

GENETIC INROADS INTO THE ART OF JAMES JOYCE

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Introduction

This book collects essays from over half a century on the writing and art of James Joyce. My thinking and my writing in this vein began as a matter of chance and coincidence. Engaged as I was after my doctorate in pursuing the study of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, I met with scepticism a request I received to contribute to an assessment of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. My colleague, Wilhelm Fuger, was planning a collection of essays discussing the novel and asked me to write a chapter about its text. Why he fixed on me to contribute on this subject was—yes because¹ I had just returned to Munich from twenty-one months' immersion in Anglo-American (in fact, altogether US-American) Textual Criticism and Bibliography under the tutelage of Fredson Bowers in Charlottesville, VA. Joyce's *A Portrait* had attracted me before, in my earliest days as an undergraduate studying English Literature in Frankfurt. I now explored the literature about it—and saw that at its core there lay distinct problems of a text-critical and potentially editorial nature. I attempted, though, to fend off Wilhelm Fuger's request: 'But it's all been done. Just to summarise that and to write it up (again): that's boring.' 'But we want it in German', he responded. So I was hooked.²

Delving in depth into the problem, I soon realised that by no means had everything been done. Significant documentary sources stood to be (re-)discovered. The essay 'Towards a Critical Text of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*' eventually headed the 1974 volume of *Studies in Bibliography*. It now opens the present collection. Its strictly text-critical and potentially editorial mode was soon complemented in

1 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, episode 18, line 1 (and re-sounded throughout the episode).

2 The outcome was: Hans Walter Gabler, 'Zur Textgeschichte und Textkritik des *Portrait*', in James Joyces *"Portrait": Das Jugendbildnis im Lichte neuerer deutscher Forschung*, ed. by Wilhelm Fuger (Munich: Goldmann, 1972), pp. 20-38.

1975/1976 by my first excursions into a genetically critical analysis of Joyce's composition and writing, and thus of the transmission of the novel-in-progress through material documents into publication. The essays this elicited became fused in 'The Genesis of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*' of 1998. At its core stands the recognition of the novel's structured complexity. Joyce carefully centred its five chapters on the middle chapter, Chapter 3, and sub-divided this in turn into three segments. The middle segment comprises Father Arnall's hell sermons. They form the novel's dead centre. Chapters 1 and 2 lead towards, and Chapters 4 and 5 lead away from that axis. Moving beyond it through Chapters 4 and 5 to end *A Portrait*, Joyce devised Chapter 5 in four segments and thereupon proceeded to mirror into Chapter 1 the four-segment structure attained for the closing chapter. This was achieved in revision by shifting the 'Christmas Dinner scene' from (originally) Chapter 2 to Chapter 1. Chapters 1 and 2 and Chapters 4 and 5 thus symmetrically bracket Chapter 3. Hugh Kenner appreciatively commented that although Joyce's chiasmic design had been there to see all the time, it had taken sixty years to be discerned.

Beyond these beginnings, uncovering fresh ground for *A Portrait*, I received another nudge from Wilhelm Füger: ought I not now to tackle the follow-up? To take the road I felt increasingly beckoning anyhow? Some editing had already been attempted on Joyce's early prose. *Ulysses*, however, was text-critically and editorially still a completely open field. I embraced the encouragement. I felt confident in my dual professional background: my upbringing on Shakespeare and English drama from around 1600, and the foundations subsequently gained in scholarship and genetic criticism from Anglo-American Textual Criticism and Bibliography, from *Editionswissenschaft* in Germany, and indeed also from French *critique génétique*. From the mid-1970s onwards, I thus chose to steer my scholarly and critical course for near half a century on the waves of James Joyce's oeuvre.

The concept of editing James Joyce's *Ulysses* using a methodological fusion of textual criticism, scholarly editing, and genetic criticism matured during three preparatory years. On the basis of a substantial grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, seven years of

intense cooperative teamwork followed.³ This resulted in the edition in three volumes of James Joyce, *Ulysses. A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, which saw publication on 16 June (Bloomsday), 1984. The edition was justly, I believe, recognised as a fresh departure in scholarly editing, and indeed equally so, though for distinct sets of reasons, in both the Anglo-American and the European professional fields.

While my work on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* had been theoretical, written with the possibility that I might one day edit the novel, the preparations for, and labour on *Ulysses* demanded a practical realisation issuing in the full-scale critical and synoptic edition itself. Hence, no essay can be provided for the present collection that chimes with the earlier text-critical and text-genetic essays for *A Portrait*. The analytical and explicatory reflections on the *Ulysses* edition that were written closest in time to its publication are the Introductions to the critical editions of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and of *Dubliners* of 1993 that followed *Ulysses*. Both Introductions are here reproduced from their re-allocation (slightly revised) to the respective Norton Critical Editions of 2007 and 2006. What each of these Introductions aims to assert, both practically and (as it were) theoretically, is that, given the state of transmission of the text to be edited, the Anglo-American mode of scholarly editing remains thoroughly valid. This clear positioning helps to sharpen further the contrasting editorial and genetically critical solutions found for editing *Ulysses*.

The high praise lavished on the *Ulysses* edition at its publication in 1984 began within less than a year to be overshadowed. The 'Joyce Wars', as they were declared at the time, found their moment in international scholarly debates; and indeed their echo reverberated into more general cultural awareness during the late twentieth century. The generations since have tended to perceive those 'wars', if at all, as past history. My essay of 2018 on steering the *Ulysses* edition through the turbulence of scholarship and reception, incorporated in the present collection, endeavours to formulate my double perspective of today on these events: that is, I believe I can both re-imagine the past moment as the

3 The team (fluctuating somewhat over seven years): Wolfhard Steppe, Claus Melchior, Charity Scott-Stokes, Harald Beck, Kinga Thomas, Walter Hettche, Danis Rose (for a few months), Mike Groden (during a productive though sadly grey and rainy July 1978).

editor working in the 1980s, and assess the facts and related issues from the outsider perspective of the (engaged) critic of the 2020s. In 'Seeing James Joyce's *Ulysses* into the Digital Age', I look back as editor and critic together on what the edition's erstwhile critics thought and saw—or overlooked or failed to see—as well as where and how their views and propositions remain valid.

Re-reading my essays—and sometimes retouching them, if only slightly—has demanded that I re-view and re-experience my shifting focus on, and awareness and perception of, Joyce's creativity and his conceptual progress from his epiphanies (1902-1903) to mid-*Ulysses* (1918). 'James Joyce's Text in Progress' begins a sequence of essays that critically explore Joyce's creativity and achievement from a genetic perspective. Proceeding from this essay of 1990—and after a fourteen-year interim across the new millennium—follows the 'Rocky Road to *Ulysses*' analysis of 2004. It sets in motion a dynamic stumbling forward, rock by rock (as it were), and so gains and communicates both feeling for and understanding of *Ulysses* in progress. The dynamics of genetic writing in progress, in other words, crave a consonant dynamic approach in critical analysis and interpretation. Pursuing the paths of creation and composition requires, moreover, reading and re-reading over time. This is the fundamental attitude that admits a genetic focus on the full range of observation, thought, analysis, and explication.

The essays that accumulated in publication from 2020 to 2022 will, I hope, prove the point. Stimulated by Irina Rasmussen's take on Joyce's modernist poetics as manifested in *Scylla & Charybdis* of 1918,⁴ I traced the episode's core Hamlet lecture back to its origins in Joyce's oeuvre. It seems to have been considered as a segment in Chapter V of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The *Portrait* fair copy has what might be seen as an entry and an exit marker where Stephen Dedalus would have gone into and, hours later, left the National Library. The Hamlet lecture was ultimately not written into *A Portrait*, however. It was replaced by a movement centred on the composition of a villanelle poem. The Hamlet version withheld in 1913, whatever it may have been like, was eventually turned into the second of the two chapters with which

4 Irina Rasmussen, 'Riffing on Shakespeare: James Joyce, Stephen Dedalus and the Avant-Garde Theory of Literary Creation', *Joyce Studies Annual 2019* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), pp. 33-73.

Joyce chose to begin composing the new novel *Ulysses*. The first *Ulysses* chapter was fully drafted 1914 to mid-1915 in Trieste. It was developed from the (Gogarty)/Buck Mulligan materials left over from *A Portrait* and became the Telemachus episode that opens *Ulysses*. The second composition for the novel, which followed on closely, was what Joyce called the 'Hamlet chapter'. It was the first full text written upon the Joyces taking up residence in Zurich in mid-1915—and thus, no doubt, it was also composed from *A Portrait* leftovers. Joyce offered the 'Hamlet chapter' for pre-publication to Ezra Pound, at Pound's request, in 1916, though in the event Pound did not take him up on the offer. From the 1916 version, since lost, derives in turn the earliest extant draft for *Scylla & Charybdis* from late 1918.

Joyce's engagement with Shakespeare and Hamlet is traceable specifically to the months of study he spent preparing for his *Amleto* lectures at the Triestine Scuola Popolare in late 1912 to early 1913. Making this line out has defined for me not only the main trajectory of the creative transfiguration of the episode into original composition, from its first apparently intended—yet retracted—inclusion in *A Portrait* through to *Scylla & Charybdis*. It has also made discernible Joyce's self-aware progression of thought, poetological choice and decision-making in his art from its early beginnings. Even at the age of eighteen, he had already expressed aphoristically his understanding of William Shakespeare as one who stood apart from the contemporary playwrights of 1900: 'Shakespeare was before all else a literary artist; [...His] work [...] was literature in dialogue.'⁵

Over the years, the constellations shifted in which Joyce's creative transfiguration of his reading, as well as his self-reflection and artistry, found interpretable expression. This I endeavour to explore in a triad of essays. 'James Joyce's Hamlet Chapter' (2020) deepens the argument that Stephen Dedalus' Hamlet performance originated during the gestation of Chapter V of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This entails the observation that not integrating a Hamlet performance by Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait* also meant sacrificing a progression through one day only for the novel's fifth chapter. A continuous morning-to-evening flow appears to have been pre-designed for it. In the event, however,

5 'Drama and Life', in *James Joyce: Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, ed. by Kevin Barry (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23.

Stephen's villanelle composition, unspecified in time, won out over his afternoon lecture to the librarians in the National Library. Yet the one-day design was only shelved, not forgotten. It was reasserted for the full eighteen episodes of *Ulysses* entire.

The second and third essays in the Shakespeare-Hamlet triad deepen in complexity. 'From Hamlet to Scylla & Charybdis: Experience into Art' (2021) endeavours to elucidate the poetics underlying the genetic progress from the (lost) Hamlet chapter of 1916 to the late 1918 draft that closely precedes the fair copy of New Year's Eve 1918. Auxiliary to the essay's lines of argument, I link to a basic text version I have constructed of Stephen's Hamlet performance from the 1918 draft.⁶ This enables me to develop the genetic argument in stages. Not least, it allows me to focus on the transformation and transconfiguration of the author-character relationship. The *alter-ego* co-existence of James Joyce with Stephen Dedalus, as lived through *Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait*, and now through to the ninth episode of *Ulysses*, ends. James Joyce sets Stephen Dedalus free; and with him Buck Mulligan, too. Both live on through the second half of *Ulysses* solely as free characters both of and in the fiction.

'Emergence of James Joyce's Dialogue Poetics' (2022), third in the triad, re-illuminates as it re-encompasses the advance of Joyce's poetics that shaped his art. The progress from the epiphanies via *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* to the Scylla & Charybdis midpoint of *Ulysses*, shows how he emulated and achieved a mode of writing akin to Shakespeare's, which Joyce in 1900 singled out and defined as 'literature in dialogue'.

'Structures of Memory and Orientation: Steering a Course Through Wandering Rocks' (re-incorporated with revisions from its original Open Book Publishers presentation in 2018) and 'Composing Penelope Towards the Condition of Music' (2023, original to this volume) round off the sequence of essays devoted to individual episodes of *Ulysses*. The Wandering Rocks episode opens the novel's second half on fresh grounds of poetics. Penelope closes it by expanding *Ulysses* ultimately into dimensions of music. The nineteen segments of Wandering Rocks represent the obstructive ever-wandering rocks through which, in Greek myth, Jason and the Argonauts successfully navigate on their quest

6 To be found at: Hans Walter Gabler, *Basic-Hamlet Proposition* (2020), https://www.academia.edu/50815114/Basic_hamlet_proposition

for the Golden Fleece. The rocks' elusiveness in the myth is artfully re-configured in this episode by means of apparently stray text snippets properly contextualisable only in some other segment or segments, outside the one that houses them. This text patterning, erratic, or seemingly so, challenges the reader to grasp the connections and make sense of them. The episode plays this game with the reader, the text's Jason substitute, both within and across the chapter segments and even back into preceding episodes, particularly the eighth, Lestrygonians. In its content, the chapter is the novel's most Dublin-centred episode. Yet it does not tell Dublin in an orthodox narrative sense or mode. To paraphrase Samuel Beckett: 'It does not tell something'—that is, it does not tell Dublin, the city, or the life of its selected inhabitants: 'it is that something itself'.⁷ It is Dublin itself. Over and above 'Dublin', in imaginative superimposition marking out the episode segments as a seascape of rocks, wander the text snippets as rock fragments, challenging us to focus on and make sense of them.

'Composing Penelope Towards the Condition of Music' establishes the novel's end beyond the closing of its Aristotelian teleologic beginning–middle–end sequence of seventeen episodes through to Ithaka. The eighteenth episode, by contrast, is devised to model an ever-presence in language. Close genetic analysis of the process of composing the draft manuscript shows how its text flow, ever enriched, integrates to create an illusion of subjectively timeless presence akin to the experience of playing or hearing music. Objectively real time recedes, to foreground a subjective experience of time in seemingly timeless presence. The episode with which *Ulysses* thus ends is—again—not about something. It creates the thing itself, the experience of a condition of music.

Three essays, also first published here, focus in conclusion on essential moments of James Joyce's encompassing command of his art and his determination to realise it. This book's methodology of editorial scholarship interwoven with criticism in genetically critical depth now provides a foothold for sampling three issues from *Ulysses* that have remained controversial, beyond the Critical and Synoptic Edition of *Ulysses*, throughout the past decades. The issues are: Did Joyce proportion the text body of the novel in its first edition? Is Stephen

7 Samuel Beckett, 'Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce', in *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (London: Faber & Faber, 1929), p. 14.

Dedalus' silent assertion of 'Love, yes. Word known to all men.' a valid text element in *Ulysses*? How does a critical and synoptic edition enable us to experience the processes of composition in time through which language becomes transubstantiated into the art of literature?

'*Ulysses* 1922 and the Golden Mean: Shaping his Text into Book' details Joyce's proportioning the text body of *Ulysses* over a final four months in 1921 for the Darantiere printers, who were as busy in Dijon as Joyce was in Paris to ready the first edition for publication on 2 February 1922. Joyce made sure that, between Nausikaa and Oxen of the Sun, the body of the book divided into precisely equal stretches, and was thus halved into a day-time and a night-time sequence of 366 pages each (that is, two 'years' of pages; 1922 was a leap-year). Over and above that, Joyce ensured that the *Ulysses* text body extended in proportion by page count to the ratio of the Golden Mean, the *sectio aurea* or *sectio divina* of ancient tradition and significance. That he could possibly have striven for, let alone accomplished this feat has long been held in general doubt. Happily, looking back after four decades into the final appendix of our three-volume critical and synoptic *Ulysses* edition helped decisively to ascertain that he did.

How, in the Scylla & Charybdis episode, does Stephen Dedalus convey what to him are the essentials of Shakespeare's late plays to his audience of librarians in Dublin's National Library? And how does he reassure himself in silent self-dialogue that he knows what he is talking about? Joyce's autograph fair copy sets this out unambiguously and in full clarity. Yet the climax of his words to the librarians and his ensuing self-reflection, comprising two entire paragraphs, are no longer present in the published first-edition text. A rational assessment of their presence in the authorial fair copy, and their absence in the typescript serving as printer's copy for the book publication, builds strictly on bibliographical evidence. This establishes that the cause for the two-paragraph lacuna was an eye-skip, hence a human error in the pre-publication transmission. Embedded in the second of the two paragraphs affected is Stephen Dedalus' silent affirmation of 'Love, yes. Word known to all men.' Ascertaining a non-authorial error in the transmission reaffirms the two paragraphs in their entirety. The two paragraphs can only be restored comprehensively, as by dint of method they must, with Stephen Dedalus' silent line of thought incorporated.

'*Ulysses* 1984: To Edit and Read in Flow of Composition' is my envoy to this book of essays from 1974 to 2024 that support the scholarly editing and explore the genetically critical dimension of James Joyce's writing and art from its beginnings to the accomplishment of *Ulysses*. Its rich and highly variant pre-publication materials in particular were new wine not to be poured into the old bottles of the orthodox practices of scholarly editing. Multiple states of his composition writing have survived. The progress they evidence render his art explorable and analysable in the processes antecedent to his work's publication as text to be read, enjoyed, and interpreted. Preparatory therefore to securing *Ulysses* as accomplished, I ascertained from all surviving pre-publication evidence the stages and states of composing the novel antecedent to the text product that eventually resulted. I edited the evidence for *Ulysses* as the novel emerged in genetic progress. The conceptual challenge was to edit the material documentation of the work's gestation and growth to sparkle in fusion with a genetically critical awareness of the progress in time of its processes of composition. In the 1980s, nothing but book print was available to render accessible and to present the process of creating and accomplishing *Ulysses* over time. Our edition therefore resorts to visualising in synopsis the successive stages of the novel's genetic progress. The methodology evolving from it was new and was seen as innovative. But conceptual understanding and appreciation of the potential of the genetically critical approach has as yet not widely translated into its further application and use. The essay that ends this book is an invitation to reflect, from Simon Dedalus' musical climax in the Sirens episode, on future realisations of the possibilities of *Ulysses*. *A Critical and Synoptic Edition*. The edition has become translatable into and genetically explorable in the digital environment that textual scholarship and genetic criticism together today command.

Munich, 30 September 2023

