of the hundred bottles with the radio beamer tower and its hangars, chimneys and equelines” (*FW* 380.15-17). Ever since *A Skeleton Key*, critics have assumed that the setting of II.3 is a pub or inn and this phrase clearly describes rather Earwicker’s supposed spirituous refreshments establishment than the *locus in quo* of a twelfth-century feast. The word *radio* certainly evokes a modern setting too. At the beginning of II.3 readers come across the description of some radio device (see *FW* 309.11-310.08). Thus, the aforementioned phrase (*FW* 380.15-17), which ends significantly with another *h... c... e...* phrase, links the end of the chapter to its beginning. Furthermore, Roderick, who is referred to as the “last pre-electric king of Ireland” (*FW* 380.12-13), drinks “Guinness’s” (*FW* 382.3, cf. 309.01) “or” “John Jameson and Sons” (*FW* 382.4), both of which are fruits of the eighteenth century.

In II.4, the setting of the Tristan and Isolde part is a ship. But there are textual elements which make such a straightforward statement appear too simplified. May this setting, as has been noted in chapter II, not indeed be the setting of a (radio) play? The underlying question then is, is the Tristan and Isolde part a story, presented by a narrator, which the four witness as ‘live events’ – meaning the four are part of the setting *ship*? Or is it a narrated story which the four witness as audience – meaning the four are not part of the setting *ship*? Is there a narrator’s voice at all in the beginning of II.4 or is it a ‘character’s’

⁵³⁷ There is also a townland Glenfinshinagh in County Tipperary (see P. W. Joyce, *Origin*, 366). In addition, the Glenfinish stream is a tributary of the Araglin River in County Cork.

voice narrating? As so often in *FW*, the question ‘Who speaks?’ cannot be answered definitively.⁵³⁸ What can be ascertained is that the narrating voice(s) change(s).

The issue of voice in *FW* is not least one of deixis as the following outline illustrates. One can observe ten changes of voice in II.4. At the beginning the birds’ song (383.1-14), printed in italics, catches the eye of the reader.⁵³⁹ The voice(s) appear(s) to address Mark. It is followed by a narrating voice (383.15-384.10) establishing the setting and further characters; this voice refers to the four as “they” (383.19, 384.6). The second change of narrating voice occurs when the four speak (384.10-15). This passage is introduced by the phrase “we are the four of us” (384.10). After their ‘appearance’ the narrating voice from before continues (384.15-386.11) which, again, refers to the four as *they* (see 384-386). This voice also narrates Tristan and Isolde’s lovemaking (384.19-34 and 385.21-36).⁵⁴⁰ The passages from 386.12 to 395.25 most critics have assumed to be narrated by the four taking turns. Interestingly, in these passages the four are often referred to by the pronoun *they*. Thus when it is Johnny’s turn (386.12-388.9), he continues in the exact same narrating voice as the one before, saying “*they* were four dear old heladies” (386.14-15; emphasis added). Suddenly his perspective turns and he refers to “the four of *us*” (387.15-16; emphasis added) only to immediately switch again to “the four” and “they” (387.16-17). The same holds true for Marcus’s narration (388.10-390.33). Recurrent *they* (see 388) suddenly becomes “the four of *us*” (389.25, emphasis added; see also 389.33), switching again to “they” and “their” (390.19-22). Lucas’s (390.34-393.3) references are to *they* only. Matt’s turn (393.4-395.25) begins with “Ah, God be good to *us*!” (393.5; emphasis added) but continues with “they” and “their” (see 393-395). If the foursome passages are considered the fourth change of narrating voice – there is really no change in narrative ‘tone’ between the four – the following passage, in which the sexual encounter between Tristan and Isolde (395.26-396.2), if there actually is one, is narrated, is the fifth. A quite different narrating voice from the preceding one sets in at 396.4. It appears to address its audience (396.4-32) through phrases such as “And plays be honest!” (396.4), “Could you blame her, we’re saying” (396.13), and “What would Ewe do?” (396.14) and refers to “they” (396.30). The seventh change comes when it appears that one of the four is narrating again (396.34-398.6) as the passage contains some of their stock phrases like “that reminds me” in conjunction with “now” (see , 397.7, cf. 387.11-14, 390.15) and “Ay, ay” (397.6, cf. 395.25, 393.6, 390.29-33, 388.8-9). A further change of the narrating voice may

⁵³⁸ The loss of the (guiding) narrative voice has been deemed one of the features of Joyce’s Modernism (see Attridge, “Modernist,” 587).

⁵³⁹ Since the references in this paragraph are exclusively to *FW*, the abbreviation *FW* is omitted for the sake of readability.

⁵⁴⁰ The phrase “we longed to be spoon” (*FW* 385.29) may indicate the voice(s) of the four.

occur at 398.7 which is the beginning of a passage (398.7-30) in which the voice appears to address its audience again, “let us ran on to say oremus prayer and homeysweet homely, after fully realising the gratifying experiences of highly continental evenements” (398.11-13), as well as the ‘characters’ (see 398.29-30). The ninth change is the song at the end (398.32-399.29) and the tenth is the reoccurrence of the voice which addresses the ‘characters’ and/or the audience (399.31-36).⁵⁴¹

As is the case in the end of II.3, chapter II.4 appears to suggest the coincidence of ‘the modern’ and ‘the ancient.’ David Hayman has spoken with respect to the chapter of “an anachronistic setting: on a modern steamship between modern-ancient protagonists” (Hayman, “Substantial,” 103). There are in the whole chapter only a few passages that may evoke a modern setting of II.4. The word “bunnyhugging” (*FW* 384.21), for instance, has modern reverberations – the bunny hug was a dance that became fashionable in the early twentieth century. The same holds true for the passage 395.7-13 with its suggestion of steam vessels, cruise ships and “honeymoon cabins, on board the big steamadories” (*FW* 395.9) as these are of course achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The frequent occurrence of the title and name Arrah-na-pogue also suggests a modern ‘reference,’ one that points to the nineteenth and/or twentieth century as well.⁵⁴² The coincidence of medieval romance (cf. *FW* 395.30) and modern time is verbalised when Isolde is described as “modern old ancient Irish prisscess” (*FW* 396.7-8). But is it necessarily “an anachronistic setting” (Hayman, “Substantial,” 103)? After all, the modern ‘references’ may only be due to the narrator(s) imposing his·her/their perspective.

The (modern-ancient) ship as setting of the Tristan and Isolde part is the only, at least to some extent, ‘stable’ anchor point for the reader. In contrast, what the setting of the four’s narrating and narrative is, that is where they are when they speak and to which places and times their stories refer, cannot be determined. An indication of place may appear to be contained in the phrase “oftentimes they used to be saying grace together [...] in Miracle Square” (*FW* 384.8-10). Those readers who are suspecting an allusion will ask themselves does this refer to the Piazza del Duomo in Pisa,⁵⁴³ otherwise known as Piazza dei Miracoli, or to Merrion Square as *Annotations* has it (see McHugh, *Annotations*, 384)? Neither of these

⁵⁴¹ This simple list does neither include the discourse in parentheses, which complicates the picture yet more, nor the possibility of free indirect discourse.

⁵⁴² Another ‘reference’ suggestive of modern time is “*Palmerstown Park*” (*FW* 383.6-7) in Rathmines which came to be known by that name only in the late nineteenth century.

⁵⁴³ Establishing links would not prove difficult. After all, the Piazza houses *four* masterpieces of medieval architecture: the Pisa Cathedral, the Pisa Baptistry, the campanile (known as the ‘Leaning Tower of Pisa’), and the Camposanto Monumentale. In addition, the façade of the Cathedral is embellished with statues of the four Evangelists.

‘translations’ is given any substance in the text. Similarly, an indication of time may appear to be contained in the phrase “the way they used to be saying their grace before fish [...] after the interims of Augusburgh” (*FW* 384.15-17). If this ‘refers’ to the Augsburg Interim of 1548 what are readers to do with that temporal information given the fact that many conflicting dates and times will follow, most importantly the repeated occurrence of the year 1132? Correspondingly, David Hayman regards the four as “located somewhere beyond time or in its flux” (Hayman, “Substantial,” 100).

What the phrases “It brought the dear prehistoric scenes all back again, as fresh as of yore” (*FW* 385.18-19) and “and all wishening for anything at all of the bygone times” (*FW* 386.6-7) seem to make clear is that the four reminisce about the past. Within their narration, the dominant temporal indication is “1132” (see *FW* 387.23, 388.12-13, 388.20, 391.2, 397.30).⁵⁴⁴ It is linked three times with the mentioning of a flood (see *FW* 387.23, 388.12, 388.18). But then again 1132 is also used as a spatial marker in the phrases “in 1132 Brian or Bride street” (*FW* 388.26-27) and “this unitarian lady [...] lived to a great age at or in or about the late No. 1132 or No. 1169” (*FW* 389.11-13). On the whole, the mere accumulation of indeterminate ‘events’ makes their narration appear meaningless both as history and as narrative:

and all they could remembore, long long ago in the olden times Momonian, [...] when Fair Margrate waited Swede Villem, [...] after the wreak of Worman’s Noe, [...] and after that then there was the official landing of Lady Jales Casemate, in the year of the flood 1132 [...], and the christening of Queen Baltersby [...], and then there was the drowning of Pharoah [...] and they were all completely drowned into the sea, the red sea. (*FW* 387.16-27)

While *Ulysses* is primarily character-driven, as distinguished from novels which are plot-driven, *FW* can neither be said to be plot-driven, nor character-driven, but must rather be described as a site where language unfolds proteanly for the sake of language unfolding and unfolding the evocative. It is a text in which motives, intentions and beliefs of the ‘characters’ cannot be established with any certainty. In *Ulysses a hic et nunc* time (16 June 1904) and space (metropolitan Dublin and environs) coincides with an *illic et tunc* time (‘myth’) and space (the Mediterranean setting of the *Odyssey*, according to Bérard, stretching almost the entire Mediterranean region),⁵⁴⁵ and yet neither does *U* question our understanding of time

⁵⁴⁴ The number 1132 has been considered to symbolise renewal (11) and fall (32) (see e.g. McCarthy, “Structures,” 611).

⁵⁴⁵ See Seidel.

through the categories of *then* and *now*, that is the triad of past, present, and future, nor does it question our understanding of space through the categories of *here* and *there*. The reader of *FW*, in contrast, cannot identify a definite setting in any chapter. Thus s/he has to accept that the utmost that can be ascertained is the inextricable concurrence of times and spaces. After having ‘universalised’ the dimensions of time and space by means of the ‘projection plane’ *myth* in *Ulysses*, Joyce sought to present with *FW* a work which would not be bound by the confines of experiential time, history, and space at all.

Ulysses and *Finnegans Wake* may at first sight appear like works that leave little common ground for comparison. And yet, the aspects of coincidence discussed in this chapter are apt to establish precisely such common ground. Joyce’s ‘poetics of coincidence,’ in particular through the coincidence of ‘character,’ exploits the fact that we are prone to search for relations, to establish connections and correspondences, to complete patterns, and to perceive similarity. One, rather famous, example of this cognitive urge is the recognition of the human brain in Michelangelo’s “The Creation of Adam” (see Meshberger). A further example is the discerning of the shape of question marks in Bloom’s wanderings in “Lotuseaters” (see Gunn and Hart, 35) to reflect “the loss of a sense of personal direction” (ibid., 36). In *FW* this urge to resort to the *familiar* appears to become the reader’s interpretive ‘survival strategy’ (see, e.g. Glasheen, *Third*, lxxii-lxxxiv and passim). In combination with the other devices described in this study, those effecting coincidence provoke large-scale acts of configuration and emplotment, and of conceptual integration, which represents another facet of the reader position. In this way, the narrative momentum coincides with the acts of meaning construction effected by the reader (see below), which is probably the most intriguing coincidence with regard to *FW*.

CONCLUSION

In 1933, Joyce told Frank Budgen that Louis Gillet “wants a chair in *Me* to be founded at *Geneva* where he can be my commentator” (Gilbert, *Letters*, 337). The thought alone must have been a great satisfaction for the writer who had proclaimed “The demand that I make of my reader is that he should devote his whole life to reading my works” (Eastman, 100; qtd. in Wilson, *Wound*, 238 n. 1) and whose declared aim it was to “keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant” (qtd. in Ellmann, *James Joyce*¹, 535). Joyce hoped to achieve such a dedication to his works, as these statements imply they would demand, by doing his utmost to make them ‘inexhaustible.’ The composition of his last two works, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, took altogether a quarter of a century; the ‘inexhaustibility’ of each work was ensured through completely different means. In the case of *FW*, whose duration of composition roughly equals that of Dante’s *Comedia*, ‘inexhaustibility’ is indeed a ‘calculated coup’ (cf. Derrida, “*Ulysses*,” 47). As *perpetuum interpretandum, perpetuum traducendum*, *FW* provokes its readers to venture on interpretation, time and again, while exhausting notions of the limits and of the adequacy of interpretation. This *αἰδιος κίνησις* (aidios kinesis, “everlasting/eternal movement/motion”) and *κίνησις ἀτελής* (kinēsis atelēs, “movement/motion without end,” “incomplete movement/motion”) (see Arist., *Met.* IX 6 1048b18-35), as opposed to *τέλος* (telos, “complete action,” “completion,” “end”) (see *ibid.*) and “ἐκεῖνη ἣ ἐνυπάρχει τὸ τέλος” (ekeinē hē enyparchei to telos, “that (kinēsis) in which the end is present”) (*ibid.*, 1048b18; see also de Vogüé et al., 53), is the accord between Joyce and his readers, their agreement about infinitely re-encountering. This is their “*Verabredung mit dem Unendlichen*” (Bohrer, *Abschied*, 603) – to appropriate Karl Heinz Bohrer’s epitaph to Modernism.

The ‘inexhaustible’ marks the time and space of *FW*’s characters, its written characters that is, the letters of its “litteringture” (*FW* 570.18). These (written) characters demand of *FW* readers the virtual *time* frame of the infinite return, not least because we are never in a position to secure a grip on them as they proliferate, through our involvement, into the virtual *space* of the archive(s) of culture. If the reflection on interpretation in the “Ithaca” chapter of *Ulysses* were to serve as a standard of successful interpretation, the possibility of an interpretation of any passage of *FW* acknowledged as successful would border on the impossible. In “Ithaca” the “difficulties of interpretation” are considered consisting in “counterestimating against an actual loss by failure to interpret the total sum of possible losses

proceeding originally from a successful interpretation” (*U* 17.345-347). If one were to counter-estimate the total sum of possible “losses,” i.e. the interpretive potential ignored by any one interpretation, the alternatives not taken into consideration, interpretation of *FW* would be a hopeless pursuit as the total sum of possible losses, the ‘quantity’ of conceivable meanings, is inestimable.

Perhaps Joyce did at some point intend to write the great literary enigma of the twentieth century, as which the symbolic production has constituted it; elaborating the hermeneutic provocation of the Dantean “‘Papé Satàn, papé Satàn aleppe!’” (*Inf.* VII 1). At all events, *FW* does participate in the psychology of the enigma, of the intellectual puzzle, and of what in German is known as *Spurensuche* (“the search for traces/signs”).⁵⁴⁶ And this is true in a specific way that goes beyond Adorno’s notion of the general “Rätselcharakter der Kunst” (“the riddle character of art”)⁵⁴⁷ (see Adorno, *Ästhetische*, 182ff). *FW* is appealing in the way, and by similar psychological means, that ciphers and riddles have tantalised humans for (tens of?) thousands of years. Joyce exploited the fact that the readers’ willingness to invest a lot of time into a work, would be particularly strong if ‘discovering’ ‘its meaning’ is considered to require some form of ‘deciphering’ and if ‘its meaning’ is considered to be concealed and shrouded in mystery – at the expense of the number of readers.

How to better motivate the willingness to devote one’s whole life to reading a work than through the promise to solve one of the greatest literary enigmas? The coup which Joyce calculated *FW* to be is that the work provokes the readers’ vanity, their ambition to be ‘intelligent enough’ for the challenge which this book promises. Joyce’s later works in particular appear to many to be suited to assure themselves of their intelligence and of the depth of their knowledge. It is characteristic of works like *The Waste Land*, *The Cantos*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* that they have elicited an extraordinary degree of reader dedication from a small, but enthusiastic readership. In a manner which can only be called *weltfremd*, some critics bemoan the fact that *FW* will always be ignored by the vast majority. These critics do not understand that a work which is not to be understood, in the ordinary sense, but rather to be marvelled at and to be ruminated forever cannot attract anything but a minority’s interest – even if that minority has become larger in recent decades – no matter how genuine their endeavours to ‘save’ Joyce’s last work for a broader readership are.

⁵⁴⁶ This perspective is promoted for instance by the very fact that no introductory volume to Joyce omits the statements quoted at the beginning of this conclusion.

⁵⁴⁷ In his 1984 translation of Adorno’s *Ästhetische Theorie*, Lenhardt translated this phrase as “the enigmatic quality of art” (Adorno, *Aesthetic*¹, 175ff), Hullot-Kentor’s 1997 translation reads “the enigmaticalness of art” (Adorno, *Aesthetic*², 120ff).

To conceive something opaque as an enigma or riddle is of course in some way to rationalise what may otherwise appear as uncomfortably close to the irrational. One of the great ironies is that human beings can approach the irrational only by rational, or rather what are taken to be such, means. It is not trivial to point out that the willingness to accept the challenge of *FW* requires the belief that the text is meaningful – that is, that its words are ‘encoded’ in order to be ‘decoded’.⁵⁴⁸ We will only attempt to think about a riddle if we believe it may have an answer.⁵⁴⁹ The criticism of *FW* is characterised by the will to make the text say something that can be expressed in ‘plain’ language, to translate the text into something comprehensible. It is thus an example of the primal human search for meaning.

While some consider the ‘quality’ of a scholarly reading to lie in the capacity to produce resonances through “risky readings” (Küpper, 17; my trans.), readings of *FW* are inevitably ‘risky’ in the sense that a reading of this text – in the most basic sense of *reading* – is ineluctably an act of extensive meaning construction and ‘translation.’ Along these lines “*Finnegans Wake* is [...] what we do with it, is mental processing, interrelation” (Senn, “Vexations,” 63). Basically, *FW* reveals that language comprehension itself involves the act of interpretation. Since there is no ‘normal’ understanding in *FW*, readers find themselves in a position in which there is no stance which could be said to be unaffected by interpretation. There can be no pre-interpretive, no ‘naïve’ reading of this text – the notion of a “primary act of perceptual understanding” (Jauß, “Literature and Hermeneutics,” 139) must disqualify itself here. In this sense one can say that *FW* foregrounds the acts of meaning constitution and interpretation.

Interpretation and translation are ultimately two similar concepts which denote the transfer of the strange and foreign into the familiar. It is in this sense that Iser insists that “we have to remind ourselves of what interpretation has always been: an act of translation” (Iser, *Range*, 5). As *homo interpretes* humans cannot help but to attempt to make sense of the world and to assume the meaningfulness of things in this world – our ‘meaning bias,’ what Hans Hörmann termed *Sinnkonstanz*,⁵⁵⁰ is one of the most powerful human dispositions. Even if we

⁵⁴⁸ If in a linguistic experiment one were to be asked to distinguish out of a pool of words actual rare words from nonwords (i.e. made-up words) and would be told that there are words from both categories in the pool, some rare words would unquestionably be identified as nonwords. However, if one were presented in another experiment with rare words and nonwords and asked to give their meanings or insert them into a selection of incomplete sentences, but would be told that all the words encountered are actual, though rare, words from the dictionary, it is very likely that many would ascribe meaning to the nonwords by some association (of spelling and/or sound) with familiar words.

⁵⁴⁹ And as the case of the Hatter’s “Why is a raven like a writing desk?” (Carroll, 60) shows, a riddle without an answer is not tolerated (see Carroll, “Preface”; cf. Carroll, *Annotated*, 72). The inevitable other side of the coin is the potential of frustration inherent in the realisation of dealing with an ‘enigma’ which may well not hold the promise of a solution.

⁵⁵⁰ See Hörmann ch. 7.

assume that “Joyce worked seventeen years to push the work *away from ‘meaning’*” (Kenner, *Dublin’s*, 304; emphasis added) we cannot help trying to push it back. *FW* thus participates in the impulse which Michel de Certeau has described in the context of the phenomenon of glossolalia: “This fiction of language never ceases to be taken for a language and treated as such. It never ceases to be *compelled* to mean something. It excites an impulse to decrypt and decipher which never wearies and which always supposes the organization of meaning lurking behind the series of sounds” (qtd. in trans. in Rasula and McCaffery 95; cf. de Certeau, 30). Those who have suggested that *FW* can be read for the enjoyment of its “surface” alone – an argument which is usually couched in terms which imply a sceptical attitude towards ‘reading for meaning’ – may have in a way failed to acknowledge that the fundamental human urge to understand our environment and our circumstances, which Albert Camus has described as “an insistence upon familiarity, an appetite for clarity” (Camus, 17), underlies uncircumventably such practices as reading.⁵⁵¹

There is no small irony in the fact that it was the novel, of all genres, however much altered its appearance was, which, in the last century, most effectively refused the reader’s insistence upon familiarity and appetite for clarity and made the reader’s position a precarious one:

Casting a glance over the development of the modern novel from James Joyce and Virginia Woolf to Nathalie Sarraute and Robbe-Grillet, the traditional bridges of understanding, which allowed the reader to transpose himself into the psyche and horizon of the world of another, are progressively dismantled here. The confidence that a common horizon of self-experience establishes the understanding each other [*Sich-Verstehen*] in the other appears not to be sustainable any more, when an explorative literature begins to relinquish the traditional unity of the subject, to reveal the plurality of the self, to dissolve the boundaries of self-consciousness into the hidden regions of the unconscious, and even to dissolve the personal [*personhafte*] constitution of dialogue through the abandonment of characters. Here, the reader is put in the position of an uninitiated third, which, in its strangeness, poses new problems of understanding for him. (Jauß, “Comprendre,” 81f; my trans.)

⁵⁵¹ Reading is of course a goal-orientated process. So, in fact, one can do ‘surface readings’ of *FW* without consciously contemplating the meaning of individual words or sentences. But one cannot turn these higher-level cognitive strategies off. Even if one is not aware of them, they do steer the reading process. Consequently, to “let the linguistic phenomenon affect one as such” (Straumann, 68) is actually to say that the unconscious urge to constitute meaning will inevitably be involved.

What, then, is the *reader position* in *FW*? This study illustrates that it is a position strongly influenced by the work's symbolic production which becomes manifest in the presuppositions about the work – mediated by critics, secondary literature, seminars, reading groups, web content, etc. (see ch. I). It is a position characterised by the provocation of a profoundly indeterminate text – arising from lexical distortion, obfuscation and *minus functions* – which effects a being thrown back, again and again, on the formal dimension of its language (see ch. II and III) and which, at the same time, invites, teases readers to hazard acts of extensive meaning construction (see ch. II) by provoking a dynamic which makes the whole archive(s) of culture into the text's context (see ch. III) and thus makes it 'readable' in the first place. It is also a position which is such as it is because of the foregrounding of the inextricable coincidence of words (see ch. II) and voices (see ch. IV) and the non-foregrounded, irredeemable coincidence of times and spaces (see ch. IV) in the apparent absence of any other traditional structuring element of narrative (see ch. II and IV).

If the *reader position* is a very idiosyncratic one in the case of *FW*, the *reader function* is no less so. The term *reader function* is here meant to denominate an act of reflection on the part of the reader rather than some virtual structure or information 'inscribed' in the text. The act of reflection concerns the answering of the question: Which function do I have as reader with respect to the text at hand? This act is provoked by the process of reading and rereading the text and is thus a response to the text. While for some readers their *reader function*, even regarding 'open works,' will involve the notion of intentionality, to figure out what the author intended to say/mean, based on the view that it must be the author's will to convey something more or less specific, for others it will involve realising which potentialities are made available by the text in order to be read in *homogeneously specific* ways (e.g. readers reading for 'the' plot or for 'the' religious symbolism, or, say, for *sortes Joyceanae* (i.e. with the intention of understanding what one is reading exclusively in terms of divination), or critics reading with a psychoanalytic, Marxist, or New Critical, etc. focus), for still others it will involve realising which potentialities are made available by the text in order to be read in *ever new* ways. In this respect, *FW* presents a particular, indeed revolutionary, challenge with regard to the *reader function* because it counteracts the two former of these responses. As this study illustrates, the inherent logic of *FW* ultimately consists in making the criterion of intention unavailable, effectively cancelling it.⁵⁵² It is first and foremost in this respect that one can say with Donald Davidson that "[b]y creating a hermeneutic space between the reader and the text, Joyce has at the same time doubled his own distance from the reader" (D.

⁵⁵² At the same time, Joyce took the liberty of inaugurating the process of *WiP/FW*'s symbolic production as discussed above.

Davidson, 157). Joyce may not have been the first writer to effectively cancel intention in his·her work – Dadaists and Russian Futurists had done so before. But Joyce was certainly the first to realise it in what at very first sight appeared to be a novel, that is, in a voluminous text rather than in a poem. And yet we may continue to adhere to the notion of authorial intention to the point that although we may be aware of the aforementioned logic, which *FW* critics are aware of in principle at least since the 1980s (see subchapter I.2.4 above), we still recoil from expressing its consequences. *Reader function* and *reader position* can hardly be considered independently of each other and yet it is necessary to distinguish them conceptually because the former brings the freedom-to-reflect aspect of reading literature (with respect to the fundamental question arising from the fact of *being the reader*) into focus whereas the latter emphasises the aspect of reading being influenced, being determined to a certain degree by a variety of factors.

FW takes full effect by provoking the reader to become *textor*, thereby attaining its supplement in terms of narrativity. The reader as *textor*, as weaver, weaves the text further, becoming through his·her acts of meaning construction the architect of narrative order who supplements the text with a satisfactory degree of meaning and coherence. Only by effecting this does *FW* realise its full *Wirkungspotenzial* (response-provoking potential). The Derridean concept of the *supplement* (see Derrida, “Supplement”) provides an apt way for this relation between *FW* and the reader-as-*textor* to become evident. As surplus (see *ibid.*, 144) the reader-as-*textor* adds something to the plentitude (see *ibid.*), namely narrative coherence. At the same time, it is only through this, through the reader becoming reader-as-*textor*, that the text becomes a narrative and thus replaces what it proceeds to enrich (see *ibid.*, 145). In fact, *Finnegans Wake* manifests the transition of the prerogative of narrativisation of the literary text from the author to the reader – or putting it more precisely, the author entrusting the licence of narrativisation to the reader – who cannot be considered simply a ‘gap filler’ any more but who becomes the narrative *ratio*, the narrativising *Instanz* of the text, and thus, in a way, *auctor* (not least in the sense of ‘guarantor,’ in which the aspect of ‘one who carries responsibility’ comes most clearly to the fore). Perhaps it is in this sense more than in any other that one can speak of *FW* as “the exclamation point to Modernism” (Staley, 6) – what could be more tempting than to define Modernism as the signalling of this entrustment/transition – and see it as a critical moment in the history of literature. The reader-as-*textor* does not attempt to figure out any more what it may be that the author intended to say or which story the author wanted to tell but feels called upon to create, to construct, from the defying text – defying but at the same time yielding – various narratives him·her·self. In

other words, the reader-as-*textor* does not consider *FW* a riddle but realises that one of the answers to the question “[A]nd is there one who understands me?” (*FW* 627.14-15) is: s/he who “find[s] [it no source of discouragement] [...] how minney combinaisies and permutandies can be played on the international surd” (*FW* 284.11-14). The realisation that with regard to *FW* the *reader function* is to become reader-as-*textor* comes only gradually and it is far from easy for readers to also abandon the criterion of authorial intention in their acts of meaning construction because intentionality is so entrenched in our interpretive thinking.

In this sense *FW* is a *Wirkungspotenzial* that provokes and teases its readers to supplement the *minus functions*. This is not a filling in of gaps (*Leerstellen*) with details but a supplementing with the basic narrative elements such as characters, plot, etc.⁵⁵³ The *minus functions* thus elicit ‘plus projections’ from readers, supplementing the ‘deficient’ elements. Accordingly, the reader “restores to the text those functions which have been neutralized” (Iser, *Act of Reading*, 211). While with some readers this represents the comprehensible desire “to reach firmer ground through recourse to criteria which the ‘minus functions’ of the text have in fact invalidated” (ibid., 210), today the experienced *FW* reader – fully aware of the precarious nature of his/her acts of meaning construction, interpretation, configuration and emplotment – does so not in order to “reestablish the nonfulfilled function in such a way that [s/he] might produce a unified evaluation of the events, a consistent attitude toward positions in the text, or a story that would impose a specific meaning on the interplay of the characters” (ibid.), but rather in order to construct, and, contrary to Lyotard’s proposition (see Lyotard, 15), to take pleasure in constructing, always anew and in an aleatoric way, unfamiliar narrative configurations; and this is part of the “fundamentally new interaction with readers” (Schwab, *Subjects*, 227) which *FW* instantiates. And perhaps at this point we have reached Schiller’s “Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen” (trans. as “On the Aesthetic Education of Man”) in which reflection becomes the prerequisite of ‘aesthetic play’ (see Schiller 182ff, 208ff) – considered in the light of Wittgenstein’s rhetorical question “And is there not also the case where we play, and make up the rules as we go along? And even where we alter them – as we go along” (Wittgenstein, 44^e § 83). Rather than being faced with “the burden of emplotment” (Ricœur, *Time*¹, 77; emphasis added), experienced readers pursue, in rereading, the bliss of “the plurality of entrances” (Barthes, *S/Z*, 5), ‘*la soif de l’imprévu*,’ i.e. the plurality of ways and means of making the text accessible, of accessing the potential of the

⁵⁵³ The concept of the text as penetrated by gaps reaches its limit in the case of *FW* and the notion of the text as stratification (*Schichtung*) of indeterminacy, interstratified with (more) determinate elements, which are the basis for readerly elaborations, asserts itself. (This notion is not meant to evoke Ingarden’s concept of the structure of the literary work as consisting of several *Schichten* (“strata”).)

text, “not aim[ing] at establishing the truth of the text [...], but [precisely] its plurality” (ibid., 14). Accordingly, since through its *minus functions* *FW* teases its readers to ‘translate’ it into a narrative, it is perhaps more useful to say that it is through readers’ involvement that *FW* suggests to be a narrative instead of declaring it to be this or not that in terms of narrativity.

Evaluations of *FW* cover the whole range of conceivable reactions, from outright dismissal as “one of the greatest failures in literature” (Nabokov, *Lectures*, 349) by Vladimir Nabokov⁵⁵⁴ to Harold Bloom’s praise of it as coming “as close as our chaos could come to the heights of Shakespeare and Dante” (Bloom, *Canon*, 422).⁵⁵⁵ Many of those who believe that *Finnegans Wake* is a failure may ultimately agree on specifying this failure to lie in the work’s ‘failing’ to ‘transport’ its readers into a fictional world; no reader comes even close to be tempted to believe “que e[s] verdad tod[o] [...] que leía” (*DQ* I, 1, 39), the windmills which *FW* readers tilt at are certainly not those of *l’effet de réel* and immersion. Those who deem it to be a ‘masterpiece’ make their case on the basis of notions such as originality, aesthetic boldness, ‘openness,’ or what they perceive to be the anticipation of the conception of language which would be elaborated in the 1960s by French philosophers and *théoricien-ne-s* (post-)structuralistes. *FW* is then considered to be unparalleled in exposing or illustrating the signifying potential of language in an act of foregrounding language’s unerasable playful excess, its essential indeterminacy. Another way of seeing its merit is to consider *FW* instantiating a field of tension between what Aleida Assmann regards as the two fundamental Western sign conceptions, which she has termed *Manifestationslogik* (“logic of manifestation”) and *Ersetzungslogik* (“logic of replacement”), between which she considers Western history to have oscillated, even if – as she outlines as well – the general historical development has seen the latter superseding the former (see Assmann, 728 and passim; cf. Foucault, *Order*). *Manifestationslogik* is meant to indicate that “the thing itself is present in the signs in one way or another. [...] In other words: the thing manifests itself in the sign” (ibid.; my trans.), whereas *Ersetzungslogik* suggests that “the thing is represented by the sign” (ibid.; my trans.) and thus signs are in this way “only indirectly related to the world of things” (ibid.; my trans.). Something indeed “motivates, animates, inhabits the [*FW*] sign, which is [...] its place of materialisation and presence” (ibid.; my trans.) – but it is not things but rather

⁵⁵⁴ In contrast, *Ulysses* Nabokov placed first among the “greatest masterpieces of twentieth-century prose” (Nabokov, *Strong*, 57).

⁵⁵⁵ Harold Bloom, one of the great defenders of the concept of a central Western canon based on the notion of aesthetic autonomy, writes in *The Western Canon*: “[I]f aesthetic merit were ever again to center the canon, the *Wake* [*FW*], like Proust’s *Search*, would be as close as our chaos could come to the heights of Shakespeare and Dante” (Bloom, *Canon*, 422). This evaluation is based on Bloom’s understanding of the originality of Dante and Shakespeare: “One mark of an originality that can win canonical status for a literary work is a strangeness that we either never altogether assimilate [as Bloom holds to be the case in Dante and Joyce] or that becomes such a given that we are blinded to its idiosyncrasies [as in Shakespeare’s case, according to Bloom]” (ibid., 4).

other signs, as in the case of *FW*'s lexical blends. Whatever one assumes the relation of *word* and *world* to be in *FW*, every single one of its readers has experienced, or will experience, the fundamental provocation of this text – the wanting of something s/he perceives as desirable or natural (cf. OED, “void, adj. and n. 1,” B.13.b.), whether it be called content, plot, story, key, solution, or meaning. In respect of *FW*, the horizon of reading will always be bounded by the windmills of what Iser and others have termed readers' involvement, which less and less readers may mistake for the aesthetico-historical giant of representation, but the dimensions of which, like those of the horizon, seemingly self-obliterating, remain unrecognised.

Why still deal with *FW* in the twenty-first century? Can the engagement with the work lay claim to any topicality? The answer is yes. Because the text makes us forcefully aware of the issues which are involved in reading, meaning constitution, interpretation, and narrativity, such as our desire for meaning and *Sinnzusammenhänge*, i.e. the desire to organise a plurality of elements into a subjectively satisfying coherent whole on the level of meaning (and our cognitively active part in constructing them) – with *FW*, in other words, due to its provocation, it is never too late to ask fundamental questions, and this certainly constitutes its significance. It reminds us of the fact that literature is first and foremost language before it is meaning in any conceivable sense of that word. At the same time it makes the notion of meaning being interminably deferrable appear suspect. If one insists on viewing the work in relation to our world, then *FW* can be seen as a work that reflects the ever-increasing complexity – some would probably speak of a complexity verging on obscurity – of our world which no one can pretend (any more) to grasp in its entirety. By denying us the possibility to translate its kaleidoscopic complexity into a simplifying coherent narrative without our becoming aware of the nonsensicality of such an approach, *FW* refuses to sustain the perpetual impulse of reducing the complexity of human existence, including art, to the plethora of all-too-simple-stories with which we contend ourselves – being unable to cope with this complexity ‘in its entirety’ – day by day. The insights that we wrest from the fact of our being human only ever raise an absurd number of new questions. The more ‘knowledge’ we accumulate, the more the complexity of the world and of being become perceptible; positivist and teleological notions of progress have been shattered, as well as the hope for its futurity, pace Habermas. Similar with *FW*, the more we think we know about it, the less we seem able to claim to understand it. At the same time, it also represents man's striving to solve the mysteries of the world, not being content with not understanding. Its complexity and overtaxing of the individual grasp and its consequent effect to act as a community-building stimulus make it a work of interest for the twenty-first century.

APPENDIX A: THE USE OF THE TERM *MODERNISM* IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The term *modern* is, and has always been, a relative one – always subservient to contemporary exigencies at any time of its use (see Klinger). Thus the phrase “moderne writers” had been used as early as 1589 by George Puttenham in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (see Puttenham, 80). The phrase “modern poetry” occurs already in Thomas Rymer’s *A Short View of Tragedy* from 1693 (see Rymer, 120, 123). Indeed, as Ernst Robert Curtius has shown, the contrast *antiqui – moderni*, describing poets, with the latter term meaning ‘of the present time,’ was already in use in the sixth century (see Curtius, *Europäische*, 257) and was also topical in the late twelfth century (see *ibid.*, 127, 259 n. 1, 483). In the first half of the twentieth century, Edmund Wilson and Harry Levin used the term “modern literature” when writing about what in the second half of the century would be termed Modernism; and the famous Gotham Book Mart catalogue from 1940 carried the title “We Moderns.” In contrast, the terms *modernist* and *modernism* have acquired a more specific meaning in the course of the twentieth century. The following overview – rough as it is – is meant to illustrate their uses in the early twentieth century, indicating early examples of such uses that are in accord with its present meaning to some degree. It provides a context for the discussion of Elias Arnesen’s use of the term *modernism* in chapter I.3.2 of this study.

The terms *modernist* and *modernism* were occasionally used in writing on painting, literature and music in the early decades of the twentieth century. In discussions of painting the term modernism occurs, for instance, in John Duke Coleridge’s essay “The Necessity of Modernism in the Arts” (1852), in C. F. Hayward’s “Modernism in Art” (1860), and in Sidney Colvin’s “Art and Criticism” (1879) in which it is used, more often than not, as a pejorative term. In a piece on contemporary painting in *The New Republic* from 1916, George Soule criticises the “modernist” (Soule, 284) painter’s “revolt against representation of nature” (*ibid.*, 284f) and his “abandoning [of] recognizable forms” (*ibid.*, 286). In his “Modernism in Art,” the painter Arthur Wesley Dow writes, a few months later, in 1917, “Modernism is an inclusive name applied to the many forms of rebellion against the accepted and the traditional” (Dow, 113). He sees in modernism for instance “[t]he rejection of most of the traditional ideas of art, even to the denial that beauty is worth seeking” (*ibid.*, 116). Modernists, Dow points out, pay “[l]ess attention to subject, more to form” (*ibid.*) which includes “[c]easing to make representation a standard” (*ibid.*).

In writing on music the terms appear in a similar context in the same year. In his *Ultra-Modernism in Music: A Treatise on the Latter-Day Revolution in Musical Art*, the English composer William Edmondstoune Duncan wrote: “Ultra-Modernists in music are those daring spirits who put invention and imagination first, and precedent, convention and scholarship last. Their point of view is that of the pioneer; and only the untried absorbs them” (Duncan, 1), and hastens to add that “dramatists, novelists, historians, poets, and painters are doing the same thing – attempting new combinations and defying the old notions of harmony, colour and form” (ibid., 2). Duncan notably refers to the “vers libre of Kahn, Stuart Merrill, and Verhaeren, or the Cubist doctrines of Matisse and Picasso” (ibid., 123). Also in 1917, the English composer Cyril Scott published a collection of his articles under the title *The Philosophy of Modernism: In its Connection with Music*, in which he defended the modern composers’ (he mentions Alexander Scriabin, Percy Grainger, and Claude Debussy) “tendency [...] to invent new forms or structural designs” (Scott, 67). At the same time, Scott rejected “futurism” in music which he equates with ‘experimentalism’ for its own sake (see ibid., 6).

In the field of literature, as with the Spanish-American *modernismo* which originated from the works of Rubén Darío (see Jrade), the terms *modernism* and *modernist* were not uncommon in Russian criticism of the first decades of the twentieth century (see Mozejko, 892f). The word *модернизм* (modernizm, “modernism”), or *модернизмъ* as it was often spelt in pre-revolutionary Russia, which was often used to refer to the Russian Symbolist poets, appears, for instance, in such titles as S. Povesa and L. Kogana’s *Модернисты, их предшественники и критическая литература о них* (Modernisty, ix predšestvenniki i kritičeskaja literatura o nix; “the modernists, their precursors and critical literature on them”) from 1908, Nikolai Apostolov’s *Импрессионизмъ и модернизмъ*, (Impressionizm" i modernizm", “impressionism and modernism”) from the same year, Victor Chernov’s “Модернизм в русской поэзии” (Modernizm v russkoj poëzii, “modernism in Russian poetry”) from 1910, Emil Medtner’s *Модернизмъ и музыка* (Modernizm" i muzyka, “modernism and music”) from 1912, and *Синтетический модернизмъ и богоискательство* (Sintetičeskij modernizm" i bogoiskatel'stvo, “synthetic modernism and godseeking”), the second volume of Semen Vengerov’s *Русская литература XX вѣка* (Russkaja literatura XX veka, “Russian literature of the twentieth century”) (1914-1916), from 1915. In 1909, in the résumé of the last issue of the Symbolist magazine *Вѣсы* (Vesy), its editor, the Symbolist Valery Bryusov, wrote: “Most of all Vesy sought to be the champion of a whole cycle of complex and organically connected ideas and experiences, even an entire world view, known

under certain conditions as ‘Symbolism,’ ‘Modernism’ [модернизм], ‘the new art,’ and even ‘Decadence’” (qtd. in trans. in Peterson, 135). It is thus not surprising that English works on Russian literature by Russian émigrés like Moissaye J. Olgin and D. S. Mirsky also made use of the term. In his *A Guide to Russian Literature (1820-1917)* from 1920, Olgin referred to the Russian symbolist poets as “modernists” (see Olgin, ch. 2). Mirsky’s *Contemporary Russian Literature, 1881–1925*, from 1926, also makes use of the terms but in a rather vague fashion.

In discussions of English literature, too, the terms were in circulation in the early decades of the twentieth century as a search of the database of The Modernist Journals Project shows. In 1912, John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield advertised their magazine *Rhythm* as “the unique magazine of modernist art” (qtd. in Brooker and Thacker, 263 n. 1; cf. Murry, 55). In his *Modernism and Romance*, published in 1908, the English journalist and critic R. A. Scott-James calls the “characteristics of modern life in general” *modernism* (Scott-James, x) – a word which he borrow’s from Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* – thus using it to describe “the distinctive ideas and habits of thought which are ‘in the air,’ which are affecting all of us in our lives and our outlook upon life” and how these are reflected in “modern literature” (ibid., xii). Francis Lamont Peirce wrote in his 1911 piece “Bernard Shaw: A Prophet Who Laughs”: “Modernism in literature finds divers modes of expression. There are the shadowy, appalling Destinies of Ibsen, the agonizing glooms of Hauptmann’s *Weavers*, the ethereal symbolism of Maeterlinck’s *Joyzelle*, the pagan ardors of D’Annunzio’s *Ship*” (F. L. Peirce, 18). In their *Literature of the World: An Introductory Study* from 1922, William L. Richardson and Jesse M. Owen refer to “Modernist movements” in Russian and Spanish literature (see Richardson and Owen, 196, 318f). In 1924, John Crowe Ransom referred to the term *modernism* in “The Future of Poetry.” Joseph Warren Beach used the term as well in his *The Outlook for American Prose* in 1926 where he wrote “We are bound to see in our prose developments of ‘modernism’ parallel to the developments in all the arts” (Beach, *Outlook*, 12); he also used the terms *modernist(s)* and *modernism* as a matter of course in his 1932 *The Twentieth-Century Novel: Studies in Technique*. One of the most well-known instances of the use of the terms is certainly Robert Graves and Laura Riding’s *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, which appeared in 1927. In 1935, the English critic and novelist Walter Allen wrote in “New Trends in English Poetry”:

The word modernist, always ill-defined and applied variously to lyric poetry and lamp-shades, may be used in two senses: to mean certain technical experiments and innovations in literature, and to mean a certain disgust and disillusion expressed in literature. In other words, the emphasis may be laid either on form or content, so that a novelist like Huxley, whose work

contributes little of experimental interest, may be considered a modernist on the score of his content. The modernist period in England came to a head in the immediately post-war years. As Edmund Wilson pointed out in *Axel's Castle*, English modernism is strictly a development of the methods used in French symbolism. [...] The modernist period lasted roughly from 1916 to 1927, and with the exception of the work of Lawrence, never in any sense a modernist, the only important work during that period was in the modernist vein. We may limit the period from the publications of *A Portrait of the Artist* and *Prufrock* until Edgell Rickword's *Invocations to Angels* and Graves's *Poems: 1927*. And the characteristics of modernism may best be suggested by a list of the important writers of the modernist period, Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, Herbert Read, Mrs. Woolf, T. F. Powys, Norman Douglas, Graves, Rickword, Aldous Huxley, and the Sitwell family; names that may easily be equated to such American writers of the same period as Scott Fitzgerald, Anderson, Hemingway, Cummings, Conrad Aiken, Kay Boyle, Gertrude Stein, Carlos Williams, Pound, Ransome [sic], Hart Crane, Allan [sic] Tate, Wallace Stevens. (Walter Allen, 35f)

In *Die Französische Kultur: Eine Einführung* ("French culture: an introduction") from 1930, Ernst Robert Curtius wrote, "Since Baudelaire there has been a 'modernism' [*Modernismus*] in French literature" (Curtius, *Französische*, 94; my trans.). According to Curtius, the French modernism, inaugurated by Baudelaire and carried on by Mallarmé, Valéry, Rimbaud and Claudel, meant a "breaking" (*ibid.*; my trans.) of the "rational world view" (*ibid.*; my trans.) and an appeal to the "sense of the poetic mystery" (*ibid.*; my trans.).

APPENDIX B: ILLUSTRATIONS

(The figures and images below must be rotated.
In order to do this click *View* on the menu bar, then *Rotate View*.
Zoom for a larger view.)

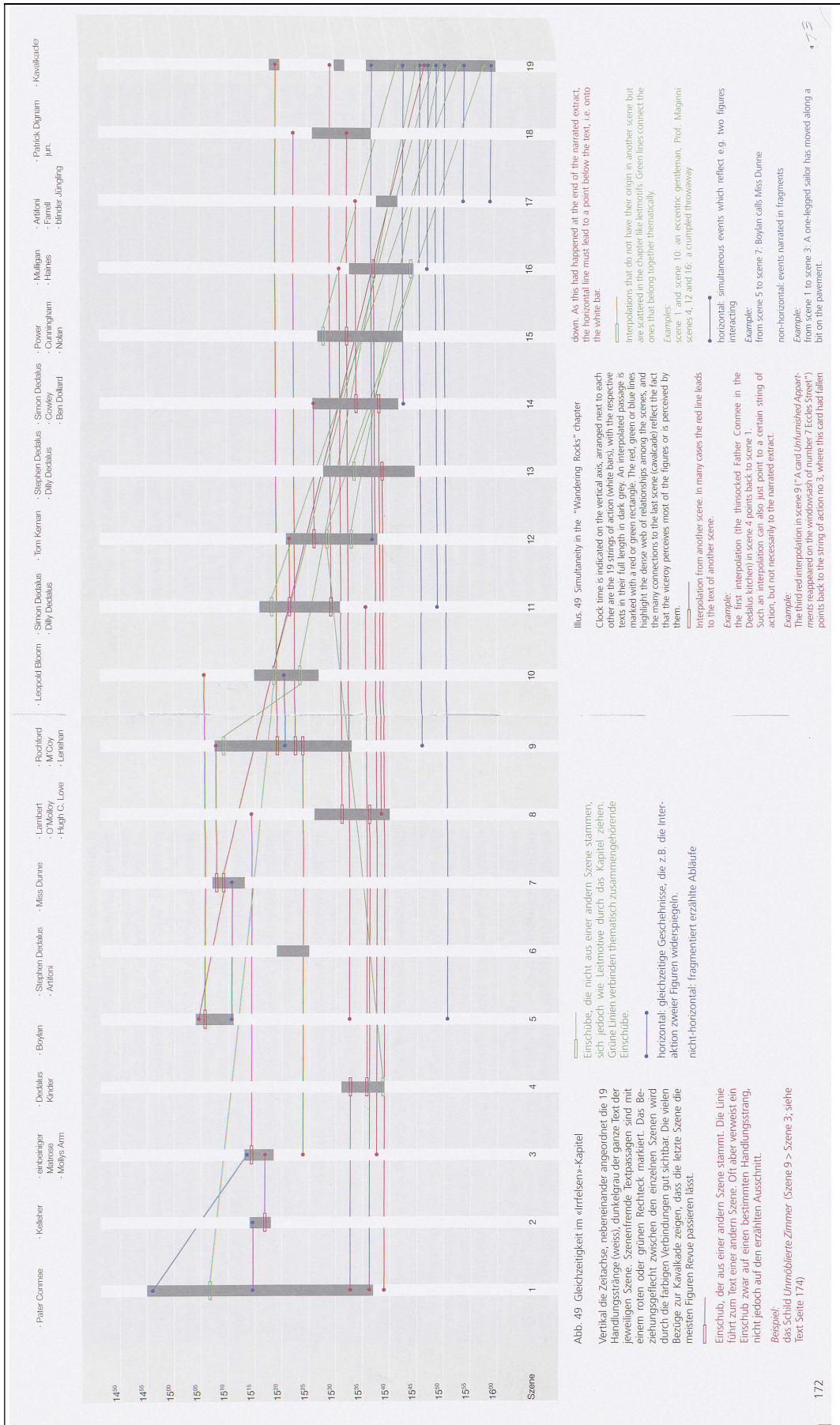


Fig. 2 Ruth Frehner's diagram of simultaneity in "Wandering Rocks".

Source: Frehner, 172f illus. 49; reproduced by permission of Ruth Frehner.

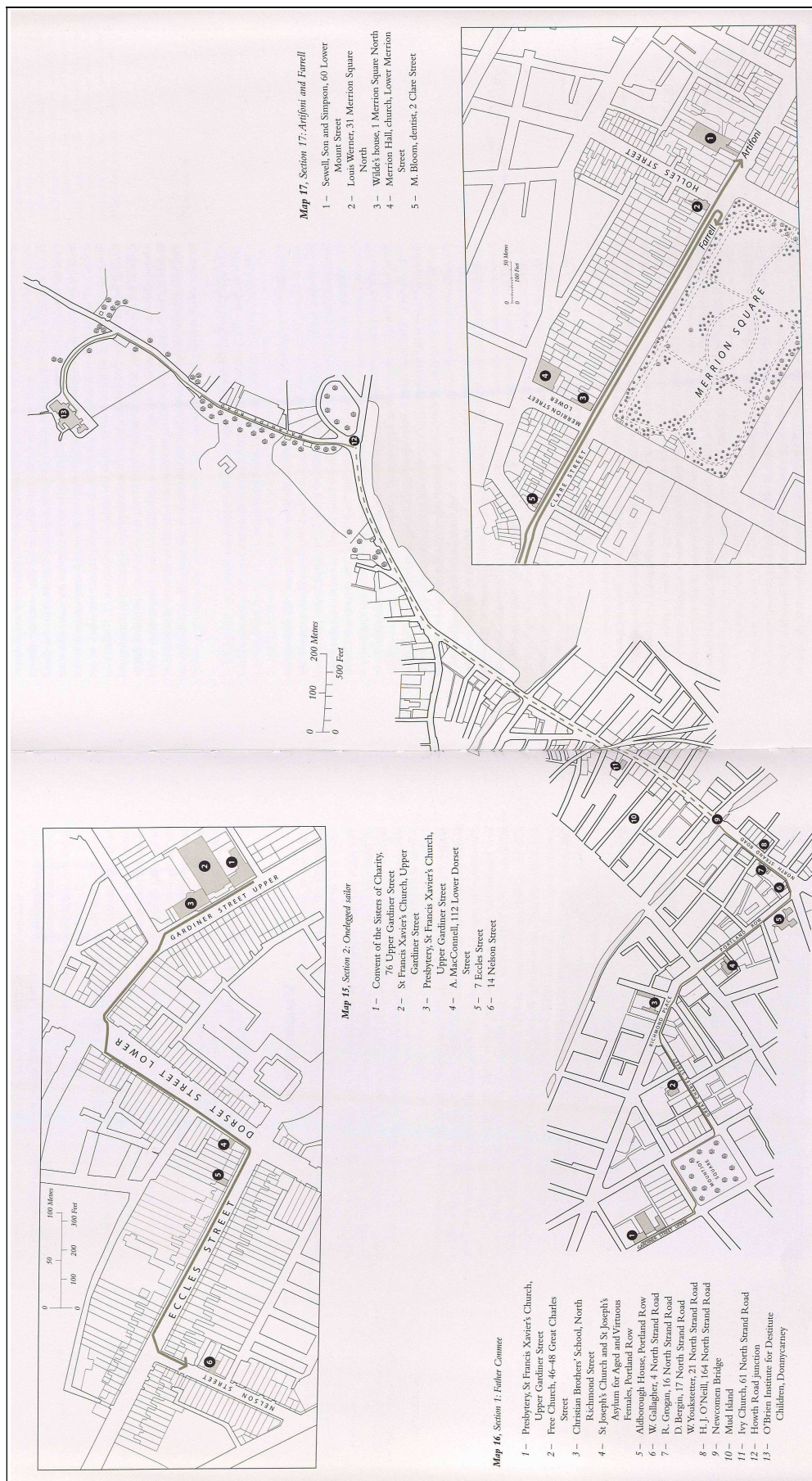


Fig. 3 I. Gunn and C. Hart's maps of the "Wandering Rocks" vignettes 1, 3, and 17.
 Source: Gunn, 46f maps 15, 16, 17; reproduced by permission of Clive Hart and Ian Gunn.



Large map: Excerpt from the Phoenix Map of Dublin, 1912, with Father Conmee's itinerary. The uninterrupted line marks his walk, the broken line his tram journey. Small map: Dublin, survey map, with the itinerary of Father Conmee and the viceregal cavalcade. The itineraries are those of the protagonists of the first and last section of the chapter. In analogy to the way they frame the chapter, these protagonists, by virtue of representing the church and British colonial rule, also formed Irish society at the turn of the century. Note that their paths do not cross but take different directions.

Abb. 45
 Grosses Bild: Ausschnitt aus dem Phoenix-Stadtplan von Dublin, 1912. Markiert ist Pater Connees Route zu Fuss (ausgezogene Linie) und im Tram (unterbrochene Linie). Kleines Bild: Dublin, Übersichtsplan, mit den Wegrichtungen von Pater Conmee und der vikereglichen Kavalkade. Bei den eingezeichneten Wegen handelt es sich um die der Protagonisten der ersten und letzten Szene im Kapitel. So wie diese das Kapitel umfassen, stehen die Protagonisten – Pater Conmee als Vertreter der Kirche und der Vikereg als Repräsentant der britischen Kolonialherrschaft – für die prägenden Kräfte der damaligen irischen Gesellschaft. Die Wege kreuzen sie sich nicht, verlaufen vielmehr in verschiedene Richtungen.



Dignam's Court

Fig. 4 R. Frehner's excerpt from the Phoenix Map of Dublin (1912).
 Source: Frehner, 158f illus. 45; reproduced by permission of Ruth Frehner.

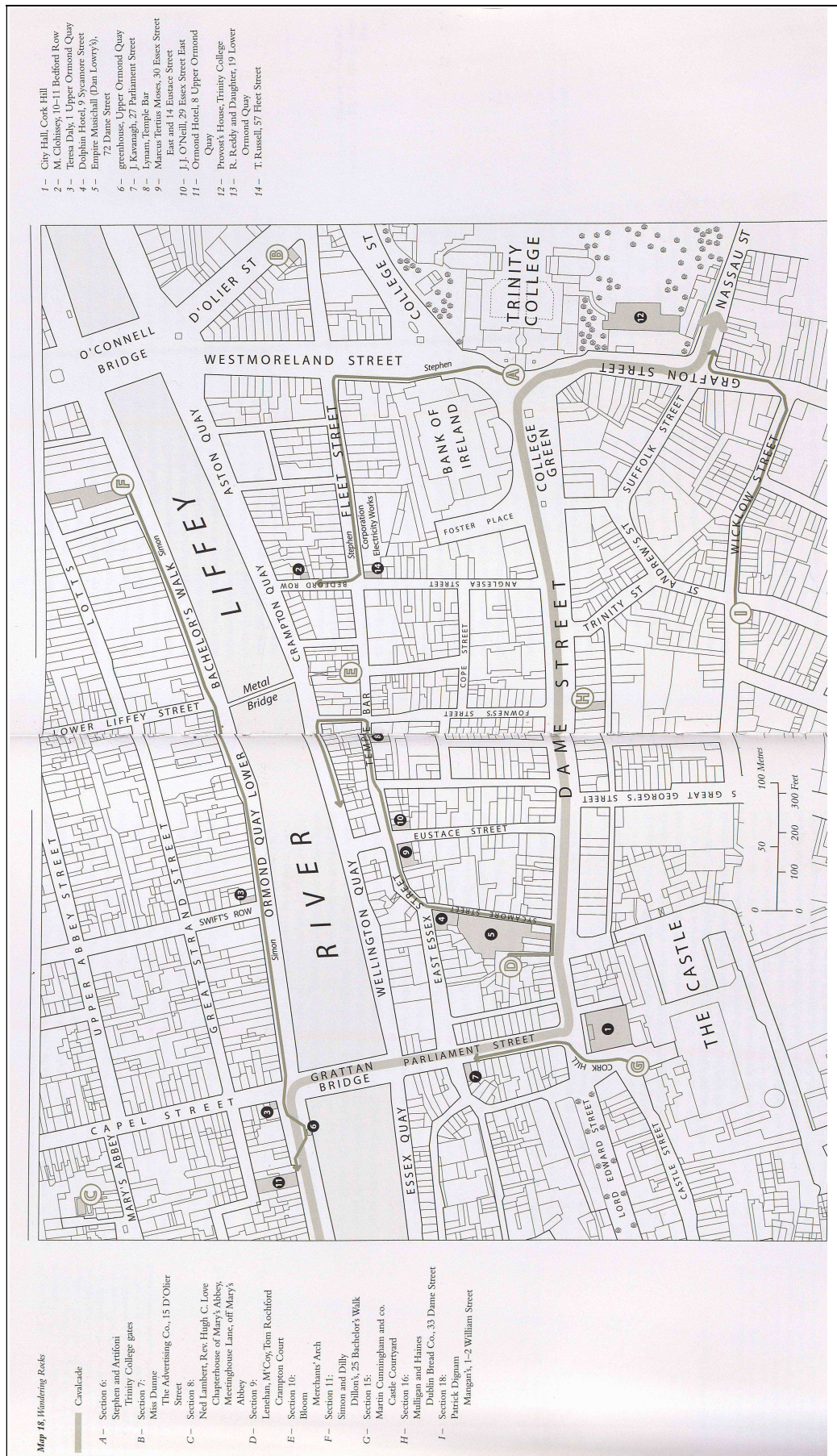


Fig. 5 I. Gunn and C. Hart's map of the "Wandering Rocks" vignettes 6-11, 13-16, 18.
 Source: Gunn, 50f map 18; reproduced by permission of Clive Hart and Ian Gunn.



Fig. 6 I. Gunn and C. Hart's map of the "Wandering Rocks" vignette 19.

Source: Gunn, 54f map 19; reproduced by permission of Clive Hart and Ian Gunn.

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Abstract

The central aim of this study is to describe and explain the peculiar position of the reader of *Finnegans Wake* and to account for the reading strategies and interpretive strategies resulting from this position. The first chapter is concerned with reconstructing the “symbolic production” of *FW*. It does so by conceiving the commentaries on and the criticism of the work, the processes of canonisation, in particular the factor university qua institution, and the effects of literary theories as agents and factors of this symbolic production, which influences the reader position. Chapter II explores how the language of *FW* ‘functions’ with respect to the reader and seeks to identify some of the devices through which the reader is put in the position in which s/he finds him/herself. It examines the reader’s involvement in the text and develops a mode of analysis that allows us to account for and to describe coincidence as an important aspect of meaning construction in *FW*. Chapter III enquires into the two dynamics which *FW* elicits. These two dynamics point to the notion of the text’s essential self-reflexivity (in the case of the esoreferential dynamic) and to the notion of the text’s essential allusiveness (in the case of the exoreferential dynamic) respectively. The considerable issues that are implicated in the latter dynamic are examined here. The last chapter argues that coincidence is an apt concept to describe salient aspects of *Ulysses* and *FW*. Under the heading of coincidence, the chapter assembles a discussion of the notions of form and content and their relation in *U* and *FW* and of the coincidence of (characters in) time(s) and space(s).

Short Biography

Philipp Rößler was born in Leipzig. He graduated from Universität Leipzig with a Magister Artium degree (M.A.) in English language and literature (*Anglistik*) and in medieval and modern history. During his studies, he spent a year at the University of Miami. In 2009 he joined the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies at Freie Universität Berlin.